

Dear friends of MEDEA e.V.,

One Day im Bhawini

In the summer of 2014 (winter in Swaziland), we had the great fortune to visit Gertrud Langensiepen in Swaziland and to see the current projects of the MEDEA e.V. on site.

It was an extraordinary trip for us, especially the visit to the child headed household in Bhahwini we still remember. The household there consists of a grandmother and her five orphaned grandchildren aged between 3 and 18 years.



The ride to the mountain region of Bhahwini was adventurous; as we had the feeling to go into the middle of nowhere, while we realized the way the children have to travel to school every day.

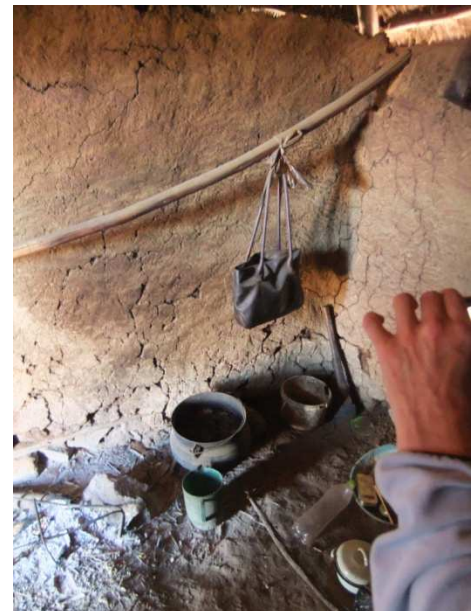
At the top in the mountains we found building for the family under construction from MEDEA e.V. There we first met the Grandmother "Gogo" with her 5 grandchildren who had not school this day. The grandmother received us wrapped in a woolen blanket (duvet for the 3 women in the family), which she did not take off during the entire visit, from which we concluded, that that night in the mountains must have been very cold.





Moses, the builder who is working for MEDEA, was busy at work on a self-made scaffold to plaster the new house. The children were watching us very closely, but were extremely shy. Thankfully, "Dawn", a knowledgeable, local staff member of Gertrud, was present to translate, since the family members do not speak English.

Gogo led us through the old huts, where the family lives until then, that made us speechless. The walls fragile - whole part of the walls of clay were missing, the roof had holes so that the wind was able to pull through. We could not imagine how to survive a night in these circumstances.



The 3 boys were sleeping on a single mattress that consisted only of metal spirals. They had to share 2 blankets and that with night temperatures of 4 - 6 degrees. Gogos hut was not only her bedroom, but also a tool shed and kitchen with fireplace. For sleeping, the grandmother and the 2 girls had only 1 meter space on the bare ground only with a bast mat. Here you can talk only of survival; not to imagine how a child can develop well in such circumstances.

Gogo told us happily that she is overjoyed when she looks across to the construction site; there arises her new home and it feels like in a dream to her.

After this we could encourage the children to play some ball games - a welcome change in their dull everyday life.

The family owns only the clothes that they wear on the body. Because the entire family should receive an initial set of clothing - including footwear and the children never had shoes, so did not know any sizes, we had to measure their feet.



Our last action of the day was to put the already bought plants in the set up garden. The soil there is very hard and stony and so the whole family helped for this.

Before nightfall we started to go home, full of impressions of dismay and humility that accompanied us for the rest of our trip and did not let go. This encouraged us in our decision to continue helping with MEDEA e.V.

In October 2014

Elke Gerold & Mona Jochum