

Dear friends of MEDEA e.V.

In February 2020 we - Elke Gerold and Mona Jochum - had the great Opportunity to turn our back on the misty German winter and to get some sun in ESWATINI. But we also had the opportunity to get to know the rainy season and its consequences.

The purpose of the trip was to meet our diligent Siswati employee Valencia and support her at the current projects, in order to provide you as German members of the association with our view of things and thus jointly support solutions to come. Through some donations from dear family members, as well as interested colleagues and friends, we had a pleasing sum of money with which we were able to support affected children and families.

We visited a School of Deaf, where we met the deaf and dumb Bongekile Tfwala, a cheerful, bright girl. In our presence, she talked in sign language with her teacher, who then translated. She completes her last year at school and is trying to find out through internships what her career aspirations are. Because she likes to braid her hair, a career in hairdressing would be an option; or due to of her fondness for baking, an apprenticeship as a baker. We provided her with clothing and cosmetics and paid the school fees for this year.

With a warm thank you and a smile we said goodbye.



Elke, Mona & Bongekile



Pindile with 2 of her 5 children

Next we visited our family in Kalanga. Sabelo came running towards us, to open the gate. We could immediately recognize his half-sided disturbed motor function (the boy suffers from epilepsy). Pindile, the mother, told us about his poor eyesight, which is why he no longer goes to school. At school we met the three siblings: Sipipo, Lungile and Bayenda.

In the director's office, at a temperature of 40°C, we discussed what the three children needed in school uniforms.



On our request to get a receipt, a teacher went with her car to another school, to get a receipt block.
This is Africa as well!

On the trip home we decided to introduce Sabelo to an eye doctor and then visited a boarding school (school for handicapped people) to possibly - accommodate him there.

The rainy season tied us to the house at times; due to a weather-related power cut, our headlamps were used for reading and knitting. In addition, trips into the mountains were not possible, despite 4 wheel. During these days we did some shopping (clothes, food) for the Kalanga family, which we brought them later. But then the sun came back and brought heat, heat, heat...!

A highlight of our trip was a BMZ workshop, prepared by Kholiwe, a BMZ staff member, which we attended. We met very committed school committee parents - they had a walk of 8 to 10 kilometres and a one hour bus ride behind them. Nevertheless, the workshop was opened with a "goosebump song". The topics were "Education since 1981" and "Education today". The participants listened with interest, diligently asked questions and internalized the contents of the workshop.



The Workshop participants

Our next project was to visit the high school in the community of Maduma and inspect the land for the construction of the kindergarten.

A dedicated helper recognized us from the workshop the day before and greeted Mona by name.....we were happy about that!

The last newsletters show the development of the high school. We were able to visit a nearly finished building - in such a short time.

Valencia - you did a great job!



The new High-School Classrooms

We also visited the children's household Lukhele, in the municipality of Mandlovo. We were impressed by the tidy household - although the children grow up without parents. The oldest one handed me a "love letter", on which he very accurately noted down the wishes for cosmetic articles, such as deodorant stick, toothpaste, soap for himself and his siblings.

Very humbly we started the way home: How privileged we live in Germany!

Last but not least we met a young girl in Manzini, who had been ordered there by Valencia. She told us that she could not finish her schooling - her mother had no money. Her statements, certificates and written documents were so characterized by hard work and ambition that we were happy to pay her school fees until she finishes school. She thanked us with a letter and of course with a thank you and a smile.

Every evening, Mona and I had the opportunity to discuss and exchange ideas - to share our feelings of concern with each other.

This helps a lot to understand the African world better.

Very grateful for this wonderful time with Valencia we travelled back to Germany.

Elke Gerold, Mona Jochum

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