

Mai 23, 2023

Dear Members, Friends and Supporters of Hand in Hand for Kenya,

In April, Mercy, the long-time social worker of MCC, and Nicholas, the headmaster of the Secondary School and Boarding School, visited Germany for ten days. This visit followed the visit of the two board representatives, Barbara Krohne and Helen Milkau, to Kenya, who had already traveled to MCC at the end of March (you can find a detailed report and many photos on our website under News). It is a special concern of the association to make it possible for loyal employees from Kenya to visit Germany. After the pandemic, we were already able to receive two employees from Kenya in Germany last year. In this way, our Kenyan team can better understand why certain aspects are so important to us, such as the dual concept in school, playful learning in kindergarten, waste disposal and separation, the vibrant concept of libraries, and much more, as they see it firsthand here. Together, we can decide how we want to implement things in MCC and the Academy. They also get to personally know the active members and stay as guests in many families' homes. We are always excited about the conversations that arise on these occasions and the sense of closeness that goes far beyond the "business" aspect. Last but not least, our Kenyan partners are important representatives at all schools that support us so fundamentally and often for many years through fundraising runs.

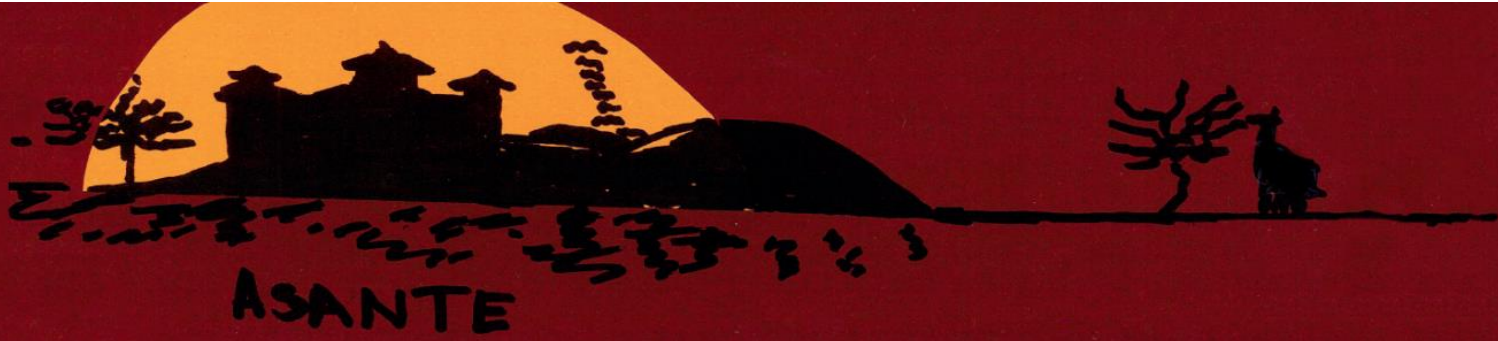
Mercy and Nicholas had a tight schedule and visited various types of schools and kindergartens, as well as two children's homes, in order to gain as many impressions as possible. They gave presentations to school classes about the MCC and the Academy, which often sparked lively discussions with the students. They engaged in exchanges with teachers and educators from kindergartens and children's homes. And, of course, sightseeing was also part of the program.

We interviewed them on their last day about their time in Germany. Here is an excerpt from the interview that we would like to share with you:

**What expectations did you have regarding your visit here in Germany?**

*Mercy: To compare the education systems in Kenya and Germany – what system exists and what do children learn in kindergartens and schools here. As a social worker, I was particularly interested in how children's homes in Germany are structured and, above all, financed.*

Vorstand: Barbara Krohne   Anita Wimmer   Helen Milkau



**Was it your first time in Germany? Did your expectations meet reality?**

Mercy: *Yes, it is my first time in Germany. Many expectations were met, but there were also things that surprised me. For example, the reason why children live in German children's homes is often not because they no longer have parents but because they suffer from mental health problems. I was particularly surprised that many of them struggle with suicidal thoughts. Similarly, the fact that children's homes in Germany are state-funded surprised me. If we had more government support in Kenya, we might have fewer orphaned children. [Editor's note: Perhaps through early psychological, medical and financial support for families in need.]*

**What about government support in Kenya? Do you have meetings with the government/ Do you collaborate with the government?**

Mercy: *Yes, we have meetings with government authorities and other institutions like the MCC. We also submit applications for government support, which we fill out as well. However, we don't receive much financial assistance and we suspect that corruption is involved. Sometimes we receive calls telling us that we can pick something up and then we are surprised that it's just sanitary pads.*

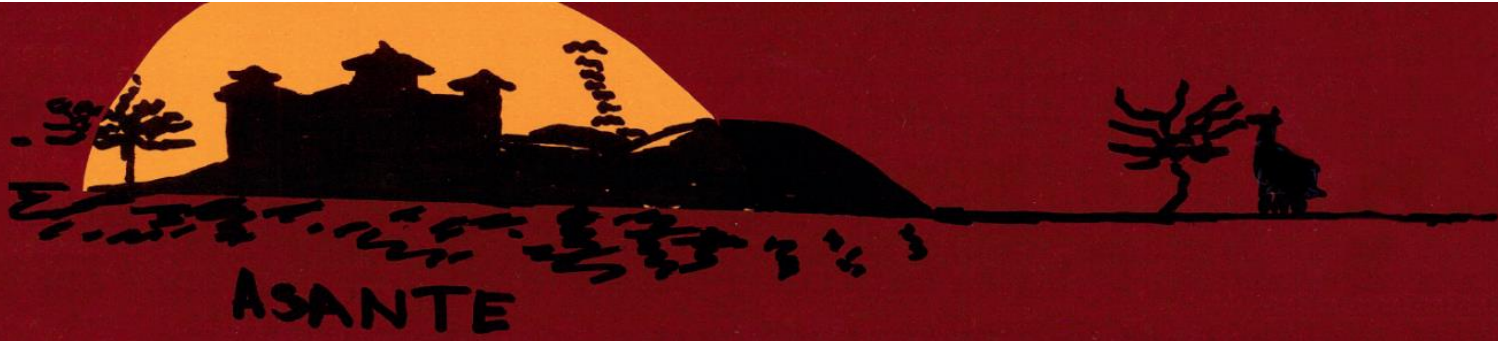
**Is it even worth trying then?**

Mercy: *Yes, we have to keep trying. However, the MCC cannot survive on government support alone.*

**What role does education play in your eyes? How is the education system changing?**

Nicholas: *Knowledge is essential for life, in any system. When a society is educated, it changes everything. In Kenya, the education system is undergoing significant changes. Instead of unhealthy competition among students, we are striving to achieve more quality by focusing on the character of each individual student. Instead of the 8-4-4 system (Primary – Secondary – University), we now have a 2-6-3-3-3 system (Preschool – Primary – Lower secondary – Upper secondary – University). However, the new system brings challenges: Since schools are financed by parents and not by the government, the new system is a burden for many parents. Additionally, many institutions lack sufficient space for new classes, for example. It would have been better if the new system had been introduced as a test to allow for further improvements. Now our students are suffering as a result.*

Vorstand: Barbara Krohne   Anita Wimmer   Helen Milkau



**Do you also have overarching/cross-school meetings with other colleagues?**

Nicholas: *Yes, we have regional meetings with approximately 1000 school principals. We also discuss the things that are not working well.*

**How was it for you to visit German schools?**

Mercy: *It was interesting for me to see that students in Germany have the opportunity to bring their own interests into the education system and pursue different paths. Teachers can also support their students in a completely different way. If someone is more interested in practical learning, they can pursue vocational training and even earn some money while doing so, which is great. It's also worth mentioning that schools in Germany collaborate with various companies. [Editor's note: referring to vocational schools and dual vocational training, as well as internships offered in technical high schools or secondary schools.]*

**Do you mean that it's better to focus on the student rather than just focusing on the best grades?**

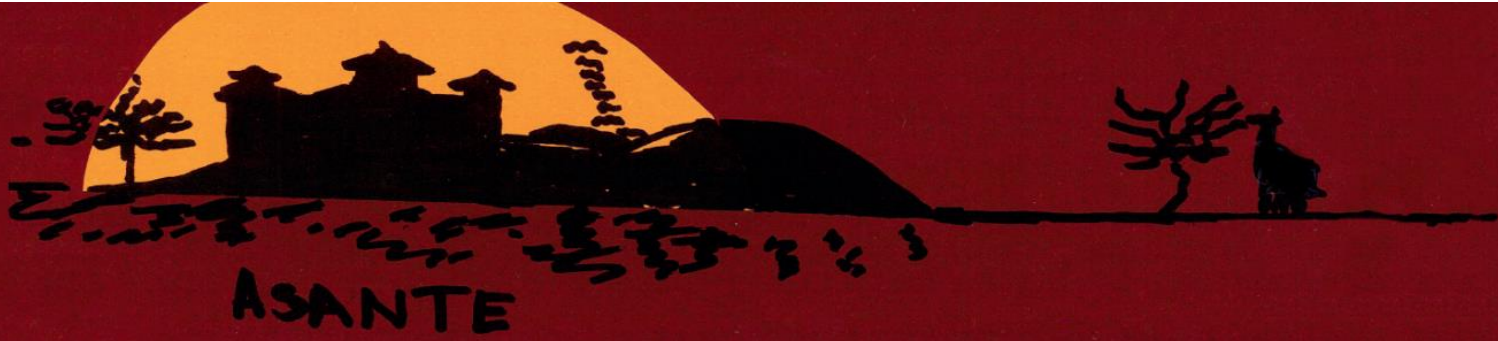
Mercy: *Yes, exactly.*

**What was your impression, Nicholas?**

Nicholas: *I learned that education in Germany is funded by the government, making it freely accessible to everyone. In Kenya, that is not the case, as parents have to pay for education, and children often have a dangerous/unsafe journey to school as well. I also met teachers and educators in Germany who simply love their profession. In Kenya, teachers provide more instructions instead of working together with the students as a team, as they do in Germany. German students do not want to repeat a grade and therefore study more. In Kenya, students are allowed to move to the next class even with poor grades.*

**What is the first thing you want to implement in Kenya?**

Nicholas: *I want to encourage teachers to pursue their profession with passion rather than focusing primarily on salary. This way, children will have more joy in their education. I also want to involve parents more because, up until now, parenting has been left primarily to the teachers.*



**What will you take home with you, Mercy?**

*Mercy: Giving students more opportunities for co-creation. Are we providing them with enough chances to make decisions? Are we giving them sufficient opportunities to participate in planning? Can they contribute effectively?*

***Once again, we noticed how important direct exchange is, how interesting personal conversations are, and how much we can learn from each other. The visit was a complete success, as we received positive feedback from numerous sources.***

Carline Mutz and Anne Roll

**SAVE THE DATE – SAVE THE DATE – SAVE THE DATE – SAVE THE DATE**

Saturday, June 24th, AFRIKAFEST in Ingolstadt with a booth by "Hand in Hand für Kenia e.V."

Saturday, July 15th, AFRIKAFEST at Stoa near Edling (northern Chiemgau), starting at 15:00, with a diverse, interesting, and entertaining program for young and old (e.g., original children's program, market stand, children's choir, musical and culinary highlights, open-air cinema, ...)

Vorstand: Barbara Krohne   Anita Wimmer   Helen Milkau

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