

Juli 4, 2024

Dear friends and supporters of Hand in Hand for Kenya,

In April and May 2024, Kenya experienced massive flooding, similar to what we recently faced here. The school operations have now returned to normal, three weeks later than initially planned. Some houses and roofs of our MMP families could not withstand the water, and at the MCC, we had water in the basement and much of the Shamba was either drowned or washed away. The good news is that all roofs at the MCC held up! However, some repairs will be necessary, and a lot of support will be needed in the community.

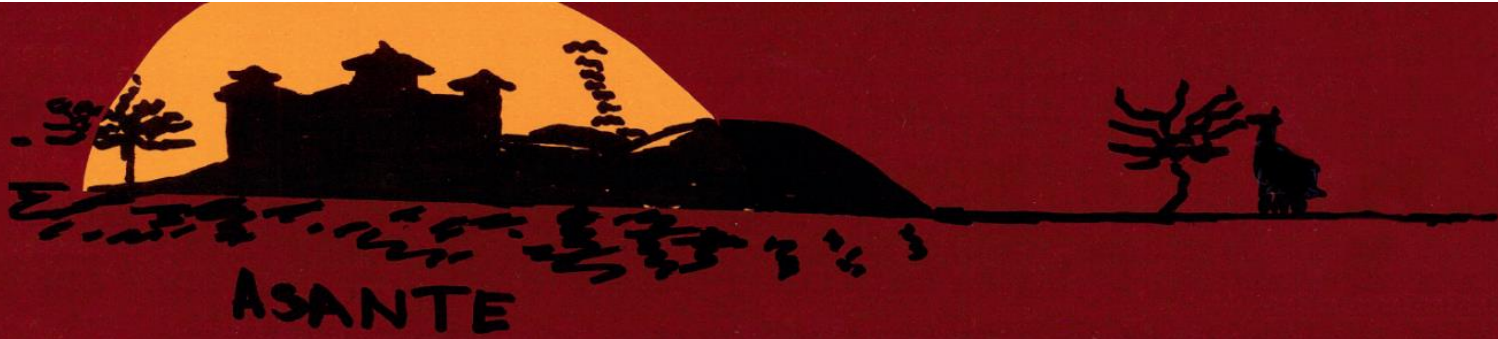
This year, it was once again our director Jimmy who joyfully came to Germany in April: many school visits, meetings with association members, and long and productive conversations. As always, it was wonderful and beneficial to sit together and exchange ideas face-to-face.

Helen Milkau and Barbara Krohne from our board of directors were on-site again in early June and reported: *"As always, we tried to fit in as much as possible in the limited time. This included, of course, the Maasai Market for new souvenirs for our events and a cheerful pool day with all the children, organized by our volunteers. During an extensive visit to the Shamba, we saw everything we had only learned about from the planting plan and team discussions. The floods did not spare our farm either, much of the harvest was lost, but thanks to the terrace planting, we came off relatively lightly. At least the river now has good water, which will hopefully last until the next rainy season in November. To our great delight, the biodigester is working perfectly for the MCC, the school, and the boarding school, meaning all the water is actually reused! And the second great joy is that we continue to have a very reliable partner in terms of service with this company. Now we hope that the good collaboration will also extend to the photovoltaic system. We had many intense conversations with the principal and deputy principal of the Academy of Maisha Mazuri as well as with the individual teachers, especially those of the three vocational subjects (home economics with its own bakery, agriculture, computer, and business). This also includes planning internships and special programs with our internship coordinator Vicky. We are pleased about the expansion of our MCC team with Beatrice, the evening homework teacher, who has already made initial progress. And as always, we enjoyed the open and direct conversations with all team members at the MCC. It is a special privilege to work with our team."*

For those wondering about the frequency of visits from Germany, we assure you that all flights to Kenya are not paid for with donation funds but by the travelers themselves. We disclose how donation funds are used every two years at the general assembly. The majority of donations go towards ongoing monthly living expenses. Nonetheless, we often receive (especially from companies and school or corporate events) inquiries about direct investments. Here is a brief overview of future investment projects: furniture for the boarding school, books and shelves for the school library, the basketball court, support for trips to Nairobi to the museum or other excursions, two long water hoses to the river pump on the Shamba, regular payment for the tutoring teacher at the MCC, extra tutoring hours at the Academy, and generally food for our fully occupied MCC and over 150 students at the Academy.

Vorstand: Barbara Krohne Anita Wimmer Helen Milkau

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“Yes, we can!” Michael Kakuyu is the Finance and Administration Manager of Youth Support Kenya and our project manager for all initiatives. Although his father sold a piece of land, it was not enough for school attendance. The now 31-year-old Michael Kakuyu has fought for his education. Walking an hour to and from school each day was the least of his problems. Without his mentor Jimmy Kilonzi, the director of Youth Support Kenya, whom he met almost 15 years ago, and the support of a sponsor from Germany, he would not be where he is today. Julia, a member of our active circle, spoke with him, and here is an excerpt from the interview – the full interview can be found on our homepage at 4kenya.info/category/kenia-aktuelles/.

Michael, you are the interface between MCC, Primary, Secondary School, and Skills Center. Not to forget agriculture, Shamba. Please describe your job!

I started as MCC Manager in 2015. Since then, we have steadily grown. By 2019, we had the first class in the Secondary School. As a manager, I was responsible for the finances of the home and school. I wrote all the reports and conducted job interviews. Every project went across my desk. Currently, I spend three days a week at the MCC and two days at the Skills Center.

What is your greatest joy in the job?

There is nothing more beautiful than helping a child who comes to the MCC full of worries to become happier and more determined. I love talking with the children and engaging with them. With us, anything is possible for every child.

What was your own childhood like?

I come from very poor circumstances. Now I am so confident and optimistic. Now I can be a role model for the children. My parents were casual laborers, earning almost nothing. No one could pay my school fees. Still, I managed to attend a day school.

What was your school day like?

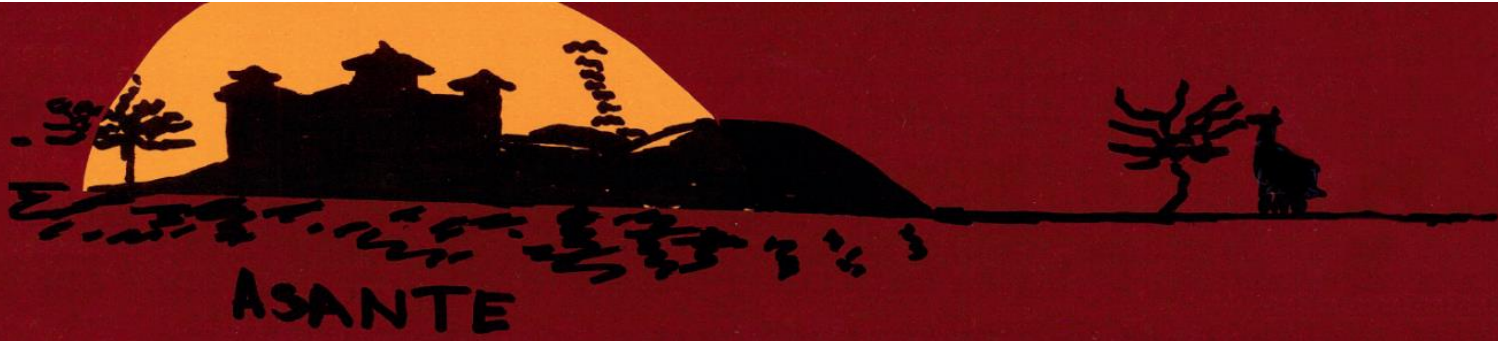
I woke up early in the morning, the moon still shining in the sky. In our mud hut, I had no clock. I left without breakfast and hurried to school to get something to eat. I didn't know if there would be anything to eat after school. I told myself, "I hate poverty. I want to get out of it." That drove me.

What happened after your school days?

I started with an internship as a primary school teacher and taught at Sunday school. I loved being with the children. Then I met Jimmy. Through him, I also met Eva, who became my sponsor and funded half of my studies. The government covered the other half.

In 2012, I asked Jimmy for an internship at the Skills Center. During the week, I was at university, and on Fridays and weekends, I was at the Skills Center. There, I was already allowed to teach communication and finance topics. In addition, I worked as a casual laborer on construction sites, mixing cement, and so on. I earned 6,000 Kenyan shillings a month (about 45€).

Immediately after my graduation, Jimmy gave me the opportunity to take on the position of finance manager at the MCC. I immediately had a team around me.



What influence do our institutions have on the surrounding area and Nguluni, the nearest town?

We support many households in the region. Moreover, we stimulate the economy. Parents now make a living by bringing us firewood or chickens. All the craftwork here is done by local workers. The money flows into the community's cycle. There are more businesses in the area because of this. We are growing and have become a really large enterprise that influences the town.

What are the biggest professional challenges for you currently?

It is a real struggle to keep income and expenses somewhat under control. Some people have no idea what we are doing here. They are too careless. Even the government. That really touches me. I wholeheartedly support anyone who wants to get better. The requirement is that everyone must share our vision. Together we can make it!

Your dream for the future?

Our children should have hope and become successful people. They should be grounded and perhaps even become sponsors themselves one day. I also hope that our staff here can live their vision. Everyone is welcome with us! The academy should become one of the best schools in Kenya. We are already far ahead with our children's home. We are unique. Yes, we can!

Michael has become a central part of the team in Kenya over the years. The visits to Germany, but also our regular visits on-site, have allowed us to grow together and learn from each other. Michael has now also learned a lot from Jimmy, who is giving him more and more freedom in many matters, which is also a sign of mutual trust. Through his personal story and the values that Michael brings, as well as the way he lives Mai-sha Mazuri, he is both a role model and a friend to the children and the team. We look forward to many more years of good cooperation and thank Michael for his wonderful commitment.

Last but not least a big Asante Sana from us to all of you – thank you for all your support, your interest, and for telling others about our association, so that we can continuously enable young people to find new paths to an independent future.

Anne Roll and Carline Mutz