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kiD

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Bremen, december 2016

Dear KiD friends,

Before 2016 comes to its end, we want to send you our warm greetings and give you a short glimpse into the lives of our children in Kenya.

It is now 4th December, the first Sunday of Advent. As is tradition in many German homes, on this day it is traditional to cut a so-called „Barbara branch“ - a small branch from a cherry tree, for example - and to bring it indoors and put it in a vase full of water. If the branch blossoms at Christmas, it means the year ahead will be filled with good fortune. Of course, it's hard, at first, to believe that it could bloom, because when it's first cut, the branch looks like dead wood.

Thinking back to the beginnings of KiD, we also would have never believed - never dared to dream of - what would become of this project. Despite all the difficulties - the new laws and decrees, increasing



Some of our KiD children who attend Mekaela Academies.



Elijah Musili (director of all the schools) welcomes parents to the parents' meeting. Seated: Heinz Isbrecht (DiD) and Abdallah Nyundo (head teacher).

Parents listen intently to the latest news.



ly, it seems, they change their minds about which future professions they hope to pursue. It is just awesome to see how every new nugget of knowledge, which the children earn through a great deal of effort, makes them realize more and more that „the world is open“ to them if they are educated.

Often we adults become focused on the living conditions of some of these children, and it makes us downhearted. But our students' faith that they may someday become a fireman, a pilot or a doctor - it's just breathtaking. And indeed, why should they not have that faith? Like the Barbara branch, the hope is in what is to come!

Here is news of what your hope and faith have already produced: we are pleased to report that all of the children have passed their qualifying tests, and will start the school year! All but four will advance to the next level. With KiD's (your) financial support, Mekaela School has offered those few students the extra tutoring they need to succeed at a second try.

As they did at KiD, in both schools our children are provided with meals, medicine and school uniforms and supplies. They ride a bus to and from school. And they enjoy school outings and competitions. At our last parents' meeting, which we convened during our last stay in Kenya, parents crowded into the school. They are very interested in how their children are developing and getting along in school. At the end of the meeting, parents came to us to say „**thank you**“ for everything we are doing for their children. It didn't matter which language they spoke: their eyes, their handshakes, said it all. If only we could, we would pass along to every single one of you their handshakes, and the look of gratitude in their eye. They are well aware, and deeply appreciate, that people who do not know them

food prices, severe weather conditions, changing teaching staff and much more - our children have developed tremendously and are blossoming in the truest sense of the word.

Unfortunately, the discrepancies with Edward and Joshua remain unsettled, which continues to frustrate and sadden us. But that's not our point. We want to focus now on that which is essential: the children. They are still fantastic. Their thirst for knowledge, their endless curiosity and their joie de vivre are infectious and help us to focus beyond any troubles of the present.

When members of our KiD-Team returned from Kenya in September this year, they brought not only the latest news but also had the latest photos. Those of us who had stayed at home were flabbergasted: we could hardly recognize many of our little mates! Our chubby-cheeked kindergarteners had turned into proud school children. Their shorts, which, half a year ago, had been too long, were now too small! However, nothing has changed in the girls' never-ending passion for new hairstyles and hair accessories.

All the children report that they feel comfortable at school and are keeping up well. Fourteen of our older children still attend Rainbow 4 Kids School, in the 7th and 8th forms. Almost week-

care so much for their children. And, in turn, all of us can be proud of their children, who repay our confidence with hard work and enthusiasm.

When we visited, we brought with us some gifts for the older students, in the form of refurbished notebook computers our company no longer used. The children responded with surprise and joy - it was like Christmas in September! But forgive us - we have misspoken, because they're not really „children“ anymore, but teenagers! These notebooks have already enriched students' learning in our computer class - and at home. For example, we sent one of our parent volunteers home with a notebook full of the videos we had made about KiD's children over the years. He has been a long-time volunteer, and we thought he would enjoy watching the videos as a way to get familiar with using a computer. But who was it who really showed him how to operate „such a thing“? Yes, you guessed it - his children (pardon, his teenagers)! Of course they beamed with pride because they could already use some of their newly acquired knowledge to teach their father!



The “parents“ are excited but still cautious while working with a computer.

As an incentive for all students we made a deal: Whoever worked very hard during the week, and was punctual and reliable, would be allowed to take one of the notebooks home over the weekend. Every week, one notebook went home. The prospect of a weekend with even an old device which can be found in almost any of our households here in Germany (often more than one, in fact, and more up to date) had an immediate, positive effect: very well-behaved and even harder-working students. We could only hope that no one would experience technical difficulties, and that the battery would hold its charge throughout each weekend, because electricity in the residential areas is unreliable and power cuts are common.

Now, like students around the world, our students are looking forward to their holidays and to Christmas. Even in Diani, one can listen to Christmas carols, mostly from battery-run radios, find Christmas decorations and Christmas cards in the shops. The difference is that, in Diani, it is summer and therefore people prefer cool drinks instead of mulled wine, which we probably have here. Also unlike in Germany, many children in Diani will receive no Christmas gifts. Their enthusiasm for life, and their trust in future, though - those are truly gifts!



The KiD „children“ are delighted with the new notebooks and, as it seems to be with children everywhere, quickly adopted this new technology – which portends well for the future.

As an eventful 2016 for all continents draws to its close, not everything is ideal, not everything is pleasant, not everything is smooth, and not everything is finished by the end of the

year. Yet, so much **is** complete, bright, warm, friendly and positive. And fortunately, those good things do not vanish at the end of the year. That's what we should remember. Whenever we arrive, the children wave to us joyfully, and whenever we leave, they wish us well. They have trust - in us, in you, in themselves, and in their abilities and dreams. So - naturally - we believe in them, that someday they may wave to us as firemen, pilots and doctors.



Heike Isbrecht (in the middle) with some of the mothers of our KiD kids.

What makes an almost lifeless Barbara branch blossom in winter? You keep it warm and give it water. Nothing more. The rest of the process is invisible to us, and we must invest our faith in what that process can bring.

We thank you all from the bottom of our hearts for „the warmth and the water“ you provided for the children through your donations this year. It's normal to wonder, given the misunderstandings and difficulties that occur locally, if everything still makes sense, if all our work with the children might fail to blossom. Please have faith in the children, have faith that their dreams, because of your support, will one day be within reach. With joy, we will continue to support them. And we very much hope that you will, too.

We wish you all merry Christmas days, full of health and confidence, with time to reflect on the past year. May these provide the „warmth and water“ that will bring a flourishing bouquet of optimism and positive experiences in the new year.

With warmest regards,

Your KiD team