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Bremen, im November 2011

Hello, dear friends of KiD!

Outside, a winter mist is wafting between the houses, blurring the view somewhat. It's like looking at the world through smudged eyeglasses. A new KiD report will soon be on its way to you, for the last one dates back nine months already. But for the moment, let's have a glance at our last letter: What have we already told you, and what's new? It's difficult to remember, because we're so busy with KiD throughout the year, and our plans very quickly become reality - a reality, which you, of course, cannot yet know. And it is precisely for this reason that we want to bring you up to date!

But first, for a moment, imagine how nice it would be, in this grey time of year, to take a nice journey to sunny Africa. Well, we have some advice: Don't forget your raincoat! When some members of the KiD team travelled to Kenya at the beginning of October, it rained almost nonstop, and so heavily that many places saw flooding.

You may ask: What about the Kenyan drought we have heard about in the news, the one people are fleeing, including those from Ethiopia, Somalia and Djibouti? Actually, the drought persists in Northern Kenya, and across the countries to the north of Kenya. „Our“ part of Kenya, where the kindergarten is situated, has not been directly affected - and, for this, we are sincerely thankful!

Nevertheless, the impact is perceptible there as well. Food prices have dramatically increased. Edward, KiD's director, told us that, in May, prices had increased by 30 - 55 %. For example, a kilo of beans, which had been 50 Kenyan shillings, was now 80 KES. A litre of diesel jumped from 73 KES to 105 KES!

Fortunately - as a direct result of your support - we're able to absorb some of this inflation by growing our own produce, in the new garden plot we purchased last year! It's rewarding to see, so quickly, that we made the right decision to do so.

Which brings us to our first bit of news: a parcel of land directly next to our garden plot came on the market, and we jumped at the chance to buy it! This nearly doubled our acreage. Our gardener is doing a good job, as always, and Hamisi, the „plot agent“ and friend of KiD, continues to supply us with fresh water at no charge, which helps keep our costs low. This purchase has already been a good investment in securing the future of our children.

During our visit, KiD staff proudly pointed out to us which of the food came from KiD's own land: nutritive bananas, fresh bell peppers and tomatoes, corn (for mush) and the „favourite“ vegetable of many children: „scuma“ - spinach ☺.



With cats and dogs raining all around them, the children gathered for meals under the roofs outside the classrooms. KiD teachers stood in front of the children to protect them further.

Speaking of eating, on some days it rained so heavily that the path to the kitchen/dining area became slippery, and teachers worried that children might fall carrying their plates. Instead, the children had their meals sitting outside, under the porch roof of the classrooms. Teachers wrapped themselves in rain-coats and lined the chairs along the outer wall, then stood facing the children with their backs to the rain, to keep the children dry. It was inspiring to witness this level of dedication in our staff members!

Whenever the weather allowed, the children romped around outside during recess periods. Football is still all the rage with the boys, whereas the girls prefer going on the swings. They play whatever games children play here - tag, hide-and-seek - and they also enjoy digging in the sand and so on. Naturally, there were scratches to be treated and tears to be dried, gently. Our kindergarten team do their jobs with heart and good sense, as always.

As for us, while the rain was pattering on the roofs, we had time to look at the bookkeeping, to review the curriculum and also to discuss with staff any concerns and plans.

Where the curriculum is concerned, our children are on target and beyond. Even the very little ones in KG1 impressed us with their knowledge, gained under the gentle instruction of their teacher, Miriam. And what could be more fulfilling than to hear the older children, in KG2, „speaking English“, counting and doing arithmetic up to 100! We owe this progress to the competence of their teacher, Agnes. She makes certain that all the children master these skills before they leave the kindergarten.

Before we get to our most exciting news, let's take a look at the books. Everything was in perfect order.

The only financial liability we could foresee is the bus. Wear and tear, due to age and to the humid climate, will soon make it impossible to guarantee a safe transport of our children. We had bought it used, and now its age is showing: rust is nibbling at almost all parts of the bus.

We also had to discuss the drastic price increases we mentioned earlier. So far, we're managing to beat inflation by raising our own fruits and vegetables, and also because the exchange rate of the Kenyan shilling is advantageous to us at the moment.

In previous reports our most exciting news has usually been about physical improvements to the school - the garden, the playground, the kitchen, the bus - all of which we could not have made without your support. This time our most exciting news comes from beyond the school grounds, for during our visit, our manager, Joshua, and our director, Edward, presented us with something we had only dared to dream of - receipts from an increasing number of parents who are now paying for their children to attend! Yes, the „test school“, which charges tuition, has been a success - and with no adverse effects on the kindergarten. This means we can afford to sponsor educations for those children whose parents cannot afford to pay.

But you already knew that, didn't you? Or, at least, you seemed to sense it would become true. Your continued, generous donations throughout this past year, in advance of our „test” results, showed that you had made a leap of faith: you seemed to know - perhaps even before we did - that everything would work out, and that everyone at KiD would work hard to make it so. By your continued support, you showed confidence in our decisions and goals, that you are right there behind us. For that we cannot adequately thank you!!

In addition to donations from individuals and groups, we also received a very generous allowance from „NAK karitativ.“ This is a relief and development organization of the New Apostolic Church (NAK) in Germany, that initiates or supports projects and aid activities, independently or in cooperation with church and other respected partners all over the world, with the objective of helping people live safely and with dignity.

How could we better thank you for your faith in us than by sharing with you the very best news of the year - the news that proves you were right?

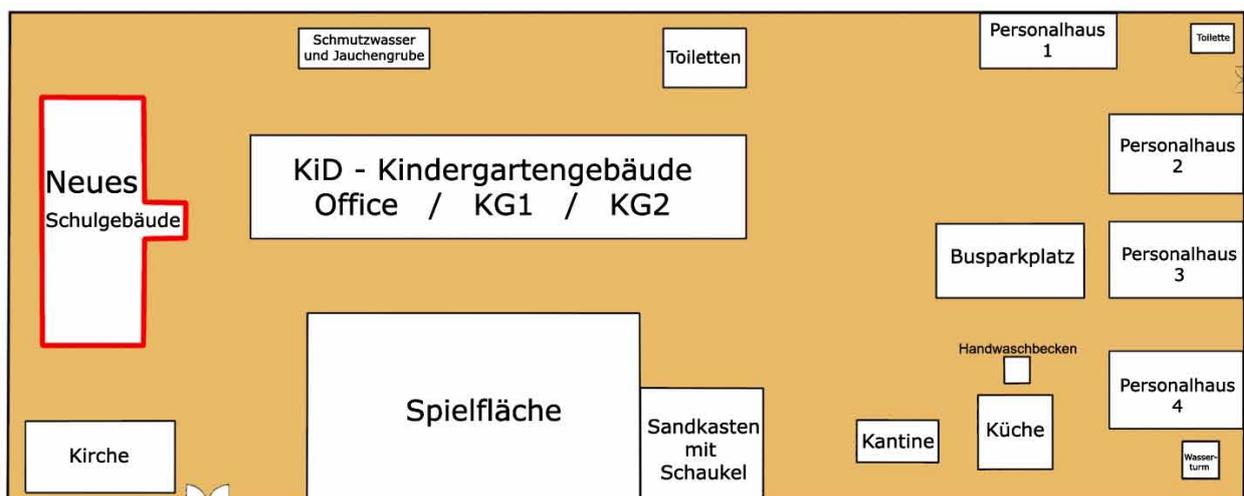
As you know, it has always been our goal that KiD e.V. would someday be self-supporting. And now, thanks to your generosity, we are thrilled to report that it is now actually possible to found our own school! And not only to found the school, but to build it, directly adjacent to the kindergarten!

We found a draughtsman who realized our idea of a two-storey house with four classrooms - two on each on level. We hired workers who began to dig the foundation, using nothing but iron rods to pry up the hard coral, just as workers had done to build the foundation of the original kindergarten building years ago.

Building regulations have been considerably tightened recently, probably due to house collapses in Nairobi, where apparently some builders had ignored regulations and used substandard materials. So it is now necessary to have a construction supervisor on site during the whole building phase, and every single stage of construction must be approved and certified (and paid for) along the way. But, of course, all this serves the safety of our children.

Despite all of the new paperwork and inspections, construction has been smooth and efficient. Enough so, in fact, that the plot now has electricity and water, and, in January 2012, we will begin instruction in the two ground-floor classrooms. The original first (test) form will begin at this school as the new second form, and the children from KG2 will be the elementary school students of the new first form. Already now, there are plenty of applications.

Also in January, we will need to hire an assistant cook, for it will simply be too much work for one person to prepare meals for so many children. And, of course, we will need another teacher for the top form. The jobs we create mean even more families will be supported.



Building map of the entire KiD plot, including the new schoolhouse (at left, framed in red).



Joshua and some of the children standing on the site of the new building.



Breaking ground for the new KiD school building.

With all of our progress at KiD, there is much about Diani we cannot change: snakes brought out of hiding due to greater humidity at this time of year, mosquitoes that breed in standing puddles around town, increasing the danger of malaria for residents. Likewise in our own hometowns, we „muzungus“ (Swahili word for „people with white skin“) from Europe have suffered EHEC outbreaks, and wild pigs in our front gardens. So, in the face of „certain uncertainty,“ we must endeavour to progress wherever we can!

Your contributions to the progress of KiD's children - by providing them with a full belly and a solid educational start - create a bulwark of hope against the ordinary madness of life. Words are inadequate to thank you for your support: the achievement is the reward; during these cold, grey, misty days of European winter, it is an achievement that brings warmth, light and clarity.

We wish you all a new year full of the same kind of confidence and faith you have shown us at KiD.

With gratitude, and with anticipation for what the new year will bring us all,

Your KiD team

Stephan Lorenz

Anke Windeler

Jarco Lindhorst

Clare Utter

Heila Staff

Manfred Linde

Rein Kiedel

Hilke Finck