



*Amini uonayo, siyo uyasikiayo*, trust what you see, do not believe what you hear. In keeping with this saying, we set out once again to “check on the projects.” Above all, to be able to look our protégés in the eyes, but also to communicate personally with the many helpers and various actors in implementing the projects. It makes a difference to see a scholarship recipient develop from a shy secondary school student to a confident business student. It also makes a difference to see how the person responsible for signing an annual report is committed to the cause and maintains direct contact with those receiving funding. In any case, this appearance – even if it may also be deceptive – has strengthened the trust in our partners and the confidence in the meaningfulness of our foundation. The following impressions of this trip from last year (11/14 - 11/25 in Kenya, 11/26 - 12/15 in Zanzibar) are intended to bear witness to this. The focus of our visits was on the projects in Kenya, while in Zanzibar we also tried to use this (to some extent unfortunately former) “paradise” for vacation purposes.

The fact that the visit to Kenya was very successful, we owe – all in all – to the friendly and effective support of *ChildFund Kenya*. Our heartfelt thanks go especially to the project manager and “ndugu” Dr. Issa Kipera and (his indispensable right hand) Mary Were in Nairobi, as well as to the programme coordinators of ChildFund Kenya’s implementing partners Peter Shikuku (Kendu Bay) and Silas Kinyua (Mutonga).

The special feature of this visit was a 50-minute video film we had prepared and that we showed to the scholars and friends in both Mutonga and Kendu Bay. We did not want to appear “empty-handed”, this time, but rather show how our family lives here in Berlin, but above all how the education system works in Germany to emphasize the importance of education for *development* (the title of our foundation). Several young people and adults have been interviewed in the film to emphasize the high value of dual training (practice in the company, theory in school), which is little developed in Kenya (as well as in Tanzania). In both countries, academic training is still considered the non plus ultra because it is the only path that offers secure jobs in the (mostly) public sector.<sup>1</sup>

If we remain in good spirits and strength, and if the interview material we collected on the trip proves sufficient, this film will now have a parallel for the Kenyan case.

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<sup>1</sup> This film cost us a lot of energy and imagination. We would have been lost without the help of our granddaughter Lilo (16 years old) as a perfect English speaker and almost professional “cutter”. Furthermore, we do not want to hide our big thanks to the interview partners: Leah Schmid (artist and apprentice in a pastry shop), Anett Schmid-Spindler (educator), Martina von Seifried (dental assistant), Amir Shayestenaar (painter's apprentice in third year), Matthias Klein (master painter) and Helmut Jäger (head of OSZ Communication, Information, Media and Design in Berlin-Wedding); particular thanks go to our son Daniel, who, as an IT specialist, was often the last technical rescue to us. We are also grateful to Maximilian Peukert at the WZB for initial advice on how and with which technology even non-professionals can conduct an interview these days. The result of amateurs can now (since December 2024) be downloaded at: [https://youtu.be/\\_ACfQ4XYyhs](https://youtu.be/_ACfQ4XYyhs).

The first visit was to the two projects in Mutonga (near Mount Kenya). On the first day, after a four-hour drive, we met there almost all the scholarship holders, now 16 in total. We were greeted with eulogies, singing and praises; we showed the film, and discussed it. The scholars were particularly interested in the possibilities of training or studying in Germany. Then a shared lunch followed with delicious dishes, including the inevitable ugali (compact maize porridge) and well-seasoned goulash made from goat meat. After a few interviews, especially with the efficient leading managers Lucy and Silas, the highlight came – at least for the young people: everyone received pocket money of 5,000 KES (approximately 33 Euros) transferred to their cell phone through a local mobile money transfer platform called M-PESA at the simple push of a button on the laptop. In other words, suddenly everyone's cell phone rang (if they had one) and reported the execution.

On the second day we visited the *Kamarandi Girls Rescue Centre*, about 15km from Mutonga. Here, in an almost idyllic location, we were welcomed by a large delegation who showed us around the buildings and facilities. In the presence of the now 13 protégés of this refuge center for abused girls, we were able to listen to around 10 welcoming speeches, from the project manager and the deputy chairman of one of the two supervisory boards to representatives of the regional government; prominent regional police were also present. This was followed by our responses and even the bold attempt to sing a canon together. The highlight for our hosts then was the symbolic presentation of a check for one million KES (approx. 6,250 euros).



Left to right:

- Lucy Mwende  
(Sponsorship Coordinator, Childrise)
- Silas Kinyua  
(CEO Childrise)
- Venansio Mwenda  
(Chairman Childrise)
- Esther Gitonga (Social Worker, Administrator of Rescue Centre)
- Simon Nthiga  
(Chairman Rescue Centre Board)
- John Murithi (Finance Officer, Childrise)
- Günther Schmid;
- Barbara Schmid-Heidenhain

The center is planned for a capacity of up to 100 children, but a maximum of 50 seems realistic to us. Because both the selection and the reintegration of the abused girls – this became even clearer to us during the visit – require great sensitivity, enormous personal attention, and patient coordination of many necessary single steps (from psychological support and family visits to complicated arrangements with local or regional authorities). The prospects are good that the responsible municipality and regional administration will

guarantee the basic financing of the center in a few years. In addition, the two nearby primary and secondary schools offer good conditions for the success of the overall project.

However, there are still enormous hurdles to overcome before sustainability can be achieved. The current capacity of the solar system in the entire complex is far from sufficient; although a well was successfully drilled, the water turned out to be saline and only suitable – if at all – for irrigation. A new, solar-powered pumping station is now to be built on the nearby river (fed primarily by the water from Mount Kenya). The intention to ensure food security through farming, livestock breeding and a greenhouse has so far only been rudimentarily implemented. We agreed to use a professional gardener to help with this issue. The centre will also need to be better equipped with staff to ensure comprehensive care for the children and their reintegration. We will follow developments with great attention and make our continued support dependent on noticeable progress.

After the visit to the Kamarandi Centre, Childrise Mutonga arranged a meeting with the parents of our scholarship holders. This time only mothers attended who were primarily interested in their children's future (i.e. further support) after they have successfully completed secondary school. The encounter ended with the obligatory gifts (woven baskets and straw hats), wild dancing, and shrill hellos.

Our second visit went to the project in *Kendu Bay on Lake Victoria*. To get there requires a one-hour flight from Nairobi to Kisumu, then a three-hour drive along the Lake Victoria coast. Lots of green here too, sometimes rain. At the meeting at the ChildFund Kenya regional centre, we recognised familiar faces among the management and students (also 16 in total, five were absent). The film screening was attended attentively, but here too there was great hesitation to ask questions and a reserved interest in training and educational opportunities in Germany.

We interviewed some of the scholarship holders at this place, and on the second day also two experts: Teresa Adhiambo Asingo (Director of Early Years Education in the relevant region), and Dolphine Auma Okoth (responsible for public health at the region's schools). Teresa pointed to the almost completed Kenyan educational reforms, which above all strengthen the performance principle: For example, the levels from F1 to F4 of secondary school can now only be taken if certain points are achieved at each step. Vocational training centers – we already discovered this on the way – are being expanded, but there is a lack of teaching capacity and material infrastructure there. Dolphine complained about the precarious contract structure for experts in her field and the lack of hygiene precautions in schools, so that many girls still stay at home because of menstruation, thus making them remain behind the development of boys. ChildFund Kenya's mentoring programme places particular emphasis on this point.

We gained further insights in interviews with the management of ChildFund Kenya's implementing partner in the lake region: Peter Shikuku (Programme Coordinator), Omesmus Yogo and Rose Achieng Angiro (Project Officers). A key result and a certain reassurance of our concerns regarding NGOs (see CDF Newsletter 23)<sup>2</sup> is to ensure that ChildFund Kenya

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<sup>2</sup> What is meant above all is that NGOs contribute to strengthening the culture of dependency (if not corruption) instead of promoting the development of self-employment.



works closely with relevant government authorities both regionally and nationally. In contrast, the practice of many (especially foreign) NGOs is to operate without the knowledge or even against the will of public institutions, to act unsustainably or to provide double funding due to a lack of coordination. Ideally, as Dr. Issa Kipera in the final interview emphasized, NGOs work complementary to public institutions and offer both initiatives and the know-how of decentralized actors, so that there are good chances of “bottom up” development instead of a mostly inefficient “top down” development.

The farewell to our protégés is once again spiced up – to everyone's delight – with the digital magic pocket money trick; moreover, everyone receives textbooks to prepare for the next exams according to their individual needs. We were also happy about the meeting with some parents who brought up the original idea at the meeting that beneficiaries of our CDF could contribute to an education fund if they had successfully achieved their career goals. Even if these contributions were only small amounts, according to the motto “*haba na haba hujaza kibaba*” (“little by little fills the measure”), substantial funds would come together that would not only benefit the sustainability of NGOs of our kind, but also counteract the danger of dependency-culture. Let us see whether this idea can be implemented; we promised each other that this will happen: *ahadi ni deni* (“promises are debts”). Finally, in addition to the meetings and interviews, we indulged ourselves a few sightseeing events: Lake Simbi (a volcanic lake); Takawiri Island (a bird paradise), and Rusinga Island (Tom Mboya Mausoleum).



Parents of scholarship holders in Kendu Bay. In front and in the middle Dr. Issa Kipera; above, second from the left, Peter Shikuku; in front at the right Adryanna Angel Joy, who wants to become an airplane engineer

Our subsequent *project activities in Zanzibar* were limited because the schools there are closed in December. Although we renewed old contacts with teachers or school principals, we did not make any progress with the eLMS project (a long-run favourite) or the promotion of the inclusion group.

A bright spot, however, was the meeting with all the scholarship holders, now 13 in number (including a boy who is studying law but was absent at the meeting). The exchange with them, especially with our reliable secretary Sharifa Ali Kassim, was refreshing and brought to light another interesting idea. When asked how our CDF Foundation could be sustainably strengthened, the suggestion came to activate the CDF website, i.e. to make it interactive and promote it “worldwide.” Since some scholarship holders study IT-related subjects, they would also have genuine competence in this area. But the saying from above also applies here: “tutaona” – we will see.



In the middle, with sunglasses, CDF secretary Sharifa Ali Kassim; on the left her sister Husna; at the side of Barbara Sabiha, IT-student who wants to become a (television) journalist (see Tiktok, as.supa).



Finally, the **CDF-Budget** (Euro) for the year 2023 in raw figures:

<b>Income</b>		<b>Expenditure</b>	
General donations*	4,475	<i>Kenya:</i>	
Special donations**	13,300	Kamarandi Girls Rescue Centre	16,250
		30 Scholarships à Ø 350 €	10,500
		6 Vocational Schs. à Ø 500 €	3,000
		5 Computer à 250	1,250
		25x33 Euro Pocket money/Meeting	825
		Administration (ca.10%)	3,000
		<i>Tanzania/Zanzibar</i>	
		Secretariat / Scholarship Sharifa	2,800
		4 Scholarships F5, F6 à 350	1,400
		4 Vocational Scholarship à 700	2,800
		4 Vocational Scholarsh. ½ à 1.000	2,000
		3 Computer à ca. 200	600
		13x20 Euro Pocket money/Meeting	260
		Maintenance of eLMS <sup>1)</sup>	2,300
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,775</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>46,985</b>

\*) Donations below 1,000 of various size from relatives, friends, acquaintances, colleagues

\*\*) Special donations from friends, acquaintances, colleagues, including own contribution (€3,000; 2x€2,000; €1,200; €1,100; 4x€1,000); 1) steering computer for eLMS; Internet-connection at Jambiani Secondary School

The difference of 29,210 euros between income and expenses shows that we have used up our reserves significantly this year. This simply means not accepting any new scholarship holders to be able to fulfil the obligations towards the current scholarships. We will also stop any infrastructure investments in Jambiani Secondary School; the high initial investment in the *Kamarandi Girls Rescue Centre* cannot be repeated either. If necessary, we intend to access the foundation's capital stock, which ultimately amounts to the termination of the CDF. At our age, we anyhow must think about either expiring or handing over the CDF to interested parties. In any case, we would like to thank all our donors very much for their loyalty so far and their many moral supports. Maybe there are suggestions or even ideas for new perspectives from this group. In the medium term, we hope for your continued project support. Please note once again the important information from our umbrella organization ChildFund Germany: The BICs and IBANs of all *Bank für Sozialwirtschaft* accounts have been changed with effect from this year; this also affects our foundation's account. We request you to use the new number below in the future; donations via the old account will be honoured until the end of 2024.<sup>3</sup>

Barbara Schmid-Heidenhain and Günther Schmid<sup>4</sup>

Berlin, January 25, 2024

<sup>3</sup> Contributions should be sent to: Child Development Fund (CDF) (Barbara and Günther Schmid), Bank für Sozialwirtschaft, Stuttgart, Swift Code/BIC: BFSWDE33XXX; IBAN: DE45 3702 0500 0007 7818 26. Important! **Please give your private address with the donation**, and ChildFund Deutschland (Nürtingen) will send you a yearly receipt for contributions to a recognised charity.

<sup>4</sup> Emails und Homepages: schmidhdb@aol.com; gues@guenther-schmid.de; www.childdevelopmentfund.com; www.editionpamoja.de; www.guenther-schmid.eu; www.tingatinga-berlin.de