

Successful completion of school book donation in Makanya, Tanzania - Project "Kitabu kingereza Yako"

Some numbers to start with, as they speak for themselves. We collected a total of just above 2300 Euro. With this amount we were able to purchase more than 1200 English school books covering all primary class levels from grade 1 to 7. This outnumbers the amount of books the two primary



schools in Makanya could acquire from public funds since their foundation. The demand for English books in these two primary schools could be widely satisfied, resulting in a situation where maximum two students have to share one book. In some classes the book-student-ratio is ideal at 1:1. Since such a large number of new books have become available, four other primary schools in the Pare Mountains received books as well.



I wish I could share with you the reactions and the gratitude of the students and teachers. Unfortunately, I can only send you some few words and a couple of pictures.



Handing out the school books in the primary schools in Makanya were beautiful moments that affected and encouraged us in our efforts at the same time. The distribution of books in Makanya did not happen without recognition. After numerous meetings with teachers and school executives, all students and teachers were present on the long awaited day. The students were dressed in their uniforms, the yards were swept and the Tanzanian flags hoisted. Everybody was looking forward to the distribution of new books that would facilitate the coming school year at least in terms of English classes. The ceremony in the schoolyard was well



organized and the 'School committee' was invited to attend. First, we were introduced by the head teacher and afterwards we could address some words in Kiswahili to the students ourselves. Often we got interrupted with applause even though the children could hardly wait to keep the new books in their own hands. The books received the School-stamp and were passed directly to the children. In Africa the gesture concerns the people and the children appreciated the books as if they were their own. The books of course will be collected from the students at the end of the term; however, we wanted to hand the books to the children to encourage them to use the books carefully and to show the teachers that it is particularly the students that are meant to be supported.

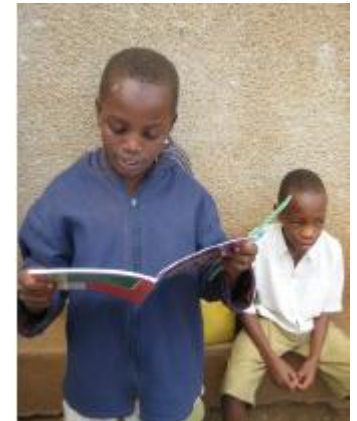


We have seen these days more gratitude as I can possibly put into words. The teachers explained that the books pose a unique and unparalleled support for the primary schools in Makanya. They promised to fairly distribute the books and to prioritize the English teaching in the course of instruction. One the one

hand, we are sure that the books will bring a significant improvement for the teaching practice. Exercises and homework will become much easier compared to a situation when only one out of five students can take an exercise book home. On the other hand, I think the new books will give good motivation for the next school year. It will be a beneficial

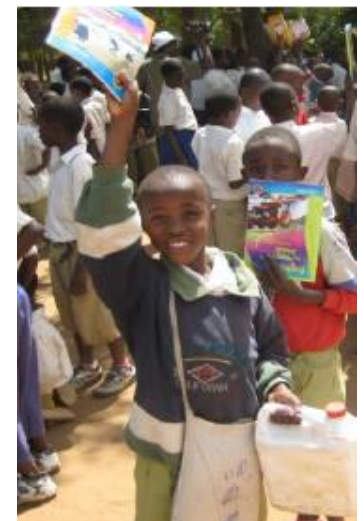


situation for both, the students regarding their willingness to learn English, as well as for the teachers, who are often reluctant to teach English lessons, due to their poor skills. The recognition that people in far Europe care about the education in Tanzania is an equally unique and important signal and evokes humongous respect among the people here.



At the same time it is clear that the books cannot turn around immediately the catastrophic learning conditions prevailing at many schools. Students fail to do homework because they have to help out with the field work when they get back from school. The books are a first yet important step towards a better education that is still a long way off. We are pleased to see that our support was well received and adopted to the everyday teaching and learning. After all what we have

seen and experienced here, we are convinced that our project had a significant impact and that each and every book was worth the money.



In addition to the newly purchased Tanzanian textbooks, we have given a number of English books from a German secondary school to the staff of the Makanya schools. We did this for the teachers to collect ideas and suggestions on how to teach English grammar. We also delivered two copies of all ordered

books to a small public library in Makanya. This library is currently run and built-up by my colleague Ally (Makanya). Anybody can use the materials to study English in self-study or with instruction. On special request, we have given a list of all contributors to the schools that received books to remind the Vitabu project as a successful example for simple and individual external support.



Now, only one thing remains to be said: Thank you.



I am overwhelmed by the confidence that I have received from all of you. I did my very best to not disappoint anyone and I can assure you: we achieved a great deal. I had never expected to collect so much money and to be able to support so many students. I feel touched that there are still people who are interested in the concerns of their fellow men in Africa and willing to participate in a little development project such as the Vitabu project. I would like to express my great thanks to you. This goes of course to all those of you who contributed financially, but also to

all the others who could not contribute this time. We contributed a little bit to the international understanding and I hope that everybody will keep this idea in good memory. The students and teachers in Makanya will certainly never forget it.

Asante sana.

Ally and Timo

