



HIPS GHANA

Information Letter no. 2

HIPS Deutschland

Brigitte Honsel
Schützenstr. 16, 59872 Meschede
Tel. 0291-58221
Fax 0291-58224

[Bank account](#)

Sparkasse Meschede, account number 3012
of the Evangelische Kirche, Meschede,
- which has declared its willingness to issue
a donation receipt and to pass the money on to the
recipient without deduction - [keyword](#): HIPS Ghana

Dear Godparents, Sponsors and Friends of the HIPS,

almost a year has passed since my last letter, and it is time for another report on our project.

In October 1998, I again went to Ghana for two months, in the hope of being present for the beginning of the building work on our kindergarten. We had repeatedly been promised a site in Teshie, and Helene Jäger, the founder of the HIPS (Helene's International Preparatory School), who lives locally, and myself began negotiations with the community chiefs to get our project under way. On visiting the site however, we discovered to our dismay that a house had been built without permission on part of the land promised to us, and that the people living in it were by no means favourably disposed towards our plan to construct a school and a kindergarten there. So in order to avoid the trouble which would have inevitably resulted, we reluctantly abandoned the site. That meant that we had to start again right from the beginning. Our search for a good location at a reasonable price continued.

In mid November we were successful. The community of Weija, a suburb of Accra, placed a beautiful piece of land at our disposal. It was covered with bushes and trees and lay close to a small river. Part of the local population earns its living in the waterworks of a reservoir located close by. The women are mostly employed in a quarry, where they break stones for road construction with only the most rudimentary

of tools. The average native of the area is therefore very poor, and many of them do not have the money to send their children to school or kindergarten.

Living in this region, we are confronted daily with many incidents great and small, many of which are pleasant, and some of which are alarming and even shocking. The more I glimpse what goes on behind the scenes, the more often I visit Ghana, the more I realise just how important our help is for the children who live in this country.

In the middle of November, our container finally arrived from Europe. Helene was delighted that her property from Switzerland, which she had found so difficult to leave behind, had arrived safely. Something from the past, a reminder of more familiar surroundings to give her a touch of home in a distant country.

Apart from many donations, such as that from Ikea for the kindergarten furnishings, and the playground equipment from Kettler, the generous gift of an off-road vehicle from DaimlerChrysler in Stuttgart, was also in the container. In our attempts to get the container through customs, our own limitations became more apparent from day to day. After an unbelievable four weeks of coming and going between various authorities and the customs office, and a marathon involving thousands of stamps, forms and official approvals, we finally succeeded in taking possession of our container on December 10th.



Our joy knew no bounds. Not only the fact that everything was still intact, but that we now had a car to take us through heat and dust wherever we needed to go. In the middle of December, I was then able to return to Germany, leaving Helene with the prospect of her first Christmas and her first new year in the place she had chosen to spend this part of her life.

On January 28th 1999 came the first great day for our project, unfortunately without my presence. The first spadeful of earth was turned and the excavation work began.

The Ministers for Labour, Social Security and Education were present in person, thus giving our project a measure of official recognition which may well be of great benefit in the future.

In mid-February 1999, I then returned to Ghana accompanied by my son Jan to see for myself how things were progressing. My friend Helene, who had now been in the country for four months, supervised the building work from day to day. Apart from keeping an eye on the work on site, she had to make sure that materials such as bricks, cement, sand, paint, tiles, wood etc. were available when they were needed. We gave as much help as we could, and when we left again on 10.03.99, the shell of the building was complete up to the framework of the roof.

By the end of June, it was already possible to estimate when the construction work would be finished. Before I departed once again for Ghana, I held a Tombola for the benefit of the HIPS children. Thanks to the generous support of local businesses, I was able to collect the sum of DM 1,725.00. Once again, my thanks to all those who contributed.

In early August, I flew out to Ghana again to help Helene in the last weeks before the great event. We had four weeks of hard work before us.

First and foremost, the children who would attend our kindergarten had to be selected. As we could accept only 34 children, and only those who were in the greatest need, the process of selection was an extremely difficult business, in spite of the assistance given by the local chiefs. Forms had to be filled in, children and parents interviewed. The demand for places was overwhelming. Some we were able to make very happy, but there were many tears because we were reluctantly forced to put most people off until (perhaps) another day.

At last the great day dawned. On September 4th, the opening ceremony took place in the presence of a considerable number of dignitaries.



Besides the German Ambassador, the Deputy Swiss Ambassador, high-ranking officials from the Ministries of Labour and Education, church representatives and local chiefs, there were the proud parents of the lucky children and a large number of interested visitors from Weija. With a celebration typical of the country, the kindergarten, kitchen and storehouse (the children attending have one warm meal per day) as well as the playground and garden were officially inaugurated.

With the press and radio present, the dances and music performed made it a day which those in attendance will remember for many a year.



The kindergarten is like an oasis, in which children and teachers spend several hours of peace and happiness every day.

We are more than happy at the generosity shown by you, and offer you our sincere thanks.

At the same time, we ask you to continue to give us your support.

Our needs are great, and our means (further diminished by the rate of inflation) are small.

Any contribution, large or small, is most welcome.

Above all, we need sponsors, because it is only these that can keep the project alive in the years ahead.

All our efforts in Ghana will only come to fruition if we are able to keep up the pace from day to day. For this reason, it is of great importance that Helene decided to move her residential base to Ghana even before the project began. Only in this way can our donors be sure that their generous assistance is really received where it is most needed and is not just channeled off into unknown hands.

On the other hand, all this can only function as long as your willingness to support the project remains unbroken. With the first phase in the project, the building and

opening of our, your kindergarten, I feel that we have made an impressive start to our project.

The happy children who have been accepted, the disappointment of those who were not, the hopes of the parents, who now have the opportunity to learn proper English in classes given by Helene on two evenings per week, and those of the community leaders for continued support of the education project, all this lives through your generosity.

We are relying on all those who have magnanimously offered their sponsorship, to continue their support in the new year. The successful continuation of a project of this kind is wholly dependent on the long-term availability of funds.

Wishing you all the very best for the year 2000, I remain,

yours sincerely,

Brigitte Haase



Meschede, January 2000

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