



HIPS - Charity Organisation

Weija, Ghana

HIPS Information letter No. 13

May 2008

Dear friends and sponsors,

For quite some time I'm back from my first trip to Ghana this year.

But to keep you informed, this is the report to tell you what has happened since I last visited Ghana and what had happened during my new visit there.

Arriving in Accra, the next day Brigitte Strehler- who was joining me again for a week -, and I drove early the next morning to Weija eager to see the children. Naturally our arrival was celebrated as always.



Fortunately the containers, which we could send with the German Kinderhilfswerk, had arrived finally in Ghana and all of our things also reached Weija. So Birgit and I started to unpack and distribute the gifts to the children. As you can imagine this was quite a challenge, since everybody tried to force his way to the front, and naturally did not listen to us telling them, that there was enough for everybody. So at the end of the day Birgit and I were totally whacked, when all of the shoes, clothes, hosiery, and different other useful things found their new proud owners.



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Again during this stay we attended various lessons, where we could not overlook some notable shortages, which led us to a request for decision to correct the situation at the board meeting the next days. There was decided to immediately start a new search for some better qualified teachers. Naturally this will increase our budget, but we all felt that this is unavoidable, if we don't want to lose our school certification. From more than 50 applications, which we got from an announcement in the relevant newspapers, we finally could select 4 candidates. During this process Mrs. Emma Gottfried, our new board member and head of the Montessori school in Accra, has been of great help to us.

After one week, which has been also quiet straining for Birgit Strehler, she had to fly back. I have to thank her very much for her repeated help and engagement on side in Weija.

On the day she left, my son Jan and his girlfriend Deborah arrived in Ghana. For Jan this has been already his second trip to Ghana His first trip has been in 1999, when he just could observe the first work on the Kindergarten building. So it was quite some experience for him to see the development from there to now with 3 schoolhouses, a kitchen house, 2 sanitary buildings and the computer container. Not mentioning the partially gardenlike and fenced HIPS area.

When they visited the area at Weija they also were welcomed very warmly with songs dances and various games.



Deborah and Jan did handicrafts and played with the little ones at the kindergarten. They also attended various lessons, where they could help with some suggestions to improve the classes. The three of us also had to continue to distribute more of the clothes, which came by the mentioned containers. To reduce the chaos while handing out all the things, this time we had sorted out and placed everything on different tables, from where we wanted to distribute the clothes, shoes, T - shirt and other gifts from class to class. As almost assumed it did not help really:





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The bicycles, which also came by the container, will be used by the staff of the school and the kindergarten. They had been a special surprise. Those things, which could be used by adults, we brought to the Queen mother at Weija, to let her hand out the various clothes to those who needed them the most.



March 6th, the National Holiday of Ghana, allowed us to take off for a short trip to show Deborah and Jan a bit of the country. They very much enjoyed seeing the loveliness of the landscape and the friendly people.

Back to Weija on Monday we had a very unpleasant surprise. The refrigerator broke down over the weekend and all the food in it had been destroyed. So we had no chance than to drive to Accra and buy a new one, which turned out to be not that

easy, since we needed it to be delivered to Weija. Naturally the whole action was quite expensive because we also had to buy all new food too.

During the stay of Deborah and Jan, we also had the chance to visit the Montessori school of Mrs. Gottfried. It was astonishing and notable, what she had developed there over 20 years. However the parents have to pay for the education, which naturally allows much better qualified teachers and school equipment. May be with the help of Mrs. Gottfried one of these days we can also have a nice little Montessori school in Weija.



Unfortunately time went by fast, so that Deborah and Jan had to leave after ten days back to Germany. They have been of great help to me and I was very thankful to see how engaged they have been working for HIPS.

As a souvenir they bought for all of the HIPS children a very nice handcrafted lion, which was welcomed very much by the children, as you can see on the picture on this page.



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The following lines should tell you, how the two felt during their days in Ghana:

We also, Deborah and Jan want to tell you about our short stay in Ghana and at HIPS in Weija. After a delay of one day caused by bad weather conditions we arrived in Ghana and went to Weija already early the next morning. Very anxious we were looking forward to see the HIPS project. Naturally we were expected with songs and dance in that little HIPS paradise in Weija. We were very proud to see, what my mother has been setting up there, to see what her ever unbroken engagement has brought about and what has been developed with the kind help of all the HIPS sponsors and friends.

If you drive from Accra following a continues row of cars and trucks on a road with millions of holes and bumps to Weija, you finally reach at end of an unpaved street a little oasis, the HIPS grounds. In contrary to the governmental and most of the private schools, which you pass on that one hour trip, the HIPS Weija compound presents a real difference. Nice and colourful painted buildings, a gardenlike surrounding with a lot of different flowers and plants from Europe and Ghana. At first sight you recognise how affectionate this whole setting has been set up for the children of the really poor families of Weija. We were very much impressed and could easily see in the faces of the children, that they were happy being a HIPS child. While we were at the HIPS compound we did handcraft and homework with the children from the Kindergarten, helped in the kitchen to prepare the daily meal (we do know now how Kinki and Fufu – the local dishes – have to be prepared , which all of the children get aside a good breakfast).We joint different classes and helped to distribute all the good things coming with the container from Europe .We could visit Weija, talked to a lot of people and got a much better impression of the country than just being a normal tourist.

We had a lot of appointments in connection with various actions concerning the children and the HIPS organisation. Procure medicaments, joining my mother in visiting an eye specialist with one of the HIPS children, buying a new refrigerator talk to the accountant and so one. We also had the chance to meet the Swiss and German Ambassador. This kind of contacts and



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those with the leading local people are very important for a project like HIPS. It was very encouraging to see how interested and helpful the German Ambassador and his wife were. To keep it short: We got up early with the cook and came back home quite late in the evening. This is rather strenuous in connection with the climate for a European and more so we admired my mother how she can handle all this now for about ten years. To run a project like this, to wait for everything and everyone, to discuss problems for hours and again and again, and a lot of other obstacle, all of this is hard work. There is no Africa romantic with it and surely to be there twice a year for a month or so, this is no vacation.

Unfortunately we had to go back after those 10 days. But we were caught by the country, the people, their culture and their joy of live and naturally most of all, by the HIPS project.

We will be back to HIPS, back to Ghana, back to all of those wonderful children, were each of them is worth that the friends and sponsors of HIPS keep their support going on, so that they get the chance through a good education to turn their life and the one of their family into a much more promising future. A project like this, with direct help in this very, very poor community is probably the best way to help not only the people in the village but also the whole country.

But now back to some of the other remarkable occur rents of my stay.

Since my last visit the 2nd sanitary building had been erected, and I had a chance to thank the German Ambassador Dr. Haas and his wife for their personal help to sponsor the building. As mentioned by Deborah and Jan, we went to a special eye doctor to find out, if he could help our HIPS child. Unfortunately there is no possibility to do so in Ghana. The child would have to be brought to Germany, which is aside the cost more or less impossible, since her mother does not speak any language aside the local dialect. But I am not willing to give up jet and so I will try to get into contact with the Organisation of Ärzte ohne Grenzen, which comes with a ship to Ghana every once in a while, were an operation could be done. For some time now there is the possibility to get a health insurance in Ghana, which naturally most of the people can not afford. I have been working on that item and finally found a way, were all the HIPS children in total can be insured. The special deal with Dr. Alla had been to expensive over the time, so now all children are having their own insurance and can go to a doctor, if one is needed.

Almost at the end of my turn I was visited by Mr. Vaskow, a retired head of a large school in Germany, who hade been to Weija almost a year and a half ago. He was quite emphasised that time, talked to the teachers, visited the lessons and listened to the problems of the school staff. Also this time he did so and could give to me some very valuable tips. He also gave to me some addresses, where I could buy the necessary material for the upcoming physic and chemistry lessons. I hope and in a telephone conversation some weeks ago it seems not to be impossible, that he will join me next year for some weeks to Weija . I am sure that this would be very valuable for the development of the school.

But, dear friends and sponsors, all, what has been set up in Weija can not exist if there is not the necessary money to keep the project running. Fortunately again we had some special actions over the last month, who added to the needed funds.

So some good friends of ours Mrs.and Mr. Kloss took up our idea of last year and asked for a donation for HIPS instead of birthday presents. We got 5.200 € out of this request, a sizable sum and a great help for the HIPS children.



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A department of a Swiss bank decided at the end of 2007, not to give Christmas presents to some of their major customer and donated instead 4.125 CHF to HIPS. a generous and welcomed help.

A good friend Mr. Ueli Gnos held up a charity Christmas dinner. The proceeds of 1.720 CHF will guaranty our more than 100 children breakfast and food for a few weeks.

The primary school in Dorlar/Germany held up different actions to collect money for HIPS. Around Christmas they baked Christmas cookies and sold them on a Christmas market. This brought 370 € for HIPS and around Eastern Mrs. Düking, Mrs. Hämmerlein and Mrs. Merzhäuser held up a pottery workshop with the children of the Dorlar school to make different pottery products which could be sold on Easter Sunday.



This brought another 220€ for HIPS. I am very thankful for this special action from children to children.

Also on a Christmas market Birgit Strehler sold handcrafts, made by herself and got 520€ for HIPS. I thank her very much for this new engagement for the good of our Children in Weija.

Many thanks to all who showed those special actions for HIPS. It encourages me and it is good to see how many people with a creative idea are helping us.

Special thanks again to all of our friends and sponsors, who are the bases of the existence of HIPS by their regular funding of our project. Without their help the whole project would not function, without their help funding the education of the HIPS children would not exist.

A special thanks to all of you again.

So much for this Information Letter: I plan to be back to Ghana in October and I am eager to see, what is waiting for me.

I will be back with more and new information after my trip.

Thank you all and God bless you

Yours

Brigitte Honsel