



Active Direct Help Newsletter 33

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314 students, 4 villages, 10 classrooms, 10 teachers



L: Wolfg. & Mpona with students outside & ... R: in the classroom

Dear friends,



Presentation in the Gerbach School which supports us

The big increase in the number of students who want to go to our school was quite unexpected. It really shouldn't have been such a surprise when you consider that our school has more spacious classrooms than the schools in the other villages, the students learn French from the first grade and the school is free of charge,

something you don't find elsewhere in Congo. All this is made possible only thanks to our sponsors and supporters. Thank you for all your help! You have an integral part in this project.

On our yearly trip through Germany in summer visiting our friends and supporters we met Jos who spent 7 months in the bush overseeing our school project there. Together we were able to participate in our 4th interview with "München TV". Here is a link to it <http://youtu.be/Ea1sylvFtwM> and to our latest video about Mushapo www.youtube.com/watch?v=m5X7qFfJKNk. We also had the opportunity to give a short live Talk at the biggest German TV station, the ZDF www.zdf.de/ZDFmediathek/beitrag/video/1947916/Wolfgang-Schmidt-im-Talk.

After our German tour, we travelled together as a family to Congo. We had many important meetings with our friends there which set a new trend for our work in



L: Joseph's and our family R: Joseph shows us the Maduda region in Bas Congo

Congo. The serious sickness Jos had in the bush showed us that we need to get the project set up in such a way that it can run without us personally being present so much. The school needs to



L: School committee with 2 chiefs, Jean, Mpona, Abbe Thomas & Rev. Tshinbambo R: Mpona & Jean with the parents

become more and more independent from us. As difficult as it is to set up any lasting development work in the bush, it is very needed as otherwise the village people all want to leave and will overcrowd the cities even more. Because life in the villages is so hard, people hope to find jobs in the city. But once they get there, they don't find any and end up worse off than if they would've stayed in the countryside. Whole villages are disappearing because the old people there die and the young people head for the cities.

In order to get our project to stand on its own feet and to keep running well once we slowly pull out, we founded a school committee with the help of our dear friend in Kinshasa, Professor Mpona, who was willing to come with Wolfgang to Mushapo. Prof. Mpona is from the same region in Kasai and speaks the local language Tshiluba. He was very instrumental in conveying our new plan to the local people. By now we have all the members of the committee together: the two chiefs, one representative each of the two congregations which are strongest in education there - the Catholics and Mennonites, one representative of the parents, the new school director and our manager, Ing. Jean. The committee meets once a month and is supposed to keep an eye on the overall project to help solve problems, like avoiding theft in the agricultural project, and to see that things are going in the right direction.



Inside the cargo plane or ...



... on bike across the river, exciting bush travel



With Philippe (tallest) & his helpful team at their Denys Tshikapa camp



Denys team changing oil on our generator



Making racks for drying manioc after soaking it for 3 days



Packing dried manioc roots in big 80 kg bags to be sold

Our first 5 hectares of manioc are growing well and should be harvested soon. We invested in another 4 hectares of manioc and hope that after that harvest it will help generate some more income for the school. In the meantime the number of our sheep on the farm doubled because our first 3 new baby lambs were born.

A big challenge at the moment is to get more strong school buildings constructed. With the sudden increase of so many pupils we needed 4 more classrooms which we were able to create by restructuring the old farmhouses of the SADR farm. But this is only a short term solution. As you can see in our last Newsletter, the walls of these old houses won't last long and we need to build more brick buildings.

The second brick building is almost finished, but we need 4 more and are looking for the needed finances. We would also like to invest more into the agricultural project so it can create better income in the future. One positive side-effect of the increase in all these activities is that it creates more jobs for the local people: teachers, guards, farm and construction workers etc. Our project means also an enormous encouragement for the people of Mushapo and the surrounding villages Kakondo, Shamubenzi and Kamupafu, as they see a better future for their children through a good education.



Roof construction of our second school building

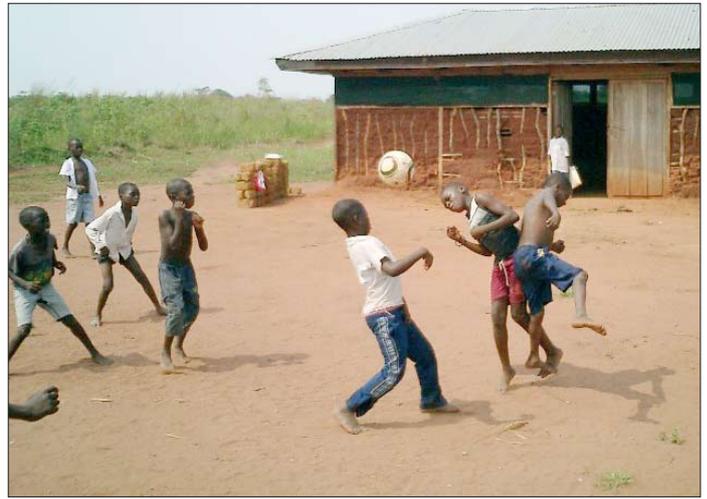
Wolfgang was also able to make a short scouting trip to another far away corner of Congo, in the Western region of Maduda. It is another neglected rural area where people are trying to improve their living standard. We would like to help them, but first need to build proper school buildings in Mushapo and get that project stabilized.



Left: First comes the roof to protect the construction from the rain, then the walls go up. **Right:** ... almost finished now!



Kindergarten in Miesbach collected notebooks & pens



It's so much fun for the kids to play with a real soccer ball!



A new oven to burn bricks so they become stronger

Jos visited us in Prague to help us set up our new base which gave us also the opportunity to discuss our next steps in Congo. He is planning to go there in January and we are still looking for somebody locally to be with him in Mushapo and assist him in case of sickness, help him with his work and cook for him. To get a proper meal in the bush is not easy without electricity or clean water and not much variety of food available, but we want to do all we can to avoid any more sicknesses.

We wish you a beautiful *Christmas* time and all the best for the *New Year*,
With many greetings,

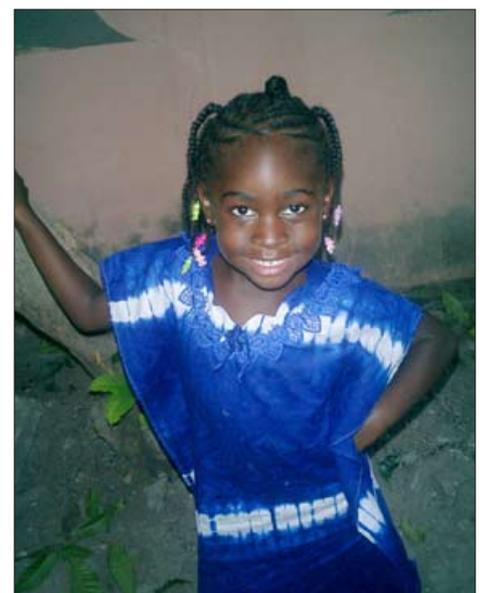
Wolfgang, Lenka and Team



Our first newborn baby lamb



Lenka and Anissa help cooking



Anissa in traditional dress & hairdo

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