



In Africa as well as South America, where the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation helps thousands of needy children and their families, people are following hygiene rules as well as they can depending on their circumstances.



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Dear friends and supporters of the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation,

Given the overwhelming global impact of the Corona virus, one might expect that nothing much has changed since our last Newsletter of May, 2020; that is simply not the case. Despite numerous challenges that you will read about in this Newsletter, volunteers of the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation and its booster clubs have done amazing work helping children around the world despite (and perhaps because of) the pandemic.

Despite difficult, often almost impossible conditions imposed by the Corona virus, the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation has achieved considerable success. As the financial report clearly shows, your individual contributions are a testament to your wonderful support. We cannot convey how appreciative we are for your ongoing support. In the May issue of the Newsletter we asked for donations to obtain food because the food situation in many relief areas was extremely urgent. Rapid help was required and you came through in a truly amazing way.

A big **THANK YOU** to all of you! Without your help we could not have performed our work. As the holidays approach, we at the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation wish you all the best. May your holidays be happy and the upcoming year filled with all the best life has to offer – especially good health.

Best Regards

Ernst Engel
Executive Director

Bettina Haubner und Jaime Garcia
Deputy Executive Directors

Members of the Executive Board of both Booster Clubs
Freunde der THOMAS ENGEL-Stiftung Fulda e. V. and Nastätten e. V.



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COVID –19 and its impact of the aid projects

COVID-19 and its impact on all of our lives and that of the more than 3000 children that the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation and its partners support.

ESWATINI

Acorn Mndzebele, the head of our aid project *Litsemba (hope)*, sent us the following report on Oct. 14, 2020 :



Introduction

At the beginning of the year 2020 as the world faced the outbreak of COVID-19, the government of eSwatini announced a partial lockdown calling for its citizens to stay at home. As a result, activities were suspended in Neighbourhood Care Points (NCPs). The impact of this was immediate and dire: families were faced with a critical shortage of essentials, especially food. Working under the auspices of the Litsemba project, Young Heroes stepped up and oversaw a number of COVID-19 relief projects, perhaps the most noteworthy of which was making sure that almost three thousand children continued to receive at least one nourishing meal a day. Below is a summary of activities carried out in the NCPs.

Achievements of the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation during the pandemic

Provide emergency response to 2,824 kids and 475 caregivers in NCPs during the COVID-19 pandemic for improved safety and livelihoods

Due to the government's partial lockdown, the *World Food Program (WFP)* organization could not provide food donations to the NCPs. The children in the NCPs were directly impacted as they were no longer receiving a daily meal. Supported by the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation and the *Möwenweg Foundation*, the Litsemba project donated corn flour, beans and cooking oil to 87 NCPs, assuring children received a daily meal. It is important to note that the NCP caregivers and community leaders observed COVID-19 precautions while preparing and serving the food.

Two thousand eight hundred twenty four (2824) children benefited from the work of the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation, as did 475 caregivers. Using the WFP scale and recommended daily food allowances assured that children received one nourishing daily meal.

To assure a rapid and timely delivery of food to the 87 NCPs, two vehicles were hired. The deliveries were done over nine days in the month of May, eight days in the month of June, eight days in the month of August and the last deliveries were made over eight days in September. The amount of food provided to the 2824 children and 475 caregivers amounted to E712,800.00 which is about € 36.850,00 or US \$43,685.00

Without question, the spread of the COVID-19 virus increases the risk of infection for children who are already especially vulnerable



given the extreme poverty of eSwatini. Thus it was mandatory that everyone associated with this project know and practice accepted precautionary measures such as continually washing one's hands with soap and running water, frequently sanitizing, wearing a face mask, and checking temperatures daily. Given that the NCPs could not afford to purchase items necessary to maintain safety precautions, the Litsemba project provided all 87 NCPs infrared ("gun") thermometers, 5 litres of liquid handwashing soap, hand sanitizer, face masks, disposable hand gloves and green bar soap.

As part of the daily prescribed health safety precautions, the temperature of each child is taken and registered on logbooks. In case there is no safe, clean running water available, NCP caregivers and children use the hand sanitizer. Additionally, each NCP caregiver and child are provided green bar soap to assure that even at home, together with family members, they will continue to practice accepted safety measures prescribed by the World Health Organization. Reusable masks and disposable hand gloves are provided to caregivers to protect them as they help the children in the NCPs. The total cost for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was about E150,000.00 which amounts to € 7,750.00 or US \$ 9,188.00.

In order to increase the safety of the children and caregivers in all of the 87 NCPs, staff members received training from the Ministry of Health on how to properly fumigate their respective areas. Staff members were trained on how to mix the alcohol substance with water, on how to determine which areas should be fumigated, and how to properly administer the solution. The PPE used by the staff for fumigation was provided through donations. The fumigation solution was provided by the *National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA)*.

At the beginning of May of this year, the Litsemba Project staff undertook a major activity: to train/educate all NCP caregivers, community leaders, and community police as to how to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. All those taking part in the training were expected to share this information throughout the community and to help others engage in safe health practices. By any measure this project has been a resounding success!

With the governmental lockdown in place, *Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCE)* activity was stopped immediately and children could not attend classes. The closing of schools has created problems around the world, but the situation is particularly dire for the children of eSwatini. Children do not have access to on-line schooling and without schooling children are doomed to remain in their current lives of poverty. The Litsembe Project undertook the incredibly challenging project of preparing educational materials as well as teaching NCP teachers how to monitor and guide the students. NCP teachers distribute the educational materials to children when they came in to the NCP for their daily meal. These educational materials have been specifically designed to be completed at the homes of the children with the help of adults. NCP teachers monitor the completed assignments of the children to assure that all students are doing their work and that older children do not do the work of the younger children.

As would be expected in this time of pandemic, children in eSwatini are unable to go to clinics for vaccinations, deworming, and other basic medical support. **Dr. Barbara Jörg**, chair of the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation booster club in Fulda, made use of telemedicine to treat children suffering from skin disorders. Dr. Jörg requested and received photos and through the use of these photos, she was able to remotely treat the children suffering from skin disorders. Our thanks are given to Dr. Jörg for her help. The Mobile Clinic of the Litsembe project now has ointments to treat fungal infections on the head and scabies on the body.



National vaccination weeks have been proclaimed for October, November and December but they have been postponed until further notice given a lack of available vaccine.

All activities that have begun during the pandemic continue as of the writing of this newsletter.

Other projects supported by the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation and begun before the pandemic also continue such as the cooperatively organized income-generating activities of poultry and pig breeding. At five different NCPs there are sewing projects, including the making of reusable Corona face masks.

Since the beginning of October, the NCPs have been open once again for preschool sessions and visits from the Mobile Clinic.

The Litsembe project is fulfilling its goal of helping children in eSwatini. Daily meals are provided for children at 87 NCPs, COVID-19 prevention protocols have been shared with community leaders who in turn share with others. On-going monitoring assures that safety protocols are carefully practiced. Education is continuing for school age children as they learn at home. A structure is in place that includes careful record keeping making contact tracing easy should the need arise (*Currently, eSwatini has 5696 COVID-19 positive cases, 5337 recovered, and 114 deaths*).

TANZANIA

At the beginning of the pandemic, the Tanzanian government moved quickly to shut down international air traffic, closed all educational institutions and banned all public gatherings for a 30 day period. Since that time, very little information has been forthcoming out of Tanzania. The Tanzanian government has not published any Corona statistics since the end of April (at which time, allegedly 509 people were infected and 21 people had died).

On the 20th of July, 2020 the Tanzanian president declared the country free of the Corona virus, stating *"God has heard our prayers."* Despite this positive statement, it is clear that the country is suffering greatly as a result of the virus. Because of the lockdown and existing travel warnings, much-needed tourists are staying at home. Tourism is the life-blood of Tanzania's economy and without it, unemployment is increasing, as is hunger and poverty. Poaching is increasing, to a large degree the direct result of decreasing tourism. Due to the fact that people are not visiting the national parks, fewer rangers are employed in Tanzania's beautiful national parks.



The THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation (in association with other voluntary agencies) has resumed its very important work for children, women and other groups in Tanzania.

Overall, Tanzania appears to have weathered the Corona crisis better than European countries in terms of health, but the country is suffering much more from the economic consequences of the pandemic.

UGANDA

Although Uganda was largely spared from the first Corona wave which struck Germany in March, Ugandan COVID-19 numbers are now increasing dramatically. Drastic increases in the months of August and September led to almost 11,000 cases and 98 deaths as of October 22, 2020. According to the Ministry of Health Uganda the cases have been mostly due to clusters of outbreaks in confined spaces such as prisons and are not as severe as sensational news stories have reported. The airport in Uganda's capital city of Kampala has been reopening gradually since October 1, 2020 which is good news for people wanting to visit. Tourism is the reason the government in Uganda lifted the travel ban. Even though Uganda is not yet a destination for mass tourism, tourism is gaining financial importance in this East African country.

To the credit of the Ugandan government, Corona virus prevention protocols have been put in place and are practiced. To enter the country, one must present a negative Corona test, no older than 72 hours. Tourists entering the country must go straight to a hotel. Tour operators must guarantee that tourists have no contact with the local population. Since May the wearing of facial masks is mandatory and anyone not complying with that rule is required to pay a significantly large fine. The website of the government offers a comprehensive list of effective hygiene measures. The country no doubt benefits from the experience and infrastructure it has gained and built during previous epidemics such as HIV, TB, and Malaria.

Recently, the well-known and highly regarded medical journal, "Lancet," ranked Uganda 10th in a list of the countries most effective in controlling the virus, a noteworthy achievement.

While the country is doing well in controlling the virus, the health system is undeveloped, with less than 0.5 of a hospital bed available on average. That is 2.2 less than the average worldwide and 5.1 beds less than the average in Europe. Additionally, Uganda has an average of 0.9 doctors per 1000 residents, less than the worldwide average of 1.5 doctors. After gaining international acclaim from the Lancet ranking, the government of Uganda announced plans to invest more than their usual 6.2% of the GDP in their health system (The average in the world is around 9.9%). This is a very important step in the right direction and one that will serve Uganda's people well, not only during the pandemic but for the future as well.

The THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation is focusing on expanding income-generating measures for the people of Uganda. Detailed information will be provided in our next newsletter (*to be available in May, 2021*).

ECUADOR

The Corona virus continues to negatively impact—in very real and dire ways—the people of Ecuador. At the current time, the virus is increasing and the "Corona traffic light" is yellow which means little tourism, no gatherings with more than 25 people, mandated masks, maintaining prescribed social distances, and closed public schools. Education is only available on-line in a country that does not have the technology and infrastructure to support large scale distance learning. It is hoped that in April of next year (*after the upcoming summer vacation period*) children and young adults will be able to return to schools and universities again. The almost non-existing economy is critically slow to recover, savings are depleted, and many shops and restaurants have had to close permanently.

The THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation has been supporting two projects in Ecuador for many years: The **Melvin Jones School** for Handicapped Children and **Helping Kids in Ecuador**.

The **Melvin Jones School** is experiencing more financial problems than ever before. Many parents have lost their jobs during the pandemic and are unable to pay the fees needed to send their handicapped children to school. The loss of money generated by children who cannot afford to attend has been devastating to the Melvin Jones School (*not to mention the even more devastating effect on the children who cannot attend*). The Ecuadorian government has promised to provide on-going financial support, but payments have been few and very far between; in reality, government help is non-existent. In the past the school has generated income by providing physiotherapy for physically challenged children and adults. Recently, their electromagnetic treatment machine broke and therapy cannot be resumed until it is repaired. Poor families, especially poor seniors, have been recei-



ving essential medications such as those needed for high blood pressure and diabetes. In the past these medications were paid for by the government, but at the present time, no governmental support is available. All of this has resulted in the few teachers and therapists often having to wait long periods before receiving their salaries.

Without the support of the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation, the survival of the Melvin Jones School would undoubtedly be at even greater risk than it is now. The THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation is paying for part of the salaries of the few teachers and therapists as well as for getting the electromagnetic treatment machine repaired. Additionally, The THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation paid for the medicine for 36 patients for four months. The desire of the Foundation to help the school is great, but unfortunately does not have the funds to do more at the present time.

Helping Kids in Ecuador (HKIE) provides necessary medical surgeries for poor children in Ecuador who could not otherwise afford these procedures. Over the years, HKIE has built a large network of local doctors and hospitals that charge a minimal or no fee at all. Mary and Tod Freeman, chairs of the HKIE Foundation recently wrote the following:

"Thank you again so much for your recent donation and your continued support over all those years. The THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation has improved the quality of life for many poor children here in Ecuador."

Jaime Garcia, one of the two vice chairs of the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation, and his wife, **Edith**, live in Ecuador permanently and oversee the above two aid projects. At the moment they are engaged in starting a third booster club for the foundation called **Amigos de la Fundación THOMAS ENGEL**. They have started a third aid project that provides interest free micro loans for small vendors. These loans are made to individuals who lost their businesses during the pandemic and who do not have the means to start anew. The idea for that came from a group of foreign women (*Koffee Klatch*). Our third booster club will assist this group. So far 56 micro loans have been given by the Koffee Klatch group and by the booster club. Numerous individuals and their families are seeing an improvement in their economic situations. In the next newsletter, we will feature a few of the individuals benefiting from a small loan.

Africa, a continent of contrasts, even in times of the Corona Virus



Africa, a continent of contrast, faces unique difficulties. But, according to the medical Journal, Lancet, Africa also has unique strengths in terms of coping with the COVID-19 pandemic.

In fact, things look surprisingly good for the African countries. The African head of the World Health Organization, **Dr. Matshidiso Moeti**, initially estimated that every fourth person of the 1.3 billion residents would be infected and that as many as 190,000 people would die this year of COVID-19. Thankfully, that did not happen. The lower than expected occurrences of the Corona virus may be partially due to the very small amount of testing that was done, but are more likely due to the experience Africa has had earlier with infectious diseases such as Polio, Measles and AIDS. Schools were closed immediately at the beginning of the pandemic, air traffic was stopped, and many prevention protocols were immediately put in place. In South Africa, for instance, even jogging and the consumption of alcoholic beverages were prohibited as were any public meetings.

As of the middle of October, 1.5 million known cases of COVID-19 existed in Africa with 36,000 deaths (a surprisingly low number given previous estimates). The percentage of deaths resulting from COVID-19 in Africa is 2.4% compared to Germany's rate of 3.0%. According to the German Medical Journal, many deaths are not associated with COVID-19 given that many people die of infectious diseases during normal times. One must also consider that only 3% of the African population is over 65 whereas in Germany 25% of the population is over the age of 65.

The German Medical Journal also reports that Africa continues to experience outbreaks of Cholera, Yellow Fever and Malaria, extreme rainfalls in East Africa followed by plagues of locust, food shortages, political unrest and an ailing health system. Even in African regions where there have been encouraging improvements in finding ways to reduce the severity of the above problems, the Corona virus wiped out most progress made to date. There have been massive setbacks in vaccination programs and in the treatment of malaria and HIV.

In Africa, there are only 0.3 doctors per 1,000 inhabitants. By comparison, in Germany there are 4.8 doctors per 1,000 inhabitants.

Health care contrasts, both positive and negative, abound in Africa. On the one hand, fundamental materials such as disinfectants, masks, and medical personnel is missing. On the other hand, according to European Investment Bank Vice President, **Ambroise Fayolle**, the continent is considered a pioneer in mobile payment services. On the one hand, 70% of the African people do not have internet; on the other hand, the digital infrastructure has improved immensely. Kenya, Ruanda, Uganda and Morocco have tracking systems for infected people. In Tunisia and in Senegal, the pandemic is fought in isolated cases using robotics. Even drones are used in remote areas.

Traditions and superstition are widespread and accepted as truth by many in Africa. Especially in areas with poor infrastructure and limited education, many people rely on prayer, rituals, and natural medicine and reject modern medicine as witchcraft. These beliefs often hinder the work of the NGO and that of the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation. Therefore awareness-raising work, especially in terms of medicine, is one of the most important tasks to be accomplished if the African people are to be protected from epidemics.

Due to COVID-19 a lot of relief supplies such as vaccines for diseases such as measles, have been prevented from arriving where they are needed. According to UNICEF leader, **Henrietta Fore**, to declare war on the Corona pandemic should not mean exchanging one health crisis for another. Large parts of the African population are acutely at risk, including in the countries where the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation is active.

And one more point has to be made: According to an article published in The German Medical Journal on August 31, 2020, the countries of the global north should not ignore what they can learn from the African countries on disease control.

Travel and Events

Travel

We have had to cancel all our travel to the different aids projects throughout the world due to the pandemic. Only **Kirsten Boie** and **Gerhard Grotz** from our partner organization, the **Möwenweg-Stiftung** were able to fly to eSwatini to set in motion relief measures there.

Even with the travel restrictions we have faced, we have remained in close contact with all of our onsite partners, all of whom are intensively involved with their specific projects. Modern communication tools are invaluable. **Jaime Garcia**, one of the vice presidents of the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation, lives in Ecuador and oversees projects there.

Events



The THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation has two established booster clubs in Germany and a new booster club is just coming into being in Ecuador. Booster clubs are an important source of income for the Foundation and their work is greatly appreciated.

This past year has been a challenging one in terms of fund-raising. The health protocols of the pandemic require social distancing and no more than small group gatherings. Nonetheless, booster club leaders persevered in overcoming the obstacles created by the pandemic.

A very creative idea of the booster club Friends of the **THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation** in Nastätten was to relocate the traditional benefit concert to a drive-in movie theatre. The attending fans applauded by honking their car horns. According to the newspaper, Rhein-Lahn, this event was a great success. Another successful event of this booster club was their open garden show. Their next fundraiser—a hot wine stand on the yearly Christmas street in Nastätten—is planned for the 28. and 29.11.2020. Hopefully the event will go on as planned but nothing is guaranteed in this time of the Corona virus.

The booster club Friends of the **THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation** in Fulda was able to have their very popular yard sale in October. Their next event is a Christmas tree sale, planned and held jointly with the Haimbacher Sport Club. It is hoped that the event will not be cancelled due to increasing Covid-19 numbers. Unfortunately, the benefit concert in Fulda had to be cancelled.

Benefit concerts *ovationen 2021* are planned in Nastätten and Fulda for 26.03.2021 and 27.03.2021. These dates are now questionable because the location that normally is filled to capacity with 400 people is currently limited to 70 because of the need to social distance. If the concerts cannot be held in March, we have reserved the alternative dates of 10.09.2021 and 11.09.2021. We will keep you informed.

TERMINE

Freunde der THOMAS ENGEL-Stiftung Fulda e. V.

12.12.2020 Weihnachtsbaumverkauf bei vorweihnachtlichem Ambiente zusammen mit dem Haimbacher Sportverein 1952 e. V. auf dem Gelände des Vereins in der Eichhornstraße 27, Fulda-Haimbach

27.03.2021 oder 11.09.2021

“ovationen 2021” – wegen Corona gilt vermutlich der September-Termin

Freunde der THOMAS ENGEL-Stiftung Nastätten e. V.

26.03.2021 oder 10.09.2021

“ovationen 2021” – wegen Corona gilt vermutlich der September-Termin



CONTACT

THOMAS ENGEL-foundation

Executive Director

Ernst Engel
Sonnenstraße 4
36041 Fulda
Phone: 06 61-9 01 53 38
Fax: 06 61-9 01 53 42
Mobil: 0171-8 16 87 56
E-Mail: ernst.engel@thomasengel-stiftung.org

Deputy Executive Directors

Bettina Haubner
Auf dem Daubus 26
56357 Lierschied
Phone: 0 67 71-59 98 68
E-Mail: bettina.haubner@thomasengel-stiftung.org

Jaime Garcia
Malecón de Chipipe,
Edf. El Veleró Azul, 1 B
Salinas, Provincia Santa Elena
Ecuador
Phone: +593-96 82 63 448
E-Mail: brook1904@icloud.com



www.thomasengel-stiftung.org

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Gender reference: For reasons of readability, we used a gender-specific differentiation that is neutral. Corresponding terms apply in principle to all genders.