



## A Cry for Help

### Dear Friends of the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation,



Unfortunately, donation volume has been steadily decreasing, no doubt due to the Corona Virus pandemic combined with crisis situations around the world (in Afghanistan, Haiti, Ethiopia and elsewhere). While donations have been decreasing, the global need for help has been increasing. Your help is desperately needed.

The information available regarding world poverty and hunger is often contradictory and difficult to obtain. From a global perspective, over the past 30 years, the percentage of people living in absolute poverty has fallen from 39 % to 9 %. Since there are different and, in some cases, obsolete figures to determine the absolute poverty line, we follow the definition of the World Bank: namely an income below \$1.90 = Euro 1.60 per person per day defines the poverty level. This figure takes into account purchasing power in respective countries. At face value, the decrease in world poverty to 9 %, it is tempting to think that poverty is no longer a

critical issue. That is simply not the case; the needs are still staggering. According to the latest figures from the Statista Forum of the United Nations, 42.3 % of the population in sub-Saharan Africa live below the absolute poverty line, as compared to "only" 1.2 % in Europe and Central Asia. By 2030, it is expected that 85 % of the population in sub-Saharan Africa will live in extreme poverty.

Recent figures regarding world hunger are especially disturbing. According to the world hunger index, worldwide, 155 million people are suffering from serious health problems caused by malnutrition, that is, 20 million more than last year. The Corona Virus pandemic, wars, and climate change are primary contributors to this increase. The shortage of food has become an urgent priority of our Foundation.

We, the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation urgently ask for your continued support. We need your help now more than ever. Please let your family, friends, co-workers and acquaintances know about the good work being done here in the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation.

#### Thank you!

Have a peaceful Advent season. Happy Holidays and best wishes for the New Year 2022.

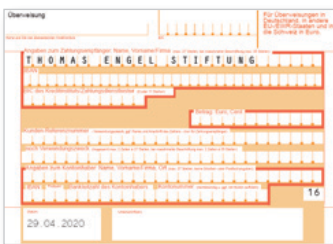
Best Regards,

**Ernst Engel**  
*Executive Director*

**Bettina Haubner and Jaime Garcia**  
*Deputy Directors*

#### The Board Members of the 3 THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation Booster Clubs

*Friends of the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation Fulda and Nastätten and Amigos de la Fundación THOMAS ENGEL in Ecuador.*



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## Ecuador: An Interview with Jaime Garcia

Jaime Garcia is Deputy Director of the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation and Executive Director of the booster club *Amigos de la Fundación THOMAS ENGEL*. Recently, Jaime was interviewed by Bettina Haubner, who has served as a Deputy Director of the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation since its inception.



Jaime Garcia in the interview with Bettina Haubner

**Bettina:** Hello, Jaime. I am happy to see you again in person in Fulda; it has been a while. For the last three years you have made your permanent home in Ecuador. I want to use this opportunity to find out first-hand all about all the aid projects that are going on in Ecuador. Maybe we should start with the projects that we have been aiding for the last few years and then continue with Ecuadorian aid projects that have commenced since you started the booster club *Amigos de la Fundación THOMAS ENGEL* last year in October. How is the current situation at the **Melvin Jones School** for children with disabilities?

**Jaime:** Because of the Corona Virus pandemic, there are no classes in the school as of now. The facility is only used for therapies. As a way to keep the school open, the school reached an agreement with the government to offer vocational training for adults and establish a program to monitor the wellbeing of seniors. Despite all that, the school had to let personnel go. Another significant problem created by the pandemic was the decrease of children and young adults receiving therapies at the school. Normally the school has an average of 180 children receiving therapies and/or attending classes at various levels and now they have only about 60. As a result, there is less income for the school. Our annual donation of \$5,000 is being used to pay the social security and health insurance of the employees. I serve as an on-site volunteer "go-to" person to help find solutions as problems arise, something that happens at least once a week. The garden project for growing vegetables is on pause for now, but I am happy to report it will start again in conjunction with the agricultural faculty of the **Universidad Peninsular Santa Elena (UPSE)**.

**Bettina:** Am I correct in assuming the work of Helping Kids In Ecuador is likely to be less affected by the pandemic. Is that so? How many children received operations with donations from the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation?

**Jaime:** Since the organization was founded in Salinas, Ecuador in 2011, over 620 children from very poor backgrounds have received operations or help for many significant health problems



Ready to take off for the Amazon Region

such as cleft palates, tumors, or received prostheses. Since 2016, the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation has assisted HIKE with about \$15,000, which has helped about 36 children. As many of the children HIKE serves live in very remote, inaccessible areas, **Dr. Pablo Salamea Molina** and his team sometimes must go on outpatient missions by plane, all on a volunteer basis.

**Bettina:** And now tell me about the third booster club of the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation. I understand it was established on the 25<sup>th</sup> of October 2020 and is called *Amigos de la Fundación THOMAS ENGEL*. I am very excited that we have another booster club outside of Germany and want to hear all about your activities there!

**Jaime:** We take care of the two projects just discussed (the Melvin Jones School and HIKE) but there is so much more that needs to be done. Since Edith and I now live in Ecuador permanently, we have become more aware of the daily plight of the country's people. Of particular concern is the suffering experienced by the refugees here from Venezuela.

Following our principle of helping people to help themselves, we now give interest-free micro loans with a total amount of \$5,000 to 35 people in need. The average individual loan amount is \$200. The loans are intended to help people restart businesses that were closed during the pandemic or to start a new business. We have given loans to people who now sell fish, fruits, and vegetables on their bicycles as well as loans for several other purposes. One family started a small pizza business, and a young woman opened a small store selling paper goods and making copies for students. Just recently we gave 10 farmers loans to increase their productivity. The duration of the loans is usually six months. To date, ten loans have been paid in full. The payment ethic is exemplary.



Farmers signing micro loans



*„Following our principle of helping people to help themselves, we now give interest-free micro loans with a total amount of \$5,000 to 35 people in need.“*

As soon as our financial situation allows, we want to support a school in a small remote coastal area that has little infrastructure. People here are among the poorest of the poor, lacking virtually everything. Our plans include providing 35 school desks that will be finished by members of the community. We also plan to build a bigger septic tank and small cafeteria for the school. We will provide the materials and community members will do the actual work needed for this project.

A primary source of income for these projects is fund-raising events. Unfortunately, the restrictions associated with the pandemic limited our ability to have public fund-raisers. That is why donations are desperately needed, now more than ever.

**Bettina:** How many members does the club have at this moment?

**Jaime:** As of now we have 37 members. We are optimistic that we will have more than 50 in the coming year.

**Bettina:** Thank you for this very inspiring conversation. I am looking forward to continuing our work together. Thank you also to Edith who supports you so wonderfully in your goal of helping numerous needy people in Ecuador.

## eSWATINI: Introducing the Club “Dogs Helping Children”



Many of you are probably wondering about the motivation behind a club called “Dogs Helping Children.” how can dogs help children?

A few years ago, it occurred to Erwin Scheibenzuber that children want to help animals, especially dogs and they would happily spend part of their allowances to provide that help.

Undoubtedly dogs would do the same for children, if only dogs had allowances. Of course, one could argue that dogs do have allowances, the only difference from children in this regard is that a dog’s allowance is managed by the dog’s owner. The four-legged friend needs food, must be treated by a vet, needs insurance, receives toys and treats, has to be groomed and much more. Keeping this in mind, Erwin and his family started the club Dogs Helping Children. In the years following 2009 when the club was started, the club has met with popular approval by numerous dog owners.



Bianca, Xenia, Nina and Erwin Scheibenzuber

For the most part, *Dogs Helping Children*, helps children and their families in Africa and more precisely in eSwatini. eSwatini is a land locked country in southern Africa. It is bordered by Mozambique and South Africa. eSwatini is a very poor country and has the highest HIV/AIDS rates worldwide. More than one out of four adults in eSwatini are affected with HIV/AIDS. Unemployment is very high and more than two-thirds of the eSwatini population lives below the poverty level (\$1.25 per person per day). In many families, the grandparents must take care of the children because both parents have died of AIDS. During the rainy season, wind and rain often destroy the simple huts built out of clay. The assistance of the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation is greatly needed in eSwatini.

Working together, the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation and their implementation partner **Young Heroes** build simple strong homes. These two room structures are greatly appreciated in an area where families often lack even a roof over their heads. The board members of the *Dogs Helping Children Club* decide which families will receive one of these small houses after assessing information about the family, location of the property and the current living conditions of the family; this information is supplied by the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation.



Since 2009, 25 small houses have been built in eSwatini and 4 are being built this year.

In eSwatini we visit the suggested families and commitment for the construction of a house is usually made on-site. Unless one has seen it first-hand, one cannot imagine the joy triggered by the realization that the family will have a new and sturdy home. At the next visit, the newly built home is inspected. Because of the Corona Virus pandemic, the last time we were in eSwatini was in 2019. We hope that the situation will change for the better

in eSwatini as more and more people are vaccinated. The THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation cannot help everyone, but we are passionate about improving the lives of as many people as we can.

**Nina Scheibenzuber**

## TANZANIA: Supporting the work of "TAKE A MALAIKA"



Tanja Schmitt-Kupcik of the club TAKE A MALAIKA



In our June 2021 newsletter we reported in depth about two aid projects in Arusha, a city of more than 400,000 people in north-east Tanzania. These projects are jointly supported by the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation and the club TAKE A MALAIKA. The THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation pays for the health insurance of 24 employees of the local organization called TWIGA VISION. Tanja Schmitt-Kupcik wrote to us in September 2021 after her trip to Tanzania and told us how thankful the employees are for our help. Finally, they can visit a doctor when needed.

As part of the "Family-Friends-Projects", the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation helps five large and needy families with interest-free micro loans. These micro loans help recipients on the road to financial independence. Micro loans make it possible for individuals to open or expand an existing business such as setting up a hair salon or tailor shop. The early reports on our micro loans are very encouraging. It is gratifying that the business training courses given in conjunction with the loans are well-received.

## UGANDA: Current aid situation

To date, the aid project "howareyou" has been under the umbrella of the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation. We are happy to report that this project has become independent of the Foundation. The project manager Charlotte Campbell and her employee have started the club **SOU Uganda**. They want to promote and

further develop this project on their own. We would especially like to thank Charlotte for her past work and cooperation, and we wish the *SOU Uganda team* much success. If needs should change in the future, the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation will definitely consider helping again.

## New Aid Project

### „Light for Nepal’s children“ – a new aid project of the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation



Ms Man Kumari Khadka and daughter Rita Bista

At the beginning of 2021, the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation undertook a new aid project to help support the 12 boys and 5 girls who live in the Nepalese orphanage **Light for Nepal’s Children**. Children at the orphanage range in age from 7 to 18 years and are taken care of by **Ms Man Kumari Khadka** and her daughter **Rita Bista** (*assistant in charge*).

The orphanage was opened in 2003. Part of their food comes from the orphanage garden; about half of their 800 square meters of land is used for agricultural purposes. Depending on the season, orphanage residents grow cabbage, radishes, cauliflower, beans, corn, chili, cucumbers, pumpkin, and spinach. Everyone helps in the garden and all residents become well-versed in how to grow food.

While gardening is obviously important, the over-arching mission of the orphanage is to assure the children are well-educated. The children attend the local school and after graduating from high school they will be prepared to continue their education at the college level. The oldest child in the orphanage, **Ramesh Pandit**, recently completed high school. To learn more about the children of the orphanage, please visit the picture gallery of our



Garden for the Light for Nepal's Children



website. All the children of the orphanage will be introduced there over time in the future.

In addition to the garden the *Light for Nepal's Children Orphanage* has a large house of about 300 square meters and a playground. The employees have clearly identified what the children need and what will best help them. In order to achieve the mission of helping these children, financial help is needed. The THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation supports *Light for Nepal's Children* on a regular basis. Our contact person for this aid project is the project manager, **Pamela Wiegand**.

## Introducing our New Volunteer: Maja-Linz Lauer

### Dear Readers,

After two years of assisting the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation, I want to use this opportunity to introduce myself to you.



Maja-Lina Lauer

My name is **Maja-Linz Lauer**. I am a student, 21 years old, and have been working with Ernst Engel since the beginning of 2020 on different projects of the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation. I mostly help with communication, write texts, update parts of the website and am in contact via email with different project managers. This is where my studies benefit me because, in addition to some legal topics, my education focuses on communication and intercultural relationships. I just started my 5<sup>th</sup> semester at the University of Fulda. I am planning a career as a journalist. I am working part-time for the media company, Burda, and I am happy that while working for the Foundation I have been given the opportunity to enhance my literary and communication skills.

However, my work for the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation is about much more than that. I am deeply grateful for the opportunities that I have had in my life. I was born in Germany, had a good home and parents, an education and much more. For that reason, I want to work to best of my abilities for a better world for all. That may sound naively optimistic, but optimism inspires me. I believe in solidarity and in the cumulative effect of seemingly small things. I am convinced that even if it is never possible to prevent all the suffering in the world, every step in the right direction is worth it.

That is why I am very happy to be part of the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation team. Hopefully, we will see each other at our flea market, a benefit concert, or the annual Christmas tree sale.

Until then I wish all of you the very best.

Best Regards,

**Maja-Lina Lauer**

## Travel and Events

Because of Covid, we could not travel to the different aid projects. Only Tanja Schmitt-Kupcik, the chairperson of the TAKE A MALAI-KA club was brave enough to travel with her husband to Tanzania. Additionally, Edith and Jaime Garcia took advantage of living in Ecuador to visit several THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation projects taking place in that country.

Despite the Corona Virus pandemic, during the second half of the year the booster clubs of the Foundation organized several events. The Friends of the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation Nastätten organized an open garden event, hosted this year by Jan and Katrin Menzel in Buch and the booster club also hosted a musical brunch in Pohl. Both events were a large success. The booster club Friends of the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation Fulda held their annual flea market with a raffle and the addition of culinary specialties. None of these great events were possible the year before due to the pandemic.

In Ecuador, the booster club *Amigos de la Fundación THOMAS ENGEL* has not been able to plan any events for this year due to the Corona Virus pandemic restrictions imposed by the government, but they are planning their second annual Christmas Bazaar on Friday, November 26, 2021.

[www.thomasengel-stiftung.org](http://www.thomasengel-stiftung.org)  
[www.freunde-thomasengelstiftung.de](http://www.freunde-thomasengelstiftung.de)

### TERMINE

#### Freunde der THOMAS ENGEL-Stiftung Fulda e. V.

- 11.12.2021** Weihnachtsbaumverkauf zusammen mit dem Haimbacher Sportverein 1952 e. V. auf dem Sportgelände des HSV bei vorweihnachtlichem Ambiente mit Glühwein, Würstchen und mehr
- 25.02.2022** Um 19:00 Uhr Mitgliederversammlung im Hotel Am Dom in Fulda
- 26.03.2022** Um 19:30 Uhr Benefizkonzert „ovationen 2022“ im Fürstensaal des Stadtschlusses in Fulda

#### Freunde der THOMAS ENGEL-Stiftung Nastätten e. V.

- 27./28.11.2021** „Weihnachtsstraße“ in Nastätten
- 25.03.2022** Um 19:30 Uhr Benefizkonzert „ovationen 2022“ im Bürgerhaus in Nastätten

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#### Donation Account

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Intended use: donation, name, address

Paypal for Ecuador: brook1904@icloud.com

Your donation is tax deductible and will be used 100 % for our aid projects.



If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter please send a short e-mail to [bettina.haubner@thomasengel-stiftung.org](mailto:bettina.haubner@thomasengel-stiftung.org) with the note "Unsubscribe Newsletter".