



Team and coworkers in eSwatini

Dear Friends of the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation,

First of all, a heartfelt thank you to all of you for your generous support of the work we accomplished last year. Your support was and continues to be greatly appreciated.

In this newsletter you will find a brief annual report for 2021 detailing the financial scope of our relief measures. At the present time we are facing a situation of great concern. Now that the pandemic seems to be mostly behind us, it appears that our booster clubs will finally be able to plan and carry out fundraising events; we sorely missed the revenue of such events for the past two years. But now, it seems that due to the war in the Ukraine,

donations for other foreign countries will be scarce. Most of us are very touched by the horrifically inhumane events in Ukraine and we are motivated to help those affected as much as we can. However, we should not lose sight of the on-going and very real need in other parts of the world.

We, the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation, are passionate about continuing to help the people we have supported to date, but we cannot do this without YOU. Every Euro/Dollar counts and is urgently needed.

In this newsletter, we want to focus on our new partner, the Africa Rotary Club. Members of this Rotary group visited Eswatini (Swaziland) and reported their impressions and findings. In this newsletter we also are happy to feature Acorn Mndzebele, the Litsemba Project Manager in Eswatini as well as to provide brief summations of the Foundation's work in Tanzania and Ecuador. In our next newsletter, we will once again catch you up more fully on what's happening with our other projects.

Thank you and 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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Annual Report 2021 in brief

Credibility and transparency are of vital importance, especially for organizations such as the **THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation** that generates its income primarily from donations and whose employees are unpaid volunteers. As part of our on-going effort to be transparent, below is the 2021 financial report of the **THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation**.

Financial support of the aid projects of the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation in Euros

Eswatini	181,300 Euro
Tanzania	9,030 Euro
Uganda	9,935 Euro
Ecuador*	8,892 Euro
Nepal	6,500 Euro

*Additionally, 7,495 U.S. dollars (approximately 6,890 Euros) were generated by the Ecuadorian booster club of the Foundation and used directly for aid projects in Ecuador.

Income

Income from the Foundation's capital	15,210 Euro
Income from donations	223,171 Euro
Income in Ecuador	6,890 Euro

214 supporters donated directly to the Foundation while others donated to booster clubs (thus donating indirectly to the **THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation**). 74% of the donations received came from organizations and companies. Among the organizations donating were the three **THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation** Booster Clubs with their approximately 200 members. These clubs include:

Friends of the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation Fulda e. V.,

Friends of the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation Nastätten e. V.,

Amigos de la Fundación THOMAS ENGEL

These three non-profit clubs not only collect membership fees and donations, they also organize fundraising events, one of our most important sources of income. Because of the Corona pandemic, most of the events scheduled for the past year had to be cancelled. That makes the high level of donations to the Foundation even more remarkable.

THANK YOU ...

..., FOR SUPPORTING OUR WORK SO GENEROUSLY SO FAR. YOUR DONATIONS MAKE OUR WORK POSSIBLE, AND WE HOPE WE CAN CONTINUE TO COUNT ON YOUR SUPPORT AS WE MAINTAIN AND EXPAND OUR WORK TO MAKE LIFE BETTER FOR THE POOREST OF THE POOR.

Africa Rotary Club Trip Report to Eswatini (Swaziland)

Because of the Corona pandemic, a trip to Eswatini was not possible for almost three years. Some members of the group had already been there and imbued their fellow travelers with their enthusiasm for this small country in southern Africa. Finally, after waiting for so long, on April 1, 2022, a group of engaged members of the newly organized **RC e. V. (Africa RC)** flew to Eswatini (formerly Swaziland), to learn about the relief work and the current needs of that country.

We, the members of the Rotary Club Wörthsee and the Rotary Club Ammersee-Römerstasse, as well as other interested men and women founded the non-profit club **RC Africa e. V. - Rescuing Children**. The founding members have many combined years of experience in international aid work and with projects in Eswatini. We are new partners of the **THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation** and their project **Litsemba (hope)**, which is carried out by three partners of the TEF (the main organization) as well as the **Möwenweg-Foundation** and the **Kindernothilfe e. V.**



In more than 100 *Neighborhood Care Points (NCPs)* the Litsemba project provides warm meals and basic medical aid for about 3,000 preschool children from poor families. Originally, a large number of these community centers were established by the charity **Hand in Hand Wiesbaden e. V.**, supported by donations from the Rotary Club Wörthsee.

Our goal was to determine where and to what extent support is needed as by the Litsemba project. To accomplish that goal, our agenda for the one-week trip included visits to the village communities and NCPs, visits with families in need, and meetings with the local partner **Young Heroes**.



Eswatini is one of the poorest countries in Africa and has for the longest time the highest AIDS rates in the world and thus the highest numbers of AIDS orphans.

Exploratory trip through the poor south of Eswatini

“As beautiful as Tuscany,” was a frequently heard exclamation of fellow travelers. The landscape of the four levels features unusually beautiful, gentle hills with many types of vegetation in many shades of green. Large forest areas alternate with savannahs, where acacias provide shade for people, goats, and cows. On the way from the airport to the capital, Mbabane, in the northern part of the country and then in the south and the east we saw that the infrastructure has greatly improved in the last few years. Well-developed highways, increased traffic and thriving shops in the cities characterized the picture.

But this first impression is very deceptive and should not minimize the fact that there is a large poverty gap. Almost two-thirds of the people here live below the poverty line and self-sufficiency is difficult to achieve. In the rainy season the barren soil continues to be washed away and in the dry periods the crops wither if they cannot be irrigated. The shops have a large assortment of goods, but they are very expensive and too far away from the common people. The unemployment rate is very high. The lucky ones have a job in the production facilities for wood or sugar and earn approximately 150 Euros a month. To work at these jobs, people must wait in long lines in front of the doors every day.

In the afternoon we drove through constant rain to the project site in Nhlanguano, two hours away from Mbabane, located in the especially poor southern region of Shiselweni. Thanks to our local partners, we had two reliable off-road vehicles. They were no luxury because for the next two days we drove “off-road” over sand tracks with large potholes through sparsely populated and hilly landscape in order to reach the remote villages and NCPs.



Committed caregivers and lively children in the NCPs

“We are the children, we are the future generation,” 27 Swazi-children sang in English as they jumped with joy. They repeated what Mukelo, their volunteer caregiver, shouted. During the week at this NCP the kids, ages 2 to 5, receive preschool lessons and a meal.

We had the opportunity to see some of the two-room houses built for the poor to provide safe shelter. We also visited a few other NCPs, many in good condition where care for several children is provided. We also visited one NCP under construction and two without structures. The caregivers, all women from the surrounding communities, are passionate about their work. Those of them trained as teachers provide pre-school classes while other volunteers cook with very heavy cast iron pots over an open fire the daily meals for the children. Meals consist of corn, millet or rice, beans, sugar, salt and oil. These dedicated women are supported with income-generating measures such as growing vegetables, keeping chicken and pigs, handicrafts, collective savings and the awarding of scholarships.

As would be expected, there is a need for repairs. Some of the open cooking areas are to be remodeled to keep smoke out as well as to make the roof wind and weatherproof. Litsemba has provided large water tanks to collect rainwater (which are elementary for survival). It is of vital importance that these sites be protected from storms and theft. All the buildings must be surrounded by a sturdy high fence. Basically, Litsemba provides the materials, and the members of the communities have to maintain the properties for the benefit of their children.

The *Mobile Clinics* of Litsemba provide very valuable service to the NCPs. Each clinic consists of an all-terrain vehicle, basic medical equipment, and two nurses who drive every day to the NCPs. Their nursing duties include giving vaccinations against measles, polio, and Corona, as well as providing vitamin supplements and basic therapeutic care and education (how to recognize symptoms, for example). The nurses are employees of Young Heroes and are mostly retired women. There is a need for younger professionals, but they expect higher wages for their work. In addition, an additional driver and a second *mobile clinic* is urgently needed.

Education is of paramount importance. Only with schooling and vocational training can we shape the future of the children and their families and secure a better future for them.

After successful pre-school classes in the NCPs, ideally the six-year-olds switch to the primary schools that are located through-



out the country. However, many children do not have their birth certificates. Birth certificates are an essential prerequisite for admission to primary schools. Last year Litsemba helped several hundred children obtain birth certificates. The fee for registration is low, but the travel costs to governmental agencies are considerable in view of the long distances.

School fees and learning materials are paid by the government but the government does not pay for or provide the school uniform. The school uniform is a significant cost for poor families who must save for the uniform long before the school term begins, saving a month for shoes, another month for pants, etc. According to the principle "Promote and Demand," this works relatively well.

The main problem currently facing the NCPs is finding a replacement for the missing World Food Program (WFP). Food has not been delivered to the NCPs since the beginning of the year. Instead, the WFP announced it will deliver seed and fertilizer, not food. This action has resulted in an urgent need for the supply of food to the NCPs.

Completion of an intensive project trip

On the way back to the capital, we toured the eastern Big Bend region where the Zoggs Manufacturing facility is located. We support this facility by purchasing and marketing their products. Local women are employed by Zoggs Manufacturing to create creative and colorful piggy banks, bowls, and the like by hand. If you want to help quickly and easily, you can purchase these African decorative and gift items from our web shop: www.etsy.com/de/shop/rcAFRIKAe/.

At the end of our trip, we treated ourselves to a small reward, a two-hour safari through Hilane Royal National Park. In a large area in the northeast of the country we were able to observe native wildlife up close. We saw big rhinos by the water, giant elephants, half a dozen giraffes and much more. The highlight for us was a mother lion that was on the driveway and walked toward us in a smooth gait, pursued by her two adolescent sons a hundred meters apart. Eswatini is a fascinating country.

Our conclusion: This trip has strengthened our commitment to our relief work! The week was extremely intense with lots of positive impressions, a big need for action and worthwhile projects, lovely people, and inquisitive children. We will focus on "help for self-help" and the improvement of educational opportunities for children. Given the urgent food problem, we also want to supply corn, rice, and beans to some of the village centers. We will supply our supporters with personalized donation packages for short



and medium-term assistance and will communicate transparently. In the long term, our goal is to accompany the people until they are independent and are equipped to take their personal future into their own hands. "In the current world situation, it is important not to look exclusively at the war in Ukraine. Other volatile regions of the world should not be forgotten and neglected. On the contrary, it is increasingly difficult to help especially poor regions," emphasizes RC Africa CEO Joachim Muffler. Further information will soon be available on our website. Please visit our website: www.rcafrika.de (*under construction*).

Talk with Acorn Mndzebele, Litsemba – Project Manager in Eswatini



Acorn Mndzebele is responsible for the Litsemba project, a program that is supported by the **THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation**, the Möwenweg-Foundation and the Kindernothilfe e. V. With a team of nine employees, Mr. Mndzebele works in Nhlngano in the Shiselweni region, the poorest area in southern Eswatini. He manages 101 Neighborhood Care Points (NCPs) with their more than 500 caregivers and approximately 3,000 children. Country-wide there are approximately 400 NCPs.

approximately 400 NCPs.

What led you to this very challenging work?

I have been working for Young Heroes since November 2017. As part of the Litsemba aid program, I was given the task of building and maintaining the buildings of the NCPs as well as organizing the pre-school and the regular food and medical care programs for the children. Some of the children are orphans or come from very poor families. For this we need volunteer caregivers from the surrounding communities. We must find them and train them. This task is very complex and made even more difficult because most NCPs are very remote and only accessible via unpaved roads.

You know your way around here very well. Have you been working long for aid organizations in your country?

I am a real "Swazi." I was born in 1963, grew up near Mbabane and I love my small proud country. I am the father of four children and happily married. I am very thankful for everything I have achieved so far. It was not easy. I also did not have a birth certificate and without one a person does not exist for the authorities. I promised myself that no more children would suffer as I did.

In my professional life I have gained valuable experience. I have worked for several organizations such as World Vision and for a few years I owned a small construction company.

Owning a company teaches one survival skills and how to manage complex projects with different stakeholders.

This task requires experience and commitment, but certainly also a good education.

Yes, certainly. I studied Theology and English. Afterwards, I studied Financial Management and Administration. I have always been interested in different cultures and philosophies because people are to be valued irrespective of their differences. My employees also are well educated and they have goals for continued training. I have a trained project manager and an education expert on my team. She is responsible for the ECCE (*Early Childhood Care and Education*) of the children who come to the Neighborhood Care Points. She works closely with the Ministry of Education to assure NCP children are well-prepared to attend primary school.

Your job requires a high level of stamina. What is your motivation and that of your employees?

"You need to be patient, you need to know what you want, and you need to pursue it until you get what you want." So far, I have made good progress with this motto, and it is what I use to motivate my employees and to retain them. They are often exhausted by the long days, the long drives, and the demands from the main office. At times, many want to quit and find an easier job or one that pays better. But in the end, they stay, remain committed, and do their jobs with mind and heart. They have developed a love for the children in their care and do not want to lose any of them. The glowing eyes of the children and the caregivers is their daily reward. And, of course, we are a little proud when we see the long-term success of seeing "our" children go to school or start vocational training because we know they are on their way to independent futures.

There is always a lot to do for aid organizations. There must be positive surprises, but also disappointments.

That is true, there are ups and downs in this work. For example, during the Corona pandemic protective measures were taken very seriously by our government and they restricted our ability to provide individualized care to the children. But now the schools and NCPs are open once again and we are hopeful that the future will be better.

You also need negotiating skills and assertiveness. The principle guiding the construction and use of the houses is that of community cooperation. We provide the materials and instructions, but the community members must build and maintain the houses. Usually, this works very well. Most women volunteer to cook and teach pre-school. But just as in every other place, there are community leaders who do nothing. If they do not cooperate, the project is doomed to fail. That is the primary reason we visit and talk to the leaders on a regular basis.

I want to emphasize that the cooperation we receive from Ernst Engel and his project managers is extremely pleasant and productive. They rightly demand good reports, but doing outstanding work is exactly what our organization, Young Heroes, is committed to doing.

Do you have a long-term goal and vision?

Yes, absolutely. My vision is to help every small child in our poor region, Shiselweni, to alleviate the effects of poverty and to receive school education. When we have achieved that goal, I want to help children in other regions. That is the project of my heart and it is worth fighting for.

Thank you, dear Acorn, for that open conversation and your high engagement! We are looking forward to our work together.

I am very thankful to you and your donors and hope that you will continue to support us. Your help arrives exactly where it is needed.

Further news in brief

Relief measures in Tanzania

The cooperation with **Take a Malaika e. V.** is very good. In order to help needy children and their families, the goal is to establish a local NGO (*Non-Governmental Organization*). In June, Tanja Schmitt-Kupcik, the Executive Director of TAKE A MALAIKA e. V. will travel to Arusha for the second time.

The **THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation** pays for the health insurance of the 24 employees of Take a Malaika e. V. making it possible for these individuals to receive medical attention when needed. Additionally, we financially help five families (single mothers with many children) with part of the help being in the form of micro credits. For example, one woman has successfully started a mobile trade with second-hand clothes. In Tanzania, the market for donated used clothes from Europe is very big.

We are very impressed with the work of TAKE A MALAIKA e. V. and will try to increase our support to this organization

Amigos de la Fundación THOMAS ENGEL in Salinas/Ecuador



Borrowers with their loan contracts to the right are Edith and Jaime Garcia

This Ecuadorian group, with its 72 members, is the third booster club of the Foundation. Together with them and some individual help we have supported both the **Melvin Jones School** (a school for handicapped children and young adults) and **Helping Kids in Ecuador** (an organization that provides surgeries and other therapies for low-income families through a network of doctors and hospitals).

The third and very successful project of the Amigos de la Fundación THOMAS ENGEL is that of making interest-free micro loans. So far, the Amigos have given 99 loans to more than 60 families and therefore make possible more financial independence. Each borrower can have a limit of two loans. With a capital of \$10,000, the booster club has been able to give micro loans totaling \$26,390. The \$10,000 seed capital continues to be used and reused helping more people "help to help themselves."

Ernst Engel recognized with the Paul Harris Award

The Rotary Club Mbabane/Eswatini recommended that the Executive Director of the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation be recognized by The Rotary Foundation International" for his many years of work for the benefit of thousands of needy children in Eswati-

ni. The award was given by the Rotary Clubs Wörthsee and Ammersee-Römerstasse with whom the **THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation** works closely and successfully.

DATES

Friends of the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation Fulda

09.10.2022 Benefit Concert at the Orangerie in Fulda "Ovationen 2022"

10.15.2022 Flea Market in Fulda-Haimbach

12.10.2022 Sale of Christmas trees at the Sports club Haimbacher SV

Friends of the THOMAS ENGEL-Foundation Nastätten e.V.

07.03.2022 "Open Garden" at the Tree School Weyersbach in Holzhausen

09.09.2022 Benefit Concert at the Town Hall in Nastätten

10.08. oder 10.15.2022 "Musical Wine Tasting"

11. 26./27.2022 "Christmas Street" in Nastätten



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