

# Newsletter

To our members and supporters

Berlin, October 2025



No 2/2025



Dear members, Dear supporters,

It is an old story, yet it remains ever new... (H. Heine)

... daily learning...

in everyday school life always remains new when you come back to our school and see the children. They are visibly growing up, developing magnificently, and new facets are constantly becoming apparent. Their sustained, unwavering high motivation, their insatiable thirst for knowledge, their continuous diligent learning, the highest level of concentration during the – unfortunately all too frequent – regular exams, and their never-failing cheerful, even joyful mood never cease to amaze me. Our schoolchildren in Maweni really make the most of the

opportunities we offer them! We see amazing learning success in many of them, which I measure not only by their excellent grades, but above all by the knowledge and understanding they have actually acquired.

## Learning - as commonplace as it is exciting



Of course, the field of learners is large. We have high-achieving pupils and those with learning difficulties who, according to the latest politically correct administrative jargon, should no longer be referred to as "slow learners" but as "differently gifted" pupils. Everyone makes the best of it and does so in a remarkably good mood.



As a result, the children are happy to sit "after" voluntarily and cram the subject matter over and over again or repeat tasks on the blackboard. Our teachers are paying more attention than ever to each individual. And, of course, we don't judge our pupils solely on their grades, but also see and encourage their talents, for example in sport, art or music. In doing so, we never disregard the often very difficult economic and social environment from which our pupils come to us.



Unfortunately, many schools in Kenya sort out children according to performance: they sometimes chase away low-performers and “poach” high-performing students from other schools in order to end up with better exam results. We deliberately do not take part in such manipulation, but we have fallen victim to such “poaching” on several occasions. Since we have also been able to offer our graduates a certain amount of further support through scholarships at other schools, the incentive to transfer to other schools has been greatly reduced.

# Reading, reading, reading ...



During my visits in February and July 2025, I noticed significant progress in the reading skills of our youngest pupils from pre-school and grades 1 to 3. Reading is defined as a core competence and learning focus at our school.

Our goal is to motivate children to experience reading as their own inner need and to pursue it by asking for new, more interesting and more challenging books on their own initiative. Our 'library' has already grown a little, and we are delighted to receive every new English book.



What impresses me most about our oldest pupils in the Junior Secondary School (Years 7–9) is their laboratory work. This is a new field, and our pupils are grateful for these opportunities and embrace them with great interest and curiosity. Overall, the examination results are good and are steadily improving.

Our students are generally unable to acquire knowledge about their region beyond what they learn at school. How could they? The journey from their home to school and back is often the only journey they can make, because even a trip to Mombasa city is too expensive (2-3 euros). A family of five would rather use that money to put food on the table.

However, Mombasa has beautiful places that are worth visiting, such as Fort Jesus, built by the Portuguese, Mombasa Haller Park (zoo) or the local Moi Airport with planes taking off and landing. Hardly any of our pupils have ever been there. We would like to do this with our children if our resources allow. We will decide on one or two smaller trips so that we can at least do something on this route.

# After the exam is before the exam



At the end of each term (three terms per year), there are examinations. The examination questions are set by the state, are comprehensive and last for several days. And sometimes there are additional examinations in the middle of a term. This results in a total of six examination weeks (Monday to Thursday) per year! Even preschoolers aged 4 to 6 are tested so 'strictly': they have to colour in shapes, speak English, count and write and draw the first letter.



All this testing often seems rather excessive to me, but at least it trains concentration and establishes an exam routine. We hope that this will benefit the children when they take their final school exams (currently at the end of Years 6 and 9) and help them achieve good grades.

I am always impressed by how seriously and intently our pupils take these examinations. Personally, however, I believe it is more important for children to learn for life and therefore not just reproduce the material, but really understand it. We are continuing to work on this.

# Our school – a platform for important initiatives



Schools in Kenya are also focal points for government and social initiatives, particularly health care measures such as anti-parasite and vaccination programmes or health education campaigns.

During my stay in July, I witnessed the government's vaccination campaign against measles, rubella (combination vaccine) and typhoid. Both were very well received by parents and children alike. Some children were visibly nervous about the jab, but they were supported by their classmates in the large school community. This helped the fearful children to overcome their fears and become little heroes.



As is now once again the case in developed countries, infectious diseases such as measles, rubella and typhoid fever are a regular public health challenge in many developing countries. Paradoxically, however, the regression in Western countries is leading to fears that a country like Kenya will one day surpass us in the rich North in terms of measles vaccination coverage.

Parents and children from outside our school also came to the vaccination appointment. For many of them, government vaccinations unfortunately remain out of reach. Their parents cannot afford the school fees or do not recognise the need for vaccinations, so they do not actively seek them out.



In addition, we had the opportunity to offer three workshops over the summer on a community-based awareness initiative to combat drug abuse, sexually motivated violence and mental illness. These topics are also highly relevant in Kenya.

The students and our teachers received the information with great interest and participated actively in the discussion.

We hope that our workshops have contributed to the prevention and protection of our students and teachers. The positive response encourages us to continue our efforts in this area.

## All round - sport

For several years now, we have been promoting sporting activities for our children with growing commitment and dedication. The Kenyan government also supports the sporting development of schoolchildren by making sport an integral part of the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC), which was implemented three years ago.

Many of our children and some of our teachers are particularly enthusiastic about this area.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our special thanks to the sponsors whose targeted sports donations have enabled our children to participate in competitions and provided them with equipment. The donations enabled us to purchase sports equipment (balls, goals, athletics

equipment) and to replace it from time to time, as the balls wear out quite quickly due to intensive use. We were also able to cover the travel and meal costs for the children to participate in sports competitions at sub-county and county level (Mombasa County).



I was extremely impressed by the progress our children have made, particularly in volleyball and athletics. They are highly motivated and enthusiastic, and show tremendous enthusiasm for the game and team spirit.

At the end of July, our girls and boys made a very positive impression in volleyball at the Mombasa district level and performed extremely well. They won several games, especially the girls. In the end, they were defeated by slightly better teams, but this spurs them on to continue training and to go even further next year!

# Give the kids space to play



In Kenya, daily routines are very school-like in many places, even for the youngest children in preschool (aged 4–6).

We are aware that children of this age still have a great need to play and romp around. This is taken into account in the lesson plan with playful elements such as dancing and singing, as well as in active break activities such as sports games.

However, rest and quiet play are also necessary. In March, we set up separate play/rest areas in our PP1 and PP2 preschool classrooms. The children can retreat there when they need to rest or play intently with dolls, cuddly toys and other toys. For those children who stay at school after lunch to wait for their parents to pick them up, the space is also suitable for a little afternoon nap... but sometimes the children just fool around there!



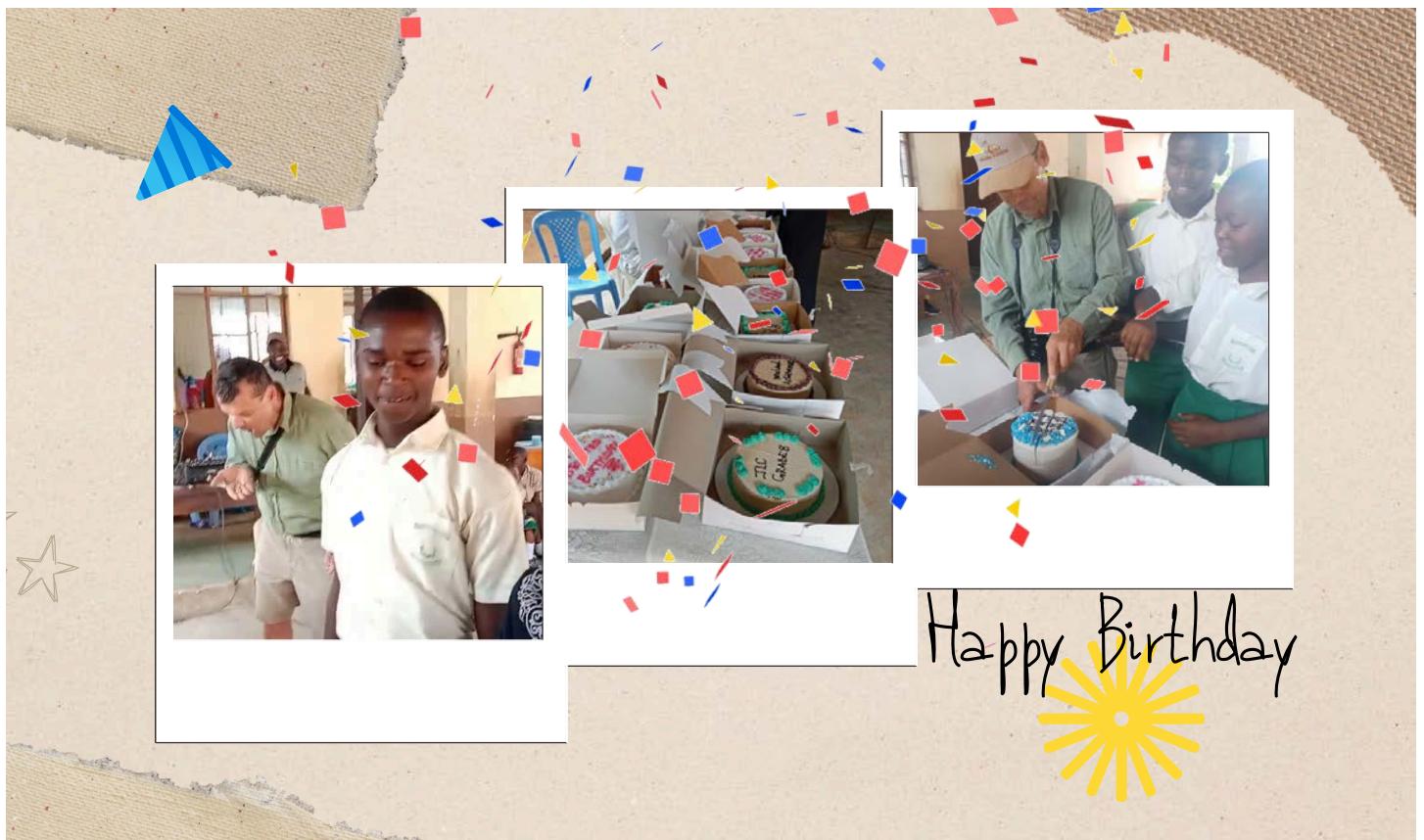
## Saturday night at the movies



...and if not on Saturday night, then on Saturday afternoon. Our extracurricular events, which we offer mainly on Saturdays and during the official holiday periods, are a wonderful development. Here, we want to promote general education and independent thinking, but also offer the children some fun and variety. We still need to work on selecting and preparing suitable content. Although unsuitable content is consistently screened out and prevented, it is not always easy to find the most suitable and beneficial content. As elsewhere, the same applies here: the internet is like drinking from a fire hose. You have to know exactly what you are looking for.

This time, I ventured an experiment and suggested to the young people from the Junior School that they watch the current film adaptation of 'West Side Story'. I was mentally prepared to switch to something more agreeable if necessary. The 'musical' genre was previously completely unknown in Kenya, especially in the village where our children come from. So I was all the more astonished at how much both the dramatic plot and the music (not to mention the dancing) appealed to our young pupils. They discussed the drama for a week – and then put the DVD back in again the following Saturday. Their next request: *Titanic*. Well, I don't know...

## We love celebrations best



Not only because there is always something more and better to eat than the usual weekly fare. On special days, there is usually pilau with a larger portion of meat. Sometimes there is also lemonade or cake or tart.

This time, we celebrated the successful completion of Term 2, sporting successes at district and regional level, and – albeit belatedly – my birthday. I ordered - at my own expense – enough cake for every child to have not just a small piece, but a proper slice. I had never before brought so much joy with a birthday cake.



Before dinner, there was the usual varied cultural programme with performances by each class featuring music, dance and theatrical performances. Reggae remains particularly popular – pure joy!

# Zoom-Talk with the Löwenrots



One of the highlights of March was the Zoom Talk between our Year 9 class and the so-called 'Aufbaustufe' (post-secondary level) of the Löwenrot Gymnasium in St. Leon-Rot in the Rhine-Neckar region.

The advanced level at Löwenrot Gymnasium is an optional 11th school year in which students do 'practical' work and pursue a social cause with a real company founded specifically for this purpose in order to generate funds through fundraising campaigns. We are very honoured that the promotion of our school has been designated as the social cause of the student company.

At the beginning of the year, the desire arose for the students of Löwenrot and the elders of our school to get to know each other. No sooner said than done: we organised a Zoom conference. In preparation, the Löwenrots introduced themselves and their lives in Germany with short films, while the JLCs introduced themselves with personal presentations and a dance, also filmed.

The Zoom meeting began with excitement on all sides and ended with a moving moment prompted by the seemingly innocuous question about their hobbies. The children, who could not have come from

more different worlds and were communicating across a distance of over 6,000 kilometres, were united not only by their love of football, but also by their love of music: each class had at least one soloist who gave an impressive performance of 'Hallelujah'. There were many tears of emotion.

The comment from Stefan Vogel and Jasmin Zimmermann, the teachers supervising the Löwenrot project, on the Zoom conference: 'Our kids from Löwenrot really got back into their project.' We have already received some really impressive donations and are delighted about it! Thank you very much!



Dear members and supporters!

Each day, our children in Maweni demonstrate an unwavering motivation and infectious joy as everyone learns, plays, and develops. Furthermore, the gratitude that the children themselves and their parents express is simply overwhelming.

Thanks to your and all your support, we can achieve these educational achievements and hopefully many more together.

Each donation matters.

Each donation changes at least one life.

Each donation contributes to our collective future.

On behalf of the school and the children, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your ongoing support and will be delighted if you continue to contribute.

Warmest regards,

yours truly,

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