

Studienförderung Passo Fundo

Scholarships for students in Brazil and Africa

Annual report 2019

This year was highlighted by reunion with partners and friends, who are looking after our scholars. The scholarship foundation had invited to Muenster, the atmosphere of which greatly impressed our guests. We are looking forward to reporting about these constructive meetings.

Dorothy B from Malawi

An insight into the life of a scholar

As in the last year we are beginning our report this year by introducing a confident scholar. Last year this was a young woman from the north west of Brazil.

This time it is the scholar Dorothy B from Malawi, who will give us an overview of her life. She comes



from a family of five children. Because of shattered family circumstances she grew up with her aunt, a primary school teacher, in a small village and was able to visit the generally fee-paying secondary school. She achieved excellent results in the national final examinations and obtained a place to study Business Administration at the Polytechnic University of Blantyre.

Life at university, she explains, is not easy for poor students like her. It is always about money. Halls of residence are too expensive, as are the meals in the cafeteria. A lot of the time she has to go to bed with an empty stomach. As her hobbies she describes singing, reading novels and the writing of short stories. Observation and writing are her way of discovering new aspects of the culture and tradition of her home country.

On finishing she writes: "I am an ambitious young lady, and there are a lot of things I wish to accomplish in life. Priorities first, I want to be an independent woman. Most women in my community and across the country are dependent on men, and I do not want that to be the case with me. I know that most

women are suffering today for not having the opportunity of education. But I want to start a project that will enable these women to learn simple skills like sowing, cooking and baking, and others. This way, they may have at least a business, and they will be able to fend for themselves, other than depending on their husbands for everything. I also want to build an orphanage to help the children without parents in different communities. Above all, I want my family to enjoy the fruits of my education.

Finally, I would like to assure the Trust that I will do my very best in my education so that their efforts and money will not be in vain."

What would happen to Dorothy and other poor, gifted young women in Africa, if they did not have the chance to confidently manage their education and with this their life and to turn it towards a new orientation for themselves and people around them?

Malawi

Conference with our British and Dutch guests from the Nchima Trust and Medulawi in Muenster (Photograph)

The state and development of the scholars' group in Malawi were discussed with our partners Nchima Trust (UK) and Medulawi (Netherlands). We had invited to a meeting in Muenster-Roxel. The international collaboration and the exchange of experience are a great gain for our scholarship foundation.



Apart from lacking digital resources for studying, the main issues for students in Malawi are the daily worry about food and accommodation that is too expensive. For this reason, we decided an increase in the scholarship and a subsidy for the costs of living. Especially, alumni should in future be more involved in looking after scholars, and the feeling of belonging together should be strengthened by regular meetings.

In September, there was a first large meeting of scholars and alumni of various universities in the country at Chancellor College in Zomba. The various groups exchanged their experience in their social projects and other ideas. Jeffrey Mitini, head of the university institute for management and information technology, attended as a guest lecturer. He emphasised how important it would be for the students to prepare for the digital age when planning their career and to plan creative paths in this direction.

The students were overjoyed on being advised about the annual subsidy to cover the costs of daily living.

Kenia

Visiting our scholars in Nairobi

Andrea and David, who are actively working for our charity, went to visit our scholars in Nairobi in August this year, and were highly moved by the experience (Photograph). "Most of the students live in the Slum Kibera. The circumstances there are probably the biggest challenge. In addition, getting to the university is consuming a lot of time, access to computers, books and appropriate space to study is limited, and university staff is frequently on strike." This makes it even more impressive to learn how seriously and focussed the scholars are studying.



Especially those that are further progressed in their studies have clear ideas about their aims, and some are nurturing not only a “pragmatic” interim goal, but also further dreams about their future. For example, Sylvia, who is studying “nursery stage education”, is dreaming to become a barrister for children’s rights. A lot of students stress that they want

to use their university qualifications to benefit others.” While they are continuing individual social projects that they were already pursuing as pupils of the St Aloysius Secondary School during their lecture-free periods, the students are keen to work on a joint project. Together, they are working to improve the removal of refuse and the water systems in Kibera. Accordingly, they have started to clear the waste water gully that is running through Kibera (image). In the name of the scholarship foundation, Andrea handed out memory sticks bearing the logo of Passo Fundo and passed on two used laptop computers from Germany, a joyful surprise for the students.



*Kibera –
Cleaning waste
water gully by
our students*

Finally, Andrea is writing: “We are happy and grateful that we could meet the Passo Fundo-students; every one of them a

remarkable personality. They are exceedingly grateful for the support they receive, and we had to assure several times that we would pass this on to the donors in Germany. Moved and movingly one student said at the end of the meeting: “This changes my life – please tell them, thank you!” Our memories from our visit to Kenya? Primarily the encounters with remarkable people, who in the face of all difficulties radiate the ambition and power that they can change the situation for themselves and for others.”

Brazil

Delegates and committees of the partner organisations on a visit to Muenster

As conclusion and climax of the year Brazil was our guest in Muenster, a premiere. For 15-17 November, we had invited two representatives of each of the five Brazilian partner organisations to a meeting at Liudgerhaus. Apart from two, all of them were alumni, of which there are already around 300 in Brazil. Another eight additional alumni from Brazil took part in the meeting.



After an atmospheric reception in the “Hall of Peace” of the town hall, we looked back on 30 years of joint work in Brazil. We then focussed on getting to know each other as there had only been a few visits of charity members in Brazil previously, as well as on the intense exchange of information, which is fundamental to success in joint working. It became apparent that the social situation of the country, together with a lack of funding for education and recently the limitation and cut of social funding is a main concern for our Brazilian friends.

All partner organisations gave detailed reports on the work with their scholars and about their social projects, which were then discussed in a plenary session. In particular, we looked at experiences during the last five years and the numbers of scholars and graduations, equity financing like through payback from alumni. Via direct exchange of ideas, in groups or pairs, we were able to clear up misunderstandings, spoke about the improvement of accounting, and talked about the costs of the students’ social projects. The exchange is to be intensified by having designated representatives on the German side who will correspond with the students of a particular group. They will send individual replies to termly reports, and will accompany the students through their studies.

The meeting gave numerous new impulses for the German-Brazilian cooperation, which is still founded on a trusting and friendly basis as mirrored in a new declaration of joint aims.