

NEWSLETTER

December 2018 and January 2019



PASSION TO SERVE. DRIVEN BY LOVE



My Talent Show

One stage to celebrate
all our children's
various talents

Find out more
on page 2

Brass Music at Root

Finally, our trumpets and
trombones are able to
make friends!

Find out more
on page 10



Sad News at the beginning of 2019

Root Foundation needs a new Children's Center!

Events in January

On Monday, 7 January, the **Local Government**, represented by District and Sector executives, contacted us about their decision to bring a different project in their building where we have been working since 2014. They **asked us to move out of the center and find another place.**

First, we were supposed to actually evacuate all our stuff in only one week as the new project would settle in very soon. In the following, we tried to talk to them as much as we could and the final decision was to extend our stay in the building so that **we will leave the center until 14 February.**

This shocking news has hit our organisation very suddenly and created a **difficult situation**, especially because we needed to act very spontaneously.

What has been done so far

We looked for an affordable house nearby that could at the same time support our children activities and our administrative work. During the period of the last few weeks, **we could only find one suitable building in Batsinda which we have already rented now for three months** with the beginning of February. We think renting is the only possible short-time solution to maintain our programs even though we are challenged by the money to pay for it regularly.

Long-term solution proposal

However, the **most sustainable solution** would be to have our own place in the future. We have contacted a few friends including experts to help us **raise up to 70,000 Euros** within the next six months. This amount would enable us **to buy a land and finally build our own center.**

It is a huge goal. Still, after listening to the feedback from friends and noticing the empathy of the community, **we are optimistic to strive towards it.** In a meeting including some local supporters, we decided to work on the realisation of different fundraising ideas to achieve the above-mentioned goal.

As one of the different important approaches we will take, a **fundraising campaign** especially for buying our own land and building our own center **will be launched soon.** We would like to most kindly ask you to **check the updates we will give you** within the next weeks. In addition to that, every advice and support is very welcome. **Let's ensure our future together!**

My Talent Show

Root Foundation Kids performed outstandingly on stage

It was the highlight of the year – and at the same time the last event Root Foundation has been organising in 2018: our My Talent Show. As you might know, this annual celebration is meant to give a platform to all of the different children we are hosting at our center so that they can show all their various, superb talents! Not only established groups such as the Traditional Dancing and Drumming – which can be newly explored by astonished visitors with every performance once more – or Theatre presented themselves: From Belly Dance, Singing and Modern Dance to Fashion, Acrobatics and Comedy, a wide range of amazing acts inspired the stage. This evening, the whole Root Foundation area was literally filled with local and international visitors and – apart from our children and volunteers – especially with many parents who had come to watch or cheer their children during their performances. Though it was already such a celebrative atmosphere, the children probably were even happier when we gave everyone of them bread and water in the end of the event. To make My Talent Show so much of a success, our sponsors have helped us a lot with their support: Thank you so much, Goethe-Institut, La Galette, Jibu, Sulfo Industries, the Jumelage / Partnership of Rhineland-Palatinate and Rwanda, T2000 Supermarket and Techno Market Printing House!



Three trips on one day

Extraordinary experiences before Christmas

Shortly before Root Foundation started into the holidays over Christmas during which our Children's Center would be closed, many of our children were still given the opportunity to gain new experiences during one of our three trips which all took place on 23 December 2018. Thanks to the generous offer of our partner Jallyn Travels to sponsor a trip to Akagera National Park, a group of children got the chance to go there, accompanied by our team members Cheez, Providence and Straton. Thus, they saw zebras, elephants and other fascinating animals in real for the first time – everyone was truly excited about this travel into the wild nature! (You can see a picture of the group below.) At the same time, a group of teenagers visited the “Campaign against Genocide Museum” which is located in the Rwanda Parliament building. This trip was supposed to have an educational impact according to the serious historic issue the museum deals with. Last but not least, a group of those Kids who are engaged in Traditional Dancing and Singing performed at a Christmas event for children with disabilities which took place at a center of the organisation “Love with Actions”, located in Bumbogo. It was a special matter for our volunteers and the children to visit this impressive organisation and to contribute to the festive feeling for the disabled children on this day!



Bye to our interns, Sophia and Lorenz!

“The closeness to the cause of work is the most special thing about Root Foundation”



From September to December 2018, you have been working as interns for Root Foundation. What have you specifically been working on?

Lorenz: We were mostly here to do administrative work. In the beginning, we especially helped Cheez and Patrick to draw up a long-term structure for the Root Foundation and to decide on what kind of goals Root Foundation wants to reach.

Sophia: These goals have been set especially considering the organisational structure, meaning: Which kind of positions does Root Foundation want to create in the future? How should the organisation be run? How many employees will it have in total? And what exactly should their tasks be and what their relations to each other? This plan is laid out for the next one to five years.

Lorenz: Apart from the organisational structure, we have worked on different projects, have written down a fundraising strategy and drawn up a concept of how to expand our Umwali Program. Basically, we were just assisting Cheez and Patrick who both of them have a lot of really, really great ideas. But we tried to narrow these ideas down and to formulate them in a way so that they will be realisable. Besides, we also did some minor training for the volunteers. We tried to share the experience we had made in different organisations and to assist wherever we could.

What makes Root Foundation special for you?

Sophia: I think what makes Root Foundation very special is that you see how awesome it works with just the help of a bunch of volunteers, with like six people as the core of the people that work on the everyday matter. Most important, the

achievements that are realised with so limited means are incredible and the number of children who are profiting and benefiting from this organisation is very inspiring. I am very grateful that I got to see this effort on the ground in Rwanda.

Lorenz: I agree: the huge amount of time, resources and effort all the volunteers put into the work – “just to see” (in quotation marks) “children smile” and to help others – is amazing. The spirit behind the organisation really got through to us during the work here. What really touched me was that I could actually see the outcome of where we are assisting. Everybody who puts in effort at Root Foundation gets so much more in return just to see the Kids dancing and playing, being able to go to school. And that’s probably the most special thing about the work here at Root Foundation: the closeness to the cause we are working on together.

What will you take with you from your stay in Rwanda in general and your work at Root Foundation in special?

Lorenz: I will take with me that the work in an organisation that directly works together with its beneficiaries is never easy. There are always obstacles. Life is always a little bit harder than you imagined it to be. Also, with whatever plan you go into the work, you can assume that you are going to throw it away and that you have to work around the challenges that pop up during that journey. However, there is always a way to achieve your goal. And the work here at Root Foundation, but also the general life style of the Rwandan people has shown me that, if you have a goal and if you work towards it, no matter how harsh the circumstances are, if there is enough willpower behind it, then you are able to achieve what you want.

Sophia: Something entirely different, it is just a thought and it sounds a bit cliché. But being here for three and a half months just gave me another reality check about what I already obviously knew: that as a European I live an extremely privileged life. It is also something that I have been dealing with theoretically in my studies for the past three years. Still, as a person who comes to Africa for the first time, it is just a different feeling to see the life as it is here, especially the big differences to what we are used to from Europe. And I think it is very valuable to go home with this, with these experiences, just to see my own life in another perspective.

What are your future plans?

Sophia: We will try to make the best out of this gap year, hopefully do some more internships, try to learn a lot and either next year or the year after it, continue to study by picking up a master study, probably related to International Development.

Life at Root

Impressions from December





Critical Thinking Workshop

Debate & Checkmate

What is leadership about? “Leadership is not about being in a big position, but it starts with self-leadership, when you are self-responsible, when you don’t cause problems yourself, but solve the problems others have and also try to find a solution for problems together with them.” This is not a quotation of an experienced professor of Social Studies, no, it is the answer Xavier (13) gave to the question what he had learned during the Critical Thinking Workshop he had attended. Organised and implemented by our partner organisation “Heart of a thousand hills”, this workshop took place at our Children’s Center during the whole week from 7 to 13 January. Around 30 children gathered together for four hours every afternoon. They learned in an interactive, engaging and creative way about what it means to take a responsible role in their community and society as well as about how to critically question issues and how to cleverly debate about them. On top of both group discussions and more individual tasks such as creating a poster about one’s role models, the participating children took the challenge to experience different methods that help them “train their brain” such as chess which they really enjoyed. On Sunday, the workshop closed with a presentation and the distribution of the certificates which the parents were proudly invited to join!



“And the trumpets, they go...”

Brass Music is finally starting!

Since the end of summer 2018, our trumpets and trombones have been waiting to be properly used by Root Foundation’s children. Finally, the time has come and the first delegation from our Uganda-based partner organisation “Brass for Africa” arrived! On Thursday, 24 January, we received Loise Njeri from their M&E department as well as their experienced brass music teacher Ronald Kabuye for a few days and – first of all – brass teacher Tonny Mwolese. He will be staying in Kigali for the first two months of the project now to start teaching our children how to play brass instruments as a new part of our Personal Development Program. Before some first introductory lessons and try-out sessions were offered by the two brass teachers, the project realisation started by distributing and translating surveys to many of our children. These surveys deal with their individual family and educational background as well as with their skills and weaknesses, based on self-assessment. They are supposed to deliver a strong understanding about our children’s life circumstances in various regards. Six months after the start of the project, the surveys will be implemented once more so that it becomes possible to see which differences have been made in children’s development during the time of regular attendance of Brass Music lessons. Within the next few weeks, Teacher Tonny will be determining one group of younger and one group of elder children who are going to start learning brass instruments. We are looking forward to this amazing project and are already incredibly glad about the very first results of this musical experience we could listen to!



Life at Root

Impressions from January



What happens next?

Come and visit our events!

As our Saturday Program is open for everyone, we would love to invite those who are living near to come over and visit Root Foundation during one of our next **Saturday Events**. They will take place at the new Children's Center in Batsinda on **16 February and 2 March**.

Root Foundation Rwanda | Newsletter, December 2018 and January 2019

Editor: Leander Hebllich, Photos: Hannah Willke

Contact Us:

rootfoundation2012@gmail.com

Muragwa Bienvenue, Executive Director

+250 786 006 709

Leander Hebllich, Assistant Director

+250 738 257 536

Root Foundation
Children's Center Batsinda
KG 810 St, Kigali, Rwanda

P.O. Box: 1579 Kigali

A big **“Thank you”** again to all our supporters! We have now managed to send more than 45 children to school for this Academic School Year which has begun in January. This success has only become possible due to you, our supporters, which is why we are very grateful to you!

Especially, we would like to cordially thank **Oliver Lötze and Johannes Donderer** as well as **Ursula Wussow and her students** from our German partner school Gymnasium Netphen for their exceptional efforts in raising school fees for our children!

Also, huge thanks to our friends **Roberta Minotti** and **Claudia Lopez Tena** as well as to our former volunteer **Annika Böttcher** for their great efforts in general fundraising! All of you helped us so much!