

Annual Report of the Step by Step (SbS) organisation for 2021 Jahresbericht der Organisation Step by Step (SbS) für 2021



Dear friends of Step by Step,

The year 2021 was again a very challenging one, the pandemic still had our world firmly in its grip and has permanently changed many things. In the following pages, we would like to give you an overview of the events and activities of this year of our project in Tanzania:

Project report:

Despite all adversities, we can be very satisfied and proud in retrospect, we have achieved a lot, we have been able to take many steps in the right direction.

On 17 March 2021, the very controversial incumbent President John Magufuli died unexpectedly. The former vice-president "Mama Samia", who had risen to office in accordance with the constitution, very quickly set a new tone and in some cases carried out a complete reversal of policy. It is not for us to pass judgement here, but at least in Corona policy and for the concerns of foreigners in Tanzania (organisations, residence and work permits, etc.) much has improved. We are now well positioned with our organisation, registered as an orphanage and hope to be able to concentrate on our work with the children, apart from dealing with the authorities.

Due to Corona, we had to postpone our trip, which was already planned for summer 2020, two more times, because there was always a new "wave" in Europe. In September, it finally worked out and we were able to accompany our volunteers (more on this below) to the project and introduce them.

There were also other Corona "waves" in Tanzania, but these did not have nearly the impact we had feared. All in all, we can say that Corona is now only considered one of many diseases there and there are hardly any special measures or restrictions, except for international travel.



Our tour group in Sept. 2021 with the volunteers, staff and children.

We are growing and the children are doing great!

This is again the first and most important news, after all they are the reason for all we do. The sometimes very tragic stories of all the children, including our new arrivals Mesia, Anton, Aloyse, Andrea and Thamson can be read on our website.

We were able to take in the brothers Andrea and Thamson from a distant area (but still the Morogoro region) from an awkward situation, requested by our acquaintance and long-time supporter Bruno Ospelt from Liechtenstein.

Anton has and had a particularly hard time. He was ill with malaria and, if untreated would be permanently impaired. He was left to his fate on the side of the road with practically no hope. He cannot walk, talk or eat, only later did it become clear that he is also at least partially blind, all consequences of the untreated malaria.

He was lovingly taken into our community and our matrons are caring for the little one carefully. He was taken to various clinics as far away as Dar es Salaam for some examinations and is now driven weekly to a special therapy in Morogoro. With a specially made walking aid, he can now walk a few steps. Everyone hopes that he will regain at least some of his lost abilities and one day be able to lead as independent a life as possible.

All our children are still very young and not yet of school age. This was also our plan, so that we can prepare them well for school entry and in the course of time get a good age mix through new additions. However, looking after 10 small children, most of whom are still wearing nappies, is very time-consuming, plus looking after Anton, so we were very happy that Angela, the wife of our director Marcel and a trained nurse, agreed to support us as a matron for at least a few months, so we had three "mothers" for 10 children, which was also needed.





From left to right:

- Angela, head-matron and wife of director Marcel.
- Jamila Schmid Frey, our member of the board of directors of SbS and always a great help.
- Matteo, Jonathan and Tamara our volunteers.
- Harald Frey, construction manager of the project without whom it would never have been possible.

Anton can already walk a few steps with his walking aid.

A lot of work has been invested in the farm!

Part of our planning is to cover our own needs as far as possible by growing vegetables, cereals and other crops on the one hand, and on the other hand to earn money for the farm by selling agricultural products in order to become as independent as possible in the long run.

In addition to vegetables, beans, sunflowers and maize for our own use, we also cultivated large areas of chilli and sesame. These crops promised to fetch a good price and should work in the location. Unfortunately, the small rainy season in November failed to materialise for the third time in a row in 2021 (not a single drop of water fell since April), which had a severe impact on our crops. The pumped groundwater is only enough for domestic use and a little for the home garden, the dam intended for the large areas (a few thousand cubic metres after all) was then soon empty, and so our efforts with the crops were unfortunately ruined. Only a very small harvest of moderate quality was the reward for many, many hours of work, and the sale could not even cover the labour input financially.

We are afraid that climate change will become a bigger and bigger problem for us, too, and if the small rainy season does not come regularly again, as it did in the decades before, we might not be able to farm.

We have also had our entire farm examined and analysed in detail by experts and have received a very detailed report with laboratory evaluations. Unfortunately, this report is also not very encouraging, the soil condition together with the water scarcity of the last years is not a recommendation for commercial farming. We will see.



The entire farm, the soil structure and the condition are precisely checked and documented.



Bird's eye chilli was grown on about 7 ha. The preparation, planting and care was very labour-intensive.

The improvement of the houses is completed and a wash house is built!

At the beginning of the year we started to improve the houses and to provide more security by building a closed corridor. We also noticed a few other details that we could improve and include in the planning of the next building stages. This work was completed in the summer and we moved on to the next project.

Since a total of about 20 people live in our project now, a lot of laundry naturally accumulates. Until now, this was washed in small buckets and by hand between the houses. This is neither ecological nor economical and requires a lot of water, soap and even more work.

So the plan was to build a wash house with a proper washing trough and the possibility for a washing machine. The electricity should come from a new plant (see below) and the roof of the wash house with the solar panels will provide the electricity and at the same time the shade. Wolfgang Schmieder again created a perfect plan for us and the bricks for the building were formed and fired by our workers themselves with clay from our property under the guidance of an expert. This resulted in a great project that fits in well with the overall layout.

The building was finally completed by ourselves during our visit in September and a washing machine was also procured. The large washing trough was also immediately taken into use - but the washing machine did not get electricity..... See next item.



The bricks for the washhouse were made with our own clay, by our workers and fired in the field.



The walls are growing in height.



This is how the wash house looks now, with a solar roof and lockable rooms for the washing machine and materials. It was happily put to use immediately, a real relief!

Our workshop was expanded in anticipation of electricity and equipped with proper tools. As soon as we have electricity, most of the work that needs to be done can be done by ourselves directly on site. With this workshop we are better equipped than most of the craftsmen in the area. The workshop has already served us well in the completion of the wash house and the installations.



New power supply!

Again and again we had big problems with our island power supply, the lead batteries are simply too sensitive, the charge and load regulators too unreliable! The capacity was so bad at the end that the lights went out at about 9 pm, although it doesn't get dark until about 6:30 pm. The operation of a refrigerator was out of the question. As this is also a safety problem and the children had to go to the toilet in the dark during the night, we really wanted to improve this. Alexander Netzer, a friend and supporter is a proven solar expert who planned and put together a great system for us. Unfortunately, we couldn't find the necessary lithium batteries anywhere in the area, they simply don't exist in East Africa yet, so we got them here in Europe and sent them on their way to Tanzania. The odyssey we finally experienced with the batteries would go beyond the scope of this article, but it was really adventurous.

Alexander Netzer accompanied us to carry out the installation of the complex but very simple and safe system on site. The wiring of all houses and the installation of the solar panels could still be done, but the components from Europe simply did not arrive. Endless phone calls and interventions did not help, even 2 months after the promised date the parts did not arrive and so we had to leave behind an almost completely installed system that could not supply electricity because of the missing parts.

The delivery arrived in Vianzi just as we were landing back in Zurich from our trip. One or two days would have been enough to complete the project, but we were not granted that.



Our solar expert Alexander Netzer at work.



Many hundreds of metres of cable and earth wire had to be laid.

Fresh eggs!

We had wanted our own chickens for a long time. In 2021 the time had come, a coop with a fence was built and the first chickens moved in. Soon there will be eggs and, with a bit of luck, chicks.



Our first volunteers from Europe!

Through the AUSTRIAN FOREIGN SERVICE, Austrians can work for up to one year on a social project abroad and are officially sent by the Republic, insured and also receive pocket money. For young men subject to compulsory military service, this service can also be counted as civilian service. After all the formalities as a registered volunteer organisation were completed, we received the confirmation that the first three volunteers could travel with us to Tanzania in September and begin their service.



From left to right: Jonathan Biberbost, Matteo Treichl and Tamara Freudlperger, a great life experience for these young people

Since all three had never been to sub-Saharan Africa before, we accompanied them and familiarised them with the country, the people and our many acquaintances so that they could feel really safe. To get them in the mood, we invited them to a nice hotel and on a safari, and after a few days they were slowly introduced to the project.

After the completely normal initial problems with the completely new situation, all three have settled in well and are implementing good projects. Tamara helps with the matrons with the children, works on the bookkeeping and overall raises the standard a bit to what we Europeans are used to. She also plays great games with the children, which also include their first lessons. Jonathan and especially Matteo have taken on the garden and raised it to a new level, together with the compost production it will be a great thing. We are very proud of our volunteers who will be with us for about nine months in total.

It is already clear that this will become a permanent feature and the next volunteers who want to work with us from September onwards have already signed up.



The vegetable garden has been greatly expanded and improved by Matteo and Jonathan, and it has also been shaded so that the sun does not burn the plants again in the hottest season. The entire vegetable garden is equipped with drip irrigation. In the back, on the far left, you can see the chicken coop.

Wedding!

A particularly joyful event was the wedding of our on-site director Marcel Mlacha and his bride Angela. Our whole travel group was invited to the celebration! The church choir alone impressed us very much. It was a unique experience and an honour to have been there.



Das glückliche Brautpaar.



A large wedding party celebrated exuberantly until late at night!



We also met some acquaintances from our previous project in Moshi at the wedding - my goodness - how the orphans at that time (all in green) grew up, tall young women greeted us joyfully.

Miscellaneous and future plans

- In January, Marcel had an accident with his motorbike. Fortunately, he only suffered minor injuries which healed after 1-2 weeks and the bike did not suffer too much. But this again shows us the necessity to provide a car for the project soon. It is simply safer in every respect and of course much more can be transported. Unfortunately, the cost of cars in Tanzania is extreme, they cost about 50 percent more than in Europe and old, used ones with up to 300 -400,000 km still cost USD \$10,000 - \$15,000.
- Once again, the access road to our project was badly affected during the rainy season. However, after the repair work carried out together with neighbours, the road is now better than ever. On one section in Lukobe, the government is even building a bridge at the worst point and there is a second access possibility via the neighbouring SAT farm.
- We were able to support the International School Morogoro with a loan so that it can continue to fulfil its so important task. The whole process and the repayment instalments so far have all gone perfectly according to plan, the school has recovered well from the corona-related low blows and is running well again.
- Our accounting is still very challenging, European standards are completely foreign here and we are still struggling with the implementation. At least we have now installed internet banking, so we can make transfers from Europe, this alone is a big step forward. Tanzanian law requires all registered NGOs to have an AUDIT from a Tanzanian auditor. With a lot of effort, we have managed to do this, and the 2020 accounting year is now the first to be audited in this way. Unfortunately, this also results in high costs.
- The solar-powered pump that pumps the water for our entire project from a depth of about 100 metres had a problem with the inverter in the spring. Unfortunately, we received zero support from the German manufacturer, even after dozens of contacts from Germany to Switzerland and South Africa. Finally, we were able to get a replacement unit from a local dealer in Kenya and soon we were pumping again with solar power instead of the diesel generator.
- Peter Wachter, also a supporter for many years, also accompanied us on the trip. His project was the attempt to plant olives in Tanzania. Unfortunately, the seedlings we took with us and planted immediately after our arrival did not withstand the strong sun and all died, but Peter does not want to give up and wants to start another attempt.
- We were again able to take many used clothes and other donations in kind in our luggage to Tanzania and to our project. Everyone was very happy and since there are new children again, everything could be put to good use right away.
- We are very happy that sponsors have been found for the further expansion of the project from 2022. The jewellery company LUNA, which had already supported us several times, as well as a group of Upper Austrians, led by a dentist and a stove builder, have each agreed to finance another residential house for orphans; we are still looking for supporters for the third house of the village group. We want to stay true to our motto and grow step by step and in a healthy way. That is why we are waiting with the construction of the block until the operation and the staff have settled in and the financing of the entire expansion project is secured.

Our Homepage!

...is being looked after so wonderfully and, what's more, free of charge by the advertising agency "Hellblau" in Dornbirn, as they have always helped us with all matters such as logo, printing etc.. Udo and Wolfgang make sure that the latest information is always available and another supporter has meanwhile translated the entire website into English. We are happy about this, and all are welcome to browse through the website.

<https://stepbystep.or.tz/>

You can find the exact location of our project if you search Google Maps or Google Earth for:

"Step by Step Morogoro ", then you will be "flown" directly to our project and you will see satellite images in good resolution.



Decorating the home for Christmas

With this report we hope to be able to give you an insight into our project, we are again proud of everything we have achieved with your help and are fully motivated for the next year. On behalf of all of us and our organisation, I would like to thank you very much for all the support you have given us!

With the very best regards,

Hanno Breiffuss

Schaan, February 2022