

# Project Proposal

Upgrade of a community newspaper and construction of a radiostation for the coast of Kenya.

## ***The project***

The existing government-independent community newspaper „Pambazuka Coast“ will be upgraded and managed in a more professional way. A radio-station which is already being planned for several years will be realised.

Through the radiostation, the reports and articles which will and already have been researched by the journalists can be spread further and so reach a wider circle of people.

Through independent news, the population will be informed about their human rights, cases of corruption and so on. People will be asked to participate actively and will be educated for this purpose. A network of seminars about community awareness and solidarity is planned.

## ***Development aid?***

From mid July to mid September I went to an orphan-home to Kilifi, a little coastal town, 50km north of Mombasa for an internship for 8 weeks.

After a short period of time, I got to know Georg Züwerink, who controlled project-development based on the yearly report 2004 of the Development Aid of Kenya of the German „Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit & Entwicklung (federal ministry of economic cooperation & development)

He investigated from a „bottom up perspective“, whether the German tax money for development aid was really used for the desired purposes and if it really reached the intended recipients. He reported about the experiences and outcomes of the research to the German ministry. As a result of the findings in his report, the development aid for the next year might be stopped totally or cut drastically.

On behalf of the orphans home, I accompanied Mr. Züwerink and a Kenyan journalist to the District Commissioner of the region Kilifi. For two days, we confronted the DC with the available documented facts relating to the German funded projects.

For example, only the region of Kilifi was assigned a food-emergency-aid programme of EUR 300.000,-. The whole country of Kenya received more than 24 million Euro of German tax money in 2004.

The DC presented all kinds of excuses, however was not able to explain or produce documents showing where the money went. Seeking help, he called the ministry of Nairobi on the second day. From there he received order, not to give out any kind of information. For further information, Georg Züwerink was invited to a reception at the ministry in Nairobi. However, he refused the invitation on the grounds of democracy being a process that works from the bottom up, not vice versa.

Furthermore, the minister could have made all necessary information available to the office of the DC immediately via fax.

## **Terms of free Journalism**

The newspaper „Pambazuka Coast“ has been a programme of the kddp, the Kilifi Development Programme, that was funded by a German organisation for many years. Now, that the support has come to an end and the newspaper – as well – was about to be stopped, Kitheka Dan Muoo with some of his students took over the paper. He was supported by a Kenyan businessman, who provided them with a computer and a little office.

The editor of the newspaper „Pambazuka Coast“, Kitheka Dan Muoo, 39 years old, taught journalism at the Mombasa Polytechnical Institut. At his disposal he has an extremely big network of national and international contacts. He worked as a cameraman for Reuters and for some time as well.

He is known as incorruptible. Amongst other things, he uncovered a scandal concerning atomic waste in the north of the land and was the first cameraman at the Nairobi Embassy Bombing. He revealed cases of corruption and bribery at the local law courts. Whilst undertaking these kinds of activities, he has often come close to losing his life.

He had to disappear into the bush for a longer period of time. His house was burnt down and he spent some years of his life in prison. All because he showed the deep rooted corruption in the political system – which, of course, some powerful and influential people did not like too much.

Through a private donation of myself, the first issue of the newspaper could finally be printed. Headline: „KShs 30,000,000 Kilifi Food Aid Disappears – German Government sends investigators“. The first ever reaction concerning corruption from the Kenyan people themselves.

## **Anticorruption**

On big posters on Kenya's streets the slogan „stop the corruption“ being displayed nearly everywhere cannot be missed. The current situation of the first free press-initiative however, is as follows: The person, who until that date benevolently provided the office and computer, totally withdrew all equipment shortly after the publishing of the anticorruption-issue of the newspaper.

Kitheka Dan Muoo and some of his co-workers now rent a tiny office. They are only equipped with an analog SLR camera that I left them and a typewriter.

Due to the lack of equipment the next issue can only be realised with enormous effort – the last weeks Dan had to raise money exclusively with portrait-photography.

Kitheka Dan Muoo has an extensive network of contacts within the press, many of whom he even trained himself at the Institut of Journalism.

I met further journalists who I talked to separately - amongst others employees of the Kenya Times or the head of the radiostation of BBC East Africa. All of them were very enthusiastic about the idea of getting a government-independent newspaper and radiostation and promised their help immediately.

Alexander Markwalder, who I met shortly after, is Swiss by birth, grew up in Tanzania, went back to Switzerland and has been living in Kenya for more than 20 years now. He lives in Ukunda, south of Mombasa and sees himself as a white African.

He knows the african culture like hardly any other white man and has a very profound knowledge in politics. He has many connections and relations in Kenya itself, though looks at many things with a certain objectivity, distance and a „sense of justice“ that many Africans lack.

Thanks to his help, some stories have already been investigated and were published in the last edition. In this context, Alexander Markwalder is a very important person who promised his active help for these projects. I introduced him to Mr. Züwerink and „Dan“ immediately.

### **Basic technical equipment**

Right now, money is needed for an office with electricity and internet connection. We are in need of two or three computers, a digital camera, a videocamera as well as a scanner, printer, telephone and fax machine.

A used car or similar for quick access at newspots or transport of equipment would be extremely advantageous. Very important is the participation of media specialists on-site, who can teach the basic technical skills needed to operate a radiostation to a certain circle of people.

For the construction of the radiostation, some steps have already been undertaken, the overall planning is still very open and vague though. Diverse information have been gathered and the frequency of the station (Coast FM 99.9) already been registered.

Multiple organisations have already been contacted, who may help with the funding of the radiostation. In order to receive this funding, a small station which is already up and running is necessary though, for which there is currently no funding. The following concepts of financing have been researched:

UNESCO            may contribute a total of 15 Mio. Shilling (~ EUR 150,000) spread over 3 years.

UNIFEM            may contribute money, if at least 50% of the programme-topics related to women.

UNEP                may contribute money, if there are at least 30 minutes of environment-related topics each day.

Even reuters would contribute related reports and news for the programme.

### **Summary**

Development aid the way it is right now, only provides people or donors here with a „feel-good-factor“ and allows themselves a pat on the back. The truth is a totally different story:

Development aid from Germany and other countries does not reach the intended recipients. The vast majority of aid disappears in the pockets of influential private individuals or politicians. Due to this, the projects and help, Kenya receives from outside its own country has to be thought over and controlled accordingly.

Giving local people the possibility to control whether aid reaches its rightful recipients with this independent media-initiative will be far more effective than foreigners poking their noses in. Furthermore, through the upgrade of a citizen-based, communal newspaper with radiostation it is possible to make the local people aware of their human rights and local laws.

Such an initiative really has the potential to make a major change.

Dan Kitheka Muuo is already encouraging local people to become active parts in the community, to participate in the newspaper, train them to become reporters to research reports and stories and with that, teach them the skills necessary to exploit the media to good effect.

The infrastructure is already in place: Good journalists with outstanding contacts, who want to help their country to being able to help itself. Journalists with experience and knowledge, who I got to know through intensive talks and who I totally trust. To lead the team, a journalist who already trained many young people and young adults. A journalist who has built up many social projects within the existing structures and who is very socially active. Unfortunately, there are no financial resources and expert knowledge to realize this.

### **How to get it all started**

.... to be done ...

### **Contacts**

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In the not-anymore-existent office:

On the very right: Dan Kitheka Muuo with camera



In the District Commissioners' office.  
From the left: Georg Züwerink, Benjamin Wadewitz, District Commissioner and further officials.



Discussion with journalists in Mombasa.  
What are the obstacles of journalism in Kenya?

How can a government-independent newspaper/radiostation be realised?



Together with the boss of the radio-department of BBC East Africa, Noel Mwakugu in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. „I would help immediately!“



The printed issue of the new paper. On the right: Georg Züwerink



The first issue for sale. Headline „EUR 30.000,- Kilifi Food Aid disappears“.  
– The first reaction to corruption out of the own country ever.



Checking of the accountancy



Woman with tumor on her leg: „No money for operation.“

Money of the German government for treating cases like these is provided. The money disappears though, does not reach the ones in need.

Women: „I didn't know about those funds (for treating these cases)“.