



newsletter

Island Kids
Philippines 

2022/3

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Dear Friends of Island Kids Philippines

Official awards and recognition for our work are important for the staff of PIKIFI, and IKP Switzerland and Germany. However, even more important to us is to experience the effects of our work: Many of our young men and women are striving to finish an education in order to lead an independent and responsible life. Three life stories illustrate the difficulties along this route.

Good news is that with front-of-class teaching back, a difficulty over the past two years ceases to exist.

But human trafficking and the related widespread corruption consistently cause difficulties. We are all the more grateful that PIKIFI has won a legal case of human trafficking, and the influential person concerned was convicted.

Your important and valuable support enables us to turn difficulties into hope, dreams and a better future – thank you!

■ Award, Recognition and Effects

The City of Cagayan de Oro (CdO) celebrated its 72nd anniversary on 15th June 2022. In order to commemorate this milestone in its history, the responsible persons honored institutions which, “together with the authorities, led the city among the Top 10 in the Philippines”. It was a great privilege that only Balay Mindanaw and PIKIFI received and award of all the NGOs and associations in the area. **So far it is the most significant award for PIKIFI** and a great honor for us, because it recognizes our commitment over many years for a better CdO. The wooden award with its engraving is an acknowledgment that we get many things right and our effort is worth it.



After evaluating the implementation of the OSAEC project (prevention of online sexual abuse and exploitation of children and adolescents), UNICEF and Save the Children Philippines concluded that our team has done an **excellent job**. Therefore, the project will continue under the direction of PIKIFI in CdO. During the next 12 months, PIKIFI will accompany the municipal organizations in the four current districts, and will then start information campaigns in other districts. One of them is Canitoan where many families have been resettled after the devastating typhoon Sendong in 2011. Many children live in this area who are neglected or have even been abandoned by their parents. In this way, the know-how is multiplied and spread by Save the Children, UNICEF and PIKIFI.

The work of PIKIFI in the areas of prevention, education, information and birth control is showing its **effects**. Children and adolescents have new goals:

They first want to finish their education before deciding to get married and to have kids (and if so perhaps not as many). In this way, they themselves, the family they were born into and their own future family manage to escape the poverty trap.

■ Finally, Front-of-Class Teaching is back!

The two school buildings of PIKIFI comply with the minimal standards of the local health authority for resuming front-of-class teaching. Our staff – first of all our director Virgie Demata-Vicare and the teachers – put a lot of time, energy, effort and dedication in making the necessary adjustments: hygienic facilities, a tent for isolation and a tent for screening before tuition (i.e. taking the temperature). From August, with the beginning of the new school year, front-of-class teaching will take place in the freshly painted classrooms, although, to begin with, only half a day and in classes with half the number of students.



Our teachers

For two years, our staff has put in all possible effort to provide our over thousand students regularly with module lessons and food packages. It is thanks to our staff that most of our students did not leave schooling during the pandemic and will hopefully come back to their regular classes. This is even more remarkable as during the past two Covid years about 4 million students in the Philippines dropped out of school, according to an article in the [NZZ](#).

But it is also thanks to you, dear readers, who, with your donations, have encouraged our staff and children not

to give up and work together towards a successful future. For your loyalty we thank you with all our heart.

Teaching with modules had clear disadvantages compared with normal teaching, and it meant a huge challenge for most students. Though for some, this method of teaching was an opportunity, to be specific, for the teenage mothers. During the pandemic, several of them resumed education, because they did not have to be present in classrooms, but could learn at home while looking after the children.



A chance for teenage mothers

■ Medical Prevention

About 200 adults benefited from a free tuberculosis screening in a mobile X-ray unit. In case of a positive result, they are given medication and looked after by medical staff.

■ On our own Behalf

New Information Flyer

Apart from donations, you can also support our work in a different way: IKP Switzerland redesigned our flyer and had it printed. On your request, we would be delighted to send you a number of A4 flyers, folded into A5 for distribution to interested people. Please send an e-mail to info@islandkids.ch indicating the number of copies and your postal address.

New Payment Slips

From 1st October 2022 only payment slips with a QR code are valid in Switzerland. Enclosed please find two versions from IKP: one for general donations, the other for sponsorships. Any standing orders also need to be adjusted.

■ Corruption and Justice

PIKIFI reported the influential lawyer A.P. for abduction of one of our foster children (2016), and for misleading justice. The criminal offense of abduction of a child was removed from the files at the time without explanation. In the other case, the lawyer was found guilty and charged with an extremely mild fine of CHF 100.--. However, PIKIFI reported him to the Philippine Chamber of Lawyers and demanded his law license being taken away for professional ethical reasons. His law license has now indeed been taken away for three years. This decision sets a clear example for corrupt and unscrupulous lawyers. It shows that the wheels of justice grind slowly, but nobody is above the law. This case is also highly charged because it is a possible precedent. Most NGOs and even the public Department of Social Welfare and Development, DSWD, are wary of charging powerful lawyers like A.P. Too big is the fear of retaliation and even threats to life or physical condition. This fear had to be endured by PIKIFI over years as well. Even now one has to stay alert.

■ Fates

Nursi Mae joined PIKIFI at the age of 13 and never before had visited a school. Thanks to our ALS program (alternative learning system for adolescents without education) she successfully finished elementary school and went on to High School. She was able to finish it successfully after her internship (Newsletter 2022_2), and would now like to proceed to university for studying. Nursi Mae comes from a Muslim family and has a two-year-old son. We congratulate her on her successful graduation and are very proud of her!

Mary Ann was a timid five-year-old girl when Thomas Kellenberger met her. Together with her older siblings and cousins, she entered the school of PIKIFI. Unfortunately, she often stayed away from classes under many excuses of her mother. Nevertheless, our

staff never stopped trying to convince the mother of the importance of attending the classes. By and by most of her siblings and cousins left school and got married. Mary Ann moved with her mother to Maramag, and after a while communication stopped. Until, all of a sudden, Thomas received a message from Mary Ann. She told him about the difficulties she had to overcome during her time at school. What motivated her to carry on was, that the staff of PIKIFI believed in her and always gave her another chance. This motivated her to finish school and to study in order to help other people in future. Therefore, Mary Ann returned to CdO and would like to finish the last year at high school and then go on to further studying. She would be the first in her family to finish compulsory elementary school successfully. PIKIFI reintegrated her in the school program and supports her plans. We are very proud of Mary Ann!

and the mix of medication was poured onto a flowerbed. Today, the young woman lives together with her partner and has two healthy daughters. Thanks to her excellent performance, she finished the 12th grade with distinction and was granted a university scholarship. We are grateful and proud of this young woman!



Mary Ann 2011

When another **girl** got pregnant at the age of 16, she bought a mix of medication on the black market in order to abort the unborn child (abortions are illegal in the Philippines). Thomas noticed something was wrong and addressed her. In tears she told him about her pregnancy and her plan. He expressed his empathy and showed understanding for her intention. At the same time, he pointed out that this sort of abortion bears a great risk. He assured the girl that in case of a pregnancy, PIFIKI would support her in the best possible way. The teenager decided to keep the child,



Mary Ann 2022

Fates like these led to the formation of classes for teenage mothers by PIKIFI. The situation of teenage mothers in the slums of CdO is described in a realistic way in an article of the news magazine "[Spiegel](#)".

People like these three young women continue to give us hope and inspiration for our work and our help for the people in the slums of CdO.



newsletter

Island Kids
Philippines 

Company details



For Switzerland:

Island Kids Philippines
Vorholzstrasse 12
CH-3800 Unterseen

info@islandkids.ch
newsletter@islandkids.ch

Donations account Switzerland:

Berner Kantonalbank, 3001 Bern
IBAN CH84 0079 0042 4190 1489 2



For Germany:

Island Kids Philippines
Deutschland e.V.
c/o Familie Erzinger
Gartenstraße 36
D-14548 Schwielowsee

deutschland@islandkids.ch

Donations account Germany:

IBAN: DE55 1605 0000 1000 9063 84
BIC: WELADED1PMB

Pictures:
Island Kids
AdobeStock.com

Compilation German: Christina Kurzen
Translation: Barbara Brand
Layout/graphic: René Müller

Actual information you'll find as well

www.islandkids.de
www.islandkids.ch

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KuyaThom

... Burning heat, hardly any shade, no internet connection, vast uninhabited waste lands and nasty sandstorms made my first 200 km in the Kazakh Desert a real challenge.

... Completely exhausted, I was invited to spend the night in a mosque on the last day of Ramadan and was nurtured with a rich and tasty meal. I drank horse milk for the first time and was repeatedly given water, food and even money along the way. The police too appeared to be a real friend and helper. As a meditative place, the desert also gave me what I was desperately longing for: time for real reflection and introspection.

... Along the long and hard stretch drivers kept pulling over and providing me with water, food and words of encouragement. One of them was Bokenbay together with his lovely wife Roza and their children. They invited me to be their guest once I would arrive in Beyneu. After several tent nights and without the chance for a shower, I got a rather unpleasant shower in form of heavy rainfalls! Yes, you read it right, "HEAVY RAINFALL IN THE DESERT!" And it lasted not for hours, but for days! On my last 60 km to Beyneu literally everything I carried on and with me was wet, including my backpack under its raincover. As I got freezing cold, he appeared again, my genie! A driver had pity on me and offered me a ride to Beyneu. You've got it, at this point I simply couldn't say no.

... The road here is in a very bad condition. However, as part of China's 'Belt and Road Initiative' a New Silk Road is being constructed just a stone throw away from the old dilapidated one. This turned out a real blessing for me, as I was invited to stay overnight in two of the camps for the Chinese and Uzbek laborers. They served me dinner and breakfast and I was happy to have company after my long and lonely hikes in the desert. Thank you very much for your hospitality guys! After more than 800 km of desert I couldn't stand any longer the monotonous flat landscape with its endlessly straight road and temperatures now reaching 45°C. On the last 120 km to Nukus a guy named Satmurat offered me a ride and I happily accepted it.

... Satmurat invited me to his home for the celebration of the 7th birthday of his daughter Amanda. After lunch, we visited two museums in the city and in the evening, we celebrated with the whole family. Thank you so much for the great time Satmurat and family!

... The atmosphere in the old town reminded me of the tales in "1001 nights". Together with the French restorer Lucie I visited the public market and enjoyed having good conversations over a cold beer. Marco, an Italian living and working in Basel, shared his lunch with me. With over 6000 km, I am getting close to one half of the total distance. At this point, I want to thank my sponsors GALVASWISS, LOWA, LEKI and INGENIEUR BUREAU STERCHI. I also want to thank all those who have made a donation for the proposed second children's village in the Philippines.



... Reaching Miskin, I was exhausted from the heat. To Buchara it was another 300 km of desert without any civilization. With temperatures on the rise and now well above 40°C I was concerned about my health and decided to take the train to Buchara. In Buchara, I visited historical Quran schools and mosques with their unique persian architecture. Suddenly I found myself in the middle of the old Jewish quarter. At the entrance of the Synagoge, an elderly woman welcomed me in. She showed me the ancient Torah scroll, which had survived the pogroms of the soviet era and is believed to be a 1000 years old. She told me that Buchara had once been home to 26,000 Mizrahi Jews and that their number continues to decrease with now less than 100 of them remaining in this city. While she was sharing her eyes went teary.

... I walked the 285 km from Bukhara to Samarkand in 6 days. On the 5th day, I walked 80 km on a single day. In Aqtash, I arrived late at night and very tired. At midnight the 76 years old father of my host cooked scrambled eggs and tea for me while sharing about his harsh time in Afghanistan, where he had served the soviet army. My host even offered me his bed, which I refused to accept. Instead I slept next to him on the floor and watched him praying deeply devoted on his carpet at 4.30am. At 5am we went to his stall at the local bazar, where he invited me for breakfast.

Embracing each other, we said farewell and I went my way. In Samarkand I took a train to visit Tashkent, which was not along my hiking route. I was invited to visit Helmut and Rahel.

As the head of DEZA, Rahel works at the Swiss Embassy. Her husband Helmut is a freelance coach. Staying at their place gave me a much-needed break and allowed me to meet interesting people like Marco Mantovanelli and his wife Michelle. Marco is the head of the World Bank in Uzbekistan. I also met Munir Mammadzade, the head of UNICEF Uzbekistan. From him I learned about the social issues in the country, its dependency on Russia and about UNICEF's child rights advocacy.

... I stayed at the Heartland Hostel (in Samarkand). When the lady owner and her niece learned about my walk for a cause, they told me not to pay for my stay but instead use the amount as a donation for our project. They even invited me to join them for dinner at the house of the family. Thank you so much for your great hospitality!

... After more than 1500km of desert I'm finally back in the mountains and I'm loving it! The Fann Mountains in Tajikistan are simply amazing. In Artuch village I played hide and seek with the village boys, gave my baby stroller to the poorest family in the village, was fishing with locals at the beautiful Kulikalon Lake, and with the local mountain guide Wadim I climbed my first 5000 meters above sea level peak (Zamok Mountain 5020m).

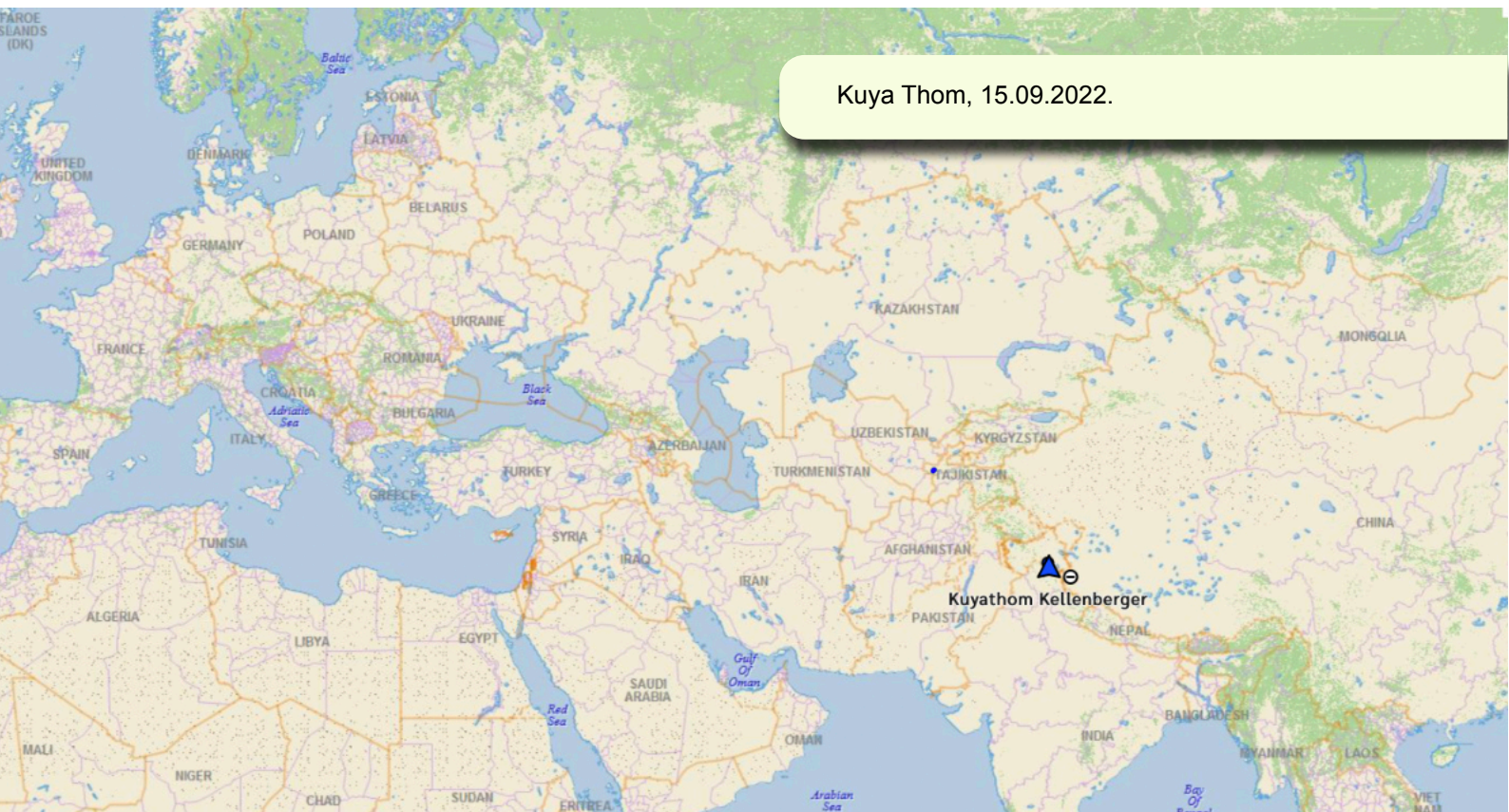


... After Alauddin Pass and Zamok-Peak I had to conquer another 3 passes each of them on altitudes between 3900 to 4100 meters. Alone I walked over 3 glaciers, climbed steep slopes without trails, searched paths through inhabited valleys, and got across wild flowing streams without bridges. The only people I met were shepherds with their dogs and their herds of sheep and goats. The first two were Kiom and Nemet. They offered me dinner and their tent for the night.

... Two valleys further I met the young shepherd Ulugbek with his big herd of 800 sheep and 200 goats. Ulugbek came for my rescue when I fell into the wild mountain stream I was trying to get across. I was again invited to sleep in the tent of the shepherds.

... Reaching Dushanbe together with my smart phone, I was quite exhausted. Temperatures were now reaching 43 degrees and there were only few trees providing shade on the way. At

... Back in Dushanbe, I received two new pairs of shoes from my sponsor LOWA at the Swiss Cooperation Office (DEZA). THANK YOU LOWA + CH! The next morning, I set off for the Pamir. Tortured by up to 45° heat I hiked 40-45km per day, crossed 3 passes and ascended up to 1630 meters of altitude in one day. I slept with shepherds under the open sky and under the same blanket. There I saw the Milky Way as clearly as never before. In the morning, however, my body was full of flea bites. I gave the police the gasoline of my stove and helped to push on their red Lada, was over and over again offered meals and places to sleep.



Kuya Thom, 15.09.2022.