



newsletter

Island Kids
Philippines 

2022/4

In this edition

- Teaching and Studies
- After-effects of the Covid Pandemic
- Women's House / Dormitory
- Jungfrau Marathon
- Concert of the "Gendarmen" and "Quattro Schtatzjoni"
- IKP Shop
- **Kuya**Thom

Dear Friends of Island Kids Philippines

Together with front-of-class teaching, our students profit from a varied program, while our staff are trying to assess and minimize the after-effects of the pandemic.

With great pleasure, on 15th October 2022, we inaugurated our new building "Women's House / Dormitory" in memory of Ruth Kellenberger, the mother of Thomas.

Not only one, but four events in Switzerland support Island Kids Philippines: IKP was Charity Partner of the Jungfrau Marathon, and in December charity concerts will take place in support of the project "Kuya Thom".

We are very grateful and look forward to any form of support of our work amongst the poorest of the poor in Cagayan de Oro.

Soon the year 2022 comes to an end. During this year we faced again big challenges. We wish you courageous hope and the ability to see the good and beautiful in this world. Poverty and misery will not have the final say as long as there are people who care for other people – whether it is in Europe or in the Philippines.

Merry Christmas and a successful New Year!

■ Teaching and Studies

The teaching in classes with half the number of students had a good start, although with many regulations of the Government: For example, wearing masks is mandatory and every child has to carry a flask of disinfectant. Both items are provided by the school, namely by PIKIFI, as our families could not afford these extra costs. Most children are very happy to see their classmates again and being taught front-of-class. If there are any questions, they can address them directly to the teacher.



Members of the municipal youth council (Sannguniang Kabataan) visited our primary school.

More and more adolescents are now attending external high schools or a university. This is due to our growing organization, to the constantly adapted and improved strategies of intervention and programs like the support of education of teenage mothers. Therefore, more and more adolescents graduate successfully and achieve higher education. We are very grateful that some receive a scholarship for a public university based on their academic achievements. Nevertheless, the costs for PIKIFI for transport, board and lodging are rising (universities outside CdO). The doubling of petrol prices and the increase in the cost of living are big challenges for our budget planning.

By resuming normal teaching, our staff are no longer tied to distribute school modules and food packages. Visiting individual children at home and explaining the modules claimed a big part of their time. They are glad to have more time again for other activities, for example the still urgently necessary education about sexual

exploitation on the internet or prevention of pregnancies of underage girls.

On 14th October 2022 members of the municipal youth council (Sannguniang Kabataan) visited our primary school in order to get a picture of our situation. A group discussion followed about supporting the illiterate and pupils with writing difficulties. Every Filipina and every Filipino should be able to read – even the children and adolescents living in difficult circumstances.

The regular training in schools in case of earthquakes have resumed, and the vegetable garden in the school grounds has been newly planted. Here, the children can learn how they and their families can grow vegetable for their own use.

■ After-effects of the Covid Pandemic

The consequences of malnutrition due to lack of income during the Covid pandemic, and hesitating too long to consult doctors, or go into hospitals, because of the widespread fear of possible infections with Covid 19 have most likely led to a weakened resistance among the inhabitants of the slums.

During the past months, we witnessed many illnesses and deaths as well as several new cases of tuberculosis. Before the pandemic, regular checks, vaccinations and dispensing of medicine helped to reduce the number of patients. We are grateful that the City provided people with medicine free of charge. However, the regular taking of medicine for example against tuberculosis has to be supervised by PIKIFI, otherwise patients will become drug-resistant.



Milk for especially deprived children

Sadly, children and adolescents died over the last few months. At the beginning of the school year, all students had a health check where their nutritional status was recorded. This observation will continue. With the start of the school, the children get regular lunches and snacks in school. For the moment, the monthly distribution of food packages could be stopped. In the context of a municipal program, we were able to distribute milk to especially deprived children. We hope this program to continue.

■ Women's House

The construction work for the women's house is finished. The local building authority has completed its inspection and issued the operating license. The house was named "**Ruth Kellenberger**" in memory of Thomas' mother who died on 6th October 2020. As a founding member of IKP, this wonderful and courageous woman supported IKP from the first moment. With much professionalism, pride and joy she put her heart and soul into this charity founded by her son. "Without you, dear Mum, I would not have made it", says Thomas. We are convinced that Ruth would be very pleased with this house providing shelter and protection.



Ruth Kellenberger Safe House



■ Jungfrau-Marathon

No marathon in Europe is on the same scale as the Jungfrau Marathon. The most beautiful marathon in the world with its 42 km distance and 2025 m difference in altitude between Interlaken and Eigergletscher is a big challenge. The route leads along the lake of Brienz, through mountain villages, past the phantastic background of the mountain giants Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau.



IKP at the Jungfrau Marathon

People playing the Alpine Horn, ringing bells and waving flags along the way contribute to the experience. Island Kids Philippines had the honor to be Charity Partner of the Jungfrau Marathon 2022. A considerable amount of part of the entry fees was donated to our organization (runners could pay a voluntary extra amount of CHF 10.--). Members of the IKP managing committee together with other volunteers presented our organization at a stall and answered questions, while busy schoolkids from the class of vice president Gabi Gafner (Unterseen) distributed home-baked cakes.

■ Concert of the “Gendarmen” and “Quattro Schatzjoni”

We are very pleased that [“Die Gendarmen”](#) and [“Quattro Schatzjoni”](#) can invite again to their Advent’s Concert after an interruption of two years. With these events the artists support our project “Kuya Thom”.

Friday, 9.12.2022	20 h	Ref. Kirche Spiez
Saturday, 10.12.2022	20 h	Ref. Kirche Ins
Sunday, 11.12.2022	16 h	Ref. Kirche Signau

..



[Die Gendarmen](#)

■ IKP-Shop

Also for the year 2023 we offer a **calendar**. 12 pictures show children who profit from our projects. The children are photographed individually or in a group and they convey pure vitality.



März
2023

Mo	Di	Mi	Do	Fr	Sa	So	Mo	Di	Mi	Do	Fr	Sa	So
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31									

ii. Weltfrauentag • 20. Frühlingsanfang • 26. Beginn der Sommerzeit

The calendar (A4, landscape, spiral binding) costs CHF/EUR 15.--, plus CHF 3.-- for mailing expenses.

For the sixth time a **new A-Post stamp** is issued of IKP. The B-Post stamp keeps its motif.



Enclosed please find the corresponding flyers with the order form and address.

For orders mailed to Germany please contact directly deutschland@islandkids.ch

Further information can be found at any time at projekt@islandkids.ch or tel. 031 992 29 37

Company details



For Switzerland:

Island Kids Philippines
Susegg/Waldegstr. 175
CH-3803 Beatenberg

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](https://www.adobe.com/stock)

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

Actual information you'll find as well

www.islandkids.de
www.islandkids.ch

© 2022 Island Kids

KuyaThom

... Fit again, I set off for the Bartang Valley. From now on I have no internet connection and I am in the most remote region I have ever been. Until a few years ago, the villages here didn't even have electricity. A man from Bern changed this with his project "Pamir-Link" and brought electricity from hydro power to the people.

... I spend the night at the house of the former English teacher Gulistan. I ask why in other parts of Tajikistan I couldn't talk to women, while here women keep approaching me. She explains that the Pamiri are Ismaili Shia Muslims and not Sunni Muslims as in the rest of Tajikistan. The Ismaili practice a progressive, liberal Islam. Their Imam who had lived in Geneva said: "If you have two children, a son and a daughter, educate first the daughter."

... Shortly after Gudara, I meet a nomadic family with a donkey. Then it becomes completely deserted and quiet; for 140 km I am all alone. I hike 4 days at 3800-4300 m through the national park, marvel at the unique nature, sleep under the sky or in my tent, drink from creeks and listen to my own thoughts. This time of silence and self-reflection is very precious for me.

... Reaching Lake Karakol, all borders are closed - I have to go back to Dushanbe.

... Since I can't hike to India via China, I decide to fly to Leh, in Ladakh, India. As flights from Dushanbe are expensive, I want to fly from Tashkent. Raphael travels with me. A truck driver gives us a lift. After a hellish drive with up to 100 km/h and daring overtaking maneuvers we reach the city of Istarafshan. We buy a tandem bicycle to cover the remaining 200 km. The bike is too small, both suffer from diarrhea, the tire bursts twice and I leave Tajikistan late at night just in time.

... On the flight, I meet the Israelis Roei, Noa, Mai and Aria. We immediately have a great connection and a lot of fun together.

... Together we celebrate the first anniversary of my journey. Later on, two of the women have to be hospitalized due to altitude illness or maybe food poisoning. I decide to stay until they get well. It turns out to be the best decision I could have made. Through my friends I get connected to the huge community of Israeli travelers. I'm invited to join their Kiddush at the Beit Chabad. There are about 70 young Israelis and my soul feels at home just as it does whenever I visit Israel.



... I am warmly welcomed by the entire community, start once again to learn Hebrew and have interesting conversations with the Rabbi. I feel that this is a very important chapter of my inner journey.

In Leh we also meet the American Nemo. On his spiritual search, Nemo finds interest in Buddhism, which together with Islam is the main religion practiced here in the very north of India.

... It's time to say goodbye, as I continue my hike from the Pakistani border through India to Nepal. Leaving the group at lunchtime, I get emotional. Leaving people who have won my heart is always the hardest thing for me. Thankful for the precious time we had, I'm hiking back through the Nubra Valley towards Leh. I still manage 45 km on that day.

... Early in the morning I begin my massive hike of 58 km with 1800 meters ascend through difficult terrain with glacier and over a peak on 5614 mamsl. Pushing myself to the limits, I reach the glacier by darkness with the half-moon as my main source of light. At 9 pm I am on the peak and start descending. A rock breaks loose, I fall and tumble down the slope. My body is bruised all over, but I am still lucky as I have no fractures nor serious injuries. I am not sure whether I should cry or curse myself over my foolishness.

... Shortly after Dad I meet a French trekking group with a local guide. After that it becomes deserted and quiet - total loneliness. After a day's walk through desert like mountains, I find that a river marked on the map is completely dry. I have less than one liter of water with me and panic a bit. An hour later I see from a distance a riverbed that also seems to have dried up. However, on the banks I believe to spot green patches. As I get closer, euphoria rises in me because I spot a very small stream in the riverbed. Thank God, it has a little water! The next days are extremely hard and lonely. Again and again ascending and descending to and from over 5000 mamsl, cold nights, for five days I don't see a single human being, I often feel lonely and long for company. The only consolation is the unique and fascinating, untouched landscape.

... In Chandra Valley, I meet people again, get invited to stay overnight and play card games with Israelis. Crossing Hamta Pass, I meet many guided trekking groups from Israel and India and animals carrying loads over the pass. Arriving on the other side of the pass I am amazed - it looks like Switzerland. Around 9pm and just in time for the beginning of 7 days of continuous rainfalls I finally reach the city of Manali.



... With the Israelis I keep visiting the Bait Chabad, participate in the Kiddush and celebrate Rosh HaShana, the Jewish New Year. I also get to know Stefan, a New Zealander. He records a 2-hour podcast with me. It rains nonstop for 7 days and I decide to stay in Manali until after the holidays. Right on time after Rosh HaShana the rain stops and I continue hiking towards Kasol.

... Malana is kind of a strange place. Apparently, the world's best hashish comes from here. The whole village is full of cannabis plants. While the men smoke pot all day long, the women and children harvest the flowers and rub them between their hands to extract the resin and make hashish.

Position from Kuya Thom, 13.11.2022.

