



Usakos Needy Children Support Organization

Newsletter Term 1 (Jan. - Apr.) 2018



Greeting

A new year has started and is already approaching the end of its first trimester. The UNCSO (Usakos Needy Children Support Organization) is taking this time to reveal the development of the last 3 months in the Organization.

The following newsletter will shed light on the events of the past three months using text and many photos. The focus will lie on reporting the past and present projects as well as projects and plans lying in the future – challenges waiting to be tackled.

As always, the children approach all events with enthusiasm and joy, curious what “auntie Marianne” and the volunteers have planned for them this time.

We send our warm regards out to all donors, supporters, former volunteers, as well as their friends and family and hope that you enjoy the following insight into the beginning of 2018 for the UNCSO.



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1. Volunteers



Teresa Mitterwallner
20 years
Graduated school
12/02 - 06/04/2018



Vincent Kather
24 years
Studies Engineering
27/02 - 20/04/2018



Leon von Salisch
24 years
Studies inclusive pedagogy
27/02 - 13/03/2018



Kyara Katzer
21 years
Studies teaching
12/02. - 16/03/2018



Miriam Schwab
23 years
Studies special need
education
19/02 - 16/03/2018



Anne Buschle
24 years
Studies special need
education
19/02 - 16/03/2018



Rebecca Bergrs
25 years
Educational Scientist
03/04 - 26/04/2018



2. House visits

Due to our limited time, it was only possible to visit the houses on two days. But it was, nevertheless, possible to go and see nearly all of the children's living situations. This gave us a proper view of the families' living conditions: some parents were very caring and it seemed like they look after their kids in spite of the hard circumstances. On the other hand, we were very shocked about parents who gave their children hardly any attention, almost seeming uninterested. We also visited families, which haven't eaten anything for days, some who live in very small shacks with more than 9 family members. Furthermore, a few houses were extremely dirty and smelly due to the people not having a toilet or a proper waste disposal.



After the house visits we kept ourselves busy with the problematic families and came to the conclusion that we really want to help. We decided to provide enough water for the families for the upcoming three months. Some of the kids didn't receive any beds or mattresses yet and have to sleep on the floor, that too is an aspect we wanted to keep in mind for the donations.





To sum it up, the house visits were very interesting and gave us a deep insight in the children's lives. After we got to know the parents we were able to understand and explain some of the attitudes and behaviors of the children in the center. Alcoholism is a major problem in the Usakos township (like many other townships throughout Namibia).



3. New school uniforms

Like in every first term of the year, the school uniforms are renewed. Many children couldn't even button up their trousers anymore, because they grew out of them. Also, most of the shoes were broken and the shirts, which are supposed to be white, were full of scribble and tenacious stains. It took a while to gather all the right sizes, but after a while that challenge was mastered. The center children are now equipped with new uniforms for the next terms.



4. Donations

Early on in our time in the center, we realized that few of the kids had their own pencils, pens etc. to work with and that there was a general lack of school utensils in the center. Furthermore we found out, that many of the kids did not eat properly at home, as there is a lack of basic food, like rice, pasta, flower or cooking oil. Another item that was missing in many of the children's households, were their own beds. Many kids slept on the floor, or shared a bed with one or more siblings. To change these circumstances for the kids and provide essentials for them, we decided to start a fundraiser project, to buy school materials, food, and beds.

Food packages



New beds and mattresses



Exchange of letters

Teresa's mom, who is a primary school teacher in Germany, suggested a nice idea: starting an exchange program between her primary kids and our center kids. Already in the first weeks she sent a package with letters to Namibia. Every letter included small presents, like pencils, erasers and little sweets. When opening the package, the center kids were very happy and decided to write an answer. We hope, the kids from very different cultures, can start a long lasting letter exchange.



5. Projects

To motivate the children, Marianne and the volunteers came up with different projects, that the kids could work on for several days of one week. The aim of these projects was, to subject the kids to topics they might come in contact with on a daily routine, but don't learn about in school. Many of these projects were hands on projects, like planting their own plants.

Experiments

One major project were four little experiments which we prepared and performed with the kids in groups. This project took place over three days, during which we tried the experiments, discussed the theoretical background and planned the presentation for the other groups. Our intention was to convey the knowledge to them in a fun and active way. The experiments were about creating a volcano out of vinegar and baking powder, producing cheese, a solar oven and a lighted teabag which flew like a hot-air balloon. The groups created posters which they presented to all of the kids to reflect what they've learned.



Planting

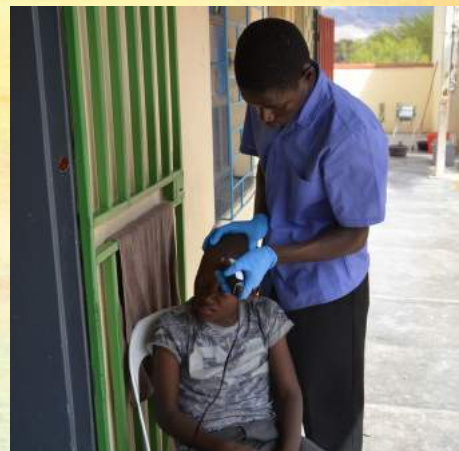
The pot- and plant project was initiated in order to teach the kids responsibility and to allow for a sustainable and fun project. It started out with the up-cycling of empty plastic bottles. These were creatively decorated with colored paper and drawings by the children. After filling the bottles with dirt and seeds the first signs of young shoots showed after a few days. The kids were delighted and proud.

In addition to the kids planting project, the area next to the school water tap, the only place on the school grounds with a regular water supply, was used to plant a small oasis, that now accompanies the water tap.



Hygiene day

The body hygiene is a major part of the work in the center. Every day the kids brush their teeth and wash their hands together. But sometimes it is necessary to operate an entire hygiene day where the kids wash their whole bodies. Therefore we used a whole Friday and prepared different stations, where we passed through a whole beauty program. We washed all the heads of 38 children with shampoo and treated them with ointments. Some girls had to loosen their braids, so that we could wash and brush it completely. The boys got their heads shaved nicely and we also cleaned their ears, washed their hands and cut their nails. The beauty program ended up with a long foot bath for each kid.



Easter week

Due to the upcoming Easter holiday, we dedicated one week to this topic and filled it with different arts and crafts projects, games and songs: we for example colored eggs, built Easter baskets and did egg-and-spoon races. The week ended with a big Easter-Party, which at the same time was most of the volunteers farewell-party. The self-built Easter-baskets were filled with small presents, fruit and sweets and hidden in the center surroundings to be found by the kids.





6. Wishes for the Future

As many of you might know, the organization UNCSO is depending on donations, both in form of materials and money as well as the important work of the volunteers to sustain the lasting encouragement of the needy kids in Usakos, Namibia.

The following section will feature an overview of the anticipated projects of the near future to potentially enable a financial independence of UNCSO and the donations needed to start these projects as well as the materials needed to keep up the important school work with the children.

Anticipated Projects

Marianne and her supporters have thought of an elaborate plan to enable the organization to become financially independent in the long run. Two of these projects are the following.

Print Project

The numerous weddings and other fests taking place in the surrounding of Usakos are often celebrated with different specially printed shirts and other textiles. As there is no company or store offering such a service, the printing projects aim is to fill this gap by purchasing a textile and ceramic printers, enabling the organization to offer a printing service to earn some money.

Marianne has already started researching the specifics of purchasing such machines and anticipates to fully start the project within the coming year.



Taylor Project

A further service that is desperately needed more in the area of Usakos is tailoring. Some of the organizations children's mothers already work as tailors and have somewhat mastered their craft. The plan is that these mothers host classes to teach other children's mothers how to sew and thus enable them to have an occupation again and with it a stable income.

Five sewing machines are already in the organization, ready to be used. This project will commence within the next months.

Materials needed to start and sustain this project are the following:

- (potentially old) sewing machines
- fabric
- thread
- needles



Materials Needed

As mentioned in the donations section, the donations that we received in the beginning of the year were used to purchase new school uniforms along with new writing utensils. The purchase of school uniforms is only necessary once in a while, but writing and especially craft materials are needed on a regular basis. In addition to that many of the children are in need of new clothes, sheets, and shoes. Material donations, consisting of old but still usable clothes, sheets, writing and craft utensils or shoes are always desperately needed in the organization and truly support UNCSO.

Arts and Crafts Materials:

- pencils, pens, and colored pencils
- paper to write as well as to craft (can have writing on one side)
- potentially building kits, to explain things like solar energy or electricity
- old laptops or other technical devices

Materials for Children in the organization:

- clothes
- sheets
- old shoes (if the shoes are used, they must be clean of dirt, as foreign germs often cause problems with customs)
- most of the materials can be bought in Namibia, but often are more pricey than in foreign countries, as they often imported. Material donations of the listed goods are thus a big support for UNCSO.



Received donations

The kids were very thankful for the clothes and toys that arrived as a shipment from Germany in the beginning of 2018.



On behalf of the kids we would like to thank each and every donor for their grateful donations



Call for Donations

To further be able to buy the listed materials and realize the anticipated projects, reoccurring donations are of the utmost importance, as only they enable the possibility to plan for the future and have an idea of the budget for the coming terms.

Old or used materials that are just lying around, not being utilized anymore can be much needed in Usakos and pose a great support for the organization. Sending parcels containing these goods to Namibia is possible from foreign countries, especially in Europe. There are organizations in many countries operating a shipping business to Namibia, where parcels are collected and then sent together. This option decreases the shipping cost for the individual and is usually operated three to four times a year. Shipping parcels from Germany is possible with the organization "Hilfe Namibia".

Especially arts and crafts projects (which are the projects requiring the most materials) give the children the rare opportunity to explore their inner artist. The possibility to be purely creative is often a source of motivation that exceeds the practice of arts and crafts and can boost the children's grades in other subjects as well. All children should have the opportunity to contemplate their inner creative self.

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SWIFT-BIC: FIRNNANX



7. Acknowledgment

We thank all the donors and the families and friends of the volunteers for the support of the UNCSO. The kids in the center have received a lot of new materials, food, water and inspiration because of you. Special thanks go out to Irina, Sophie, Katrin, and Marion. Finally we would like to thank "Hilfe Namibia" for all their support.

