



«THE WORLD IN BOOKS» – A PROJECT IN TANZANIA

Background

People in Europe generally have easy access to the world of books with a multitude of publications – literature, fiction, text and reference books likewise. However, this is not so in most African countries: There are still only a few local publishers, and in particular books of native writers and artists are rarely published and distributed. The picture books of the Tanzanian illustrator John Kilaka («True Friends», «Fresh Fish») for example have been published in German in Switzerland and in numerous other countries and languages, but there is no edition in Swahili; and to this day, the books have not been published in Tanzania.

Literature is one of the most important forms of expression of cultural identity reflecting and shaping the values and realities of a society. This is the reason why the lack of such has a negative impact on the development of young people. And because reading skills are rated as core competence for getting good opportunities in education and career the consequences here are equally severe.

To Know One's Own Culture

Psychosocial work places the strengthening of the sense of self-esteem into the centre of activities in the field of development policies and may be seen as «transversal issue» in development co-operation. The results of various studies show that a weak sense of self-esteem is at the root of many psychological sufferings and represents an obstacle in the social and economic development. Children and youth who have a particular low self-esteem dispose of little «coping-mechanisms» to overcome difficult life situations, as it is often the case in everyday life of countries with a high rate of poverty.

Therefore, strengthening the sense of self-esteem promotes the individual de-

velopment as well as the building of a social community offering equal opportunities to all its members on a long term. Literature as a important and vivid expression of culture and personal identity can play an important role in this process.

The Tanzanian organisation Nelico – New Light Children Center Organization – works for the disadvantaged and often traumatised groups in the Geita District in the Northwest of the country and conducts information campaigns. Nelico is an ideal partner organisation for this project, in which psychosocial support is linked to the strengthening of cultural identity and the promotion of the local writing and literature tradition.

Project Goals

- **Sensitization** for the issues of «**Cultural Identity**» among central multipliers in the Geita District, Tanzania: Teachers, community workers, youth workers, youth groups, etc.
- Promotion of the (cultural) self-confidence and reading skills of children and youth in the Geita District, Tanzania, by working with **stories and literature, or with the oral story telling tradition respectively**
- Implementation as **pilot project** and reviewing of materials and experiences for later repetition of the project with other partners (eg. Manual)
- On a long-term basis: **Educational promotion** and psychosocial «empowerment» in social classes which have no reading access.

Project Management

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