

Yearly Report 2015

Forward

In December 2012, we purchased in Selo, Kasangulu, Bas Congo, in the outskirts of Kinshasa, 4ha land. In Spring 2013 we could straight away start the construction of the center "Tala Mosika" thanks to all the sponsors and foundations. It is hard to believe that in fall 2015, just after 2 ½ years we inaugurated our 7th building & 2 converted containers. Of course we still have a lot planned but now the infrastructure is such that the program can start holistically. With the aim of stimulating the local economy with a micro-economic approach in order to achieve sustainability are already the first success stories. It clearly requires a lot of patience and time, training, and discussions with the local people. There needs to be a rethink, so that they can free themselves from the cycle of poverty with our assistance. In this annual report we present all the activities of this past year. Let's start with the highlights.

Highlights

January 3, 2015: Finally water! After drilling 150 meters deep and across 900 meters, with misplaced tubes along the way. But finally the task was completed. We installed electric pumps and tanks to allow access to water. Impressions: <http://complexe-tala-mosika.blogspot.ch>

February 1, 2015: 5 years ago, I founded together with my husband and my father, "River of Hope" without a cent or a specific project, believing that the project will find me. I am so pleased that I can look back after 5 years on a great job, as well as a top motivated team, my family and people and foundations who have believed in us and supported us financially and morally. The result is impressive and I am honored to bring the positive news from Congo. Thank you for your trust and continued help.

February 5, 2015: Visit from the Catholic School Association Kisantu. We are recognized by them and connected as a "technical school". All thanks to the great work by the project and school management as well as all the qualified teachers who come to the capital to teach our team. <http://talamosika-programmescolaire.blogspot.ch/>

FEBRUARY 26: Through the Christmas campaign 2014 of "Ostschweizer help Ostschweizer", we received the promise that they will finance the purchase of the inventory for the infirmary. <http://dispensaire.blogspot.ch/>

March 10: Selo is becoming a small business hub with the installation of the "finca" banking system. Our employees have a bank account and can withdraw money on site.

March 15: Congratulations to our U-18 football team for their 3rd place in a large regional inter-schools tournament. In addition, one of our players was named 2nd best player of the tournament! Soccer School Sanga Mamba 2010 <http://ciperfoot.blogspot.ch/> football school Selo - 2013 <http://ciperfoot-talamosika.blogspot.ch/>

MARCH 19: Thanks to the support of "Solidarity for one world" and the Catholic Church Buchs, Grabs and Sevelen, and all the donors, we received \$ 25,000 for our infirmary in Selo. We started construction in early April and opened the doors at the end of this year. <http://dispensaire.blogspot.ch/>

April: The "cultural promotion of the canton of St.Gallen" and "Swisslos" have co-financed a hotel for teachers with a contribution of CHF 20'000. The construction started last summer.

Easter: On behalf of River of Hope and our local team in the Congo a big thank you to my niece Elina Zahner who fought for our project. The entire upper level of Eglisau / ZH (6 classes) organized an annual Easter Run. On one hand, they trained intensively for this sporting event and drew attention to their efforts, and on the other hand it is also about promoting awareness that in this world there are a lot of people worse off than us who live on the privileged side of the planet. Each class suggested 2 projects, and invited the chosen organizations to present their activities. Finally, the students selected 2 projects to supported, and River of Hope was one of them - THANK YOU!!! During their annual Easter-run, the entire Eglisau high school including teachers collected over CHF 30'000, of which we received 50%. This contribution supports funding of school fees for children, as well as medical care. The social commitment displayed by the school is a great example for their students, and a message that together you can accomplish so much. <http://osterlauf-eglisau-2015.blogspot.ch>

May 7: Integration & Fundraising in Buchs / SG. The 2nd international Werdenberg walking rally took place once again in Buchs / SG. With a benefit of CHF 1838.90, it was a win-win event for 28 nationalities, 16 institutions and our project the Congo. <http://international-werdenberg-rally.blogspot.ch>

September 2015: Joey Doron, on behalf of River of Hope, received the Peace Ball in Bad Ragaz by Abhijeet Barse, CEO of Slumsoccer India, and on behalf of the National Children Football Alliance, England. A few days later (October) our family flew to Congo with 2 peace balls in hand. Joey handed over the red balls to two orphan girls in Don Bosco and Tala Mosika. Footballschool "Tala Mosika" & "Don Bosco" <http://ciperfoot-talamosika.blogspot.ch> & <http://ciperfoot.blogspot.ch>

October 2015: I traveled for the first time to Congo with my family to launch the Peace tournaments and inaugurate all the new buildings of Tala Mosika. What a great experience for us all!

Time to say thank you

I thank my whole team in Switzerland and Congo. Through tireless motivation and a clear vision we achieved surprisingly good results. The financial control is carried out by ACV revision in Buchs / SG.

Thank you to all the people who show their support year after year with donations, or asking their friends to collect funds instead of buying presents for their birthday.

Thank you to institutions that have been supporting us for years, and have placed their trust in us, such as the Catholic and Protestant Churches in Buchs, Grabs, Sevelen and Teufen, the Hotel School Cesar Ritz in Le Bouveret, St. Georges school in Clarens, and all the foundations that believe in us. Without this generosity we would not be where we are today. Thanks also for all the invitations to present our project: Rotary Werdenberg and the Kiwanis in St. Gallen and Buchs, Thanks to all the schools that initiated support campaigns, such as the high school in Menzingen Zug & junior high school in Eglisau. Without you all we would not be able to achieve so much in recent years.

Our local team has kept itself very busy throughout the year moving forward multiple projects simultaneously. They oversaw 5 construction sites and ensured that we could start the new school year under the best possible conditions. We look forward to the year 2016 and all the exciting challenges ahead.

Media – thank you to the local journalists who reported on our achievements in several newspapers

Press: <http://www.ariverofhope.org/media/> **Films:** <http://www.ariverofhope.org/media/movies/>

Interviews: <http://www.ariverofhope.org/media/interviews/> **Blogs about all our projects:** <http://www.ariverofhope.org/alle-projekt-tala-mosika/>

Our center „Tala Mosika

Visits: this year we welcomed visitors from several organizations including the Medicor, Caritas Linz, Cuisine sans frontières, the Swiss representative of the school Emergence in Kinshasa and various ministries from Kinshasa and Bas Congo. Most of them stayed in our guest rooms that have bathrooms and running water. Our guests enjoyed their time with us and we are grateful for their constructive and positive feedback.

Construction: we moved full steam ahead with the construction of our center "Tala Mosika". We inaugurated new classrooms, the sewing studio, agriculture program, kitchen & dining room, infirmary, staff accommodation, shop and snack bar. Our aim is that in the near future more parents will be able to afford school fees and contribute to the Tala Mosika "health insurance" plan. We also aim to attract the villagers and travelers to purchase goods at the store and consume in the restaurant. A whole new world is now open for the villagers of Selo, who's main source of income back in 2013 was producing coal. The road is still long: people have to understand that there are other ways to live, they courageously have to open up to changes in their lives, give us their trust, and together we will make a concrete and positive progress. Impressions: <http://complexe-tala-mosika.blogspot.ch/>

Infirmary "Margaretha": In November, we finally opened the infirmary. Since 5 years, we have 2 doctors in our team who supported us even with the building regulations, grants and logistics. In order to cover the running costs, River of Hope secured a starting capital but after 2 years the infirmary should finance itself. In addition, the salaries of staff should be covered by the state in some cases within 1-2 years. The infirmary will offer from January 2016 an on-site medical care to over 1000 people, until now the nearest medical facility was located 17 km away. One way to finance medical care is by our own health insurance where adults pay a monthly fee of 5\$ and children 2\$. Children who are enrolled at our school will pay 10\$/year. Those who cannot yet afford this insurance scheme pay a contribution at each visit. Our ultimate goal is to build a hospital, this requiring the permanent presence of an ambulance. Our current financial situation does not allow for such a scenario, but we aim to achieve this some day. At the moment we focus on providing timely paid medical care which in turn ensure that the salaries of the staff are covered. Warm thanks to "Solidarity for a world" of Buchs, Grabs, Sevelen and the Catholic Church Buchs for financing the construction of the infirmary, and "Ostschweizer help Ostschweizer" for the financial support of material including beds, laboratory equipment, furniture, etc... A special thanks to my mother who asked her friends to donate to River of Hope rather than buying her gifts for her 70th birthday. The money collected covered all permit costs. Impressions: <http://dispensaire.blogspot.ch/>

Accommodation for teachers: the construction of accommodation for the teachers was co-financed by the Cultural Fund of the Canton of SG and Swisslos and was inaugurated in September. Now, not only the teachers but also the staff of the hospital can stay on campus during working time. This solution provides and sense of stability to all employees. Currently we can only find qualified staff in the capital and we therefore need to provide them suitable lodging facilities and food to attract them to come and work in Tala Mosika.
<http://complexe-tala-mosika.blogspot.ch/>

Kitchen & Diningroom: In summer 2014, the project leader of Cuisine sans frontières (CSF) visited Tala Mosika for the first time. The outcome was a decision to finance the construction of our kitchen & dining room for 100 people. The construction began in December 2014. In January 2015 we loaded a container in Buchs, filled with kitchen and restaurant material that was collected from several Swiss restaurants. The offloading and set-up was coordinated on site by Sebastian, a member of the CSF team. In February 2016 he will return to Congo to train together with another cook our Tala Mosika team. The training focuses on hygiene, use of the material, food sanitation, and cooking suggestions for a balanced diet. Thanks CSF for this great and uncomplicated cooperation. Impressions: <http://cuisine-talamosika.blogspot.ch>

Agriculture: chicken, sheep and goats have found a home in Tala Mosika. In the autumn we bought about 1-2 hectares of land for each of the four surrounding villages. We founded an agricultural cooperative where part of the involved villagers' profits go to pay the school fees of their children. This approach ensures self-sufficiency: the parents have a source of income that also covers the education of their kids and health insurance. Many thanks to Caritas Linz / Kinshasa for your advice and financial support. Our goal in the new year is to acquire more land so that the villagers can increase their crops and sell their fruits and vegetables at the market. Our agricultural training program is the ideal solution for them. On Tree Day, students planted Moringa trees – also called "miracle trees". Impressions: <http://agriculture-tala-mosika.blogspot.ch>

Primary and secondary school with boarding: In 2014, we have opened the school and in the summer of 2015 all our 6 graders successfully passed the national primary school final exams. A great success for students - teachers - parents and for all of us. A sign that we are on the right track and that our decision to hire well-trained teachers from the capital was the right one, despite the huge overhead costs that this requires. Another highlight for our elementary school teachers was that they already were able to complete the first 3-week training in school Emergence in Kinshasa during the summer holidays. This course was offered by the CPA with a Swiss educator, and is supported by Family Gnögi from Zurich. This productive and uncomplicated cooperation is great and important for all of us. The Emergence school board with its teachers came to stay at the center Tala Mosika for a 3-day working retreat. This school year counts about 150 students. Unfortunately, some parents do not send their children to school regularly, and avoidance of school fees payments are a regular issue. Parents are often unable to pay school fees so we are constantly looking for solutions and ways to help them secure a job. Their lack of education and professional skills limits their options, but several are able to work on campus in our kitchen, the sewing studio and especially in agriculture. A huge thank you to the Foundation Medicor for financing the construction of 4 terraced buildings over the past 3 years where all our classrooms, offices, storage, dorms etc. are in. Impressions: <http://talamosika-programmescolaire.blogspot.ch>

Sewing studio: Since the summer of 2014 women who can already read and write, or the students of Analphabet- program are entitled to receive a professional education the sewing studio. The prerequisite was that together they would cover the costs of the teacher. We are proud to say the since February 2015 the 30 participants in the program have been able to pay 100% of the salary, travel expenses and food of their teacher. Thanks to the impressive progress made by the women of the sewing studio we launched our own "Tala Monika collection" in October 2015. We aim to sell their products both locally and maybe one day in Europe. The cooperation between the women in the studio has many advantages: we can accept large orders, for example the sewing of sheets for an entire local orphanage. Profits are distributed in part between the ladies and to a community fund that covers operational and overhead costs. We thank all the people in Switzerland who donated manual sewing machines, buttons, zippers, fabrics, wool and much more. Impressions: <http://atelier-couture-tala-mosika.blogspot.ch/>

Container: this year again we have sent a container and converted into a shop. It now stands next to the other container, on the main road N1, which serves as snack bar and office for the FINCA bank.

Soccer: As you may know, we opened our second CIPERFOOT football center in October 2013. This offer is aimed at disadvantaged children and youth living in poverty or on the streets. The training takes place 3 times a week. Most families cannot afford to pay for the training, so again this year we are very happy to have covered the costs of the trainers, meals, medical care through financial support.

Our football school CIPERFOOT from Sanga Mamba was registered as a first of its kind in the year of 2010. In 2013, we started with the football training at "Tala Mosika" in Selo.

- Our U-18 team has qualified for the 2nd time in a row for the final round of the African tournament organized by Manchester United and Airtel Congo.
- We organized a tournament on the "peace day". <http://ciperfoot-talamosika.blogspot.ch>
- We participated in several tournaments in Kinshasa. <http://ciperfoot.blogspot.ch>
- "One World Futbol" developed a unique ball that does not require air and is virtually indestructible.

we are very proud to be part of this story, and that our project could benefit from the sponsored basis.

<http://www.oneworldplayproject.com/our-impact/blog/river-hope-brings-power-play-congo/>

Interview with the singer, Sting: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYV86ogAuQY>

- We are pleased to be a part of the "National Children Football Alliance" in England, a football organization that promotes peace projects. <http://www.childrensfootballalliance.com/a-peace-field-in-the-congo/>
Impressions: <http://www.ariverofhope.org/peace-field-project/>

News about our Team in Congo

Christophe Mbedi: Our project manager moved with his wife and three daughters to our center Tala Mosika in the beginning of September. They are now on site around the clock. His 3 daughters attend primary school, his wife works as a "house mother" and takes care of the 6 high school boarding students and the management of the sewing studio. The family feels very comfortable and we thank them for their tireless commitment.

Including Christophe's assistant, the security guard, and our driver we now have 4 families that have relocated to the center. Together with the teachers and the staff of the infirmary, and the boarding students who also reside in Tala Mosika, life on campus is never dull, there is always something going on! Eating together, socializing, watching movies, playing football or basketball. My family also enjoyed this atmosphere during our last visit.

We need urgently support with the following:

Solar system: we still lack proper power supply. Installing a solar system is our goal for 2016. We are looking for a company / foundation who can support such projects.

Medical care: for the next 2 years we seek financial support for staff wages until the infirmary can sustain itself. (Total approx \$ 1,000 / month)

Sponsoring school children: We offer a day school and a boarding school for disadvantaged children from Selo and the surrounding area. We welcome boarding students from families who can easily afford the fees because their contribution is enough to cover the cost of schooling disadvantaged children.

We offer a strong educational program with national standards, so that the children can eventually learn a profession and open new opportunities for their future. We also provide access to sports and extracurricular activities. Children receive the necessary support to grow up to be confident and strong individuals who have all the necessary tools to tackle adult life. Our aim is to free families from the cycle of poverty and misery. We still need to help to pay the teachers salaries. (Teacher salaries total about \$ 2,500 / month)

- **Sponsoring a classroom or a dormitory:** We are growing, and we need more classrooms and dorms.
- **Support us in the financing of furniture for classrooms or beds and wardrobes** for the boarding school. Here you will find further information: <http://www.ariverofhope.org/help/name-a-room/>
- **Transport:** We urgently need a second car to transport people and goods.

Information from Switzerland

FYI - We remind you that all officers and employees of River of Hope work on a voluntary basis. Therefore, all donations go fully in the project. All administrative and project-related costs have been and still are supported by specific donations.

Support us or simply donate – thank you!

- Invitation to a lecture "A Congolese village come to life"

We build the infrastructure for a village with over a 1000 inhabitants with a micro-economic approach. I am happy to tell you how we go about it and where the challenges lie.

- Sponsor our project with an activity in your company, club or school. We gladly assist and advise with numerous ideas and recommendations.
- Buy something from our shop: <http://www.ariverofhope.org/help/shop/>
- Buy our birthday calendar - sponsored by the "Kiwanis Werdenberg" for CHF 22.-/€20.-

Donations

Raiffeisenbank Werdenberg Genossenschaft

Bahnhofstrasse 12, CH-9470 Buchs SG

River of Hope (ROH) / Bank Nr. 81251 / Swift: RAIFCH22 / IBAN: CH68 8125 1000 0046 9403 4

Thank you so much for your support - together we are strong
We wish you a healthy, great and successful year.



Claudia Doron-Zahner & Team