



Giovanni



The Magazine from  JUGEND EINE WELT



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ETHIOPIA

A COUNTRY BETWEEN HOPE AND TRAUMA

Issue 1 - 2026

Hope for Tigray

A visit to our projects

Page 10

An interview with Father Estifanos

The priest talks about his work with people traumatised by war

Page 15

An award for strong commitment

Director Reinhard Heiserer is fundraiser of the year

Page 20

Contents

04 Ethiopia – the cradle of humankind

A country between hope and trauma.



08 A brief trip through time

Jugend Eine Welt has been working for disadvantaged people in Ethiopia since 1997



09 Two model projects in the heart of Ethiopia

A brief presentation of a doctor with passion, a mission and a centre for street children



10 Islands of hope in Tigray

Relief coordinator Wolfgang Wedan tells us about places of hope where assistance nevertheless continues to be desperately needed



14 Voices from Maylemin Camp

Project coordinator Konrad Fentzloff talks to people forced to seek sanctuary in a refugee camp



15 “The trauma will stay with us for a long time.”

An interview with project partner Father Estifanos Gebremeskel



Interview with ambassador Simone Knapp **16**

Challenges and opportunities for Ethiopia

Senior Expert Franz König **18**

“My world has changed.”

A return to work at Jugend Eine Welt **19**

Our colleague Petra Gmeindl: a powerful story

News **20**

A prestigious award, a productive meeting and an important discussion between different generations

In action **22**

10 years of WeltWegWeiser and the latest from the “Kinderarbeit Stoppen” alliance

204 products made with child labour **24**

From clothing to cocoa

Tasty treats **25**

Ethiopian lentil stew and traditional flat-bread

About Giovanni Bosco **26**

Every child is important

The solar power programme **27**

A successful template for the entire continent

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Contact: Jugend Eine Welt, Münchreiterstraße 31, 1130 Vienna

www.jugendeinewelt.at     Jugend Eine Welt

+43 1 879 07 07, info@jugendeinewelt.at

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Director and responsible for the content: Reinhard Heiserer

Editorial Team: Stephanie de la Barra, Karin Mayer-Fischer, Martin Obermayr, Tanja Zach, Thomas Zach

Graphics / Layout: Sebastian Pichlmann

Coordination und organisation: Karin Mayer-Fischer

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Note: For ease of reading, personal pronouns refer to all genders.
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Reinhard Heiserer visiting a project in Ethiopia.



Dear Readers,

Filled with gratitude, we present the latest issue of our *Giovanni magazine*, which is dedicated to Ethiopia!

A country on the Horn of Africa with much that surprises us. Over the past three decades I've been able to visit the country several times, returning to Austria on each occasion having gained many new insights, impressions, experiences and acquaintances.

I have wept at the atrocities of war, been inspired by the people's readiness to help one another and been overwhelmed by the warm-heartedness of the children and young people. I have got to know Addis Ababa, the country's pulsating capital with its modern centre and Africa's biggest open-air market. I visited ancient Christian sites and drank in stunning scenery. Ethiopia is steeped in history and culture and rightly proud of its past and its present.

But what made the greatest impression on me were the people I met. They achieve great things in circumstances that are often challenging. These may be fighting to survive on a pittance, seizing the opportunity offered by education as a way to break out of poverty or managing their daily lives with their families as best they can with determination and optimism. Over the past years, the people involved in the projects

supported by Jugend Eine Welt in Ethiopia have had to endure and cope with much that has made daily life more difficult: wars, famine, plagues of locusts, drought and much more.

When you drink your next cup of coffee or next light some incense, take a look to see where the product has come from: it may well be from Ethiopia! Ethiopians use both these items a lot. In this issue, we give you details of some of the people and social and development projects that Jugend Eine Welt supports in the country where the year has 13 (!) months.

My appeal to you: Please continue to accompany Jugend Eine Welt and help us contribute generously to initiatives, programmes and opportunities for a better future that help people in Ethiopia and elsewhere in our ONE world in which our support keeps poverty at bay and opens up new prospects!

In gratitude,

Reinhard Heiserer
Director, Jugend Eine Welt





One Country, Many Stories

A little girl crouches on the floor of her makeshift home in Tigray, Ethiopia, a pile of kindling beside her. Her eyes, bright and alert, show sadness but also hope – a contrast that sums up Ethiopia. In this issue, we tell you not just one story but many: of suffering and solidarity, of endurance and transformation. And of how the help made possible by Jugend Eine Welt – while it cannot undo what people have gone through – can open up roads leading to a new tomorrow.





FOCUS ON *ETHIOPIA*

Ethiopia is a country caught between hope and trauma. On the one hand it's the home of booming cities such as Addis Ababa, the "political heart of Africa" with the headquarters of the African Union. On the other, there are regions like Tigray that have been ravaged in recent years by brutal war which has left hundreds of thousands dead, destroyed schools, forced people to flee in droves and left many traumatised.

The territory that is now Ethiopia is as old as humankind itself.

Here, in the valley of the Omo River, the oldest traces of human life were discovered. Kingdoms dating back millennia, the Christian highland, legends of the Ark of the Covenant – Ethiopia's history is rich, proud and unique. It still remains the only country in Africa never to have been colonised for a significant length of time. Despite that, virtually no other country has been so profoundly affected by deep divisions, murderous conflicts

and bursts of optimism.

The current situation is also extremely paradoxical. While Africa's second-most populous country (130 million, Nigeria 233 million) heads towards a vibrant modern age, it continues to struggle with severe social inequality and the traumatic consequences

of the ruthless armed conflict in the northern province of Tigray from 2020 to 2022 – see our report on pages 10–13.

Where Jugend Eine Welt began

"Ethiopia is also the country from which we received our »



Jugend Eine Welt's first employee, Hannes Velik, during one of the first project visits in Adwa, Tigray, over 25 years ago.

first-ever project application in 1997,” explains Hannes Velik, head of Strategic Partnerships at Jugend Eine Welt. “It was a fax from the Salesians of Don Bosco in Adwa, which by a strange twist of fate is in the Tigray Region where we now support so many relief projects. The application



“Staying in a region for years and decades shows what sustainable development cooperation is all about.”

Hannes Velik, head of Strategic Partnerships at Jugend Eine Welt

was for electrical equipment for a vocational school.”

And Velik points out another remarkable coincidence: “Adwa is important to Jugend Eine Welt for another reason, too, because it was here that our training scheme for solar engineers started in

2015.” This issue tells the story of the solar power programme, how it was severely disrupted by the chaos of war and how it remains an example that is being followed in many parts of Africa to this day.

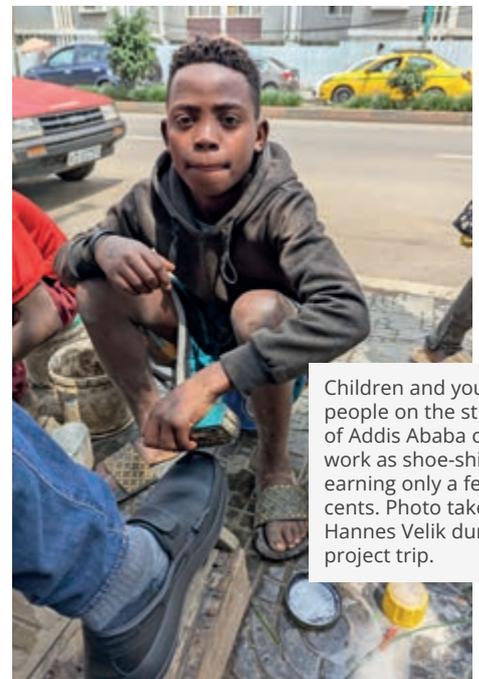
“That fax, now yellowing and illegible, was the start of a partnership that has lasted for decades and continues to bear fruit today,” says Velik, looking both back and forward. “It is precisely this that shows what sustainable development cooperation means.” This continuity makes the difference. Because, through all the years, Jugend Eine Welt has stayed in Ethiopia to help people – despite political setbacks and conflicts.

Why aid is still important

The war in Tigray has left a traumatised generation, schools were destroyed, children are starving. At the same time, the climate crisis brings the threat of drought and failed harvests in the region. Yet there is still hope: education, food, psychosocial support and sustainable technologies such as solar-powered pumps for drinking water ensure a future.

One of those who played a

central role in the solar power programme back in 2015 is Abba Estifanos Gebremeskel. The Tigray-born priest, then head of the Salesians in Ethiopia, today helps combat the traumatising that affects generations in his home region. You’ll find an interview with him on page 15. Read more about the Don Bosco Children project for street children in Addis Ababa and the hospital run by the Medical Mission Sisters in Attat and headed by Sister Rita on page 9. ■



Children and young people on the streets of Addis Ababa often work as shoe-shiners, earning only a few cents. Photo taken by Hannes Velik during a project trip.



ETHIOPIA AT A GLANCE

- **Area:** 1,1 Mio. km² approx. (Austria: 84.000 km² approx. – roughly 13 times smaller)
- **Population:** 129 million approx. (Austria: 9 million approx.)
- **Capital:** Addis Abeba; population: over 5 million
- **Languages:** Amharic (official language), over 80 other languages
- **Neighbouring countries:** Sudan (1), South Sudan (2), Eritrea (3), Djibouti (4), Somalia (5), Kenya (6)

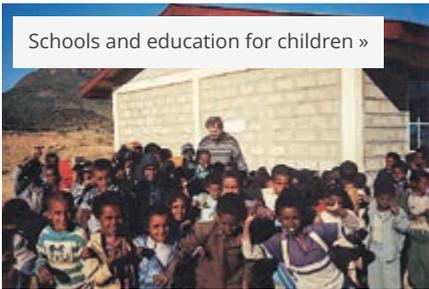
HARD FACTS

- **42,6 %** of 15- to 17-year-olds in Ethiopia are involved in dangerous work.
- **200.000** children live on the streets.
- **1 Million children** are deemed to be at risk of ending up on the streets.
- **19,1 years** is the average age in Ethiopia (Austria: 43.6 years).
- **Around 36%** of all children are malnourished (main cause of infant mortality).
- **4.6%** of all children die before the age of 5.

A BRIEF ETHIOPIAN TRIP THROUGH TIME

What has been achieved so far with grants and donations: Since 1997, Jugend Eine Welt has been working with great energy for people living in poverty or as refugees in the country located in the region generally considered as the cradle of humankind. The photos below represent a brief trip through time, showing you the help that has been given to the population of Ethiopia down the decades thanks to the support of our dedicated donors.

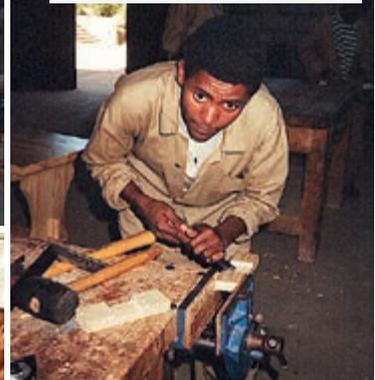
Schools and education for children »



1997 — 2007



« Providing vocational training



2007 — 2017



Supporting families and children with water, food and accommodation.



2017 — 2025



Promoting women through needs-oriented training | Expansion of solar power | Distributing Jugend Eine Welt relief parcels in Tigray

Sr. Rita Schiffer – Doctor with Passion and a Mission



For nearly thirty years, gynaecologist Sr. Rita has been in charge of Attat Hospital, some 200 kilometres south of Addis Ababa.

At the hospital, she and her team provide basic surgical procedures, emergency operations and midwifery in a region where most women would otherwise have no access to medical assistance. One special service offered at the hospital is the “Maternity Waiting Home” that admits expectant mothers from isolated villages whose pregnancy poses a potential risk and offers them a 24-hour stand-by service for operations and caesarean sections. In addition to this, Sr. Rita trains nurses, midwives and doctors who reinforce the local health service in the long term. In 2022, her dedication was recognised with the Else-Kröner-Fresenius Prize for medical development cooperation. Her most outstanding quality is her combination of medical excellence and profound humanity: no one is turned away in Attat – even those who cannot pay receive assistance. In this way the hospital shows that access to health care must never depend on a person’s wealth but is a human right.

Don Bosco Children: From the Streets to a Start in Life



Don Bosco Children opens doors that, for many street children in Addis Ababa, would otherwise stay shut.

Various programmes are run, offering them shelter, health care, psychological support, social support and learning opportunities. The youngsters are gently introduced to life away from the streets before they are given the chance to either go to school or learn a trade.

The vocational training prioritises practical skills: in workshops for motor mechanics, electrical engineering, metalworking, leather-working or catering they can learn trades with a future. This is complemented by a solar engineering and environmental education programme organised jointly by Jugend Eine Welt and the Schwarzenegger Climate Initiative. In all Don Bosco Children projects the same approach is evident: loving support, commitment and cooperation. The grown-ups are not stern authority figures; instead they are there to accompany the youngsters on their journey and show them trust. In this way hope becomes a trade and trust becomes a future – while street children become young people with good prospects.

A "typical" home in times of war and crises: often, six to ten people from different generations live in part of a requisitioned classroom or gymnasium, separated from other families only by blankets.



ISLANDS OF HOPE IN TIGRAY

Great as the need in Tigray is, the courage of the people there is more impressive still. Wolfgang Wedan, relief coordinator at Jugend Eine Welt, talks about his trip to all four Jugend Eine Welt project locations where aid is desperately needed.



Wolfgang Wedan, relief coordinator, at a water collection point in Ethiopia that was funded by Jugend Eine Welt.

**It's 11th September 2025,
New Year's Day in Ethiopia.
In the town of Adwa the
local people have collected
money to buy a cow.**

They intend to celebrate the new year with the people who have had to flee from their home regions. "The feeling of solidarity in the local population is very strong," says Wolfgang Wedan. "But they have very little themselves because their own region has been ravaged by war and they receive no support from the government in Addis Ababa. This makes new conflicts more likely. That's why it's so important that we provide as much humanitarian support as we possibly can."

Tigray is located in the far north of Ethiopia, flanked by Eritrea to the north and Sudan to the west. For

years the region has been overshadowed by the bloody conflict fought out between Ethiopia and Eritrea from 2020 to 2022. An estimated 500,000 people were killed, while roughly two million were forced to flee and are unable to return owing to continuing unrest. The atrocities



„The project has already reached far more people than originally planned. So the aid is proving effective, but we must not let up.“

Wolfgang Wedan, Jugend Eine Welt relief coordinator

perpetrated have left countless people traumatised. Schools were plundered, hospitals destroyed. Hunger and disease continue to pose a risk to the lives of the most vulnerable to this day.

A future of hope

If, at first sight, the situation appears hopeless, a closer look shows just how effective the aid from Jugend Eine Welt is. That is why the comprehensive programme that was launched in October 2024 with funds provided by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) was given the name "Hope for Tigray". "Our most recent visit took us to all four of the locations where our partner organisations are working: Mekelle, Adigrat, Adwa and Shire," says Wedan. "The project has already »

reached far more people than originally planned. So the aid is proving effective, but we must not let up.” The types of aid provided are many and varied, yet precisely tailored to local needs. In Tigray’s capital Mekelle, for instance, it looks like this: “On the one hand, we provide training for young people in solar engineering and various trades to enable them to find work,” explains Wedan. “On the other, we support the Salesians’ efforts to supply water: with their wells they reach 10,000 people every day.” The same number of people receive drinking water every day in Adwa, too – at 55 collection points funded by donations to Jugend Eine Welt. “Additionally, we have acquired water trucks to reach those who need help even more effectively.”

In the camps for internally displaced persons especially, even the essentials are lacking. In Shire, in the far west of Tigray, a camp for 5,000 people was established. However, as many as 50,000 are living there! “There are only a few toilets, so the people have to share. The first cholera cases have already been reported. If it spreads, it could be catastrophic,” says the experienced relief coordinator.

A child’s life at last

While many schools still house homeless families in cramped conditions, there are also islands of hope. In Shire, for example, Jugend



Eine Welt supports a Don Bosco school with 1,600 children and teenagers. Twice that number are waiting for a place. “Here we see how important all-day programmes are in times of crisis,” says Wedan. “Apart from school lessons there are sports and leisure activities as well as meals. This eases the strain on families considerably.” Courses run by the Salesians are funded in Adwa, too. “Apart from the formal school lessons there’s even a school for circus performers there. Just as advocated by Don Bosco, play is also important to awaken hope and reach children who have seen terrible things.”

Adigrat, in northeastern Tigray, shows particularly vividly just how traumatic circumstances for children can be. Here, the most appalling war crimes were committed. Here, the wounds are deepest. The Eritrean army systematically used gang rape as a means of breaking women’s resistance. “Children born as a result of such crimes are ostracised from traditional communities,” explains Wedan. “We therefore support child-friendly environments where these children are safe, can play and learn to deal with what they have experienced. For example, they are given paper and crayons to help them express their fears and distress.”

Often, the affected women are also expelled from their communities. “If they want to »

receive the psychological help they so desperately need they must do so secretly," says Wedan. "That's why we've launched so-called listening units with the Salesians and the Mums for Mums association." These "units" are safe spaces for one-to-one consultations and group therapy to help overcome traumas. In them, the women are simply listened to. The listening units are also a pioneering project for adolescents who were sent to war and came back traumatised. In an interview on page 15, Father Estifanos explains how to ensure that this generation is not lost.

Food and dignity

It is at the food distribution points that the extent of the hardship becomes particularly apparent. Hundreds of children form orderly queues and wait patiently; there is no jostling. Even the smallest take responsibility: five-year-old girls carry babies on their backs and look after their younger brothers and sisters. This is not how childhood should be.

What they are waiting for is Famix, a high-calorie special food for babies, infants and nursing mothers. "It is essential that particularly the very youngest get everything they need to survive and grow," Wedan says. Some of the aid is in the form of cash transfers, enabling the recipients to buy produce at the market themselves. "This gives the people not only food, but also independence and dignity."

Back to school at last – for many children, this is a dream, not an obligation.



One portion of Famix ensures growth as well as the energy to learn and play in times of crisis.

Our donations also ensure that staples like cereals and rice are available.



A picture paints a thousand words: Thanks to our aid, mothers and children have fresh hope.



Little things, big effects

The situation remains precarious: overcrowded camps, rising prices and more refugees arriving from Sudan. Plus the threat of famine, because more and more trees are being felled to have wood for cooking, which causes the soil to dry out and be washed away when it rains.

But wherever help reaches those in need, hope increases. At the Salesians' facility in Adwa, for instance. It is early morning, and the scent of freshly baked bread fills the air. Full baskets are loaded onto lorries to be taken out to the camps – 10,000 of them every day. For many families, the bread is their first meal of the day. "This also shows how the future will look," explains Wedan, "because the bakery uses solar power."

And speaking of solar power: the Salesians offer solar panels in camps without electricity so that mobile phones can be charged. "That sounds banal," says Wedan, "but if you've been living in a camp for five years your phone is your only link with your family. Once the battery's dead you're cut off."

A piece of bread in the morning. A classroom full of children. A well with a ramp so that wheelchair users can also fetch water. A girl drawing a sun with crayons. Sometimes it is everyday scenes like these that leave a lasting impression – and show that a future is possible. ■

VOICES FROM MAYLEMIN CAMP

Jugend Eine Welt project coordinator Konrad Fentzloff talked to families in Maylemin Camp on the outskirts of Mekelle. They tell stories of war and fleeing their homes – and of how aid gives them hope.



Abrahat – mother and survivor

When the war reached her village in western Tigray, Abrahat fled with six children – the youngest a mere five months old. Her trek lasted 20 days: alone, the baby on her back, the older children helping each other. The widow currently lives in a classroom with her children and 30 other people. A year ago, her children were able to start going to school again. “That eases the burden a bit,” she says. “I have time to fetch water and do some cooking.” Through Hope for Tigray she also receives some cash support.



Kahsay – a father without work

Kahsay fled with three children and his parents, who need looking after, from Humera, a town in northwestern Tigray bordering Eritrea and Sudan. The family has been living in the camp for five years. Now 38, Kahsay once worked on construction sites, but there is no work for him in Mekelle. “We rely totally on handouts. Without the water and food we are given we would not survive.”



Bricho – an anxious mother

Bricho is 35, a mother of three with another one on the way. She too fled from western Tigray where the campaigns to drive out the local population were particularly intense. It took her two weeks to find sanctuary. Today Bricho, her husband and their children share a classroom with ten other families. The only privacy is provided by blankets as partitions. “In the camp, the biggest problem is disease: the appalling lack of hygiene and the overcrowding mean that infections spread like wildfire.”





„The Trauma Will Stay With Us For A Long Time.“

In this interview, Father Estifanos Gebremeskel describes the biggest challenges facing his country.

He hails from Adigrat in Tigray and was head of the Salesians of Don Bosco in Ethiopia. After completing a psychospiritual programme of leadership and training in Italy, Abba Estifanos, as everyone calls him, now looks after people traumatised by war.

What areas are the Salesians of Don Bosco working in?

Our programmes range from schools and youth centres to training and job placement to trauma therapy. There are so-called listening units for women who experienced sexual violence during the war. In these sessions they can talk, share their experiences – and someone listens. Our healing programme also includes sport, theatre, music and dance. In addition, we provide relief such as food distribution, sponsorship schemes for orphans and training courses aligned with the job market.

Where did the idea of the listening units come from?

When we started receiving reports of sexual violence I realised that unless we do something, many women will suffer long-term mental health issues. I was still in Italy at the time and voiced my concerns to Jugend Eine Welt. This led to the idea of psychosocial support which in turn led to the listening units in Ethiopia. The programme works very well even though the staff themselves need support because some of the stories they hear are deeply disturbing. These traumas will stay with us for a long time. Families are torn apart, children grow up in traumatised

families. Consequently, we urgently need family therapy and psychosocial specialists.

How do you go about this?

We train family therapists in cooperation with Mekelle University. We also invite therapists from abroad who support our staff. Long-term, we aim to train more social workers and psychologists. Training is vital for anyone who works with people – whether as a teacher, as a healthcare professional or as a priest. Many of them have to learn to cope with what they hear or have gone through traumatic experiences themselves.

How do you see the cooperation with Jugend Eine Welt?

It's a satisfying and very positive partnership. The Jugend Eine Welt employees are receptive and committed and support us not only with emergency relief but also with long-term projects in fields such as health care, disaster prevention and sustainability.

What gives you personally hope for the future?

I believe in God and have faith that He will give our country peace. Of course, we have to do our bit to achieve this goal. I believe that we can turn young people into resilient characters – people who continue to grow even when times are hard. ■



An in-depth interview with Abba Estifanos is available here: jugendeinewelt.at/aktuelles



© BMEIA

„An Example for Women“

Simone Knapp is Austria's ambassador to Ethiopia. She talks to us about opportunities, projects for the future and the importance of help for girls.

What role does development cooperation play in your work as an ambassador?

We want to create opportunities for people in their home environments. Development cooperation represents an investment in our own prosperity and our own security. Consequently, it's an important, integral part of foreign policy. It helps us contribute to stability, both globally and in Austria. It also opens up new markets and opportunities for Austrian businesses. We create partnerships that enable growth and innovation for both sides.

“Development cooperation represents an investment in our own prosperity and our own security. Consequently, it's an important, integral part of foreign policy.”

Simone Knapp,
Austrian ambassador to Ethiopia

The embassy in Addis Ababa is responsible for two target countries: Ethiopia and Uganda. Recently, I visited an extremely interesting project run by an ADA business partnership in Uganda. In cooperation with local stakeholders, the project is setting up a new training and mentoring platform – Tech Wings Africa (TWA) – for 200 people in software development. This initiative aims to improve the skills of tech talents there and support the local tech ecosystems. Additionally, at least a quarter of the participants should be women.

In Ethiopia, ADA is currently supporting the process of national dialogue since the country has been experiencing multiple crises and conflicts for several years. This process was initiated

by parliament to enable effective, peaceful and constructive dialogue about the current challenges. At the same time, the aim is bolster the country's capacity to prevent conflicts and consolidate peace at regional and national level as well as across national borders.

What are the current challenges and opportunities for Ethiopia?

Ethiopia's annual budget is roughly the same as the city of Vienna's. Like many other African countries, its population is growing rapidly. The average age is 20. This young population gives the country great potential. At the same time, training opportunities and jobs are required to fulfil it. Providing schools and other basic services such as comprehensive health care poses a major challenge for Ethiopia. In addition, the necessity of establishing democratic institutions and reinforcing the rule of law as essential pillars of national stability and security should not be forgotten.

How important are aid organisations like Jugend Eine Welt for giving opportunities to young people?

Young people in challenging situations and underprivileged regions – mostly away from urban centres – need new perspectives for their future. Jobs are scarcer there, too, and there are structural economic deficiencies. Education and training measures are essential for promoting the creativity of young people and helping them lead an independent life. A few months ago I visited the really marvellous project run by the Salesians of Don Bosco in Adwa, Tigray, for training solar engineers. In the training courses that ADA supports, teachers learn the skills needed to train»



Thanks to the support of our donors we can also target women for training in skilled fields such as electrical engineering and solar engineering.

solar engineers themselves. In the meantime, crash courses in solar engineering / photovoltaics are also being held and a solar engineering workshop has been fitted out with new equipment.

Many children are still traumatised from the war, have little hope and are therefore susceptible to radical tendencies. Moreover, a large number try to migrate to other countries to find work. So it is all the more important to give them training opportunities and a sense of security. It was inspiring to hear how Jugend Eine Welt work with their partners. During the war that raged in the region from 2020 to 2022 the Salesians also did everything to support young people there.

What's the idea behind the alliance of female ambassadors from several countries and their efforts to promote peace?

Some colleagues are calling our group of female ambassadors working for peace "queen bees" or "bees for peace". For us as women in positions of influence it's important to set an example and uphold the interests of women who have no voice. Consequently, we female ambassadors to Ethiopia often hold discussions and regularly plan joint events such as activities in support of girls to tie in with International Day of the Girl Child on 11 October or panel discussions on the role of women in the peace process. ■

Austrian Foreign Minister Visits Jugend Eine Welt Project in Ethiopia

During his visit to Ethiopia in January 2021, Austria's foreign minister at the time, Alexander Schallenberg, travelled to Addis Ababa with Jugend Eine Welt director Reinhard Heiserer. There they visited the Jugend Eine Welt training workshops that are supported by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA). For several years, ADA funded vocational training for solar engineers at a number of locations in the province of Tigray and in Addis Ababa. The foreign minister's visit was a sign of recognition and solidarity for which we are very grateful. The Austrian Development Agency is an important funding partner for development cooperation programmes supported by Jugend Eine Welt.



Scan the QR code for an in-depth report on our website.

Funded by the
 Austrian Development Agency





Left: Franz König with Reinhard Heiserer following his return from Ethiopia.
Right: Going abroad to make a difference – Franz first had this idea as a 14-year-old.



“My World has Changed.”

Franz König was one of the first Senior Experts to undertake a voluntary assignment for Jugend Eine Welt in Ethiopia. The financial expert from Upper Austria supported Don Bosco project partners in the administration office in the capital, Addis Ababa.

What prompted you to go to Ethiopia as a Senior Expert?

I vividly remember the images shown of the Ethiopian famine in 1984/1985. I was 14 at the time and found those pictures incredibly moving. They have stayed with me ever since. That was when I began to take an interest in the field of development cooperation. Following periods of voluntary work in India, Uganda and Ghana I hoped – by then in my mid-forties – for an assignment in Ethiopia. Jugend Eine Welt gave me this opportunity through the Senior Experts scheme.

What was your working day in the country like?

Owing to my professional

experience (financial administration, controlling, project controlling, organisation) I was assigned to the head of finances (economist) of the Don Bosco organisation in Ethiopia. My tasks included drafting annual reports and balance sheets, and I tried to support the individual houses with their reporting.

In addition, I was able to contribute to monitoring the Jugend Eine Welt projects that were being implemented in Ethiopia at that time. That all sounds rather dry, but it wasn't. The economist always took me with him when he travelled to the houses, which meant that I was able to visit all 14 Don Bosco locations all over Ethiopia. I was also able to see the projects supported by Jugend Eine Welt (including a solar power programme), a hospital in Attat and even four UNHCR refugee camps in South Sudan, a country ravaged by civil war.

Which impressions from your time in Ethiopia have stayed in your memory?

I was often struck by the people's tremendous zest for life. It is simply incredibly rewarding to get to know people from other cultures and other countries, and at the same time it certainly causes you to change your own world. In my case, I have definitely become more humble and have learned to appreciate much more the fantastic environment we live in, especially here in Austria. It was marvellous to see that people living in poverty that to us is simply unimaginable nevertheless manage to live a life in perfect dignity when at least the bare minimum of essential supplies and health are guaranteed.

Why do you support the work done by Jugend Eine Welt?

Education is an extremely important and sustainable form of development cooperation. This is precisely Jugend Eine Welt's point of departure. The worldwide Don Bosco centres have been in existence for decades and are reliable partners on the ground. ■

Are you interested in a voluntary assignment as a Senior Expert? We are here for you – from the first meeting to your return.

Contact & information:

www.jugendeinewelt.at/seniorexpertsaustralia
einsatz@jugendeinewelt.at
 Phone +43 1 879 07 07 | Barbara Stranzinger





A Return to Work at Jugend Eine Welt

Jugend Eine Welt employee Petra Gmeindl wishes donors a happy birthday – and is always ready to listen.

If your phone rings around the time of your birthday and you hear a voice from Jugend Eine Welt, it is sure to be Petra Gmeindl.

The friendly native of Lower Austria has been working for Jugend Eine Welt for four years and passes on the organisation's best wishes for a happy birthday to its donors. "It's a very gratifying and personal task," says Petra. "I can wish people all the very best on their special day and thank them for their support. And I'm always very happy at the positive reactions I get."

"Happy birthday!"

Following a life-threatening illness, Petra showed iron determination to fight her way back and resume her life. She started as a volunteer and now works seven hours a week. The opportunity to make

phone calls on behalf of Jugend Eine Welt means a lot to her – it's another step on the road back to normality.

She is generally on the phone in the mornings for around an hour and a half. "I start at 8:30 a.m. because it's a good time to reach our donors and they have time for a chat. In the afternoons they're often out or in their gardens." The length of the call varies. Sometimes it lasts only one minute, the time needed to wish someone a happy birthday. Other times it can last for a quarter of an hour. "It greatly depends on what the lady or gentleman is doing when I reach them. Many of them are talkative, though some are also worried that I might be calling to ask for another donation. So then I tell them straight away that I'm phoning solely because it's their birthday. At the same time, I understand their

concern because nowadays when the phone rings it's often someone trying to sell you something."

"Work enriches my life"

Petra is very pleased to be part of the Jugend Eine Welt team. Her limited mobility means that she works from home. That means that, as a rule, she only sees her colleagues at the Jugend Eine Welt office in online meetings. But this physical distance is no problem for her. "I had a good feeling right from the start. Whenever I have a question, someone always helps me straight away. I really appreciate the sociable and helpful atmosphere. Quite simply, I really enjoy the work and it enriches my life. I always wanted to work in development cooperation. Thanks to Jugend Eine Welt I now have the chance to do my bit."

Horse-riding: her favourite pastime

When Petra puts down her phone, she loves to spend time on the back of Brother – a therapy horse from the HippoCampus riding stable in Deutsch-Haslau. Together with the gelding, the horse-lover practises Western-style riding. ■



FUNDRAISER OF THE YEAR

A very special award for co-founder and director Reinhard Heiserer.

Reinhard Heiserer is Fundraiser of the Year 2025.

At the annual Austrian Fundraising Awards, the Jugend Eine Welt director received a prestigious accolade for his many years of dedication. Born in Tyrol, he co-founded the Austrian development organisation Jugend Eine Welt 28 years ago and now joins the ranks of prominent laureates who include Gery Keszler, Sabine Haag, Heli Dugler, Marianne Hengl, Werner Kerschbaum, Pius Strobl or, most recently, Michael Landau.

What counts is our ONE world

In his stirring words of thanks, Reinhard Heiserer said: "Thank you very much for this prestigious award. Particularly in times like these when the USA and many governments in Europe – including the Austrian government – are drastically cutting funds for development cooperation and focusing increasingly on themselves, it's important to promote the idea of our ONE WORLD even more vigorously. It is unacceptable that our prosperity depends largely on exploitation, child labour and environmental destruction in countries of the Global South. We must give children and young people prospects by means of school education and professional training. It's a question of justice, fair economic relations throughout the world, a healthy environment. It's a question of the ONE world we all live in, of a 'good life' for everyone."

"No success without Heiserer"

Under his leadership, Jugend Eine Welt has established itself in the space of thirty years as one of Austria's foremost development organisations, collecting a remarkable total of EUR 125 million in donations and grants. During the awards ceremony, **Ruth Williams**, director of Fundraising Verband Austria, noted: "An extraordinary success for a good cause that would not have been possible without the unstinting efforts of Reinhard Heiserer. This success has its roots in an unequivocal stance, bold messages, a high level of transparency – and a willingness always to break new ground." In her tribute, **Sophie Lauringer**, chair of the Association of Catholic Journalists, editor-in-chief of Der Sonntag in Vienna and long-standing associate, emphasised Heiserer's devotion to development cooperation. She said he had "played a key role in the noticeable increase in philanthropy in Austria over the last thirty years." In addition, Heiserer "is not shy of flagging up necessary changes in legislation. His initiatives have a lasting impact – on us and on Jugend Eine Welt's aid projects. And it looks highly unlikely that Reinhard Heiserer will run out of ideas in future." ■



L-R: Sophie Lauringer, Reinhard Heiserer, Marion Rödler, Ruth Williams | © Sima Prodingner



Scan the QR code for the ORF television report on the Austrian Fundraising Awards ceremony:
www.youtube.com/@jugendeinewelt/videos



FIRST-HAND INFORMATION

Our honorary ambassador Chris Lohner talked to Peter Konteh, a long-standing project partner from Sierra Leone, West Africa.

In early September, Jugend Eine Welt was visited by a long-standing project partner from Sierra Leone.

Peter Konteh, head of Caritas in Freetown, is responsible for rebuilding St. Anthony's Clinic in the West African metropolis. This reconstruction is being co-funded by Jugend Eine Welt and is an urgent undertaking. The existing clinic is so dilapidated that during the rainy season some of the medical staff refuse to work there owing to safety concerns. A shocking state of affairs that must be remedied as soon as possible – a view shared by Chris Lohner. At a meeting in Vienna, Jugend Eine Welt's honorary ambassador talked to Peter Konteh to find out how the work was progressing. Currently, the foundation walls of the new St. Anthony's Clinic are finished. Donations are urgently needed for the next stages of construction. The clinic in the slums of Freetown is a vital facility for the poorest of the poor. ■

ANNUAL GET-TOGETHER

Annual Jugend Eine Welt gathering in Tulln

The traditional annual Jugend Eine Welt get-together was held in Tulln in early October.

Under the motto of "Macht. Fair. Teilen" (roughly, "share power equally"), around thirty participants, including young volunteers, people interested in helping, Senior Experts and Jugend Eine Welt employees, discussed civil efforts towards global justice. The two-day event tackled key issues such as "How did we get into this situation of global injustice?" and "What can we do about it?" Group exercises were held and current examples concerning supply chains and child labour were discussed. To round off the programme, Ishmael Charles, a Jugend Eine Welt project partner in Sierra Leone, gave an online talk and Jugend Eine Welt director Reinhard Heiserer presented some facts and figures. The participants unanimously agreed that the meeting was a successful forum for prompting action and sharing experiences. ■





10 YEARS OF WELTWEGWEISER

The Austrian service point for international voluntary assignments celebrated an anniversary



On 25 September 2025, *WeltWegWeiser*, the independent service point for international voluntary assignments run by *Jugend Eine Welt*, celebrated a special anniversary

Under the motto of “A thousand roads. One vision.” the network invited guests to the Museumsquartier in Vienna to celebrate its tenth birthday. *Jugend Eine Welt* director Reinhard Heiserer and *WeltWegWeiser* project manager Stephanie de la Barra were delighted to be able to welcome partners and supporters including the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), long-standing associates and many other guests.

Opening talk and panel discussion

Following Reinhard Heiserer’s stirring words of introduction and an insightful talk by Christoph Schweifer – for many years secretary-gen-

eral for international programmes at Caritas – a panel of five experts discussed various aspects of voluntary assignments in the Global South. Simone Blümel (Braveaurora), Gunter Schall (ADA), Helene Feldner (Ministry for Social Affairs), Andrea Peters (weltwärts, GER) and Daniela Fellingner (Grenzenlos) contributed a range of topics and fascinating insights into their work.

For quality voluntary assignments

The *WeltWegWeiser* network consists of seventeen Austrian organisations that arrange periods of work abroad and, since its foundation, has been an advocate of quality voluntary assignments. To achieve this goal, *WeltWegWeiser* laid down quality standards as a voluntary commitment for international voluntary assignments as long ago as 2016. Since then, most of these standards have also been adopted

by the Ministry for Social Affairs and apply to all the Ministry’s approved organisations in this field. The standards stipulate that assignments must result in long-term learning, respect local institutions and promote genuine cooperation between equals. They therefore define the preparation, accompaniment and follow-up of assignments. They clarify the meaning of transparency, the roles played by the volunteers and areas where no compromises may be entered into – for instance protection of the child and safety at the location concerned.

No “voluntourism”

WeltWegWeiser also stresses its clear opposition to “voluntourism” – a combination of “voluntary work” and “tourism” in which tourists on a kind of package tour do “work” for a brief period that, however, has no lasting benefit for the people and projects at their chosen destination. ■





This workbook and previous issues can be ordered from: info@jugendeinewelt.at

AGAINST CHILD LABOUR AND FOR THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Current campaigns of the “Kinderarbeit stoppen” alliance

As a member of the “Kinderarbeit stoppen” (stop child labour) alliance, *Jugend Eine Welt* – along with *Dreikönigsaktion*, *FAIRTRADE Austria*, *Solidar Austria* and *Kindernothilfe Austria* – campaigns for an end to the exploitation of children through child labour and the implementation of the rights of the child everywhere in the world.

The alliance organises educational activities, political lobbying and high-profile campaigns to draw attention to the causes and consequences of child labour and demands that effective measures be taken to combat this global injustice.

Dance against child labour

From a dance campaign against child labour with the title “No Means No” – as a cover version of the global smash hit “Live is Life” by the cult Austrian band Opus. Or at face-to-face meetings with members of the Austrian government such as Eva-Maria Holzleitner, the minister responsible for women’s affairs (photos below). The “Kinderarbeit stoppen” alliance gives the 138 million working girls and boys around the world a powerful voice. The plea is clear: children should be in school – not being exploited for the profit of others. What the alliance demands is equally unequivocal:

rigorous implementation of the EU’s Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive in order to end child labour everywhere in the world.



Take action

The enclosed workbook serves to provide information and inspiration. It tells you about child labour and which products for daily use it is hidden in. It also contains tips for explaining the topic of child labour to children in the classroom which will be of particular interest to teachers. ■



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Interested? Find out more at jugendeinewelt.at/kinderarbeit-stoppen or contact us directly: aktivwerden@jugendeinewelt.at



204 PRODUCTS FROM 82 COUNTRIES MADE WITH CHILD LABOUR

Children's hands are at work in Ethiopia, too.



The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that around 138 million girls and boys aged between 5 and 17 are involved in child labour. About 54 million of them work in particularly dangerous jobs.

Child labour has many different causes, but far and away the most common is poverty. Children have to contribute to their family's meagre income or help in the family business or with household chores. Many children have no choice but to fend for themselves and care for their brothers and sisters because their parents have died or are sick. Others run away from domestic violence. Child labour is also often found when families have been uprooted by war, migration or environmental disasters or when educational institutions have been destroyed or are inaccessible or unaffordable.

Another cause of child labour is discrimination: sadly, many societies still regard girls as being of less value than their brothers. They are taken out of school earlier and put to work from a young age or, as often happens, are forced to marry while still very young. Children belonging to minorities subjected to discrimination such as ethnic or religious groups are also often excluded from the official education system. It should not be forgotten that child labour makes good business sense for many, such as companies that profit from exploiting children and teenagers, paying them a pittance and forcing them to work with no safety measures or contracts.

Create awareness, make a contribution

Here in Austria, many people are unaware that the topic of exploitative child labour also connects to their own lives. Yet it is highly likely that all of us have, at some point, bought products in whose manufacture

children were involved – such as chocolate, mobile phones, gold, coffee, sugar, tea, cotton or tobacco. Unfortunately, which products might be a result of child labour is not common knowledge. In most cases it is the responsibility of the consumer to find this out and, in cases of doubt, choose fair trade products instead. Every business that categorically rejects the use of child labour in its supply chain and every individual who considers human rights and the rights of the child when shopping is making an important contribution!

Products from the hands of children

At regular intervals, the Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) at the U.S. Department of Labor publishes the "List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor". The List contains goods and products from various countries for which there is reason to believe that they were produced by child labour or forced labour. In 2024, the List comprised 204 products from 82 countries, including Ethiopia (leather, gold, the drug khat and hand-woven textiles).

When investigating child labour, teff, also known as Williams lovegrass, also appears frequently. The world's smallest grass seed – gluten-free and high in nutrients – is native to Ethiopia where it has been a staple food for millennia. Consequently, teff is a fixture of Ethiopian agriculture. Ground as flour, the grass is primarily used to bake bread. ■



For more products and information, go to jugendeinewelt.at/kinderarbeit



Ethiopian Lentil Stew and Flatbread

Misir Wot (lentils with the Ethiopian spice mixture berbere) and classic injera flatbread as an authentic accompaniment.

PREPARATION TIME: allow to rest for 24 hrs + 40 minutes preparation time

INGREDIENTS FOR THE STEW, 2 PORTIONS:

- 200 g red lentils (dried)
- 2 medium onions
- 2 large tomatoes
- 3 cloves of garlic
- 1 thumb-sized piece of ginger (peeled)
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil (e.g. coconut oil, rapeseed oil)
- 2-3 EL berbere (African spice mixture: pepper, chilli, paprika, allspice, cumin, coriander, turmeric, fenugreek seed, nutmeg, cloves & cardamom)
- Sea salt

METHOD

- 1 Place the lentils in a sieve and thoroughly rinse under running water. Drain and set aside.
- 2 Peel and finely dice the onions. Wash the tomatoes, remove the pips and finely dice. Peel and finely grate the garlic and ginger.
- 3 Heat the vegetable oil in a saucepan and sweat the onions until they are translucent. Add the garlic, ginger, diced tomatoes and berbere spices. Fry lightly for 3-5 mins, stirring constantly. Add the lentils and 700 ml of water. Bring to the boil. Lower the temperature and simmer for 15 mins with the lid on, stirring occasionally until the lentils are soft and the wot has the desired consistency. Add salt to taste.



The original method of making injera on a compact wood-fired oven. (Wikimedia Commons Library)

INGREDIENTS FOR FLATBREAD, 6 PIECES APPROX.:

- 720 g water (35 °C)
- 100 g sourdough
- 7 g salt
- 250 g teff flour (alternatively: buckwheat flour)

METHOD:

- 1 Put the sourdough and salt into the water in a bowl and stir well into a watery mixture.
- 2 Stir in the flour.
- 3 Cover the starter dough with plastic film and leave to prove at room temperature for 2-3 hours.
- 4 Then cool the dough in the refrigerator for 24-48 hours.
- 5 Preheat a frying pan on the hob.
- 6 Pour a thin layer of the flatbread mixture into the pan. Cover each flatbread individually and bake at a medium heat for 2-3 mins.

It All Began with a Whistle!

Giovanni Bosco saw talents and abilities in every child.



Bild mit ChatGPT erstellt.

It was a cold morning on 8 December 1841. The young priest Giovanni Bosco was getting ready for Holy Mass in the church of San Francesco d'Assisi in Turin. Suddenly, a commotion was heard from the vestry.

A verger was shouting that a boy had stolen in from the street to get warm. The young lad, dressed in rags and too frightened to speak, scarcely knew what was happening. His name was **Bartolomeo Garelli**, and he was an orphan with no home, no school and no friends.

Hearing the ruckus, Don Bosco immediately intervened. In friendly but firm tones he asked the verger to leave the boy be. Then he turned to Bartolomeo. "What's your name, my friend?" he asked with a smile. "Bartolomeo Garelli," came the

faltering reply. Don Bosco nodded. "Did you ever learn to read or write?" Bartolomeo shook his head. "No, Father." – "Can you do sums?" Another "No."

Don Bosco looked into the child's eyes that were filled with uncertainty. "So what can you do?" he asked patiently. Bartolomeo shrugged. Too often in his young life had he heard that he was useless and good for nothing.

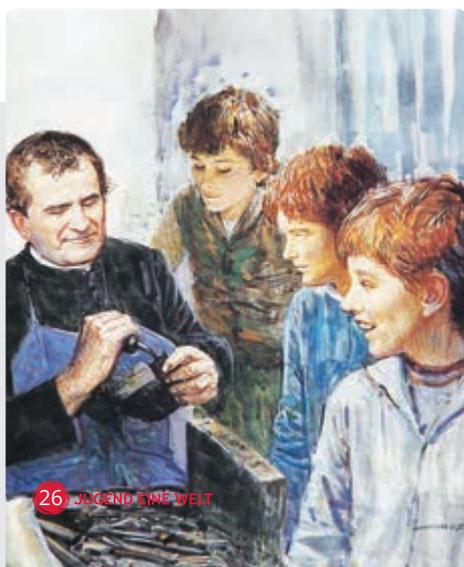
But Don Bosco persisted. After a brief pause he winked and said, "But maybe you can whistle?" The boy's face broke into an uncertain smile. "Yes, I can whistle," he said timidly.

"Wonderful!" exclaimed Don Bosco delightedly. "We'll start with that, my friend. You whistle, and I'll show you something new." All the tension disappeared from the vestry. Don

Bosco promised to teach Bartolomeo to read and write if he came back the following Sunday. The boy nodded – for the first time in his life he felt welcome and noticed.

This mundane encounter between a priest and a street boy was the start of something big. Because what began as a casual chat in the vestry later grew into what was to become Don Bosco's oratory – a place where children and young people found security, education and trust.

Don Bosco had come to the realisation that was to characterise his entire life's work: everyone has a skill, a gift from God, that is just waiting to be discovered and nurtured. Even those who appear to have nothing can do something – even if it's "only" whistling. And that is precisely where hope begins. ■



Don Bosco (1815 - 1888)
pioneer of social work and young people's saint,

is the patron saint of Jugend Eine Welt. His devotion to children and young people is the example we aim to follow. He set up several workshops so that street children in 19th-century Turin could obtain a good education. The dedicated priest also negotiated the first indentures for the youngsters in his charge. Today, the numerous Don Bosco projects in over 130 countries worldwide provide young people with solid vocational training. That gives them the chance of a better life.



A Successful Template for the Entire Continent

Training in solar engineering from Ethiopia: Knowledge that transcends borders and creates a future

When Jugend Eine Welt set up the first training programme for solar engineers with the Salesians of Don Bosco in 2015, expectations were high – but no one could have guessed just how much of an impact this project would have.

Jugend Eine Welt's Hannes Velik recalls: "Of course, we hoped that something would come of it. But we couldn't have imagined the full impact."

Despite the chaos of the war from 2020 to 2022 and the region's complete isolation, the programme remained alive there – at the same time becoming the starting point of a success story that can benefit the entire continent. Young solar engineers who were forced to flee Tigray during the conflict took their knowledge with them to West Africa. For example, they played a pivotal role in setting up a centre of excellence for renewable energies in Ghana. Today, enthusiastic young people from many parts of Africa attend six-month courses, after which they launch solar power projects in their home regions. In this way, a network is gradually forming that will, if all goes to plan, one day connect all 34 countries south of the Sahara: the All Africa Don Bosco Solar Team.

In all project locations it is the combination of theory and authentic practice that is at the heart of the programme's success. After completing their training, the young specialists

install solar arrays in Don Bosco facilities. This enables them to gain valuable experience in the trade and provides schools, workshops and health posts with their own source of power. The promotion of girls and young women is a particularly important aim of the programme, to actively stimulate their interest in careers in technology.

Solar power means survival

In Tigray itself, solar power is also important in another respect: it guarantees the water supply – and consequently survival. The destruction of local infrastructure and the lack of fuel mean that many wells would otherwise be practically unusable. "Here, solar-powered pumps equate with disaster prevention," explains Velik. "Because clean water is the prerequisite for everything." This shows that education in renewable forms of energy is not only important for the future but also a means for ensuring immediate relief and long-term stability.

What began in Adwa has now spread all over Africa. A programme that prepares young people for a sustainable labour market and helps entire regions grow stronger by dint of their own efforts. "Sometimes the brightest potential emerges from the darkest places," says Velik. "The solar power programme shows that even in places where much is broken, new things can develop that have a lasting impact." ■

„Sometimes the brightest potential emerges from the darkest places.“

Hannes Velik



Children need light for schoolwork and reading, parents need electricity to cook for their families. The power supply is either very unreliable or non-existent. Solar power provides the answer. It also creates jobs and reduces the number of trees felled for firewood, thereby preventing soil erosion.



For more details about the Jugend Eine Welt solar power programme, go here:
www.jugendeinewelt.at/solarprogramm

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