

Lounge

WATER FOR BIG PLANS

These school pupils have big plans. Many want to go to university when they leave school to train to become teachers, doctors or engineers. Yet it is a difficult path to get there. They live in Uganda, one of the world's poorest countries. At the Divine Mercy High School in Kyotera, the 300 pupils – of which around 80 percent board at the school as they live so far away – share six toilets. And water is a scarce commodity. The well frequently dries up. If they are thirsty, they often have to walk to the public water taps to buy water. We want to change this situation.

Matthias Exner, an engineer at Lufthansa Technik, is familiar with the situation in the town of Kyotera. In 2017, he spent a number of weeks living there. His task: as an active member of the NGO Engineers without Borders, he came to help to build cisterns and a canteen at another school in the town. The project was successful. "Ultimately, we were able to provide an impulse and give them structural help with a relatively modest level of funding," says Matthias Exner. "The fact that things worked out well there and that the school is now in a much better financial position is mostly down to the efforts of the local people."

Sustainable in all respects

On the basis of this experience, Engineers without Borders – with co-financing from the help alliance – are now giving their support to the Divine Mercy High School. New toilets and washrooms, a better connection up to the water supply and a water filter to provide drinking water are planned. Not only the students will benefit: The sanitary equipment, pumps and water tanks will be purchased exclusively from Ugandan manufacturers. As the facilities are to be built by local craftsmen, this will help them to build up knowledge and experience and to generate income in another area apart from agriculture. And the tiles which will be required will not be baked according to the usual process but will instead be mechanically pressed. The resulting material is better, cheaper and significantly more environmentally-friendly – for 10,000 to 20,000 tiles, the traditional baking process requires around 10 tonnes of firewood with the corresponding CO₂ emissions. An enquiry has already been received from a member of the clergy who has asked whether these tiles could be used in the building of his new church.

An infectious zest for life

"It is incredible to witness the zest for life and the optimism which the children in Kyotera bring with them to school and to see how keen they are to learn", says Matthias Exner. "It really motivates us to try and take away some of their burdens and to give them support in their everyday lives."

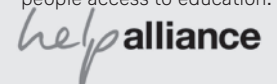


Matthias Exner, Design Engineer at Lufthansa Technik



THE HELP ALLIANCE

The school project in Kyotera receives financial support from the help alliance, the aid organization set up by the Lufthansa Group and its employees. It is currently responsible for around 40 projects worldwide which aim above all at giving young people access to education.



www.helpalliance.org