

## GANDHI, BLESSED TERESA OF CALCUTTA... AND THE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

**If we do not share common ideas  
that stand behind cooperation  
actions, the latter will fail**

A famous text from Gandhi says:

Your beliefs become your thoughts.  
Your thoughts become your words.  
Your actions become your habits.  
Your habits become your values.  
Your values become your destiny.

This text can be related to another famous text from Blessed Teresa of Calcutta:

The fruit of silence is prayer.  
The fruit of prayer is faith.  
The fruit of faith is love.  
The fruit of love is service.  
The fruit of service is peace.

Both Gandhi and Blessed Teresa of Calcutta are two deeply religious people. Gandhi is Hindu but loves and respects all the other religions; Gandhi identifies God with the truth. Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, Catholic, identifies God with Jesus of Nazareth. Simplifying, it could be said that Gandhi's text would have a more humanist character,

## editorial

whereas Blessed Teresa of Calcutta's text would have a more religious character.

Both texts have very significant analogies; starting from the inner world (your beliefs – your thoughts; the silence – the prayer) to be followed by action; this process ultimately shapes your person and destiny.

What do these texts have to do with our small NGOs and the international cooperation? What do they show us? We think that both texts prioritize the idea, the belief of action. It can also be said that actions are the result of our inner world. Therefore, it is also necessary to share a world view, a common imaginary and utopia to work correctly in the world of international cooperation.

An action, a cooperation project by itself can stem from different motivations and beliefs that can be contradictory in some cases. If we do not share common ideas that stand behind cooperation actions, the latter will fail. The close relations enabled by common projects are thus ephemeral and non-prolific if they do not come hand-in-hand with a common horizon, a shared utopia; this does not mean that we all working in international cooperation must think or believe the same, but at least we must make an effort in order to share our inner world, to be more honest and efficient in our work.

The Council

# A YEAR IN PERU AHEAD OF US

# thoughts

**Many small people at many small places doing many little things will change the face of the world.**

¡Hola! We are Sarah Ament and Judith Manusch and we will spend one volunteering year in Arequipa as of August 2010 supporting the project „Malnutrition vs. Education“. After having just passed our final secondary-school examinations at the Robert-Bosch-Gymnasium in Langenau, we are really looking forward to a year of adventure in Peru. But how did we end up with this project and the organization “Claim for Dignity e.V.”? All started with a school cooperation between our school and the “La Mansión” school in Arequipa.

We learned a lot about the country, its specifics and problems from several activities like our project days and a charity walk. So when they were looking for two volunteers to work at “La Mansion” we were filled with enthusiasm right away. This was just a great opportunity for us to advance the dialog



between our schools and actively provide a meaningful assistance.

„Many small people at many small places doing many little things will change the face of the world.“

This Xhosa saying describes our motivation quite well. We think that we can only move forward and change things together, and that everybody should make a contribution within his or her own possibilities. Moreover, we always dreamt about getting to know other countries and cultures. That's why we are looking forward to new experiences and encounters at a place far away from German norms and regulations.

Only 50 days to go before we take the plane! The excitement grows and our travel preparations are in full swing getting vaccinations, applying for visas, looking for insurances, tranquilizing mum and dad – and that's just on top of the Abitur. It's sometimes stretching our organizational talent.

A nice diversion and also a big help are the training seminars held by our dispatching organization, the confederation of the German Catholic Youth (the BDKJ or “Bund der



Deutschen Katholischen Jugend") of the diocese Rottenburg-Stuttgart. This organization provides a great exchange of important information between experienced former volunteers and all young people with a one-year assignment ahead.

Life of and with other cultures, our own motivation, globalization and the country Peru are just some of the topics of a total of 25 training days. We can already say that we have learned a lot, for example to be proactive and how to meet other people in an open-minded way, no matter what social level they belong to, what cloths they wear and how old they are.

We are enjoying a lot these various encounters and new contacts and feel well prepared for our volunteering year. There is indeed little left to say other than:

We are ready for Peru – let's start the adventure!

Sarah und Judith

## ON LOCATION - JOSEPHINE FROM AREQUIPA

**I am happy about each child that is fed and has clean hands**



## experiences



Now I have been working for our project "Education vs. Undernourishment" in La Mansión del Fundador, Arequipa, for four weeks. Two months are still ahead of me. If you ask me how I got here I am not at a loss for an answer but I do need to explain why because I come from a field that's not exactly known for giving development aid. As a law student I am not required to go abroad and for the longest time I didn't have the wish to do so either. On the other hand it might have well been studying law that got me thinking last summer. What is justice? What is fairness? In what way am I responsible?

I don't have the answers yet but I am looking for them. And I am sure that being here is one step of the way. It's helping me as much as I can help others here.

My contribution to the project is simple. The focus of my work is on the school canteen where meals for 120 students are prepared by the mothers who are helping with the project. My part as a volunteer is

basically taking care of the children. The goal is to teach them in terms of hygiene along the way. Each day 240 hands need to be washed. That means to help every child with the soap and the water jar because there is no running water. Sometimes I fear I will rather recognize a child by his or her hands and not by his or her face.

When all the children are through with the water I start moving around and help reconcile when there is a quarrel or prevent dancing demonstrations on the tables. I also try to teach them some basic manners. I know that using your hands for eating instead of a fork can be quite an experience. But if a five year old doesn't get to eat because she is using her fork the wrong way around it is helpful to know how things work.



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## experiences



When the children have eaten one by one they leave the canteen. To do the cleaning and all the dishes will take another hour and by then it usually is around 4 p.m.

Then I go home and rest because at 9 a.m. the next morning it starts all over again.

It really is a simple job but it is important that this work is done. That's why I do it every day. And I am happy about each child that is fed and has clean hands.

Josephine Asche

student from Tübingen, Germany, age 24