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**Dear all,**

As 2016 drew to a close, so too did our anniversary year: 10 years of Studies Without Borders! 10 years of committed engagement, projects of all shapes and sizes, and heaps of success stories. Of course, it has also been 10 years of ups and downs, and we have encountered a number of obstacles along the way which taught – and will continue teaching – us a great deal.

The new Studies Without Borders Executive Committee members have embraced their roles, brimming with ambition and motivation. We are eager and excited to get new ideas off the ground and ensure that the coming 10 years are as full of life as the previous 10 years. We are committed to overcoming all barriers which prevent young people around the world from accessing education, and this core value is at the forefront of everything we do. In a world where walls and borders are springing up around us, it becomes increasingly important to stand together and support one another: let's make a positive change together in 2017.

Our work seem to be making a difference - we are delighted (and a little bit proud) to draw your attention to the project of our former scholarship holder Tcheusi from Kindu in this newsletter. We have also outlined the motions passed at our Annual General Meeting held in December, where decisions were made about what the future looks like for Studies Without Borders, and how our organisation can continue to develop. To round off, there are updates on our projects in Afghanistan and Mweso (DR Congo), as well as our new project in Guatemala.

With no further ado, we bring you our newsletter - in both English and German for the first time - and wish you pleasant reading!

Ulrik Feuer (Chair) and Dominik Welke (Communications Officer)

[So what are our former scholarship holders actually up to?](#)  
[Tcheusi Kwetakiswa Anifa in Kindu launches a crowdfunding appeal](#)



“Save a woman in childbirth and you save the whole country” – Tcheusi Kwetakiswa Anifa

In the Alunguli municipality in the east of the DR Congo, former scholarship holder Tcheusi from Kindu is setting up a medical centre for mothers-to-be. Decades of conflict in the DR Congo have left many pregnant women to fend for themselves with no access to essential medical care.

Tcheusi Kwetakiswa Anifa is 39 years old and mother to five children. She successfully completed the ‘Diplôme de License’ in Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the ‘Institut Supérieure de Sciences Médicales’ in Kindu in the academic year 2015/16. Tcheusi has already passed her fundraising target of 500 US dollars which will go towards constructing the building, but as we all know, the more funding there is, the further it goes.

Click [here](#) to go to the appeal (available in French/German); it is available until end of February.

## Report from the 2016 Annual General Meeting

Time flies – somehow a whole two months have slipped by since our Annual General Meeting in December 2016 in Bad Honnef, near Bonn, Germany where we met to make decisions affecting our future course of action. These impact the organisation’s work in Germany as well as our scholarship programmes. Here is a short report on the topics up for discussion and the motions passed:

### Motion on the Studies Without Borders vision statement

Studies Without Borders pursues a vision of a world of peace and solidarity, in which all people have influence on their living situations and environment.

*‘We see education as a key factor in making this vision a reality. Education engenders freedom to act and promotes self-determination. Consequently, we are actively involved in three areas: encouraging participation, improving the quality of education, raising consciousness (...)’*

Over the course of the past year, a project group has been busy drawing up an official statement on Studies Without Borders’s educational-political concept for ease of communication in the organisation’s public image. The organisation officially approved the document at the AGM. A similar text was already formulated and passed as a vision statement in 2015.

To read the full versions of our vision statement and educational-political concept (available in German), please visit our [website](#).

### Founding a Friends of Studies Without Borders association

The brainchild of a soon-to-be alumnus, steps are being taken to set up a Friends of SWB sponsorship association. While this doesn’t require official approval at the AGM, we welcome the initiative and expressly support and endorse the action. A draft version of the Articles of Association for the foundation of the Friends of SWB association has already been drawn up, and we’ll keep you up to speed as things progress.

### Other motions

An **amendment to the membership fee regulation** was passed, approving a slight increase to the minimum membership contribution and adjusting the permitted intervals between payment (all members have received a separate mailing on this subject). As of next year, **up to nine members can be voted onto the Executive Committee** instead of seven in a bid to reduce the workload for members who take these posts on a voluntary basis. In other news, a small **structural amendment to the project in Mweso** was passed and Studies Without Borders also openly declared its **commitment to using gender-inclusive language** in its public relations work.

On top of this, the **budget proposal was passed** and a **new Executive Committee, Advisory Committee and Audit Committee** were elected. Our annual budget amounts to a six-digit figure which is mainly channelled directly into our projects. The seven members of the Executive Committee decides about all financial activities and constitute the legal representatives of the organisation. The Advisory Committee supervises the Executive Committee and is on hand with counsel for the project groups where necessary. The Audit Committee monitors the Executive Committee and is responsible for carrying out a cash audit.

## The faces of Studies Without Borders: the 2017 Executive Committee



**Chair: Ulrik Feuer** (rear left) is studying Economic Sciences at the FSU in Jena. He is looking forward to chairing the committee in 2017 and working together to shape the future course of the organisation.

**Vice Chair: Ruth Ranjan** (rear right) is studying Biological Sciences in Konstanz. She is particularly eager to work with the project coordinators on the scholarship projects – right at the heart of SWG.

**Treasurer: Niklas Wank** (front left) is studying Mechanical Engineering at the TU Dresden. Niklas is committed to keeping the organisation in a stable financial position to ensure a long and sustainable future for our work.

**Membership Officer: Sophia Horsch** (centre left) is studying for a degree in Renewable Energy Systems at the TU Dresden. She is eager to continue generating and implementing new ideas for member recruitment and support.

**Fundraising Officer: Alicia Fert** (centre front) comes from France and studies Political Science in Bonn. She is looking forward to integrating new ideas into existing projects.

**Communications Officer: Dominik Welke** (centre) studied Biology, Philosophy and Neuroscience in Bonn, Vienna and Freiburg, and is set to start his PhD this year. He is keen to give the organisation's public image a professional edge.

**Events and Design Officer: Monika Berezowski** (front right) is studying Social Sciences in Marburg. Monika already has lots of concrete ideas for supporting the local groups with event organisation and perfecting the SWB Look together with the new Design project group.

## The latest from our projects

At the start of the year, everything in our ongoing projects revolves around selecting new scholarship holders. To read short reports from the Afghanistan and Mweso (DR Congo) project groups, [click here](#). We are particularly delighted to have an update on the new project in Guatemala which looks set to offer the first scholarships in 2018.

### Scholarship programme in Afghanistan

Four of our scholarship holders are on track to complete their studies this spring: Naser, Sayed and Wahid studied English literature, and Roya is graduating in Journalism. All four will be graduating within the standard eight semesters of a study for a Bachelor degree.

It follows then that a selection process is currently underway to choose the next generation of scholarship holders to start in March 2017. To date, we have received 137 applications from students in Herat – an all time high, which stands as testament to the high regard for Studies Without Borders scholarship programmes. We would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to everyone involved in the selection process – without your hard work, we would not be able to assess each application in detail.

### Scholarship programme in Mweso

As the result of a government ruling to postpone the date of the next presidential elections, civil unrest has spread across the DR Congo over the past six months – including in the region of Mweso. A sad consequence of this is that five of our scholarship holders were not able to complete their studies in 2016 as planned. But help is at hand: an

internal call for aid from Studies Without Borders managed to collect enough sponsors and project-related donations over Christmas to secure the finances for scholarship extensions! Once again, we would like to express our thanks to everyone who donated.

Since 2010, 67 scholarship holders have successfully completed their studies in Mweso, while 30 have discontinued their studies. 46 scholarship holders are currently studying in the programme in Mweso, and another 10 scholarship holders were accepted in the last selection process. Their contracts will be drawn up at the first possible point.

### **Scholarship programme in Guatemala**

A new scholarship project is currently being set up in Guatemala. The programme aims to support young students involved in the struggle for indigenous rights in Guatemala. This seeks to create awareness for the discrimination experienced by this huge percentage of the population.

The selection process for the first scholarship holders will be held in June/July this year, and the programme will get underway from January 2018.

But there is a lot to do before then: work on the project restarted last October after planning ground to a temporary halt. Members from local groups in Hamburg, Göttingen and Frankfurt are involved in the project, as well as individual members from other local groups. At the moment, we are focussing on setting up networks in both Guatemala and Germany. In Guatemala, we are establishing contact with potential partner organisations which can assist in selecting scholarship holders and support in implementing their own projects. Meanwhile in Germany, there are several events in the pipeline for 2017, including a screening of the film 'Ixcanul' (Volcano) and podium discussion in Göttingen to raise public awareness about the situation.

Financing is another major issue. We are looking to secure financing through a range of fundraising actions and funding opportunities, including grants and other organisations.

Updates from our projects in **Sri Lanka**, **Kindu (DR Congo)** and **Chechnya** will be included in our next newsletter issued in May 2017.

## **Support Studies Without Borders**

### **Join the selection panel and choose our scholarship holders**

Speak enough French to understand written text? Available on one of the following sets of dates?

20 March - 02 April; 03 April - 16 April; 17 April - 30 April
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The Kindu project group is still on the lookout for members to serve on the selection panel for one of the three rounds of assessment during March and April. If you are interested, please get in touch with [Julia Hellmig](#) by 28th February.

### **Donate via text**

It has never been easier to donate to Studies Without Borders! Simply text 'GIB3 SOG', 'GIB5 SOG', or 'GIB9 SOG' to 81190 and €3, €5 or €9 will make their merry way to Studies Without Borders. Texts are charged at the network operator's standard rate plus an additional 17 euro cent service handling fee.

Please note that you can only donate using this service from a German mobile.

### **Keep up to date with Studies Without Borders on Facebook**

Click [here](#) to go to the Studies Without Borders Facebook page.

For further opportunities to support Studies Without Borders, for example to become a member or make a donations, click [here](#).

**All that remains is for us to say a huge thank you to all the active members of Studies Without Borders, present and past, and all the Friends of SWB and sponsors for your support!**

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## BILDUNG FÖRDERN - SELBSTHILFE ERMÖGLICHEN

Etudes Sans Frontières - Studieren Ohne Grenzen Deutschland e.V.  
c/o Universität Konstanz, Postfach 233  
78457 Konstanz  
Deutschland

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Website: [www.studieren-ohne-grenzen.org](http://www.studieren-ohne-grenzen.org)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/studierenohnegrenzen](https://www.facebook.com/studierenohnegrenzen)