



Frankfurt, November 2017

Dear readers,

As the peaks of our contented eurocentric world slowly disappear under a cover of white powder and the days grow shorter as winter sets in, some people are rediscovering an ounce of Christmas spirit amid the mulled wine, tinsel and endless dirge of Christmas music. This feeling of fuzzy sluggishness has set also in in the SWB Executive Committee, accompanied by a nagging need to say thank you. Indeed, thank you for your support over the past year, during which the organisation and its projects have continued to grow and we have been able to build on our cooperation with all our partners.

Despite this contemplative winter slowness, we should not lose sight of how much has happened in SWB this last year. As semesters get underway in our target regions, SWB is supporting numerous new scholarship holders who are making new inroads into their futures. So much good news has reached us from our projects that there is hardly space to share it all with you in this newsletter. The academic year has also begun in Germany. Our 16 local groups have been busy putting on information evenings which have proved a great success and we are delighted to welcome so many new members to the fold. These are the people who will shape the organisation in the years to come – possibly even as soon as this year's Annual General Meeting, taking place at the Starkenburg castle near Heppenheim on 8th December. We come together at the AGM to make decisions affecting the overall direction of the organisation in the next year and appoint the central roles and offices. With no further ado, we would like to start this newsletter with the words of one of our scholarship holders, who we have supported – and she us – for several years now.

Enjoy the read,

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

A personal message from our year-long scholarship holder Zalina from Chetchnya

Dear members, dear supporters,

In July 2017 I passed my Bachelor dissertation titled “Automated Tracing Improved through Convergence Recognition” with the grade 1.7, thereby completing my degree in Computer Science at the University of Tübingen.

Without you, SWB Friends and members past and present, this would not have been possible. When I came to Germany eight years ago, I didn't know anyone and couldn't speak German. Many SWB members have supported me throughout these last eight years and done their very best to make me feel welcome and put me at ease. The dedication shown by the SWB members has given me great motivation to work on my own social project. My hope is that young people in Chechnya will be able to improve their skills in foreign languages – especially English. This is so important as all the opportunities to come into contact with the rest of the world – be it student exchange programmes or continuing education abroad – are contingent on mastering a foreign language. Nowadays, there is a wide range of high quality educational resources available online in English offering opportunities to continue learning and growing in all manner of directions and fields. Assuming, of course, you are motivated to learn new things and can understand the language. This is why my aim is to help



people in Chechnya gain access to individual or small group language tuition over the internet. I wanted to get on with the project as quickly as possible. This led me to attend a number of project management workshops from the Civil Academy in 2011, and to carry out the first attempts to put my project into action. I was however forced to accept that it was slightly unrealistic to try to get my project underway while I was also busy doing my Computer Science degree in Germany and learning a new language myself.

Zalina in Tübingen
scholarship holder
2009 - 2017

All the same, I stand by my project idea. Yet in this period after graduating, it is important for me to deepen my knowledge of my field and gain a certain material comfort so I can pay back my loan from SWB*. I will start working for an IT company in Germany in November 2017, and as soon as my work situation permits, I would like to devote myself to my project.

I would be delighted to stay in touch with the organisation and learn from the practical experiences of past and active members to help me implement my project.

Many thanks for all your support!
Zalina

* In addition to the scholarship from SWB, Zalina also received funding from the TL Foundation (TL-Stiftung) during her studies, which has close ties to the university. The financial support from Studies without Borders ran out at the end of 2016 - she received a student loan from SWB during her final semester

The Annual General Meeting (Mitgliederversammlung) and SWB Conference

Today in 2017, there are more students in Germany than ever before; a phenomenon which is reflected in our current membership figures. Our organisation currently has 1,173 members, of which so far 117 have newly joined for the coming year. We hope to see as many of them as possible at our AGM on the 8th of December in the Starkenburg castle near Heppenheim. This is where the organisation democratically appoints the new Executive Committee (initially 8 members), the Advisory Committee and the Audit Committee for 2018. The provisional budget for the coming year will also be approved, which will be increased slightly from 2017. In addition to this, all members are welcome to propose motions which will be put up for discussion. This year, decisions need to be taken regarding changes to the project in Chechnya, and a computer room project in Kindu. Minor changes to our guidelines are also on the agenda, along with strategies to ensure financial transparency in the organisation, expanding the role of the Advisory Committee and SWB's political position. We are looking forward to lively and controversial debate.



Our Venue
manifest of an age of borders



Following the AGM, the SWB Conference will take place from 9-10th December, to which anyone interested (members or external parties) is welcome to come and receive a weekend of training and exchange. This year, the programme was put together in cooperation with the SWB Academy, our new platform for internal training and workshops. Bearing the title 'Personal Development and Development in the Global South - The Added Value Created by Involvement in Development Cooperation', a wide-ranging and comprehensive programme awaits featuring workshops and presentations from internal and external speakers. By the end of it, we will all have a more articulate idea of how we engage and why we are active. The conference has been generously funded by the charity 'Brot für die Welt' and the foundation 'Umverteilen'.

The latest from our projects

Read on to find out the latest from our projects in **Sri Lanka**, **Kindu in the DR Congo** and **Chechnya**. News from our projects in **Afghanistan**, **Mweso in the DR Congo**, **Burundi** and **Guatemala** is set to follow in the next newsletter in February 2018.

Eastern Sri Lanka (Local group: Karlsruhe)

After several months of planning, numerous Skype interviews with applicants and extensive discussions, the project group selected a new scholarship holder in October for our university scholarship in Sri Lanka. **Aaqila** studies Medicine and impressed us with her skills, motivation and good ideas for voluntary engagement. Aaqila would like to start a programme to raise awareness and disseminate information about remaining safe from the increasingly widespread outbreaks of Dengue fever in Sri Lanka. She will join the currently small group of Sri Lankan scholarship holders from the start of next year, to make numbers up to three. As ever, we remain committed to expanding our networks and have made contact with two promising social organisations.

A film and info evening will be held at the university cinema 'AFK' in Karlsruhe followed by a discussion about Sri Lanka. It is aimed at members of the public of all ages with an interest in Sri Lanka. The final date has not yet been settled but we will keep you up to speed via Facebook and on our website, so keep your eyes peeled.

[Learn more](#) about our project "action forum" ieastern Sri Lanka

Vavuniya, northern Sri Lanka (Local group: Heidelberg)

Our second project in Sri Lanka is also expanding. There is considerable inequality in the educational opportunities available in northern and southern Sri Lanka. Most universities are clustered on the south of the island and opportunities for higher education are mainly available in English or Singalese. On account of the language barrier and the distances involved, the Tamil-speaking population in the north of the country faces multiple barriers to higher education. Through the foundation of the Infinity Center for Higher Studies in the north of the island, our cooperation partner would like to take action against this disparity and offer accredited further education courses in Tamil.



Julius and Mercymirudula at one of their seminars on alcoholism

In 2017, Studies Without Borders provided the course fees for the Basic IT course for six scholarship holders. They were put forward for the SWB scholarship by our in-country partner, as they come from particularly financially disadvantaged families and were highly motivated to put their ideas for social projects into action. The trust we placed in them was fully justified and the scholarship holders were able to put great projects into practice. **Annaluxica** and **Vasumathy** have set up a community garden with bananas and peanut so they can offer their neighbourhood a balanced and vitamin-rich diet. **Elishroshani** held a seminar in her village on the topic of microfinancing. And **Julius** and **Mercymirudula** organised an events programme to educate young people about the dangers of alcoholism, as alcoholism is a widespread problem among young people in northern Sri Lanka.

This year for the first time, the Infinity Center for Higher Studies is also offering one and a half year courses from the AAT* which provide extensive education in the field of bookkeeping and accounting. From 2018 we would like to provide funding for two of our scholarship holders to take these courses, as they have shown extraordinary commitment to empowerment and the rights of women and underprivileged children.

*AAT stands for „[The Association of Accounting Technicians](#)“; the organisation which put together this course.

[Learn more](#) about our project "Infinity Centre" in northern Sri Lankas

Kindu, DR Kongo (Local group: Tübingen)

The selection process for our new scholarship holders has finally come to a close and we are pleased and proud to welcome **seven new faces** who really stood out from the 177 applicants in numerous rounds of selection process. They started studying in October and are now working on their social engagement concepts which are due to get underway in January 2018. We are excited to see the results and will keep you up to speed with them and their project ideas via Facebook and our website.



Our new scholarship holders in Kindu

The future is bright for scholarship holders: together with our in-country colleagues, SWB carried out a tracer study in April 2017 which revealed gratifying results. At the time of the study, 25 of the 40 previous scholarship

holders succeeded in graduating from their courses. Of these, the vast majority have found employment at a suitable level in their field - many in the public sector.

For more detailed information, please click [here](#).



Appointment of Shadracks (at the right) at Maniema ctity hall

And to put the icing on the cake, we received the news that our former scholarship holder **Shadrack KILONGOZI SIMASA** was made Province Minister for the Environment for the province of Maniema in September this year. Getting safe information from the region is not always easy, but the note was broadcasted in the local radio and we received pictures of his appointment. We sponsored Shadrack from 2008 to 2011 while he gained his diploma as a 'Technicien en developpement rural', before staying on at the institute for professionalisation. During his time as part of SWB, he taught social affairs in the surrounding rural area.

[Learn more](#) about our project in Kindu

Chetchnya (Local group: Tübingen)

As you have already read above, **Zalina**, a long-term scholarship holder from SWB's Chechnya project, was able to celebrate her graduation in Computer Science from the University of Tübingen. The project group looks back over a fruitful cooperation with an inspiring and hardworking person.



Zalina (centre) studying

Zalina had to fight with great ambition to pursue her dream of studying abroad and taking on responsibilities in civil society, as her plans were met with a lot of resistance from her family, which lost its father in the war. The Studies Without Borders scholarship offered Zalina the opportunity she wanted to take up a residence in spite of the obstacles she faced. In 2009, she moved away from the constraints and repression and came to Germany, where she was able to start studying after completing a one-year intensive German course. Today, she speaks fluent German, is active in the struggle for women's rights and would like to enrich Chechen civil society through exchange with other cultures. Such cross-border communication will doubtlessly benefit everyone involved. Indeed the members of the project group in Tübingen have learned a lot from Zalina, and consider it a privilege to remain on hand with advice and friendship for many years to come.

Ibraghim, our future scholarship holder from Chechnya, is also looking forward to moving to Tübingen. We introduced him in a past [newsletter in May](#): Currently, he is primarily involved in voluntary work in the social sector and also pursuing a degree in Engineering. He would like to gain deeper insights into work with disabled people in Germany, so he can take valuable competencies and new approaches back to his social work in Chechnya. Unfortunately, a delay in granting him a visa has prevented him from coming to Germany in October as was originally planned. Undeterred, the project group continues to work towards getting Ibraghim to Tübingen in time for the summer semester in 2018.

[Learn more](#) about our projekt in Chetchnya

Support Studies Without Borders

Unsere Arbeit ist nur möglich, weil Sie und Ihr uns dabei unterstützen! Das kann auf viele unterschiedliche Weisen passieren:

With a Party

Planning to celebrate a special birthday or any other occasion, and want to do a good deed at the same time? Lend a hand by setting up a donation box at your party for Studies Without Borders' projects, or ask your friends to make donations instead of giving gifts. No matter the size or scale of the celebration, you and your friends can always contribute to supporting our vision.

Check out our [website](#) for stories of how other people have collecting donations at parties (in German).

Get involved in our umbrella organisation

Based outside Germany but still want to get involved in Studies Without Borders? Check out our umbrella organisation Etudes Sans Frontières International. At the moment, the only other active branches in addition to Germany are Canada and Austria, but it is nonetheless possible to lend your assistance remotely.

More information is available via their [website](#), and [Facebook](#)

With our brand new 'Bildungsgeschenke' - gift donations for education

Our 'Friednsgeschenke' became 'Bildungsgeschenke' and come with a brand new design. Make a friend or relative's day and support our work at the same time. How? Purchase a 'Bildungsgeschenk' gift donation and receive a greeting card to pass on or hold onto as a reminder. The donations go towards supporting students striving for peace in our project regions.

To find out more and order our gift donation, click [here](#)

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 and sponsors for your support!

Website: www.studieren-ohne-grenzen.org

Facebook: [/www.facebook.com/studierenohnegrenzen](https://www.facebook.com/studierenohnegrenzen)

BILDUNG FÖRDERN - SELBSTHILFE ERMÖGLICHEN

Etudes Sans Frontières - Studieren Ohne Grenzen Deutschland e.V.

c/o Universität Konstanz

Postfach 233

78457 Konstanz

Deutschland

[Ich möchte keine Mails über diesen Verteiler erhalten.](#)