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“Thank You Very Much For Everything!”

Students from Germany, Spain, Sweden and Uganda last summer helped build an elementary school in Africa.

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One thing we quickly learned from the people of Uganda: their gratitude and infectious joy. *Mweebale nnyo, mwebalire ddala!* We often heard these words in the past few weeks and have repeated them ourselves

just as frequently. In Swahili they mean: “Thank you very much, thank you very much for everything!”

These words are a good summary of this year’s project. We ourselves were very thankful for having been able to take part in this project and work alongside these people.

This time we were a small but high-spirited group of young people from Cologne, Essen, Hollerath, Lippstadt, and Barcelona. Loaded with 14 suitcases containing a large supply of clothing for our friends in Uganda, our trip took off from Düsseldorf on August 10, passing through Cairo on the way to Entebbe.

In Bugala Study Center, an Opus Dei student residence in Kampala, nine more students joined our group, and from there we went on to Ssukka, where we had already constructed a first building with three classrooms last year. There we were warmly

received by the village community, especially by the children with their songs. The number of children was striking: in the past year the school had grown by 80 pupils.

Three weeks of work awaited us there and a clear mission: to leave behind us, for these children and their teachers, another school building ready for occupancy. During the preceding weeks a group of students from Spain and Sweden had already done a great deal of work, and the four classrooms of the new building were built up to roof level. The project was led by Jean Mwebasa, a student from Makerere University, who takes part in the catechetical and cultural programs in Bugala Study Center.

The day began at 7:30 a.m. with Mass. This was followed by breakfast and then a brief trip to the construction site. Awaiting us were

the Ugandan craftsmen, two mountains of sand, many sacks of cement, and of course our tools. At 1:00 pm we went back to our lodgings—at the farm of Jean’s family—for lunch. After a short siesta, by about 2:30 we were back at the construction site. The afternoons were a little less intensive, so that some of us could play with Harriet and David and their friends and even had time for a game of soccer.

After the evening meal we all sat together for a while and were able to learn a lot about the different tribes of Uganda. And thus the three and a half weeks were soon over, leaving behind many new friends and a land we had grown to love. To everyone who made this project possible:
Mweebale nnyo, mwebalire ddala!

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