

A VERY SPECIAL DAY

The very special day on our visit to Cameroon, was Friday, 13th October, for this was the day that our group from Switzerland visited the „GENERATIONENHAUS“ in Bissiang.

Full of excitement and expectation, we drove through Kribi (where our hotel was situated), and then along a VERY BUMPY and DUSTY road leading deep into the nearby rainforest. On the way we passed through several small villages, scattered far apart in this fascinating countryside. We saw children in their school uniforms and flip flops or wellington boots, on their way to or from school. They waved and giggled when they saw “les blancs” passing by!! We also observed women hanging their washing out over bushes and trees, their infants watching them from the doorways of their simple houses, and men carrying HUGE machetes, knives used for cutting through the rainforest, on their way to find food for their families.

The journey seemed endless, but then suddenly, in the middle of nowhere, we heard machines running and sensed there was a great hive of activity nearby!! We had arrived at our destination at last, and the board “GENERATIONENHAUS, KAMERUN” came into view. We were greeted by smiling dusty workmen and cheerful ladies clad in brightly coloured dresses and head gear, all proud to show us the progress that had been made over the last few months.

The “GENERATIONENHAUS”, still to be completed, looks very solid, being built with the bricks made by the brick machine which was financed by our parish project. The walls of the building look as if they will stand the weather and “wear-and-tear” of many generations of children. Stefan and Marie Francette Dubach showed us around the house, and answered all our questions about the progress of the building, and the plans for the future. The rooms inside the house are spacious and full of light. There are attractive grids on the windows, solid ceramic floors (easy to keep clean), and beautiful embossed ceilings (a surprise present from the plasterer). The building has a large atrium in the middle, serving as a place where the inhabitants can meet and socialize in a protected area.

The highlight of our visit to the “GENERATIONENHAUS” was the church service that took place in one of the larger rooms. Two big logs were brought in to use as supports for a wooden door, which was stretched across them to serve as an altar. A cloth was laid over this construction and candles were lit at each end. The various priests that were present disappeared to change into their clerical vestments, and our group settled themselves cross-legged on the floor (well, I was offered a chair, being the eldest present!!). The workmen and colourfully clad ladies mingled among us to take part in the service, either sitting on the floor, or on the windowsills, or standing outside looking through the windows. What an atmosphere of SOLIDARITY!!! Quite UNDESCRIBABLE!! There were old with young (there were many children and youths in our Swiss group), Cameroonians (very dark skinned) with Swiss (“les blancs”), men and women, workmen with office or retired office workers – all with the same aim – to bless and pray for the successful completion of the building and then for the habitation of the “GENERATIONENHAUS” with the orphaned children and childless parents, who will join together to make, hopefully, a happy and thriving community!! Pfarrer Josip Knezevic gave a sermon in German stressing the wonderful link between the people of Cameroon involved in this wonderful project and the people of Rüschtikon, and we gave each other our hands in solidarity—a moving moment for all of us!!

We saw several rainbows while we were travelling through Cameroon. However the GREATEST RAINBOW of all is the one stretched between the "GENERATIONENHAUS" in Bissiang in Cameroon, and the people of Rüşchlikon in Switzerland. We must keep THIS rainbow coloured and alive by supporting this wonderful project. This idea could in fact develop from a "GENERATIONENHAUS" to a "GENERATIONENVILLAGE"!! My husband and I are proud to be part of the project.

"DO NOT PART WITH YOUR DREAMS OR ASPIRATIONS FOR WHEN
THEY ARE GONE YOU MAY EXIST BUT YOU HAVE CEASED TO LIVE"

Henry David Thoreau

Christina Schildknecht