

Perspective through education: The success story of Home for Hope child Jessica

Lucas Sauter Orengo

When life takes an unexpected turn, fate often plays a decisive role, depending on how you look at it. In retrospective, one could explain the scene that must have taken place many years ago in rural Ghana. Or at least try to. A look back:

In the grind of everyday life, challenged with raising grandchildren, an elderly lady in Gomoa Tarwka must have been busy 16 years ago. And then: an information stand in the middle of the chaotic streets of earth on which the hard life is fought every day. It advertises a children's home called "A home for children" - now widely known in the region as Home for Hope. Without hesitation, the old lady recognizes the opportunity and sends her six-year-old granddaughter, Jessica, to the project. A full 16 years later, the now 22-year-old calls the University of Education in the city of Winneba her home.

The chance of an education - in the midst of rural poverty

From a simple life in the countryside to a linguistics student - a leap that neither her grandmother nor Jessica herself would have dared to dream of. "Just having three meals a day as a result of the project," says Jessica in retrospect, was an "incredible change". Life in the countryside offered hardly any prospects and virtually nobody had the financial means to offer children a comprehensive education back then, nor do they today. The prospect of a better life - almost utopian. Now Jessica is fighting for a future in the world of journalism. It is thanks to the old lady's decision that this happened at all. After all, it was she who saw the unexpected glimpse of the information stand as an opportunity. A chance to make a living through financial support within the structures of an established project.



So now she is sitting there, Jessica, 22 years old, a child of the Home for Hope project from the very beginning. In the IT center, behind her rows of computers, a printer and copier are now also part of the inventory at the end of 2023. In textbook English, she talks about her dream of working as a journalist one day - and about how radically her life has changed for the better thanks to the project. "You always had enough school materials, structure and uniforms," she recalls of the early days. "The only thing you had to do yourself was study hard.

The starting signal: Home for Hope begins to grow

When she is 12 years old, Larissa and Carolin, together with John Essaah, the local project manager, take on the small, under-resourced children's home, and the story takes its decisive course. Within a few years, Home for Hope, at a new location not far from the original one, developed into a flourishing educational project: dormitories, classrooms, a large school bus, an IT center and a library, even a health center and, most recently, solar panels for self-sufficiency give countless children not only a home, but the chance of a better life. The school fees of around 250 schoolchildren are subsidized to such an extent that every family in the region can afford to send each of their children to school.

"You have to give more than usual to realize your dreams"

Jessica, who emphasizes that she will never forget where she comes from, seized this opportunity. At the age of 18, she reports, she learned the most important lesson for herself. "You have to give more than usual to fulfill your dreams". She already knew where she wanted to go: university. With diligence and courage, she focused on her goals and received a letter a few years later. The sender: The University of Education.



Since then, Jessica has been able to call herself a student. For her, however, this is just the beginning - after all, she still has a long way to go. But her eyes are already shining: "My dream came true: The project has changed my life," she sums up calmly.

When her grandmother noticed the information stand 16 years ago, she could never have imagined what she would have initiated for her granddaughter. A child of the project at university - a path that Jessica is sure to be followed by many more Home for Hope children, whose education will also be fully funded by the project.