

# 2021

## Annual Report

BETTER ME E.V.







# Content

Foreword	2
Structure of the Non-Profit-Organization	3
Goals and Theory of Change from Better Me e.V.	4
Where we work	5
Our Kisumu office	6
Dome Home renovation	7
Volunteer and Internship Program	8
Activities in Kenya	9
• Youth Upliftment Mentorship Program (YUMP)	10
• Bursary Program	11
◦ Success Story	12
• Chapo Festivals	13
• Madoma Korando Educational Centre	14
• Adventure Camp	15
• Advocacy for Children's Rights	16
• Homeless of Kisumu	17
◦ Success Story	18
• Dewo Ngima	19
• Armstrong Women Empowerment Center	20
• Child Sponsorship Program	21
Finances	21
• Balances, Income and Expenditures	22
• Profit and Loss Account	23
Outlook for 2022	24



# Foreword

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, BETTER ME E.V.

Dear readers,

We are happy to share that 2021 has been another great year for Better Me e.V.. In September 2021, two of our board members (Simon and Torsten) made an inspection trip to Kisumu, Kenya and we were humbled to see and experience what our team and partners have achieved since our last visit. The board is incredibly proud of our growing team in Kenya, which has managed to respond to local needs, despite the ongoing pandemic.

Thanks to our supporters, last year we were able to award more high-school bursaries to needy students and at the same time, improve their extracurricular care.

We were also able to deepen our existing partnerships and projects. Together with Homeless of Kisumu, Dewo Ngima, Armstrong Women Empowerment Center, and the Dolfine Korando Educational Centre, we have been able to respond to the most vulnerable populations' negative psychosocial and economic needs, which have grown significantly due to the pandemic.

Our innovative work in Kisumu has attracted government attention and we have established Better Me as an integral stakeholder for children and youth empowerment. This has allowed us to contribute our experience and knowledge to the development of laws, and together with the relevant authorities, we promote the care of children and young people in the region.

We are also happy that since mid 2021, we were able to welcome volunteers and interns in Kenya again, and our volunteer programs enjoy great popularity.

The positive development in all areas, despite the adversities, inspires us to continue to give our best and grow our impact.

With kind regards,

Torsten Kremser, Simon Kühnert, and Gudrun Kremser  
Board of Directors, Better Me e.V.

# U.S.A.

Thanks to our partner  
Pledges INC, donors from the  
U.S. can receive

**501(c)(3)**  
tax receipts,  
when donating via Pledges.

Contact us for details via  
[team@betterme.org](mailto:team@betterme.org)



## Structure of the Non-Profit-Organization

BETTER ME E.V.

In June 2021, Better Me e.V. moved its base to Schneverdingen, Germany. The highest decision-making body is the general assembly, consisting of the full members of the association. The general assembly elects the board for a period of three years.

The last amendment to the articles of association was decided on the 6th of June 2021.

### Members

Better Me e.V. accepts full and supporting members. At the time the 2021 annual report was published, Better Me e.V. had the following members:

13 full members

1 supporting member.

### Board of Directors

On September 16, 2020, the general assembly re-elected the board for 3 years in accordance with the statutes.

The board consists of  
Torsten Kremser (CEO),  
Gudrun Kremser (treasurer) and  
Simon Kühnert (Deputy CEO).

### Donation Account

Volksbank Lüneburger Heide e.G.  
IBAN: DE82240603002483534000  
BIC: GENODEF1NBU

### Notice of Tax Exemption

According to the last notification of tax exemption that we received from the Soltau tax office in Germany, under tax number 41/211/00629, on the 04.02.2020 and in accordance with § 60a 1. AO, we are permitted to receive donations that we use for the purposes of "People's Education and Vocational Training including Student Aid" and are permitted to issue donation receipts according to the officially prescribed format for donations.

Register court: Lüneburg district court  
Register number: VR 201537



# Goals and Theory of Change

BY BETTER ME E.V.

We strive for a global community of self-responsible, compassionate and curious human beings who work together to strengthen life in all forms. For us, holistic education is the way to achieve this notion.

The basis of our theory of change is the conviction that people have the ability to change their situation themselves, if we create the right environment to acquire knowledge and skills that enable a self-determined and independent life. We see our role in strengthening human potential. Active listening, true solidarity, compassion, self-awareness, and respect for other cultures are necessary if we are to be successful.

Our goals strive for sustainable and regional change. In order to achieve this and a long-lasting effect, we work through our local office in Kisumu, Kenya with local, non-profit-recognized partner organizations. We also work with the local government and coordinate our programs with the Department for Children, Social Services, and the Ministry of Education. In this way we ensure that our activities can be carried out smoothly and that we have a positive influence on the social and educational system.





## Kisumu

The third largest city in Kenya is located directly on Lake Victoria and has sub-tropical weather.

## Where we work

### KISUMU COUNTY IN KENYA

Kisumu lies in western Kenya, on the shores of Lake Victoria. Almost half of all households are poor by national standards and around 60% live in informal settlements. Only about half of all residents of Kisumu have a primary school certificate, approximately 60% live in houses with clay floors, and over 70% of the houses are built with walls made of clay, wood and corrugated iron. About 70% of all residents cook with firewood and only about 18% have electric light in their houses.

100% of our beneficiaries live below the poverty line. The average household has 5 people and usually the entire household lives together in a one-room apartment. The majority of households earn their living through precarious casual work or as small entrepreneurs. In rural areas, the majority of our beneficiaries rely on subsistence farming to feed the household.

70%

of the houses are built with walls made of clay





## Our Kisumu Office

### HOW WE WORK

In order to achieve our goals, we pursue holistic approaches that take into account the complexity of our world. Our solutions are based on the needs of the people we want to reach and are developed in partnership with them. For this, we have a local Better Me e.V. office in Kisumu. The local team works with local partner organizations, volunteers, interns, and the government in Nyanza, Kenya. Our ongoing presence enables us to be in constant discourse with our beneficiaries and stakeholders.

The Kisumu office is managed by our program coordinator Thomas Ogalo. He is assisted by a team of two social workers and a partnerships manager, as well as an international team of volunteers and interns, who drive our project work in Kenya.



### Full-Time Staff



## New Office Building

In 2021 it became clear that our growing team, along with the increasing number of interns, was in dire need for a separate office to work more effectively. Essentially, the space in the Dome House had become too small. In December 2021, after a period of planning, we started the construction of an office building next to the Dome House. Long term, this new construction is more economical than renting and we estimated that the investment will pay off within 3 years.



The Foundation



Under Construction



First Floor



# Dome House Renovation

## OUR KISUMU OFFICE

In 2021, after 6 years of tropical sun, storms and heavy usage had taken its toll on our dome house, we gave it a complete makeover. The renovation was urgently needed, as can be seen in the pictures. It was also a strategic decision, to ensure that the building would be ready to host many more volunteers and interns over the next 5-10 years. The cost of the renovation was covered by the volunteer program.

After a lot of hard work, our dome now shines in new splendor and is already home to 8 volunteers and interns. More information is included within the next section.

# Before



# After







**12** Volunteers  
& Interns  
have supported us in Kenya

## Volunteer and Internship Program

### HOW WE WORK

#### Reopening and expansions

The volunteer program was severely impacted by the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 and the first half of 2021. We are happy that we were able to revive it at the end of the year. Since then, we have welcomed 12 wonderful people from 9 countries to Korando.

Since July 2021 we have listed our programs on a German volunteer website. We have also expanded our application process and with over 140 inquiries, we have seen an incredible increase in interest.

At the time of publishing this annual report, we have 23 applications in process, 7 confirmed and 8 volunteers (7 of whom are doing their internships with us) are currently in Kenya.

#### Internships in Kenya

The influx of interns is particularly new to us and we are already seeing great results. The interns stay for 3-6 months and are a real asset to our team.

All financial gains from this program were channeled directly into the fulfillment of our statutory purposes. In addition, our volunteers and interns have become ambassadors for Better Me e.V. and some have even joined our German non-profit organization.



In 2021  
we reached  
**1800+**  
Beneficiaries in  
Kisumu, Kenya.



## Activities in Kenya

2021 was a successful year for Better Me e.V. despite the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. We have strengthened and expanded our existing projects and deepened our partnerships.

With the following pages we would like to give you an overview of our programs and activities in Kenya.



## For live Updates from Kenya

IN ENGLISH AND GERMAN



@bettermekenya  
@bettermekinderhilfe



Together we reached

750

Youth  
with YUMP



## Youth Upliftment Mentorship Program (YUMP)

### ACTIVITIES IN KENYA

Young people in Kenya are increasingly exposed to psychosocial problems and have little access to counseling support. With the Youth Upliftment Mentorship Program (YUMP) we offered psycho-social support to over 750 youth and are steadily expanding our reach.

During this time, our team of social workers and psychologists continued to develop the mentoring program, so that it reflects the reality of life and the problems of young people and adults in Kenya. YUMP builds on cognitive behavioral therapy, communication skills, sexual education, problem solving, and emotional learning. YUMP is run by our social workers and the core of the program are the weekly sessions with the youth. Our mentoring program helps young people to maintain healthy and positive relationships, it promotes responsible behavior and supports them in achieving the goals they have set for themselves.

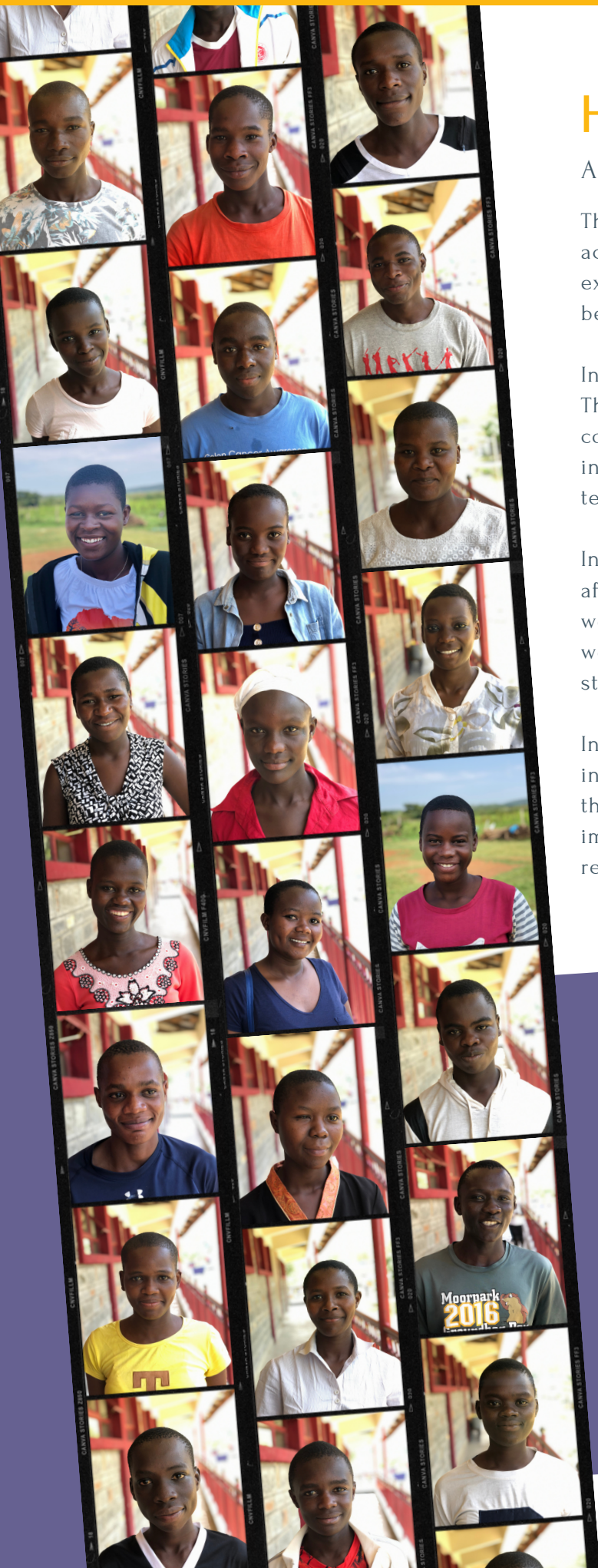
This year we conducted YUMP in schools and institutions in Bondo and Kuoyo, Kisumu and at the Dolfine Korando Educational Center. In Kuoyo, we piloted our first regular YUMP club in partnership with the secondary school and our evaluation showed improved mental health and resilience in participating students. We are looking forward to expand the program in 2022 to dozens of schools and other institutions.



### Our evaluation has shown that YUMP:

- strengthens youth resilience;
- enables to respond better to psychosocial stress;
- promotes problem solving;
- participants are more informed and so YUMP reduces the risk of teenage pregnancy and HIV;
- improves mental health





## High-School Bursary Program

### ACTIVITIES IN KENYA

The aim of this program is not only to give young people access to further education in local, state, county, and extra-county secondary schools, but also to support them beyond school with the YUMP mentoring program.

In 2021 the program has grown from 118 to 129 students. This year we focused more on improving program coordination and individual support. For this we have introduced a new modern database, which supports our team in looking after the large number of students.

In addition, we have introduced obligatory "parent days" after each semester (three times a year). On these days, we have an expanded team of psychologists and social workers on site to hold individual sessions with each student and their caregivers.

In addition, we have provided the beneficiaries with increased support, both at school and outside of school, through our social workers, which attributed to notable improvements in areas such as self-esteem, child-parent relationship and academic performance.

We supported  
**129**  
Youth to access  
High-School Education





## Success Story from Dennis\*

### HIGH-SCHOOL BURSARY PROGRAM

Dennis has been a Better Me bursary recipient since 2018 and graduated from high school last year. The 21-year-old is the eldest brother of five siblings. His parents are smallholder farmers and have barely enough income to pay for food, clothes and rent. The family could not afford the school fees for the high-school themselves. Dennis says "The help came just at the right time. I was about to drop out of school due to the lack of school fees".

Dennis' efforts have paid off. He has achieved such excellent academic results, that he now gets a scholarship from the state that enables him to go to university. Dennis, who has a passion for farming and studied science at school, wants to become an agricultural engineer. For this he will start his studies at the leading university for agricultural sciences in Kenya. Dennis says thank you for "the support I have received over the years. Now I have the opportunity to create a better future for myself. As an agricultural engineer, I will find good work to take care of myself and my family".

We are proud to have accompanied him to this point and wish him all the best on his way.

\*Name changed to protect the child

“

*The help came just at the right time. I was about to drop out of school due to the lack of school fees.*

”







## Chapo Festivals

### ACTIVITIES IN KENYA

This activity was developed in partnership with Jijenge Youth and Background Angel Network. The idea behind it was to create a way to uplift children who are in institutions and have been affected by different vulnerabilities; for example, some children have been in conflict with the law, and others are in schools that cater their various forms of disabilities.

This year, the team improved the Chapati Festival concept, by blending a celebratory meal (chapatis are a treat for children in Kenya) with YUMP activities like counseling, games and music. Sharing a meal is a universal way of promoting human connection and when combined with our YUMP activities, it creates the perfect platform to share joy.

The first edition was held at a rehabilitation school for boys, Ebenezer School. This is the institution that admits children rescued from the streets by Homeless of Kisumu. Our team managed to reach a total of 78 children, and 32 local volunteers participated in the activity. The next edition was held at the Kisumu Remand Home. Here we were able to interact with 48 boys and girls. 25 local volunteers participated in the activity. The Kisumu Remand Home is a special place to visit because it's a place that offers a second chance to children who have been in conflict with the law. The last edition of the Chapati Festival in 2021 was held at the Lutheran School for Children who have Mental Disabilities. This event was especially close to everyone's hearts. Here we reached a total of 155 children with 44 local volunteers.







# Education & Support for **220** vulnerable Children

## Madoma Korando Educational Centre

### ACTIVITIES IN KENYA

A central part of our work is the continuous support of the state-approved primary school in Korando. The school cares for over 220 orphaned and vulnerable children.

### Partnerships

Our Partnership Manager worked with Korando to establish the educational institution as a key stakeholder in Kisumu. This allowed Korando to be invited by the regional government to work on a law regarding child protection and child and youth empowerment. In addition, Korando has formed new partnerships with local organizations that promote teaching and learning at school, such as FabLab Winam. Around 150 students have gained insight into digital media, design thinking, and visual arts through this partnership. We are proud of our team in Kenya for forming such partnerships. These new partnerships also include Promoting Access to Community Education (PACE), which has supported the school with three additional teachers.

### Team building and Support for the Teachers

We continued to support Korando in mastering the transition to the new competency-based curriculum and in growing the team spirit between the teachers. For this we held a 2-day seminar for the 12 teachers and organized a weekly lunch in the Dome House. In addition, we installed partitioning walls in the staff room of the new school building, to create offices for the headmaster and deputy headmaster.

During Christmas, we organized festive activities for all children and prepared a small Christmas package for all Korando employees.



Team-Building Seminar



New Teachers Office



Fablab Workshop





## Adventure Camp

### ACTIVITIES IN KENYA

In spring 2021 we organized a 5-day adventure camp for over 70 children and young people. The participants were beneficiaries of the Korando Primary School as well as scholarship holders of our bursary program.

The long school closure and the negative economic development particularly impacted the weakest of our society. The poorest were cut off from virtual and other extracurricular learning opportunities, so the psychosocial burden on families and children was great. Due to the particularly negative impact of this situation, we planned the adventure camp.

The holiday camp offered the participants a special experience during this difficult time. The camp provided creative freedom and strengthened independence and personal responsibility, as well as team work.

Our innovative holiday camp even aroused the curiosity of the Social Welfare Office in Kisumu. The director paid us a joyful surprise visit and in her speech encouraged the participants to continue pursuing creative and innovative paths.







# Advocacy for the Rights of Children and Youth

## ACTIVITIES IN KENYA

With the appointment of a Partnerships Manager, we now also have the opportunity to publicly campaign for the rights of children and young people in a just and sustainable world. We have supported the Kisumu regional government by hosting the International Day of the Girl and actively participated in World Mental Health Day, World Clean Up Day, World Peace Day, World Woman's Day and other public events. In addition, we have contributed our experience and expertise to local legislation regarding children and young people's rights and have appeared in numerous television and radio interviews.

We are pleased that thanks to our team, Better Me is now a household name at grass-root and government levels within Kisumu.





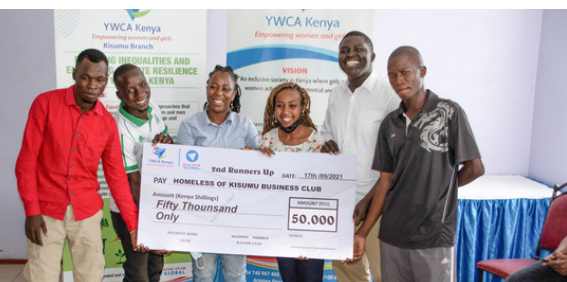
We Supported  
**300+**  
Homeless Children & Youth



## Homeless of Kisumu

### ACTIVITIES IN KENYA

Homeless of Kisumu is an initiative that was launched in August 2020 with the help of Better Me e.V. and works with various interest groups in Kisumu to support street children and homeless people in a dignified manner. Together we offer psychosocial support, free meals, medical care, sports, music, art, and economic empowerment activities. Better Me supported this initiative financially and, most importantly, technically through our team of social workers. The team is also supported by over 100 volunteers from Kisumu. In 2021, Homeless of Kisumu has continued to grow and an average of 200 street children come together every Saturday.



### Business Club

Last year the Business Club was formed to help older street youth generate income and get off the streets. This year we are incredibly happy that the club won a prize of Ksh50,000 (around €400) in seed capital to open a social business, that up-cycles waste materials.

### Social Work

This year, Homeless of Kisumu has again managed to reintegrate 10 more children into their families. The children and families continue to be cared for and receive support to meet their basic needs.

### Team Building

Our team also held a team building seminar for 25 local volunteers to strengthen the work of Homeless of Kisumu.



Children were reintegrated  
into their families





## Success Story from Tim\*

HOMELESS OF KISUMU



“

Now I can live  
at home and go  
to school again

”

12-year-old Tim comes from a village near Kisumu. He lived on the streets of Kisumu after running away from home.

Eventually, Tim found his way to Homeless of Kisumu and slowly opened up to our social workers.

After our social workers visited the family, the family started working through their conflicts in family therapy. Now, Tim and his family have found a way to live together again and he is now going back to school.

Homeless of Kisumu, continues to offer support to Tim and the family and continues to evaluate the situation.

Tim "is happy about the support of Homeless of Kisumu" and wants to continue to "live at home and stay in school". The team will continue to do everything they can to ensure that Tim achieves his goal.



## Summary

Tim's story shows why it is so important for Better Me e.V. to support Homeless of Kisumu with administrative costs. Thanks to our help, social workers can build long-term relationships with street children and their families.

The long-term work of our social workers gives us an effective way to improve the lives of the street children.

\*Name changed to protect the child



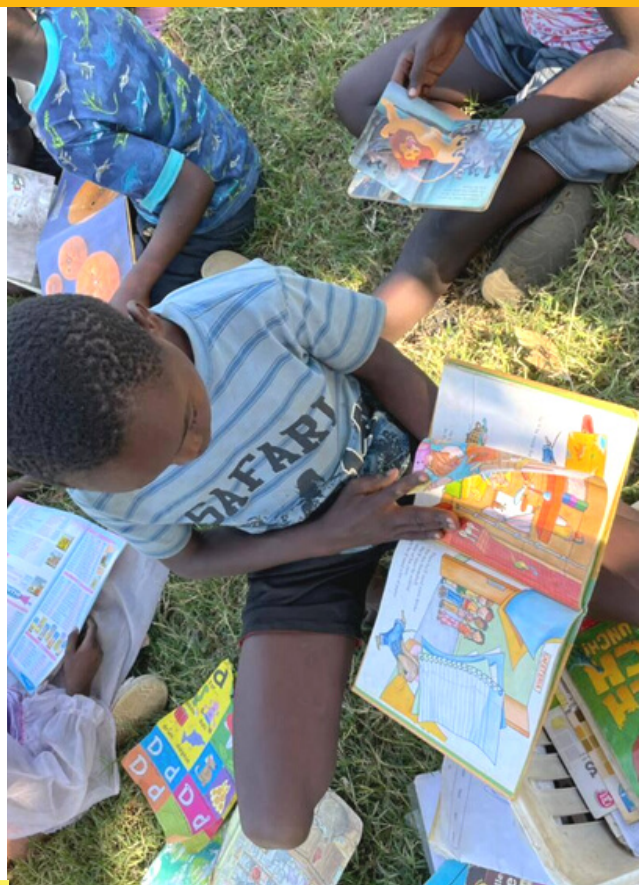
## Dewo Ngima (Partner)

### ACTIVITIES IN KENYA

#### Mobile Library

We support Dewo Ngima in maintaining their mobile library, which mainly enables school dropouts to continue to learn independently.

The volunteers from Dewo Ngima reach an average of 40 children per day and after a long break due to COVID, the mobile library was able to continue this year.



#### Woman Tailor Project

We further developed the tailoring project in 2021 through our partnership with Dewo Ngima. Sewing work gives vulnerable mothers in the Kisumu slums a way to earn money. Among other things, the sewing workshop made over 800 bags for our Better Me Christmas fundraiser.

#### School Fee Bursaries

Furthermore, we helped Dewo Ngima financially to enable 8 students to go to school. This year three of them have successfully completed primary school. One of the graduates achieved such excellent academic results that he was called to a national high-school - Kisumu Boys High School. We are happy to continue to enable vulnerable children to access education.

**850**  
**bags**  
**were made for us by the**  
**sewing workshop**





## ARMSTRONG WOMAN EMPOWERMENT

### ACTIVITIES IN KENYA

In 2020 we partnered with Armstrong Women Empowerment Center. Armstrong is active in the informal settlements around Kisumu. The organization is run by the residents of the settlements on a voluntary basis and works together with the women and girls in the community to improve their situation together.

#### Project Milkka

In 2021 we supported Armstrong with the implementation of the "Milkka" project and reached over 300 young mothers. Milkka promotes breastfeeding and helps the young mothers to earn their own income.

#### Girls Mentorship

Additionally, we ran our YUMP mentoring program for Armstrong beneficiaries this year and more than 110 students took part.

Together  
we reached

410

Girls & Woman





We have  
**54**  
active  
Child-Sponsorships

## Child Sponsorship Program (CSP)

### FUNDRAISING

Fundraising is an important part of our work. We want to build long-term partnerships with donors that allow for continuous work. In addition, it is important to us to maintain our independence and to attract a large number of sponsors.

We are incredibly grateful to our child sponsors for remaining loyal to us this year. Despite the difficult economic situation caused by COVID-19, we have managed to expand the child sponsorship program. At the time the report was published, we had 54 child sponsorships, which is 10 more than last year.

All children in our sponsorship program come from the Korando Education Center and either live with their families, relatives, or with foster families.

The contributions from the sponsorship program do not go to individual children, but continue to be bundled to finance our project work and thus benefit everyone. The monthly contributions from the sponsorship program are extremely important for financial planning and also ensure the independence of Better Me e.V.







## Finances

### BALANCE

We started 2021 with an opening balance of €17,248 and ended it with €7,528. Our total result for 2021 is -€9,720.

Balance	2021	2020
Closing balance December 31st	€7,528	€17,248

### INCOME

Income for 2021 was €57,936. We did not receive any special purpose donations or government funding during this period. The main sources of income were donations, the child sponsorship program, and our volunteer program.

Income per Department	2021	2020
Income Charity Work	€35,436	€29,465
Income Wealth Management	-	-
Income Charitable Business (Statutory Purpose)	-	-
Income Charitable Business (Volunteer and Internship Program)	€22,500	€1,485
<b>Total</b>	<b>€57,936</b>	<b>€30,950</b>

### EXPENSES

The expenses amounted to €67,656. The overwhelming majority of €57,859 was used for direct project implementation in Kenya.

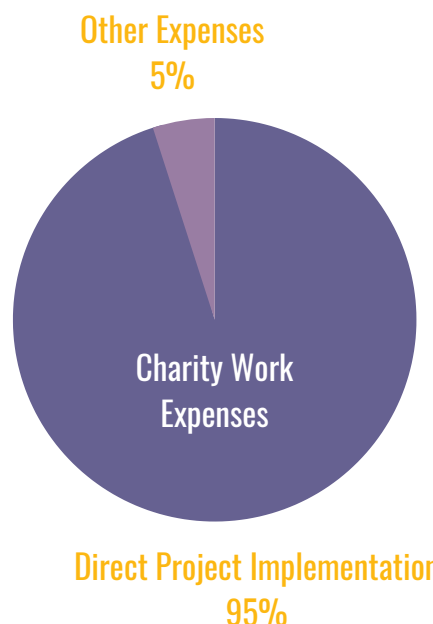
Expenses per Department	2021	2020
Expenses Charity Work	€57,859	€30,777
Expenses Wealth Management	-	-
Expenses Charitable Business (Statutory Purpose)	-	-
Expenses Charitable Business (Volunteer and Internship Program)	€9,797	€873
<b>Total</b>	<b>€67,656</b>	<b>€31,650</b>

# Profit and Loss Account

## FINANCES

In Germany we distinguish between charity work and charitable business. Thus, our charitable business, which is mainly our volunteer program, has their own income and expenses.

We are happy to share that with our charity work we used 95% of all received donations for direct project implementation. The majority of the remaining 5% was spent on payment provider and transaction fees, as well as insurance.



Profit and Loss Account	2021	2020
<b>Income Charity Work</b>		
- Donations	€23,788	€17,553
- Child Sponsorship Program	€11,648	€11,912
<b>Total Income Charity Work</b>	<b>€35,436</b>	<b>€29,465</b>
<b>Expenses Charity Work</b>		
- Direct Project Implementation		
- High-School Bursaries (129 Students)	€29,858	€1,304
- Partner Support, Staff Salaries, Outreach Activities	€21,375	€27,857
- Office Construction	€3,758	-
- Transaction Fees (Paypal, Stripe, GoCardless, Transferwise)	€1,206	€791
- Donor Relationships	€27	€106
- Legal and Government Fees	€83	-
- Insurance	€549	€549
- Operational Costs (Website, Software)	€160	€170
- Travel Costs	€844	-
<b>Total Expenses Charity Work</b>	<b>€57,859</b>	<b>€30,777</b>
<b>Grant Total Charity Work</b>	<b>-€22,423</b>	<b>-€1,312</b>
<b>Income Charitable Business</b>		
- Volunteer and Internship Program	€20,820	€1,485
- Canvas Bag Sales	€1,680	-
<b>Total Income Charitable Business</b>	<b>€22,500</b>	<b>€1,485</b>
<b>Expenses Charitable Business</b>		
- Accommodation and Catering	€1,902	€464
- Dome House Renovation	€3,017	-
- Commissions (Volunteer and Internship Agencies)	€665	-
- Volunteer Coordination	€1,512	€409
- Production and Shipping of Canvas Bags	€2,701	-
<b>Total Expenses Charitable Business</b>	<b>€9,797</b>	<b>€873</b>
<b>Grant Total Charitable Business</b>	<b>€12,703</b>	<b>€612</b>
<b>Grant Total Better Me e.V.</b>	<b>-€9,720</b>	<b>-€700</b>





We say  
**THANK YOU**  
and wish you all  
a happy

**20plentyNEW**



## Outlook

### OUR WORK FOR 2022 AND BEYOND

Thanks to the fantastic work of our team and partners, as well as the constant discourse with our beneficiaries, we were able to develop clear priorities for the future.

In 2022, Better Me e.V. will focus on strengthening and financing the bursary and mentoring programs, thereby placing social-emotional learning, talent promotion, and the personal development of our beneficiaries at the heart of our work.

Furthermore, we will continue to strengthen our Kisumu office with our internship program and are actively working on grant proposals to finance our main programs. We are also looking for partnerships with companies and foundations that are attractive and profitable for everyone involved. Ultimately, we want to build long-term relationships that allow diverse and innovative collaborations.

We thank you for your support and wish you good health and a great new year!

Torsten Kremser  
Chairman of the Board, Better Me e.V.