

## THE ASSOCIATION

### *The initiator*

Dipl.-Ing. Diébédo Francis Kéré, architect, chairman and founder of the association *Schulbausteine für Gando e.V.* (School Bricks for Gando) was born in the village of Gando in Burkina Faso. At the age of seven he was sent to school in the city. Thanks to a scholarship and some luck he came to Germany. After an apprenticeship as a development aid worker he graduated and studied architecture at the Technical University of Berlin.

Strongly attached to his native country, Francis Kéré was able to profit from his international experience and act as an emissary. His main goal is to improve the social, cultural and economical situation of the village community. The project he realized in 2001 was the building of a modern school for his village that combined existing local teaching traditions with western influences. In 2004 the school was internationally acknowledged by being given the *Aga Khan Award for Architecture*.

In November 2005 he started to build an extension building since the initial school building is unable now to shelter all the students that want to attend school.

Besides working on development projects Francis Kéré is an assistant lecturer for architecture at the Technical

University sensitizing his students for the special demands of development aid projects.



*Francis Kéré amidst students at a fundraising event*



## Schulbausteine für Gando e.V.



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## *The foundation of the association*

### *How it all began...*

What had started as a request of the village community for a favor of one of its members took shape at the coffee shop of the Technical University of Berlin.

Back then when his village community asked him whether he could help saving their old ramshackle school building Diébédo Francis Kéré, a native of Gando in Burkina Faso, was studying Architecture in Berlin.

To raise funds that were necessary for the construction of a new school he persuaded his fellow students to donate some money symbolically buying one or two bricks for the school project instead of drinking another cup of coffee.

Eventually, he and some friends founded the non-profit association *Schulbausteine für Gando e. V.* (School Bricks for Gando).

The prime goal of the association is the advancement of school education, health and development aid in Gando. Since 1999 the association is the basis for many projects not only helping the people in Gando but the population of the entire region and elsewhere.

Moreover, Francis Kéré founded an architecture firm for planning and designing projects for the association and other non profit organizations in the field of development aid for the Third World.

### *The idea behind it all*

In Africa traditionally every family member is responsible for the well being of its family. In Francis Kéré's homeland a member of the community is indebted to the community as a whole. Every single person is crucial for the survival of the community.

In case a member leaves the community in search of a better life he/she tries to make up for his/her absence by providing financial aid.

Diébédo Francis Kéré is in this exact situation and wants to fulfill his social duty by being there for his people.

But there is a difference in his care compared to that of others who live outside of Gando: Francis Kéré aims to provide his family and his community with more than just money. He wants to find long-term solutions that will change negative structures and make Gando a better place to live in; not only for those who live in it now but for future generations also.



## *The school points the way to a better future!*



*Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day.  
Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.*

### *The goals*

In all our projects we apply the principle of helping people to help themselves. Of course it is important to supply hungry people with food. Especially if there is a dearth after a natural disaster.

But genuine sustainable development aid should focus first and foremost on long-term considerations. We must not wait to act until the catastrophe happens. Otherwise our help backfires and we only create long-term dependencies.

In other words: Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime. That is why we have adopted "the school points the way to a better future" as our motto.

That means: New improvements will always be established in the school first. In all projects the school will be the place where the new generation grows up with certain improvements and independently introduces its families to the positive changes. Some changes will not be immediately welcomed by the village community but there will be a generation that naturally takes advantages of the improvements we introduce in Gando. This is what characterizes sustainable development aid.