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April 2016 | NEWS FROM KOLPING INTERNATIONAL

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International News

Dear Kolping Sisters and Brothers,
Dear friends of KOLPING INTERNATIONAL,

These International News have to report about new beginnings and losses. While in one part of the world – in Ecuador – people are buried under the ruins of their homes because a devastating earthquake hit them without warning, young people in India can start a new phase of their lives through the completion of occupational training. Linking this tragedy and this ray of hope is the bond of international solidarity, which runs through all Kolping Associations.

Thanks to generous donations, the Head Office was able to provide rapid help for Ecuador – even though the rebuilding and the grief will accompany the local people for a long time. Through Kolping, every year thousands of people in India get the opportunity to mobilize their strong points – by means of occupational training or small loans.

However, it is above all the power of the community which comforts and opens new perspectives. These News illustrate this power which is generated in Kolping Families in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Good reading and Treu Kolping,

Your Markus Demele.

International Donating by searching the Internet using benefind.de

A number of search engines exist, but usually only a few are used. The search engine benefind.de provides a large number of search results and serves a good purpose at the same time. Anyone who performs the naturally free web search using benefind.de will generate 0.5 of a cent per enquiry for the previously selected charity. And: When making an on-line purchase via benefind.de, up to 10% of the purchase value go to the organization of choice – for example to Kolping International. In 2015 around 600.00 Euro were ‘search-generated’ for the international work of the Kolping Society. Establishing benefind for Kolping International is very simple: 1) one makes benefind the default search engine by simply entering www.benefind.de into the browser. 2) One selects Kolping International as the organization to be supported. Without much effort one is thus doing something good for projects around the world.

Ecuador - International

Help after the earthquake

After the devastating earthquake in Ecuador, Kolping International provided its local partners with 40,000.00 € emergency relief. The Kolping Society of Ecuador with presently around 1,500.00 members has existed since 1989. The provided money is to support the affected Kolping Families in their emergency needs and the re-building of their homes.

On April 17, the 7.8 strength quake, which devastated large parts of the coastal region west of Quito, has cost at least 570 lives. More than 7,000 people were injured, and much of the population became homeless – including many people from the Kolping projects.

Jeanette Calvachi Noboa, the Managing Director of Kolping Ecuador, happened to be at a Kolping conference in Portoviejo when the earthquake destroyed large parts of the city. "It was terrifying to see how the ground moved like in waves, and everything fell around us. There was also the terrible fear that a tsunami might follow." But the quake destroyed or heavily damaged houses not only in Portoviejo. Kolping Ecuador has already organized emergency aid measures for the quake victims in several Kolping Families and wants to assist with the reconstructions in the near future. The entire international Kolping community is linked to the victims and their families in prayer. We accompany the rebuilding in solidarity.

Germany

Berlin Kolping Youth awarded the 2016 Franz-Bobzien-Prize

As part of the 71th anniversary of the liberation of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp, the prize was awarded by the Brandenburg Minister President Dr. Dietmar Woidke at the Orangery in the park of Oranienburg Castle. The choice fell on the trans-generational commitment "LEST WE FORGET – voluntary; trans-generational; enduring;" of the Diocesan Kolping Society of Berlin.

From 32 projects, the jury unanimously chose the Kolping commitment to the Ravensbrück memorial. During his introduction to the award ceremony, the mayor of the town of Oranienburg, Hans-Joachim Laesicke, emphasized the importance of such initiatives, which deal with the difficult topic of Nationalist Socialism. In this day and age, such work is to encourage people and be a counter-example to the many "Bad News". Tonight the public eye should fall on this positive commitment. At the same time, there was an "evening walk of concerned citizens". According to Laesicke, today's award ceremony is to be a counter-demonstration for a peaceful and tolerant co-existence.

In his tribute, Minister President Dr. Dietmar Woidke said that such a project can help strengthen our democracy and the idea of tolerance. He most sincerely thanked the Kolping Youth in the Diocesan Kolping Society of Berlin for promoting this project for years. This project excels through its consistency. Next he asked: "Is there a better way to counter the trivialization of history, right-wing populist ideas, and the tendency to forget? I hardly think so!"

Germany

Kolping thinks ahead with regard to the world of work

The world of work is in transition once again. After the steam engine, the assembly line, and the computer, a new revolution is under way: The "Industry 4.0". This observation is made by the Board of Kolping Germany, and a working aid is being published on this topic. The seminar paper "World of work and social issues" presents four selected studies, which deal with the impact of the so-called "fourth industrial revolution" on the world of work.

The term "Industry 4.0" – which has established itself as a headline – masks the digitalization and cross-linking of commercial production processes. Objects become intelligent, machines talk to one another, and data travel in the clouds. One is talking about the "Internet of Things".

Let us illustrate it with an example: Even today there are a few driverless tractors plowing farmlands in Germany. A computer steers and operates the agricultural machine via GPS. And it not only knows where plowing is needed, it also knows when the time is right. Because it is linked to sensors in the soil and a weather station – and it naturally informs the next machine that the seed can now be spread. In this scenario – the imagination is limitless – the farmer becomes the warden, he is the master of his intelligently cross-linked machines. These developments have, of course, massive ramifications on employment.

One therefore also talks about the "World of Work 4.0". Employment conditions become more flexible, working models become digitalized, and demands are escalating. Some US studies already suggest that twenty years from now around 50% of the workforce will be replaced by computers and machines.

Kolping Germany is also participating in the discussion about the future world of work. Since the times of Blessed Fr. Kolping, our Association has the mandate to actively co-shape the world of work. The expert committee has therefore declared "The World of Work and Social Issues" as the priority topic of the current year. It is an important topic which will affect people all around the world.

Austria

Multi-faceted commitment to people

In April the General Secretary of the International Kolping Society, Dr. Markus Demele, became more knowledgeable about the work of Kolping Austria. The core of the travel program consisted of attending a meeting of the Austrian Executive Committee, talks with National President Christine Leopold and National Secretary Wolfgang Engelmaier about the priorities in the collaboration between Kolping Austria and Kolping International, as well as visits to different Kolping facilities in Lower Austria and Vienna.

In the Kolping House "Living Together" in Wien-Leopoldstadt, Markus Demele started to get an idea about the generation-linking work of Kolping Austria. In Mistelbach, the General Secretary was welcome in a total of four Kolping facilities: in the local women's refuge, in the establishment (home and workshop) for people with disabilities, as well as in the House Mistelbach, which is dedicated to the "classic" Kolping tasks of accommodating youths, but it is also a place for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

"Kolping Austria understands how to present the image of a social-issue-related organization and, at the same time, to pay a lot of attention to the strengthening of the Association", said Markus Demele, impressed by the implementation of Kolping ideas in Austria.

A wonderful surprise was also the message of a great political honour for Christine Leopold and, at the same time, a gratifying tribute of appreciation for Kolping Austria's work. On April 22, Chancellor Werner Faymann appointed her to the Economic Curia in the Federal Chancellery. This committee advises the leaders of the federal agency "Statistic Austria" in fundamental questions. In her acceptance speech, she referred to the responsibility of the members of this body for the social cohesion in Austria and beyond: "Our society must not become unglued into individual parts, but the common element must be maintained – because we can master the challenges of today and tomorrow only together."

With the appointment as a member of the Economic Curia comes the professional title of "Kommerzialarat" (honourary title conferred on business magnates and financiers). The International Kolping Society sends heartfelt congratulation to our Kolping Sister.

Romania

Laudato Si implemented: Pilot project to reduce energy consumption in the Kolping Hotel Kronstadt/Brasov

In his encyclical *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis writes in # 26: "There is an urgent need to develop policies so that, in the next few years, the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gases can be drastically reduced (...)." The Kolping Hotel in Kronstadt/Brasov wants to put this into practice and has become an important player in the context of a European pilot project with regard to the voluntary commitment to reduce energy consumption.

As part of the project "Nearly Zero Energy Hotels", which is co-financed by the European Union's program "Intelligent Energy – Europe (IEE)", a total of 16 hotels have been selected, which have subjected themselves to an energy consumption audit. These hotels have taken concrete environmentally friendly steps and committed themselves to make more investments to reduce the hotel's carbon dioxide emissions. Now in the spring of 2016, the project results were presented to the public in the building of the European Parliament in Brussels, under the auspices of the European Parliamentarian Maria Grapini. Kolping Romania was represented by the hotel employee Irina VasIU-Eris. Here it becomes clear once again: Kolping is not just talking about the Catholic Social Teachings, but it actually puts them into practice.

Uruguay**Development of the program “Living together without violence”**

The President of the “Foundation for Reconciliation”, Leonel Narvaez Gomez, visited Uruguay in April. Narvaez is a tireless advocate for human rights and has stood up successfully for, among other causes, the release of hostages held by the FARC in Colombia. He had been invited by Kolping Uruguay and Caritas, who have been running the program “Living Together without Violence” for the past eight years. Narvaez and the Foundation for Reconciliation have been awarded the UNESCO Prize in Education for Peace. Based on the insight that the conflicts and violence in today’s society can really not be solved by even more violence or police operations, the program works primarily through education.

During his stay, Narvaez gave talks on the topic “Living together without violence: the challenge of restoring social cohesion” and lectured in Maldonado, Florida, and Canelones. He also met with various people of the Ministry of the Interior, prisoners, businessmen, teachers, and social workers. Especially during the visit to the penitentiary in Maldonado, where Narvaez and the Board of Kolping Uruguay met with the administrators and juvenile prisoners, their statements and experiences made it clear what changes are generated by the project for their personal lives. With the support of Kolping Uruguay, more and more people become aware that education can mean not only development but also peace.

Honduras**Project diversity to continue in the coming years**

To respond to the most varying needs in the country has become the program of Kolping Honduras. Not long ago, Oscar Cardinal Andres Rodriguez Maradiaga called on people to not resign themselves to the daily murders being committed in Honduras, through which “a whole nation is killing itself”. This quote was stated by the Archbishop of Tegucigalpa as a warning. The clergyman cited the exceptionally high rate of murders as a “bleeding to death” of the country in Central America. And the numbers prove him right: In Honduras, a country controlled by drug and gang wars, the crime rate has reached a peak in the current year. Two metropolitan areas – San Pedro Sula and the twin cities of Tegucigalpa-Comayagüela – are among the ten most dangerous cities in the world due to their annual murder rates of 111, i.e. 73 murders per 100,000 inhabitants. One focus of the work done by Kolping Honduras is therefore working with young people. They are to be made aware that the organized crime in the country should not be considered to be normal. There would always be the danger for the young people to become involved themselves in confrontations between gangs. However, topics such as environmental protection are also part of the educational program. At the end of each course, every participant will, of course, receive a certificate. Kolping Honduras also continues its collaboration with the School of Agriculture in Zamorano. Here Kolping Families receive training in the efficient and sustainable cultivation of various crops. Different projects and yet one objective: economic security and peace for the people of Honduras.

India**Pre-cast concrete parts lead to independence**

One example from among hundreds of the work done in the largest National Kolping Society outside of Europe with just under 30,000 members: In Kancheepuram five young men attended one week of intensive training in the production of pre-cast concrete slabs. Despite the extremely high temperatures, the young men from the Leeli Kolping Family’s youth group picked up the necessary skills with great enthusiasm and a lot of diligence. The concept of the course was to start with theoretical training, then proceed with how to procure the ingredients, as well as the assembly of slabs and supporting bars, and eventually the production of load-bearing walls.

The participants were confident that with the knowledge acquired and the diploma in their pockets they will be able to take the step into independence. The new business establishments are accompanied by feasibility studies of the Thanjavur welfare organization, some of whose staff are also Kolping members. Kolping International wishes the future young entrepreneurs every success.

South Africa

National Convention with new Kolping Families

On the fourth weekend in April, the National Convention of Kolping South Africa took place at the Kolping-Guesthouse in Cape Town. After a decline in membership was recorded in recent years, the delegates were able to enjoy a number of new Kolping Families this year. They were ceremoniously presented with their Kolping-shirts by the National Co-ordinator Judith Turner. The new members were welcomed with great applause.

In a greeting message to the Convention, General Secretary Dr. Markus Demele wrote: "Among the most impressive memories of my work for Kolping International is still the encounter with Kolping members in Johannesburg two years ago. Here 60 or 70 years old members of European descent met with members from poorer neighbourhoods and townships. Encounters took place with people from various ethnic backgrounds, people with and without disabilities, people of different sexual orientation and most unequal family backgrounds. But they were people who are sharing the same values and thus come together in the Kolping Family. This constitutes the specialness and beauty of Kolping. This is surely also the way of the Rainbow-Nation: people from different backgrounds come together and respect one another as sisters and brothers." With more Kolping Families, Kolping South Africa will become even more colourful.