

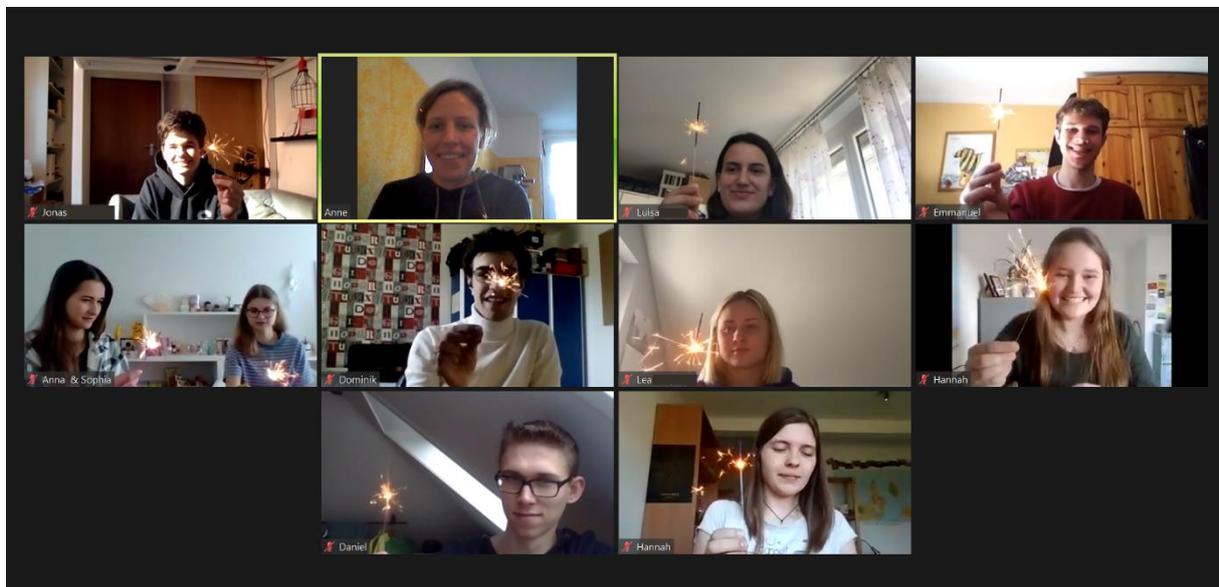
Dear Partners!

Some weeks have passed since you received our first newsletter which we initiated to keep you updated about our activities with the MaZ team in Germany. Since this time, again some things happened about which we would like to tell you in this letter.

News from the MaZ team

The MaZ Team, which is currently represented by Anne Arenhövel and Hannah Ivens, started the new year with optimism and positive energy! Three digital information seminars, for which the MaZ Team was assisted by some MaZ who returned in the last years, were organized for young people who are interested to take part in the MaZ program. Finally, by the end of February, seven new MaZ decided to start their preparation with us for a year abroad. Anna, Dominik, Emmanuel, Jonas, Lea, Luisa und Sophia plan to start their mission this year! Despite the many uncertainties due to the Covid pandemic these young people are motivated to experience the MaZ-adventure.

And although our first course “One-World” could “just” be undertaken in a digital format, it was a real success. Besides getting to know each other, the MaZ dealt with topics like global distribution of power, trade structures, and looking from a critical perspective at development cooperation and voluntary work. Highlights of the seminar were a shared dinner with Pizza (an Italian food, which is a thin and flat yeast dough with tomato sauce, optional some more toppings like vegetables or meat, and cheese on top), a game for which the MaZ had to get outside to do some creative and funny exercises during a walk, as well as our monthly MaZ-online-mass.



A moment with sparkling sticks (which can be used indoors without danger) at the end of the seminar.

How the upcoming seminars will be like - whether we can meet in person or have to do them in a digital format as well - depends a lot on the situation concerning the pandemic in Germany. At the moment, the numbers of infected people are decreasing so that some restrictions were eased a bit. Schools started again to offer in-classroom teaching. Students are back in school at least every second week with classes being divided into two groups; on the other days they continue to have lessons by

digital means. Following some special requirements more shops were allowed to open again for customers. By this, at least some kind of our usual everyday life is possible again.

Concerning vaccinations, in Germany people who are older than 80 years, nursing staff, and by now also childcare workers are prioritized. It seems possible that at the end of this year everybody who wants to, will be vaccinated. It is not obligatory to get vaccinated in Germany.

At the moment, the MaZ team is waiting for the new rules for travelling. For all countries, to which our MaZ are sent to usually, a travel warning is still issued. As soon as these are eased, the MaZ team will contact you, our partners, directly to see whether and under which circumstances a MaZ-year can be possible, starting from September or October 2021.

So by now we still just need to have patience, not lose our hope and keep on looking to the future with a positive mindset!

A look back – Interview with Jule

Who are you and what is your connection to MaZ?

Hi, my name is Jule and I am 20 years old. I spent my MaZ year 2019/20 in Cochabamba, Bolivia. There I was at first working in a kindergarden, called Guarderia, where I played and drew with the young children. Furthermore, I visited the women's prison until December twice a week together with my host mother. There we made postcards which are sold in Germany afterwards to give the women a small salary. After the winter break I changed my whereabouts to Sipe Sipe where I helped older children (12-15 years) with their homework.

How was the sudden departure for you?

At first I didn't really realize what was happening. One Monday when we arrived, the children were already sent back home due to Covid-19. So we couldn't say goodbye unfortunately. Everything was so uncertain: There were police patrols everywhere, the borders were closed, and I asked myself: "Are we even going to be able to get home under these circumstances?". Actually, I would have liked to stay for longer. But the situation in Sipe Sipe and also, that my work with the children was not possible anymore within the regulations in the lockdown, created an atmosphere far from normal anyways. The travel back to Germany was quite hectic and without long planning. At first, my only information was that I and the other two MaZ who stayed in Bolivia should take a plane on the following Friday. On Wednesday we cooked a typical German dinner which we ate with my host family and their relatives. During the dinner, we received the information that we would need to leave with a bus to Santa Cruz already on the next day, because to plane from Cochabamba was booked out. There was no time left to think much about everything, and on the next day my host family accompanied me on my way to the bus stop. It was after the departure for me to finally realize that I am really on my way back to Germany.



Jule and Erik, a boy from the kindergarden, are dancing in the yard.

How was the time after your return here in Germany?

That's hard to describe. Everything felt so familiar as it is my usual environment. Everything was just the way I had left it behind and I could spend lots of time with my family. During the lockdowns in Germany there was not much one could do anyways.

What are you doing now?

I am studying agricultural sciences at the University of Bonn. With this I am dealing with topics in biology and chemistry, how to grow plants, ecology, and animal sciences.

Is there any special experience during your MaZ-year which you would like to share with us?

Christmas was particularly nice for me. When I thought about it before, I couldn't imagine to get into a Christmas-feeling, especially due to the warm weather. I celebrated the feast with my host family, my host father's parents, and his two sisters and their families. In this community, I felt comfortable and welcome which made the Christmas feast so special for me.

A look to the future – Planning the upcoming Pentecost-meeting

At the moment, the MaZ who were abroad from 2018 to 2019 are planning our Pentecost-meeting.

It has tradition that for the weekend of the Pentecost feast old and young/new MaZ, with or without families and friends, come together from places all around Germany. We celebrate Pentecost together in

Knechtsteden as Pentecost is the feast

of the holy ghost and therefore a central feast for the congregation of the Spiritans. In the past years mostly 40 to 50 people took part. We have some activities together with the fathers, for example the High Mass and the parish festival. Furthermore, some group activities are offered which are always prepared by the MaZ who returned two years before. These deal thematically with one main topic, for which we chose "Open my eyes so that I can see all the wonderful things in your teachings" (Ps 119, 18) for this year.



MaZ Meeting during the weekend of Pentecost in 2019.

Mostly, the meeting is thought to give some room to exchange experiences; to meet each other again, talk and take a lot of the MaZ-spirit, which became something special for all of us already during the preparation for our mission, back home to our every day's life again. Among all MaZ and friends of MaZ we have this really unique feeling of being part of a great community.

Due to the current situation concerning Covid-19 we are not sure yet, whether this year's meeting can be done as usual in Knechtsteden, but we are also working on a digital alternative.

We are looking forward to it in any case!

Dear partners, you can see: We don't let the pandemic take the many bigger and smaller gleams of hope, to which one can look forward, away from us, and the MaZ-spirit can be lived even during a time with social distancing! We hope, that you also discover such sparks of hope, which brighten up the look to the future, once in a while in your everyday life.

We keep you in our prayers and sent warm greetings from the many different places in Germany!

Sophie, Silke, Judith und Anne (on behalf of the former MaZ and the MaZ team)