

## **From orphan to RDO project coordinator: Fidelis Filipatali - A life story from a remote rural area in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania**

Fidelis was always - as he calls himself a "sunshine baby" - a lucky child. One who has always had great luck in his life. Very early as a small "Toto" he lost his African mum and grew up together with his siblings as a half-orphan in an area that lives mainly from Subsistenz farming. Children usually learn farming traditionally from their parents. In the project region of Mdabulo and Kilolo, however, HIV is widespread, so the orphan rate is particularly high. Whole "child families" are left without parents and no longer learn farming to the extent they want to "get through":

His first great luck describes Fidelis in his cheerful manner as follows: it had happened during a sudden thunderstorm in the field work. He would have been struck by the lightning that hit a tree, unless little Fidelis had been so "annoying" to his father that he had to go home with him immediately. The father would rather have waited under the tree until the storm had passed ...

Fidelis has managed to find his destiny through small detours (Priest Seminar - later retreat, then training as a Social Worker / Business Administration) as project coordinator of the Tanzanian NGO Rural Development Organization (RDO).

In the beginnings of the operations of the One World Group Schlins / Röns Fidelis attracted attention as a teenager at agricultural workshops, where he became involved as a translator. At that time, the parish priest was the contact person for the Vorarlberg project staff.

Very soon a sponsor and supporter for Fidelis was found, who supported him financially through the entire training period.

As part of the expansion and further development of the projects of the One World Group, a partner NGO was founded in Tanzania: the RDO Mdabulo (Rural Development Organization). Fidelis was appointed as project coordinator. With a great deal of skill, perseverance and full commitment he is committed to the individual areas of RDO:

- Agriculture Projects
- Home-Based Orphans - Funding Programs
- VTCs (Vocational Training Centers) where craft training (metal, wood, plumber, electrician, building trade), tourism and housekeeping or seamstresses are trained - all with basic program agriculture.
- Water cooperatives with spring sockets for drinking water supply to the villages
- Student hostels that can already receive themselves
- Various products such as agricultural yields, animal breeding and sale, products from the wood and metal workshops

Fidelis is the Finance Coordinator and Manager, who is mediating and controlling the various project teams of RDO.

Meanwhile, the projects and the workings of the RDO have become known in Tanzania and throughout Africa. Fidelis was finally selected for an international university agricultural online education, where he successfully completed his 3 - week graduation course in Wageningen / NL in October.

His story is an African success story that lets many young people from his homeland look to the future with hope. They seek less in the crowded cities where they have no better chance than drop outs. Motivated through Rural Development Organization they are better involved in their villages also with a lot of volunteer work in the projects of the RDO.