



Tom Kagerer comes from Germany and brings 10 years of management experience with BMW.

He left his position as management consultant within a BMW Financial Services transformation project in Munich to become a fellow and work as Chief Project Manager with Heart in Cape Town, South Africa.

Why did you join the program?

„After 10 years working in the car industry I had the strong feeling to change my career and apply my professional skills to help others. I wanted to be part of a work force trying to make this world a better place to live. Hence, I was looking for an opportunity in the social/environmental sector.“

How is your current work different from what you used to do before?

„All skills gained in my management role at BMW are highly valuable for Heart. To work towards a vision, organizational goals or milestones and measure success according to meaningful metrics is vital in an NGO environment, too. Nevertheless, the difference is that things can be changed a lot faster than in a big corporation. Being flexible in terms of your role is very important. Finally, I am strongly involved in the decisions of Heart’s new business model. Working on a strategic level for the organization and providing input for a holistic approach to run the business is something far more responsible than I have ever had to do before.“

During the fellowship – what motivates you?

„Being part of a dynamic team of change makers – people who are creative and professional whilst having fun – is highly motivating for me. Working towards a model that has the potential to change giving in Africa is the most responsible and interesting job I have ever done.“

What has been the most touching moment so far?

„Being part of a food tent build and having seen how needs of underprivileged people can be satisfied was the best reward ever for anything I did at work so far. You cannot imagine the big smiles I have seen. (A food tent helps to grow vegetables a lot faster than normal; it supplements food for around 50 adults and 80 children.).

On my private initiative, I formed a small project team to support an AIDS orphanage in Khayelitsha. I raised money and collected donations to help 25 orphans living in the a poor community in Cape Town’s biggest township. The project team around Zanokhanyo is feeling a strong responsibility to support local people. In 2009, there are 1.2 million AIDS orphans in South Africa. Within the next 2-3 years this number will double. To see the kids living without parents in a township, struggling to get their tummies fed only once a day, was probably the most touching moment so far.“

To whom would you recommend the program?

„A fellow has to work in a highly independent, solution oriented way and must be dedicated to the greater purpose. A fellow must also be aware that he operates in a different cultural environment. Pragmatism is also important, as the lack of resources does not always allow the full blown solution one may have in mind – remembering the way things have been done in the corporate world.“

Heart, Cape Town, South Africa



Problem

A growing number of NGOs and social enterprises were established in South Africa to respond social and environmental problems as backdrop of prevalent poverty, inequality, poor education, AIDS, and environmental degradation. Organizations are often hindered from achieving sustainability, due to two major problems: lack of a sustainable funding base, and/or lack of organizational and managerial capacity.

Solution

Heart’s work focuses on three elements: (1) building social enterprises, (2) creating social investment opportunities, and (3) raising awareness through social media. It acts as an incubator of a unique portfolio of 12 distinct social enterprises, to address some of the most pressing issues.

Impact

Heart reached approximately 400’000 people in 2008 through its 12 portfolio organizations. Within the next 3 years, Heart aims to be able to reach 1.7 million people. This increase should be achieved by scaling up existing projects as well as projects that are currently still in the development stage.

What does Heart say about Tom?

„It has been my great honour to work alongside Tom over several months, night and day. He is a global change maker of the highest order. His meticulous attention to detail and unmatched passion for social transformation in Africa has resulted in the preparation of a business case that has the potential change giving in Africa forever. Tom has a unique ability to change lives - he has changed my life and the lives of everyone in our team - we are now ready to change the lives of our country’s neediest people.“ *Peter Shrimpton, CEO Heart*