

## 2020 in retrospect by Kurt Schibler



"We take it as it comes and make the best of the situation".

Firstly, things turn out differently... and secondly, than you think. On 14 February 2020, I travelled to Peru for the umpteenth time. On 14 March, I was invited to the wedding celebration of my godson Carlos Enrique Quispe Altamirano in Urubamba. On 16 March, I was scheduled to travel on to Machu Picchu. But on 15 March, a strict quarantine and a rigorous lockdown was ordered throughout the country.

So I was stuck in the small town of Urubamba in the Sacred Valley of the Incas at almost 3000 metres and yes, what do you do in such a situation? The best! Now it paid off that I had bought a parcel of farmland years ago. So I decided to do "voluntary land service". Ploughing with two bulls was a wonderful experience, as was sowing and planting by hand afterwards.



Wonderful childhood memories came back to me! As a toddler, I had learned from grandfather Fritz, who was an excellent sower, (also in the

human sense!) how to sow in the field. The local campesinos (mountain farmers) were thrilled to see how the hermano Kurt, "El Suizo" could lend a hand at the work. "It brought back feelings of home in me!" So the days, weeks, months flew by quickly. The subsequent harvest of fennel, broccoli, cauliflower, lettuce and beetroot with seeds from "Landi-Switzerland" was "fantástico"!

In Urubamba itself, we did not hear much about the Corona virus, while the situation in the cities of Peru was very tense. Many people, former rural dwellers, left the cities and walked back to their hometowns for several days. The pandemic mercilessly exposed the desolate social, labour and medical situation: No work, no money and thus no food! Oxygen for the sick in the hospitals, a foreign word. There is no social welfare office, no IV, etc. in Peru where one can knock on the door for support.

In addition to my commitment as a farmer, I have secured my plot of land with solid masonry, because perhaps a house or a medical or course centre will soon be built on it. In this way I was able to employ 5 people (fathers) and provide them with an income.

The Equipen boss Gregorio, whom I have known for 25 years, has worked very well with the "Equipo Positivo". They built a super wall in Inca style! We constructed a new boundary about 100 metres long, which will protect our property from floods. The cultural office in Cusco congratulated us for this work.

On the last day before I left, I asked everyone what they had learned from our work together. Punctuality, camaraderie, organisation, appreciation, no alcohol during work (unfortunately this is not a matter of course in Peru) and respect.

I myself had to practice "paciencia" (patience). After 4 months, water and electricity connections were finally approved and water pipes, street lamps and electric meters were installed. My experience has always been that people grow through resistance! "Keep at it and don't give up!"



There were also many moments of relaxation and recreation! I regularly went on wonderful hikes; some of them were day hikes of up to 12 hours. I enjoyed the freedom and the nature!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported me in any way from near and far. who have supported and accompanied me in any way from near and far. Of course this also includes the spiritual world in Globo.

After several cancellations of KLM and rebookings, I was soon able to travel as a "Swiss abroad", I was able to make the journey home after 10 months on 15 December 2020 from Lima-Amsterdam-Zurich. Lima-Amsterdam-Zurich. And on 16 December 2020, I arrived in Zurich at around 10.30 pm. I landed in Zurich safe and sound!