



COMMUNICATION ON PROGRESS 2020

hemmersbach

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This is our **Communication on Progress** in implementing the principles of the **United Nations Global Compact** and supporting broader UN goals.

We welcome feedback on its contents.

STATEMENT OF CONTINUED SUPPORT

The past couple of months have been challenging for the whole world. We have seen ourselves in a completely new situation, which was for most of us a scenario no one could have ever imagined.

Thanks to our great colleagues and their relentless efforts and dedication during these difficult times, we made it through the crisis while focusing on our health and saving jobs. Our technicians continuously ensure that the system critical IT infrastructure keeps running besides constantly changing restrictions. Our administration colleagues ensure smooth ticket flows whilst our managers continue to focus on keeping our customers satisfied and delivering WOW!-effects for them. We demonstrated that orange blood is virus resistant.

Our efforts for making the world a better place through our direct actions and other projects did also not stop in the past months. Hemmersbach is now the Social Purpose IT Company. This strengthens the reason why we get up every day to create WOW!-effects for our customers: to make the world a better place, to act where authorities fail, and to give added value beyond business.



Ralph Koczwar
CEO Hemmersbach
April 2021



hemmersboch

EMPOWERING IT INFRASTRUCTURE EVERYWHERE

We provide IT infrastructure services globally for the IT-Industry. With 4,000 permanent colleagues in more than 50 subsidiaries worldwide, we provide IT infrastructure services in 190+ countries.

GLOBAL FIELD SERVICES

As a process expert with 20+ years of experience, we empower IT industry leaders to provide field service everywhere. We avoid and automate tickets, providing the entire process globally with own permanent technicians wherever possible while achieving our customers' commercial and quality objectives.



**EMPOWERING
FIELD SERVICE
EVERYWHERE**

1

DELIVER

We deliver global field service with our process excellence and wherever possible with own permanent technicians.

2

TRANSFORM

We take over the customers' existing field service delivery organization and transform it to their desired future mode of operation.

3

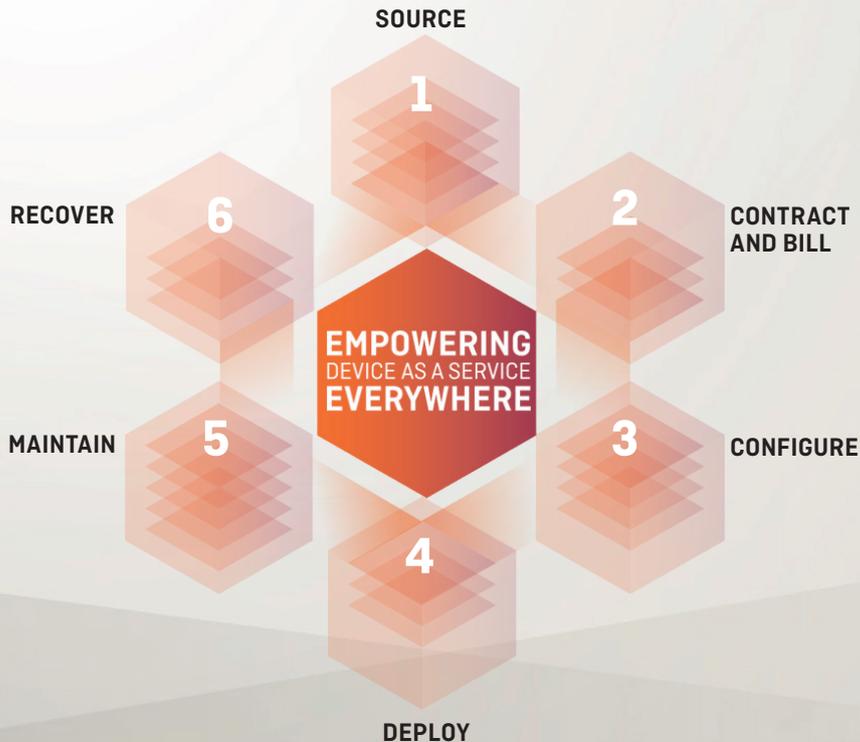
CONSOLIDATE

We consolidate our customers' existing field service providers globally.

GLOBAL DEVICE AS A SERVICE

Hemmersbach empowers IT industry leaders to provide Device as a Service (DaaS) everywhere. DaaS comprises the entire device lifecycle – all services handled by one supplier. It is our calling to enable this DaaS revolution globally for the leaders in the IT industry.

We offer six service modules that our customers can tailor to their demands:



1

SOURCE

Product selection, image compatibility lab, procurement, financing

2

CONTRACT & BILL

Local end user contracting, invoicing in 50+ countries, tax and customs optimization

3

CONFIGURE

Zero touch readiness, image and application pre-installation, customization, integration

4

DEPLOY

Storage and transport, installation and setup, data migration

5

MAINTAIN

Field Service, IT-bars / lockers, staff augmentation, technical contact center, insurance coverage

6

RECOVER

Device uninstallation, data sanitation, recycling and remarketing

CERTIFICATES

Continuous improvement while providing excellent services is the core of our commitment. An annual external evaluation of our existing standards is business as usual for us. This is why we hold our ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and ISO 27001 for several consecutive years now.

Even the Corona crisis did not stop us from implementing a new standard, the ISO 45001, which was verified at the beginning

of 2021. Occupational safety is daily business for us, and the certification is now just the official proof of our already existing Hemmersbach Integrated Management System.

The ISO 45001 has various benefits, such as the increase of trust through ongoing improvement of the colleagues' and our organizational safety. It also incorporates a preventative risk and hazard assessment, which serves as an early warning system.



THE SOCIAL PURPOSE IT COMPANY

We are *The Social Purpose IT Company*. Why? We consider social and environmental issues in our decision-making process and our core is to contribute positively to society. It is our DNA.

Working with us does not only guarantee expert IT support, but has also a positive impact for all of us. We use our entrepreneurial experience and our colleagues' dedication to affect changes where it is urgently needed. Moreover, sustainable development is more than just a phrase to us; it is an obligation to work hard toward the achievement of measurable goals. That is why we incorporated the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Our Communication on Progress is divided into the following sections:



People



Planet



Community

Each section highlights our efforts in those areas and the SDGs to which we contribute.





PEOPLE

With 4,000 permanent colleagues in over 50 subsidiaries, we are a global team we can rely on. We enable a culture of diversity with people of all ages, genders and different cultural backgrounds.

OVERVIEW



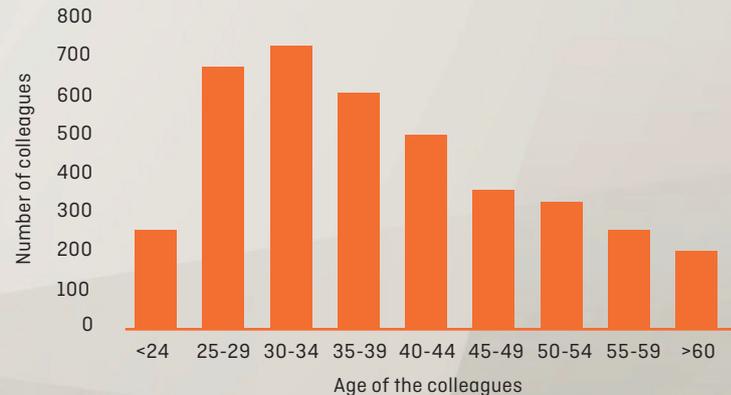
We have zero tolerance toward any form of discrimination. Equal opportunities are offered to anyone that shows passion, commitment and good work – we focus on performance, nothing else. This is also visible in our female management quota: 33.4% of all colleagues in management positions are women, which is above the German ratio of 29.5%¹.



We support each other and give our best day by day. Our corporate spirit also helps us during the pandemic: We were able to secure jobs and proved that orange blood is virus resistant. Being in the service industry, our colleagues are the most valuable assets we have. Our success stands and falls with their motivation-driven and qualified performance.

Therefore, we live an open and honest communication philosophy across Hemmersbach, paired with flat hierarchies. We encourage every colleague to speak up without hesitation and inhibition and use multiple communication channels to raise any type of concern.

Age Breakdown



¹ de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/1098311/umfrage/frauenanteil-in-fuehrungspositionen-in-der-eu

RECRUITMENT AND COLLEAGUE EDUCATION

Our goal is to provide a work environment where everyone has the same opportunities to develop and succeed. We operate a number of internal policies to ensure that we are conducting business in an ethical and transparent manner. Our robust recruitment policies safeguard any form of non-compliance to legal regulations or our internal policies in the recruitment phase already.



HEMMERSBACH GLOBAL CAMPUS

For personal and professional development, we create, design and deliver courses, workshops and further development programs, answering every colleague’s professional needs for learning and development.

On Global Campus, our internal learning and development platform, our colleagues can create different channels to build a knowledge base. The idea behind it is to offer an environment where colleagues can help each other. Consequently, they can support each other with topics in their own area of expertise while they simultaneously learn something about other fields as well.

Even during a pandemic, we strive to surpass ourselves. Last year, we recorded an average of 1,500 active Global Campus users per month, who rated the provided courses and training materials very

positively. We have of course converted all of our learning courses so that our colleagues can access them remotely. But this does not stop us from developing further at a high level of quality.

People who read regularly stimulate their brain cells, train their cognitive abilities and can expand their knowledge in various areas. For this reason, we have launched an e-library with more than 2,000 books and audiobooks available.



SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAIN

As a global company in the IT service sector, a sustainable supply chain is essential to ensure adherence to local regulations and our standards. Before establishing a contractual relationship with any of our Hemmersbach Authorized Partners (HAP), we conduct due diligence. The standardized onboarding process ensures that our service has the same quality worldwide.

All of our HAPs and their sub-partners have to comply with our dedicated Service Provider Code of Conduct. It contains key principles and requirements with respect to responsible social, environmental and ethical practices. To verify compliance with our Code and applicable laws in the corresponding countries, we reserve the right to audit our HAPs as necessary.

We assess our HAPs in our yearly Service Provider Evaluation. The assessment is based on various criteria, such as certifications, turnover and service quality and is done by the responsible Partner Manager either locally or centrally in cooperation with the Service Delivery Manager. The Service Provider has the chance to influence their received ranking by improving their performance within the criteria. If we are not happy with the cooperation, we take corrective actions. Thus, we have an agile process in place that can be extended to prospective services.

Monitoring our expenditures based on diversity criteria is also a part of our sustainable supply chain measures. To do so, we cluster information from our whole supply chain (HAPs, Part Supplier and Transportation) according to the following categories and merge them with our turnover:



HEALTH & SAFETY

Our health and safety policy forms the basis of our health and safety management system (HSMS), which is ISO 45001 certified. By creating and maintaining a safe and healthy work environment, we want to ensure the efficiency and long-term success of Hemmersbach.

Our goal is to maintain a balance between the well-being and safety as well as the performance of our colleagues through comprehensive health and safety management.

Occupational health and safety compliance is ensured through:



Proper workplace design and optimization of the work process



Proactive focus on reducing health and safety risks



Removing hazardous substances



Continuous improvement of our HSMS



Fulfillment of all legal requirements for health and safety



Consultation and participation of colleagues on health and safety topics

We conduct regular trainings and perform site visits if necessary. In case of an accident, we identify the root cause and install preventive actions.

COVID-19 MEASURES

It is impossible to predict exactly when and where the next pandemic will have its origin, how fast it will spread and how severe it will be for each age group. The severity of pandemics in the 20th century tended to decrease, but this does not allow any predictions, as the Corona pandemic impressively demonstrated.

To protect our colleagues, we immediately implemented the legally required protective measures. In addition, we went the extra mile by introducing additional actions to protect their physical and mental health.

HOME OFFICE:

We constantly adjust our home office regulations to current local circumstances. Every colleague can work from home (if possible) if they do not feel safe for whatever reason, for example because of travelling to work by public transport. We increased the cleaning intervals in our facilities and use special virucidal detergents.



CORONA TASK FORCE:

We established a dedicated task force in every country to act fast and effectively to contain the spread of the virus at Hemmersbach. Our colleagues of the Corona Task Force treat all Covid-19 concerns fast, professional and of course confidential.

CORONA SHAREPOINT:

To share news, documents and processes across the globe, we created a dedicated Covid-19 SharePoint for our colleagues.

GOOD NEWS AND GOOD VIBES NEWSLETTERS:

Our marketing department regularly sends out newsletters to all colleagues with tips, ideas and positive news to help us all through the pandemic period. They incorporated creative ideas about how to challenge oneself and help us to maintain our team spirit.

CORONA TEST CENTER:

To ensure that our colleagues have a safe start into 2021, we set up a Corona test center. There, our colleagues can get tested voluntarily and free of charge for Covid-19, using a rapid antigen test.



HEMMERSBACH PANDEMIC POLICY:

The international surveillance system of the World Health Organization (WHO) has installed a six-level pandemic alert system, on which the Hemmersbach Pandemic Policy is based on. Independent of the WHO Pandemic Alert System status, we monitor the internal "Attendance Rate" for each country. In case of a country attendance rate of <95% (status red), it is the responsibility of the responsible country / area manager to conduct detailed analyses and plan appropriate measures.

The Hemmersbach Pandemic Policy consists of the following **4 phases**:

- **Normal infection situation national / international**
- **Warning signs**
- **Pandemic**
- **Post pandemic**

TEAMBUILDING EVENTS

Even in times of a global pandemic, where social distancing is always on the agenda, we are still united and connected. We had three remote events to keep up the team spirit, challenge ourselves and achieve something together as a team. On top, our Performance Heroes Facebook group makes it easier to get in touch and share enjoyable news and activities with each other.



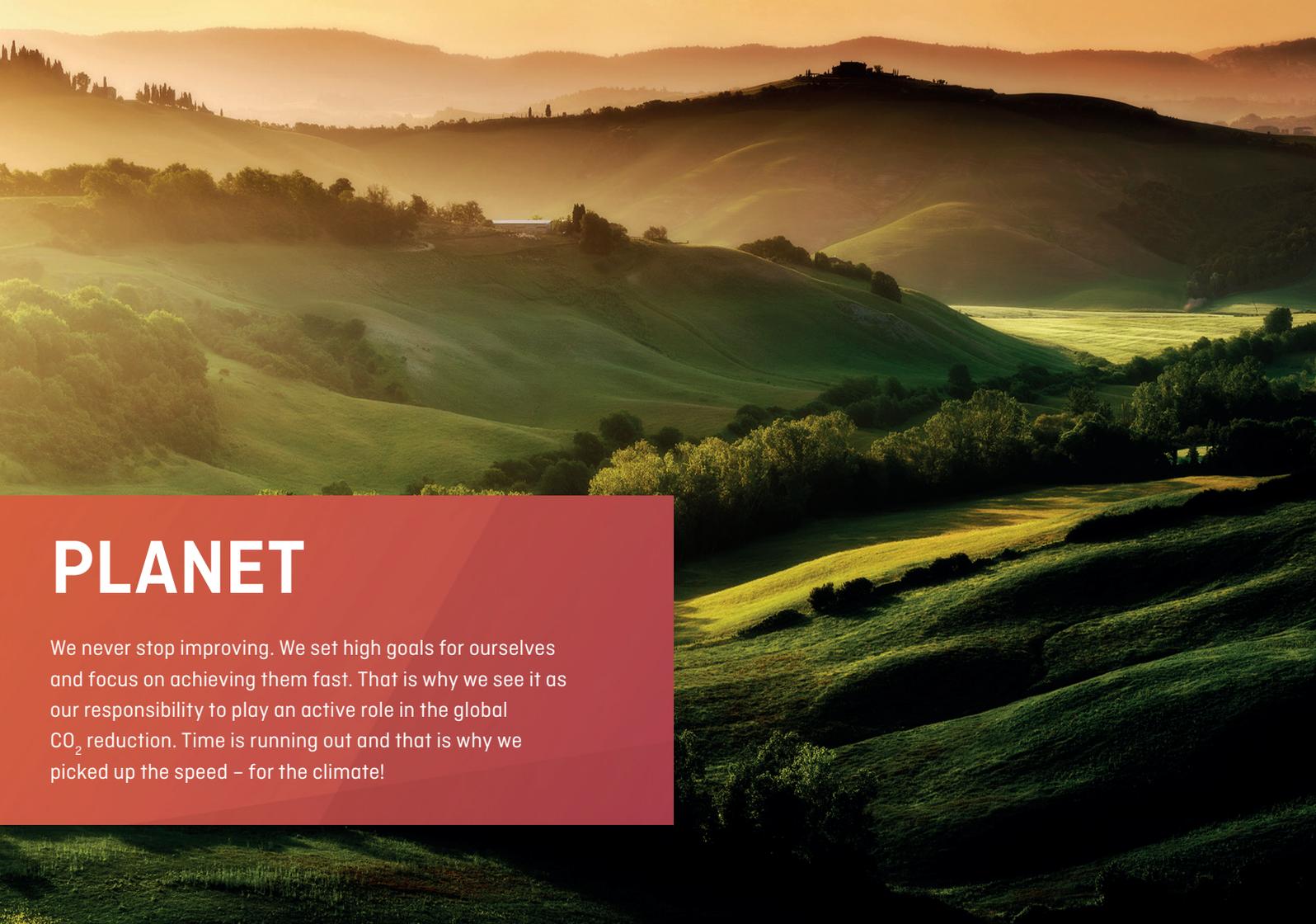
HIKING
4,283.36 km



RUNNING
366.43 km



BIKING
4,283.36 km



PLANET

We never stop improving. We set high goals for ourselves and focus on achieving them fast. That is why we see it as our responsibility to play an active role in the global CO₂ reduction. Time is running out and that is why we picked up the speed – for the climate!



9.83 %

of all the energy used in 2020 at our HQ is from own photovoltaic energy



100 %

of our energy used in our HQ is from renewable resources



LED

gradual change of all subsidiaries to LED lighting



CO₂ neutral

charging stations for e-cars and e-bikes at HQ



10.61 %

decrease of monthly CO₂ per car while increasing our fleet



8 %

reduction of fuel consumption of our field technicians



QM

the first climate neutral department



> 180 t

of waste collected by our Marara Ladies

MISSION ZERO: REDUCING CO₂ GLOBALLY



The CO₂ concentration in our atmosphere is increasing at an alarming pace. The Paris Agreement reinforces the importance of acting now. However, the current climate policies will not reduce greenhouse gases quickly enough to reach the international targets. Furthermore, scientists are predicting that global emissions have not peaked yet and that it is essential for the world to reach net-zero emissions².

We are committed to provide services that are environmentally conscious and incorporate environmental practices to our business strategy. This ensures the responsible use of resources within our operations. Therefore, our colleagues consider the impact of new processes in advance and make use of environmental friendly technology where reasonable. Our environmental policy establishes the foundation for us to build our Environmental Management System (EMS), which has been ISO 14001 certified since 2015.

² Our World in Data:
<https://ourworldindata.org/co2-and-other-greenhouse-gas-emissions>





MISSION ZERO

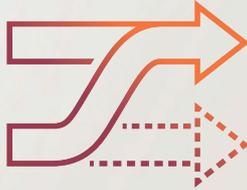
Our aim to reduce CO₂ is embedded in our EMS. Our goal is to achieve our Mission Zero: To become a CO₂ neutral company and, in the long run, even CO₂ negative.

We based our Mission Zero on three pillars:



REDUCTION

Reduce our own CO₂ emissions to a minimum with the help of new energy saving technologies or make use of alternative CO₂ friendly means of transport.



ELIMINATION

Best case: We are able to eliminate CO₂ completely such as by switching to 100% CO₂ neutral energy.



COMPENSATION

The remainder of our CO₂ consumption shall be compensated. We do this through investment in new technologies and the active support of research.

TRANSPORTATION AND RESOURCES

Transportation is one of our main CO₂ contributors. Our technicians drive by car to repair devices, and our project teams travel by plane when they need to visit customer sites. We are aware of our high potential to save resources here – which is why we act. We are continuously evaluating the possibility of e-mobility and started a pilot project in Germany: The usage of e-mobility for our field service technicians. For this, several factors need to be considered, such as the distance driven, battery capacity and the possibility to charge the car with CO₂ neutral energy.

Apart from this, we are monitoring our fleet figures to switch to more efficient cars wherever possible. We achieved 10.61% saving of the monthly CO₂ emissions per car in 2020. We are happy with



this result, especially since our fleet has grown by more than 20%. Furthermore, our technicians keep an eye on their fuel consumption by driving in an environmental responsible manner, with our dispatch team planning their routes efficiently. As a result, they were able to decrease the fuel consumption again by 8% in 2020, resulting in an average consumption below 6 liters per 100km.

As we are increasing the number of electric cars for our managers as well, we now have ten charging points at our HQ. The energy used is 100% CO₂ neutral. We also inaugurated an e-bike charging station. Our colleagues can now take advantage of the cooperation we have for e-bike leasing and charge their bikes at work, climate friendly and free of charge.

CO₂ NEGATIVE IT FIELD SERVICE

We believe that it is our obligation to target social and environmental grievances for future generations. To be also a reliable corporate citizen in relation to our business partnerships, we decided that we offer our services to be CO₂ neutral or negative. Thus, we are not part of the CO₂ footprint of our customers. Our CO₂ negativity path is based on two pillars: reforestation and technology.

Forests are a natural carbon sink that absorb CO₂ from the air through photosynthesis and help to mitigate the human made greenhouse gas emissions. Besides, forests are habitats for many species and are home to 80% of terrestrial biodiversity. The FAO³ states that 75% of the world's freshwater comes from forested watersheds. We make use of these benefits, by planting trees in order to compensate our emitted CO₂ and to strengthen poverty-stricken communities in developing countries.

Our calculation is based on a 10% mass growth per year and results of 1,835 kg captured CO₂ for each kilo of gained biomass. Internal analysis came to the result that one Field Service ticket emits about 12kg CO₂, including onsite service and administrative efforts.

³ FAO=Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Report 2018:
<http://www.fao.org/3/I9535EN/I9535en.pdf>



TACKLING CO₂ REDUCTION THROUGH FOSTERING RESEARCH



Our second pillar for reducing CO₂ is based on supporting research projects to support technologies that have the potential to remove CO₂ from our atmosphere in a sustainable manner.

COOPERATION WITH RMIT UNIVERSITY

As always, we are going the extra mile. The researchers of the RMIT University in Australia successfully converted CO₂ back into coal in a world-first breakthrough. With the help of a liquid metal catalyst, the researchers were able to convert the CO₂ into solid flakes of carbon. This technique offers an alternative way for removing the greenhouse gas from our atmosphere⁴ safely and permanently. As we are convinced that this technique has tremendous potential, we have decided to cooperate with the university, as exclusive supporter. The goal is to scale the amount from grams to tons within the next years.



PROJECT CARBDOWN

Together with Fieldcode and the Carbon Drawdown Initiative – a non-profit organisation – we initiated the Project Carbdown. The project focuses on a process called enhanced weathering. The basic idea is to spread rock powder together with bio char on agricultural fields that leads to the removal of CO₂. As the natural process of weathering is quite slow, we are currently experimenting which size, materials and conditions needed to speed up this process. The goal is to reduce CO₂ emissions by measurements of tons, rather than kilograms within the next few years.



⁴ RMIT University: www.rmit.edu.au/news/all-news/2019/feb/carbon-dioxide-coal

NEGATIVE EMISSIONS PLATFORM

Negative Emissions Platform is a unique partnership of European and international actors that represents technology developers, providers and sponsors, research centers, academia, think tanks and civil society. It provides a forum in which diverse like-minded organizations actively collaborate to improve political and public recognition of carbon removal. Our CEO Ralph Koczvara is a founding member of the Board of the Negative Emissions Platform to actively support and drive forward the concept of negative emissions.



NEGATIVE
EMISSIONS
PLATFORM



HEMMERSBACH RHINO FORCE



For decades, rhinos have been hunted by crime syndicates for their horns, which are then sold on the black market. Today, they are one of the most endangered species on the planet – that is why we protect them. Hemmersbach Rhino Force fights poachers with night vision, stealth boats, drones, and – if necessary – uses armed force. While patrolling the bush, our rangers risk their lives every day to ensure the rhinos’ and other wildlife’s survival. We operate in South Africa and Zimbabwe.



29

poaching & wildlife related arrests



16

illegal firearms recovered



122

rounds of ammunition
confiscated



400

snares removed from the bush



56,119

bags of rubbish collected



200

rhino semen straws collected



25

endangered monkeys saved from being
trafficked



3

pangolins rescued and
released



Last year, we expanded our area of operations in South Africa and another famous big five Greater Kruger game reserve on the western border of the Kruger National park accepted our service. After familiarizing our elite rangers with the new terrain and coordinating our activities with the reserves own forces, we fully incorporated this new area of operations in our schedules. First response actions, recognized fence breaches, tracking operations and a reduction in incursions and incidents are first victories in our fight to protect the rhinos there.

Our area where we operate in Zimbabwe, Rifa, 800km² in size, used to be a popular hunting area. After the operations started, we decided it is essential to keep Rifa hunting free in order to create an environment where animals can live sustainably. To do so, we are supplying daily food rations to 65 rangers and their families in Zimbabwe so that they do not have to use the

usual ration hunt scheme anymore. This enables the rangers to concentrate fully on their duties, leading to more patrol hours, more operations and more focused animal protection fighters. Besides, we are supporting the locals on focusing on commercial tree planting for their living. The first nursery is already a home for hundreds of trees, which will soon be able to be planted.

Especially during the pandemic, the reserves and parks in Southern Africa reported rising numbers of poaching incidents. This is the result of an increasing demand for horn and ivory, leading to countless wildlife deaths. But not on our watch: We kept numbers low in our area of operations. With more surveillance technology, more shifts and more boots on the ground, we repeatedly stopped poachers in their tracks. This war is far from over, but we are in for the long term – and we will win.



PRESERVE RHINO GENES – CRYOVULT PROJECT

To preserve the current genetic diversity of rhinos, Hemmersbach Rhino Force has started the Cryovault project.

We collect rhino sperm, egg cells as well as other biological material from live and deceased individuals. All samples are cryopreserved in our biobank, which will soon be the largest genetic reservoir for African rhinoceros in the world. The frozen reproductive material enables assisted breeding – the ultimate safety net against extinction.



In 2020, our Cryovault team made big steps in progressive conservation. They managed to:

- collect, analyze and preserve genetic material of 44 rhino bulls, 39 white rhinos and five black rhinos
- obtain viable semen samples of 34 rhino bulls, of which 15 have the quality to be cryopreserved as genetic resource and for future assisted reproduction purposes
- cryopreserve viable semen from free-ranging black rhino bulls for the first time
- cryopreserve another 200 straws of rhino semen – this equals 20,000,000,000 sperm cells
- store 324 blood samples for future reference and research purposes
- provide veterinary assistance for necropsies of poached rhinoceros, veterinary care for leopard cubs and other orphaned or injured wildlife
- provide veterinary assistance during routine rhino dehorning operations and management interventions as part of conservation efforts

MARARA POWER RECYCLING PROJECT

Our Marara Power Recycling project combines two essential needs of the Zambesi Valley in Zimbabwe: wildlife protection and improvement of the living conditions through a self-sustainable project. During the last year, our Marara Ladies continued to keep the area clean and collected over 56.000 bags of trash.



In March 2020, they organized litterbins along the A1 road at Chirundu, where thousands of trucks cross the border between Zimbabwe and Zambia every day. Due to the pandemic and border controls, traffic jams on both sides of the border increased dramatically, with disastrous effects on the surrounding environment and wildlife.



The drivers are stuck on the side of the road for days, waiting for the process to cross the border. The rising amount of trash pollutes and contaminates the environment, makes people sick and kills wildlife that eats the rubbish. This is a real threat to both man and animal. That is why our Marara Ladies took action and installed recycling bins.

In addition, hunger became an even greater threat than usual. We heard of local communities with nothing to eat – and a farmer who could not export his bananas anymore. Two for one: We got the bananas for the communities. Our Marara Ladies gave the bananas to 5,000 starving locals.





COMMUNITY

Protecting the most innocent is on our agenda. We help children across the globe who live in poor conditions. Finding new solutions and bringing our ideas into real life was the main focus for 2020 – and we were successful.

HEMMERSBACH KIDS' FAMILY

Our approach is to base our activities on our three steps of support: Improving living conditions, psychological help and to foster the education of the children. This will help to achieve our goal of providing children in need with a better future.



POLAND



2,026

children under Kids' Family care



66

supported foster care centers



24

facilities equipped with bio feedback devices



Skillplanet.io

launch of our educational online platform

INDIA



403

children under Kids' Family care



50

kids from the slums and streets in our Kids' Family home



600

solar lights for 300 families



1.8 t

of waste removed to official dumpsites



5,000 l

of water delivered every morning to Ramamurthy Nagar Slum



Learning Center

set up in Ramamurthy Nagar Slum in Bangalore

KIDS' FAMILY POLAND



SKILLPLANET.IO – BOOSTING EDUCATION THROUGH OUR SELF-DEVELOPED PLATFORM

For many months, the Polish Hemmersbach Kids' Family team had been working on a unique project: They created the Skillplanet.io platform. Skillplanet.io offers interactive e-learning trainings, opportunities for teenagers' personal and professional development, access to websites to learn school subjects and foreign languages. It's completely free and includes creative gamification and competitions with valuable prizes.

Skillplanet.io does not only support the education of children and teens, but also provides considerable assistance to all caretakers, teachers, and specialists. The first free webinars for foster care workers and foster parents have already been published. The first webinar was about working with a motor hyperactive child and was organized with the help of the Cognitus Training Center in Warsaw. There are many more to come, featuring specialists in various fields of science, including pedagogy, psychology, development support of children with special needs or social work.



THE HEMMERSBACH KIDS' FAMILY PROGRAMMING ACADEMY

The Programming Academy is the next step of our educational programme for pupils living in children's homes. The classes are led by a qualified teacher with experience in working with younger kids and is able to share the rather difficult and complex knowledge of programming. Currently, there are 17 students enrolled who meet twice a week online. They complete many programming tasks, using JavaScript, HTML and CSS technologies and are assigned to real projects. Our students will finish the Programming Academy by creating a full-fledged website.



EEG BIOFEEDBACK AND SNOEZELN THERAPY

One of the largest deficiencies, which kids from children's homes suffer from, is the lack of proper psychological and psychiatric support. Besides the EEG Biofeedback devices we provided, children will now have the opportunity to use Snoezelen therapy, which supports the psychophysical development and the treatment of various types of dysfunctions. Snoezelen is a method mainly intended for people with various disorders but completely healthy people can also use it as a part of relaxation.



The main assumption of this therapy is to stimulate the senses: sight, hearing, and touch, as well as muscle relaxation and emotion control. The Snoezelen complex is usually one or more interconnected rooms, equipped with appliances of different textures such as mattresses with vibrations, paths lightened up by fiber optics, voice tubes, and soap bubble generators. The colours of the room are kept in a palette of delicate, pastel shades. The sounds that accompany the therapy are gentle and calming,

and the people inside are required only to whisper to each other. A visit to the room is a therapeutic experience that helps a child achieve a psychophysical balance.

TARGETS FOR 2021

The target for 2021 is to actively support 24 foster families, as we appreciate the work of foster parents who face various challenges every day and give children a real home. We will focus on special assistance in the areas of physiotherapy, speech therapy, dentistry and psychology. Furthermore, we will be providing Biofeedback therapy and training in conducting therapy at home. Of course, the children will have access to Skillplanet.io, to support their educational development.



KIDS' FAMILY INDIA



HEMMERSBACH KIDS' FAMILY HOME

The pandemic has affected people all over the world, but it completely upended the lives of the families living in the Ramamurthy Nagar slum overnight. With schools closed, and the day laborer jobs that the families were dependent on gone, most of the families desperately tried to return to their native villages, travelling hundred miles by bus or oxcart or on foot. However, some of the families were unable to leave. The children of these families, with their poor nutritional levels, were at greater risk during the pandemic, and with government schools closed, they were falling behind every day.



This crisis brought home to us the urgency of our mission. We saw that it would be impossible to provide for the welfare or the future of the children without a stable environment. Therefore, we are proud that we were able to open the first Hemmersbach Kids' Family Home. A safe haven in the outskirts of Bangalore: the three-story home has twenty bedrooms, classrooms and office space. Green grass and palm trees surround it.

The children have taken well to their new environment. This is the first time they have had running water, regular meals, and the daily presence of dedicated teachers. Nevertheless, most gratifying to us is the sense that these children have the chance of something denied to many kids in the slums – a childhood.

LIVING IN RAMAMURTHY NAGAR SLUM DURING THE PANDEMIC

The pandemic hit us hard all over the world, however living in a slum in those times is a tremendous difference compared to what we are used to. Social distancing and basic hygiene rules are often simply impossible to follow. Often, families of four to six people or more are packed into a makeshift tent that takes up no more than a few square feet. With the national lockdown, most of the inhabitants are now also unable to supply their families with food. These bad conditions fueled our ambitions to work harder and to help faster especially in those hard times.



When we first came to the Ramamurthy Nagar slum in Bangalore, 1,800 tons of uncollected stinking waste had accumulated there over the last decades. It was a breeding ground for many infectious diseases, and we knew that if we were to take the care of these children seriously, we would need to clear it. We moved more than 54 truckloads of waste to official dumpsites away from the slum. However, all of our efforts would be in vain if people continued to use the emptied space as a dumpsite. Most of the waste had not accumulated from the inhabitants of the slum, but from people living in neighboring communities. We decided to set up signposts and garbage containers that local authorities would regularly empty.

After cleaning up their slum, we gave two inflatable solar powered lights to each of the 300 families. Thus, they are not dependent on the unreliable power supply in the slum, which is a great advantage and an unknown situation for them.

Just a month before the peak of the first Covid-19 wave, we had made it: basic hygiene as part of the children's daily routine by constructing a concrete basin right at the door of the container school. The kids were taught to wash their feet and hands before entering the classroom. At the foot of the basin, the used water flows into a flowerbed that we planted together with the kids. In order to protect themselves from being infected, we continuously trained them in washing their hands and distributed soap bars while of course supplying clean water every morning, seven days per week. In total, we provided more than 1.8 M liters of drinking water for the families in 2020.

We also extended the food supply. Our India Kids' Family colleagues worked around the clock to ensure that not only meals are still being distributed to the children who come to our container school for lunch, but that all of the families that have remained in the slum after the lockdown receive food. The price for milk has risen by 300% and the families tried to make masks out of undershirts for their children. In addition to the daily lunch meal, we also provided their families with raw grocery staples as well as milk and proper masks.



CONTAINER SCHOOL IN RAMAMURTHY SLUM

Our container school was also affected by the public school closures. After nine months of closure, the public schools in India were opened again in January 2021. We quickly opened the container school for our children and extended the opening hours to teach and care for as many kids as possible. We now operate two classes in parallel from 10:30-12:00 and 13:00-16:00. Right now, 40 children attend our regular classes. Besides education, they also receive a tasty lunch at our school.



hemmersbach

Hemmersbach GmbH & Co. KG | Sulzbacher Str. 9 | 90489 Nuremberg

Tel: +49 911 52-798-0

info@hemmersbach.com