

Presentation on 21 March 2026 at the final meeting of Discover by Keith Lindsey



Picture 1:

A warm welcome to you all; I'm delighted that you're all here. This is a very significant day for me and for Discover – the decision to dissolve the association was not an easy one for us.

It's impossible for me to describe all of Discover's work over the last 12 years in just 20 minutes, but I hope you enjoy this brief summary.

Picture 2:

By coincidence, today is also International Day of Forests – every year on this day, Discover partners plant trees with schoolchildren. To our great delight, they're doing the same again this year!

First of all, a few words about myself

In 1996, I came to Germany as a young man of 50. I was faced with the question: What on earth could I possibly do here – I mean, here in Swabia! In England, I had worked for many years coordinating projects in the fields of youth welfare and unemployment – first for an NGO and then with the ecumenical Teesside Industrial Mission.

Then, one Saturday morning, my wife suggested I meet Hans-Martin Hirt, the coordinator of anamed, at the fair trade shop in Winnenden. That is how my work for anamed – which stands for 'Action for Natural Medicine' – began. This development organisation is well known here in Winnenden.

Thus I learnt a great deal about the use of tropical plants for health and healing – a field that was completely new to me.

Picture 3:

At first, I helped to translate teaching materials into good English. I then had the opportunity to visit several African countries – initially with Martin Hirt, but later on my own as well. I was very grateful for these experiences.

Picture 4:

I thoroughly enjoyed this work: I brought anamed's scientific knowledge and experience to the seminars, during which I also taught many practical skills, such as making ointments and soap. I was fascinated by what the African participants told me about their knowledge of their native plants, and by the joy they showed when I took their traditional knowledge seriously. And I enjoyed getting to know so many committed Africans.

Picture 5:

Through family connections, I had also visited Rhodesia on several occasions; following its independence in 1980, it became Zimbabwe. Through these visits, I

came to understand the conflicts and challenges facing African countries as they strive to free themselves from their colonial past. Our second son, Peter, was actually born in Rhodesia and has made Zimbabwe his permanent home.

Picture 6:

After 15 years working at anamed, I was ready to start something new. A group of people came together who helped me set up a new association in 2014.

Picture 7

Why did we name the organisation 'Discover'? We wanted to continue to engage with our African partners as equals and to emphasise the principle that we can learn from one another. By sharing experiences and knowledge, we can **discover** new things – that can improve and enrich our lives.

Picture 8

As an association, we set ourselves the following objectives in 2014:

We aim to make a contribution in the following areas, irrespective of regardless of religion, gender or tribe:

- the development of self-confidence, new skills and income
- building trust and confidence
- peace and reconciliation in the community
- promoting good health through organic gardening, good nutrition, hygiene and natural methods of healing

Right from the start, we worked alongside people with whom we shared a bond of mutual trust. We were guided by our partners' ideas. After all, they understood the needs of their communities far better than we did!

And so we support initiatives in predominantly rural areas, for example:

Picture 9

- Training seminars for farmers on organic vegetable growing, healthy eating and natural remedies

Picture 10

- the creation of vegetable gardens on school and community grounds,

Picture 11

- the production of wood-saving stoves.

After two years, we realised we had made very good progress and we were eager to continue.

Picture 12:

Our support has not been in vain. In 2018, Eric Kihuluka in Kaliro District, Uganda, reported: "Nutrition and hygiene standards have improved significantly, with the result that fewer demands are being made on our health facilities."

It's hardly surprising that the deputy director of health, whom I visited with Eric, smiled!

He went on to write: "Perhaps even more significantly, people in the district are now working together in a way they never have before. Teachers, health workers, local authorities and religious leaders recognise that the path to health and prosperity lies in effective cooperation. Even domestic violence is now less prevalent than before."

Picture 13

In 2020, after six years, we were pleased to see that our African partners and we had achieved a great deal.

But as the Discover Team here in Winnenden, we were getting older and felt it was time to call it a day.

Picture 14

Mayor Norbert Sailer, however, took a different view. We and all our African partners owe him a great deal: he recognised that our work also plays a vital role in the fight against climate change. Even back then, the devastating effects of climate change had already hit our African partners far harder than they had here in Europe.

Picture 15.

And Mr Sailer also persuaded the Winnenden local council to support us for five years with 15,000 euros a year for tree-planting initiatives that reduce CO2 emissions.

With this financial foundation in place, we pressed on, shifting the focus of our work to supporting tree-planting projects and the associated educational activities.

We designed this postcard to raise further support for tree planting in Africa.

Picture 16

And so, over the past six years, Discover partners have planted tens of thousands of trees.

Picture 17.

This is how bare many of the deforested slopes of the Rwenzori Mountains in western Uganda look.

Picture 18:

The deforested mountain slopes of the Elgon Mountains in eastern Uganda are just as badly affected. Over many years Makabuli Yusuf has dedicated himself to their reforestation. With his wonderful turn of phrase he said, "Mother Earth is freezing. She needs a warm blanket."

Picture 19

Today, many people realise how important it is to reforest mountain slopes in order to prevent landslides and flooding. These disasters not only destroy homes and fields, but also repeatedly claim human lives!

Picture: 20

That is why Thomas and his team have been working hard since June last year to plant 8.5 hectares of land high up on the slopes of the Rwenzori Mountains with various species of native trees.

Reforestation is no easy task. The only way to reach this site is on foot, a 7-hour uphill trek.

Because it's such a long way, the group must spend the night there, which means they must carry tents and food as well as the tree seedlings and tools.

Thanks to the donations collected at our most recent charity concert, Kenja Thomas and his team were able to plant a second batch of 10,000 tree saplings earlier this month. Their aim is to plant a total of 40,000 trees.

Picture 21

To protect the nearby slum areas from further flooding, Thomas and his team have planted over 5,000 fast-growing bamboo saplings along this riverbank.

Picture 22

In the Rwenzori Mountains in western Uganda, our three partners, Kenja Thomas, Robert Bwambale and Masereka Emmanuel, have so far planted over 55,000 trees.

In addition, they have trained 360 farmers in agroforestry and organic farming methods.

Picture 23

The impact of agroforestry is remarkable. It involves combining trees, vegetable cultivation and livestock farming. The trees provide shade for the vegetable crops, and the animals provide manure. Farmers like Mr Peter, who can be seen in the photo on the left alongside our partner Robert Bwambale, grow vegetables on the ground and harvest fruit and their own firewood from the many trees.

Picture 24

One of the many benefits of agroforestry is that people – such as Deborah Kabugho here – can feed their families with their own produce and send their children to school by selling the surplus. No wonder she looks so happy! She and many others have been able to learn about agroforestry farming at the nearby agroforestry demonstration farm.

Picture 25

With the support of Discover, seven demonstration farms have been established where agroforestry and organic farming methods are taught. These demonstration farms are of great value to local agriculture. Here in Zimbabwe, we see a group of university students from the 'Lifelong Learning' movement at the local demonstration farm. On the left is Joachem Nyamande, the founder and manager of this farm. He is standing in an area dedicated to the natural regeneration of trees. Natural regeneration also makes an important contribution to reforestation.

Picture 26

Discover partners work with communities, not just individual families. For example, Kenja Thomas has been supporting very poor women and children in the village of

Kighengi for over 14 years. During this time, I have visited the group several times myself and have seen an improvement in living conditions in the village on each occasion: agricultural production has increased and nutrition has improved.

Picture 27

And, perhaps most importantly, I have seen a sense of despair and hopelessness give way to new hope and confidence.

Picture 28

Without exception, all Discover partners work with schools. It is no exaggeration to say that, over a period of 12 years, pupils and teachers from hundreds of schools have planted trees and some have even created school gardens. The schoolchildren learn practical skills for their own survival – and their parents often learn from them; here, for example, a young mother – she was very happy to be allowed to take a tree seedling home with her.

Simply because we're getting older, we decided two years ago to work towards winding up the Discover association. We didn't want to run the risk of having to stop suddenly because I simply no longer have the energy and strength for it.

Picture 29

Most of our partners are well prepared for being more self-reliant. Many have, for example, set up their own tree nurseries. They distribute tree seedlings in the neighbourhood and are able to earn a small income from this. Here we see Makabuli Yusuf and his exemplary tree nursery.

Looking back now, we naturally ask ourselves how we can assess Discover's work today.

Picture 30

Our partner Eric Kihuluka founded the group 'Mikwano' – which means 'friendship' – in the Kaliro district of Uganda over 20 years ago. Mikwano has been supported by Discover since 2014.

Eric reports that Mikwano is having a positive impact on the development of the entire region. I can confirm this, as I saw it for myself when I visited Eric and he showed me around schools and community groups. The local authorities couldn't believe that Mikwano is just a small organisation supported by our limited financial resources.

Quite honestly, I am also impressed by what Eric has achieved in his region with Mikwano.

In our view, what is true for Mikwano is also true for Discover as a whole. This slide highlights some of the key elements of both Eric's work and Discover's work as a whole.

We judge that our partners made such outstanding changes in their communities because we following the following principles:

1. Discover's work is long-term.

2. Discover partners are themselves members of the community in which they work.
3. They know from their own experience what the people there really need.
4. The little money they have or receive is used directly in their work.

Picture 31

But let's hear what some of our African partners themselves have to say about their work in the name of Discover:

Back in 2016, Tamima Omondi from Kenya wrote:

“Discover goes to the grassroots, to the neglected communities that most organisations overlook, with the aim of improving the lives of the people there.”

In 2026, she wrote: “We have seen a huge improvement in the environment. Together with schools, churches and women's groups, we have planted almost 9,000 trees. And people have changed their attitude towards trees – today they love and care for them, and rarely cut them down.”

Judith Nambi from Uganda writes:

“Agroforestry has significantly improved our living conditions: here in Africa, an agroforestry garden isn't dependent on the seasons; we can harvest all year round.”

“Thanks to agroforestry, families here can now build a livelihood for themselves. As a result, many people – particularly men who had migrated to the slums – are leaving the cities and returning to their villages; this has been a lifeline for a great many families. Many thanks to Discover for this.”

Mpuuga Edigar from Uganda reports:

“I have planted trees with pupils, teachers and parents at several schools in this dry and neglected region. Many parents have thanked me for my hard work and patience, and for not giving up on the community despite the many challenges. The pupils are looking forward to enjoying the fruit from the trees very soon.”

Rehema Namyalo from Uganda says thank you:

Thanks to support from Discover, I have installed a well for the water supply, as well as water tanks that hold 25,000 litres of rainwater collected from the roof. Now all households in the village can obtain clean water for a small fee. And the women are no longer exposed to the many dangers involved in fetching water over long distances.

George Zokli from Ghana writes:

“In my village, Adaklu Anfoe, we have planted many trees, including moringa trees and medicinal plants. Thanks to organic farming methods, the soil is more fertile, there is more shade, and the harvests of vegetables such as tomatoes, amaranth and onions have improved. The villagers are better nourished. They are happier and work together much better than before.”

Joachim Nyamande from Zimbabwe reports:

“Thanks to Discover’s support, I’ve been able to realise my vision of an eco-farm: it’s a demonstration farm where I’ve installed a biogas plant. Larger areas have been fenced off so that the trees there can regenerate naturally. We’ve also set up beehives and produce honey. We’re delighted to be able to share our knowledge with so many people here.”

Finally, a big thank you from me,

Firstly, to my team for standing by me over the years, and for correcting and reining me in when necessary. Many thanks to Simone Huschka, Christa and Bernd Weeger, Walter Erhardt, Hans Herbert Frank and Barbara Benz.

I would like to thank those who have committed to continuing their support for one of our partners in Africa

Many people have supported us with advice and practical help over the years. Many thanks to

- **our mayor, Mr Sailer, and Mr Rauleder**, the environmental officer for the town of Winnenden, thank you for your support and cooperation.
- **Martin Staiger**, who managed our bookkeeping and finances for many years.
- **Roland Kopitz**, our faithful auditor since 2014, who is unfortunately unable to be here today.
- **Andreas Weber** for the brilliant films about Discover, which you can all still watch on our homepage.
- **Birgit Weller and Walter Erhardt** for their many excellent articles in *Blickpunkt* and the *Winnender newspaper*.
- **Gaby Annan and Florian Hårdter**, who represented Discover at the “Winnender Wetzede” organised by the Lions Club.

And I would also like to thank everyone I haven’t mentioned, including my family members, without whose moral and technical support I could not have managed this work!

And last but not least, a huge thank you to all of you, our supporters, without whose generous donations our work would not have been possible.