The life of the famous German doctor Albert Schweitzer is characterized by a lot of great projects, which he brought into being in order to help nature, mankind, and animals. His biggest and probably most famous project was the construction of a hospital in Lambarene. The following text is concerned with Albert Schweitzer’s life and time at this special hospital.

The beginning of this project can be traced back to the year 1913, when Schweitzer and his wife went to Africa. They left Germany on 03/21/1913 and arrived three days later at their travel destination. There they built a hospital in the middle of the jungle of the French colony Gabon. A characteristic feature of this hospital valid until today is that treatment is free, because only very poor people search help there. Moreover, Albert Schweitzer had no easy time there, because while he had to build the compendium of the today’s beneficence he simultaneously served as a doctor, too. Especially his wife had a really hard life, too. This is why Schweitzer appreciated her a lot, for instance when he said, “[...] the fact that she managed the complicated African household and additionally to work in the hospital every day for a few hours was really an achievement.”

Unfortunately, he was at first not allowed to assist the region with medical knowledge very long due to the beginning of the First World War. Being an enemy to the French nation because of his German citizenship, he could not stay in a French colony. But in 1924, he came back and reopened his own place for help. Besides the patients, also their families and hurt animals could find a shelter, and even more importantly: they could receive medical provision.

He then constantly repaired and expanded the building, but at one point he had reached edificial limits and so he built a new hospital three kilometers away from the first one. Later, in the 1970s, the new hospital had not had the necessary equipment and structure, so it was completely restored and was reopened in 1981.

Even after the death of Albert Schweitzer, his hospital is still operating. The organization “Association Internationale Schweitzer Lambarene” (short: “AISL”) tries to maintain and spread the mindset of Albert Schweitzer. Members are collecting money from donation campaigns to save this important hospital for both humans and animals. Additionally, the leprosy village accommodates 30 patients and the hospital is the employer of seven doctors and eighty medical assistants. It is in this year that the Albert Schweitzer Hospital in Lambarene has been in existence for 100 years, i.e. from 1913 to 2013.

To conclude, it is evident that this person clearly had an ambition and he wasn’t afraid of realizing it. He offered his own life to help others and took a back seat. During his life, he published a lot of his worldly wisdoms, which always allude to his attitude towards life. So he uttered, for example, “Spend your time always as your heart and your soul can profit.” With respect to his career choice, he once explained, “I want to be doctor to effect without speaking.” These may serve as explications for his wonderful sympathy and for many of his life decisions like building up the Lambarene hospital.

Also today there are a lot of projects, organizations, schools and other institutions which chose the name of Albert Schweitzer for their names to indicate what kind of purpose they follow. A lot of them were already established all around the Europe continent by 1949, and all of them have the same intent: to help others.

The Lambarene hospital
References: