

Newsletter 22, December 14, 2019

Dear sponsors and friends of school money project

Foundation LOOKING-FORWARD



We can all be proud of the results of our school fees project in Vietnam. During our stay in Nha Trang and Dien Khanh in September we meet My Hanh as a department manager in the VinCommerce supermarket where we are to do some shopping for 15 welcome packages for new L-F students. Kim Phi tells us that she now works at the Viettravel travel agency. Hoang Hoa says she works as a saleswoman in a baby shop and we hear that Tan Tai is now a guard at the PoNagar Cham temples. Other former L-F students are still studying or have



found work. It's nice to meet these young adults again and hear how they are doing. *(My Hanh ensures that we get extra discounts and free items in her supermarket. She packs our groceries and has them delivered to our apartment).*

◆ From 1 to 19 September we visited "our" students and the L-F managers in Dien Khanh. We have been warmly welcomed by the school boards of the 7 participating schools. On the Trinh Phong secondary we could attend the special opening ceremony of the new school year. We have said goodbye to 13 students who have completed the 9- or 12-year basic education and have admitted 18 new students in need to our fund. At the time of departure, there were 90 students in the school fees project. Unfortunately, 2 students have stopped school in recent months and the number is now 88.

◆ At school our students are indistinguishable from other students. All are wearing a school uniform and their shirt / áo dài is pure white. The pupils are not allowed to come to school dirty and without a real schoolbook bag. Only at home visits do we see the difference. The simple houses vary from wood to brick. Walls and roofs are usually made of corrugated iron



sheets, but also asbestos sheets. With the poorest families, cooking is still done inside home with a wood-fired fire pot.

Very often we come to these families, because father or mother died of cancer. The hospital treatment (*which is not done effectively at the provincial hospital*), the large amount of prescribed medication and the expensive traditional funeral afterwards, saddle the families with a very large debt to the bank or other family members. The school fees (*from the girls first*) are no longer paid and the school board asks our fund for help for the affected family. For only a few students per school we can offer structural help by paying their school fees. To try to prevent the misery of the cancer disease we have this year, by means of an extra donation, bought a gas hob for 2 families (*40 euros each, including gas bottle*). Next year we will check whether those gas hobs are still in use / available.

◆ Financially the project is running well and stable. Many of the L-F students have a personal supporter in the Netherlands or United Kingdom. We are looking for a personal supporter for a few more students. We know that not every periodic donor wants to be a personal supporter for a student. We naturally fully respect that. Nevertheless, we would like to explain why we would like that. In the Netherlands and United Kingdom, a name associated with your donations does not mean close contact, but it does mean a face with your donations to the school fees project. You do not have to feel responsible about the course and duration of the student in question. In fact, all school fees are paid from one big pot of donations. The second important reason for personal donation is in Vietnam. Each cooperating school may put a limited number of ± 12 students on the list for help. They know Looking-Forward as a group of parents (*of course this is not ungrateful towards other donors*) who want to help an extra child for a better future. The school boards know that our budget depends on a certain number of families in the Netherlands and United Kingdom. As a result, they rarely ask for more financial help for their school.



◆ The Looking-Forward project brings a lot of social benefits, especially in Vietnam but also in the Netherlands and United Kingdom. It is a pity that those involved live 10,000 kilometres apart. In order to properly supervise the project and to keep control of the funds, we do have to travel to Nha Trang every year. That travel is done by plane. We do this with 3 flights outward and 3 flights back, namely; Amsterdam-Frankfurt-Saigon-Nha Trang. Anyone who knows us personally knows that we are "environmental" people and do a lot to combat climate change. The annual, very environmentally harmful air journeys required for the project give an uncomfortable feeling; can't it be different / less? This year we have tried a few things. On the outward and return journey we travelled by train to Frankfurt. The costs were slightly higher, but it is 2 flights less. We fly with a KLM or Vietnam Air scheduled service, never with budget airlines.

Last year we became grandparents of 2 beautiful grandsons (*Pim and Roan*). Lidy therefore did not want to stay in Vietnam for long. She flew back to Frankfurt on September 17 and boarded the train there. I, Johan, flew 2 days later to Guangzhou in China (*1000 km.*) And got on the train there for a 12,000 km journey home. The first reason for this experiment was because of the environmental benefit, but a second reason was also the special experience of a long train journey through China and Russia. I have been on the road for two and a half weeks with transfer points: Beijing (*Beijing*), Irkutsk (*in Siberia*), Ekatharinburg (*Asia-Europe geological border*), Moscow and Berlin.

It was a great trip! The environmental benefit (*CO2 saving*) has certainly yielded it, but the competition with the aircraft is unfair. For 143 euros I could have fly home with Lidy (*return ticket cost € 746 / one-way ticket cost € 603*). The train tickets, including 3 visas, cost more than € 1500. For once it was an adventure, but as a good alternative to the plane the train is not feasible / affordable here. (*We always pay all travel costs in private*)



◆ In October our foundation signed a so-called "pledge". With this pledge, the supportive private foundations declare that family is the place for a child to grow up. They call on other NGOs, companies, churches and schools to invest in family-oriented care. Childcare in orphanages is not included. More information about this at: www.bettercarenetwork.nl

◆ **Financial accountability**

On December 11, 2019 an amount of € 7378,- is on the bank account from Looking Forward (*including prepaid tuitions*).

During the school year 2019-2020, the foundation financially supports 89 students = 50 girls and 39 boys.

77 students have a personal supporter. (10 of them supported by Looking-Forward United Kingdom). 12 More students are available for support.

Special revenue: € 200,- once-only offer

Special spending: no unforeseen big spending

Private costs are administrated separately from the Looking-Forward finances. All sponsors can get full access to the L F-accounting.

The policy plan and the statutes of the foundation are published on the L-F website.

Thank you for supporting the Looking-Forward school project in Vietnam,

We wish you a GOOD and HEALTHY 2020

L-F NL: Lidy en Johan Verschuren, L-F UK: Steve Martin

E-mail: info@looking-forward.nl , Website: www.looking-forward.nl

IBAN: NL15RABO 01360.36.562, BIC/SWIFT RABONL2U for Looking-Forward foundation

E-mail: Steve.Martin@pafra.com

