

# NEWSLETTER

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## 'GOTONG ROYONG UTRECHT' FOUNDATION

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### 1. From the board

We have entered our 17<sup>th</sup> year. Strange how time deceives you; you think you can catch it in years or in hours, but 'on the inside' it feels very different. We can hardly believe it has already been 17 years since we started. Probably because it reminds us of the fact that we ourselves are 17 years older too. Which is true according to the passport, but 17 years? It very much feels like yesterday.

For the first time in our existence we recently thought about how long we want to continue the work and what criteria to apply to make this assessment. The reason for this was a question that was asked by our partner foundation in Indonesia. Because of new counter-terrorism legislation they will have to write new mandatory reports for the local authorities. This means a lot of extra administrative work will have to be done. The explicit question from Yogyakarta was: "Are there any indications (financial reasons) the foundation may stop, because if this is the case, we will not put any effort into setting up extra administration and drawing up reports."

We thought about this question. For us financial arguments never played an important role. For a good project with the right intentions, money will always come in. Criteria that do matter are the need, the quality of the local support and our own hearts and minds. All of these are fully met and that means that we will continue our work and continue to represent you, sponsors and interested parties.

We thank the people who have contributed financially in recent months. A special compliment to Ine and Piet, Cees and his wife from Alkmaar, Ratna and Bpk Pok.



*We do it for them*

## 2. 'Couleur locale' Indonesia

In February and March, we visited the projects again and have seen and experienced the local situation with our own eyes and heart. Indonesia is a country that is developing in a very fascinating way: an intriguing mix of tradition and conservatism on the one hand, and a fascination for modern things (clothing and gadgets), for global trends and fast food on the other hand. As in many countries with developing economies, in Indonesia not only the gap between rich and poor is growing, but there is also a growing middle class with increasing consumption.

Bali, the so-called Island of the Gods, increasingly suffers from traffic congestion. An underpass is being constructed to improve the traffic flow to and from the airport. The project will take two years, until then chaos rules.

The big cities of Java are experimenting with a five-day school week instead of the usual six days. As a result, the children will have longer school days. This means lunch must be served at (or near) school. This creates new trade and business activity, but also higher costs for the parents.

## 3. Project information

### I Yogyakarta-Java / Singaraja-Bali Scholarships

In March we met many students and their parents in Yogyakarta, in particular from Junior Highschool (SMP), Senior Highschool (SMA) and Vocational School (SMK). After the breaking of the ice, these were relaxed meetings which yielded a lot of information. It is fantastic to see that several children, whom we have sometimes been supporting for 7 or 8 years, are now in quality schools and in the top 3 of their class. We will purchase laptops to lend to three of these stars so they do not have to spend their evenings in internet cafes to do their school assignments. It is now up to us (including Amaliah, the local coordinator) to guide them to further study, to a level the children themselves hardly ever dared dream of. Until recently, their vision of the future was: passing the final exam and then ... no idea, probably work.



On Bali, in the children's homes Widhya Asih 3 and Widhya Asih 7, we spoke again with the staff and a few children about university studies. There are four candidates: Mita (accountancy), Indri (nursing), Yanti (economics) and Budi (sports teaching).

We recently met most of the young people who are already receiving a scholarship for a university study. They are doing really well. Only Pande was absent, presumably from shame as he has apparently stopped in his third year. He reconfirms a prejudice on our side. What is it with those guys in Bali: are they wimps? Not serious enough? Under too much pressure to earn money? The girls, on the other hand, are doing really well. We learned from Novia that after only one year of being a teacher, she is being polled for the position of head. Then there was a chance meeting with Eka. She graduated in Yogyakarta as a nurse three years ago and found a job in a good private hospital in Bali. In her free time, she works with the ambulatory medical service of Widhya Asih and thus we ran into her in the children's home in Amlapura where another graduate student (Yudi) is now the Head. Eka has become a radiant young professional and Yudi and his wife are the proud parents of a daughter and expecting a second child.



Medical team Widhya Asih (Eka on the right)



WA3 -students



Yudi (WA7)

On Java, in Yogyakarta, we met Sumi, the young woman from Bali who graduated from ISI, a renowned art academy, as a dancer, choreographer and dance teacher. She proudly announced that she has had various assignments and can live independently on her income.

## **II Bali : Children's homes Widhya Asih Singaraja and Amlapura**

In the previous newsletter, we wrote about the problems with the school bus of the Singaraja children's home and the idea of buying a good second-hand one. We have now seen the bus with our own eyes: the paint is peeling on all sides, a dent has been repaired in an ugly way, the interior is a mess. As for the engine, the vehicle is still in a reasonable condition. However, the bus lacks power steering and power brakes. The cost of refurbishing the exterior and interior and paying the overdue road tax amounts to 3500 euros and even then you merely have a refurbished, old, too small bus. A good, larger second-hand bus (from 2013/2014) will cost 15 to 16,000 euros. That is a lot of money, but also a lot of money is saved (60 children taking public transport twice a day). A big challenge. We will be looking for sponsors in the coming months.

As from March the children have been getting dancing lessons and gamelan lessons again: two times two hours a week until the summer holidays. The total costs are 190 euros per month.

The previously reported rebuilding project in Amlapura's children's home has been cancelled; a good renovation will do. We are happy with it because the plan was really too ambitious and far too expensive. We have been able to make Yudi and the children happy with the purchase of a good acoustic guitar and two computers, one with a good Corel video editing programme. We have also taken care of medical costs and the production fee of the school uniforms. The visit to KFC is starting to become a tradition.



*The children of Widhya Asih 7 in Amlapura*



### III Yogyakarta: Seniors' support programme

In mid-March we had an outing with all physically capable members of the six seniors' groups. It was a happy day. They visited Taman Mini in Kaliurang (north of Yogyakarta, on the slope of the Merapi volcano). It is a garden with miniature versions of the most iconic buildings of the world: Big Ben, Eiffel Tower, Taj Mahal, a Dutch windmill, the tower of Pisa etc. As usual, the highlight of the day was singing and eating together in the shade.

We visited some 20 candidates for the seniors' programme at home, to get acquainted but also to make an estimate of the need for support. The encounters were very confronting sometimes. The dignity of the people was impressive, despite the (great) poverty in which they sometimes find themselves.



*Candidates for the seniors's programme*



*Seniors' outing*

### IV Yogyakarta: special project

A quarter year ago we wrote: "Maulana is one of the children in our scholarship project (Junior High school). He lives with his mother and three brothers in a very small rickety house on the edge of a drainage canal. Actually illegally, but tolerated by the district council." It is three months later now and in the meantime we received a letter from Maulana stating that he refrained from further support for school. An inquiry via Amaliah, our coordinator, revealed that the letter had been written at the instigation of the district chief, who believed Maulana no longer deserved the support after he (together with others) had been caught stealing cigarettes and a cell phone. Exit Maulana, according to the district chief. We think it is rather an ill-conceived and not really "pedagogical solution". But the efforts that were made to put things right, led to nothing. We have decided to wait and see this school year. A deluge of "you must be ashamed" has been poured out over him. We will see how he proceeds and develops. Amaliah is keeping an eye on it.

#### 4. Sponsoring possibilities

- the **scholarship programme**: one scholarship is **€ 70** (primary school), **€ 120** (junior high school) or **€ 185** (senior high school) a year and can start any time during the year,
- sponsoring **a child of the children's home** for **€ 12 a month** (€ 36 a quarter or € 144 a year) for complete sustenance,
- the support of **a senior** (60 plus) for **€ 10 a month** (especially for vitamins, minerals and medical care). This is € 30 a quarter or € 120 a year.

Of course you can also send us a free gift and leave the spending to us.

#### 5. Gifts

Gifts are more than welcome at our bank account in Holland: **NL74ABNA084.21.36.932** (for the attention of Stichting Gotong Royong - Utrecht). For people who want to donate and who are living outside Holland, please contact us by email so that we can find a proper method of transaction for your donation.