

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 22 ISSUE 1 OCTOBER 2023



'GOTONG ROYONG UTRECHT' FOUNDATION

POSTAL ADDRESS: OUDKERKHOF 15 BIS, 3512 GH UTRECHT, THE NETHERLANDS

EMAIL: INFO@GOTONG-ROYONG-UTRECHT.NL

BANK ACCOUNT: NL74ABNA084 21 36 932 | REG.NUMBER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE H30179877

Report of a visit to Yogyakarta, August-September 2023

Although we are well informed about the projects through emails, reports, messages and photos via Whatsapp and Zoom encounters, seeing, hearing and feeling things in person is something completely different and live encounters add a lot.

A trip along the projects

Over the course of three weeks, all the projects were visited: the nursery Rumah Kita (including an difficult meeting about whether or not to continue funding it), the six groups of senior citizens and several schools (including the school in Gunung Kidul, an hour and a half's drive from the city, traffic jams included). We paid visits to students' homes and together with students we visited a state-of-the-art agricultural project on the top of the hills near Imogiri, where an internship might be possible for them. There were also several meetings with parents, successful students who were rewarded with a lease laptop and three graduates. Two outings were organised. The first outing was with the children from the day care centre to the mini zoo; a kind of petting zoo, but with local animals. Besides goats and rabbits there were snakes, iguanas, mustelids, turtles and parrots. The second outing was with 100 senior citizens to Rumah Kita's big pendopo to be entertained by the volunteers and to dance, sing and - of course - eat together.



Highschool students in traditional "pakaian adat" with their parents

We also visited four elderly people in their homes. They had been proposed by the neighbourhood representatives as candidates for the seniors' support programme in their neighbourhood and had to pass the "test". It was up to us to form an opinion based on a visual assessment and a brief interview about income and live-in children/grandchildren. Things are not always what they seem.



Children of the Rumah Kita nursery and their supervisors at their outing to the mini-zoo.

All of this was preceded by a goal-setting meeting. The three weeks ended with a report from our side on our findings, recommendations and possible decisions. And of course the last item on the agenda was a meal together.

General impressions

The President of Indonesia (Jokowi) has a very good press and his plans to improve access to certain facilities for the grassroots people (our target group) are having an effect on health and education. The city of Yogyakarta gives the impression that the economy is doing well: it has become a magnet for local tourism, plays an important role in national history (in the Merdeka armed conflict), and the presence of the Sultan and the Craton, Borobudur and Prambanan also attracts a large audience.



With honours: S1 Chemie



Mathematics award at regional Olympiad



Happy parents

A lot of restoration has been done and is still being done in the city and the infrastructure has improved. The city is often very busy with mainly commuter traffic in the early morning and late afternoon, a sign that a lot of work is going on!

Project impressions

All the projects are going very well. Things are well and smoothly organised and the atmosphere at the various sites is pleasant. Bu Amaliah and Bu Daryati play an important role in this. In the background, Bu Murdijati is still pulling the strings, despite her impaired vision and hearing. At our request, all the participants in our projects (children, students and senior citizens) have been reassessed to see if their current economic circumstances still justify participation. The main reason for this was our desire to reduce project expenditures as our income has fallen. Specifically, the primary school group has been reduced and we have not accepted any new students for the junior and senior high school this year. As for the seniors, we did not want to cut back. We did not visit the Widhya Asih 3 orphanage in Singaraja on Bali this year. The limited support we still provide there (mainly a school fund to which we make a monthly contribution and support for a number of university students: school fees, travel and accommodation expenses, pocket money) and the frequent individual contact meant that there was no need for this trip and we saved time and money.



Two volunteers: Bu Santi & Bu Dharyati



Participant in the seniors' programme

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