

NEWSLETTER 13 FROM HELLABEEM NETHERLANDS

JANUARY 2009

Status project

1 December 2008 it was exactly two years ago that we moved to Sri Lanka. During the past few months a lot happened at Hellabeem. On 23 November our 22nd pupil arrived: Dhananjay from Colombo. For the time being he is the last pupil we can have. We will see whether we can manage Hellabeem with this capacity and these finances.

Pupils

So we have 22 pupils now, eight of whom move around in a wheelchair, two with a rollator and two with crutches. For the others walking is difficult for instance because of a half-sided paralysis. A pupil of this group has problems therefore not only with a leg, but also with a hand. We also have a few pupils with a cerebral damage, who are spastic apart from their physical handicap. These young people have, as opposed to the physically disabled, a minor mental handicap. In the beginning it is difficult to estimate what they can or cannot do. In many cases these children have never been to school, though they should be able to mentally. We teach reading and writing to everybody. For those who cannot hold a pen, the computer is a good way out.

Apart from teaching them we also help the boys as far as their physical situation is concerned. Sandun and Rawindra for instance have had their second operation. Now they are able to bend their knees again. Before these operations they always had to live with stretched, inflexible legs. Intensive physiotherapy teaches them to use their legs as best as they can.

The children really feel at home with us. We have a regular schedule and recurring rituals to please them as much as possible. When they are celebrating their birthday for instance they are given a plant or tree to plant. They will have to look after it themselves as far as possible. In this way we have already planted much greenery, which gives us a lot of flowers as a result.



Buildings

For the time being we finished the construction of buildings. In the building that was completed last the physiotherapy, the kitchen and eating room are situated, they look wonderful. In August we opened them, just like all other buildings, in the traditional way by cooking milk on a wood fire. Now only the finishing touches have to be put to our house. It goes without saying that the costs are for us. We are very much looking forward to moving in. During the past two years we have lived in a small room with all our stuff in storage.

Our physiotherapy room has now two tables for treatment and is in use full time. The practice is managed by Sameere, assistant remedial therapist. He works under the supervision of a physiotherapist of an English organization: Leonard Cheshire International (LCI), who has its own department in Sri Lanka in Thalpe. Every week Sameere and I go to the LCI- physiotherapist together with five children. There a plan of treatment is written for each of them that Sameere can carry out. Each month the plan of treatment is adjusted.



Making brooms



Sowing

Courses

As we wrote in our last newsletter, we have given courses during the last two months together with LCI and AMURT. The latter organizes and finances the courses. LCI selects the candidates and we facilitate them. AMURT also gives them the tools to start at home. The disabled - young and old, girls and boys – took courses in making brooms, mats, shoes and clothes. If it is too difficult for the children to take a course, for instance because they have bad eyesight or are mentally handicapped, a relative takes the course. At home this person can show the child how to do something in a quiet way. Together they can put into practice what they have learned and in this way generate an income. The last course that was given was a sewing course of more than three weeks. In this period more than 60 people were walking around at Hellabeem, staff included. It was great to see that all went well and that everybody was walking around with a radiant face. This is exactly the reason why we started the project!

Small projects

A large part of our site has been prepared to start a demonstration garden to teach the pupils to do organic gardening and growing vegetables. We are starting this in the new year

For a short time we have had a cow! She is two and a half years old and we got her from the building contractor. Amila took over the contracting business from his father as his father had a stroke and could not work any more. Each year on his birthday he buys a cow at the butcher's that actually should be slaughtered. A proper Buddhist does not kill animals. We think this is a such a wonderful thought that we adopt the idea. The cow does not give milk yet, she is still too young. But we hope that in a year there will be calves after A.I. - treatment and we will be able to milk. High on our list of wishes is a crossing of a real Frisian cow and an Indian bull.

Meanwhile we work hard to get the new website up to date. We hope to tell you more about it in our next newsletter.

Volunteers

In the past months too we got help from various volunteers. Lotte Aal for instance came with her father Rob to Sri Lanka for a fortnight. After a short roundtrip they worked here for more than a week. Rob has painted the old kitchen and dining room and started mosquito nettings as a protection for birds coming in the new building. Lotte, who had to do an international project for school, has given English lessons together with Dinja Buitenhuis. After a week a friend of Dinja's arrived, Joost van der Linden. He has finished the mosquito nettings and repaired wheelchairs. We are very glad with all this help! May be this is something for you! We can always use the help of physiotherapists and handy people. The job which is most important right now is the production of tricycles for disabled people and the construction of a windmill. Do you know somebody who can help us? At Hellabeem you can combine a nice holiday with volunteer work.



English class with the volunteers



Opening of the physiotherapy

Finance

Our file of regular supporters is getting bigger and bigger. We now have 61 authorized supporters. To guarantee the exploitation we have decided on a temporary target number of a 100 supporters. Are you going to help us reach this target? You can do so by giving an authorization to the treasurer for a contribution on a monthly, quarterly or yearly basis. It is also possible to sponsor a small project, I can always give you information on this, my telephone number is 0031(0)35 6937892, sonjavidwalle@hotmail.com.

Sponsors

We thank everybody who gave their birthday money to Hellabeem. We also receive amounts of money from people who asked money for Hellabeem as a gift for their wedding anniversary. These are highly valued gifts! We also got a part of the proceeds of the beautiful broaches made by Janny Look and other Sri Lankan jewellery they sell. Special thanks to Patricia Stomp who with a final effort and thinking of Hellabeem finished the Marathon of Amsterdam and in this way collected € 950,-. Thanks to the Lakeland Foundation, to Stichting Steunfonds Overgooi and Stichting Klein Verzet for their contributions. All Gifts, great and small, too many to mention them all, we are very grateful for them! It feels very good that there are so many people who help us building Hellabeem in whatever way.

NEWS FROM THE DUTCH BOARD

Once again we ask your attention for our SCHOOL VOOR SCHOOL PLAN, with which you can get your (grand)child's school enthusiastic about a campaign for Hellabeem. The plan provides many suggestions to help the teachers organize a campaign. You can ask for this ready-made-plan by phone 0031(0)35 6948846 or by mail welmoet@hellabeem.org. You can also find it on and download it from our site www.hellabeem.org.

We go on building Hellabeem. What we need most now are those 39 more supporters, let's reach 100! Also you can sponsor a child for instance with your company or your friends, you can contact me on this. Our address is Hellabeem Sri Lanka, P.O. Box 11, Weligama, Sri Lanka. My e-mail address is: helene@hellabeem.org.

With all the best wishes for 2009 for you and yours
and kind regards, also on behalf of Mahrooza, Lahir and Jan,

Helène Heijen