



# BETULA ASIAN AID FOUNDATION

## Newsletter December 2019

**Dear friends of Betula,**

Hope you are all doing well. The year of our 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary has been a special one and as you will read below a very busy one. On the occasion, we were lucky to be one of the beneficiaries of an annual fundraising event of the Dutch Business Association in Vietnam last November. For this and the many other special attentions and donations received over the past year a very big thank you.

For 2020 I wish you all a very healthy new year!

### **Mushrooms help to generate income**



Herewith an update of our special income generating project in Gia Lai. We are happy to inform that the project is successful. The project leader has finished a 1 month intense training in Ha Noi and now sharing her experience with 4 other poor families. Harvesting now takes place and the mushrooms will be sold at the local market. Here are the stories behind the people we are helping.

H'Binh is 21 years old. After finishing high school, she got married at a very young age which is common with minority people. She has a young baby which makes finding a job difficult. The mushroom growing is a perfect way for her to earn money and take care of the baby. Our male trainee is Champa who is 23 years old, he and his wife studied at the university but for both still no job in sight. They have a 1 year old son.

H'Yin is 30 years old. She is a single mother. Her son has a light disability. Before participating in our project she collected plastic bottles to have income to take care of her son. Her smile says it all. She is very happy growing mushrooms providing her a more stable and better monthly income.





H'Nary is 23 years old. She studied as a teacher for 4 years but then no job opportunity. She is married and has a young daughter. The couple has no stable income. When she started growing mushrooms her husband joined helping to harvest straw. They are happy to have a stable income from this job.

This time 3 quintals of straw material were made for 1 family. 15 kg of straw mushrooms and 10 kg of oyster mushrooms are harvested. After deduction of seed and water cost, each family has over 50 euro income a month. This doesn't seem much but is a substantial, additional income for these people.

Families are using the space under the houses to grow the mushrooms. We foresee that production will increase and are planning to build a small place where the extra production can take place. Moreover we will help at least 2 more families next year. *Please support this amazing project and help to realize the new location or more families to be able to participate.*



## Leg surgery for Duy

Duy is 17 years old. He was born in a disadvantaged family in the province of Nam Dinh in Northern Vietnam. 2 years ago, his mother died because of ovary cancer. His father is addicted to gambling, spending all of the family's income and borrowing even more. He was arrested and convicted of illegal gambling activities. He might be in prison for at least 4 years. The financial situation of the family is very bad.

Duy likes playing football a lot. His dream is to become a national football player. Unfortunately he broke his leg while playing football. It was a complicated fracture. Without a swift operation Duy would not be able to walk normal again. He has a health insurance but it doesn't cover all the cost for surgery and other expenses.

The news that we were going to support his case had a big impact on the boys condition as he worried he would not get the operation to make him help walk again. We will also see where we can support Duy after the operation as physiotherapy will be necessary for his recovery.

When Duy was visited he wore the soccer shirt of Heerenveen, the first Dutch Premier League club where a Vietnamese player is contracted.

## School fees for the new school year



Every year we support about 60 children all over Vietnam so they are able to stay in or can go back to school. In the cities of Hanoi and Hue and the provinces of Quang Nam and Gia Lai we help disadvantaged and disabled children. We support with fees of 100 to 150 euro annually. The amounts help to buy uniforms, books and cover other costs.



## Follow up on Hung Anh

You may remember the story of Hung Anh the boy who lost both his parents at a very young age. He was sent back and forth between family members who were involved in criminal activities and never showed any real care for Hung Anh. The neglect led to emotional and physical problems. Finally he was kicked out on the street so they didn't have to make the effort nor spend the money. Our partner organisation Blue Dragon took care of him.

Hung Anh was diagnosed with Tuberculosis (TB) five years ago. Together with Blue Dragon we have been supporting him with medical treatment, some living support as well as counselling to help him overcome the neglect and trauma he has experienced. Last year, he was diagnosed with a lung infection showing some "air balloons" in his lung that could break anytime. If they would break the air would spread throughout his lung and he could die. A life threatening situation where we immediately responded. The first treatment was about 3 months ago. Based on the result of the next treatment and how his body responds, the doctor will advise about future treatments.

## What a result for little Duoc!



Not so long ago we supported a baby in Gia Lai with milk. The baby was still too weak to have an operation for his cleft lip and the milk would help to make him stronger. After almost a year the doctors found him strong enough. So we helped the family to get to the hospital and to do the operation the boy needed. The result is amazing.

## The story of Thanh Long

The story of this 17 year old boy is heart-breaking. From a young age he lost his parents due to drug abuse. All of Long's childhood experiences are seeing his mom, uncles, brothers and even strangers coming to his small house using drugs and alcohol. Often he was beaten up by them. Despite growing up in such environment he kept himself clean. Not using drugs or dealing it as his family wanted.

Thanh Long has been supported by our partner Blue Dragon since he was about 15 years old. He was given safe accommodation and school fees were paid. He has been able to get a job after finishing a vocational training. Soon after, though, he was pressured by his family to support them and their addiction.

Some months ago Thanh Long collapsed on the road. Tests in the hospital showed that he is experiencing psychosis due to his traumatic childhood. He needs to stay at the mental hospital for treatment. No one in his family supports him, they even make it difficult for outsiders to help him to get treatment. But with the help of Blue Dragon he was admitted and is receiving the treatment he needs. We are happy to contribute to cover his medical costs and wish he will be doing well soon.

## Mo suffers severe neck injury



Mo, 17 years old, is in the 11th grade at Dang Tran Con School in Hue. On a stormy day in October while riding her bike the wind swept under her raincoat and covered her face. Only these short seconds were crucial. She ran into a truck parked on the side of the road. Mo suffered severe neck injury and some parts of her body were paralyzed. She could only breathe with the support of a machine.

Mo comes from a poor family. Her father rides a bicycle taxi, her mother is jobless due to a heart condition. She has a student health and accident insurance but only parts of the operation, treatment and medicine needed are being covered. Her family borrowed a lot of money for her treatment to the point they can no longer afford. Because of your support we are able to help Mo. The family sends a big thank you.

The first operations started in October. As I am writing you I learn that Mo is doing better. She doesn't need support to breath, operations have been quite successful. Parts of her body though are still paralyzed. Next steps are considered by the doctors. We will stay by her side.

## Full moon festivities

This year I was fortunate to celebrate full moon festivity with HIV+ and HIV 'affected' children. 'Affected' is used here, as they are not infected but their parents are or they are orphaned as parent(s) died as a result of the disease. The children had a great time enjoying performances and their favourite snacks and drinks. During the festivity we also handed out the scholarships we provide for many of the children and gave the health insurances we bought so they can get their life supporting medicine for free (for now).

Being in the area we also used the time to visit some of the HIV+ affected families who we supported with buying chickens. We were happy to see how well the project is doing. A couple of chickens have become dozens and are giving the families meat, eggs and income from sales.



## Eye screening mission in Myanmar



Last month we supported our partner Burma Children Medical Fund (BCMF) on an eye screening mission in Myanmar. A two days travelling and a four-day screening mission in Northern Myanmar was wrapped up only last week. Almost 600 villagers eyes were tested from 65 different towns and villages. 433 glasses were distributed and 84 patients were registered for eye surgery.

We have been able to support this mission with the generous support of a Dutch optician. Thank you.

Why would you support us? Betula works at grass root level and direct. Your donations are completely used to help the beneficiaries. For more information about the programs and projects please visit our website:

[www.betula-asianaid.org](http://www.betula-asianaid.org)

Your support is needed and appreciated.

I wish you all good health!  
Kees