

2018... a **Running start**

With the view of our front garden and a Dutch weather scene in the sky, I try to put my hundred thoughts on paper. Hopefully it will rain soon. While I see how the clouds pick up, I realize again that I still have to learn so much! How my own culture plays a major role in the decisions that I make and how it can be a hindrance for the adults and children we are working with. My way of doing things is not necessarily the right one and definitely not the only one. Luckily I am not alone and Jac-Louis and I are a good team, loyal colleagues but fortunately also life partners :)!

Lighthouse

26 January was the big day of the move and since that day we have been living in our new rented home. The space, playground for the children, storage space and garden are all a great luxury. Only 3 days after our arrival, our first 2 Lighthouse children arrived. A boy of 15 years was with us for almost two weeks but unfortunately he has chosen for life on the street again. Some valuable lessons were learnt during this time. A girl of 18 months is still with us and might go to a family member next week, 3 hours drive from Gobabis. Her sister of 4, who lived with us for 5 weeks, has now been placed in a beautiful foster family within her own culture group. It is going very well with her.

We deem all our relationships with various stakeholders of vital importance as we look to collectively address the challenges. Lessons are frequently learnt and little victories celebrated...every day a classroom.

We are very grateful for all the support we receive from family and friends, which makes this way of helping in the community of Gobabis a lot easier.

New school year

The first month of the new year is always a big challenge. Some need to return to school, others look to register at new schools and many more children want physical support as they would like to go to school. Unfortunately help available is always less than what is asked. This means that we have to provide all old and new sponsor children with all the necessities. All 48 children are looking to us, of whom 20 must be taken to schools outside Gobabis ...

All the work we do pays off when we see joyful children going to school, ready to learn.

Light for the Children School

Through friends from Windhoek, Jac-Louis was able get 33 used office chairs from a business. After much organising, a transport company brought these chairs to the school free of charge. Now the computer center at Steps for Children (part of Light for the Children) has new seats!

A New class

At the beginning of January there was a class of 35 children between the ages of 7 and 12 at Light for the Children. These children have already aged for regular education but because they had no birth certificate, or their parents have never bothered to get a school, these children were still at Pre-primary school. After identifying the need, Jac-Louis, together with the Ministry of Education, has found a public school to take this group of children. This school has specially recruited a new teacher to teach these children. Hence, there was a bit more room for a few new children at Light for the Children.

Countdown

I am very grateful for my large “range” of brothers and sisters because in this way we get at least regular visits :)! On 17 March my sister, Geertje, hope to come for 3 months (!), helping at Light for the Children and in the Lighthouse. A wonderful prospect! Who knows, maybe my Dutch will get better and the men in this house also learn more Dutch;).

I can put more on paper, but let us keep it here for now. We look forward hearing from you as we always enjoy reading and hearing how you are.

Love and peace from the Lighthouse in Gobabis

Gijsbertha (and the Men)