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### Dear Sponsors

Quite a bit late, still I wish all of you good health for 2018 from bottom of my heart; but above all wishing that you never lose Hope; the Hope that world will become peaceful, most of all for those, who are suffering at the moment. It is the hope which makes it possible for us to think that everything will come out well.

Here at Bassam we are enjoying our wonderful home. In the meantime all the flower, shrubs and trees, which Aziz planted, are starting to grow. Even the sunflowers are blooming, which is a small wonder in this humid weather. For our kids, patients and staff sunflowers are something exotic. As I told them that in French the sunflowers are called Tournesol and the flowers are always turning their head towards the sun and we should also do the same and always look at the light - they thought that the sunflowers are the best flowers in the world! The kids are very happy, now that they have a better life after spending so many years in the terrible slums of Adjouffou and are enjoying it very much.



## Therese, Marie-France and Ernest

I like to tell you a story, which makes me happy. About 15 years ago - at that time we were still in the slum of Adjouffou - I went to the night market at around 9 pm to eat something. The night market then as it is even today is a place lit with petrol lamps. There are a lot of old and broken tables, where the men and women prepare and sale food. I had a desire to eat Chicken-Braise with Attieke, a short of grilled chicken with couscous-looking manioc dish. As I waited in front of the stall my eyes felt on a young girl sitting on the hard bench. I went to her and asked:

“Good Evening, little Girl, what are you doing here alone at this time in this dangerous market? Do you really believe that this is a good place for you?” She answered promptly: “I and both of my siblings are hungry”.

I knew that many street kids sleep under these old tables as they have nowhere else to go and live from the food fished out from garbage. ” What is your name and how old are you?”

“I am Therese and am 13 years old. My sister is 5 and brother is 4”. I ordered an extra chicken with a lot of Attiecke for them and said: “I am Madame Lotti. Go to your siblings and eat and come to our Center of Hope tomorrow. I wish you a good night”. I had thousands of questions, but the time was not right. If she comes or not is written in the stars, which that evening shone very brightly. The thought that a 13 years old girl has to beg for food, disturbed me enormously. My appetite was gone, I gave my food to another kid, who stood before me and looked at me sadly. There are so many of them----

Next morning Therese really stood in front of me, holding a sibling in each hand and immediately introduced them: “This is Marie-France, 5 year old and this is Ernest, 4 year old”. The boy, whose feet were struck in tattered shoes, looked quite bright. Opposite to that the small girl, who wore a torned little skirt, which she has long outgrown looked sad. She was not wearing any shoes. One of her feet was covered with a very dirty cloth. I don't want to talk now about the smell that came from it. “Where are your parents?” I wanted to know from Therese. “Our mother is dead. My father is a sailor and is never at home; Marie-France’s father is dead and Ernest’s father has married again, has a bar and every night he is drunk and does not help us. We live with an older brother, who still goes to school and has neither any money”. Hard to believe what she tells; I have to send my social worker there to check all these. “What is wrong with Marie-France’s foot?” I asked her. She put Marie-France on a stool and took the bandage off; what I saw left me spellbound. Marie-France had no heel any more, instead there was only a big hole. It was surprising that she didn’t groan from the pain; she just sat there and didn’t make any sound. I had a closer look at the foot and found out that two toes were also missing.



“Therese, did you never take him to a doctor?” I forgot completely that she herself was a kid.

“Yes, now and then I did bring him, but I didn’t have the money and no one helped us”. “Has she no pain?” “No, she can’t feel even when she bangs her foot, the foot is dead”. I said “I understand. For the time begs I shall keep you with us; you will be looked after, get food and better clothes and new shoes. First of all, right now we have to look after Marie-France’s foot. Please go home and inform your older

brother and Ernest's father that for the time being you will stay with us". Said and done. The father was glad over this news. I brought Marie-France to Professor Assi, a Foot- specialist; he diagnosed Pancreatic Cancer. A chronic disease of red blood cells, which are crippled and therefore cannot transport oxygen properly. You can find this disease only in the South and there is no medicine for it, as the pharmaceutical industry is not interested in it. The people, who get this disease slowly becomes crippled and/or have lifelong wounds, which do not heal. And when they suffer from a severe form they will hardly survive beyond 30. What can help is fresh blood every six weeks, but that costs.

Marie-France was lucky, still today she suffers from a mild form of the disease. Professor Assi looked after her and within one year her heel cured so well that she could wear sandals again. That was the time, when Therese requested us to allow her to take over the role of the mothership again. So we rented a small house for the three, subsidised their food and schooled them. All of them knew that they can come back to us any time, which they did regularly.

And today? Now Therese has a son, who makes her happy. The father is no longer with her, but Ernest and Marie-France are. Marie-France, now 20 works as a secretary and Ernest, now 19 finished high-school diploma with distinctions and is now studying law. We bear the cost of his study, as for another 800 children.



As Marie-France received her first salary, she brought it to me. I thanked her, but asked her to bring it to Therese - as if someone was really worth of receiving this gesture, it was SHE. I know that Ernest and Marie-France never forget what Therese has done for them.



The fate of these three confirms again that it is important to stay in a place for a longer time. To watch how the kids grow up, to make sure that they get everything a kid is entitled to and much more, much love, this makes us happy.

Dear Sponsors, this is also YOUR work. You help us so that we ourselves never give up hope, that it always go forward in spite of life being hard, painful and unjust. Thanks to you, the life of many will be better,

With endless, sincere Thanks

Yours  
Lotti Latrous