



The Faraja project in Arusha.

We are just a couple, a couple as many others. In the nineties we fell in love with Africa. The first years we had our holidays there, and travelled together in the Bush. 3 to 4 days bush, than a shower and bunkering and back in the bush. One year in the Kalahari desert in Botswana we met the bushman, and there we understood what poor means.



After that our lives start changing, we started as most tourist the wrong way, we brought books and pencils for school.

Later we built in Kimberley South Africa a school room for handicapped children. Also in Kimberley we started a center for little children from aids parents. We took daily care of 80 children between 1 and 6 whose parents were either in hospital or dying.

Corruption has no color, so in order to protect our lives we had to leave South Africa, and handed the daycare over to the church.

One year later we started a new project in Tanzania. The first object was young boys, using glue in the street. We had a take in center in Arusha where we did it in our way. We do not believe in big systems, when you want to save young children. We had a normal house in a street, with a social worker. Max 12 boys were allowed. 24/7 accompaniment, trust has to be built. In the last 10 years more than 500 boys are taken from the street, and more than 75% does not go back in the street. Main enemy is the tourist who give a dollar in a country where a month wage is \$ 70. A boy, when he is between 12 and 15, earns easy \$ 5 a day from tourists.



The boys as we find them, and how they are in the center

But we wanted to concentrate on another group of human beings. A group not talked about. If we hear about girls, it is about human trafficking, or forced prostitution.

But there is a lost group of humans. To understand it, you have to understand the culture, only than you can really feel the pain.

In the world of the Masai, man are dominant. In their culture if you are circumcised you have the right on a girl. In the same country people are very poor and there is almost no work. Unemployment reaches above 50%, but in the lower classes it is above the 70 to 80%.

If your father has three wives, and with every wife has 6 children, who are you, what is your possibility.

And the value of women is counted in cows. If you are a girl in such a family, your economic value is the bride price. If you are "lucky", you are sold as a bride, with a bride price for your parents you are sold to an old man who can permit it.

Or you are hungry, and there is a boy, who is nice and gives you food, of course also for a price.

There is a group of girls, in the age of 14 to 17 who have a baby. Young mothers.

First question how did they get pregnant:

A: Rape

B: Family abuse

C: Traffic accidents

D: No food and mistreated

E: And of course also mistakes with a boy friend.

“Hello, I am 15. My name is Julita. My mother has a problem in her head. She does not understand everything. My father has left years ago. My brother and sister had nothing to eat. My mother sent me as a house girl to a family. They did not pay me, but the father of the house raped me. I have now his child. The police did not accept the claim. The next two years I am the guest of United Children.”



How does the government react to solve the problem,

If you are below 16 and get pregnant, the girl has to leave school.

But there is a man, by law it is rape and the father goes to jail. So nobody will acknowledge he is the father. The problem is, for the father it is deny, run or jail.

The father of the girl sends her away, the family honor is affected.

And the value of the girl is gone, no man is interested in a girl of 15 with a child.

Most heard arguments from social workers in the problem of these girls:

It is their own fault, why care

You cannot trust them.

They are all prostitutes.

They all have aids

A baby is always something, expensive and ill.

That is the way the Tanzanian community looks to girls who are pregnant after rape and abuse.

We take care of young girls with a baby. A girl of fifteen, with her child, after abuse or rape and nobody takes care. They are sent out of school and have no friends. What is the future of the harmless baby. A mother should love her child, but after rape that is not easy.

Child marriage is still a big issue in Tanzania, a bride price has more value than a live. We have girls run away, sometimes in the age of 12 where the stepfather claims she is sixteen and sells her. The husband uses her as a slave, makes her pregnant. The young mother runs away with her child. Who cares, if the police finds her, she will be brought back to her legal husband.

Because of these reasons we started a project in 2008 with Mama Siara. She had a center for human trafficking and abused young girls. She was already working with the Tanzanian government through the Arusha City Council and the Social Welfare Office. She had support of the European community in relation with the global fund for children. As Europe is now concentrating on refugees, the support from Europe has ended. So the small budget that was available for human trafficking has ended.

In 2008 we started to built 6 rooms. After increasing in 2010 and 2012, since 2014 we offer 30 young mothers a year of education, shelter and support for their baby.

As most girls are abused or raped, the social aspect is very important. We learn the raped mother to love her baby, instead of getting the re-experience of the rape every time she sees her child.

We teach them a basic profession so they can survive in the hard live of Tanzania.

We have sewing, cooking and hairdresser classes, all jobs you can do in the street and have an economic value for the girl and her family. Because if we succeed in restore the relationship with the family and her roots, her future looks much better.

The classes:



Cooking class



Hairdresser class



Sewing class

As they are mothers we also built a day care center, with an extra classroom for a pre-primary education class, so there is also a social connection to the neighborhood.



The day care center

Of course 80% of the babies get sick the first months, as they are not used to normal regular food. They are not even used to a meal a day, it is just what the mother can find in the street.

Most important after a year they can start a business, of because of the practice, they find a job.



Sofia started a small shop in Karatu after the year to take care of her children.

In order to make this possible, all girls get a start up support when they leave. Because not a big amount of money, as the Father or stepfather will steel that immediately if he knows it. So just a small amount for 2 to 3 month rent and food. So when they leave they can rent a place to stay. They also get a bed with mattress, mosquito net, blanket and bed sheets. And a basket with plates, cups, knife and spoon. Most girls we visit after 3 to 5 years still sleep on the same bed, and use the same plates and spoons.

Of course to explain it in a few lines is difficult, so maybe a pictures is a better way.



Neema with her son Faraja November 2008, when we found her, ill and nearly dead. Abandoned by her family



In the middle the same Neema at the end of 2009.



2 years later, Faraja is going to school, and Neema has a shop and a little plot where she lives.

It is as far as we know the only initiative in the whole of Tanzania, and even east Africa. We believe that in one year we should change this girls from victims with a child, to independent woman with a future.

Now we are in 2020, we are in the age of 69 and 71 and retired. After paying for over 12 years we are not able to do it anymore. But the girls are still there, the problem is still there, but it is another time and a new vision is needed. Montessori teaching is a way to enter into a new system of education. Until now teachers beat children in the class, it is how they were treated in school. But for the future of Tanzania a combination of Montessori teaching and educating young mothers, need a fresh start. So it is the circle of life that people retire and other take over with a new and fresh idea how to help these young mothers.

Kitty and Marcel Vloemans

Marcel and Kitty Vloemans (CV)



Married for 45 years and having 2 sons.

Marcel has been working in the electronic retail branch since 1972.

In 1983 he started a cooperative for retailers, which after some overtaking's was the biggest group on the Dutch market in 1994. It kept that position until his retirement in 2016.

In 1989 he was the founder of an international cooperative in the electronic retail branch. Euronics started in 1990 with 5 countries, participating, nowadays it covers more than 30 countries, it is the biggest cooperative worldwide, with a consumer turnover of 18 billion euro. Marcel is still connected with the group as Advisory board. During his live he has worked in many organizations in relation to labor, environment and other interests of the market. In 2019 he received a high Dutch honorary medal of His Majesty the King (Officer in the Order of Orange-Nassau) for his work done.

Kitty is a fashion designer.

As Kitty and Marcel wanted to be sure that the nurture of their boys went in the best way, they decided that Kitty would be a housewife. But as the sons were getting mature, there was time to help children in Africa. Since the last 15 years, their holidays changed from relaxing time, to supporting time. Starting 2008 Marcel visits Tanzania 5 times a year, and Kitty 2 to 3 times a year, to safeguard the projects. Besides the two projects mentioned, they still support 10 children in the age from 5 to 12 in primary school. They will keep doing that until the children end the primary school.

Because of her profession Kitty is much involved in the Sewing class. She guides the teachers and has a big interest in the results of the class. In 2009 4 sewing machines and 4 lock machines were installed. In that year a special course of a week for using the machines was given by Kitty and her friend.