

Dear YAN members, parents and everybody who is here on this remarkable day.

We say remarkable and in this letter we are going to explain why this day is so remarkable.

Congratulations to the Youth Advocacy Network with their second anniversary.

Let's first give a short introduction of Stichting Taiama-Andreas.

Stichting Taiama-Andreas was founded in 2007 in the Netherlands in Europe.

Here in the office there is a map of the world where you can find our small country.

Presently we are 8 people, men and women from 40 till 79 years old. Our founder Father Bles who lived in Ghana and still has friends in Sierra Leone, retired last year. He is 92 years old and is still our advisor. One of our members, Kelly Fofanah, grew up in Kabala but came to our country during the war.

From 2008 till 2014 we had a program for women in Taiama, Sierra Leone. The program stopped because we think that it is good to help people to build a strong organization but we don't want to make them depend on our help forever.

Stichting Taiama -Andreas has with 2 main goals:

First: Looking at and learning from each other's lives, habits and cultures with respect for each other's identity. For that we have frequent contact through phone calls and WhatsApp and we try to visit our projects on a regular basis.

Second: Doing fundraising in our country by exploring activities like selling things, giving lessons and lectures about Sierra Leone to students in primary and secondary schools and to other people that are interested. And that goes very far: we took a coalpot and a matawodo to our country and cooked with people, we had an exhibition of cultural clothes, people had to carry water on their head to have the experience young girls have when they go out to catch water.

With the money we collect by this fundraising we support projects like YAN.

Today you already have heard a lot about YAN and its activities like the advocacy activities, the school support program and the efforts we made to help some YAN members to learn a job through the job skills.

In the past 2 years we also made efforts to make YAN a bit sustainable. YAN members told you about the challenges they faced. If you have further questions, you can always ask YAN members but also contact Stichting Taiama-Andreas. A lot of YAN members do have our phone numbers.

This day is a remarkable day.

And now we want you to pay attention because we want to explain why we see this day as a remarkable day.

In August 2017 the Youth Advocacy Network started with 19 young women and men. Together we found an very dedicated advisor for these young people, Mr. Jones and he still is an excellent advisor to all of us because he isn't afraid to give his opinion and knows how to solve problems at both sides in a diplomatic way.

Together we jumped into a journey in which nobody could foresee how it would go and where it would end. In that year 13 members got school fees and there was money for lots of advocacy activities.

A year later in August 2018 YAN had a farm next to KSS where they could go and learn about agriculture but also got the opportunity to earn some money for the YAN activities. YAN selected 25 vulnerable students who, together with 11 YAN members, got school support through Stichting Taiama-Andreas (STA). There where advocacy activities and the YAN office that was rented for YAN by STA was transformed into a complete office. In January 2019 we found a second advisor in the group Mrs. Sesay from KSSG. A dedicated woman with a lot of experience and connections.

Now we are here in August 2019. Members come and go but YAN, a group of young people that started with a dream still exists. That is remarkable.

The last year wasn't easy. A lot of older members went to university. Younger female members came. That is good but also difficult especially for the farming project. Remind the vision of stichting Taiama-Andreas is to make Yan partly sustainable, at least for the advocacy activities, like the International Day of the Girl Child and to visit a village like Semamaya. YAN needs also money for petrol for the generator to use for education for the computer in the office.

Today 2 years Yan, a remarkable day with ups and downs. That hasn't been possible without the efforts of a few dedicated members. In every group you have leaders and followers. Today we want to say thanks to 2 of them that are here today. Sajor Jalloh and Bangalie A. Mansaray, executive members from the beginning. Please give them and all the other Yan members a big applause. We also want to thank the advisors, Mr Jones advisor from the beginning and Mrs. Sesay . (Applause)

This day is remarkable because we have some people here that are warm-hearted to Yan: parents, teachers, stakeholders, authorities.

We as stichting Taiama-Andreas have a request for you for the future. We cannot support this group forever, we need your help. Help to support this group during advocacy activities, the agriculture project, maybe to find or support an office that is more centralized in Kabala. In the group discussions you can offer your help to this unique group.

We think that we as adults have a shared responsibility to this group. We as people of a foundation in a country far far away, and you as teachers, parents, stakeholders, authorities in Kabala, Koinadugu.

YAN a young group with a lot of dreams, they thrive by positive change.

On behalf of Stichting Taiama-Andreas, The Netherlands

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