



**St Mary's Anglican Church Twente**

T.a.v. het bestuur

*Via email*

Deventer, December 21st, 2022

Dear St Mary's,

Thank you for your letter via email which reached us last week.

I just want to express my heartfelt appreciation for the support you've given us over the years.

Thanks in part to your support, Mineke Foundation has been able to:

- Train over 400 (young) women in vocational and business skills since 2015. About 65% of our vocational graduates have started their own micro businesses, and we've been regularly moved by stories of how they've become economically self-reliant, been able to send their children to school, or leave abusive relationships.
- Support over 60 women with micro loans to help them build their businesses
- Provide education to about 75 women about women's rights, health, and dealing with sexual and gender-based violence.
- Train more than 150 high school youth in skills - including digital skills - to improve their employability and therewith their position on the labour market
- Pre-Covid, offer after-school social and educational activities to almost 200 children

Thank you so much for helping us do that!

The past 2.5 years were difficult for us. Like in the Netherlands, Liberia imposed two six-month lockdowns.

During the lockdowns, no group activities were permitted. This meant that in 2020 and 2021, we had to shut down almost all our activities, with the exception of our micro loans. Eventually, we had to close down our vocational training, terminate the contracts of various team members, and give up our rented office & training space.

Thankfully, in 2021, we received a donation from a large Dutch funder that enabled us to start renovating the school that my parents built before the civil war. As you may remember, the school was severely damaged during the war. The school reopened partially in November 2021 and Mineke Foundation is currently using the renovated school office and a classroom as our office space. We hope to complete the renovation of the school in 2023.

Renovating the school also opened new doors for us. We secured an initial collaboration with an American organisation, Education Development Center, to train youth in various skills to improve their labour market position. These included basic digital skills (using MS Office, email, internet security etc), job search skills (writing application letters, CVs, searching for jobs online), and mental health/resilience. We're hoping that this collaboration will continue in 2023, which would give us the opportunity to reach more disadvantaged youth.

We're also hoping to relaunch our Women's Club, with the educational activities that I mentioned above. As you are undoubtedly aware, violence against girls and women increased enormously during the pandemic, especially in developing countries where many women live in vulnerable conditions. As always, and in line with our belief that economic empowerment is the only lasting way out of poverty, we hope to augment the educational activities with business training & coaching and more micro loans. We believe that this will provide more women with the opportunity to achieve economic independence and make a lasting difference in their families and communities.

And, of course, we're continuing our efforts grow the Damiefa School so that more children can have access to high-quality, affordable education. This including building our teachers' pedagogical knowledge and also expanding our Art Education programme, where we focus on developing children's fine motor, creative, and problem-solving skills.

The Covid pandemic knocked us off our feet, but also showed us that we've succeeded in laying a solid foundation. I am hopeful that, in 2023, we'll be able to build on that foundation to continue supporting the disadvantaged children, youth and women in Liberia.

We would not have been able to lay that foundation without your support throughout the years. I've put together a short video showing our results in 2021 and 2022 and I'm pleased to share it with you. Please [follow this link](#) to view it.

Once again, thank you, and God bless.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tonia Dabwe", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tonia Dabwe  
Founder & Chair, Mineke Foundation