

EVALUATION REPORT OF THE
"PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE IN THE NETHERLANDS".

The Foundation "Project Implementation Committee in the Netherlands" (PICN) was founded on the 15th of July 1998. On that day the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Asian Women's Fund and PICN has been signed for the AWF by Mr. Tatsuo Yamaguchi, Vice-President of the Asian Women's Fund and for the PICN by General ret. G.L.J. Huyser, the President of the PICN at that moment. The signing ceremony took place at the residence of the Ambassador of Japan to the Netherlands, His Excellency Mr. T. Ikeda. On this occasion of the signing of the MoU, the Japanese Prime Minister, Mr.R.Hashimoto, has addressed a letter to Prime Minister W. Kok, expressing "sincere apologies and remorse for the sufferings of the former "Comfort Women" ", making reference to the significance of this Project in the Netherlands. (Later a copy of this letter was send to every recipient of the Project.)

The Board of PICN.

At the time of the Foundation the Board of PICN was formed by:

General ret. G.L.J. Huyser, President,

Mrs. Drs. M.J. Hamer-Monod de Froideville, Vice-president (and Secretary), also
person of confidence for the victims,

Mr. R.A. Peter Treasurer,

Mrs. C.E. Suverkropp Member

Mr. drs. C. Otte Advisor

Two members of the Japanese Embassy in the Netherlands as representatives of the Asian Women's Fund became the observers of the Board. They were present at each meeting of the Board until they were transferred in the year 2000. Their successors became the new observers.

In September 1998 Mrs. K. Rijckborst-Van Houweninge was welcomed as the Secretary of the Board.

In November 1998 General ret. G.L.J. Huyser had to withdraw as President from the Board, because of private reasons. He declared to support the Board as its main-advisor.

In its meeting of the 9th of November 1998 the Board decided to appoint:

Mrs. Drs. M.J. Hamer-Monod de Froideville as President, also the person of confidence for the victims,

Mr. R. Ungerer as Member of the Board,

General ret. G.L.J. Huyser as Main advisor of the Board.

The function of Vice-President was vacant, however Mr. R.A. Peter declared that, when necessary, he would perform as Vice-president.

Before the start of the Foundation PICN Mr. R.A. Peter did take care of a proper insurance for the Board concerning its responsibilities. Also Mr. Peter approached the accountant "Deloitte en Touche" to do the accountancy check of the finances of PICN every year before the end of the Japanese financial year (31 March), starting in the year 1999.

The Foundation of PICN was registered at the Chamber of Commerce in The Hague under the number 27173399. A bank-account was opened at the ABN AMRO bank in Wassenaar. General Huyser, Mr. Peter and Mrs. Hamer were authorized to sign.

The purpose of the Project.

The aim of PICN has been to implement the so called "Life Improvement Project", which has been established in the Netherlands by the Asian Women's Fund to improve the living-conditions of those people, who were forced to perform sexual services to members of the Japanese occupation forces and other Japanese authorities at a comfort station or similar location for a certain period of time during World War II in South East Asia, and who did possess the Dutch nationality during those days, and who are still alive.

PICN did implement the Life Improvement Project by providing the above mentioned group of war victims with Project-money to be spend on medical- and welfare-goods and/or services, in order to improve their living-conditions. For that purpose the AWF provided financial resources for the PICN to implement the Project, in order to express Japanese feelings of atonement for the suffering of these women.

The start of PICN.

At the start of the Project the AWF and PICN agreed that the implementation of the Project should take place in three years time (1998/1999, 2000 and 2001). (However in the beginning of the year 2000 the PICN was informed by the AWF that the money for 2001 would be provided in the year 2000. This was very good news. So at the end of the year 2000, the year of the State-visit of Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of

Japan to the Netherlands and the year of the celebrations of 400 years of relationships between Japan and the Netherlands, all recipients had received the Project money.)

The transfer of the data of applicants from the Foundation Japanese Honorary Debts (FJHD) to PICN was settled with FJHD. This was necessary because PICN as well as FJHD wanted to be completely independent from each other.

A foundation like PICN, which keeps personal data, is lawfully obliged to register at the Dutch Chamber of Registration of Personal Data. PICN has done so.

PICN has approached the Dutch Ministry of Finances about the question if the recipients are due to pay income-taxes over the Project-money. The Ministry supplied a letter to PICN, in which they informed the recipients, that no income-taxes will be levied on Project-money.

Also the Pension and Beneficiary Board (PUR) was approached with the question if the receiving of Project money will be of any influence to payments in connection with the Dutch War-laws. This appeared not to be the case.

Advertisements.

During the preparation phase (the -more than two- years before the foundation of PICN), negotiations took place between members of the board of the Foundation Japanese Honorary Debts (FJHD) - performing only as intermediary between the group of the so called "Comfort Women" and the AWF - and members of the Embassy of Japan as representatives of the AWF to finally come to the above mentioned "Life Improvement Project" in the Netherlands. During this negotiation-period advertisements were placed in the Magazine of the FJHD, in order to reach the group of victims of forced prostitution. That is why a great number of these victims already applied to Mrs. Hamer, who, at that time, was a board member of FJHD and the person involving the confidentiality of this special group of victims. On special forms these victims informed Mrs. Hamer already about the way they would like to spend the money possible to be received from the AWF (Later PICN could use these forms as lists of goods and/or services).

In the realization phase, from the start of the PICN, Mrs. C.E. Suverkropp was charged with the disposing of advertisements. In July 1998 all the Dutch embassies have advertised. During 7 months advertisements have been placed in papers, magazines, home-pages etc. all over the world, in the English language as well as in Dutch. Mrs. Suverkropp did an excellent job. The list of all the disposed advertisements was handed over to the observers from the Japanese Embassy. As a result of these advertisements many new applications reached PICN.

The way applicants were judged by PICN.

To begin with, Mrs. Hamer, being the person of confidence, received all the application-letters at the special Postbox-number of PICN. She made the first selection. When in her opinion a person could possibly belong to the group of special victims of forced prostitution, the official application/registration form was sent to this person, together with a standard-letter in which the applicant was informed about the way PICN would handle the case, and together with the lists of goods and/or services. When these forms were returned by the applicant to Mrs. Hamer, she whitened all the names and other personal data from the application-letter. Mrs. Hamer put a code-number on the letter, sent the letter to the other board members and advisors of PICN and then brought the letter and the lists of goods and/or services into the next PICN-meeting. According to the standard-criteria: (Dutch nationality at the moment of the event, during WW II, forced, by members of the Japanese occupation forces or other Japanese authorities, frequency, nature of calamity, causality diseases, location) the Board of PICN examined the case. Very helpful to PICN were the existing reports about the victims, which were usually made by Pelita and/or the PUR. In cases where no reports existed, PICN could verify the stories through other ways: witnesses, names of camps and brothels known by Pelita and PUR, existing literature and other sources. Having examined every case very carefully in this way, PICN came to the conclusion that about 28 applicants could not be judged as recipients of the Project. They received the special notification-form of the results of the examination, in which they were informed not to be accepted as a recipient of the Project.

Finally 78 persons were judged to become recipients of the Project. All these persons received the notification-form of the results of the examination, in which they were informed that they were accepted as recipients of the Project.

Mrs. Hamer signed the English versions of the lists of goods and/or services, approved by PICN and sent these lists to the Embassy of Japan, together with an official form on which were mentioned:

Code-number, age, country, date of application, date of determination as recipient, goods and/or services approved, total value of goods and/or services provided (as agreed the same amount of money for each person), situation of suffering and comment of the PICN.

Postponement of the final date of application.

In January 1999 PICN received an urgent request from one of the social workers of

Pelita. He pointed out that for some of his clients it still is very difficult to speak about the brutal sexual abuse they had to endure by members of the Japanese occupation forces during WW II. He estimated that about 10 to 25 women might apply to become recipients of the Project, if the final date for application would be postponed, so that they would get more time. PICN decided to bring this request to the attention of the AWF.

Mrs. M. Ise, executive Director of the AWF, and Mr. T. Yamaguchi, Vice-President of the AWF, joined the PICN-meeting of the 4th of March 1999. During this meeting we discussed the possibility of postponing the final date of application. It was decided that this date will be postponed to 15 March 2000.

Countries where the recipients live.

The Netherlands	54	United States of America	5
United Kingdom	2	Australia	6
Indonesia	8	India	1
Canada	2		

Letter from ex-Prime Minister Hashimoto.

On the occasion of the signing ceremony of the MoU between the AWF and the PICN on the 15th of July 1998 the Prime Minister of Japan at that time, Mr. R. Hashimoto, did send a letter to the Dutch Prime Minister W. Kok, in which Mr. Hashimoto conveyed his "most sincere apologies and remorse to all the women who underwent immeasurable and painful experiences and suffered incurable physical and psychological wounds as comfort woman" These are words of high importance.

For PICN the logical consequence of the fact, that we knew, that this letter was received by our Prime Minister, was, to do our utmost to get a copy of the original letter and the official translation in our possession, in order to send copies to every recipient. Therefore we first approached the Cabinet of Prime Minister Kok. The Cabinet answered that it was up to the sender of the letter to give permission to send a copy to PICN. In March 1999 Mrs. Hamer and her husband were invited by the Japanese Government to visit Japan. During this visit Mrs. Hamer brought the question to the attention of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In June 1999 the Cabinet of the Dutch Prime Minister delivered the copy of the original letter of Mr. Hashimoto and the official English translation to PICN, just in time to send copies to all the recipients, together with the first remittance of the Project money. As General ret. G.L.J. Huyser predicted in his speech on the occasion of the signing ceremony: receiving this letter of

apologies and remorse from the Prime Minister of Japan "will make the acceptance of the Project money more acceptable for these victims. In their proces of recuperating from their post-traumatic stress disorder they need from their former "enemy" healing, spiritual words, concrete material, deeds and an attitude of "this will never happen again"." General ret. Huyser spoke of the trinity: spirit, deed and attitude in a proces of reconciliation. In their - spoken and/or written - reactions to Mrs. Hamer, many recipients expressed their deep emotions concerning the receiving of the letter of apologies and remorse from Mr. Hashimoto. It was extremely important that the remitment of the first Project money (the deed) was accompanied by this letter (the spirit). Together they form a part of the attitude. The way the AWF have cooperated harmoniously and always in good spirit with PICN showed the involvement of the AWF, an involvement which, in our opinion, became commitment and dedication towards the wellbeing of the victims. This involvement forms another part of the attitude.

Implementation plans.

In the months March of the years 1999 and 2000 PICN has presented the implementation plans for both years to the AWF.

Deceased recipients.

5 recipients died in 1998, 1 recipient died in 1999 and 2 recipients died in 2000. The legal heirs of these persons have received the Project money.

Saving-account.

On the 11th of August 1999 the treasurer of PICN, Mr. R.A. Peter, opened a saving-account in order to earn more interest. A part of the money of the working-account was transmitted to the saving-account.

On the 7th of August 2000 the saving-account was finished by Mr. Peter, and the amount of money was remitted back on the working-account of PICN, together with the interest.

Survey of total income and expenses.

The survey of the total income and expenses of PICN will be expressed in the accountancy report of the accountant Deloitte en Touche. This report will be made by the accountant as soon as possible.

Reactions of recipients, used by the AWF for the Press.

Because the AWF is based on the joint collaborative efforts between the people of Japan at civic level and the Japanese government, it is important for the AWF to keep the public informed about their activities. That is why PICN received the question from the AWF to send some expressions of the victim's feelings concerning the Project and their emotions for having received the letter of apologies and remorse from the ex-Prime Minister Hashimoto, to the AWF.

In February 1999 a correspondent of the Yomiuri Shimbun had interviews with two former Dutch "Comfort Women" in the presence of Mrs. Hamer. In these interviews both ladies spoke openly about the way they have suffered during WW II and about their positive feelings toward the Project.

In the year 2000 Mrs. Hamer did send some letters of recipients, in which they expressed their emotions and their feelings of gratitude for having received the letter of apologies and remorse from the ex-Prime Minister Hashimoto and for having received the Project-money. Of course all the personal data of the writers of the letters had been removed by Mrs. Hamer.

What to do with the personal files after finishing PICN.

After the remittance of the last part of the Project money, Mrs. Hamer has asked all the recipients the question, what they wanted to be done by PICN with the personal files. (PICN is legally obliged to ask this question and to implement the answer.) There were three possibilities:

- a) To destroy the files;
- b) To return the files to the recipients themselves;
- c) To give the files to the Dutch Institute of War Documentation (NIOD).

40 recipients wanted their files to be destroyed. This has been done through a paperdestroyer, the recipients were informed when the files were destroyed.

20 recipients wanted their files to be returned to them. This has been done under registered post.

18 recipients wanted to give their files to the NIOD. This will be done in June 2001. The recipients will be informed.

Conclusion.

Since the date that they were installed until the finishing-date of PICN all boardmembers and advisors were highly motivated to accomplish their mission of implementing the "Life Improvement Project" as good as possible. The spirit in the

board has been excellent. The relationship between the board members and advisors of PICN and the representatives of the AWF, the Japanese Embassy and the Japanese observers has always been one of good spirit

too. Minor problems could be solved in a fine way of mutual understanding and respect. The Life Improvement Project in the Netherlands has been successful.

Because of the advertisements at the start and even before the start of PICN, we have reached a lot of victims all over the world, who have applied to become recipients of the Project. All the applications have been judged by PICN very carefully and fairly. PICN has always handled every case with very much attention for the person involved, in a kind and patient way.

Towards the media PICN has always taken up a position of silence and subtlety, because of the delicacy of the subject.

The information towards the victims has always been accurate. PICN has treated them with understanding, kindness, patience and respect. Some recipients of course needed more attention than others. Those, who needed someone to listen, have found their way to the person of confidence. Mrs. Hamer has experienced that listening to those persons was very important to them. In some cases the story, told in their application-letter has been the first time for the victim to come out with it. The confidential relationship between the victims and Mrs. Hamer appeared to be a sort of a healing-process of the victims. These contacts (by telephone or by letter or even in person) have grown during the years, and probably won't stop after the finishing of PICN.

As mentioned before, receiving the copy of the letter of apologies and remorse from ex-Prime Minister Hashimoto has been highly important to the victims. Mrs. Hamer received many expressions of deep emotional feelings from the recipients, concerning the letter, and only positive expressions of feelings of gratitude concerning the receiving of the Project money.

As one of the recipients said: "I prefer to accept money from the AWF rather than from the Japanese Government, knowing the AWF money partly is a gift from the Japanese people through which they want to express, they sincerely do regret what has happened to me. Whenever the Japanese Government itself will have to pay compensations, these would be forced through lawsuits"

The lives of the recipients of the Project really have been improved thanks to the AWF, not only because of the financial compensation in the form of the Project money, but also because of the feelings of recognition, the letter of the former Prime Minister Hashimoto has given them.

All members and advisors of the board of PICN are looking back in great gratitude to their mission, because they all do realize, the Life Improvement Project has brought these good things into the lives of the 78 recipients.

On the 14th of July 2001 PICN will be finished officially.

The Hague, January 2001.

Also on behalf of the Board members and advisors of PICN:

Mrs. Drs. M.J. Hamer-Monod de Froideville,

President.