



ANNUAL REPORT 2015

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PROLOGUE

In front of you is the annual report of the Meiling Foundation concerning the year 2015.

In 2015, 40 children came home compared to 44 children in 2014. In comparison with the previous year, there is a decrease of 4 children (9,1%). This decrease is almost entirely realized in the China channel. There is no apparent specific reason for the decrease. This can be based on several factors. The first months of 2016 show an increase of the number of children coming from Taiwan to The Netherlands compared to 2015. During the last year, 27 children came from China to The Netherlands (2014: 29 children), 1 child from Surinam (2014: 0 children) and 16 children from Taiwan (2014: 15 children).

The decrease in the number of adoptions appears to be both an international as well as a national trend. In 2015 a total of 304 children arrived in The Netherlands compared to 354 children in 2014, 401 children in 2013 and 488 children in 2012. A decrease of 50 children (16,5%). The decrease in the number of adoptions where the Meiling Foundation was the mediator is 9,1% which is considerably lower.

This general decrease in the number of adoptions raises (countrywide and political) questions concerning the number of internationally operating adoption agencies in The Netherlands. The question can be approached from a number of angles, such as reliability, quality, finances and continuity. Because of the way the Meiling Foundation is organized, we are able to offer the quality of service that is needed and is to be expected. Quality and reliability are vital to us throughout the whole adoption process. Regardless of the number of (realized) adoptions, we trust to be able to guarantee this level of quality and reliability. Due to this, and also considering our financial situation, we look to the future with confidence.

In the coming year we intend to continue to make every effort in the interest of the child, the parents and our organization to make adoptions possible. A good match between child and parent invariably remains our main focus!

Driebruggen, 8th August 2016

On behalf of the Meiling Foundation Board,



Chairman of the Board Meiling Foundation

POLICY AND APPROACH

MEILING MISSION STATEMENT

The Meiling Foundation's (hereafter: Meiling) goal is to support children living in other countries who are in need. Meiling acts as an intermediary for international adoption for children who lack the opportunity to grow up in a family if they stay in their countries of birth, and by supporting projects for children who live in a children's home in their native countries.

For Meiling, the interest of the child is the central concern. For some children in need, international adoption is the last possibility for the children to have a chance for a good future. These are the children Meiling focuses on in its task as an intermediary for adoption. During the mediation, parents are sought for children and not the other way around. Adoption is a last resort.

Often, adopted children have a history of bad experiences. Meiling believes that an adoption of excellent quality is crucial for a child to be able to deal with these experiences and to have the opportunity to grow up to be a valuable member of the Dutch society. With this in mind, Meiling mediates as careful as possible, using volunteers who have experience as adoptive parents and who have the professional qualities necessary to perform their tasks within the adoption mediation.

With the interest of the child in mind, Meiling puts extra effort into helping children for whom finding parents is difficult. As a result, Meiling intermediates both for healthy children and for children with medical issues coming to The Netherlands. This medical report can vary a lot, for example: premature birth and operable handicaps (such as a cleft lip or a clubfoot) or permanent handicaps (such as deformed hands, asthma, intestine problems).

Meiling also does not forget about the children living in the countries that it mediates in who do not qualify for an international adoption. In these cases, Meiling carries out project aid aimed at supporting children where life does not come easy, by supporting projects in which facilities in children's homes are being improved, supporting children who have the opportunity to be raised in a foster family or enabling children to receive medical surgeries, which will make the lives of the children easier.

INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

The area in which Meiling works consists of three core activities, namely those

- aimed at mediating the adoption of children from abroad,
- aimed at giving project aid to benefit children in the sending countries, and
- for the benefactors of the foundation.

These activities are possible, thanks to a large group of about 90 volunteers, whom Meiling is very proud of. They perform their divergent tasks in their spare time in a professional manner and they make these activities possible. Teams of volunteers organize their own work as much as possible, and in doing so they are Meiling's outer face to many people.

INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

One of Meiling's core activities is mediating for adoption. Meiling is licensed to do this based on a permit by the Ministry of Justice. In 2015, Meiling mediated adoptions of children coming from Surinam, Taiwan and China.

THE NATURE OF MEILING'S MEDIATING ACTIVITIES

In its mediating activities, Meiling works for children in the sending countries who require help and for whom an international adoption represents the only chance to grow up in a family situation. For these children, Meiling tries to find (suitable) adoptive parents. Meiling does this in close cooperation with the adoption-authorities in the sending countries, the contacts appointed by these authorities, and the homes in which the children live. In terms of these authorities, Meiling's task is to screen prospective adoptive parents who sign up with Meiling, to check if they meet the requirements of the channels Meiling is working for and to support these prospective parents in making their written request for permission to adopt. A further task of Meiling is to act as a liaison in the formal adoption procedures in the sending countries, with the central authorities in The Netherlands and the sending countries.

The channel contact persons do whatever is necessary to find a good and fitting home for every child coming to The Netherlands through the mediation of Meiling. Next to this, so-called special needs children receive special attention. These are adoptive children who need special care, due mainly to physical or social circumstances. Generally speaking, finding a suitable home for these children is more difficult than for other children. During the past years, the international adoption scene in which Meiling is involved, shows an increase in special need adoptions. Meiling sees this as a token of trust of the sending countries, that Meiling is allowed to mediate in the adoption of these children who need extra care and attention.

DEVELOPMENT IN THE NETHERLANDS

Due to the decrease of the national number of completed adoptions in the last couple of years, and the expectation that this number will not show any substantial increase in the coming years, the question arises what consequences this trend has or should have in the (near) future for the adoption chain.

In 2014 the Dutch adoption agencies presented their advisory report 'The adoption chain in 2020' to state secretary Teeven of the ministry of Security and Justice. After this, during the course of 2015, the ministry of Security and Justice instructed an external consultant agency to conduct an exploratory research for possible scenarios concerning the establishment of a future-proof system on international adoption.

In 2016 the external consultant agency will deliver their final report. In response to this report next steps will be taken. We will continue to closely monitor the developments in this area.

INFO LINE, INTAKE AND CENTRAL WAITING LIST

INFORMATION LINE

In most cases the first contact prospective adoptive parents have with Meiling is via Meiling's information line. The information line was originally set up as a telephone information line for questions about the various aspects related to an adoption. The items one could think about are applicable laws and regulations concerning adoption, requirements of the sending countries in which Meiling works, waiting lists and many other matters related to adoption.

Since 2014, the information-line by telephone ended because it was hardly used anymore. The email infoline; info@meiling.nl, was available all through 2015. Apart from that, several persons used Meiling's general phone number to get in touch and/or receive information.

INTAKE

When prospective adoptive parents choose Meiling to mediate their adoption, a combined overall/SN-intake meeting is planned. For this, a check-list is used and sent to the prospective adoptive parents, along with the letter of confirmation. Based on the information returned through the checklist and the home study report, a first assessment of suitability for mediation is made by the Intake team. It appears to be more and more often that couples are impossible to mediate during the intake meeting due to conditions by the sending countries that could easily be checked (for example the number of years a couple has to be married, in the case of Taiwan). In case no obstructions turn up from the data on the checklist, prospective adoptive parents receive an invitation for a SN-intake meeting. This meeting usually takes place within two months after receiving a copy of the adoption permit and the home study report drawn up by the Child Protection Board.

The primary goal of the SN-intake is to ensure that Meiling is able to mediate for the prospective adoptive parents. The children whom Meiling mediates all have a socially burdened background or a medical file. Parents must have clearance for this in their home study report. Also, other criteria are important: the requirements of the sending country the parents choose for, the specifics of the request for mediation by the parents, the conditions Meiling operates under, and the possible limitations set by the parents' adoption permit. Sometimes it is not possible to reach a conclusion in just one single intake meeting. In these cases, a follow-up meeting is planned. Meiling reserves the right to call in external experts to perform on an advisement level. In case of a request for mediation for a second (or third etc.) child, a SN-intake meeting is arranged as well.

When Meiling concludes that mediation is possible, a mediation agreement is signed. In this agreement the mutual obligations are recorded and Meiling commits to do everything within its power to reach a successful completion of the mediation.

It may occur Meiling judges mediation is impossible. This is always based on both the interests of the adoptive child and the prospective adoptive parents' wish to raise a family. As indicated, the interest of the child is Meiling's primary consideration. These decisions are always difficult to make, both for the prospective adoptive parents and for Meiling as the mediating organization. To guarantee the thoroughness of these decisions, the more difficult requests for mediation are examined in a team meeting and proposed to the board for a final decision.

INTAKE STATISTICS 2015:

In 2015 we received 71 requests for mediation (2014: 50). Eventually, 29 couples withdrew from the procedure in 2015 (2014: 24). Of these, 23 reports were sent back to the Ministry of Justice for reasons of pregnancy, divorce, too long waiting times or other reasons (2014: 22). In total, 6 reports were forwarded to another mediating organization (2014: 2).

At this moment, Meiling does not use a central waiting list. Basically, the parents can commence immediately after the SN-intake meeting towards the country-intake. In case the number of requests should increase again, it can be possible that the central waiting list could be re-established. Then, the file of the prospective adoptive parents waits here until it can be reviewed by the channel they wish mediation from.

In terms of the waiting period for different countries, each individual case of mediation strongly depends on the parents' situation and the procedures in the sending countries. Should the parents have a large list in which they are very open minded towards various special needs, the waiting period could be considerably shorter.

Number of couples on the central waiting list as of 31 December 2015:

- Taiwan: none
- China: none
- Surinam: none

MEDIATION

From the SN-intake, the file of the prospective adoptive parents is forwarded to the Meiling country team. The country team arranges a country specific intake. This involves informing the parents about the requirements and the procedures and paperwork of the sending country. After the country intake, the prospective adoptive parents complete the set of documents needed for the adoption procedure in the sending country and the legalization of any official documents. Adoptive parents call this the 'The Hague tour', because of the number of official bodies situated in The Hague (the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Justice Hall, and the sending country's embassy) that have to be visited. If necessary, the final set of documents may be translated by Meiling volunteers after completion, before being sent to the authorities in the sending country with an accompanying letter.

Next, the parents' request for adoption is matched with the children available for international adoption. How matching occurs may vary from country to country. In Taiwan social workers working for the children's homes choose three couples they consider suitable for a certain child. The biological mother makes the final decision from the three couples. In Surinam, the Bureau for Family Justice does the matching. For China and Taiwan, the matching for special needs children is done in The Netherlands.

When the matching is completed, the volunteer working for Meiling reports the joyful news of the proposal of an adoptive child. After the adoptive parents have accepted this, the adoption procedure in the sending country continues. This procedure is not the same in the different countries. In the case of an adoption from China, only an administrative procedure is required, but in the other countries Meiling mediates for, a procedure at a court of justice is required. During this procedure, which sometimes may take quite a long time, the judge actually approves the adoption.

In Surinam the adoptive parents and also if possible the birth mother have to be present at the pronouncement of the court. Also in Taiwan both the adoptive parents and the biological mother if possible have to be present at the court hearing.

For all three countries: China, Surinam and Taiwan, the prospective adoptive parents are required to travel to their child's country of birth at the end of the procedure. They have to fulfil formal demands that are part of the adoption procedure. The transfer of the child to the adoptive parents occurs there as well.

ADOPTION PROGRAMMES ASIA CHINA

TEAM COMPOSITION

In the table below the composition of the China team shows as per 31 December 2015:

Name	Tasks
Paulina Korenstra	Coordination and administration
Ilja Pott	Coordination and administration
Corrie en Hennie Snatersen	Organization of trips and contact persons for Chris Tao Ping
Ineke van den Berg	Support parents
Arie van den Berg	Finances
Serge de Blok	Support parents
Han Lei	Translations and contact person CCCWA
Marga Westenberg	Special need matching
Els van der Heide	Intake
Dagmar Kloppenburg	Intake and medical assessor
Joke Breukel	Intake
Monika Borsboom	Intake
Anna van Gemert	Medical assessor
Rineke Bode	Post-placement reports

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In 2015, a total of 27 children (2014: 29 children) were adopted from China, of whom 25 boys (2014: 24 boys) and 2 girls (2014: 5 girls). That means there were 2 children less than in 2014. We notice that it becomes more and more difficult to match quickly; China has less special need children for adoption. The procedure regarding the matching of special need children from China is unaltered. We still see a trend towards more medically complicated and combined special need children files which does not make the matching easier. Compared to 2014, the number of children matched by means of the so-called Shared List was lower again.

The average period of waiting for parents who want to adopt a child with a special need from China through Meiling, was ten months. In 2014, this was nine months. We have revised the forecast for the families to a waiting time of 0-24 months.

The delay of the regular matching procedures at CCCWA continued in 2015. In 2015 CCCWA matched one 'as healthy as possible' child to a Meiling family. At the end of 2015, the period of waiting in China has risen to over 9 years, whereas this was 8 years by the end of 2014. A further increase of the period of waiting is to be expected. Meiling has 2 more families on this as-healthy-as-possible waiting list.

The regulations of the Hague Adoption Convention apply to families with a BKA-number dated in 2006 or before. There are no parents left with an older BKA-number who wish to adopt from China.

At the end of 2006, CCCWA drew up a new set of regulations for future requests. These rules apply to prospective adoptive parents whose files were logged in at CCCWA after 1st May 2007. All family files are checked critically. All the Meiling files sent in for regular adoptions were accepted. Towards the end of 2014, CCCWA renewed these regulations. As of 1st January 2015 these new regulations apply to all family files forwarded to CCCWA after that date.

The central waiting list and the China waiting list are coordinated by Rineke Bode. Ilja Pott assesses the home study reports in consultation with Marga Wensenberg and Paulina Korenstra. Rineke Bode forwards them to one of the 2 special need intake teams.

The intake, the special need intake and the medical evaluation of the children's files are done by Marga Westenberg, Els van der Heide, Dagmar Kloppenburg, Joke Breukel, Monika Borsboom and Anna van Gemert. Marga Westenberg, Serge de Blok and Paulina Korenstra do the matching from the CCCWA shared list. If necessary, inquiries can be made about social- and/or issues in development with a remedial educationalist and for orthopaedic issues with a rehabilitation specialist.

TRIPS TO CHINA

China is an adoption channel for which both parents, or at least one of them, are obliged to travel to China. The prospective adoptive parents travel to China to complete the official Chinese adoption procedures.

If only one parent travels, a Power of Attorney has to be brought, through which the parent who does not travel gives the traveling parent written permission to complete the procedures.

Meiling has extensive travel experience and we believe that, when there are already children in the family, it is in everybody's interest that brothers and sisters younger than six years of age should not accompany the parents in their adoption travels to China. The pros and cons are discussed with the parents during the country intake and during the waiting period. If parents decide to bring their child(ren) under the age of six years along anyway, we advise them to bring along an extra person.

In 2015, a total of 9 trips to China were organized during which a total number of 27 children came to The Netherlands. The trips show in the following table.

Trip	Number of children	Accompanied by	To province of	Date of arrival
1.	4	Theo van Gaal	Henan/Tianjin/Beijing	31 January 2015
2.	3	Corrie Snatersen	Shanghai/Yunnan /Fujian	25 April 2015
3.	4	Corrie Snatersen/Tom Griffioen	Jiangsu/Anhui/Beijing /Shaanxi	2 May 2015
4.	4	Theo van Gaal	Hubei/Liaoning/Beijing/Jiangsu	11 July 2015
5.	4	Ineke van den Berg	Guangxi/Henan/Zhejiang/Hunan	22 August 2015
6.	1	Ineke van den Berg	Hubei	28 September 2015
7.	1	Ineke van den Berg	Shaanxi	24 October 2015
8.	4	Ilja Pott	Guizhou/Shaanxi/Shanxi/Jiangxi	21 November 2015
9.	1	Beppie Poulus	Henan/Sichuan	19 December 2015

SUPPORT IN CHINA

The coordinating organization in Beijing, the CCCWA, which handles all requests from anywhere in the world, appoints children for adoption from all over China. In 2008, the CCCWA changed to a digitalized system for special needs adoptions, to which Meiling is also connected. All special needs files of children are offered and processed digitally.

Since 2010, among other things we use a 'shared list' system, allowing us to do the matching ourselves using the digital system. In September 2010, CCCWA started its so-called 'special focus' program, as a result of which children that have been on the shared list for more than 2 months, obtain more matching possibilities regarding the period a family has to hand over its China file.

At the start of the adoption procedure in The Netherlands, the adoptive parents have to prepare their documents for China. These documents have to be translated into English. The English translations are made by volunteers within the organisation and checked by Han Lei. She also supports the China team by making Chinese translations and with the contacts with CCCWA by e-mail or by telephone.

When traveling to China, the adoptive parents are accompanied by our contact person, Chris Tao Ping, his son Michael, or one of his assistants. For some 20 years now, since 1995, Chris has been assisting parents in their travel to China and in Chinese adoption procedures. Also, a Dutch travelling companion will join during every trip. There is a group of 15 experienced volunteers who regularly support families during the adoption procedures in China.

ADOPTIONS FROM CHINA PER YEAR

Until and including 2015, a total of 1329 children have come from China to The Netherlands. For the last couple of years, the yearly number varies between 20 to 40 adoptions.

Almost all of the children adopted in 2015 were so called 'special need' children. One child was adopted in The Netherlands through the regular matching procedure. The age of the 27 children at the moment of their homecoming was as follows:

Age	Number of children
< 1 year	0 children
1 – 2 years	9 children
2 – 4 years	16 children
4 – 6 years	2 children

RATIO BOYS/GIRLS

At this moment, almost all the adoptive children coming from China are boys. In 2015, 25 boys (2014: 24 boys) and 2 girls (2014: 5 girls) were adopted.

SPECIAL ADOPTEES

The CCCWA has authorized the Meiling foundation to find parents for children with medical problems, the so-called 'special needs' children. In 2015, 26 'special need' adoptions were realized.

'Special need'	Number of children
Cleft lip (in all degrees)	11 children
Combined special need	5 children
Missing or deformed body parts	8 children
Microtia and/or deafness	2 children

PROJECT AID

Meiling has made money available for projects in China. In November 2015, Ilja Pott guided a family for their adoption in the Guizhou province. In this province, foster home "Starfish" is active which is a known organisation for Meiling. Together with the board of directors, they bought winter clothing and other practical things at a local market for the children in the foster home.

In December 2015, Meiling made a donation to the Foundation Care4Tina to allow children to have surgery on cleft lips and other medical issues in Xi'an in the province of Shaanxi.

FOLLOW-UP REPORTS

Since 2011, CCCWA requires families to send six post-placement reports for each adopted child. Since January 2015 the periodic schedule of delivering is like this:

Report	When?
One	Six months after arrival
Two	One year after arrival
Three	Two years after arrival
Four	Three years after arrival
Five	Five years after arrival
Six	Six years after arrival

Rineke Bode coordinates the post-placement reports from the Meiling office. The post-placements reports are converted by our translators into a, partially standardized, English version and afterwards translated in the Chinese language by Han Lei. The post-placement reports of children adopted after January 2013 are obliged to be translated by a department of CCCWA: BLAS. These translation costs are recharged to the families. The reports and pictures are not only sent to CCCWA, but also entered in the online CCCWA system. CCCWA is working towards a complete digital system for the post-placements. This gives the opportunity to children's homes through the whole of China to be able to see the reports and pictures of 'their' adoptive children until 5 years after the adoption.

TAIWAN

TEAM COMPOSITION

The Taiwan team is managed by a member of the Board, whereas two country coordinators are responsibility for the daily routine. The team composition is organised like this:

Number of persons	Working area
Two persons	Country coordinator
Two persons	Special need intake
Five persons	Country contact person
Two persons	Follow-up
Three persons	Roots, divided in roots questions and roots trips
One person	Finances

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The last couple of years, the Taiwanese government invested a lot in local adoptions. This results in children with more severe special needs and burdened backgrounds who are eligible for adoption abroad.

CHRISTIAN SALVATION SERVICE (CSS)

With regard to the Christian Salvation Service (CSS) in 2015, the following points are worth mentioning:

- In 2015, 12 children have been proposed.
- Because of the platform procedure for domestic adoption, CSS expects children to be older at the time of the proposal.
- CSS expects files to become more complex with regards to SN and burdened backgrounds.

CATHOLIC WELFARE (CATHWEL)

In relation to Catholic Welfare (Cathwel) in 2015, the following points can be mentioned:

- In 2015, 5 children were proposed.
- Parents have to be willing to accept a broader range of Special Needs, as well as combinations of Special Needs in the future.

CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE FOUNDATION (CWLF)

The Child Welfare League Foundation (CWLF) is a relatively small channel in Taiwan. Regarding 2015, the following needs to be mentioned:

- This year, no children have been proposed.

ARRIVAL OF CHILDREN FROM TAIWAN PER YEAR

Until and including 2015, a total of 963 children have come from Taiwan to The Netherlands. Also, the first child ever for whom Meiling mediated, came from Taiwan.

The last couple of years, the number of adoptions from Taiwan has gradually decreased. This is partly due to the growing prosperity in Taiwan. These last couple of years, the number of adoptions seems to stabilize at just under 20 per year.

The age at the time of proposal of the 16 children who arrived in 2015 (2014: 15 children) is shown in the statistic below:

Age	Number of children
< 1 year	9 children
1 – 2 years	4 children
2 – 4 years	2 children
4 – 6 years	1 child

It is clear that the majority of the children is under twelve months of age.

RATIO BOYS/GIRLS

In 2015, 9 boys (2014: 6 boys) and 7 girls (2014: 9 girls) have been proposed.

SPECIAL ADOPTEES

All the children adopted from Taiwan have a medical and/or social report.

The following medical and social situations have been encountered in 2015:

'Special need'

(A serious form of) prematurity Background in drugs/alcohol Arrears in physical development Arrears in linguistic development (Serious) heart defect Thalassamia (minor) A child born in a family of which several members suffered from one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a intellectual disorder• congenitale cataract

PROJECT AID

Meiling has made money available for projects in Taiwan. More information is to be found in the paragraph 'Project Aid'.

ADOPTION PROGRAMMES IN SOUTH-AMERICA SURINAM

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Surinam channel is a small channel with just a couple of adoptions per year. However, in the course of the years, a strong bond developed between the Meiling Foundation and Surinam. Also in 2015, the Meiling Foundation has contributed to a number of projects in Surinam.

In 2015, one adoptive child came from Surinam to The Netherlands. This is despite the fact that in Surinam multiple children live in children's homes and a few of them would be eligible for adoption abroad.

By the end of 2015, the first steps were taken to support Surinam in the field of adoption. In particular, the quality of the complete process around adoption will have the main focus. Considering the abovementioned, Meiling is looking towards the near future with great confidence and we expect to take important steps forward concerning the Surinam channel in 2016.

Some core facts concerning 2015 are:

- Reports forwarded from the central waiting list in 2015: none.
- Number of parents on the central waiting list as of 31 December 2015: none.
- Number of adoptions in 2015: 1.

ARRIVAL OF CHILDREN FROM SURINAM PER YEAR

Throughout the years, a total of 155 children came from Surinam to The Netherlands. Since 2010, the number of children who are adopted from Surinam is very little and after 2013 and 2014, where no adoption took place, one child came to The Netherlands in 2015.

CENTRAL MATCHING UNIT (CMU)

In order to guarantee the quality of the adoption matching (in terms of correctness and completeness), the CMU started in January 2010. The CMU's task is to determine whether a proposed match between child and parents has been substantiated correctly and fully by all available basic recorded information.

In 2015, 48 proposals were checked by the CMU (2014: 36 proposals). In four submitted proposals, the CMU concluded that the file was incomplete (2014: two submitted proposals). After the country contact person provided additional details, all proposals were approved.

Within the quality framework of Meiling, the period during which the CMU has to judge a proposed match is set for 7 days at the most. In 2015, this was not realized for one proposal because this was during the holiday season. In 2015, the CMU completed its surveys in the following periods:

- (less than) 1 day: 28 proposals;
- 2 days: 12 proposals;
- 3 days: 2 proposals;
- 4 days: 2 proposals;
- 5 days: 2 proposals;
- 6 days: 1 proposal; and
- 10 days: 1 proposal

AFTERCARE

In 2015, the number of people of the aftercare-team appeared to be a point of concern, in particular because a couple of volunteers stopped. During a part of the year, one person took care of the contact with parents, contact with the Board, Foundation Adoption Services (SAV) and other partners. Luckily, support was provided from the Board as well as from the office whenever this was necessary.

In September 2015, a recruitment during the Meiling-day resulted in a couple of possible candidates for the team, of which one volunteer is willing to engage in the team for a long lasting period of time. In 2016, the search will continue to find further expansion for the team. Concerning the workload, the aim is to have a minimal occupancy of four persons. Volunteers in the aftercare team can still count on the support of two employees of Basic Trust in order to prepare anonymized cases of a more complicated nature.

In 2015 the aftercare team contacted over 50 parents/families. In 26 cases, parents requested by e-mail to receive a phone call from the aftercare team.

All other contacts were made to check with parents after arrival in The Netherlands. The number of contacts with parents is considerably lower than in the previous year. This is mainly traced back to the lower number of arrival conversations. Considering the developments of the adoption regulations, and in close contact with the Board and the country teams, we decided that as of 1 January 2013 contact with all parents will be done by the aftercare team instead of the country contact persons. Due to circumstances, the aftercare team did not entirely manage this in 2015. In 2016, they will make efforts to catch up on this backlog. Through the channels, important information is shared with the aftercare team and this is pleasant.

Also in 2015, a number of questions about complex issues regarding older children were submitted. Apparently, parents with adolescent children find their way to the aftercare team better and better. Parents also ask questions about toddler behaviour, especially when a first child is concerned. Several times, questions regarding school were asked. Apart from that, the team regularly receives questions concerning roots. For these questions, parents are redirected to the appropriate teams. However, the aftercare team has now built up so much expertise that they can answer roots questions concerning China by themselves. Consulting the China team is mainly done because the China team knows the parents concerned. Other questions concerned are mainly about bonding, eating, sleeping, and family problems. In multiple cases, the parents were advised to contact the SAV (Foundation for Adoption Services), regular professional aid, or a doctor. Furthermore, we tell all parents after the arrival of their child about the possibility of a course called 'early start', and the possibility of requesting a VIB (video interactive guidance). Also in 2015, a remarkably high number of questions came in concerning sign language, something that probably is in close connection with the more complex issues children have when arriving in The Netherlands. Other parties concerned; schools, speech therapists and students also found their way to the aftercare team in 2015.

In 2015, the team members joined the annual seminar of the SAV which dealt with openness in the adoption triangle. The study Master SEN, which includes subjects concerning behavioural problems, bonding, communication and policy, which was followed by one of the co-ordinators aftercare, appeared to be a good support while conducting the more difficult conversations. It is hardly necessary that Basic Trust supports in conducting conversations. However, referring parents to Basic Trust happens quite often.

Cooperation will remain a point of attention in 2015 and in 2016, further attention will be given to this topic. There are regular meetings and feedback on prominent issues within Meiling. Every contact is registered and conversations are being held while using a standardized questionnaire. The results of the conversation are documented in a report and are archived as such. As from 2016 onwards, all reports are archived in the client system so in case one of the employees is ill or unavailable, all information can always be retrieved.

The aftercare team was present at every general Meiling meeting held in 2015. Because of this, parents were able to ask questions face to face. Parents utilized this opportunity a lot. The aftercare team even presented information by themselves on an informative evening concerning suitable education. The combination of teaching themselves and afterwards talk some more about it, even seemed to lower the threshold for parents to ask more questions about the topic.

In many conversations, both face to face as by phone, parents appear to be insecure about their struggles. Next to the Meiling information evenings, also the articles in the Meiling Mailing seem to give recognition. Therefore, the team always makes sure that every Meiling Mailing has an article "from experience".

CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER LICENSE HOLDERS

In 2015, the contacts with the other adoption agencies have been further intensified. Whenever necessary, the different agencies are able to fall back on one another.

ROOTS

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The subject "Roots" remains to receive a lot of attention. This is to be expected as the number of young adults who have been adopted through Meiling, grows and keeps growing. Meiling distinguishes between 'cultural trips', the main goal of which is to get acquainted with a country, and the actual 'roots trips', which focus primarily on contact with birth parents, foster parents, and/or the children's home a child has lived in. A cultural trip can be made by parents with young children. For an actual roots trip the children generally have to be older. While the cultural trip is for enjoyment, a roots trip involves a much more serious element.

ROOTS QUESTIONS AND TRIPS CHINA

In 2015, little assistance was given to families making a roots trip to China. Just like in previous years, most people seem to be able to organize their own trip using the Internet, or by getting in touch with specialized travel agencies. The contribution from Meiling usually is to send the 'travel-kit', and giving information about the possibilities and impossibilities when traveling to China.

ROOTS QUESTIONS AND TRIPS INDIA

In 2014, Gerda de Groot and Beppie Poulus-van den Hurk 'officially' started as a Meiling team for roots matters. Up till then, a variety of roots questions reached Meiling. Gerda and Beppie assessed the need for roots trips, among other things, through a survey in 2014/2015. Sixteen people responded. From these sixteen, six people/families already went to India in the period between 2003-2013. From the people visiting India, nobody tried to locate biological parents. However, four of the six respondents visited the former children's home and/or contacted (former) directors and/or nannies. One respondent, who visited India, surely wants to go back again, three respondents maybe would like to go back. Of the ten respondents, who have not visited India yet, eight persons have plans to (maybe) visit the country, two respondents indicate that they do not feel the need to visit India.

Concluding; at this moment, the need for roots trips is limited and there is hardly any need for support. Children and parents want to manage their journeys by themselves. However, some would like to use our traveling experiences coming from other children and parents and our travel tips. Therefore we asked India-children/parents to put their travel experiences into writing for other India-children/parents. In 2015, we disclosed this information for people who are interested, by using two documents:

1. Background information roots trips India, with relevant addresses and other things of official authorities, and
2. Information India travels, with especially tourist information and links towards travelling agencies.

These are 'live' documents, which we update all the time with information and tips of other India-children/parents. We informed the India-children/parents about this through the Meiling Mailing in 2015.

We also arranged a 'private' group on Facebook for India-children for 18 years and older. The document about the India travels is enclosed here as well. We also placed pictures of children's homes, project aid and other relevant items. And last but not least, we signalled this group (and by using the e-mail addresses we still have from India-children and parents) that there is a trip to India in the summer holiday of 2015 for children who were adopted from India who have the age now of 20 years and older. This trip is presented by Don Bosco. It is about 4 to 5 weeks, of which 1 week is sightseeing in the area of Chennai and 3 to 4 weeks working in children's homes and/or for street kids. Therefore, it is not about a roots trip. The Meiling Board supports this initiative and wants to financially contribute to this journey.

In 2015, we advised one India parent about a roots- and culture travel towards India, but at the end she did not go through with it. We informed two adopted children through Facebook in a general way about the difficulties of finding biological parents. These questions were answered. It was limited to this in 2015.

Finally, contacts are maintained with:

- Mission to the Nations (MttN) for possible roots trips to Kakinada;
- Malaysian Social Services (MSS) and Christ Faith Home for Children, with a view to possible roots trips to Chennai.

ROOTS QUESTIONS AND TRIPS TAIWAN

In 2015, 18 families made a request for information regarding a trip to Taiwan. Some families obtain information in an early stage for their trip in 2016. During 2015, 9 families made the trip: six families visited CSS, and three families visited Cathwel.

There is an increase in information requests. There is a good relationship with both Cathwel and with CSS. Both organizations make great effort to receive visiting families and offer them every assistance to find as much information as possible regarding biological parents.

In 2015, we succeeded in obtaining information and realising a visit to the children's home and when desired an encounter with the biological family for all families who requested this.

CSS requires a minimum age of 12 years to visit the nursery and to actively search for the birth family.

In 2015, Cathwel organised a roots-finding for young adults in the age between 18 and 25 years of age. In 2015, four youngsters travelled to Taiwan. They stayed in the Jonah House of Cathwel and were guided by employees of Cathwel. The participants get acquainted with their country of birth, the culture and the children's home. They also do voluntary work in the children's home and they undertake a short tour through Taiwan.

Cathwel informed Meiling that they intend to organise a roots-finding again in 2016. In December 2015, the Roots Team Taiwan started recruiting for this.

MEILING ROOTS FUND

In 2008, the Meiling Roots Fund was established. Its goal is to support adopted persons who are interested in traveling to their country of birth, but who lack sufficient financial means to do so. This fund has limited resources and thus can support only a couple of adoptees each year. Therefore, every request is considered carefully, and everyone who profits from it must contribute a part of the sum. The rules for support from this fund can be found on the Meiling website.

In 2015, no appeal was made for support from the Meiling Roots Fund, in order to make a trip to a country of origin.

PROJECT AID

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

As Meiling is a non-profit organization, the foundation spends any means it has left from its activities on supporting projects for children in need of assistance in the countries for which Meiling mediates. In choosing the projects to support, the needs of the children and the local or regional possibilities are considered. In addition, Meiling tries to buy the goods needed locally as much as possible to support the local economy.

Each year, Meiling spends several thousands of Euros on project aid. One reason Meiling is able to do this, is that the foundation works entirely with volunteers. Because of this, Meiling is in the position to ask adoptive parents to contribute a modest sum for mediating activities and still make a part of it available for project aid. Also the money made through the project aid shop is available to support projects. In addition, as an acknowledged charity foundation, Meiling regularly receives donations for the projects from individuals, legacies, and school or church collections.

As a rule, Meiling receives its requests for aid through the adoption channels. Request for support exceeding 5.000 euros has to be agreed upon by the Board.

CHINA

Also in 2015, Meiling supported several projects (financially). In each case, an examination is being done in order to see if this support actually contributes to improvements for the future situation.

SURINAM

Surinam is a small channel, with only a few adoptions each year. Nevertheless, the ties between the Meiling Foundation and Surinam are strong. In 2015, Meiling again contributed to a number of projects in Surinam.

TAIWAN

Also in 2015, the children's homes indicated for which projects they wished financial aid. For CSS these were: Project Baby Food and the project renovation and decoration. For the last project, CSS asked financial support for the renovation for the children's home Mu-En. The children's home CSS moved to the current location more than 15 years ago. It was about time that the interior could need some freshening up. A lot was done and also the walls in the building were brightened up with cheerful wall decorations. CSS want to provide the children with a clean, safe and pleasant living environment.

Cathwel named four projects for which we asked financial support, namely:

1. The project "for the babies"
2. Therapy
3. Birth mothers
4. Sponsoring youngsters

For the project "for the babies", Cathwel indicates which articles they need and the costs that come along with them. As soon as the required amount is raised, it is transferred to Cathwel and they buy the needed supplies. Project Aid Taiwan received pictures of this.

For the Therapy project, money is collected to support in the costs that come along with giving therapy to children with a physical or intellectual limitation.

Next, there is the project Birth mothers. Cathwel offers the birth mothers workshops to help them: now and for the future. The birth mothers can attend a workshop in making cuddly toys, bibs or gifts made of cloth. Through this way, mothers start conversations with each other, but they can also make something from themselves or maybe even for their baby. This also gives them more opportunities to find a job. To be able to finance this initiative, Meiling appeals to donors.

The project "sponsor a youngster" is a long-term process. Six families in The Netherlands support 6 youngsters who live in the Jonah House. The youngsters vary in age between approximately 12 and 18 years old. Every month, an amount of 15 Euro is transferred. This amount is not just pocket money. The youngsters learn – of course with help from an employee within Cathwel – to spend the money the correct way. Because, when they turn 18 years old, these youngsters need to be independent and therefore should know to handle money in the right way. Through this way, we contribute to this learning curve.

The families who financially support a youngster regularly send a postcard or a gift to Taiwan. This is being coordinated by the team Project Aid Taiwan. Also the youngsters in the Jonah House send cards or sometimes even gifts to their Dutch sponsor family.

PUBLICITY

Project Aid Taiwan seeks publicity through social media (mostly Facebook) and on the Meiling day which Meiling organizes. Also, the Meiling website is used to ask attention concerning the projects of Project Aid Taiwan.

POSITIVE REACTIONS / DONATIONS

We regularly receive donations for both children's homes. We also see that adopted children regularly organize nice fundraisers. They, for example, collect empty bottles, organize school fairs and charity runs and all these things have the goal to collect as much money as possible for Cathwel or CSS. The children's homes are notified about the actions children organize.

INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION, AND DONOR ACTIVITIES

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

One of Meiling's core activities focuses on the (prospective) adoptive parents and their children who have committed themselves to Meiling as its donors. Besides providing information, a main goal of this activity has a social purpose, namely, to permanently maintain contacts with adoptive parents and their children as well as the donors amongst themselves.

The committee Donor Activities focuses on:

- organizing information meetings,
- organize the Meiling meeting day (the 'family day'),
- inform about relevant books,
- run the project aid shop.

MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

INTRODUCTION

The Meiling Foundation uses various communication tools and the intention is to reach and inform the intended audience in the best way possible using these communication methods. In the following paragraphs, the various communication tools will be discussed further.

WEBSITE

During the past years, the Meiling Website has proved its value as a communication tool with (prospective) adoptive parents and other persons interested in the Meiling organization. The website is and remains an important information source for (prospective) adoptive parents, other interested parties and of course the adopted children who by now have become adolescents. Therefore, an unchanged and important focus for Meiling remains to keep the information on the website up-to-date and to report news items in good time.

INFORMATION LINE

Meiling has an information line for questions about (adoption) procedures, requirements of the sending countries Meiling works with, waiting lists and many other adoption related matters.

In most cases the first direct contact prospective adoptive parents have with Meiling is through Meiling's information line. De information line can be contacted through the info email address (info@meiling.nl).

MEILINGMAILING

The Meiling Mailing is Meiling's quarterly magazine and is intended for donors. Besides providing information, which is becoming more important, the Meiling Mailing has an important social function as well. The magazine does not only provide information about the different adoption channels and the waiting lists for (prospective) adoptive parents, but also stories from and for parents and pages for adopted children form a major part of the magazine. Next to this, a special place is reserved for the arrival cards that the editors of Meiling Mailing receive.

Meiling Mailing has a circulation of over 1350 copies per quarter. The last couple of years, the number of copies has decreased slightly, due to the fact that there are fewer donors or because some of them chose a new style of donor ship, due to which they no longer receive Meiling Mailing.

The editors' team of Meiling Mailing consists of:

Naam	Werkgebied
Ans Korsten	Coordination
Wim Bernards	Member editorial staff
Cindy van der Staaij	Children's page

MEILING INFORMATION MEETINGS

Every year, the committee Donor Activities organizes informational meetings. The goal of these meetings is to provide clarification and information towards donors and prospective adoptive parents. This concerns informing about the developments in the area of international adoption and subjects related to the adoption routines. Also in 2015 the team took explicit account of the costs of the information meetings.

MEILING FAMILY DAY

An important meeting organized by the committee for donor activities is the annual Meiling family day. During this day, the mutual contacts between the donors and admiring each other's children are key. A special hour is reserved for prospective adoptive parents to meet with one another and with the members of the central intake team.

BOOK INFO

The goal of the book information is to show the literature that is connected to adoption. Among other things, the following reading material is available: country info, children's books, travelling literature but also scientific publications.

Through the Meiling Mailing, the donors are kept up to date concerning the recent developments in literature offerings related to adoption. Also, the book table is always present during every Meiling information meeting.

PROJECT AID SHOP 'MEI THINGS'

The project aid shop, among other things, sells products that have their origin in the countries Meiling mediates for. Many of these products are brought back by those who travel to one of these countries on behalf of Meiling. Other sources are used as well to ensure an assemblage of useful and attractive products in the shop. As already indicated by its name, the money made from the shop is used to support project aid; small-scale projects where the children's homes in our channels benefit from.

The shop is present at information meetings and during the annual Meiling day. Besides this, the shop team is very active recommending its products on Facebook.

BOARD AND MANAGEMENT

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Meiling Board wants to present Meiling as a solid organization to all persons and institutions involved in its services, and wants to be able to substantiate this. This quality manifests itself in the information given, in the accessibility of the organization and its co-workers, and in working with predictable, transparent and verifiable procedures.

To guarantee all of this, a number of principles of policy have been determined:

1. Every co-worker has clients, both internal and external. As a rule, the co-worker will come to an agreement with his or her client only if it is certain it can be met.
2. Powers are invested as close to the execution as possible. The Board takes it upon itself to make sure:
 - a. that every co-worker knows what is expected of him or her (requirements);
 - b. that he or she is able to determine whether his or her working results correspond to the relevant demands (evaluation);
 - c. that every co-worker is invested with the powers to ensure that his or her working results with the demands (adjustment). This way, our co-workers are made responsible for their own working results, and so for the quality of our services.
3. Every co-worker has the right and the duty to take note of any deviation in his or her working performance, and to report these to the Board.
4. Every co-worker has the right and the duty to make an appeal to the Board regarding its duty to adjust the organization and method of working when complaints and deviations are reported.
5. The policy to guarantee the quality's main emphasis is focused on predictability and prevention. The Board pursues a policy aimed at continuous improvement of the working processes, client satisfaction (and that of other parties concerned), and the prevention of errors and complaints.
6. The organization is periodically tested (both internally and externally), to check whether the procedures as determined in the quality handbook are followed, and whether set goals of quality improvement have been attained. This way, the organization is able to keep meeting our clients' wishes and expectations.

BOARD COMPOSITION ON 31 DECEMBER 2015

For most of 2015, the Meiling Foundation Board consisted of six people. The Board is the body ultimately responsible for all of Meiling's activities. The Board represents Meiling in its contacts with official offices and the central adoption authorities both in The Netherlands and in the sending countries, with the European consultation of Euradopt, the complaints committee for permit-holders international adoption, and so on. Next to this, the Board also functions as management team for the different teams and processes within the organization. The Board has the overall responsibility for all of Meiling's activities.

The Board of Meiling meets monthly to discuss matters relevant to the foundation and its activities. It also deals with questions regarding the foundation that require a statement from the Board. These questions are put on the agenda of the Board meetings by the different members responsible for the respective teams.

At the end of 2015 the Board consisted of the following persons:

Name	Working area
Patrick Heubach	Chairman, in- and external communication, CMU
Wilco Baaij	Secretary, quality management
Arie van den Berg	Treasurer, Surinam channel
Marco Heida	Website, virtual office, Taiwan channel
MarjaSijpestein-De Gelder	Internal communications, aftercare
Ilse van den Aker	Human Resources, China channel

The Board is assisted by a number of volunteers who perform tasks aimed at internal affairs. These include Donor Administration, Human Recourses, Financial administration and the Quality Management team.

The volunteers play a key role in the work for an organization like Meiling. The quality of our activities is directly linked to expert knowledge and the efforts and dedication of our volunteers. Meiling maintains this level of quality and, wherever possible, tries to increase quality by organizing educational activities and regular team consultations.

In addition, the Board is supported in its decision-making processes by a number of volunteers offering their professional expertise on legal, orthopedagogical, or medical matters. In terms of ethical issues, the Board is supported by an Advisory Council that consists of volunteers who, in the past and professionally, have proven their value in the area of adoption mediation. The more complex issues of policy are put to the Advisory Council. The Advisory Council advises the Board and then the Board makes a decision.

MANAGEMENT

Having some 90 volunteers, Meiling is a large organization consisting of volunteers who dedicate part of their (free) time to work for Meiling. Their main motivation to work for Meiling is that, being adoptive parents themselves, they want to make an effort for other children in need of help, and with the interest of the adoptive children in mind, want to help other adoptive parents. In many cases, the work they do for Meiling is closely connected to their daily job. The professionalism and enthusiasm these co-workers exhibit in performing tasks for Meiling is a major factor in Meiling's success.

In terms of internal communication, at least twice per year an information meeting is organized, at which the core teams (the Board, country teams, after-care, CMU, intake-teams and information line) have the opportunity to exchange information. Every team meets at least once per year with the member of the Board who is responsible for its working area. Apart from this, the core team volunteers often communicate by phone or email in order to discuss the daily affairs and to decide on actions to be taken.

Whenever the Board wants to receive independent advice on adoption related matters, it has the Advisory Council to fall back on. The Board greatly values the discussions and exchanges of ideas with this council.

That Meiling as an organization depends on volunteers does not diminish its goal to act professionally in all it does. Reinforcing this professional attitude by using the virtual office, training, internal consultations, and, when necessary, relying on external professional advice is a key focus. Both nationally and internationally (Euradopt), Meiling co-workers take part in adoption-related workshops and seminars.

CHANGES IN THE ORGANIZATION

In 2015, no major changes in the organization have been made compared to 2014. During the year some positions have been filled by new co-workers. For these, mutual consultation resulted in the agreement on a period of transfer of activities. Even after this period the former colleagues were willing to render the necessary information if this was necessary. Again, this shows our co-workers' level of involvement.

In 2016, no major organizational changes are expected. We do intend to keep a careful eye on the chain of adoption, and whenever there is reason to, we will not hesitate to make adjustments to the organization.

THE MEILING OFFICE

The Meiling office's address is Groendijk 20 in Driebruggen. Postal address is Postbus 7, 3465 ZG Driebruggen. The mail is delivered here and all current files are kept there. When an adoption procedure has been completed and the adoption file is complete, it is transferred to the long term external archives. Meiling keeps digital copies of the adoption files in its virtual archives.

Apart from its material office, Meiling has been using a virtual office since 2001. At this 'office', Meiling co-workers can find information, board decisions, codes

of behaviour, working procedures, and documents. Over the years, the virtual office has grown into a central element within the working organization of Meiling.