

Amira and Gelukskinders. The story

The story of the Gelukskinders Foundation and its patroness, Amira Willighagen.



Amira's breakthrough

Amira won the Dutch version of the “Got Talent” shows at the age of 9 by singing opera songs. She dreamt of getting on TV once, and once was enough. However, when she started singing, the judges’ mouths almost hit the deck.

They were clearly flabbergasted. She received the golden ticket to immediately proceed to the live shows. Her performance went viral on YouTube, and within a week there were more than 15 million views. RTL did not foresee that either. She won the competition with an incomparable rendition of *Nessun Dorma*. Judge Dan Karaty told her: ‘You were born to be on stage.’



Ever since, Amira's life has changed. She was then on a rollercoaster that kept accelerating. Amira herself enjoyed this to the fullest. She had found her passion and discovered her talent, and that is what she wanted to achieve by competing. She showed a lot of commitment to everyone by singing in front of an audience and letting all people enjoy her talent.

She has had ample legendary performances, so here are only some examples thereof, among others:

- Andre Rieu (at the Vrijthof)
- Iceland "Holagestir"
- Germany with Carmen Nebel (ZDF)
- Argentina
- The Royal Albert Hall in The United Kingdom
- Classics is Groot in Pretoria
- Starlight Classics in Cape Town, South Africa



She has already received several international awards and prizes. Amira is currently working tirelessly to become proficient as a singer. Every child in the townships of Ikageng knows Amira, because she assured there would be playgrounds in all their schools.

Before the foundation

Why is that? Little Amira (7 years old) was with her mother, who was born in Klerksdorp (SA), visiting her grandmother in Potchefstroom. When they went to visit a friend of her mother in Ikageng, Amira wanted to go to the playground. To her surprise her mother told her that there aren't any playgrounds there. When they drove back to her grandmother, she saw the children outside playing in the sand. "Later, when I grow up, I will come to make a playground for those children," Amira told her mother, persistently. Amira's mother was surprised when she heard that quote.

Two years later, after Amira's audition at "Holland's Got Talent", she was invited to a TV talk show "RTL Late Night". There she stated: "I can't be happy with all my money when I know there are kids who can't play." Some fans who heard these words from Amira worked hard to give Amira a foundation, so she can fulfill her dream to the fullest. Of course, Amira won "Holland's Got Talent", with over 50% of the votes, and two months later she participated in *Starlights Classics* in Cape Town. "Now I have the means to establish playgrounds," Amira said. The first playground is in Ikageng and is called Amirapark. Hundreds of children from the neighborhood come to play here.



In the meantime, Amira has moved from the Netherlands to South Africa. There, like the other children, she just goes to school. Art and music are most certainly a large part of her curriculum.

The foundation saw the light on the 1st of November 2014. It is named Foundation Gelukskinders (Lucky Children).

The purpose of the foundation:

The Gelukskinders Foundation aims to improve the well-being of children who grow up in townships and rural areas of South Africa. She wants to achieve this by offering opportunities for children to play in the schools and in the immediate vicinity of the child. The idea is that children who can play are happier, so they grow up to be happy adults. For older children, sports opportunities are offered. Happy playing at school means happy children in the classroom and delivers children who like to come to school. They can learn better and will develop much better on all domains. In an exceptional situation, we can also help improve the basic needs of the children.

The foundation's projects:

The foundation works with projects. Apart from the establishment of playgrounds, the foundation is involved in distribution related activities that take place during the holidays, on occasions such as Easter and Christmas. The distributed items range from food supplies to toys for children. These actions are also significantly funded and supported by donations, for which we as a foundation are enormously grateful.

To this day, we have had 18 playgrounds built, of which 2 public and 14 in primary and nursery schools, and 2 in kindergartens .

2014	Amirapark
2015	Lesego primary school
2016	Sarafina Park
2017	Promosa primary school
2018	Lesego nursery school Promosa grade 1
2019	Loula Fourie nursery school and primary school Ourief primary school Tshupane primary school Ikalafeng school
2020	Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, all endeavors had to be canceled.
2021	Hope of Glory Kindergarten

	Nursery school Bottoms and Bows Nursery school Opang Diatla, and grade 1&2
2022	Keotshipile school (February 16) (16) Bokamosa school (March 10) (17) Sonderwater (week of Amira's birthday) (18)



This year, two new ones were established in schools.

16th of February at Keotshipile school and 10th of March at Bokamosa school. In the week of Amira's birthday (she became 18), Gelukskinders together with a dozen of fans from all over the world also opened a playground number 18 in Sonderwater. The latter is a toddler playground with adapted smaller equipment.



Future aspirations:

Gelukskinders has many plans for the future. For 2023, we hope to realise 2 large new projects. In order to achieve this, we still have to work very hard this year.

Project 1: Hessie

Hessie is a remote village with approximately 1500 children. The residents are trying to renew their village. We will assist them by providing a huge playground for their children. The opening will be accompanied by a very large village festival.

Project 2: Netball

The children of the schools in the townships also want to do sports, however, the schools do not have any clothes or fabric for them. Since Amira also loves sports, she was delighted when we proposed this idea to her. Each of our schools will receive the equipment for a full netball team (clothing and official match balls). Additionally, we will provide netball poles if necessary.

We are organizing an Amira Gelukskinders tournament.

To conclude:

The Gelukskinders Foundation is a Dutch recognized foundation. We also have a department in Maryland (USA) as an integral link to American fans of Amira.

All readers, donors, supporters, of the foundation and listeners to

Amira's fabulous, magical voice, Thank you for your attention.

2023 promises to be an awesome year. Plans for 2024 are already waiting.

Gelukskinders will go on! Approaching its 10th anniversary.