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#### REFERENCE LETTER FOR LASEC

Horn, November 2, 2023

To whom it may concern,

As a family foundation we have been working in Sierra Leone for over 25 years. The one thing that enables such a long stable commitment to support the people in this country is having reliable (local) partners. In 2013 a school was started in Port Loko behind the orphanage which we had already been supporting for 15 years at that time. The school has gradually grown from a few classes to a school for all levels of primary and secondary education. Serving over 1200 students from the town. In 2021 the management of the school asked if we could support them in setting up a science lab. No local vendors or reference projects were available, so we had to find a way to enable this request. We contacted various companies and organizations, both in West Africa and international organizations. None of them could provide what we needed, or they said they could but could not show any references. In other cases, there was no "click" (or trust) after initial contacts.

In December 2022 we found Lasec online and contacted them to see if they could be our partner to provide science lab materials and furniture. From the first e-mail contact they showed a level of competence and professionalism that was a relief. We planned a Teams meeting to explain our needs and were very positively surprised that Lasec had invited not only salespeople but also materials experts, a potential project manager and an educational/teaching expert. This provided us with enough confidence for all next steps.

The fact that Lasec did not just prepare an offer based on their expertise and assumptions but requested the curriculum descriptions and proposed an onsite visit to assess the local situation showed their professional approach. Of course, this way of working takes time and money, but it was very much worth it given the overall size of the project. Another sign of understanding of the local needs was that the list of offered materials were changed and reduced after the visit by the project manager. Materials which were unsuitable for the local conditions were removed from the offer or replaced by alternatives. Recommendation to some changes of the rooms were also made by the project manager.

Very detailed drawings and lists of goods were prepared, reviewed and agreed. Shipment and import of the materials were done by Lasec and the goods arrived safe and complete in Port Loko. Installation of all furniture was done successfully and according to plan by Lasec employees with assistance of the local staff of the school. The high quality of the furniture and materials meet the rather tough local conditions. This was important for all of us since conditions are quite different when compared to Europe or South Africa.

The initial request for the science lab and materials was enlarged by adding furniture for the computer lab and, very important, a training plan to train the local science teachers. Hands on experience with science materials in teaching is very limited in Sierra Leone. The training program was tailor made for the local situation, equipment and curriculum. The local team was very pleased with the teaching approach and delivery of the training sessions and praised the skills and approach of the trainer.



The Lasec staff was very engaged in delivering quality and making sure that teachers and personnel will use all products correctly. All of this combined will ultimately benefit the education of the children.

To summarize the project and our cooperation

- Design of the science lab and computer room based on local conditions. Based on an onsite assessment and design that is fit-for-purpose for the specific challenges of the site in question.
- All materials (furniture, science lab equipment, materials for experiments)
- Transport and local installation
- Training sessions for teaching staff

From the first meeting and throughout all stages of the process, Lasec was very detailed and timely in its communication. This clarity and personal contact helped us to develop a relationship based on trust. Which we found quite unique: a foundation based in the Netherlands, local input from Port Loko Sierra Leone and a company based in South Africa. A rather unique triangle of people working together on one common goal while being thousands of miles apart.

Because of this unique cooperation we have been able to create one of the first science labs in a high school in Sierra Leone. This lab will serve both students at the school itself but also children from other schools will share the lab. It will also help to further the skills of the teachers who can use materials in real life instead of textbook based teaching.

If you have any questions about this project or our cooperation with Lasec, feel free to contact me and I will happily provide more details.

On behalf of the Henk Arts Foundation,

DocuSigned by:  
  
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Mark Arts  
Chairman



**Stichtinghenkarts**



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