



My name is **Mart Zinnemers**. I was born in 1981 in a small city in the north east of the Netherlands. I grew up in a family of five and I am the eldest of three brothers. At the time we grew up we spent most of our time outdoors. Even for a small country like the Netherlands we had a lot of space to play, explore and learn. I really believe that's how children learn best.

During primary school I already knew I wanted to be a teacher and somehow, I never lost that idea. My dad is a teacher too, but how much that was part of my ideas, I cannot really tell.

Knowing what I wanted to be, made my choices during high school a lot easier. Knowing what you want, helps a lot, but to be honest, who really knows. I picked the subjects that fitted the training to become a teacher. After graduation I went to the PABO, which is the school that trains primary school teachers in the Netherlands. From year one we had to do internships in schools. During the four years of my training I saw several different schools: small village schools, city schools, special needs schools and secondary special needs schools. They were all very different and they all need their own approach and demand a different skillset from a teacher. To be as all-round as possible with a few specialisations is very important and I learned from my mentors that the most important skill is the understanding of each individual child. They are all different and need to be addressed in a way that fits them and the teacher. I learned a lot about education during those four years as well as about myself, however not enough yet.

After my graduation I went on a trip to New Zealand and there I stayed for eleven months. Traveling by myself made me rely on myself and solve whatever came my way. It also made sure my English improved a lot and noticing the convenience of speaking more than your mother tongue fluently is a real eye opener.

Since I returned from New Zealand I worked at several schools. I started as a substitute at a few primary schools. Quite soon I was asked to come and teach English at a special needs secondary school for children with learning disabilities and behavioural problems. Here I found that teaching and helping children who must overcome even more challenges than we normally face growing up, is really where my heart is.

Due to changes in the educational system more of these kids had to go to regular schools so our school got smaller and that was the time I applied at a regular secondary school. There I also got to work with the pupils that struggled more in school. Here too I could use my passion for the underdog. Most important for me was to try to have the children have fun in school and believe in themselves.

Then I met my wife. From the start it was clear she was going to Zambia for her work and that meant that a lot of quick decisions were waiting for me. Quitting my job, moving to Zambia and be with my wife. All very good choices that I enjoy every day. It also meant that I'm at home during the week and my wife works. That is something I can't really get used to. So, it was very nice to meet Jane and Anna at a party and getting to know about chance4all. The next Wednesday I started to volunteer my tutor skills with the children of the project. I went back every Wednesday since. The current directors of Chance4all were in the process of looking for suitable candidates to join Chance4all as directors and were impressed by my expertise, dedication and genuine interest in the Chance4all children. Jane & Ana approached me with the offer to become more involved and be a Director. The program is something that really appeals to me, so I said yes. These kids struggle to make it through school and however the struggles might be different from the struggles the children back home have, life is hard for these children and they also deserve their graduation. They are smart and they work hard. Most of all, they are young people with a right to a bright future. So, **I love to able help and try to give a chance for all!**