

Newsletter 23, 20 July 2020

Dear sponsors and friends of school money project

LOOKING-FORWARD FOUNDATION



The Corona pandemic affects all of us, all over the world. People are losing their certainties, such as income, work, leisure, sports and holiday plans. Additional risk factors are being taken into account. Social habits have to be adapted. Keeping a distance from each other is the norm. Everything is unprecedentedly drastic.

For the first time, we are experiencing a life-threatening virus. In Vietnam (and all of Asia) they have experienced it before, SARS in 2002 and MERS in 2012. Acting from experience, the borders in Vietnam were immediately closed at the end of January. The communist government decided in the first case of infection that all schools, companies, hotels, restaurants, markets and shops (except supermarkets) had to be closed. People had to stay at home. So a complete Lock-down.

It worked; only 328 Covid-19 infections were (*official*) reported and no deaths. On the other hand, the economy collapsed. Hardly anyone has a job and therefore no income. The government has promised to pay each employee 1.8 million Dong (70 euros) per month, but only government employees have a registered job. From our families, which are farmers, day laborers, construction workers and factory workers, so far no one has received anything. There is now great poverty in many families.

Our fund can only help a little. Although the schools were closed from TET/Lunar New Year at the end of January and the students could not get lessons, we still paid the monthly school fees. February and March they received it at a location outside school and early May the L-F-managers Thanh and Thuy brought the school fees for April and May. The pupils then received an extra bottle of disinfecting soap (30.000VND/€1,20). The schools reopened in mid-May. They then tried to halve the classes and divide them into a morning and an afternoon group. Pupils and teachers had to wear mouth caps. This trial stopped after a week. It was impossible to make room for all pupils. The schools are already overcrowded, many classrooms are already being used twice and many classes already consist of almost 40 pupils.



On 20 May the restrictions expired throughout Vietnam. Factories, shops, hotels etc. were allowed to reopen. Schools have normal classes and teaching times again, mouth caps are no longer needed. Let's hope this goes well. The Corona virus is still in the air. The government had no choice. The economy has to get out of the valley and the school year can't be finished otherwise. Instead of the end of May, the school year ended on July 15th, in the middle of the hot summer, with daytime temperatures well over 30 degrees.

During the end-of-year ceremony at their school, all our students received the school books for the coming school year from the L-F managers. A total of 31 extra pupils also received their school books from our fund. We do this as a gesture of friendship to the school boards of the cooperating schools.



◆ Vietnam is still closed to foreigners. We cannot visit our students this year. The organization of our project is now so good that it doesn't have to give any problems. Our local managers Thanh, Thuy, Hiep and Chi can take over our part of the school year correctly, but we find it very unfortunate that we cannot say goodbye to the at least 10 pupils who are going to leave our fund. We won't be able to meet the same number of newcomers in Looking-Forward and we won't be able to pay them a home visit right now. The L-F-managers and school boards will take care of the details and photos. This year we have to make do with this. As soon as the weather permits to travel to Nha Trang/ Dien Khanh, we will definitely go. Also the biennial day out with all L-F students will not be continued.

◆ So far, all sponsors and personal supporters faithfully pay the school fees. We are very happy with this, because we know that for many this Corona time is a very uncertain period. If your personal situation is so difficult at the moment that you can't pay your tuition fees or only partially, this can of course be adjusted. We hope that after this uncertain period participation in the school fees project can take place again. In the meantime, we will absorb the available credit in our fund. The students will not have to notice anything about it financially. They have to stay at school.

◆ At the end of May L-F-pupil Quoc Hien (3-2. MDC.9/15 years old) broke his left hand during gym class at his school (Mac Dinh Chi). With us, the school insurance would probably fully reimburse the hospital costs. In Vietnam, however, this is a lot more complicated. First of all, all hospital costs have to be paid BEFORE, under the guise: no money - no surgery etc.. The quality of the treatment depends on the availability of money. Secondly, the personal care, such as washing and eating, has to be done by a family member who also has to stay in the hospital. Thirdly, one is prescribed many (too many) medications which one has to buy from one of the many commercial pharmacies at the entrance of the hospital.

It remained unclear what the school insurance could mean for Hien. A fundraiser was held among the teachers and students of the Mac Dinh Chi school. In case of a calamity with a pupil or teacher, it is customary (symbolically) not to have breakfast once and to put the money value of this breakfast in a collection box. Certainly not everyone will/can do this and the value does not exceed 5000

Dong/±€0,20. Our local managers Thanh and Thuy have sent us pictures of 3 hospital bills with a total of 5.500.000 Dong/±€220,- with the question if Looking-Forward can also contribute to his expenses for Hien's operation?

The basis of our project is school costs. Sometimes, however, we have to see this in a broader sense. Two L-F-pupils (Hong Nhung and Thi Nga) get extra money for (healthy) food, because they are malnourished. We have also given money a few times



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for a bicycle to get to school and twice for a gas stove to put the very unhealthy cooking on wood in the house. All these extra costs we pay from our so called "general fund" which is filled by extra one-time donations.

Quoc Hien lives with his younger brother and his mother with his grandparents. Hien's father passed away. His mother has to earn a living as a day labourer for five family members, which usually doesn't exceed Dong 30,000-40,000 a day, if there is any work at all. We have decided to contribute 2 million Dong/ ± € 80,- as emergency aid. Thanh and Thuy went to the house of Hien and gave the money to the grandfather (mother was working). Our managers got the assignment from the grandparents and from Hien to thank the Looking-Forward organizations very much!

We have fully informed the personal supporters of Quoc Hien, as we have always promised to all sponsors. The personal supporters do not have to pay extra costs for "their" pupil(s). That's what the general fund does

◆ As you could read in the previous Newsletter, I (Johan) came home by train last year. This journey of 13.000 km. via China and Russia I described in a book and illustrated it with many pictures. The story contains many related personal aspects and I dedicated the book to my father who, when I was 12 years old, died in an accident. For those who are interested I offer this book physically on loan or digitally mailed. (*in Dutch language*)



◆ Financial accounting

On 18 July 2020 the sponsorship fund will amount to € 6,878.14 (incl. prepaid school fees). School year 2019-2020 there were a total of 87 financially supported L-F-pupils = 47 girls and 40 boys. 69 pupils have a personal supporter, of which 10 pupils were sponsored by Looking-Forward United Kingdom.

Another 18 pupils are available for personal support.

Special donations: € 280.40 collection at cremation family member,
€ 300,- on behalf of the grandchildren of a sponsor,
€ 200 from a sponsor all the way from Japan.

We have received some extra donations because of the Covid-19 virus.

There were no special (unforeseen) expenses

Private costs are kept well separated from the Looking-Forward money.

All sponsors can have full access to the L-F accounts.

The policy plan, foundation statutes and annual report 2019 are visible on our L-F website.

Percentage of costs of project management and fund administration in relation to income in 2019 = 5.4%

Thank you for supporting the Looking-Forward school money project in Vietnam.

Lidy en Johan Verschuren L-F NL and Steve Martin L-F UK

E-mail: info@looking-forward.nl ,

E-mail: Steve.Martin@pafra.com

Website: www.looking-forward.nl

