

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME **20** ISSUE **1** MARCH 2021



'GOTONG ROYONG UTRECHT' FOUNDATION

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WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

1. From the board

"We are not going to talk about Covid!" How many times have you thought or perhaps said this in the past year? Every conversation tends to be about the virus. When you are walking down the street and you hear people talking, chances are they are discussing the virus. You try to stay out of it, but then a friend, colleague or family member tells you he or she is infected ("Can you imagine? I have been ever so careful") and once again your thoughts cling to this unpredictable virus.

Nevertheless, in addition to living in the 'new normal' with the regime of distance and hygiene, life in the 'old normal' fortunately also continues. The virus has no influence on empathy and love: we see the need; we help and care where possible.

The world seems to have shrunk. Not only because we do not travel, but also because we withdraw emotionally. We focus on national and local news. We do not hear much about how the virus spreads in gigantic countries such as China, India, and Indonesia, or on the African continent, and how they are dealing with it over there. Let us not forget that Indonesia is still there, that 'our' seniors, pupils and students are still there, that they are in the same situation and that they still need our support to be able to face the future, instead of just surviving. They too want to keep smiling and put things into perspective. This is what they sent us, Indonesian light-heartedness:



For sale. Reason: they call me a virus spreader.



Fear of vaccination.

Unfortunately, our income from private sponsors has declined significantly over the past year. Our expenses remained the same; we wanted to keep our promises and did not expect the relapse. We sincerely hope donations will increase again, and cuts will not be necessary. Our call to you: spread the word, talk to your family, your friends, your colleagues and try to capture their attention for our work. You are our best ambassadors. Do not just forward this newsletter but tell others about our work and stimulate them to support the seniors and the children!!

2. 'Covid locale' Indonesia

In Indonesia (276 million inhabitants) the official number of people who fell ill or deceased because of Covid is extremely low compared to the Netherlands. The total number of registered infections on one day (March 11, 2021) in Indonesia was equal to the Netherlands (6000). The official number of people deceased so far is also relatively low (16,000 in the Netherlands and 38,000 in Indonesia). Explanations for this are obvious (few tests, little research into the cause of death), but this is not the whole story. There is a lot of fear in Indonesia and there seems to be more discipline and more social control. This is also due to the network structure of small-scale local government.



Bu Kustamiati (Coordinator of the senior's project) and Bu Murdijati (our General Manager)

Vaccinations started around mid-February. The ladies on the photos above are working with our local foundation in Yogyakarta. Given the large number of inhabitants, it will be a long time for the vaccinations to take effect. In the meantime, the measures will continue to apply, and hopefully they will be taken seriously.

In Bali, the situation has not improved. The island, which is totally dependent on international tourism, is locked up and may not reopen until some time in 2022 or when 70% of the Balinese population has been vaccinated. The income from local (Indonesian) tourism is extremely limited, so the economic crisis is devastating.

3. The effects on our projects

I Covid and scholarships and students

The schools are not yet open, so everyone is taking lessons online, from kindergarten up to university. The children and the staff of the two children's homes (Singaraja and Amlapura) are doing very well. But the financial situation is bad. School expenses remain the same or

increase, but the sales of plants and batik are stagnating, foreign tourists (who bring money) are no longer visiting., and one Australian expat organisation has stopped supporting students. Who will help them out? There are two student candidates for the coming academic year: Elli and Sumiasi. Both want to study Economics. Are you interested in sponsoring one of them? Then please contact us about costs and possibilities!



Sumiasi,



Vivi (second from left)



Elli

Nyanyi, staff member in Singaraja, happily continues her Zumba classes online. You can see a recent clip here: <https://youtu.be/nXfSrEdQII4>.

And Yudi, Head of the children's home in Amlapura made a promotional video about daily life in Covid time: <https://youtu.be/RA3AKAYd6tk>.

Amaliah, coordinator of the Scholarship programme in Yogyakarta, worked hard in February to meet all 115 children and their parents, sometimes at home and sometimes at school.



Photos: Mothers of elementary school children who collect school supplies and scholars with the school supplies they had ordered.

Via email and Whatsapp we have regular contact with the 10 university students whom we fully support. They send us their results every quarter. We do not wish to brag, but are proud that more than half of them are in the top range. We see semester averages of 3.7

and higher (4.0 being the maximum score). Others score between 3.2 and 3.6. Former student Vivi, who now has a grant for the Gajah Mada University in Yogyakarta, is also doing very well (photo on the previous page). We spend a total of about 800 euros per month on these students. And we spend a total of at least 2,100 euros per month for primary and secondary school pupils. Most of this amount is spent on the 115 pupils in Yogyakarta.

II Covid and Rumah Kita

A financial disaster is happening at the Rumah Kita nursery we set up in Yogyakarta. It is closed because of Covid and thus there is practically no income. The staff does produce online programmes to support parents and children. They also make home visits, for which they receive minimal donations. Last year we decided to pay the salaries of the staff and spent 500 euros per month on this. So that is 6,000 unbudgeted euros in one year. The question is whether we can continue this.

III Covid and the seniors

Fortunately, Yogyakarta's seniors' programmes continue unabated. The commitment of the group of volunteers led by Bu Mur and her sister Bu Kus is firm. But we do spend 1500 euros per month on this programme.

4. The children and seniors need your support!

Because of the developments mentioned above, extra gifts are more than welcome at our bank account in Holland: NL74ABNA084.21.36.932 (for the attention of Stichting Gotong Royong - Utrecht). For people who want to donate and who are living outside Holland, please contact us by email (info@gotong-royong-utrecht.nl) so that we can find a proper method of transaction for your donation.

We also call on you to forward this newsletter including your personal recommendation to your friends and family members.

