# NEWSLETTER



STICHTING RUGGENSTEUNTJE INDONESI

SEPTEMBER 2020 - NUMBER 24

The world is still suffering from COVID-19 and the major impact of this virus on daily life since we sent out our last newsletter in March. In The Netherlands many of us have experienced and still are experiencing the impact of the virus either through family members, friends or at work. Now that COVID-19 measurements have been decreased and are less strict, more contaminations have been confirmed and the virus seems to be spreading.

In Indonesia COVID-19 seems to be spreading immensely with the peak of (confirmed) contaminations not even in sight yet. Imagine the difficulties of preventing contamination in the crowded kampungs (neighborhoods) also due to the restricted medical care in such places, which is often not available for many of the inhabitants of these kampungs.

Although Willemien and Janny were not able to visit the projects last Spring, many of the contacts and project leaders were able to share the progress of several projects supported by SRI.

### Java

The members of women's cooperation Lidia and Kembang Wangi in Central Java have been quite creative at the start of the global pandemic and have contributed in providing protective clothing to hospitals nearby. In Indonesia, similar to the situation in The Netherlands, there was also a shortage in medical protective gear, such as face masks and clothing. The women's cooperation made face masks and clothes and brought these to the hospitals. One of the project leaders stated: If the government does not provide (such things), then we need to take our responsibility. In Musuk, on the slopes of the Merapi volcano, the women of Kembang Wangi increased their vegetable cultivation to be self-supporting and sell more vegetables to add to their household income. In Solo, the women of Lidia cultivate their vegetables using the hydroponic system; part of the yield is used in their own household, whereas another part is sold to generate (additional) income. Last year SRI has sponsored a training concerning the possibilities of cultivating vegetables using the hydroponic system, which can be installed in the homes or on the roofs (refer to pictures).

As per our request, our contact in Solo has determined which families are in need of additional support (this concerned the families of children who already receive SRI support). These families mainly are poor, single (grand) parent families. These last three months 14 families receive food aid (refer to pictures). These families cannot work and thus have lost any income due to the COVID-19 pandemic such as a mother who used to drive the children in her neighborhood to school, or the person who made a living by performing as a clown at children's parties, a father driving a becak (trishaw), a day laborer and a grandmother baking cookies and selling these in front of her home. All these jobs are now impossible and government support or unemployment benefits are non-existent in Indonesia. Some of the children have sent a thank you note using their best English. We have published some of them at the end of this newsletter.

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#### SRI news

The news letters are also published on our website. We also include an Dutch and Indonesian translation of the news letter, after one of our volunteers has finished the translation:

sri-indonesie.nl/nieuws.html

<u>sri-indonesie.nl/nieuws.html</u> <u>sri-indonesie.nl/indonesian.html</u>



Women cooperation produce protective face masks.



Cultivating vegetables using the hydroponic system.



Example of food aid.

The schools have started again on July 13, just after the summer holidays. Lessons are given in a virtual classroom, so education is given online. This also adds to a household burden as the internet connection per mobile phone is paid per topping-up the (mostly) prepaid SIM card (in Indonesia this is referred to as buying 'pulsa' – topping-up the prepaid amount on the SIM card). SRI will also support the families in this.

Just like in The Netherlands, the children miss their school friends and sitting together with them in the class room. In this current time, we all realize that we are all globally connected and that we all face the same difficulties in certain aspects of life.

We often communicate with our contacts on Java via e-mail or Whatsapp. One of our two contacts in Solo really hopes to be able to come to The Netherlands in December. She is scheduled to defend her thesis at Radboud University in Nijmegen. If this is possible, we will of course be present at Radboud University, or if not, attend the online presentation of her thesis.

#### Bali

It is much harder to communicate with our contacts in Bali via e-mail or Whatsapp. Regular air mail takes time to reach (both sides) and it is not a given that letters do reach their destination. We did receive an envelope containing copies of school report cards, sent by one of our contacts in mid August. Similar to Java, Bali offers online education, but this is not available on the whole island. If it is not available, well, then there is no education at all. Now that tourists stay away, the economy on the island has collapsed and people are out of jobs; poverty is increasing alarmingly. This is mainly caused by the virus. Many people who were living just above the poverty line, the so-called lower middle class, are now struggling again in this COVID-19 situation.

In March, Janny and Willemien were still optimistic about travelling to Indonesia later this year (autumn maybe). Unfortunately, this is still impossible and now they hope to travel somewhere next year – when the world is a safe place for travelers again and the virus is put under control. We will continue to support the children and women with their studies and work and keep communicating with our contacts in Indonesia.

We are especially grateful for the support of our sympathisants who make the continuous and additional SRI support

rose people

possible, now that this .

is even more necessary.







Food aid packages ready for distribution.

Thank you notes.

