FoVO

Friends of Vietnam Orphanages Inc.

Helping disadvantaged communities in Vietnam

Report to Donors

2021 Financial Year

REGISTERED CHARITY · acnc.gov.au/charityregister



FoVO Vietnam Field Trip Key Map Red circles indicate some project locations.

REPORT TO DONORS 2021

Introduction

The 2021 financial year was very different for FoVO because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

International border closures meant that Peter was unable to travel to Vietnam. Projects were instead planned and carried out in Vietnam by Thi, FoVO's volunteer fieldworker, working alongside local partners and volunteer groups.

Despite these restrictions, FoVO continued a wide range of small projects. These included assistance to families affected by Covid lockdowns, support for school students, food and livelihood projects, assistance to people with disabilities, and projects in remote Indigenous communities.

University student volunteer groups were particularly important during the year. They provided local knowledge, organisation and volunteer labour in both urban communities and remote mountain villages. The original 2021 report described these partnerships as especially successful.

FoVO received $54,273 in donations during the financial year. This included a one-off donation of $30,000 from David Penalver, made as his last wish and providing funds for FoVO to continue operating for approximately 18 months.

FoVO spent $20,824 on projects in Vietnam during the year. As in previous years, FoVO's Australian administration costs were met separately, so:
100% of donations went to direct assistance in Vietnam.

Peter Kabaila
Public Officer
Friends of Vietnam Orphanages Inc (FoVO)

REPORT TO DONORS 2021

Project Summary

How Your $20,824 Was Spent

NO.	PROJECT	AUD	MILLION VND
1	Storm relief for Vân Kiều people, Quảng Trị	**$1,200**	20.7
2	Lâm Hà shelter and orphanage, Lâm Đồng	**$730**	12.6
3	Clothes for M'Nông people, Đắk Nông	**$100**	1.7
4	Bicycles for students in Hà Tĩnh villages — Nam and Hiệp	**$615**	10.6
5	Single-mother shelter, Hà Tĩnh	**$410**	7.1
6	University students and Child Protection Centre No. 5, Đà Nẵng	**$455**	7.9
7	Fence and chicken house for elderly woman living on public land	**$285**	4.9
8	Mái Ấm Tình Mẹ, Bình Dương	**$625**	10.8
9	Chicken project in a Hà Tĩnh village	**$620**	10.7
10	Phong Nha — chicken raising and roof repair by university students	**$950**	16.4
11	Bửu Trì and Thiên Ân children's shelters, Cần Thơ	**$1,210**	20.9
12	Gia Lai leprosy village	**$620**	10.7
13	An Vũ children's shelter, Bình Phước	**$575**	9.9
14	Disability centre, Xã Đoài	**$880**	15.2
15	Phát Diệm — chickens and food for village households	**$1,370**	23.6
16	Bicycles and awards for school students, Hà Tĩnh	**$1,440**	24.8
17	Thạch Long — "Loaves & Fishes" lockdown project	**$700**	12.1
18	Sài Gòn lockdown project	**$2,000**	34.5
19	Đà Nẵng lockdown project	**$300**	5.2
20	Con Cuông Thai ethnic village, Nghệ An — school materials, winter clothing and food	**$920**	15.9
21	All Souls Day assistance for 50 Sài Gòn families	**$2,000**	34.5
22	Đại Lộc village — chicken and duck raising and food assistance	**$1,200**	20.7
23	Support for students in five villages	**$1,620**	28.0
	TOTAL	**$20,824**	**359.3**

VND converted at the Reserve Bank of Australia average rate for the financial year, approximately 1.73 million VND = AUD $100.

REPORT TO DONORS 2021

1. Storm Relief for Vân Kiều People — Quảng Trị

Storm relief — $1,200 (20.7M VND)

Description

FoVO had developed a relationship over several years with the remote Vân Kiều (Bru) community at Bản Khe Ngài in Đăkrông District, Quảng Trị Province, near the Laos border. Earlier projects had included rice, winter blankets and tree seedlings.

In late 2020, severe storms and floods struck Central Vietnam. The Vân Kiều community experienced landslides and damage to its tree plantations. Because international borders were closed during Covid, Peter could not travel to Vietnam. Thi managed the project in Vietnam, working alongside 30 university student volunteers from the Lasan group in Huế.

FoVO contributed $1,200. Thi also raised $1,895 through a Facebook appeal in Vietnam, while the students raised $290 towards their own transport, food and activities. Together the group purchased and transported rice, dried fish, meat, cooking supplies and other household necessities, as well as winter jackets for children.

Each of the 51 households received 20 kg of rice and a package of food and household supplies. Thirty children received warm clothing.

Observation

Getting the supplies to the village was itself a substantial part of the project. A concrete bridge had recently replaced the former canoe crossing, but the truck and bus could go no further than the bridge. Three motorbikes came from the village to help transfer the supplies. The students then walked the remaining six kilometres along the mountain track in continuing rain and mud, carrying supplies with them.

Because of the rain, people gathered at the village headman's house. A member of each of the 51 households came to collect the supplies.

The photographs provide a useful record of this process. They show students carrying supplies along the wet mountain road, the hillside settlement, families gathering at the village and household life inside the timber houses.

Reflection

This project showed the value of working alongside an existing local volunteer group. FoVO supplied only part of the money. Thi raised additional funds, the students raised money themselves, and they contributed the considerable labour required to purchase, transport and physically carry the supplies into the village.

The project also demonstrated something that became increasingly important in FoVO's work during Covid. An Australian fieldworker did not have to be physically present for a project to happen. Thi and the local volunteers could organise and carry it out on the ground.





Student volunteers carrying supplies along the mountain track to the village.



Typical hillside home in the village.





Children holding their bags of sweet cakes.





A woman holds food provisions for her family.



Woman preparing the family meal

REPORT TO DONORS 2021

2. Lâm Hà Single Mothers' Shelter and Girls' Home — Lâm Đồng

Food, baby supplies and cleaning materials — $730 (12.6M VND)

Description

FoVO had been visiting this shelter at Lâm Hà, near Đà Lạt, for about two years. It was run by the Tu Hội Nhập Thể Tận Hiến Truyền Giáo religious order and provided accommodation for girls and single mothers. By this visit, a Vietnamese corporate sponsor had helped the shelter develop separate accommodation specifically for girls and mothers with babies. Boys reaching primary-school age were sent to another shelter.

Because Peter could not travel to Vietnam during the Covid border closures, Thi visited with a local woman who knew the shelter. They spent a day talking with the residents and then took the cook and a carer to the local market to choose what was needed. At the time there were 25 children and two single mothers living there, including eight infants and eleven children aged three to five.

FoVO provided baby supplies including formula, wet tissues, 560 nappies, an electric blender, hand sanitiser and yoghurt; cleaning materials; and food including milk, beef, pork, minced meat, peanuts, noodles and cooking oil.

The total cost was 11.7 million VND, about $730.

Observation

The older girls now had their own study desks and shelves for books and personal belongings. They attended the local government school and could invite school friends to visit them at the shelter. This was a small but interesting indication that the shelter was trying to provide some personal space and ordinary social life rather than simply dormitory accommodation.

During the visit Thi also spent time talking with a 16-year-old single mother living at the shelter. The circumstances recorded in the contemporary diary were distressing and included sexual violence, rejection by her family and uncertainty about her future. Thi offered to help if the young woman later wanted assistance to return to education.

Reflection

The shopping itself was simple. More important was the way the project was organised. Rather than FoVO deciding from a distance what a shelter containing babies, children and young mothers required, Thi took the cook and a carer to the market and let the people involved in everyday care help choose the supplies.

The visit also showed that a shelter could provide more than food and a bed. Personal study space, schooling, friendships and the possibility of returning to education could all matter.



Photo in front of her own study desk



Making a heart shape next to our donation





A young single mother holds her baby



	Item	Quantity	Price in VND	Price in AUD
1	Hand sanitizer	2 bottles (1 L)	440	7.5
2	Yogurt	3 boxes (180 cans)	910	57
3	Milk	2 boxes (80 cans)	700	44
4	Beef	2 kgs	350	22
5	Pork	20 kgs	2.000	125
6	Minced meat	5 kgs	550	22
7	Peanut	3 kgs	144	9
8	Diapers	10 bags (560 diapers)	2.529	158
9	Shower gel	4 bottles (4 L)	464	29
10	Shampoo	2 bottles (1 L)	190	11.9
11	Blender machine	1	680	43
12	Fruit powder	10 boxes (150g)	928	58
13	Shrimp crackers	10 bags (1 kg)	82	5
14	Dry noodles	3 bags (1 kg)	75	4.7
15	Bleach	2 bottles (1 L)	20	1.2
16	Washing powder	2 bags (5 kgs)	360	22.5
17	Toilet cleaner	2 bottles (1 L)	64	4
18	Glass spray	2 bottles (1 L)	46	2.9
19	Cooking oil	4 bottles (2 L)	160	10
20	Floor cleaner	4 bottles (2 L)	312	19.5
21	Wet tissue	5 bags	175	11
22	Baby formula	1 can	450	28
23	Chocolate and candy	15 bags	836	52
			Total: 11,700 (VND)	732.7 (AUD)



Itemised cost breakdown of the project



Making a heart shape next to our donation

REPORT TO DONORS 2021

3. Clothes for M’nông People — Đắk Mil, Đắk Nông

Winter clothes and school bags — $100 (1.7M VND)

Description

Thi asked a group of market sellers in Hà Tınh City whether they could help provide winter clothing and school bags for M’Nông people at Đắk Mil in the Central Highlands.

The market sellers responded by fundraising and collecting hundreds of items of clothing and school bags. Many were new, unsold items donated by traders from the Hà Tınh market.

FoVO contributed $100 towards getting the donated goods to the community. The clothing and school bags were sent by bus from Hà Tınh to the Central Highlands, where FoVO'slocal contact arranged their distribution.

Observation

This was a very small FoVO expenditure, but the photographs show a much larger quantity of assistance than $100 alone would suggest. Children are shown gathered around the donated clothing and with their new school bags.

FoVO's role was mainly to connect people who had useful goods with people who could use them, and then help get those goods to the community.

Reflection

This was another example of the multiplier effect of working alongside local groups. The Hà Tınh market sellers had access to clothing and school bags. FoVO had a contact with the M’Nông community in Đắk Mil. A relatively small amount of money helped connect the two.

Sometimes the useful contribution of a tiny charity is not buying everything itself, but making the connection that allows other people to contribute.





Left, M'Nung kids around the donated clothing. Right, happy with new school bags.

REPORT TO DONORS 2021

4. Bicycles for School Students — Hà Tĩnh Villages

Bicycles and chickens — $615 (10.6M VND)

Description

FoVO had developed a continuing relationship with Nam, Hiệp and Đồng, three former schoolmates who helped organise projects in their home province of Hà Tĩnh.

Working with Thi, they located and visited disadvantaged families and selected seven school students to receive bicycles as encouragement to continue their education. One family also received chickens as a small livelihood contribution.

The seven students were living in a range of difficult family circumstances, including serious illness or disability of a parent, loss of parents, single-parent households and very limited family income. The original project diary records each student individually rather than treating them simply as a group.

Observation

The photographs show the bicycles being delivered directly to the students and their families. They also record something of the households themselves.

One photograph shows Khánh Huyền trying her bicycle outside the family house, which had remained unfinished for seven years because her parents could not afford enough building materials. Another shows Uyên Nhi with her father and younger sisters, while Hiệp is shown helping to adjust one of the bicycles.

The bicycles were therefore more than presentation prizes. They were practical household assets for children whose families had little spare money.

Reflection

This was an early example of what became a recurring FoVO project.

A bicycle was a relatively modest one-off expense, but it could help a child travel to school for several years. More importantly, the students were not selected remotely by FoVO. Nam, Hiệp and Đồng knew the local area, visited the families and could see which children were likely to benefit.

The project reinforced a simple lesson: local knowledge was as important as the bicycle itself.





Truong Huu Cuong with his new bicycle

Khanh Huyen is trying her bicycle. In the background is mother and their house, still under construction after 7 years.



Nam with Thien Quoc and his mother



Hiep helps adjust a bicycle



Uyen Nhi with her father and her siblings



Uyen Nhi's friend wants a bike too!



Thao Nhi with her bike

REPORT TO DONORS 2021

5. Single Mothers' Shelter — Hà Tĩnh

Baby and personal-care supplies — $410 (7.1M VND)

Description

FoVO had been visiting the recently built Mái Ấm Thiên Ân shelter in Hà Tĩnh Province for several years. The shelter provided accommodation and care for women during pregnancy and after giving birth.

At the time of Thi's visit there were three women staying there: two pregnant women and one single mother. A woman with a disability was also being cared for at the shelter.

The building had been funded with support from overseas Vietnamese donors, but much of its day-to-day operation was left to the two nuns and the women living there. The shelter also made communion wafers for sale to local churches to help meet its operating costs.

FoVO provided approximately six months of practical supplies, including nappies, baby cleaning gauze, sanitary products, baby towels and gloves, toiletries, washing liquid, baby bottles, pillows, clothing and other personal-care items.

Observation

The visit revealed some interesting ways in which the shelter supported itself.

Local women who had recently given birth sometimes donated breast milk for babies whose mothers had left them at the shelter. This reduced the considerable cost of infant formula. The shelter's small communion-wafer business provided another source of income.

Thi also connected the shelter with the Hà Tĩnh Market Women's Group, who agreed to provide continuing visits and support to the mothers after they gave birth.

The original diary noted another feature that interested FoVO at the time. Rather than deliberately increasing the number of children living permanently at the shelter, its managers tried to find adoptive families for babies who could not remain with their mothers.

Reflection

This was a modest project supplying ordinary things that were constantly being used up: nappies, washing products, towels and other necessities.

But the visit also showed that the shelter was not operating alone. Overseas Vietnamese had helped provide the building, the nuns and residents helped generate some income themselves, local mothers donated breast milk, and the market women offered continuing support.

FoVO's $410 became one small part of a much larger local network of care.



Single mothers with our donated supplies.



Shelter manager negotiates our costs at a shop in the local market.



Single mother making communion wafers to sell to local churches for ritual use.



Three-week-old newborn with mother

REPORT TO DONORS 2021

6. University Students and Child Protection Centre No. 5 — Đà Nẵng

Children's activities, prizes, lunch and centre supplies — $455 (7.9M VND)

Description

Child Protection Centre No. 5 in Đà Nẵng housed 22 children, including seven at primary school, nine at middle school and six at high school, with three carers. The contemporary diary described the children as having been picked up from the street or left by their parents.

Thi organised a group of 20 first-year university students to spend a weekend day with the children. Half organised games and an environmental competition while the others prepared a large group lunch. The children worked in three groups. They answered questions about environmental protection, drew posters and then spoke about their ideas. The students also bought and gift-wrapped a personal prize for every child.

Before shopping, the students asked the Centre's cook what was actually needed. FoVO therefore also provided cooking equipment, shampoo, bath gel, washing powder and cleaning products.

Observation

The project was not simply a donation of goods.

The photographs show the children and university students working together, playing organised games, preparing posters, speaking to the group and receiving individual prizes. One photograph records a high-school girl presenting her group's ideas.

Over lunch the two groups also talked about their lives. The children heard about university life, while the university students heard what it was like to live at the Centre without parents. The contemporary report saw this exchange as valuable to both groups.

Reflection

This project showed another way in which FoVO could use a small amount of money.

The $455 paid for materials, but much of the project came from the time, energy and organisation of 20 university students. They planned activities, went shopping, wrapped prizes, cooked lunch and spent the day with the children.

The aim was not only to provide things. It was also to give every child an opportunity to participate and, as the original report put it, “to shine”.



All working together



A girl is happy with her Snow Queen diary notebook



Prizes gift-wrapped by uni students



“Breaking the ice” through organised games



These groups are very engaged and working hard!



A high school girl presents her group's idea



Groups get a prize



Individuals get a prize









It’s a food culture. And the group lunch is a great way for the children to get back some calories after all the games and activities of the weekend.





REPORT TO DONORS 2021

7. Fence and Chicken House for Bà Năm — Đà Nẵng

Fence, chicken house and food — $285 (4.9M VND)

Description

Bà Năm was an elderly woman living in a 3 x 5 metre shack on public land near Đà Nẵng. She kept a small vegetable garden and chickens, but cows could enter the garden and the chickens were not secure.

FoVO worked with a group of 30 university student volunteers. FoVO paid for the materials while the students supplied the labour. The project provided bamboo-cutting knives, wire, about 70 metres of wire netting and roofing sheets for a chicken house. The students also received breakfast and lunch while doing the work.

Because the wire netting could be removed and reused, the investment was not entirely lost if Bà Năm later had to move from the land.

Observation

The project did not go entirely according to plan.

The students initially went to cut bamboo posts from what they understood to be a wild garden on public land. A local man appeared waving a machete and drove them away. The diary records that the bamboo patch had once formed part of his farm before the land was resumed and subdivided. The students simply found another place to cut the posts.

They then removed the old fence, dug post holes, installed the bamboo posts and erected the wire fence and chicken house.

Afterwards Bà Năm's vegetables were protected from cows and her chickens were safer. But she immediately identified another risk: the wire fence itself was worth more than the chickens and might be stolen.

Reflection

This was another very small project made possible by volunteer labour. It also provided a useful reminder that even a simple project can have consequences that are difficult to predict. The new fence solved one problem but created another valuable object that might itself attract thieves.

A project does not finish when the new thing has been built. The important question is what happens to it afterwards.











With our food package (left) and admiring the transistor radio (right)





Shrines with home grown flowers and offerings (left) and view to bed and gas stove (Right)



Bamboo cutting knives



Unrolling wire netting



Removing old brush fencing



Digging post holes to install posts



Stretching the net to tie it to bamboo posts



Wire ties for chicken house roof sheets



Preparing breakfast



Having lunch after finishing work



REPORT TO DONORS 2021

8. Mái Ấm Tình Mẹ Single Mothers' Shelter — Bình Dương

Household and personal-care supplies — $625 (10.8M VND)

Description

FoVO had been visiting Mái Ấm Tình Mẹ, a single mothers' shelter and children's home in Bình Dương, for several years.

Bình Dương is a major industrial area near Saigon, attracting young workers from villages throughout Vietnam. At the time of Thi's visit, two mothers had recently given birth, another eight women were waiting to give birth, and about 60 children were living at the shelter.

The shelter was run by nuns. Rather than contributing to a proposed building extension, FoVO took a carer and the cook to the local market and asked them to choose things that were needed for everyday life.

FoVO provided cleaning and household equipment, toiletries, children's underwear, clothing for mothers, food, hand sanitiser and other practical items. The total cost was $625.

Observation

The project again showed the value of asking the people doing the everyday work what was actually needed.

The resulting shopping list was very ordinary: buckets, laundry tubs, shampoo, washing powder, toilet cleaner, underwear, yoghurt, food, mosquito rackets, a small cupboard, hair dryers, combs and other household items.

None was a major item by itself. Together they reflected the daily needs of a large household caring for women, babies and children.

The visit also showed the particular pressures facing some young women working in industrial areas far from their home villages. Pregnancy outside marriage could result in serious difficulties with family and community, and shelters such as Mái Ấm Tình Mẹ provided a place where women could stay during pregnancy and childbirth.

Reflection

FoVO was asked about contributing to a larger building project, but chose instead to fund practical items selected by the people using them every day.

This became a recurring FoVO approach: before deciding what to provide, ask the cook, carer, nun, teacher or other person closest to the work what is actually needed.

A useful project does not have to be large or impressive. Sometimes the ordinary things are the things most needed.



Selfie



Toddlers room



Lunch time



Lunch time



Study time at home



Buying supplies at the local market



Looking at the visitor



Things we provided

REPORT TO DONORS 2021

9. Chicken Raising for Disadvantaged Households — Cẩm Xuyên, Hà Tĩnh

Chickens and poultry feed — $620 (10.7M VND)

Description

This chicken-raising project was carried out by the Hà Tĩnh Market Sellers Group, a local group of women who had already worked with FoVO on other projects.

The women selected 10 of the most disadvantaged households in a village in Cẩm Xuyên, Hà Tĩnh.

FoVO provided 300 chickens. Each household received 30 chickens and one 25 kg bag of poultry feed. The average cost was $62 per household, giving a total project cost of $620.

Observation

The market sellers were particularly useful project partners because they were local women who were prepared to organise the project themselves. They knew the area, identified the households and arranged the distribution.

Chicken raising was already a familiar household activity. The project did not require people to learn a completely new livelihood. The chickens could provide eggs and food for the household and, if successfully raised, some additional cash income.

Reflection

This was a simple livelihood project based on something people already knew how to do.

FoVO did not need to create a new program or teach people how to raise chickens. The local market women knew the community and the recipient households already understood chicken raising.

The useful intervention was simply to provide something that was missing: the chickens and the first bag of feed.

A small livelihood project works better when it builds on skills that people already have.







Left: Chuc. Right: Kinh



Left: Mien. Right: Vien





Left: Hieu and Thanh. Right: Hoan





Left: Doan. Right: Hien





REPORT TO DONORS 2021

10. Chicken Raising and Roof Repair — Trọc Village, Phong Nha

Chickens, poultry feed and roof repairs — $950 (16.4M VND)

Description

Trọc is a village near Phong Nha in Quảng Bình Province. The village had been badly affected by floods during the previous year.

FoVO worked alongside Sister Nhàn, who ran a small community of six Sisters of Charity at nearby Hưng Trạch village. She organised a group of 25 local young people to carry out the project.

The group identified 15 disadvantaged households. Each household received 30 chickens and a 25 kg bag of poultry feed. The volunteers also helped families prepare chicken houses.

Twelve of the volunteers repaired the storm-damaged roof of an elderly woman's house. FoVO provided second-hand roof tiles and screws.

Observation

One recipient was Nguyễn Văn An, aged 82. He was the full -time carer for his wife, who was physically and mentally unwell, and their 30-year-old son, who was paralysed.

He and his wife were no longer able to farm. Their rice land had been divided among their other five children. Raising chickens offered the household a small activity that could provide eggs and meat and potentially some cash income.

The project photographs show the chickens in their new cages, Nguyễn Văn An feeding his chickens, volunteers repairing the damaged roof and one of the elderly residents being carried home.

Reflection

The project combined two different forms of assistance.

For households still able to manage chickens, FoVO provided a small livelihood opportunity. For an elderly woman whose roof had been damaged by the floods, the need was immediate repair rather than an income project.

The local group supplied nearly all of the labour. They identified households, helped build chicken houses and repaired the roof, while FoVO mainly paid for the materials and livestock.

This was another example of a small grant achieving more because it worked alongside people already organised in the local community.



Chickens from last year's project



Our project partner in this village, the lively Sister Nhan.



Chickens in a new cage



Nguyen Van An, fulltime carer for his wife and 30 year old son, feeding his new chickens..



Feeding the new chickens



Carrying an elderly client back home.



Mortar patching the roof hip



Volunteers at work repairing a roof

REPORT TO DONORS 2021

11. Children's Activity Day at Bửu Trì and Thiên Ân Homes — Cần Thơ

Children's activities, prizes and household supplies — $1,210 (20.9M VND)

Description

FoVO had been assisting children at Bửu Trì Buddhist Temple and Thiên Ân Christian children's home in Cần Thơ for more than six years. The two homes had developed a close relationship and helped each other during times of difficulty or shortage.

In 2021 Bửu Trì housed 67 children and Thiên Ân housed 44.

FoVO originally planned a combined picnic, but this was changed because of concern about Covid infection. Thi recruited 10 students from Cần Thơ University and five seminarians to organise an activity day instead.

About 50 primary-school children from the two homes came together at Thiên Ân. The volunteers organised games, quizzes and a drawing competition based on the question, "What is my dream?" FoVO also provided prizes for the children and practical supplies for both homes, including food, sandals and shampoo.

Observation

The university students and seminarians brought different skills to the day. The seminarians were experienced in organising youth activities, while the university students helped the children develop their ideas through group discussion and simple "mind maps".

The children then worked in groups to draw posters showing their hopes for the future and presented their drawings to the others.

Their ideas were wonderfully varied. One girl wanted to become a sailor, another wanted to become a teacher, while another group imagined going away in a rocket.

Every child received a personal diary, study materials and a small gift. Each group also received a prize for its poster.

The project also included very ordinary things needed by the two homes: rice, cooking supplies, baby formula, sandals and shampoo.

Reflection

This project was not simply about giving things to children.

The volunteers created a day in which children from two different religious homes could meet, play, talk about their future and make something together.

The project also showed again how FoVO could combine a modest amount of money with the skills and time of local volunteers. University students, seminarians and a university teacher did much of the organising, transport and activity work.

Perhaps the most important question asked that day was also the simplest:

"What is my dream?"

For children growing up in institutional care, being asked what they hoped to become was itself worthwhile.



Uni students wrapping children's prizes



Games for the children



Quiz with prizes



7 groups all working hard.



All drawing their favourite thing.



A girl wants to be a sailor



Another girl wants to be a teacher



This group want to go away in a rocket



These temple boys want to do lots of things (mainly flying?)



These children drawing about their dream



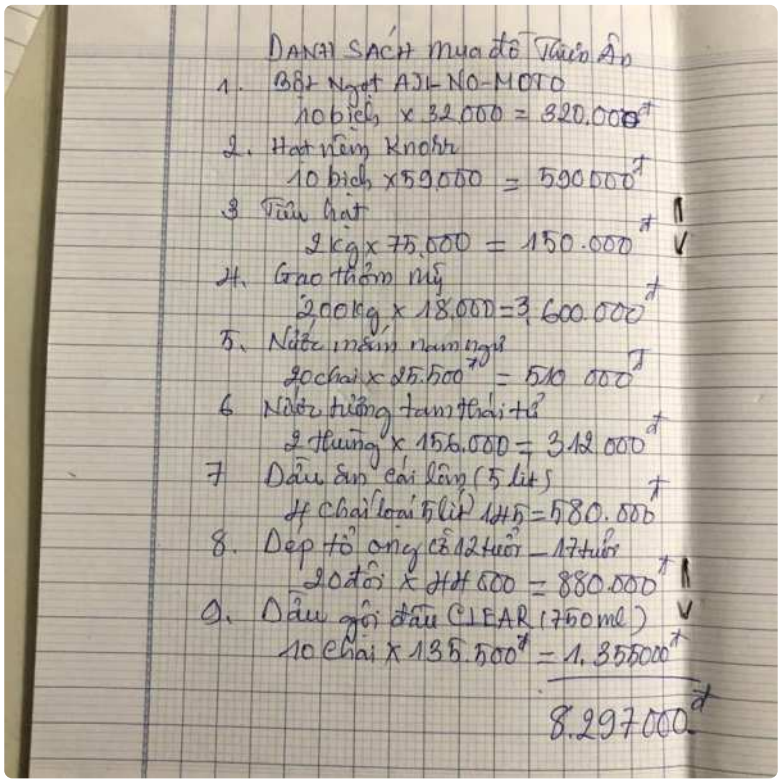
A girl presents the dream represented by her group members



These boys telling the story of their dreams



All children got their own gift and each group got a prize.



DANH SÁCH Mua đồ Thiện Ân

1. Bột Ngọt AJI-NO-MOTO
   10 bịch x 32.000 = 320.000đ
2. Hạt nêm Knorr
   10 bịch x 59.000 = 590.000đ
3. Tiêu hạt
   1kg x 75.000 = 150.000đ
4. Gạo thơm Mỹ
   200kg x 18.000 = 3.600.000đ
5. Nước mắm nam ngư
   20 chai x 25.500 = 510.000đ
6. Nước tương tam thái tử
   2 thùng x 156.000 = 312.000đ
7. Dầu ăn cái lân (5 lít)
   4 chai loại 5 lít 145 = 580.000đ
8. Dép tổ ong cỡ 12 tuổi - 17 tuổi
   20 đôi x 44.000 = 880.000đ
9. Dầu gội đầu CLEAR (750ml)
   10 chai x 135.500đ = 1.355000đ

8.297000đ

Thien An orphanage list of supplies



Supplies for Buu Tri Temple orphanage

REPORT TO DONORS 2021

12. Medical Outreach for People Affected by Leprosy — Gia Lai

Medicines and medical outreach — $620 (10.7M VND)

Description

FoVO joined a medical outreach project at La Le village in Chư Pưh District, Gia Lai Province.

People affected by leprosy and other village residents came on foot or by motorbike for health checks, wound treatment, medicines and food assistance.

FoVO worked alongside Thủy, who led a small Vietnamese charity group supported by overseas Vietnamese donors. Her fundraising raised about $1,720 towards the project.

FoVO contributed the remaining $620. Our contribution paid for medicines, including commonly used Western medicines, traditional medicines and vitamin supplements.

Thủy's group provided food parcels for 100 households.

Observation

The most important part of the project was the volunteer medical team.

The team included two doctors, a nurse and a J'rai nurse who also interpreted for local patients.

The medical volunteers inspected and treated open sores for about 50 people affected by leprosy and also treated about 200 other villagers, mainly women and children.

The work included blood-pressure checks, medicines, wound cleaning and bandaging.

Children were also given small things such as balloons and hair ribbons.

Having a local J'rai interpreter made communication with patients much easier.

Reflection

FoVO's $620 was only one part of a considerably larger project.

Thủy brought fundraising and local organisation. The medical volunteers brought professional skills. The J'rai nurse brought both nursing knowledge and language. FoVO supplied the remaining money needed for medicines.

No single group could claim the project as its own.

This was an early example of something FoVO would see repeatedly: small organisations can achieve much more when they work alongside other local groups and contribute what is missing.



Our project manager checking blood pressure.



Jarai girl shows her new hair ribbon.





Hair ribbons break the ice for the girls.





Children gather to get a balloon.





Treating an infected amputation stump



People gather for treatment





Thuy hands out medicines









Jarai nurse explains how to use medicine





















REPORT TO DONORS 2021

13. Food Security and Children's Activities — An Vũ Home, Bình Phước

Food supplies, clothing and children's activities — $575 (9.9M VND)

Description

An Vũ children's home in Bình Phước Province was a new FoVO contact in 2021.

The home had been established by Vietnamese songwriter Vũ Thành An and was being run by five nuns. It was in a remote village about 200 km north of Saigon.

FoVO worked alongside a street-singing charity group of about 20 people led by a Đồng Nai University teacher. The group raised money for charity by singing in city streets and was also developing a music café for the same purpose.

The street singers raised 30 million VND for the project. FoVO contributed another 10 million VND, about $575.

Together the groups provided about six months of food supplies, clothing for the children and a day of games and activities.

Observation

There were about 45 children at the home, most of them of primary-school age. About one-third were Khmer, reflecting the home's location near the Cambodian border.

Thi spent a day at the home and observed that the children appeared alert and healthy.

The combined project provided 1,000 kg of rice, cooking oil, fish sauce, noodles, milk and other food supplies. Clothing was provided for all 45 children.

The volunteers also organised games, drawing activities and a large lunch for the children, volunteers and staff.

The original plan had been to hold a similar activity at a shelter for elderly homeless women in Đồng Nai. That plan was changed because the shelter manager was concerned about the risk of Covid infection.

Reflection

FoVO contributed only part of the money for this project.

The street singers had already raised three times as much as FoVO contributed and brought their own volunteers, fundraising methods and enthusiasm.

FoVO's role was to join an existing local effort and help make it larger.

This was another useful lesson from 2021: a small charity does not always need to start the project. Sometimes the better role is to find people already doing useful work and work alongside them.





Prizes for boys drawing competition

Khmer girls keeping together as a group



Boys interested in the mobile phone (not allowed to use one at the orphanage).



Comforting a boy with Down syndrome.



Sweet potato bbq for lunch.



Young nun works with volunteers to prepare lunch.



Highlight of the day – food.



More than 60 people having lunch.



Volunteers unloading food and school bags, children's clothing.



Donated supplies unloaded.



Street singers group happy to arrive.



Our project for 6 months food security at the orphanage: 1,000kg rice, 20 litres fish sauce, 20 litres cooking oil, milk, noodles.



REPORT TO DONORS 2021

14. Disability Shelter — Xã Đoài, Nghệ An

Food, nappies and household supplies — $880 (15.2M VND)

Description

FoVO had been supporting the disability centre at Xã Đoài in Nghệ An Province for about five years.

The centre was run by an experienced older nun who managed a convent of younger nuns. The nuns provided rostered care for the residents.

Because Peter could not travel to Vietnam during Covid, our local contact Thủy visited the centre with a small group of university students and organised the 2021 project.

FoVO provided $880 of practical supplies for the centre.

These included 600 kg of rice, shampoo, washing liquid, cooking oil, fish sauce, milk, floor cleaner and 450 nappies.

Observation

The photographs showed children and young people living together at the centre, including a separate area for residents who were paralysed.

The project concentrated on ordinary consumable items needed for everyday care rather than a new building or piece of equipment.

Most of the cost was food and hygiene supplies that would be used continuously by residents and carers.

Reflection

This was not a new relationship or a one-off visit.

FoVO had returned to the centre over several years and had gradually learned more about the practical demands of caring for people with severe disabilities.

In 2021 the useful contribution was very simple: help meet the continuing cost of food, nappies, cleaning and personal care.

Sometimes supporting an existing service means helping pay for the ordinary things it needs every day.



A girl at the centre.



Some of the children play together.



Paralysed children's section



Children happy to see visitors



Girl with eczema sits on a bed



Supplies we bought for the centre.



Children with less severe disabilities with our visiting student group and young nuns.

REPORT TO DONORS 2021

15. Chickens and Food Assistance — Phát Diệm, Ninh Bình

Chicken raising and food parcels — $1,370 (23.6M VND)

Description

FoVO continued working alongside Sister Kính of the local Holy Cross convent in Phát Diệm.

The previous year's chicken project had worked well enough for Sister Kính to recommend repeating it. She reported that it had provided both an occupation and some additional household income.

In 2021 FoVO provided chickens for 20 disadvantaged households, most of them elderly people or single women living without regular income.

Each household received 30 two-week-old chickens and a 25 kg bag of poultry feed for the first month. This part of the project cost $1,070.

FoVO also provided 20 food parcels for elderly or disabled people whom Sister Kính regularly visited. Each parcel contained 20 kg of rice, one litre of cooking oil and one litre of fish sauce. The food assistance cost $300.

Observation

Sister Kính knew the people in these villages well and continued to visit households personally, including helping some elderly or disabled people with cleaning around their homes.

Some recipients were living alone or had disabilities that limited their ability to earn an income.

The project therefore used two different forms of assistance.

Households able to raise chickens received a small livelihood project. People whose age or disability made this less practical received food instead.

The photographs included individual recipients with their food parcels, chickens at one household and a group house owned by the local diocese where 10 women with disabilities were living.

Reflection

This project continued something that had already worked rather than constantly looking for something new. It also recognised that the same assistance was not suitable for everybody.

People who could raise chickens received an activity that might produce food and income. Elderly or disabled people who could not reasonably manage a chicken project received food assistance instead.

Fair assistance does not necessarily mean giving everybody the same thing.



10 disabled women live in a group house owned by the local church diocese.



Nguyen Thi Mo with food parcel



Disabled woman with a food parcel.



Chickens of one family



Hoang Thi Bao



Le Van Thu



Nguyen Thi Hoa



Nguyen Thi Ngai



Nguyen Thi Ru



Nguyen Thi That



Tran Thi Luy



Tran Thi Thang

REPORT TO DONORS 2021

16. Encouragement Awards for School Students — Hà Tĩnh

Bicycles, school materials and school fees — $1,440 (24.8M VND)

Description

This project was intended to encourage students from disadvantaged families who were doing well at school.

FoVO provided three forms of assistance in Hà Tĩnh.

At Thạch Sơn Primary School, teachers selected seven children from disadvantaged families who would benefit from bicycles. The bicycles cost $575.

At Đồng Chí High School, teachers selected 33 students who were both disadvantaged and doing well in their studies. FoVO provided complete sets of books, notebooks and other school materials, costing $575.

FoVO also contributed $290 towards school fees for five students from Thạch Long village. Their families provided half of the fees and FoVO paid the other half.

Observation

The teachers played an important part in selecting the students. They knew both the children's family circumstances and their performance at school.

A bicycle was more than a school item. In a village household it could also be used by parents and older brothers or sisters as everyday local transport.

The students receiving school materials were selected from different classes, with teachers choosing those who were disadvantaged but also studying well.

The school-fee assistance was deliberately shared with the families. FoVO paid half rather than the whole amount.

The individual family stories showed many different pressures behind educational disadvantage, including the death or illness of a parent, mental illness, unemployment during Covid and grandparents raising children.

Reflection

The purpose of these awards was encouragement rather than simply giving away school supplies.

FoVO relied on local teachers to identify students who were making an effort but whose family circumstances made continuing education harder.

The assistance was also practical. A bicycle helped a child get around, books removed an immediate school expense, and sharing school fees reduced pressure on a family without replacing its own contribution.

Small educational assistance can matter most when it helps somebody continue along a path they have already started.



These children have to grow into their bicycles!



Students receive their encouragement awards at high school

REPORT TO DONORS 2021

17. “Loaves and Fishes” Lockdown Project — Thạch Long, Hà Tĩnh

Food parcels for 35 households — $700 (12.1M VND)

Description

Thạch Long is a Christian fishing and farming village in Hà Tĩnh Province.

During a Covid outbreak in 2021 the village was suddenly placed in lockdown. Road barriers were erected and only authorised food deliveries were allowed into the village.

FoVO provided food parcels for 35 disadvantaged households.

Each $20 parcel contained two whole fish, five bánh mì, 10 kg of rice, 1 kg of ground pork sausage, 1 kg of sugar, one litre of cooking oil and one litre of fish sauce.

The total FoVO cost was $700.

Observation

Rather than trying to identify recipients from outside the village, FoVO relied on local knowledge.

One villager prepared a list of the 35 households considered most disadvantaged. Other people in the community then checked and confirmed the list.

Most recipients were elderly people living alone, single women, people with disabilities, carers or households without regular income.

The lockdown had an immediate effect on people whose livelihoods depended on fishing, casual work, street selling and other activities that could no longer continue.

The food parcels were prepared locally and delivered through the village roadblock.

Reflection

The project showed the value of allowing a community to help identify who was most in need.

One person's judgement was not accepted without question. The proposed household list was checked by other local people who knew the families and their circumstances.

For a small charity working at a distance during Covid, this was a simple form of local verification.

FoVO did not know the 35 households personally. The village did.

Local knowledge can make a small project both quicker and better targeted.



Our project being unloaded behind the road-block to the village.





Our delivery on wheelbarrows.





Women's group packaging the parcels.



Ba Toan



Tuyen, single mother with three children



Ba Thanh with husband



Ba Truyen



Ba Thong



Ong ba Thanh



Single woman with her food parcel



Ong Ly

REPORT TO DONORS 2021

18. Food Assistance During the Saigon Lockdown — Saigon

Food and emergency household assistance — $2,000 (34.5M VND)

Description

During the severe 2021 Covid lockdown in Saigon, FoVO assisted 70 disadvantaged households.

Most were living in rented rooms and depended on marginal or casual work such as garbage recycling, lottery-ticket selling, dishwashing, cleaning, motorbike taxi riding and labouring. Almost all had become unemployed during the lockdown.

FoVO worked alongside Sister Phương Liên of the Sisters of St Paul de Chartres community in Saigon.

The sisters provided a researched list of 140 disadvantaged households. From this list, 70 households were selected for assistance.

Each household received rice, instant noodles, cooking oil, fish sauce, fish balls, ground meat sausage and sugar, together with 200,000 VND in cash for needs such as cooking gas and medicines.

The total cost was $2,000.

Observation

The lockdown affected people very differently according to how they earned their living.

Many poorer residents of Saigon were migrants from rural villages who had come to the city looking for work. They lived in small rented rooms and depended on jobs that stopped immediately when the city closed down.

The sisters contacted the households and organised the purchase and delivery of the assistance.

The project photographs show unusually empty Saigon streets, food being unloaded and the conditions in which people were living during the lockdown.

The small cash component was important because not every household had exactly the same needs. Food could be supplied as a standard parcel, while the cash could be used for things such as cooking gas or medicines.

Reflection

Covid turned insecure employment into no employment almost overnight.

The people FoVO assisted were not necessarily households that had always depended on charity. Many had been working and supporting themselves until the lockdown removed their income.

Again, FoVO depended on a trusted local organisation. The Sisters of St Paul de Chartres knew the communities, identified possible recipients, contacted the households and organised the deliveries.

Working from Australia, FoVO could provide the money. The local network made the project possible.



Each household received 5kg rice, 1 box of noodles, 1 litre oil, 750 ml fish sauce, 1 bag of fish balls, 1 bag of ground meat sausage, 0.5 kg sugar and 200k VND ($12 AUD). The total project was $28.60 x 70 households = $2,000



Tín was a security attendant for a restaurant. He was disabled in an accident. He is still suffering from losing a leg and having to take care of a disabled son in their rental room.



Liên's daughter came out from her rental to get our supplies. Her mother passed away because of Covid-19. Her father has severe osteoarthritis so he cannot walk.



Elderly man and wife in a rental. He and his wife receive help from neighbours.



Single mother with her child in a rental room. Her sewing company employer has been closed for a long time, so she lacks income to feed her child.



Hồng has some mental illness and collects recyclables. She is living in a rental room. Other income from selling lottery tickets is not enough to pay for rent and daily needs.



Thiết's daughter gets our supplies. Since her parents' separation, her step-father has not accepted her in the house and she has moved out to live on the streets.



Dương and husband work in a factory, now unemployed. They are in a rental room. She has been working very hard, every day collecting bottles and cardboard from the street to sell to recyclers.



Tư is a single woman and cannot find regular work. She has tried to earn some income by selling lottery tickets on the street.



Hạnh's disabled nephew. He has lived with her since he was a child. He had poliomyelitis since birth. Every day, his aunt leaves him to sell the lottery tickets. However, now he has a kidney problem so her aunt has to stay at home to take care of him.



Liên is paralysed. She has tumour cerebral palsy and epilepsy. Every day her mother carries her in a wheelchair to sell lottery tickets around the city.



Our project being unloaded in a Saigon street

REPORT TO DONORS 2021

19. Lockdown Food Assistance — Hòa Quý, Đà Nẵng

Food parcels for 15 households — $300 (5.2M VND)

Description

FoVO assisted 15 disadvantaged households in Hòa Quý, Đà Nẵng, during the 2021 Covid lockdown.

Most of the households depended on factory work, construction labour or other modest local employment. Many had become unemployed when lockdown stopped normal work.

FoVO's volunteer worked with a local community leader to identify the 15 households considered most disadvantaged.

Each household received 10 kg of rice, a box of 30 instant noodle packets, 1 kg of sugar, 1 kg of chicken seasoning powder and one litre of fish sauce.

The total project cost was $300.

Observation

The local volunteer and community leader drew up the household list, bought the food and visited the families.

The project was intended not only to provide food but also to reassure people who had become frustrated and worried during the prolonged lockdown.

The households had very different circumstances. They included unemployed factory and construction workers, elderly people, carers, people with disabilities and families whose normal sources of income had stopped.

One group of seven road workers from an Indigenous mountain community was stranded in Đà Nẵng and living in a temporary shelter because they could not return home during lockdown.

A local leader used a small farm transport trailer to take food to the households.

Reflection

This was only a $300 project, but it again depended on local knowledge rather than FoVO trying to identify people from a distance.

The local people knew which households had suddenly lost income, who was caring for somebody with a disability, and who had become stranded away from home.

The visits also mattered. The project was not just a delivery of rice and noodles. It was a way of showing people that somebody knew they were there.

A small amount of assistance can still be useful when it reaches the right people at the right time.



Each household received 10kg rice ($8.6), a box of 30 instant noodle packs ($6), 1kg sugar ($1.20), 1kg chicken powder ($3), 1litre fish sauce ($1).



The “leader” taking food to each family on his farm transport trailer. He is a hard worker and very involved in the lives of people in his area.

Bà Năm



Bà Năm seems happy with our visit and our food supply.

Road workers group

The road workers were stranded in Đà Nẵng during lockdown and are not local residents. They occasionally benefit from food gifted by locals.



This temporary shelter for seven road workers is on public land.



The cook for the road worker group receives our supplies.



Road workers in a neighbour's yard having a meal with our supplied rice

Other households



Thơ worked in a sewing factory. Her husband was a construction labourer. Now both are unemployed.



Nhi has three children. Her husband has been unemployed for almost a year.



Nhiem has been sick for years and unable to work. Her husband is unemployed.



Hoang Dung's wife is getting cancer treatment. He is her full -time carer.

REPORT TO DONORS 2021

20. Winter Clothing and School Support — Con Cuông, Nghệ An

Winter jackets, shoes and school equipment — $920 (15.9M VND)

Description

FoVO provided winter clothing and school equipment for children in a remote Indigenous mountain village in Con Cuông District, Nghệ An Province.

The detailed 2021 project record identifies the community as Kho Mu, although the annual Project Summary described it as a Thai ethnic village.

FoVO worked alongside Hiệp and his friends in the Hope Connection volunteer group, with assistance from local teachers.

The project provided winter jackets and shoes for 55 children, together with equipment for the local school.

The total FoVO contribution was $920.

Observation

Hiệp's volunteer group and the local teachers planned the project together.

The children were gathered in a village meeting room, where the jackets and shoes were distributed.

The involvement of local teachers was important because they knew the children and the needs of the school.

The project combined assistance to individual children with practical support for the school they attended.

Reflection

FoVO did not know this remote community directly.

The project became possible because Hiệp's volunteer group already had local contacts and could work with teachers in the village.

Once again, FoVO's role was relatively simple: provide money for a project that local people were able to plan and carry out.

For a tiny charity, reaching a remote community often depends less on building a new organisation than on finding trustworthy people who already know the way in.



all warm jacket and school material was organize in a bag for each chilren at the school



Children and people in the village gather to receive the winter jackets and shoes.







REPORT TO DONORS 2021

21. All Souls Day Assistance — Saigon

Food, medicines and household necessities for 50 families — $2,000 (34.5M VND)

Description

For All Souls Day 2021, FoVO assisted 50 families in Saigon who had either lost a family member to Covid or included somebody with a disability.

This was FoVO's second Saigon project during the pandemic.

FoVO again worked alongside Sister Phương Liên and the Sisters of St Paul de Chartres. The sisters identified 50 families and contacted each household to find out what assistance was needed.

Rather than giving every household the same package, assistance was adjusted to individual family needs, within a budget of about $40 per household.

Items included food, noodles, milk, medicines, clothing and baby supplies.

The total project cost was $2,000.

Observation

The 50 household records showed how differently Covid affected already disadvantaged families.

Some had lost a husband, wife or other family member. Others included people with physical or intellectual disabilities, autism or serious illness. Many depended on street vending, construction work, recycling, lottery-ticket selling and other forms of insecure employment.

The project included, for example, a man whose wife had died and who later had a leg amputated. He had three children, lived in a temporary riverside hut and normally earned money selling lottery tickets.

Another young man had been paralysed in both legs from birth. His father had died, his mother supported the family by collecting recyclables, and although he had studied information technology he had not found work. He was also suffering from kidney and joint problems and could not afford treatment.

Because family circumstances differed, the sisters purchased different combinations of food, medicines, clothing and other necessities rather than distributing an identical parcel to everybody.

Reflection

This project reinforced a lesson that FoVO was beginning to see in other projects.

Fair assistance does not necessarily mean giving everybody the same thing.

The Sisters of St Paul de Chartres knew the families and could identify what each household actually needed. FoVO could provide the funding without pretending to possess that local knowledge.

The project also showed how Covid could make an existing disadvantage much worse. Disability, illness, insecure work or the death of a breadwinner could quickly leave a household with very few alternatives.

Working alongside people who already knew the families allowed a small charity to respond to individual circumstances rather than treating 50 households as if they were all the same.



A family assistance package for a baby



A family medicine package



Vong was born paralysed in both legs. His father died at a young age. His mother earns money by collecting recyclables. Vong had studied IT but has not yet found a job. Now he is suffering from joint and kidney disease but can't afford medical treatment.



After Quan's wife died he needed to have a leg amputated and earned money by selling lottery tickets on the street. Quan has three children and lives in a temporary riverside hut. He is currently unemployed.



Hung was born with cerebral palsy. His mother was his and his grandmother's carer. Hung's father worked in construction labour but is now unemployed.



Lan's child is deaf and mute. She earns money by selling lottery tickets. Lan's husband worked in construction labour but is now unemployed.



Last year after an accident, Le Van was disabled in one leg. He sold lottery tickets to support his elderly wife. He lives with his three children in a group household of 10 relatives. He is now unemployed.



Tho is a young blind man who lives by himself in a rental room. He worked as a masseur. He is now unemployed.



Trung was born with bad legs. He lives by himself in a rental room. He earned money by working in a sewing factory but is now unemployed.



Ngan's mother died of Covid. Ngan cares for her three children in a rental room. Her husband worked as a construction labourer, but is now unemployed.



Phuong worked in construction labour. His wife died of Covid. He now cares for his two small children.



Hien's husband died of Covid. She earns money by collecting recyclables and is raising a daughter.



Ngoc's husband is getting Covid treatment in hospital. She has two children and is pregnant with the third. She has no money to buy things for the baby.



Luyen has two young children. Her husband earned money transporting goods in his three-wheeler motorbike truck. But he now is sick with Covid. They live in a rental room.



Quan and her husband are street vendors, They have two children. One child is mentally retarded.



Hung was born with cerebral palsy and his mother is his fulltime carer. His father delivered goods for a company, but is now in hospital, seriously ill with Covid.



Hau's wife (pictured) got Covid while pregnant. But she survived and gave birth to a baby one month ago. The large household had seven people infected with Covid. The grandmother died and grandfather is being treated for Covid in hospital.



Lam’s husband died of Covid. She shares a rental room with her daughter and son in-law. The daughter and her husband both worked as construction labourers. Both are currently unemployed.

REPORT TO DONORS 2021

22. Chicken and Duck Raising — Hà Thành, Quảng Nam

Chicken and duck raising and food assistance — $1,200 (20.7M VND)

Description

FoVO worked with local contact Hùng in Hà Thành village, Đại Đồng, Đại Lộc District, Quảng Nam Province.

The village is near the mountains and most households depend on farming. Some families also grow cây tràm trees or collect firewood for additional income. Seasonal flooding can damage houses, livestock and crops.

Hùng selected 15 disadvantaged households that were considered able to raise poultry.

Each household received 20 three-week-old chickens, 20 one-week-old ducks and 25 kg of poultry feed.

FoVO also assisted 10 elderly people who were living alone or were unwell. They received food parcels containing rice, fish sauce, cooking oil, soy sauce, milk, sugar, seasoning and medicated oil.

The annual financial summary records FoVO expenditure on this project as $1,200. The detailed project record gives a total project cost of $1,375. The surviving records do not explain the difference.

Observation

The project deliberately provided different assistance according to people's circumstances.

Households that were physically able to raise poultry received chickens, ducks and initial feed. Elderly or sick people who were less able to undertake a livelihood project received food instead.

Chicken and duck raising were already familiar village activities. FoVO was therefore adding a modest input to something people already knew how to do rather than introducing a new livelihood.

The local contact was important because he knew which households were disadvantaged and which were still able to manage poultry.

Reflection

This project again showed that fair assistance does not necessarily mean giving everybody the same thing.

A livelihood project only makes sense if the recipient is able to do the work involved. For some households, chickens and ducks could provide food, activity and possible income. For an elderly or sick person living alone, a food parcel was more useful.

The starting point was not simply who was poor, but what each household was realistically able to do.

Small livelihood projects work best when they build on activities people already understand and can manage.

Representatives of the 15 families who received chickens and ducks to raise.



Representatives of the 15 families who received chickens and ducks to raise.



Three week old chickens



A food parcel



Our project partner Hung counts the ducks



Elderly people getting their food parcels



Women carrying their 25kg of poultry feed



Chickens and ducks separated in two houses



Bà Đức is showing her poultry house



Ánh, 32 years old, has a congenital mental disability and lives with her single mother



Sanh, 90 years old, lives alone. She is deaf. When our team arrived, they said, ''How are you?" and she replied, "I don't have money; I cannot pay for the chickens."



Xa, 96 years old, lives alone. Her daughter visits to check on her. Xa had just come back from hospital. She said to our team "At hospital, they gave me meals on time. And good food, not like at home."



Xa, 68 years old, is single woman. She is standing next to her big pile of firewood which she collected in the nearby forest to sell for living. She is a carer for her mentally ill brother, 59 years old.



Bi, 59 years old, is Xa's brother.



Năm, 55 years old, is deaf and mute. He lives alone. He is very well organized and is showing the beautiful chicken house which he made.



Tuyết, 36 years old, is a carer for her mother in-law who has been paralyzed for 5 years.





Phận is 32 years old. He was a very good student. He studied very hard and was a selected student to study at a city school in Đanang. But at 18 he developed a mental illness and was shocked when he failed the uni entrance exam. His parents have to lock him in a small room to prevent him escaping home and injuring himself.



Hương, 60 years old, is a carer for her husband who is paralised after a stroke three years ago.



Hue, 53 years old, is the breadwinner in her family. Her husband is alcoholic and her children are still small.



Hinh, 42 years old, is mentally ill. Sometimes he wanders from home and comes back days later.



Tuấn, 36 years old, is just back from drug rehab. His wife left him when he was in rehab.

REPORT TO DONORS 2021

23. Student Support in Five Villages — Hà Tĩnh

School fees, university support, clothing and study materials — $1,620 (28.0M VND)

Description

FoVO provided educational assistance to students from five villages in Hà Tĩnh: Thạch Sơn, Thạch Hạ, Hòa Bình, Đông Sơn and Quý Yên.

The project was organised with Nam, a government worker, and Xoan, a high school teacher. Their local knowledge helped identify students whose families were experiencing financial difficulty.

FoVO assisted 15 primary, secondary and high school students with half of their school fees.

Three first-year university students also received assistance towards their study costs.

The 15 school students received warm jackets or clothing together with notebooks and pens. Children with disabilities who were unable to attend school received clothing and milk instead.

The total project cost was $1,620.

Observation

Nam and his workmate visited the families to deliver the clothing and study materials.

The project did not simply give the same assistance to every student. Support depended on the student's age and circumstances.

For school students, FoVO paid only half of the school fee. Families were expected to contribute the other half.

The three university students received a larger amount because their study costs were greater.

The involvement of Xoan, as a local high school teacher, and Nam, who knew the villages and families, helped FoVO identify students who were both disadvantaged and trying to continue their education.

Reflection

This project was intended as encouragement rather than a complete scholarship.

FoVO did not try to meet every educational expense. It contributed enough to reduce a particular barrier while families continued to make their own contribution where they could.

That approach suited a small charity. A relatively modest amount could help several students at different stages of education without replacing the efforts of the students or their families.

Education does not always require a large scholarship program. Sometimes the useful intervention is simply helping somebody get past the next obstacle.



Our project partner Nam and his workmate came to each family to contribute the warm jacket and notebooks and pens for children.