

Mission in a Pandemic

The impact of the virus is opening new opportunities for the team in South East Asia to engage with their community and share Jesus' love.

Team Leader Dave shares how the team's innovative response is bearing fruit.

Like the rest of the world, the country in which we live and serve has been greatly impacted by the COVID pandemic. Official cases continue rise by around 3,000 per day but the true number is probably four to five times the official count because of the lack of testing. **There is no JobKeeper program here and though there is some minimal government assistance, tens of millions of people are being impacted economically as jobs have disappeared.**

The various platforms in which the team serves have had to adjust and be creative as we have faced the new challenges. The Education Foundation which employs over 40 local staff had to go online in the middle of March. The Creation Care initiative, in which the team serves with six local staff,

has continued to be engaged in various community development activities, including assisting disadvantaged scavenger communities. The café which the team runs with around 15 local staff had to close for a few weeks due to government regulations related to lockdown restrictions but is now operating again with extra precautions. We are grateful that we have been able to keep all the local staff working in these platforms employed during this challenging time.

These three platforms have also partnered to engage in various humanitarian initiatives. Local staff and Global Interaction team members set up a special working group to assist people in need. Funds have been donated by local staff, Global Interaction team members and supporters. Along with partners we have supplied several thousand PPE suits to

medical workers in remote locations who would otherwise have gone without. We have included notes of hope and prayer with these suits.

Packages of food staples have been supplied to people affected by the economic downturn. Help has been provided to scavenger communities, aged care and orphanage facilities, impoverished rural communities and to day labourer communities. We have carried out 24 different projects in 13 provinces, assisting around 5,000 people.

Photo taken of a family in South East Asia by Hayley-Jayne Bernhardt.



Stories of Hope

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. (2 Timothy 2:2)

Through all this work, our team seeks to build authentic relationships and share the Good News in culturally understandable ways. People's lives are being transformed through meeting Jesus. And they can't keep it to themselves! Here are three stories of many.

ALICE'S STORY

Alice came to faith and was the first employee of the Education Foundation. She later brought two of her friends from university to interview and subsequently work there too. Over time, both of those women came to know Jesus, were baptised and are influencing others to come to faith. They both now hold leadership roles in the Education Foundation.

All three of these women grew up in Muslim families and all three were the first believers in their extended families and villages. They are now passing on the Good News to others in their communities.

BERNIE'S STORY

Bernie is the head of our Creation Care work. He is meeting weekly with six men from Muslim backgrounds who are now followers of Jesus. These men are from different parts of the city here and Bernie is training them in outreach and establishing new home groups.

There have been ten people who have come to faith over the past few months through this ministry and there are several more families eager to hear the Good News.

SEEANA'S STORY

Team member Caz has been discipling Widya, a local staff member and now a Global Interaction candidate. Widya led Nur to faith and is discipling her. Nur has been sharing with Seeana, who is a young lady from the majority faith background who works as a teacher at the Education Foundation.

A western family she teaches recently sent a food package to her house using a motorbike taxi. The delivery man couldn't find Seeana's home despite getting directions from her via her phone. Seeana called her supervisor, Nur, who is a new believer to ask her advice. Nur suggested they pray together in the name of Jesus. After praying they both felt Seeana should just offer the food to the delivery man. When Seeana called the man to tell him this he broke down crying. He explained that he has a wife and three small children and no food in the house. Seeana subsequently sent them money to buy more food. And the family sent another food package to Seeana... that arrived with no trouble.

Seanna comes from an extremely orthodox Muslim family with no known believers. She continues to learn more about Jesus from Nur and is now praying in His name. Pray she would trust Him fully.

These kinds of stories have been repeated over and over here among the local staff in the past few months. Praise God for the movement of His Spirit and pray for more people here to find freedom in Jesus.

