



AS IT IS

Indonesians Collect Old Phones to Help Students Get Online

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Ghina Ghaliya of Indonesia says a stranger's visit to her house led to a campaign to help students affected by the coronavirus **pandemic**.

Ghaliya remembers when a **garbage** collector came to her house in Jakarta, the Indonesian capital. The man asked if she had an old **mobile** phone his children could use to get on the internet.

Even ugly phones are okay

"He said it does not matter if it is the **ugly** one, as long as his children can use it for learning from home," she said. "I thought there must be many people who need **second-hand** mobile phones out there."

Ghaliya works for a national newspaper. Shortly after the pandemic hit Jakarta, she and 11 other journalists organized a group to provide food and money to needy people.

They started hearing from parents who wanted their children to study online but lacked a way to use the internet. Ghaliya thought of her meeting with the garbage collector when she and her group decided to provide mobile phones to poor students.

Many of these children were not able to do face-to-face learning when the new school year started in July. When the journalists announced their campaign through social media, the reaction was **overwhelming**. Many people donated second-hand phones, while others gave **cash** donations.

As of November, the journalists had collected more than 200 mobile phones and donations of more than \$35,000. They used the money to buy more phones. They also paid for internet use for those needing it.

Currently, nearly 300 phones have been given to students in and around Jakarta as well as to distant areas like Papua, the country's most eastern province.

Happiness in a pandemic

Helping students take part in online schooling brings happiness to Ghaliya and her friends. "We really hope the mobile phones can be used as much as they can during the pandemic," she said.

Khaissyah Levi is a 16-year-old high school student in Depok, West Java. He now attends online classes in the morning. His father Deny Sayuti had been loaning his mobile phone to his son for his studies. But that meant Sayuti could only do his work as a motorcycle taxi driver for part of the day.

Sayuti wrote to Ghaliya's group in August. His family received a mobile phone a month later. Sayuti believes that his son can now do better with his online studies.

"Now I see him more **comfortable**, and he can directly reach out to his friends and teacher," Sayuti said.

Sharing a phone is not as good

Qayran Ruby Al Maghribi had also been using his father's mobile phone to attend three video calls a week with his teachers and get homework.

But the 11-year-old boy sometimes sent his homework late because he had to wait for his father to return from work in order to get back online. For the first time in his life, Maghribi was falling behind in his studies. He also had to take care of his sick mother. This was making him feel pressured.

But a big smile appeared on his face when he received the mobile phone sent by Ghaliya's group.

“I will use the phone to do online school every day,” Maghribi said.

I’m Jill Robbins.

The Associated Press reported this story. George Grow adapted the report for VOA Learning English. Mario Ritter, Jr. was the editor.

Words in This Story

garbage – *n.* wasted food and other old or unwanted material

mobile – *adj.* able to be moved or to be moved easily

ugly – *adj.* unpleasant in appearance; disagreeable

second-hand – *adj.* involving things that have already been used or owned

overwhelming – *adj.* very great in amount; huge

cash – *n.* money in banknotes; ready money

pandemic – *n.* the fast spread of an infectious disease over a very large geographical area

comfortable – *adj.* providing physical ease; warm or enjoyable
