Vietnam

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Vietnam is a country used to facing considerable challenges and 2020 was another turbulent year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In Vietnam, the wealth distribution is skewed and ethnic minorities continue to need increasing social assistance every year. People with disabilities, children in especially difficult circumstances or diagnosed with HIV suffer from being abandoned, homeless, trafficked, and neglected. Many families cannot afford to raise their children and send them to live in orphanages.

In 2020, PSBIV continued its outreach to disadvantaged children, improving the living conditions and physical and mental health of children through the Child Sponsorship Program. The support they receive through the child sponsorship is not only valuable to their current lives but also opens new doors for hope and possibility. It gives them the motivation, self-confidence, and determination to overcome obstacles in life.

This past year, PSBIV implemented many meaningful and successful projects. In the Health sector, PSBIV provided monthly nutrition support for children in the program (including sponsored children and non-sponsored children in the orphanages), to supply them nutritious daily meals. In addition, PSBIV provided dental checkups for 448 children living in the orphanages. When the pandemic first broke out in Vietnam, it led to food scarcity, shortage of supplies and disinfectants, and rising prices. Therefore, providing Covid-19 support for the children became a top priority for PSBIV. 520 children in the orphanages were provided yogurt and milk. 278 children received school supplies to help with their education and disinfectant supplies to protect them against not only COVID-19 but other diseases and illnesses. These programs were funded thanks to generous child sponsors and donors.

In education, PSBIV offered the Scholarship Aid: Teacher for Tomorrow Project for two children in the orphanages. PSBIV assisted with their school and living expenses. This project is an important support to help them overcome the burdens of life, be more confident and focus more on their education.

PSBIV also provided a life skills training course for 276 children. Teaching life skills is necessary, especially for children with special needs, to having a well-rounded and comprehensive education and improving a child’s self-esteem, confidence, and social competence. In addition, PSBIV established reading rooms for children in 6 orphanages. In these rooms the children can use the Internet for learning and relax after school with books and games. Books and learning supplies were provided during the pandemic to ensure all children have enough supplies and could focus on their studies for the new school year. This motivational gift from PSBIV and sponsors will create opportunities for children to go to school and enhance their educations.

The psychological development of children is always one of the biggest concerns of PSBIV. PSBIV helps the children celebrate Lunar New Year, International Children’s Day on June 1, summer vacation, and Mid-Autumn Festival. This year PSBIV also implemented a project on child sexual abuse prevention for more than 300 children ages 8 to 18 who are living in the orphanage.

Letters and cash gifts from sponsors still play an important role in making differences in the lives of the children served by PSBIV. Children can use this gift while they are still living in the orphanage but are encouraged to build savings for when they leave the orphanage. Thanks to this support, many children have a chance to go to colleges or universities, which enhances their opportunities to find a stable job after graduation.

2020 has been one of the most challenging years for Vietnam in particular and the whole world in general. However, PSBIV has implemented many successful projects thanks to support from sponsors, donors and the great efforts of staff. We would like to thank you for all the wonderful things that you have brought to our disadvantaged children living in the orphanages in Vietnam. We hope the lives of these children will be much better thanks to your great contribution. As the New Year dawns, I hope it is filled with the promises of a brighter tomorrow. Happy New Year! ☺
Greetings from Bangkok and Happy New Year 2021—hoping this New Year brings happiness, peace and health to you and your loved ones.

During the past several years many advancements and changes have taken place at PSBFT, especially in our ability to fundraise amid a global economic regression. What hasn’t changed is our commitment to support marginalized children and to implement cost-effective strategies and programs that maximize our ability to help and accomplish our mission.

We appreciated all the support from child sponsors and donors this last year, which enabled us to work hard to better the quality of life of our target children and families. Sponsors’ contributions helped us to provide educational assistance in the form of school and lunch fees, transportation fares, uniforms, bags, shoes, and notebooks to 323 sponsored children. 106 pre-kindergarten aged children benefited from dolls and educational toys provided to Child Development Centers. Home visits, educational consultation, family counseling, and healthcare advice helped sponsored children and families. In total, 429 children benefited from our program.

In addition, the kind support of sponsors allowed PSBFT to implement a lice prevention and treatment project for 1,020 children in Mae Ramard, Tak province and Nakhon Thai, Phitsanulok. This project included sharing local knowledge on how to treat lice, advice on how to keep bodies, homes, and bedding clean, and home visits to provide treatment and follow-up care.

Another project provided assistance to children and families enduring the COVID-19 pandemic. 206 families were provided hygienic masks for a total of 3,958 masks, families were taught what COVID-19 symptoms to look for, and how to stay healthy and strong by wearing masks in public places and social distancing. In addition, 140 families were provided bags containing rice, dried and canned fish, eggs, sauce, vegetable oil, milk boxes, fruits, and chicken. The children were very happy to learn how to cook nutritious and quality foods and enjoyed time spent eating together with their families.

PSBFT organized home visits to advise families on continuing education, physical development growth and child development, and mental and emotional care, including effective ways for children and parents to communicate with each other. The results of home visits are children and families receive knowledge and understanding on health care, nutrition, oral and dental health care. Learning about physical, mental and emotional development, and family life in schools and their communities helps them, especially teenagers affected by HIV/AIDS, live a happy life, see the value in themselves and others, and grow up to be quality adults.

Special cash gifts from child sponsors are so meaningful to the children and families. These generous gifts allow families to organize birthday parties, start small family businesses, and purchase special things outside of necessities. Many families put these cash gifts into their children’s bank accounts to help with future educational needs—it allows them to stay in school and alleviate the burden of school expenses on their families.

PSBFT and the families served are so thankful for the generosity and warm support of sponsors and donors that help fulfill hopes and wider opportunity for the children. May the coming year be full of great days that create many great memories that you will cherish. Be safe and stay healthy! 🌱
Greetings for a Healthy and Hope-Filled New Year from all of us here at Pearl S. Buck Foundation Philippines!

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 was a year of change and challenges for Pearl S. Buck Foundation Philippines (PSBP) as well as the whole world. Due to the pandemic, in the first quarter of 2020, the Philippines government issued an Enhanced Community Quarantine proclamation, which shut down businesses and led to mass unemployment. Government assistance was minimal, and the food and supplies needed by most Filipinos were not fairly distributed, disproportionately affecting those most in need.

Under these circumstances, PSBP continued to respond to the needs of sponsored children in its four provinces. Prior to the lockdown, PSBP’s national office met to finalize the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan. One of its main goals is the continuation and enhancement of resource mobilization for the growing number of sponsored children attending college. Shortly after, the pandemic hit and PSBP had to seek immediate and urgent support for the sponsored children who could no longer attend school and whose parents were suddenly out of work and without income. Generous child sponsors heeded that call for help—funds from the COVID-19 appeal were significant and allowed PSBP to provide sponsored children with basic food and essentials as well as health and cleaning products such as alcohol, vitamins, and face masks.

The second quarter continued to be challenging; however, PSBP continued to fulfill its mission in many ways. Health and education programs were still implemented, although with a different look due to health and safety guidelines and protocols. Nutrition Month was celebrated through the socially-distanced distribution of Vitamin C to all sponsored children and the provision of basic essentials like alcohol and face masks.

During the second quarter, despite COVID-19, PSBP’s Education Program was able to distribute educational materials to sponsored children as well as continue the tradition of the rewarding of a new pair of shoes to outstanding students.

The opening of schools was delayed and uncertain in the third quarter, though public schools finally opened in October. For PSBP college scholars, the usual orientation and MOA (Memorandum of Agreement) signing were conducted via Zoom except for in Ormoc City, which allowed face-to-face meetings with the observance of precautions and protocols. PSBP also implemented the Tutorial Program for sponsored children in need of academic intervention. Since the learning platform has been different due to the pandemic, PSBP has had to follow and adjust to two learning platforms—online and home-based tutorial sessions.

The last quarter saw another distribution of Vitamin C in celebration of Children’s Month in November. PSBP believes that prevention of not only COVID-19 but all disease and illness is just as important as a cure. Boosting the immune system with Vitamin C has proven to be effective in fighting the COVID-19 virus and other viruses. Generous donations to the COVID-19 appeal not only went toward boosting the immune systems of the children but also toward the provision of food for families’ Christmas gatherings. Large gatherings are still prohibited at this time, but PSBP was able to use its Christmas budget to provide the basic foods for each sponsored family to share together during the holidays. 🎄
Multicultural families formed by marriages between Koreans and immigrants are becoming increasingly common in South Korea and experience numerous difficulties caused by economic responsibilities, roles for child rearing, and blending of diverse cultures. This is the population served by PSBFK.

The spread of COVID-19 in 2020 added to these difficulties, reducing the potential for families to experience everyday joys. COVID-19 shrank economic activities in most sectors and low-income families among the multicultural community experienced difficulties in maintaining their immediate livelihood. Foreigners in multicultural families are the first targets of exclusion from employers. In rural and fishing areas, multicultural Family Support Centers were closed, leaving low-income families vulnerable to isolation and lack of COVID-19 safety measures.

In the face of these challenges, PSBFK’s main projects in 2020 were focused on measures to prevent at-risk multicultural families, excluded from equal opportunities and minimum livelihood, from being isolated in society.

- PSBFK conducted seven projects supporting about 770 households (2,300 people), contributing to emergency livelihood support for COVID-19, providing daily necessities and groceries for national feasts such as the Lunar New Year and Chuseok (Korean Thanksgiving Day), and distributing winter clothes and second-hand products for the Christmas season.
- As the transition to online classes for students and the reduction of educational support for children in vulnerable communities persisted, PSBFK implemented scholarship support, literature and Korean traditional music classes through Pearl S. Buck After-school Academy as well as online and offline multicultural understanding education for students.
- In particular, annual scholarships were offered to more than 900 children from multicultural families. More than 3,000 people participated in multicultural understanding education led by married immigrant women. Through this program, we confirmed the urgent desire for educational support in our society for multicultural families.
- PSBFK signed a project cooperation agreement with governmental institutions such as Korea Social Security Information Service and Sosa Police Station in Bucheon City to establish close networks to support multicultural families. In addition, an active effort was made to promote Pearl Buck’s spirit and legacy in the community, by playing a key role as an adviser for diverse projects organized by Bucheon City, where the Foundation is located.
- PSBFK took part in support projects for Amerasian youth and helped to prepare a translation of the autobiography of Julie Henning, an Amerasian who was raised as Pearl S. Buck’s daughter. PSBFK also assisted with the operation of the Korea Pearl S. Buck Research Association and activities of the steering committee of Pearl S. Buck Memorial Hall.

As Pearl S. Buck Foundation Korea celebrated its 55th anniversary, the staff of PSBFK is aware that they are able to dynamically carry out a variety of activities even in the middle of an unprecedented and unpredictable global health crisis thanks to loyal sponsors, sponsoring companies and devoted staff members. In 2021, the 90th anniversary of the publication of Pearl S. Buck’s famous novel, “The Good Earth”, PSBFK plans to commit to the continued development of the Foundation to fulfill and promote the legacy of Pearl Buck’s philanthropic spirit. We would like to extend our deepest gratitude and blessing to all those accompanying us in this important mission.
Despite the COVID-19 global pandemic, the Pearl S. Buck Research Association in Zhenjiang continued its work to promote Pearl Buck’s legacy. In 2020, they actively participated in the city’s external publicity to promote the Pearl Buck brand. The “Pearl S. Buck cultural characteristic brand” has been listed as one of the five major cultural brands publicized by the Zhenjiang municipal government. In the interest of promoting that brand, Lu Zhangping, President of the Research Association, attended the 2020 Zhenjiang Foreign Publicity Work Conference and participated in a forum organized by Zhenjiang Social Science Association, focusing on building Pearl S. Buck Cultural Street, and developing Pearl S. Buck cultural tourism. The Pearl S. Buck Culture Street will help better tell the story of Pearl S. Buck in Zhenjiang by integrating cultural and tourism elements such as relics and scenic spots related to Pearl Buck’s life there. The Pearl S. Buck Culture and Art School and the Pearl S. Buck Art Troupe were also established. On June 26, a cultural event was held in Pearl S. Buck Cultural Park to commemorate the 128th anniversary of Buck’s birth.

The Pearl S. Buck Research Association also continued its key mission of promoting Pearl Buck research. It successfully held its annual conference and academic seminar in January 2020. The prize-winning topics of the 2019 “Pearl Buck Research Project” were presented, and the project leaders from Jiangsu University, Jiangsu University of Science and Technology, Zhenjiang College and other institutions exchanged research results. Awards were given to 11 Pearl Buck research projects. Also, the first summer study camp for young scholars of Pearl S. Buck was held featuring an editorial exchange and online activities with famous Chinese researchers. The camp attracted 80 teachers and graduate campers from 13 universities including capital Normal University in Beijing and the University of East Anglia in the UK. More than 150 people at home and abroad studied and interacted online every day.

In addition, the Research Association continues to expand Zhenjiang’s influence in the field of Pearl Buck research. A Pearl Buck Research City Alliance was established with Suzhou, Anhui Province. The Pearl S. Buck Research Association will also continue to remain in touch with its counterparts in the United States with Pearl S. Buck International and West Virginia University.

The Pearl S. Buck Research Association has also been devoted to providing charity assistance. Some members and volunteers of the Association regularly go to nursing homes and centers for the disabled to provide companionship, psychological comfort and material help to vulnerable groups. They provide disabled students with tea art and Camellia training and help them learn life skills. They organize experts to go to communities, schools, & military camps to preach the stories of Pearl S. Buck and Zhenjiang, Pearl S. Buck and China, and her charity and fraternity.

At the Chongshi Girls School, even though the COVID-19 pandemic forced the school to teach classes remotely, the students still had a good year. The girls studied hard & adapted well to the online classroom. To help alleviate some stress the school encouraged the girls to read more books, especially books by Pearl S. Buck and books about strong women in history. A Read and Share book club was started, and the girls are encouraged to share their thoughts about books they have read.

The school focused on the physical health of the students by encouraging each girl to participate in sports activities such as yoga, floor hockey, and kick boxing. Emotional health was also a priority for the students, especially during these trying times of living through a global pandemic virus. Chongshi Girls’ School participates in an exchange program that enriches the student’s lives by broadening their minds and helping them develop better communication and language skills. The girls have visited the United States, Spain, South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.
2006, we’ve raised funds to organize a Lunar New Year gathering for around 700 people we work with, including nearly 400 kids. Everyone looks forward to this annual event where they enjoy a variety of hot dishes and take home red envelopes (monetary gifts in Chinese culture), New Year presents, and scholarships and grants for the children. As the pandemic worsened, we decided to work with a chain restaurant and give out meal vouchers to the families instead of hosting the celebration. At any time of the year, they could choose either to take the whole family to the restaurant to enjoy a hot pot or other nice dishes or to take their favorite food home. Even though we couldn’t gather together as we always had, we could still share the warmth.

Due to the pandemic, some parents were forced to work fewer hours or become unemployed, making it even more financially challenging for these families who already struggle with economic hardship. Some of our sponsors discontinued their sponsorship as they, too, were financially impacted by COVID-19. At PSBF TT, we strongly believe that even with greater challenges, our care for the children should remain unaffected. We’ve worked even harder to promote what we do and look for resources to give the general public a better understanding of the difficulties and urgent needs faced by our children. We were delighted to find there was still a lot of love in society. Many of our small donors have chosen to join our sponsorship program to support the kids’ future.

We are privileged in Taiwan, which is internationally renowned for its work and achievement in pandemic control. When it comes to disease prevention, our people have exercised great self-control, have been cooperative and well-prepared since the early days, and have not let down our guard. Immigrants need even more social support during the pandemic because they are forced to be separated from their loved ones in their home country. It is important, therefore, to work with our colleagues at PSBI and the branches in Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, and South Korea to create a synergy of engagement and support. We also hope to work together with all of those who care, fighting the pandemic with the greatest power—love.