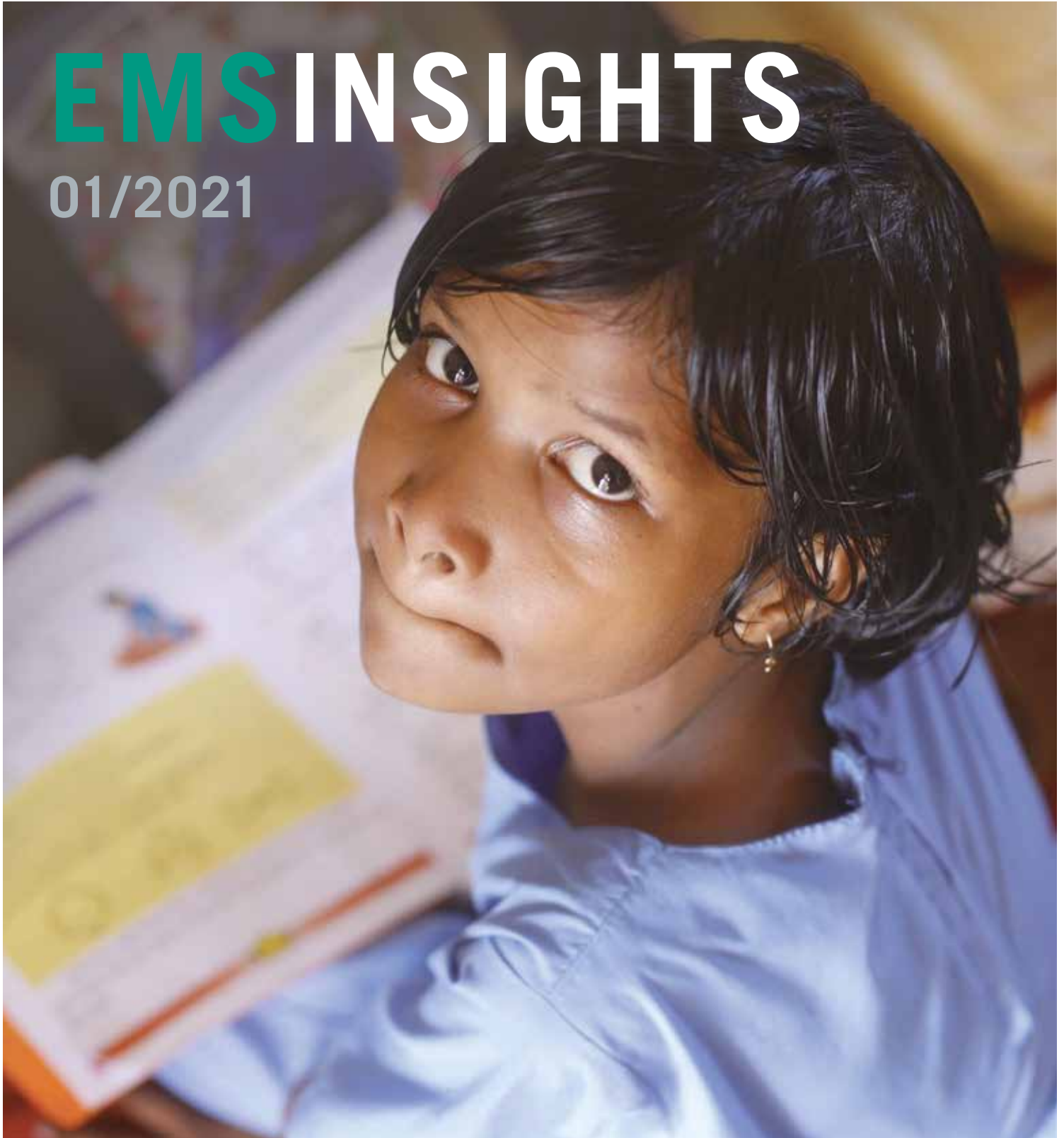


EMSINSIGHTS

01/2021



FEATURE: WHEN LEARNING BECOMES SOMETHING SPECIAL

Education in difficult times *Page 4*

FOR WHAT AND WHOM ARE WE SET FREE?

Theological reflection by Sathianathan Clarke *Page 9*

A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

Aid under difficult conditions *Page 12*



**Evangelical Mission
in Solidarity**



INSIGHTS WITH FORESIGHT

The new magazine has finally been baptised: EMS Insights. The name says it all. The aim of the new magazine is to provide insights in the work of the EMS, its member churches and its mission societies. We will report on key topics from the very varied work of the EMS Fellowship together with examples taken from EMS projects.

The new magazine is produced from totally different perspectives as it is compiled by an international editorial team located on three continents. For example, the report on page 4-8 comes from Indonesia. This international editorial work is quite unusual and we are very excited where it will take us in future issues – insights with foresight, so to speak.

But it is not just about reporting. It always depends on how people look at things: “People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart,” the bible says about God’s special perspective (1 Samuel 16:7, NIV). God looks past a person’s outward appearance, by which people usually judge others, and focuses on a person’s interior. This is certainly true for the EMS Fellowship. Over and beyond our outward differences, what connects us is an inner communion in faith. This is exactly what we experienced with the challenges we have faced over the past few months. We would really love to introduce you to our community through EMS Insights. We are looking forward with eager anticipation to your response to the articles in the first issue.

Each issue ends with an “outlook”, which is very important for us because in EMS Insights we would like to write about insights beyond our own horizon. Exactly what it says – insights with foresight!

Reverend Dr Dieter Heidtmann
General Secretary of the EMS

The Evangelical Mission in Solidarity (EMS)

23 churches and 5 mission societies in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Middle East form a network of well-established long-term partnerships – as a Christian fellowship they share resources, learning from and with one another and make decisions.

Donation account: Evangelical Mission in Solidarity (EMS) Evangelische Bank eG
IBAN DE85 5206 0410 0000 0001 24 BIC GENODEF1EK1

www.ems-online.org



FEATURE

WHEN LEARNING BECOMES SOMETHING SPECIAL

For over one year, the Covid-19 pandemic has put a brake on schooling, vocational training and university studies for children and young people. Learning now no longer automatically means sitting with friends in classrooms and listening to teachers – the picture is similar all over the world. But in the EMS Fellowship, there are several ways to meet new challenges. We include reports from Indonesia, South Korea, Lebanon and Jordan.

EDITORIAL

Insights with foresight.
Page 2

COVID-19 MAKES LEARNING INTO A CHALLENGE

Report from the Titipan Kasih orphanage in Makassar (Indonesia) and a portrait of the Christian Church of South Sulawesi (GKSS).
Page 4

THE GOSPEL OF FREEDOM

For what and whom are we set free?
 Theological reflection by Sathianathan Clarke.
Page 9

PROGRAMMES AND NETWORKS

Page 10/11

AID UNDER DIFFICULT CONDITIONS

2020 was a year like no other. Long-term plans were turned upside down. Read what we still achieved thanks to your help.
Page 12

NEWS ABOUT THE EMS

Page 14/15

OUTLOOK

Where there is shadow, there is also light.
Page 16



COVID-19 MAKES LEARNING INTO A CHALLENGE

TITIPAN KASIH ORPHANAGE (INDONESIA)

Ruth, a 16-year-old girl, looks at the display of her cellphone as if she is thinking hard to understand the material sent by her teacher during the online lesson. Once or twice she turns her gaze to the notebook in front of her to write down the answers to the questions that are part of her independent assignment.

Over the past few months, Ruth and her friends at the Titipan Kasih orphanage (Indonesian for “entrusted with affection”) in Makassar on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi have had to learn with home schooling due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Christian Church in South Sulawesi (GKSS) is the body responsible for the orphanage which accommodates about 70 children and young people between 2 and 20 years old who mainly come from a broken or traumatic family background. The youngest of them, little “Rain”, got her name when she was left as a new-born baby on the doorstep of the orphanage on a rainy day. The children and young people either attend school or are doing their vocational training.

CHALLENGE TO CREATIVITY

Ruth is an example of the current situation in the Indonesian education system since the outbreak of the pandemic last year. The first case of Covid-19 was detected in Indonesia at the beginning of March 2020. Since then, the number of positive cases has continued to rise. This not only causes problems for the healthcare system but also affects other walks of life, including education. To prevent the virus from spreading, the government of Indonesia implemented social and physical distancing and implemented stringent health measures from the very beginning.

“The rules at the orphanage now during the pandemic are the same as the rules issued by the government,” says Frederika Nela, Directress of the Titipan Kasih orphanage. In Indonesia it goes by the mnemonic “3M”: keep your distance, pay attention to hygiene and wear an “everyday” mask. But there are also additional rules for children who leave the orphanage, explains Frederika, who is called “Rika” by the girls and boys. For instance, when children

go to the market or to school to fetch or give in their home assignments, they have to take a shower and change their clothes when they return to the orphanage.

As part of government restrictions, schools were also closed and schooling is online. During the International Conference on Energy and Sustainability that took place in Medan in October 2020, the General Director for Higher Education at the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, Prof. Ir. Nizam, stated that the pandemic was a challenge to the creativity of each individual, whether it is the teaching staff or the students. The education system could be developed by the use of modern technology.

Corona not only causes problems for the healthcare system but also affects other walks of life, including education.

Junita Pulfia, a mentor at the Titipan Kasih orphanage, talks about daily life under the new rules: “The pandemic poses many challenges for us and forces the children to learn at home. The children must be supervised and accompanied while studying because not all of them understand the lessons given by the teacher. Most of the school subject materials and lessons sent by their teacher need explanation, so it is up to the parents to take on a bigger role to provide explanations.” Frederika Nela adds that many children have difficulty following the lessons online as there is no interaction between teacher and student compared to lessons in the classroom.

CULTURE SHOCK FOR TEACHING STAFF AND CHILDREN

Beti, a 10-year-old girl from Papua, also has difficulties with online lessons. She can download all school materials on her cellphone but she has difficulty doing the assignments as she misses the explanations that she would otherwise receive in the classroom.

The Covid-19 pandemic has radically changed our education model – personal direct interaction in the classroom has been replaced by a homeschooling model with online classes which require the use of various apps depending on availability. This sudden change has caused a culture shock, both among teachers and especially among students. They are forced to adapt to the situation and are encouraged to use existing technology creatively.

For example, Hilda and Yohanes who currently attend the 10th grade at a vocational school. In the meantime, they have gained experience with platforms such as Google Meet, Zoom and Classroom but all this is not as easy as it seems. It takes time to master how any one application works. Therefore, Hilda hopes that the pandemic will end soon so that she can return to school to meet her teachers and friends face to face.

LACK OF TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT

In addition to the learning process and the use of online apps, there are other enormous challenges which require equipment such as cellphones and laptops as well as an internet access and the necessary data transfer volumes. The children living at the Titipan Kasih orphanage generally come from low-income families. Few of them have cellphones or laptops to take part in online lessons. Frederika “Rika” Nela explains that this posed an enormous headache to the orphanage’s management at first.

The few devices that were available had to be shared by about 50 children in different grades. Rika is grateful that the orphanage has meanwhile received donations of used cellphones which can be used by the neediest children. The government also provides free internet data volumes for some students, which may be very helpful but not all children can receive this assistance.



Children and young adults live together at Titipan Kasih. The close togetherness of children of kindergarten age through to young adults studying for their school-leaving certificates is often difficult in online teaching.

The children in some of these photos are not wearing masks as the photos were taken before the Covid pandemic.



LEARNING ON TREES AND MINARETS

The problem is that internet access is not yet available in many regions of Indonesia. The geography of Indonesia with its thousands of islands and mountainous regions makes it difficult to install the internet network. Children in many places must search for hotspots where they can access the internet. This may be several hundred meters from their house or at an elevated point. Sometimes, it means they have to climb trees, a nearby hill or mountain or even a minaret.

The girls and boys at the Titipan Kasih orphanage have no significant difficulties with internet access as the orphanage is situated in the middle of the city of Makassar. The only thing is that access is often unstable and this disrupts online

lessons, especially when it happens during a lesson taking place on Zoom or Google Meet. So, as Junita says, the pandemic makes great demands on everybody's patience.

Patience and inventiveness are what Rika Nela and Junita Pulfia also need to adapt daily orphanage life to the new coronavirus rules. If a child falls ill, he or she immediately receives medicine, sleeps in a separate room from the others, wears a mask and is not allowed to mingle with the healthy children for a while. "So far, our children are sick for three to five days at the most, never any longer," says Directress Rika. This happens especially when it rains for days, so they may catch a cold or have flu-like symptoms such as headaches and a higher temperature. But normally, we get off very lightly. The younger ones sometimes have a tummy upset but usually it goes away fairly fast.

FOCUS ON NUTRITION AND HEALTH

The management places great importance on a healthy nutrition for the children, especially during the pandemic. “We make sure the children receive healthy food. They start off the day with a good protein-rich breakfast of tofu, eggs, milk and green beans. For lunch and evening meals there is also noodles or fried rice. In between meals we also give them biscuits of course.” The children help in cooking the food and also keeping the orphanage clean. There are special rules when guests or other people visit the orphanage. The children and guests must wear masks and maintain the right distance. Visitors are allowed to stay for a maximum of one hour at the orphanage. Groups of visitors may not be larger than 10 to 15 people and must keep to the 3M rules. The rooms are cleaned after every visit.

In addition to the daily schooling times, the children at Titipan Kasih receive English lessons three times a week and they learn to make greeting cards with embroidered patterns. Not only Hilda, Beti and Yohanes say that they miss school. They are all longing for personal contact with their classmates and teachers. “Thank God!” says Directress Rika “So far, none of us has tested positive for Covid-19!”

Dr Armin Sukri Kanna



Dr Armin Sukri Kanna lectures in theology, research methodology and the history of Christianity at the Theological College of East Indonesia (STT INTIM) in Makassar and works for the Middle East Reformed Fellowship (MERF) in the fields of media and education.

CHURCH IN THE COUNTRYSIDE THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN SOUTH SULAWESI (GKSS)

For many centuries, the history of the Christian Church in South Sulawesi has been shaped by coexistence with Muslims, but also conflicts.

The first Catholic missionaries came from Portugal in the 16th century. Later, individual Dutch missionaries worked in the region. Since 1667, there has been a ban on missionizing. This was negotiated between the small Islamic kingdoms in the region and the United East Indian Commercial Company. The ban was confirmed by the later colonial government. The GKSS started in the 19th century and only gained its independence in 1949. After World War II, its members faced persecution and their numbers dwindled from 10,000 at the outbreak of war to 600 in 1952.

Today, the GKSS has a good 6,000 members – mostly farming families in the rural regions of South Sulawesi. The church works intensively at improving the lives of its members and offers self-help and ministry work in poor rural communities. Among other activities, it maintains two boarding homes for students and a training centre for village development work.

The church management has its seat in the provincial capital of Makassar with its roughly 1.6 million inhabitants, making it the fifth largest city in Indonesia, commercial centre and congress city with about 20 universities and colleges. Some of the GKSS theologians also lecture at the Theological Seminary of Eastern Indonesia (STT INTIM) in Makassar – as do two authors of this issue: Dr Lidya K. Tandirerung (Directress) and Dr Armin Sukri Kanna. Reverend Atok Saramang is President of the Christian Church in South Sulawesi.

THE GOSPEL OF FREEDOM

Our image of Christ determines our understanding of mission. This is the basic thesis which Indian theologian Sathianathan Clarke stated in his keynote address at the EMS General Meeting in November 2020.

“For Freedom Christ has set us free”. This verse from the letter to the Galatians (Gal 5:1) is the point of departure for the strategy which the Evangelical Mission in Solidarity (EMS) has plotted for itself over the coming six years. We asked Prof Dr Sathianathan Clarke to interpret what this means for our present-day understanding as a mission society. At the start of his address, Professor Clarke asks two questions: “Who is the Christ that sets us free?” and “For what and whom are we set free?”

He then compares two alternative images of Christ. One is the world conquering power broker who rules from the high heavens. The other is the community embedded power breaker who disrupts the rules of vested systems. “Whom do we follow on our mission?” asks Clarke. “Jesus Christ as powerful Emperor or Jesus Christ the empowering Liberator?” At the same time, he warns: The pathways of freedom are “dusty” and there are no “impressive highways”. If the church wants to “follow the Jesus Way”, it “involves relocating with Jesus to where we can see, hear and touch those who are outsiders, the poor, and the deplorable”. We must relocate to the places where there is no freedom if we want to proclaim the gospel of freedom!

The pathways of freedom are “dusty” and there are no “impressive highways”.

Clarke illustrates this understanding of mission with Jesus’ encounter with the Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:21-28). To heal this woman’s daughter from demons, Jesus first has to break down the boundaries set by his own community. “Jesus is then freed to redefine the boundaries of God’s grace and mercy. The tight walls protecting community privileges are torn down to make God’s abundance available to all people, especially those who previously stood in front of closed doors.”

For Clarke, this is the gospel of freedom: “Mission entails liberation of the body and mind into reconciled life rather than assurance of safety for self into eternal life.” Mission is only possible if one is alongside the people, not by doing things for them remotely. Christian witness must always be a “witness”. Clarke refers here to the example of the former South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu who always emphasised: “To claim God exclusively for Christians is to make God too small and in a real sense is blasphemous. God is bigger than Christians and cares for more than Christians only.”

Christian witness must always be a “witness”.

According to Clarke, Christ’s apostles who set off on the dusty pathways to freedom must therefore teach others about interreligious “witness” alongside all God’s children. Without this “witness” there can be no gospel of freedom. Clarke warns about Christian arrogance: “We cannot create freedom on our own.” Only witness alongside the people can expand life into the abundance of freedom so that it becomes accessible to all God’s children. Christ has freed us to free the whole world that God loves so much!”

Dr Dieter Heidtmann



The Indian theologian Professor Dr Sathianathan Clarke lectures at the Methodist Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C. (USA). His work mainly focuses on global Christianity, contextual theology, post-colonial mission and interreligious dialogue.



INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

The EMS has approved funding for 51 projects submitted by its member churches in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. In 2021 and 2022, the projects will receive funds totalling €1.52 million a year.

During the coming funding cycle, the EMS will focus on the sectors of ministry work, programmes for interfaith dialogue and on theological training and further education. This was decided at the meeting of the EMS Mission Council in November 2020.

The diaconal commitment of the churches in economically emerging countries such as India, South Korea and South Africa is increasing more and more as traditional social networks and the care of the elderly, sick and people with disabilities decreases in families. At the same time, there is a rise in poverty and marginalisation of minorities in big cities. The EMS therefore supports many institutions and projects in the healthcare sector, elderly care and the integration of migrants and minorities. Funding is accompanied by the net-working of diaconal projects between German and international churches which have committed them-

selves to the EMS for the coming years. This applies especially to practical exchanges within the EMS Fellowship regarding central church tasks and learning from one another. In addition, crises and the processes of change are resulting in the uprooting and demoralisation of young people in many countries. The younger generation especially needs support to face new challenges. In view of this, the EMS member churches are promoting many innovative training programmes for their young members, group leaders and members of their church councils. Practical theology will prepare them for ministry work under changing conditions and will focus on future prospects in their congregations and the social communities around them.

Christine Grötzinger



The church music courses of the Donggala Church (GPID) in Indonesia were particularly hard hit by the earthquakes and tsunami in the Palu region at the end of 2018. But the courses were restarted before rebuilding of the destroyed centre was completed – they offer local young people comfort through music, support for their faith and a common perspective.



CORONAVIRUS: ON THE PATH THROUGH THE STORM

Prospective pastors of the Indonesian EMS member churches are prepared for their ministry at the Theological Seminary of Eastern Indonesia (STT INTIM). The Directress, Dr Lidya K. Tandirerung, reports:

We had to ensure secure quarantine for 250 students in residential homes and for 150 students in rented flats. A “Task Force” gave us assistance for daily needs as many parents had difficulties providing their children with financial support due to the pandemic. Volunteers helped to deliver food, masks and disinfectants to the campus. We also organised support from small retailers who were directly affected when the campus closed. In the end, the government instructed us to send the students home to their villages. This is why we had to push forward with online learning, which worked very well, thanks to the enormous work put in by the lecturers. Our students live in different regions and some of them must travel a long way to find a place with internet access. The churches organised new forms of online worship services and had to deal with theological issues, such as how valid is the

Lord's Supper when worship services are broadcast online. It was a new spiritual experience in the congregations to celebrate the Lord's Supper online.

Grief over the loss of pastor colleagues, voluntary workers and close family members was very emotional for me but it also brought me closer to God theologically as He suffers along with mankind. I am grateful for those who have survived and recovered. We are confronted with an unprecedented situation but as God's messengers, we help one another along the path through the storm.

Dr Lidya K. Tandirerung

SOUTH KOREA: CHILDREN IN THE EMS FELLOWSHIP

Schools in South Korea are also temporarily closed because of the coronavirus pandemic. Children and young people must learn at home. This poses great challenges for many of them as learning alone in front of a computer is a totally different experience than learning at school in a group with teachers.

Many children are unable to keep pace because they lack the technical equipment such as a PC or internet access. 9-year-old Saeron Shin from Yongin (Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea – PROK) writes: "I attend the Gugal primary school. Because of COVID-19 we now learn online at home, a lot from videos. This means I can hardly speak or play with my friends any more. Otherwise, we usually meet at school. Before the pandemic, the school was full of

energy and noise. At lunch break we talked, laughed and played together. My favourite subjects are sport and art. I loved sport because we played ball a lot and we had heaps of fun on the playing field.

During the times that the children are alone at home, EMSO and PIPIT bring a little variety into their lives. The big blue elephant and little Pipit the Bird have been with the EMS Fellowship since the start of 2016. These colourful figures belong to the educational programme YOU+ME: FRIENDS AROUND THE WORLD. They help children from many churches get to know and appreciate one another. Together with girls and boys at children's worship services and in primary schools, they discover different countries, cultures and religions.

Annette Schumm

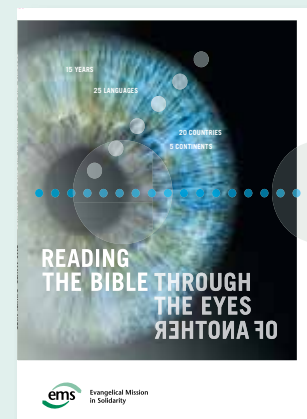


See more info in the blog at www.ems-friends.org

GLOBALISATION IN A TOTALLY DIFFERENT LIGHT

250 groups in 20 countries in the world have read the Bible "through the eyes of another". They came closer to Christians in "tandem groups" by exchanging views on the same passages in the Bible.

In their book "Reading the Bible through the eyes of another" Gabriele Mayer and Bernhard Dinkelaker described the experiences of the basic groups and the scientific knowledge gained from this over a period of 15 years. The authors also supplement the book with practical tips on how to organise Bible-reading groups. The book available in German, English, Indonesian and Korean shows that there is not only one "biblical" truth. It reflects how cultural, sociological, ethnic and religious goggles give new relevance to old passages. And that diversity means a lot of work, but is very enriching at the same time.



Order the 148-page book costing €15 from <https://shop.ems-online.org>

A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

AID UNDER DIFFICULT CONDITIONS

Thank you for your support! We would not have managed it without your help. 2020 was a year like no other for the international EMS Fellowship. From one moment to the next, Covid-19 put all long-term plans on hold. It was all the more encouraging that so many people continued to support our international work, made project funding possible and helped us face the challenges of Covid-19.

“We give thanks to God for all the generous donors who have made it possible for us to fund our projects.”

Rev Nii Armah Ashithey,

Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG)



Women in India have new perspectives by sewing and selling face masks. This provides them with a living during the Covid crisis.

PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED AS PLANNED

All 23 EMS member churches are affected by the pandemic, both by high infection rates and by government counter-measures restricting church life, schooling and employment. Despite all this, many projects were implemented as planned taking account of the necessary safeguards. For example, funds from the EMS supported the four district hospitals, 27 health stations, nine primary healthcare facilities and two nursing schools of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG) to continue providing the rural population with healthcare services including operations, outpatient treatment and medication.

The pig and cattle rearing programme of the Toraja Mamasa Church on Sulawesi (Indonesia) has paved the way for many families to escape poverty. In 2020, the entire programme was handed over to the communities and sets an excellent model for similar agricultural development programmes.

However, it needed quite a lot of flexibility: For the first time, the Diakonia sisters in South Korea donated their grants for destitute young people by a selection process broadcast by videoconference. When the Indian government closed schools and children’s homes because of Covid for an indefinite period of time, the Church of South India (CSI) sent the children from their boarding homes back to their families or found foster parents for the orphans. These families now receive regular food packets. Teachers hold their classes in villages in the open air and the staff of children’s homes make regular checks on the children until the homes can re-open.

EMS CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCY AID IN ACTION

When the coronavirus pandemic spread in spring 2020, the EMS was quick to set up its own EMS Emergency Aid Fund. Quite apart from the danger to people’s health, many churches suffered from the albeit necessary lockdown restrictions. The entire livelihood of many church members collapsed as they could no longer work. The hardest hit were the families and communities which depend on them and which are financed by collections. The funds that these churches desperately needed totalled several hundred thousand Euro. At short notice, the Corona Relief Task Team



The successful pig and cattle rearing programme on Sulawesi was completely handed over to the communities.



Indian women receive food rations for boarding home children who are currently in their care.

(CRTT) was set up in Stuttgart and devised a simplified application process to allocate funds. With the feedback information, the EMS launched several donation appeals during the course of the year with overwhelming response. It was possible to disburse corona emergency funds in June and September to implement urgently needed measures locally.

As a result, the Christian Protestant Church in Bali (GKPB) distributed food packets to 900 families in need and personal protective equipment to doctors and nurses. The Christian Church in South Sulawesi (GKSS) regularly supplied emergency food to destitute congregation members.

“We have to accept that the world is not going to be the way it once was. But it will get better again, we will adapt and move into the future together.”

*Fernandas Rathina Raja,
Secretary General Church of South India (CSI)*

The Church of South India (CSI) bought sewing machines and material for women from poor families so that they could earn a living by making protective clothing, masks and disinfectant for sale. The Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG) organised protective measures at its schools and supplied disinfectant

and face masks for all pupils whose parents are unable to afford them. Many member churches were again able to pay salaries for their pastors and support poor congregation members. Alternative digital methods were found for worship services and to continue providing ministry to congregations. Technical equipment was purchased to enable schooling to continue online.

These are only a few examples of what was achieved with the help of our supporters in 2020. With all our heart we thank you on behalf of all those whom you helped and we look forward to continuing to shape the work of the EMS with you in 2021. When you read this article, we will already be hard at work.

*Sabine Marschner
Angelika Jung*

Donation account: EMS
Evangelische Bank eG
IBAN DE85 5206 0410 0000 0001 24
BIC GENODEF1EK1



INTERNATIONAL EDITORIAL TEAM

“Internationalisation” is the slogan chosen by the Evangelical Mission in Solidarity (EMS). This is not new. Since 2012, all delegates from the 23 churches and five mission societies are legally endowed with equal rights.

Today, the EMS is no longer a German organisation but an international one. This was also expressed in the “darum-journal”, the predecessor of EMS Insights which has been published in English since 2019 – by the way, it is the only magazine by a mission society in Germany to do so.

It is therefore only a logical consequence that the new EMS magazine

should be completely produced in international cooperation. The members of the EMS communication network, consisting of Ghana, India, Indonesia, South Africa, South Korea and Germany, have regular virtual meetings with the staff at the Stuttgart office to discuss topics and authors. This is how the editorial group chose the main feature for this issue “When learning becomes something special”. The feature article about learning in times of the Covid-19 pandemic at an Indonesian orphanage was written by Dr Armin Sukri Kanna, lecturer at the Theological Seminary in Makassar and member of the editorial group.

A group of photographers and authors emerged from the photographic and authoring workshops offered by various

EMS member churches over the past few years. Their photos and texts are now included in EMS Insights. We hope this provides a genuine local insight into the current concerns within the EMS fellowship through the eyes of our colleagues. It goes without saying that EMS Insights, the English version of EMS Einblick, is available for download on our website www.ems-online.org too.

Personally, I am thrilled that the network of colleagues which has emerged from the communication departments of the EMS member churches has really come into its own four years after its inception at the EMS General Meeting in Stellenbosch, South Africa. This allows exchanges between equals and learning with and from one another in an international context to become normal practice – to the benefit of all those concerned. I am certain that our network will become an important platform for the exchange of information and the basis for the EMS to continue growing together even after my retirement at the middle of this year.

Regina Karasch-Böttcher

IMPRINT EMS INSIGHTS 39th Year
Magazine of the Evangelical Mission in Solidarity (EMS); Publisher: Dr Dieter Heidtmann (Vogelsangstr. 62, 70197 Stuttgart)

Editors: Augustine Joemath (South Africa), Armin Sukri Kanna (Indonesia), Thorsten Krüger (EMS), George Ezekiel Larbi (Ghana), Sunil Raj Philip (India), PYO Hyun Mo (South Korea), Mega Kamase Sambo (Indonesia) // **Editors in Chief:** Regina Karasch-Böttcher, Stefan Schaal // **Graphics:** büro für visuelles, Stuttgart // **Responsible editor pursuant to the press law of Baden-Württemberg:** Regina Karasch-Böttcher // **Editorial address:** Evangelische Mission in Solidarität, Vogelsangstr. 62, 70197 Stuttgart; Tel: 0711 636 78-0, Email: info@ems-online.org

Edition: 6,500

Sales: vertrieb@ems-online.org // **Printers:** MHD Druck und Service, 29320 Hermannsburg

Donation account: Evangelische Mission in Solidarität (EMS) Evangelische Bank eG IBAN DE85 5206 0410 0000 0001 24, BIC GENODEF1EK1

Picture credits: Cover: Pixabay/AkshayaPatra Foundation; p2: EMS/Waiblinger; p3: EMS/Lohnes; pp4–7: EMS/Handayani (3), EMS/Lohnes (2); p8: EMS/Lohnes; p9: Lisa Helfert/Wesley Theological Seminary; p10: EMS/Lohnes (2), CSI; p11 Richter, EMS; p12: CSI/Philip; p13: EMS/Lohnes, CSI; p14: EMS/Lohnes; p15: EMS/Gräbe (2); p16: EMS/Lohnes

EMS INSIGHTS appears twice a year and is free of charge.

ISSN 1611-1729





DIGITAL PARTICIPATION FOR MARGINALISED CHILDREN

The Schneller schools in Lebanon and Jordan were very quick to respond to the challenges posed by the pandemic. They began to introduce new forms of digital schooling much earlier than similar institutions in Germany.

About ten years ago, at the latest with the “Facebook revolutions” during the Arab Spring, people in the Middle East realised the opportunities and potential of social media and networked forms of working more than the associated risks. In any case, blackboards and chalk are increasingly on the way out at the Theodor Schneller School (TSS) in Jordan since many classrooms were equipped with smartboards between 2010 and 2018. And between September 2018 and September 2019, three training courses were offered to teachers at the Johann Ludwig Schneller School (JLSS) in Lebanon on digital changes in schooling and the use of cloud software. Just at the right time, one might say!

On the other hand, theory and practice are not always the same. Many of the older teachers at the JLSS had difficulties coming to terms with the new methods. And at schools mainly attended by children from broken and poor families, several children often had to huddle round the family smartphone whereas (few of) the other children could even afford a tablet. Schooling became the catalyst for unequal opportunities. And

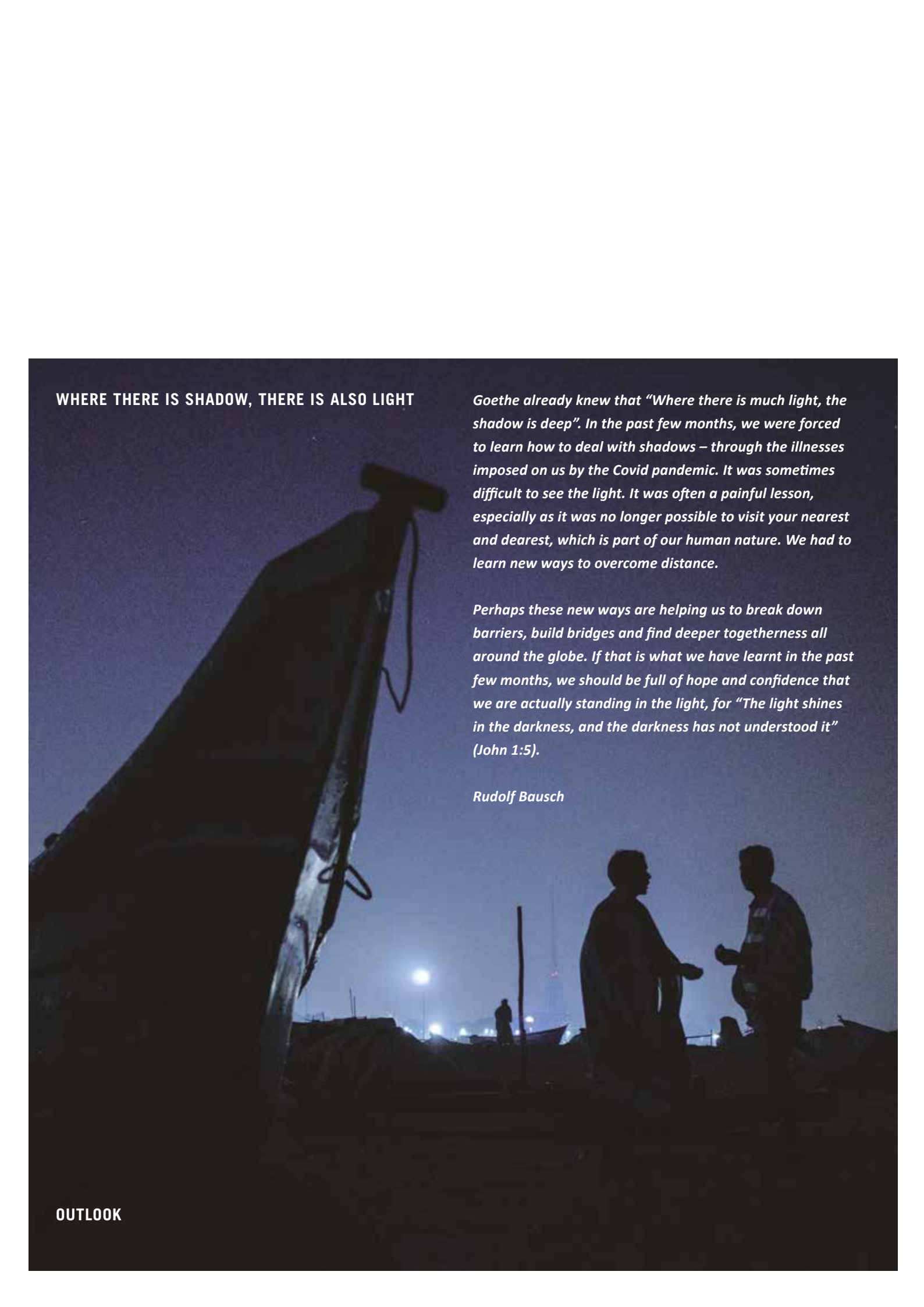
by the way, how do you teach students in training workshops how to smooth down a wooden table online? Another factor was constant uncertainty – lockdown or no lockdown? Should summer holidays start earlier or should holiday courses be organised to make up for missed lessons? Or even should students be handed their final certificates whatever level of performance they had achieved?

Digital participation today means social participation.

It was only in autumn 2020 that viable ways were found – classes were taught in alternating shifts and simple identical tablets were bought for the children at the JLSS from the EMS Coronavirus Emergency Fund. The Schneller schools are both the most traditional and the largest single project funded by the international EMS Fellowship. Their mission has always been directed at empowering young people to take an active part in society: In the past few months, it has become very clear how much this has to do with digital participation today.

Uwe Gräbe

For more information, visit
<https://schneller-schulen.ems-online.org/>



WHERE THERE IS SHADOW, THERE IS ALSO LIGHT

Goethe already knew that “Where there is much light, the shadow is deep”. In the past few months, we were forced to learn how to deal with shadows – through the illnesses imposed on us by the Covid pandemic. It was sometimes difficult to see the light. It was often a painful lesson, especially as it was no longer possible to visit your nearest and dearest, which is part of our human nature. We had to learn new ways to overcome distance.

Perhaps these new ways are helping us to break down barriers, build bridges and find deeper togetherness all around the globe. If that is what we have learnt in the past few months, we should be full of hope and confidence that we are actually standing in the light, for “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not understood it” (John 1:5).

Rudolf Bausch