

Indonesians collect old phones to help students get online

November 6 2020, by Edna Tarigan



Indonesian journalist Ghina Ghaliya pack used mobile phones before shipping them to underprivileged children who lack internet access to study online, at her apartment in Tangerang, Indonesia, on Sept. 25, 2020. When a garbage collector came to Ghaliya's house and asked if she had an old mobile phone his children could use to access the internet, it sparked an idea for a broader campaign to help students stuck at home by the coronavirus. (AP Photo/Tatan Syuflana)

When a garbage collector came to Ghina Ghaliya's house in the Indonesian capital and asked if she had an old mobile phone his children could use to access the internet, it sparked an idea for a broader campaign to help students stuck at home by the coronavirus.

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

Shortly after the pandemic hit Indonesia, Ghaliya and 11 other journalists in Jakarta organized a group to provide food and money to people in need. They started hearing from parents who wanted their children to be able to study online but lacked a way to access the internet.

Ghaliya was reminded of her conversation with the garbage collector and she and the other journalists decided to shift their focus to providing mobile phones for underprivileged students, many of whom were still not allowed to do face-to-face learning when the new school year started in July.

They announced their campaign through social media and the response was overwhelming, with people donating second-hand units and others giving cash.

As of November, they had collected more than 200 mobile phones. Cash donations amounted to more than 530 million rupiah (more than \$35,000), allowing them to buy more phones and also purchase prepaid internet for the recipients.



Indonesian journalist Ghina Ghaliya pack used mobile phones before shipping them to underprivileged children who lack internet access to study online, at her apartment in Tangerang, Indonesia, on Sept. 25, 2020. When a garbage collector came to Ghaliya's house and asked if she had an old mobile phone his children could use to access the internet, it sparked an idea for a broader campaign to help students stuck at home by the coronavirus. (AP Photo/Tatan Syuflana)

So far, nearly 300 phones have been distributed to Indonesian students around Jakarta as well as to remote regions like Papua, the country's most eastern province.

Helping students take part in online schooling brings happiness to Ghaliya and her journalist friends.

"We really hope the mobile phones can be used as much as they can during the pandemic," Ghaliya said.

Khaissyah Levi, 16, is a vocational high school student in Depok, West Java, who attends online classes in the morning. His father Deny Sayuti had been lending 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, missing out on peak times like the morning rush hour.

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



Indonesian journalist Ghina Ghaliya packs used mobile phones before shipping them to underprivileged children who lack internet access to study online, at her apartment in Tangerang, Indonesia, on Sept. 25, 2020. Ghaliya and other journalists in Jakarta who organized a group to provide food and money to people who were affected by coronavirus outbreak shifted their focus to providing mobile phones for underprivileged students after hearing from parents who wanted their children to be able to study online but lacked a way to access the internet. (AP Photo/Tatan Syuflana)



Indonesian journalist Ghina Ghaliya confirms an address with a delivery man before shipping used mobile phones to underprivileged children who lack internet access to study online, in Tangerang, Indonesia, on Sept. 25, 2020. Ghaliya and other journalists in Jakarta who organized a group to provide food and money to people who were affected by coronavirus outbreak shifted their focus to providing mobile phones for underprivileged students after hearing

from parents who wanted their children to be able to study online but lacked a way to access the internet. (AP Photo/Tatan Syuflana)



Fifth-grade elementary school student Qayran Ruby Al Maghribi, center, accompanied by his parents Fahroji, left, and Yulia, inspect a used mobile phone sent to him by Ghina Ghaliya, an Indonesian journalist who with some other colleagues organized a group to provide mobile phones for underprivileged students who lack access the internet to study online, at their residence in Tangerang, Indonesia, on Sept. 25, 2020. As of November, Ghaliya and her friends had collected hundreds of mobile phones, cash donations amounted to more than 530 million rupiah (more than \$35,000) which allow them to buy more phones and also purchase prepaid internet for the recipients. (AP Photo/Tatan Syuflana)



Indonesian teacher Inggit Andini, right, teaches at a makeshift class for students who lack access to the internet to study online, at her residence in Tangerang, Indonesia, on Aug. 10, 2020. Shortly after the pandemic hit Indonesia, Ghina Ghaliya and few other journalists in Jakarta organized a group to provide used mobile phones to underprivileged students who lack access to the internet. So far, nearly 300 phones have been distributed to Indonesian students around Jakarta as well as to remote regions like Papua, the country's most eastern province. (AP Photo/Tatan Syuflana)



Fifth-grade elementary school student Qayran Ruby Al Maghribi, left, tests a mobile phone sent to him by Ghina Ghaliya, an Indonesian journalist who with some other colleagues organized a group to provide mobile phones for underprivileged students who lack access the internet to study online, in Tangerang, Indonesia, on Sept. 25, 2020. As of November, Ghaliya and her friends had collected hundreds of mobile phones, cash donations amounted to more than 530 million rupiah (more than \$35,000) which allow them to buy more phones and also purchase prepaid internet for the recipients. (AP Photo/Tatan Syuflana)



Indonesian teacher Inggit Andini, bottom right, teaches at a makeshift class for students who lack access to the internet to study online, at her residence in Tangerang, Indonesia, on Aug. 10, 2020. Shortly after the pandemic hit Indonesia, Ghina Ghaliya and few other journalists in Jakarta organized a group to provide used mobile phones to underprivileged students who lack access to the internet. So far, nearly 300 phones have been distributed to Indonesian students around Jakarta as well as to remote regions like Papua, the country's most eastern province. (AP Photo/Tatan Syuflana)

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

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

assignments.

But the 11-year old sometimes sent his homework late because he had to wait for his father to return from work as a motorcycle taxi driver in order to get back online. For the first time in his life, Maghribi was falling behind in his studies, which along with taking care of his sick mother was causing him stress.

But a big smile appeared on Maghribi's 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.

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