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Message from the President

Dear Friends,

ST Foundation is about to close a year that, in many respects, will remain exceptional.

The courses of our DU program have been abruptly stopped in March and are just – partially— restarting these last days. This year, the number of beneficiaries represents a low point of many, many years.

Fortunately however, we have been able to maintain alive our structure, so that we are ready to recover the level of our activities as soon as the sanitary situation allows.

Despite these adverse conditions, our financial situation has been protected, thanks to the continuing financial support of ST, the perfect and timely management of our portfolio, and the very significant reduction of our expenses. So that at the end of 2020, our capacity to develop and invest remains intact.

Everywhere in the world, the sanitary crisis has generated a considerable acceleration of the digitalisation process, thus revealing new aspects of the digital divide, new configurations where we can help through different ways, and new needy populations. We have been conscious of this evolution and have been moving towards a new panel of activities, called the « Society Digitalisation » program, which will come next year as a second major sector of our actions.

Also, we have recognised the necessity to make STFoundation itself more digital in all its activities, and we have started to invest in that direction.

All in all, 2020 has been a year of fight against a major sanitary, financial and social crisis, but also a period when the Foundation has initiated new paths which are to reshape its perspectives in the near future.

Next year, we will go ahead in the same directions. First, the « Base Education » program (DU) has to be restarted on the field as soon as the sanitary conditions and local regulations allow. Second, these courses should be updated and made available through new channels like distance learning or digitalised platforms. Third, we will have to find and implement innovative ways to help the « Society Digitalisation » process that is observed everywhere.

Within these three axes, the priority will be given to the development of the links with ST sites

and countries, to which and from which the support will become essential over the months. Next year will be a year of recovery and investment. A challenging actions plan is facing us. Would we succeed to implement it completely –and I am convinced we will--, then the image the Foundation will project at the end of 2021 will have been significantly reshaped and new perspectives for our development will have been opened.

More than ever, such significant moves require your active support. Your contribution will be key. Join us and make them happen!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of you. And stay safe!

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New Initiatives in Covid 19 Scenario

Looking backward at 2020, we see how the year has been a moment of crisis but also an opportunity to evolve and rethink the Foundation's activities. The sanitary crisis impact on the DU Program led the organization to rethink its strategy's essence, focusing on a new interpretation of the Digital Divide phenomenon.

COVID-19 has created the most extensive disruption of education systems in history. During the lockdown period, the educational fragility of Europe emerged clearly. For this reason, the Foundation focused its efforts on Italy and France to help both countries deal with the rising school challenges created by the pandemic.

In Italy, two initiatives were launched in Lombardy and Sicily near the ST sites of Agrate and Catania, working closely with our volunteers to support the formal school system, families, and students deal with the digital world. Together with ACRA Foundation and CIAI (Italian center for the Aid to Children), *Siamo tutti collegati* and *TU6prof* projects were launched.



In both cases, the main scope was to provide the formal school system with the needed equipment and competencies to approach distance learning, making it more interactive and inclusive for schools and families.

In parallel, the Foundation launched similar activities in France where the pandemic revealed huge imbalances between schools and families that could access distance learning tools/competencies and those that could not. In this delicate situation, the Foundation decided to reinforce its efforts against the digital gap, donating the needed equipment to two

main local partners, the *Thomas Edison* High School of Échirolles and *Ma Chance Moi Aussi* association.

Key Results:

- Over 400 PCs donated in Italy and France.
- Creation of two e-learning platforms to support formal education.
- Creation of an ad hoc online course of five modules to help teachers familiarize themselves with the digital world.
- Engagement of ST employees in all activities in the site of Agrate, Castelletto, and Catania.
- 150 teachers attended our new courses in Italy.

Testimony from a volunteer



All the activities carried out throughout the year could not have been achieved without the support of the ST volunteers. A fantastic team helps the organization make the dream possible.

Let us hear what they want to say!
Luca Proverbio, ST volunteer from Castelletto.

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