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## STORIES OF STREET CHILDREN WITH PERSONAL DOCUMENTS

*(all stories below are real stories, but due to privacy issue,  
we will keep the name in abbreviation of the first letter of  
the name)*

### 1. Story of P

P will turn into 7 years old this year. Since P was born, his only relative who could be seen around was his father. His most familiar place was the small, rented garret with the view toward Tau Hu Canal. P had no idea who his mother was, and his father would never mention her. Sometimes P wondered why the neighborhood kids always called their “mom”, the word he’d never had the chance to say. In many mornings and afternoons, P watched the neighborhood kids in the going to school. He craved for the feeling of carrying a school backpack with colorful drawings, the feeling of touching the notebooks he sometimes saw at the grocery store. P timidly asked his father “Dad, I want to go to school too”. But the father remained quiet, then turned around and said “Sorry”.

### 2. Story of the father

In that afternoon when his son asked “Dad, I want to go to school too”, there were lots of reminiscences rushing over to the father, who had the austere face and sunburned skin.

K blankly sat during the whole afternoon, and when his son went to sleep, he sat at the front door thinking about his life. “Exile” was the first word appeared in his mind. He did not want to mention the sorrow of his family. It was the pain he didn’t want to recall, the pain that caused him to have no hometown, no family registration, and no recognition.

In 2007, he thought he would have a family when the person he called his “wife”, who lived with him without marriage certificate, gave birth to a son. During the pregnancy, the couple lived the unsettled street life. They stuck in poverty too deep to the point that after the baby was born in Tu Du Hospital, his wife had to run away from the hospital because they couldn’t afford the fee. Their life which was full of concerns about meals, shelters increased the number of conflicts. The poverty pushed people to



their limit. One day, his wife disappeared and left behind the child who hadn't turned to 1-year-old yet.

The connection with his wife was found in 2010 by a bad news. The wife, P's mom, died in a prison in Binh Phuoc Province. Why was she a criminal? Why did she die? Which is the prison in Binh Phuoc Province? The pity, the agony couldn't answer these questions for K, questions which couldn't be answered even by her relatives.

K's life was like a slow-motion movie until today, when P blurted out his desire which K could feel from noticing P bewilderedly watching the kids in the neighborhood.

Since P was born, he'd been suffering from ragged life, from lack of mother, home, hometown or identity, from wandering around beg for food to get by. K wanted his son to go to school even if he could not tell if P would make it better than himself. But he was a father, so he wanted fulfill his son's first childlike wish.

### **Support processes:**

After receiving P's background information and legal aid request, the social organization passed the files to MSD, and MSD brought it to National Legal Aid Center in Ho Chi Minh City (The Center).

Firstly, in order to ensure the accuracy of the information, the Center asked P to directly discuss with the officer who was in charge. After studying the proposal of the case and meeting K, the Center showed the steps to support in providing P his personal identification.

**Step 1:** Collect more information about the father, especially about his former family registration.

**Step 2:** According to K, he still kept in touch with the older sister of P's mother. If that person had her citizen identity card and family registration book, she could represent P to submit a request for notice of birth from Tu Du Hospital.

**Step 3:** Add more information about the mother, like the prison where she passed away to be more specific.

However, besides providing information about his former family registration, K could not provide any other information about the mother. Her sister did not agree to represent to submit a request for P's notice of birth from Tu Du Hospital.

When these instructions could not be accomplished, the Center suggested K to bring P to the Center to take pictures of both the father and the son, so that they could write the proposal. The officer from the Center directly went to Ward 18, District 14, Ho Chi Minh City to confirm their residence. Through



the landlord and households in the neighborhood, the Center confirmed the information K shared to be true.

At that time, if K submitted a request for notice of birth from Tu Du Hospital, he would surely be rejected again. Based on information collected and with professional measures, the Center instructed K to submit a legal aid request to the Center as the basis for the Center to be P's representative, so that they could request for notice of birth from Tu Du Hospital. With the guarantee and legal personality of the Center, a copy of notice of birth was distributed.

Since the actual residence of K was identified, the Center worked with the Ward People's Committee of Ward 18, District 4, Ho Chi Minh City to register P's birth certificate. With the guarantee of the Center, P's birth certificate registration was completed. However, his family name was after his mother's like in the notice of birth.

When receiving P's birth certification, K could not be happier. But happiness of the father was still hovered by fractures filled of sorrow.

K wished P to have his birth certificate. He was the only relative P had in this life. But P wasn't recognized by law as his son. Understanding his thoughts, the Center did not stop until the father was recognized by law as a citizen with fatherhood, even after when P got his birth certificate.

That was why the Center decided to keep supporting him with these specific steps:

*Step 1:* Since K provided his former family registration which he had been expelled from, the Center would assist him in getting a copy of his birth certificate and then his citizen identity card.

*Step 2:* Because the landlord agreed to add K to the family registration, after K got his citizen identity card, he would be supported in signing up for family registration.

*Step 3:* List K as one of the members in the family registration and let the head of the household guarantee both the K and P.

*Step 4:* K would sign up for his fatherhood toward P where he got his family registration registered.

*Step 5:* Support K in legal proceedings of changing P's family name from his mother's to K's.

K have never imagined that he can, once again, have "a place to belong to" and be considered as an official citizen. His son can go to school like any other children. P will enter the life as with full citizenship.





### 3. Story of C

C was born in 2009. She didn't know who her parents were. She lived with her grandmother. According to the grandmother, C's parents died. C scavenged junk then sold them every day and slept at the corner of Vinh Khanh Street every night. In November 2013, C's grandmother passed away. She officially became a homeless child without family or relatives.

That was when H, a woman living near Vinh Khanh Street and knowing C's story adopted and have been raising her until now. She wanted C to go to school and to be signed up for the family registration. She headed to the Ward People's Committee to express her willingness to adopt her. But the committee refused because C was a homeless child without origin or any personal identification. The committee also asked for the death certificate of C's grandmother. H did not have much knowledge in this field. Through some acquaintances, H learnt about the project which helped street children to have personal identification. She understood that if C had personal identification, H could add her to the family registration. If C was added to the family registration, she could go to school.

#### **Support processes:**

After receiving the proposal from MSD, the Center studied and brought out these steps to solve C's case. Along with the proposal, there was a report on C's background information with the confirmation from the head of the Residents' Association, a copy of the family registration book, a copy of the citizen identity card of H who was raising C.

Step 1: The Center demanded to provide more information about H, M's fosterer.

Step 2: The proceedings in creating a birth certificate for C would be solved as the proceedings for abandoned children.

Step 3: After H submit her legal aid request, the Center would represent her to report to the Ward People's Committee where C was living and ask for their support.

Based on the proceedings in creating a birth certificate for abandoned children, H placed an advertisement on the newspaper about how C had lived with her grandmother and the grandmother passed away so it's time for any relatives to show up. Thanks to the connection of the Center, information of missing relatives was displayed on Phap Luat TP.HCM for 3 continuous issues. After



30 days, there was nobody claiming to be her relative. So the next step was to start the proceedings to register C's birth certificate and let L adopt her.

To guarantee the process, the Center instructed L to follow these steps:

Step 1: H needed to create her criminal record at the Ward People's Committee.

Step 2: H needed to confirm her behavior and economic ability to raise a child.

Step 3: H's family registration and citizen identity card were needed (these papers were provided).

Step 4: C's birth certificate was needed (which was not available yet due to the process of confirmation relating information)

So, the initial result of the project was to finish placing the advertisement on the newspaper and to instruct the foster family to report on C being raised in the family at the Ward People's Committee.

Next, when C was identified as a homeless child, the Center would represent to ask for her birth certificate. After that, they would instruct H to sign up for C's legal guardian. Finally, they assisted C in being added to H's family registration.

## 4. Story of M

M was born in 2000. Ever since she was born, she lived without motherly care. Her mother, D, brought her to L, her current fosterer, to raise her for monthly payment of VND600,000. However, D had just paid 150.000VND and left for good.

When M was 5, the age to go to kindergarten, L and her husband discussed, wanting to let M go to school. Thanks to the instruction of kind neighbors, L found M's mother address and sent a message to ask her to give M's birth certificate so M could go to school. The mother refused to meet, instead appointed someone to bring the certificate to L and then cut off contact.

Raising M by her own since M was a baby, L really wished to had adopted M. But the family condition was quite difficult. Her husband worked as a mechanic, while L was a motorbike taxi driver. They lived in a rented house. Fortunately, the family registered their residence in Ward 14, District 11 and temporary residence in Ward 5, Go Vap District, Ho Chi Minh City. M temporarily lived with the family in Ward 5, Go Vap District too.

L wanted to adopt M so that M could be recognized as their child by law. Moreover, it would be more convenient for M to have her citizen identity card, go to school then start working. L shared that she want M to have a better "future" than the lives of her blood mother, L and L's husband.

Being busy making a living and having little understanding about law, L sometimes intended to go to the Ward People's Committee to ask about the proceedings to add M to the family registration. But



she was insecure because of not knowing that she had to go to the ward in which her family got their permanent or temporary residence registered.

At that moment, while working as a motorbike taxi driver, L found out about a project to help homeless children to get their personal identification. Although M had her birth certificate, she did not belong to any family registration or have citizen identity card. So that was the opportunity. After asking for more information, L came to TD Center of Social Protection to express her aspiration.

### **Support processes:**

After receiving M's proposal, the Center studied and responded:

*Firstly*, according to the provisions of current law, L, the fosterer, could not adopt M and add M to her family registration at that moment because her family condition could not meet the requirements to adopt a child.

*Secondly*, M had not been 14 years old yet so if there were any family meeting the requirements to adopt a child, that family could adopt M and add her to their family registration.

*Thirdly*, the information on the birth certificate from M's mother needed to be reconfirmed.

L's family attached these files in the proposal: copy of birth certificate, copy of L's citizen identity card and family registration book, copy of the temporary residence file in Go Vap District.

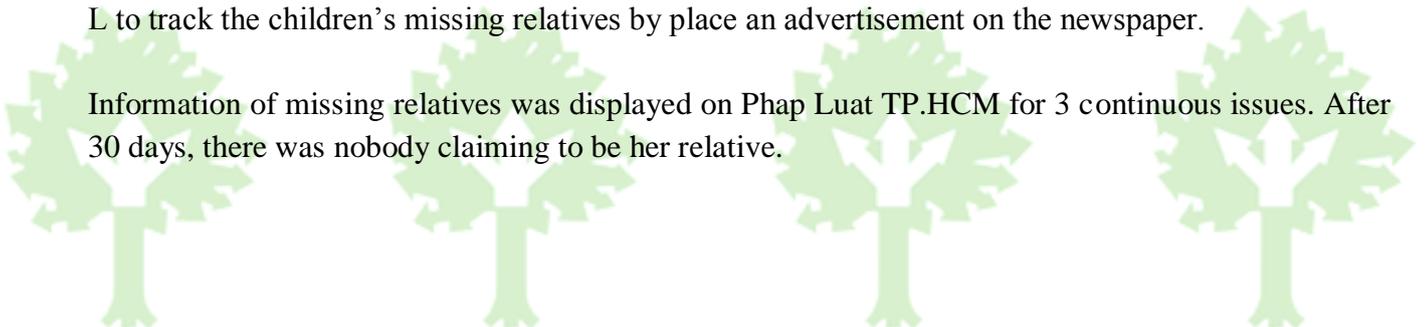
### **According to the suggestions from the Center, L shared that:**

She did not understand about the requirements needed to adopt a child. M had been growing up in her family since she was a baby, so L loved M like her own child and wanted M to be her daughter. At that moment, L could not contact to M's mother. L does not feel secure to let M be adopted to another family. L also wondered if a shelter house could help M to sign up for a family registration or not when she moved into one.

Comprehending her concerns and feelings, the Center understood her appropriate and genuine aspiration. In order to guarantee legal proceedings, the Center instructed L to submit a legal aid request to the Center as the basis for the Center to be L's representative.

Based on the request, the Center made a decision to provide legal aid to L. The Center also instructed L to track the children's missing relatives by place an advertisement on the newspaper.

Information of missing relatives was displayed on Phap Luat TP.HCM for 3 continuous issues. After 30 days, there was nobody claiming to be her relative.





Based on the laws involving legal guardian, the Center instructed L to complete the legal proceedings to be appointed as M's legal guardian. After that, L could guarantee M to be added to her family registration.

At the moment, they finished placing advertisement on the newspaper, and L is starting the the legal proceedings to be appointed as M's legal guardian. So the desire and the heart of M's foster mother were partly satisfied with M having chance to be sign up for her family registration.

