



SUNSHINE MUSIC AND ARTS PROGRAMME
Annual Report 2014

Proud of her achievements

Programme Description

Established:	1997
Location:	Sunshine School, Boy's and Girl's Shelter
Target Group:	Disadvantaged Children, Street Children
Local Partner:	Subproject of Sunshine School
Sponsor:	Sovereign Art Foundation
CNCF Staff:	Mr Nicolas Pistolas, Ms Son Thu Trinh, Mr David Tran
Monitoring visit:	David Tran
CNCF Involvement:	100%
Budget 2014:	USD 28,049, Actual Costs USD 24,437 ¹
Future Plans:	Project development and class expansion
Report By:	David Tran

On behalf of our Foundation and the Sunshine Children of Vietnam, we thank the sponsors for supporting this programme in 2014.

¹ Unaudited amount. This figure may change subject to auditor's report



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Programme Background

"I want a beautiful school for the street children, a school with sports facilities, a music room, an art department, computer technology, domestic science and training in life skills..."

Christina Noble, Bridge Across My Sorrows

Our Sunshine Music & Art Project offers a programme of classes, suitable for all our children, whether they are new to studying music and art and are just learning the basics, or they have a talent and want to deepen their studies and appreciation.

Music and Art classes play hugely important roles in the lives of young children and their intellectual and emotional development. This is even more crucial for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, such as our Sunshine Children.

There has been much research to show that poverty and its related stresses result in lower academic performance and neural function in children. Music and Art are a fun and creative way of helping to combat this.

Poverty in childhood is often the platform for a lifetime of challenges. Recent academic studies suggest that the poorest children are often denied the relationships and environments they need to develop socially and emotionally. "Children raised

in poverty ...are faced daily with overwhelming challenges that affluent children never have to confront and their brains have adapted to suboptimal conditions in ways that undermine good school performance...These children experience more stress due to loneliness, aggression, isolation, and deviance in their peer relationships, and they are more likely to describe feeling deprived, embarrassed, picked on, or bullied. As a result, they more often face future struggles in marital and other relationships."¹

Research has shown that an arts education can enhance critical thinking and develop creativity in children². During the school years there is a tremendous opportunity to turn around the negative impacts of poverty. A recent study³ provides the first direct evidence that there is a significant measurable improvement of neural function for children who participate in music lessons over a period of time.

According to the study's main author, children with around two years of training showed significant improvement in the neural function relating to language and maths cognition; the more exposure to music the child received, the greater the neural function improvement.

¹ Eric Jensen "Teaching With Poverty In Mind: What Being Poor Does To Kids' Brains And What Schools Can Do About It" ASCD, 2009

² RJ Deasy "Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development" as published on <http://www.aep-arts.org/>

³ Journal of Neuroscience: "Music Enrichment Programs Improve the Neural Encoding of Speech in At-Risk Children <http://www.jneurosci.org/content/34/36/11913.short?sid=c0a7fba1-2713-4600-8ea5-011d9639f919>



Our music lessons start from age 6 to 16 years old and cover philosophy and practical tuition in wind, string, and percussion. Similarly our art lessons are not just an outlet for creative expression. They too, are known to influence cognition. Children who regularly practice art are known to gain an increased intentional and focused determination, leading to sustained attention. This has been shown to result in cognitive improvement in many areas, including the study of maths and science, according to the results of a three- year study with over a dozen neuroscientists from five US universities⁴. This is particularly true for children from developing and middle income countries, such as Vietnam.

A 2011 University of London study found that children in Kenya who received arts education showed increases in self-confidence and communicative and expressive abilities. The results of the study even suggested that arts classes could be used to teach children tools for economic prosperity, ultimately enabling them to break the cycle of poverty⁵.

Our children study form and composition, learning a variety of techniques and styles. They also have the opportunity to participate in fun and challenging workshops and excursions.

This year we also included photography lessons as part of our curriculum.

We conduct an annual review of our curriculum to ensure that it is relevant and up-to-date. Regular communication between Sunshine School Management, Shelter staff, parents and our children helps to ensure the programme continues to thrive.

⁴ Eric Jensen "Teaching With Poverty In Mind: What Being Poor Does To Kids' Brains And What Schools Can Do About It" ASCD, 2009

⁵ University of London, Institute of Education: "The Impact of Arts Education in the Developing World: A Case Study of a NGO in Kenya"





Crafts from recycled materials



Painting for the New World Hotel event



Rock art



Magic Beans - Recycling and Art workshop

Programme Overview

2014 was another exciting year for our Music and Arts Programme that included visits and workshops from talented professionals. Irish folk musician Mick Moloney and his “Friends” ensemble returned for a second year to play their traditional Irish songs and to instruct and excite our students about their instruments. The talented and internationally renowned professional dancer, Emily Navarra, returned for two workshops with our dance class. Young Vietnamese artists from the Art for Saigon group organised a fun and creative rock painting class and The Magic Beans Workshop Company, held a 6-day workshop with our first grade class on creative ways to make art through recyclable household goods.

Both the General Art class and the After-School Art class explored new crafts from disposable items such as making owls from toilet roll holders, lollipop stick houses, facemasks, and button key chains. We also designed new Christmas cards as a fun workshop and selected those we all liked the best to be used by our offices as e-Cards or printed for sale.

One of the highlights for our After-School Art class was to create paintings for a one-week exhibition at the New World Hotel Saigon, where they sold more than half their artwork. The class also enjoyed a movie evening and our boys and girls art

classes went on an excursion to a local children’s amusement park to learn about various occupations.

Taking advantage of the professional photography skills of a new member of staff, we began a photography class in October. Eleven digital cameras were very kindly donated to the Programme which enabled our students to learn and apply basic photography techniques. Classes included one classroom-based theory lesson and one fieldtrip each week to apply the principles learned; excursions included the local parks and the zoo, a nearby church, and, of course around the office and school at Tu Xuong.

We were also able to offer a stronger General Music curriculum this year, thanks to the addition of new music books at the end of last year. This enabled our students to learn a lot more scores and at a much quicker pace.

The teacher incorporated movement and games with the scores and our older children were taught the beginnings of reading and writing melodies. There are many areas where we could make improvements but our students made fantastic progress this year, given our tight budget and the fact that they have little or no opportunity to practice outside the classroom environment.

Our choir and dance class children continue to make great progress and were able to provide great entertainment for the Foundation. Both classes performed at various internal



and external events such as International Children's Day and Graduation day. They had a challenging schedule of Christmas choir events around Ho Chi Minh City, which they managed really successfully. We were very proud of them and they received a great reception wherever we went. The students worked really hard but more importantly really enjoyed it.

Both classes were also a main highlight of the New World Hotel's 20th Anniversary Celebration show. They also participated at a local art gallery's Christmas concert, and the Australian International School's Christmas celebration. One hundred per cent of the proceeds raised from these events went directly to our Foundation.

The 2013 team also went on an excursion to the movie theatre to watch Rio 2 in 3D, in celebration of a successful 2013 Christmas season.

This year the Choir and Dance team had virtually all new members due to the graduation of most of the 2013 team members. We held a recruitment day to identify new students for our Choir, Dance and Art classes. Our young new team deserves an extra special acknowledgment for their fantastic performances and the commitment they showed.

We were also able to put together a small novice recorder ensemble to join the Choir and Dance team in performances for the Foundation and on the Christmas Choir tour. The highlight of our tour was collaborating with a local hip-hop group, Nolza

Family, who taught the students a dance routine to the song Jingle Bell Rock that the children also performed at later events.

It was a good year for the students who had the opportunity to work with seasoned professionals, create and experience new projects, sing, dance experience music, continue to display their artworks and to perform for their peers. With the occasional party and excursion, it all made for a well-rounded, productive, and exciting year for the Art & Music project.

Quick Breakdown:

- 85 Children (Afterschool Classes)
- 150 Children (General Classes)
- 6 Teachers
- 1 Art & Music Coordinator
- 25 Classes per week





Irish folk musician Mick Moloney and Friends



Dance performance



Choir performance



Our Christmas Choir



Choir practice



During a dance lesson



Practicing the piano



Guitar lesson

Programme Activities

ART

Our art classes are intended to be a fun exploration and an introduction to art styles and techniques. Our children have the opportunity to express their creativity through visual art and learn and create through a variety of crafts, drawing, and painting. We hold and host workshops and excursions to enhance our children's learning experience.

Our General Art class is a compulsory 45-minute lesson for all of our Sunshine School children. In this class students learn basic techniques and styles, including craftwork.

We also hold a non-compulsory after-school art class open to all ages. Ages range from 7 to 21-years-old, as this year we have two students honing their skills prior to attending University. In this class students learn more advanced techniques, colour-mixing and more advanced craftwork.

CHOIR

Our Choir provides the children with a chance to express themselves through song. The sweet sounds of our children's voices coming together in harmony are now a regular feature at various internal and external events. Children are taught a variety of popular and traditional songs in both English and Vietnamese.

DANCE

Our Dance classes are a fun way for our children to express themselves through body movement as well as teaching them how to listen and work as a team. This is a popular class with the programme designed very much to attract both our girls and our boys. Our dance troupe is very busy performing throughout the whole year.

GUITAR/PIANO

Private guitar and piano lessons are offered to older students who are keen and show an interest. Our aim is to work with students to develop technique and an understanding of musical score reading. We schedule occasional recitals to build the children's performance skills and showcase their talents.

CSADC DANCE/AEROBICS

The day-care group from the CSADC enjoyed various exercises and fun dances to improve their motor skills. They had lots of fun stretching, dancing and learning small routines to a musical track.

PHOTOGRAPHY

This year, taking advantage of the professional photography skills of a new member of staff and the kind donation of 11 cameras from individual donors, we introduced photography classes towards the end of the year. There was a lot of excitement as the upper grade students were able to go on excursions to a variety of local places to practice their shooting and composition skills.



Success Story

(*We have changed the child's name to protect her privacy)

It has been a delight for us to see the continuing development of Ai*.

Ai is the third child from a disadvantaged family of four brothers and sisters. Her mother died two years ago and her father is now the primary caretaker and breadwinner. He works long hours to support the family and the running of the house is left to the older children.

Ai began first grade at our Sunshine School in 2009. At first she was uninterested in schoolwork. She had problems completing work on time, focusing in class and she could be very disruptive. She consistently handed in poor quality work.

Fortunately, however, she showed a real interest and enthusiasm for the extracurricular activities we offer.

In the first two or three school years she tried many extracurricular classes such as art classes, taekwondo, guitar, keyboard, drama, badminton, choir, and dance class. She finally settled upon drama, choir, and dance as she discovered a talent and a passion for these classes.

Since taking up these classes we have seen a radical transformation in Ai's character. The classes have given her the opportunity to become more disciplined, to develop integrity, self-esteem and have given her an outlet to express herself.

Ai is now a core member of the Choir and Dance team and for the past three years, she has performed at numerous internal and external shows at various events around the city. Some of those shows include International Children's Day, Graduation Day, Christmas, and the Mid-Autumn Festival. She performed for the New World Hotel 20th Anniversary and was selected as one of the few students to work with an outside community dance team.

In dance class, her teacher identified Ai's openness and sensitivity to music and to ability to pick up and learn routines quickly. Ai was selected as the Captain of the dance team and she now helps to lead the warm-up routines and helps her peers and the younger children learn their routines. Ai has developed a great work ethic and has proven to be a fantastic role model to the younger students; she continually demonstrates hard work and respect for the teacher and other students when she's in class. Ai rarely misses rehearsals and is always complimented by her teachers for her diligence.

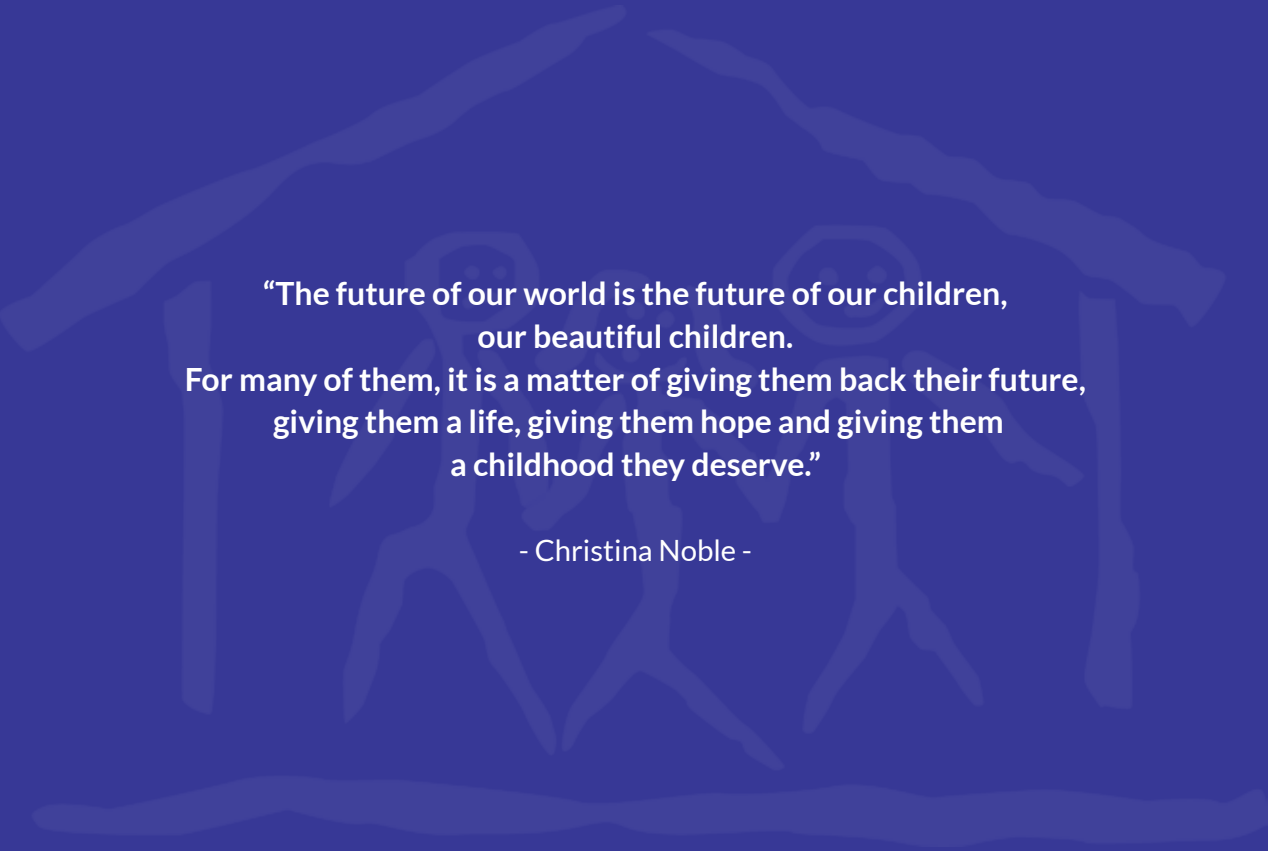
Crucially, since she became a part of the dance troupe her improved work ethic has permeated into her schoolwork. Her ability to focus in academic lessons has improved, and the quality of her work is of a much higher standard.

Ai continues to show passion in music and dance and is happy to showcase her skills for people's enjoyment. She is kind and respectful to all her teachers and peers and patient and gentle with the younger children who want to learn. It has been a pleasure for us to be a part of her positive development.





Smile during art class



“The future of our world is the future of our children,
our beautiful children.

For many of them, it is a matter of giving them back their future,
giving them a life, giving them hope and giving them
a childhood they deserve.”

- Christina Noble -



Thank you to the Sovereign Art Foundation who have sponsored this invaluable programme since 2011, allowing us to enrich our children's lives with arts & music. It is only through the kind generosity of our sponsors that we are able to continue our work with some of the world's most vulnerable children. If you or your organisation are interested in sponsoring CNCF please contact us.

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