



EDUCATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME
Annual Report 2014

Recognition for academic achievements

Programme Description

Established	2002
Locations	Ho Chi Minh City, Kien Giang Province, Long An Province
Target groups:	Underprivileged children, street children requiring educational assistance
Local partners	Kien Giang – Department of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs, Long An Union of Friendship Organization, other local partners in Ho Chi Minh City.
Sponsors:	BCG Partners, CNCF UK
CNCF staff	Mr Nicolas Pistolas [Director], Ms Son Thu Trinh [Vice Director], Ms Hoang Tu Uyen [Coordinator], Ms Phan Thi Que Khanh [Officer]
Monitoring visits	Daily
CNCF involvement:	Continuous involvement Budget 2014 US\$62,233 Actuals US\$58,797 ²
Future plans	Continue to provide education support and complementary support (career counselling, life skills training, bicycle and computer support etc.) to students in Ho Chi Minh City, Long An Province and Kien Giang Province. Establish and strengthen partnership with local partners. Improve database.
Reporting period	January to December 2014
Compiled by:	Ms Hoang Tu Uyen [Coordinator]

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

² Unaudited amount so this figure may change subject to auditor's report.



Table of Contents

PROGRAMME BACKGROUND	5
PROGRAMME OVERVIEW	9
PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES	10
SUCCESS STORIES	14





Some of the Children supported by our programme

Programme Background

We see education as crucial to the growth and development of every child and as key to breaking the poverty cycle. Without education children have no means to develop beyond the social sphere into which they are born. Education gives children a chance, a sense of worth, hope and an opportunity for change and ultimately gives children the tools to be able to change their own lives.

In the short-term, school provides a refuge from danger and from poverty but long-term it is the means by which a child can permanently escape these.

Vietnam has made significant progress with its education system over the past two decades and children now have universal access to basic education services. However, they still face considerable challenges and obstacles in accessing education in both urban and rural areas.

Besides school enrollment fees, families are also required to pay for: reading materials, transportation fees, uniforms and other additional expenses. For many of Vietnam's poorest families, the costs involved in sending their children to school are simply too much of a burden and well beyond their financial means.

According to a 2013 UNICEF report on Out of School children in Viet Nam¹, part of a global multi-party initiative to provide all children with access to education, there are over 1.1 million children aged between 5-14 years old who do not attend school

in Vietnam. Their research showed a dramatic increase in the school dropout rate as the child's age increases, with more children out of school in urban areas than in rural provinces.

"Excluded children (never enrolled, dropped out or at risk) were poor children, children living in remote areas, ethnic minority children, children with disabilities, working children, and migrant children. In addition, there were smaller numbers of children affected by or infected with HIV, orphans, street children, trafficked children and children in other special circumstances. These children were potentially at risk of dropping out, and a number of them had already dropped out."²

The reasons, says UNICEF, are diverse and complex; they range from the family simply being too poor to be able to afford the cost of the education, to being unable to get the child to school easily, to a lack of appropriate decision making within the education sector. In many cases the family is unaware of the long-term value of education, so the child does not receive adequate support and drops out of school.

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

¹ & ² Out of School Children in Viet Nam: A Country Study, published by UNICEF in Hanoi, December 2013, page 11



feeling deprived, embarrassed, picked on, or bullied. As a result, they more often face future struggles in marital and other relationships.”³

Research, however, indicates that if you can get the children into school and help them stay there, there is a huge opportunity to turn around the negative impacts of poverty. Through our Education Assistance Programme we provide scholarships to children whose families are otherwise unable to afford schooling. Our aim is to ensure that children are supported to remain in the education system. Over the past 12 years we have provided support to around 350 students each year at primary through to university level.

The financial support we provide to our children covers school related expenses and university fees. Our EAP offers scholarships to eligible students from Ho Chi Minh City and also from poor rural provinces in the Mekong Delta region.

We also provide additional student support where we identify it as relevant in the form of career counselling, life skills training, and the provision of computer, laptops and bicycles.

To date EAP has provided financial support to about 3,000 disadvantaged students, from Ho Chi Minh City and in the Provinces of Kien Giang, Long An, Ben Tre and Tien Giang.

Children who are accepted into the programme are either:

- Orphans or street children living with relatives

- From large families with parents who are disabled, low income earners (under 100 USD per person per month for HCMC or under 50 USD per person per month in the provinces) or not in regular employment.
- Those affected by the sudden loss of finances due to parents getting divorced, bankruptcy, or a serious accident to the primary income earner.
- The general rule is that only one child per family can qualify for the EAP but this is occasionally waived for families in desperate need.

³ Eric Jensen “Teaching With Poverty In Mind: What Being Poor Does To Kids’ Brains And What Schools Can Do About It” ASCD, 2009



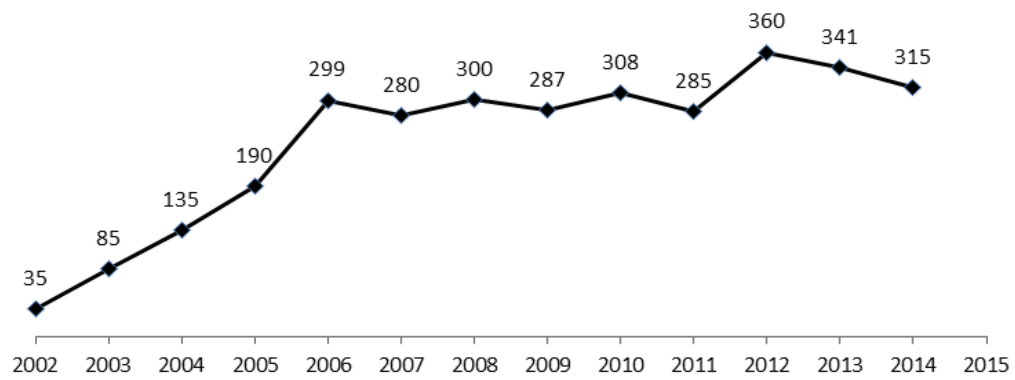


Chart 1: Number of EAP beneficiaries from 2002 to 2014



During a home visit



Scholarship distribution day



Scholarship distribution day



University students supported by our programme



Programme Overview

As at 31 December 2014, we had 315 students in our EAP, 175 from Ho Chi Minh City, 90 from Kien Giang Province and 50 from Long An Province. In 2014, there were 93 cessations of financial support due to:

- 17 students graduated
- 30 left school
- 45 moved to another region, had improved family financial situations or another reason.

We admitted 45 new children to the programme who were carefully selected according to the programme criteria. We verified each case by visiting the home of each new child. In total, we conducted 85 home visits last year, including verifying new applicants and also following up on existing cases.

In 2014, 73 bicycle kits were distributed to EAP students, a sharp increase compared to 2013 [47 bicycle kits]. The students who received bicycle kits are from HCMC, Long An Province and Kien Giang Province. Additionally, eight university and college students received good quality second hand laptops from the Donation Programme. This support was really important to them because as university and college students, they need access to a computer to complete their assignments and they need to be IT literate to be employable.

Our EAP children also joined our group excursions to local amusement parks and received extra support such as shoes, cooking oil, etc.

EAP maintained close communication and cooperation with existing local partners, including Kien Giang DELISA, Long An UFO and other local partners in HCMC.

In 2014, EAP has also commenced official partnerships with Thao Dan Charity Group and Tuong Lai Project, making it possible to provide better support to EAP students who are under the supervision of these two local partners for the very first time. By the end of 2014 EAP had also started working in partnership with Dong Nai UFO and we expect to sign an official agreement in 2015.

Thanks to the generous support from donors EAP is able to continue to provide financial assistance and on-going support to our children.



Programme Activities

Education Support

EDUCATION LEVELS

In 2014, EAP provided financial support to 315 students from Ho Chi Minh City, Kien Giang Province and Long An Province:

- 100 elementary,
- 131 secondary,
- 63 high school and
- 21 vocational training, college and university students.

Education Level	Grade	HCMC	Kien Giang	Long An	Total	%
Primary School	1st	0	5	1	6	2%
	2nd	0	11	10	21	7%
	3rd	4	17	5	26	8%
	4th	3	11	4	18	6%
	5th	6	16	7	29	9%
	Total	13	60	27	100	32%
Secondary School	6th	26	9	8	43	14%
	7th	19	4	11	34	11%
	8th	16	5	2	23	7%
	9th	25	4	2	31	10%
	Total	86	22	23	131	42%
High School	10th	18	1	0	19	6%
	11th	17	3	0	20	6%
	12th	20	4	0	24	8%
	Total	55	8	0	63	20%
Higher Education	Vocational Training	5	0	0	5	2%
	College/University	16	0	0	16	5%
	Total	21	0	0	21	7%
Total		175	90	50	315	100%

Table 1: statistics of children's education (school year 2014 - 2015)



DISBURSEMENT

In 2014 all EAP students received fixed scholarships. The total scholarship disbursement in 2014 was VND 650,540,000.00 - equivalent to USD 30,934². A higher proportion of primary students were introduced by local partners this year as older children graduated. We also continue to see a worrying number of children withdraw from school prematurely due to financial pressures and we are working with all of our children's families to try to address this issue.

SCHOOL REPORTS

Our EAP team collects school reports from students at the end of each semester to monitor progress and verify attendance rates. The team review the school reports carefully and provide the students with counselling where any issues are identified.

Grade		Result (2013-2014)							Total
		Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	Fail	Drop-out	Not submitted	
Elementary	1st	4	0	1	0	1	0	0	6
	2nd	9	6	6	0	0	0	0	21
	3rd	13	9	2	1	1	0	0	26
	4th	3	9	6	0	0	0	0	18
	5th	1	20	8	0	0	0	0	29
Subtotal		30	44	23	1	2	0	0	100
Secondary	6th	12	7	16	6	0	1	1	43
	7th	12	10	9	2	0	1	0	34
	8th	4	9	9	1	0	0	0	23
	9th	10	15	5	0	0	1	0	31
	Subtotal		38	41	39	9	0	3	1
High school	10th	4	4	7	1	0	2	1	19
	11th	0	12	6	1	1	1	0	21
	12th	4	12	6	0	0	0	1	23
Subtotal		8	28	19	2	1	3	2	63
Vocational		0	2	1	1	0	0	1	5
College/University		1	5	9	1	0	0	0	16
Subtotal		1	7	10	2	0	0	1	21
Total		77	120	91	14	3	6	4	315

Table 2: EAP's students' school results - school year 2013 - 2014 (as of July 2014)

² Exchange rate = 1 USD: 21,030 VND



In the last academic year 2013 – 2014, 24% of EAP students received marks of excellent and 91% received satisfactory school results, continuing the trend of overall improvement. We are very pleased with the overall increase in our students results but we acknowledge there is more work to be done and continuing improvements to be made. We realise too, that there are still students dropping out of school early and we will continue to work very closely with these individuals to find any possible ways of enabling them to return to school.

Additional Support

BICYCLE SUPPORT

This year 73 of our students received bicycle kits, almost double the bike kits received by our students in 2013. For the second year running, students from outside HCMC were able to receive bicycle kits; working with our supplier we were able to deliver kits to students in Long An and Kien Giang provinces. These students have to travel such a long way to school and previously had to either walk for extremely long distances or take prohibitively expensive motorbike taxis to school. Thanks to our donors generous support, the students now have their new bicycles to make it much easier for them to get to and from school and because it is quicker they have more time for their study.

LAPTOP COMPUTER SUPPORT

EAP also introduced 8 students to receive good quality second hand laptop computers. These are university and college students who really need access to a personal computer to be able to finish their assignments on time and, crucially, in today's job market it is essential to have at least basic IT-literacy. We

would like to be able to continue with this program if more laptops are available.

OTHER SUPPORT

Along with the abovementioned support, EAP also provided additional support such as cooking oil, shoes, stationery and clothes to many of its students. EAP students also joined the excursion to a local children's theme and adventure park.





Bicycle support in the provinces



Bicycle distribution day



Additional support



Lap top computer support

Success Stories

THANH – 1ST YEAR COLLEGE STUDENT

Thanh grew up in an extremely poor Khmer family in Kien Giang Province, a far away region in the Mekong Delta, Southern Vietnam.

We first met Thanh in 2009 when he was in 7th Grade. He loved going to school but we identified he was at very high risk of leaving school just like his two elder brothers before him, who had left school to start work at just ten-years-old to help the family make ends meet.

EAP staff and local partners worked together to bring Thanh back to school and encourage him to pursue his dreams. This year, Thanh graduated from high school and passed the entrance examination to the College of Kien Giang Province, majoring in accounting.

This is a truly wonderful achievement for a Khmer student growing up in poverty. He has brought pride to his family and his community, where so many children have to drop out at a very early age due to the struggle against poverty. We believe that a much brighter, better future is waiting for him once he graduates.

PHAM – GRADUATE

Pham was 17 years old and about to leave school the first time our EAP team met him. He had already worked extremely hard to graduate high school and had passed

the entrance examination to University of Technology and Education, majoring in industrial electricity.

His family being poor, however, was unable to support him in his studies; both Pham's parents were not in regular employment with a low income and six school-age children to take care of.

Pham made the tough decision to cease studying and try to find a job to support his family. EAP staff, however, encouraged him to continue his schooling and supported him with a scholarship.

Pham was so grateful at the opportunity to pursue his studies and he also worked very hard with part-time jobs before and after school, at weekends and in the holidays. He also helped his parents look after the house and his 2 younger siblings whenever he could.

Last year Pham graduated and immediately started his internship in a construction company.


EAP staff were invited to attend his enrolment ceremony, where he burst into tears when saying thanks to his sponsors and the Foundation for making his dream of attending higher education come true.

Pham is now supporting his family, particularly his younger brother and sister.





A mother proud of her daughter's achievements



**“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 -



If you or your organisation are interested in supporting this programme in 2015/2016 please contact our Foundation.
It is only through the kind generosity of others that we are able to continue our work with some of the world's most vulnerable children.

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