

Saigon Children's Charity To 2013 and beyond

October 2008

“Over the last decade, poverty in Vietnam has reduced at a pace almost unmatched anywhere else in the World.” **Việt Nam Poverty Update Report 2006**

“The vision for the next five years goes beyond the quantity of growth, to focus on quality issues.”
Việt Nam Development Report 2006

Saigon Children's Charity

5-year strategy 2009-2013

Summary and key proposals

Undoubtedly whilst there has been momentous change in Việt Nam, there is still much to be done. The government is committed to doing much of the work and has education as a key priority. SCC will carry on doing what it does best in ensuring that we continue to add value and continue to be relevant to the needs of disadvantaged children now and in the future.

SCC will also start on a longer-term process of change to ensure that as the country develops, the services and support that we offer develop accordingly. Determining how long this process will take and therefore exactly when this will happen is problematic but could be, at the current rate of growth and change, within the next 10-15 years.

SCC therefore will, as well as delivering to its 5-year strategy, consider how it can best continue to meet its vision within this time frame and in the medium to long term. This strategy is therefore also predicated on the basis of SCC embarking along a continuum of change such that we will be in a position, with skills and experience already in place, to meet those transformed needs as and when the time requires it. Exactly what these needs will be and how SCC will respond will become clearer over the next 3-5 years and is dependent, partly, on the speed and nature of change in Việt Nam.

The strategy also provides for the organisation to move slowly away from providing direct 'charitable' support towards generating sustainable structures, processes and skills that increase the quality of education and learning in all its forms whilst expanding our work to facilitate universal access for all children – particularly those with disabilities. This also includes closer work with government,ingos and other partners as well as supporting the development of local ngos.

1 Mission statement:

The vision for SCC will remain unchanged – in working towards the elimination of poverty in Vietnam through education. We have adopted a mission to ensure this is consistent with our work and the current and future needs of our stakeholders. Our mission statement is:

“SCC enables disadvantaged children in Vietnam to reach their full potential through receiving a quality education relevant to their needs.”

'Disadvantaged' for SCC means 'any disadvantage physical or mental, visible or invisible which affects a child's ability to access education or to learn to their full potential'.

'Children' for SCC means: any child up to and including 18 years old. The only exception being the provision of additional assistance to young people who have already been a recipient of SCC support in order for them to reach their full potential.

2 Strategy

2.1 The work of SCC will at all times be consistent with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 1990.

2.2 Core elements of the strategy for the years 2009-2013 will be to:

- i. Maintain current core activities – school building, individual child scholarships, Thang Long School and vocational training – but adjusted to meet current and future needs.
- ii. Introduce new and complimentary programmes:
 - Aim to do more for those we currently support
 - Broaden to capture children we do not currently support
 - Be and be recognised as a quality organisation

3 Guiding Principles

The strategy and approach are based on basic principles agreed by the trustee board and reviewed periodically. These are our tactical fundamentals and all our work is based on these.

1. Since education is fundamental to breaking the cycle of poverty, SCC will work to get children into school and ensure they have the best quality and quantity of education too.
2. SCC is never exclusive and will make its support available to all children that fall within its definitions and its mission.
3. We take a holistic view of each child in assisting them into school and to learn – and aim to tackle anything which affects their ability to enter and maintain education and to learn effectively.
4. We will ensure that our work and that of our partners is of the highest quality. The schools we work with are or commit to becoming 'beacons of excellence'.
5. SCC will act and be seen as conductor/social worker/facilitator. We will always look for existing solutions via partners we trust and create new programmes/activities only when we are sure of the need and our ability to meet that need. SCC will always 'add value'.
6. All of our work will be comprehensively researched, monitored and fully evaluated. Results will be disseminated widely.
7. We will always prioritise our work to the children who most need our help.
8. We will always look for ways to involve the local community in designing and delivering solutions and leave behind learning when we can.
9. SCC will always act in a transparent and accountable fashion.

Five-year strategy

Core elements of the strategy for the years 2009-2013 will include:

1 Maintain current activities – but adjust to meet current and future needs

We will maintain the core activities of SCC – Scholarships, School Building, Thang Long School, vocational training and disability school support - adjusted to meet current and future needs.

Individual strategies for each department will be produced detailing the above with specific targets and focus.

2 Introduce new and complimentary programmes - ‘SCC Plus’

During the next five years – SCC will introduce new programmes. The programmes will continue to meet the core mission of SCC but be additional to our current work. We will:

- 2.i** Aim to do more for those we currently support
- 2.ii** Broaden to capture children we do not currently support
- 2.iii** Be and be recognised as a quality organisation

It is likely that these programmes may over the next 5-10 years, replace the other work we do and become core activities. In 2008-09 we will conduct noteworthy and fundamental frontline research into the needs of children, schools, teachers and parents.

Proposal 2.i Aim to do more for those we currently support

‘Poverty’ and ‘education’ are not simple or straightforward. SCC will provide solutions and opportunities where there are gaps in meeting our mission statement and where the government or other partners cannot or do not provide what is required.

This option is partly met through existing schemes such as the ‘Extra Help’ programme’. We cannot however do everything and some choices need to be made. Projects from the list below will be piloted, adapted and changed as necessary. We will explore some or all of the following during the next 12-36 months and with input from partners and children. Most of the following fall naturally under existing programmes – the needs as expressed to us by those we have met include:

Scholarships	School Building	Vocational/other
Health advice, nutrition etc	Equipment for schools	Microfinance/micro-credit
Sports/recreational activities	Computers/computer rooms	Life-skills/Skills for Life
Teaching the Teachers	Books/Libraries	Specialist disability work
Family projects	Gardens/play areas	Careers advice
Counselling (Give them a good listening to”)		Building an ‘e’ resource
		Mentoring

Proposal 2.ii

Broaden out to capture ‘disadvantaged children’ we do not currently support. This is primarily but not exclusively about children with a disability.

- It is important to stress that SCC does not plan to become a ‘disability charity’ – and will continue to act as an education-enabling charity but one which supports children with disabilities in the same way as any other child.
- This will primarily mean ensuring that existing programmes increasingly target children falling under the broader description of ‘disadvantage’. For scholarships this means that we will increase the number of children with a disability receiving a scholarship from us and for school building it will mean building or supporting specialist schools or adapting existing schools.
- Whilst we are open to supporting any child with any disability who struggles to get to school it is clear that, at least in the Viêt Nam of 2008, it will be more productive to work with some disabilities than others. We currently work with two deaf schools so SCC will:
 - Continue to support and develop our understanding of deafness and education through our work with My Tho and Tay Ninh schools.
 - Build our understanding of where the gaps are through our Working with Others Scheme.
 - Keep this under review and hold further discussions with the trustees on this area again at the end of 2009.

Proposal 2.iii

Be a quality organisation

This relates not only to the work that we do but the way that we do it. Hence it is as much to do with our administration systems as it is to the delivery of rice or the provision of English at Thang Long School. We would rather do less, better than more but less well.

How we work:

- Quality – we will aim to achieve high quality in everything we do. This will involve:
 - staff training and support
 - setting benchmark standards for schools and partners
 - Engaging our partners in discussions and agreements of quality
 - seeking the best advice we can from wherever we can
 - Communications with our partners and supporters
 - Using volunteers – we will extend our skills and those of our partners through involving qualified and unqualified volunteers.
- We will actively seek out opportunities to partner with other ngos and partners to deliver coordinated support where it is needed most.
- Sustainability of work. SCC will always look for ways of ensuring the sustainability of our work.

How we are seen

- As authoritative and informed.
- As professional and responsible.
- We will introduce some policy work based on our accumulated knowledge and beliefs. These could be expounded and shared with partners through conferences and seminars which would seek to raise the level of awareness and skills of our partners. This will also engage the staff in using a common and shared language. These could include areas such as:
 - Inclusive education and early intervention
 - Corporal punishment
 - Child protection
 - Equal opportunities

This document was discussed at a number of meetings of the trustees and approved by the Chair of the Board of trustees at the annual trustees meeting held on 31st October 2008.

Comments are welcome and encouraged from anyone at anytime on the content of this document.