

saigonchildren

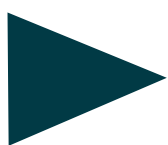
removing barriers to education



# ANNUAL REPORT

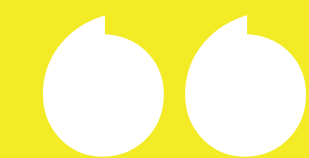


## Academic Year 2020-2021

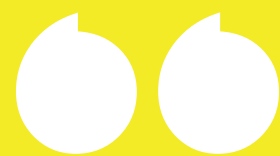


## Child Development Scholarship Programme

***“Enabling disadvantaged children and young adults in Vietnam to reach their full potential through receiving a quality education that is relevant to their needs”***



**Since 1992**







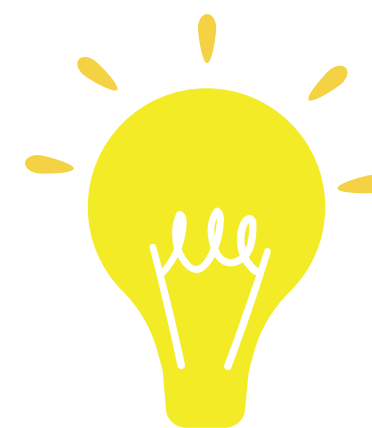
## Mission

The Child Development Scholarship Programme (CDSP) aims to ensure that all children excluded from school, or whose education is jeopardized by poverty, can attend school untroubled by worries about the cost of education to their families until they can stand on their own. We foster independence and never replace the responsibility of parents, the authorities, or the child.

## What we do

We choose students with great care and visit them in their homes. Selection criteria includes the family's financial situation (in accordance with the national poverty standard), the family's ability to earn income, and lack of or limited support from other NGOs or the government. Our diverse scholarship packages depend on student's financial capacity -- university students receive assistance to pay tuition fees, whereas school students generally receive school supplies (textbooks and notebooks), new school uniforms and 10 kg of rice per month during the school year.

**(As of the academic  
year 2020-2021)**



**41,860**  
**scholarships**  
**in 6 provinces**  
**since 1992**



“

**Scholarship  
means** ▶▶▶

”





## A **lever** to lift restrictions on education



**95.8%**

of the total number of  
scholarship students  
completed this school year



**112 bikes**

to students whose  
homes are 3 km away  
from school

**130 children and  
their families**

received urgent support  
(medical treatment, glasses,  
calculators, funeral support, etc.)

**1,814** scholarships  
to **1,872** students in  
**6** provinces of Vietnam





Impact story

# A RIPPLING REWARD OF NEVER GIVING UP

*Never losing hopes in children's endeavors and capabilities is saigonchildren's approach, regardless of their family background, financial status and grade performance at school.*

Every student has their own struggles. Nhat and Oanh are not exceptional cases.



Nhat grew up in Dong Nai, in a family of many brothers and sisters. His dad, a farmer, passed away when Nhat was little, leaving the family in poverty. Nhat became saigonchildren's scholarship recipient starting from high school till university. Now though Nhat's working as an auditor for a company in district 1, hardly does anybody believe he once thought about dropping out of college for making ends meet because he and his family couldn't afford the annual tuition fee of 16 million dong (roughly 700 USD). Despite having part-time work, Nhat couldn't earn enough money for schooling. And due to imbalance between work and study, his results at school were more daunting.

"Upon learning the situation, my mother cried and tried to advise me to be back to school while sisters at saigonchildren encouraged me to finish my programme," shared Nhat. "Months later, I had a chance to join saigonchildren's gathering event for youth development. It was my first time participating in an extracurricular activity outside the school. I feel empowered and inspired when getting along with other peers and saigonchildren's alumni, and learned about their mature outlooks on life. I admired them for what they have achieved and realized I wouldn't be as successful as them if I quit school. Since then, I have been more motivated to study well."

Same as Nhat, Oanh, at first, was also discouraged by financial struggles in pursuit of Interior Design at Van Lang University. Her parents, with the meager income from farming, have supported her schooling, alongside saigonchildren's scholarship.



Oanh recounted: "In the third year of university, the pressure of studying with the intense volume of projects to do, along with the pressure of expenses to spend on those projects, stressed me out. My family was also in financial trouble while I didn't earn much from part-time jobs. I thought about deferring one semester so as to work and earn money. But fortunately, I have the support from saigonchildren. Thanks to the mental and financial support, I could focus more on the study".





### Every child has the power to create a brighter future

As stumbling blocks foster strength and boldness, Nhat and Oanh insisted on studying until graduation. After that, Nhat works as an auditor while Oanh is a designer. They find themselves lucky because they both have a job in the chosen field. Both of them even find passion and strong interests in the sector they pursue. Without a degree, they wouldn't have found satisfaction in the work or discovered different potential in their capabilities. "The biggest meaning that this scholarship and saigonchildren bring to me is the motivation to become the person I am today. I didn't think I could achieve something big like securing the job I've dreamed of," said Oanh.

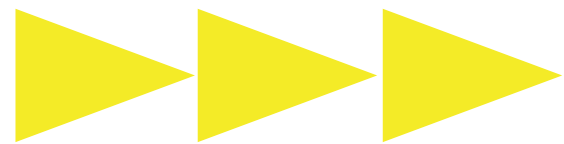
During school years, Oanh even advanced her skills and knowledge in design through work in the related field. She confessed that the more she studied and experienced, the more she was fascinated about the creative industry. After classes, she often worked as a muralist to earn extra income. She also used to design for a famous dairy brand thanks to the network building she had.

Slightly distinct from Oanh, Nhat thinks completing auditing programme at university has brought him many fruitful skills, which can be a good advantage to impress recruiters. In addition, Nhat is also a very active volunteer for saigonchildren, joining the student representative board, fundraising programme management board and organizing student development camp in 2019. "I have demonstrated management skills and been able to communicate and interact with more people. I feel happy because I can contribute to society as well as learn new skills through workshops and events," he shared.

It's been years along the way since saigonchildren cares for Nhat and Oanh when they are little. It can be said that saigonchildren is fortunate to witness their growth and perseverance. Currently, Oanh and Nhat are no longer receive support from the organization. On the path of self-discovery and development, saigonchildren is confident that children within the CDSP programme will achieve greater and more successful in the future.

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# Easing financial burden



**1,537** packs of rice with  
**46,110kg** to **513**  
primary, secondary and high  
school students



**1,551** students  
received school supplies  
and payment for tuition fees



Visit **363** families on **5** trips



**58** sharing sessions to **1,183** parents  
to learn about their struggles and help them  
understand saigonchildren's programmes



**82** sharing sessions to **1,613** students  
to learn about their wishes



**337** students and **17** caregivers  
received counselling





Impact story



# NURTURING DREAMS OF A FUTURE GIFTED SCIENTIST



Phong (grade 12) is the youngest son in a family of four. He is currently residing in Cu Chi district with his parents and an older brother. His father is a mason, but due to frequent pains and diseases, he can only work for 10 days a month, earning around 2,5 or 3 million dong (around US\$127) per month, and his mother is a seasonal housekeeper with an income up to 1,5 million dong (US\$63) per month. Meanwhile, the family also has to take care of Phong's brother whose mental disability makes him unable to take care of himself. Despite the hardship, Phong has logged four prominent trophies in maths alongside high performance in his studies. He won a provincial excellence award in grade 9, Olympic Silver Medal in grade 10, the First prize in Casio maths award and the Third prize awarded at the city level.

***His father shared: "Phong has received a scholarship since he was in primary school. The scholarship helps our family a lot because it covers part of the tuition fees, clothes, and books for Phong to go to school. The scholarship is also a motivation for him to strive for success in his studies and is also the direction of my striving ever since. When finding out that Phong had received a scholarship, he was very happy, so he could study with peace of mind and don't have to worry about tuition fees. Because he knows the family situation, he always makes efforts and always achieves excellently. His brother is sick, so we as his parents also expect Phong to study hard to have a future."***



Phong is expecting to have the entrance exam to enroll in the university. He aspired to study the following sectors: Chemical Engineering, Mechatronics, or Chemistry at either the University of Science and Technology or University of Natural Sciences. With his tireless effort towards studying, saigonchildren believes Phong can position himself well in any career path he chooses.





# Community Connection

In this school year, we hosted **4 visit trips** for major donors.

## Thuan, a government official from Women's Union in District 9, HCMC



"The first impression is the warm affection of the staff towards students and their relatives. The heartfelt greetings, encouragement, and educating life lessons have cultivated the students' motivation and willpower to overcome challenges to become the excellent ones, the individuals helpful to society and the community. Whenever and wherever it may be, I always pay my homage towards saigonchildren. They are fairies, Buddhas in this everyday life. I wish them always with peace, good health so that the unfortunate lives, poor children and vulnerable people will always receive cares and supports in a timely manner."

## Lan, a teacher in Binh Hoa Secondary School



"There are students who are abandoned by their parents, so they lack emotional and mental reliance, and consequently, fall into a state of psychological instability, carelessness, and laziness to study. It is the organization's considerate action that helps the children regain their faith in life, kindness, be more optimistic and eager to learn.

Every time students receive a gift or money from the programme, they show smiles. Their eyes sparkle with happiness because they can go to school with peace of mind, learn better every day in order to correspond to the trust saigonchildren has given to them."



## CONTINUING A LEGACY

Saigon Children's Charity recently admitted 200 more children, all from disadvantaged backgrounds into our Child Development Scholarship Programme. These children used to receive scholarship support from the Dat Viet Charity, an initiative founded in 1998 by Nguyen Quoc My, a Vietnamese residing in Canada. For over 20 years Mr. My had provided scholarships for numerous impoverished children, many of them coming from families with parents suffering from disabilities or diseases such as leprosy. At the start of 2020, Dat Viet Charity was supporting a total of 200 children.



***I have been in touch with several charity organisations, but all of them declined to help because they cannot offer the same long term commitment that saigonchildren offers – following and supporting these students until their graduations.***

Due to the hardship caused by COVID-19 as well as the fact that My is now over 70 years old and unable to carry this charity initiative into a sustainable future, Dat Viet and saigonchildren organised a transferral of students, in order to impact their education as little as possible during a time of global upheaval. Despite saigonchildren facing their own difficulties during this pandemic, the organisation could not turn away 200 students in need of an education, especially with the knowledge that without saigonchildren's support, the children would be liable to drop out of school and discontinue their educational journeys, harming their bright futures.

My explains how Dat Viet came into being, and why he chose saigonchildren: "During a trip



to Vietnam, while visiting a leprosy camp, I was told by a leprosy patient that even though he was suffering from pain every day that couldn't be alleviated, his greatest desire was for his children to go to school, and forge lives of their own out of the camp. That's why I started Dat Viet Charity. For over 20 years, myself and Jean-Marc Mignot (a volunteer who is also in his 70s) ran the charity and fundraised. Now, I can pass the baton on to saigonchildren with peace of mind, knowing that the children are still in the hands of an organisation that will fight for their educations. I have been in touch with several charity organisations, but all of them declined to help because they cannot offer the same long term commitment that saigonchildren offers – following and supporting these students until their graduations."

According to Huong, saigonchildren's Head of Programmes, from next school year, the scholarships received by these 200 children will be of a higher value than they have been previously accustomed to, in order to provide the customary level of scholarship funding provided by saigonchildren.

These 200 children have raised the total number of children supported by saigonchildren's scholarship programme to under 2,000 children. This is no small increase and will inevitably put pressure on the fundraising and administration aspects of our work. However, more than anything, we are happy that these children have continued to be given the opportunity to build better futures for themselves – there is no greater gift than education. They will join the family of saigonchildren's scholars and benefit from not just the scholarships but also all the counselling, events, urgent support, and networks that we provide to our scholarship students.

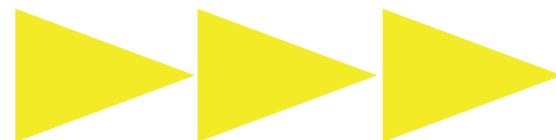






## Striving towards education inclusion

**17** scholarships  
have been provided  
to students with  
hearing  
impairments



**"I'm so excited! These new hearing aids can even connect with my phone to adjust noise sensitivity. I think I can wear them all day now. I only wore my old ones in the classroom because they would hurt my ears if the volume was too high. Now you can speak from behind me and I can still hear you," Cuong said to saigonchildren's staff, giddy with delight.**

When saigonchildren's social workers first visited Cuong's home in Dong Nai province, his mother, Nhan, was worried that we were scammers coming to deceive her family and take advantage of her disability. Her hearing impairment made the conversation quite difficult as she did not have a hearing aid, and could only interpret a few words through lip reading.

Born with hearing impairment and into an impoverished family, Nhan had to stop going to school after grade 5, restricting her to now working basic labouring jobs such as weeding at nearby gardens.

After getting married and giving birth to Cuong, life, unfortunately, did not get easier for Nhan and her little family. When Cuong was 11 years old, he started to lose his hearing, and after Cuong's younger sister was born, their father left the family without paying any child support. Since then, it has been just the three of them fending for each other. Grade 9 was when Cuong completely lost his hearing and was given his first pair of hearing aid – though they were mismatched and didn't work well all the time.

Despite fighting poverty and hearing impairment, Cuong continues to strive forward, insisting on staying in school and pursuing his education. He is now a high school student and a recipient of saigonchildren's scholarship programme. He has also managed to set up a small online business selling phone accessories to help his mother with family expenses – as since the pandemic broke out, the jobs available to Cuong's mother have decreased significantly.

Their family of three now depend largely on the income of Cuong's small online business. The boy's dream is to one day study electrical engineering in order to earn a good job and support his mother and sister.

Thanks to generous donors through a crowd-funding campaign, Cuong was sponsored with a brand-new pair of hearing aid valued at US\$1,600. On 23rd December, saigonchildren's staff accompanied Cuong for the fitting of the new hearing aids, which have the ability to connect to mobile phones, allowing him to adjust the sensitivity depending on different environments. There are many challenges still awaiting Cuong and his family but as long as Cuong feels more empowered to conquer his dream, there are still hopes for a brighter future.





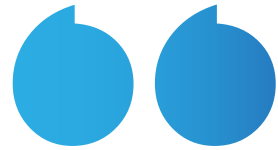
# WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

A series of training sessions relating to women empowerment was conducted from April 17 - June 6, 2021, with the participation of 28 female students. The sessions cover the following areas: Self-awareness, effective communications and emotional control, empathy, teamwork and problem solving, creative mindset, and self-planning.



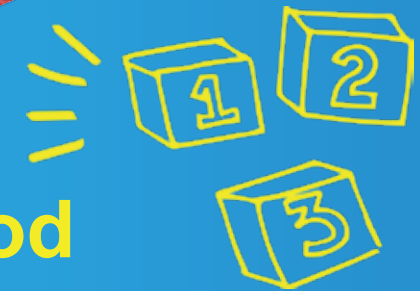
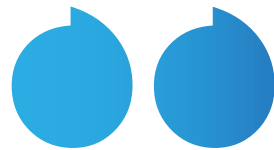


# COVID-19 EMERGENCY SUPPORT



My family has 5 members, my grandparents, my mom, my younger sister, and me. My mom has cerebral palsy and was tricked into going to China, so the only source of income is from my 60-year-old grandfather by delivering fish to the market at night. Since the COVID-19 outbreak, my family, already facing financial struggles, face even more hardship, specifically in regard to my grandfather's job. Therefore, I would like to thank saigonchildren for supporting us with basic necessities, helping my family overcome the difficulties caused by COVID-19. This gift brought my family a warm, happy, and fulfilling time. I am extremely grateful for the support as it represents a message of encouragement and love that everyone has gifted to me and my family. I promise to do my best to study at school, and conquer many more challenges, paving the way for a brighter future to support my family.

**Tran Minh Thu - 17 years old**



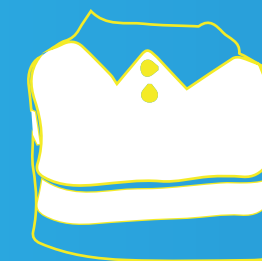
**1,994 food  
packages**

for students whose families are struggling  
with unemployment



**6 provinces**

(Tay Ninh, Dong Nai, Ho  
Chi Minh, Tien Giang, Tra  
Vinh, and Hau Giang)



**406 sets of new  
clothes and  
blankets**





**saigonchildren**

removing barriers to education

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