



saigonchildren

removing barriers to education

# 2021

**ANNUAL  
REPORT**





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## Message from our Chairman



**David Appleton**

*Chairman of the Board of Trustees*

The impact of the COVID pandemic was felt more keenly in Vietnam in 2021 than in 2020. The arrival of the Delta variant led to tens of thousands of deaths, healthcare stretched well beyond capacity, millions out-of-work, and the entire population enduring strict lockdowns for many weeks, unable to leave home for any reason other than a serious medical emergency.

Against this devastating backdrop, the worst affected were the most economically vulnerable – those with insecure jobs, particularly internal migrants, those with no savings, those living close to the poverty line; in short, our beneficiaries and their families.

In the context of this, the work of saigonchildren became more important than at any other time in our history. Saigonchildren's urgent support included food – equivalent to more than six million meals – money for rent, toys, games, books and learning materials.

The COVID support campaigns, principally urgent covid relief but also campaigns to support children orphaned by COVID and to enable online learning for children who previously had no Internet or digital devices, were well-supported by the public and so, despite the unavoidable cancellation of many of our planned fundraising activities, I am delighted that the charity adapted quickly to the challenging environment and once again raised more money and helped more children than in any other year in our 29-year history.

Saigonchildren's focus remains on the most disadvantaged in society: ethnic minority groups, girls, rural communities, and children with developmental challenges. Throughout our emergency appeals, we also maintained our core activity across all four programmes.

My sincere thanks go to every single supporter, volunteer and partner around the world whose enthusiasm for our work has made it possible to protect and transform the lives of Vietnamese children and young people during their most difficult times.

## Message from our Executive Director

After successfully overcoming the challenges of 2020, our hopes for more stability in 2021 were short-lived as COVID finally broke out at scale in Vietnam. Schools and workplaces remained closed for months, and much of the population lived under 24-hour curfew for many weeks. In Ho Chi Minh City, the military enforced a 24-hour lockdown in Ho Chi Minh City for nearly two months.

Despite the saigonchildren office being closed and most of the team unable to go outside for anything other than a medical emergency, the team responded positively and pivoted our fundraising and programme work to suit the difficult conditions. We raised money through online campaigns, purchased food, toys and learning materials from wholesalers, and liaised with local authorities & other grassroots institutions to deliver help to those in greatest need throughout the lockdown.

By intervening to help families and children at the time when they were most vulnerable, saigonchildren has ensured that they survived the worst of the pandemic without facing ruin, and are in a position to rebuild their financial security and ability to continue in education. Our campaigns to support online learning also accelerated learning for many poor children, and we provided additional vital help in tragic circumstances through our COVID orphans project 'You Are Not Alone'.



**Damien Roberts**

*Executive Director*

2021 will be a memorable year for many reasons, but the paramount memory for me will be that when Vietnam's children faced the worst conditions for more than a generation, and the saigonchildren team also faced tremendous barriers to working, we came together with our global supporters and provided timely and comprehensive support which may have saved lives, and definitely saved thousands of children from being forced to leave their education and their dreams in their past.

## OUR MISSION

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



"Everyone had to work remotely - there wasn't any in-person opportunities to interact with each other which felt very isolating and lonely. Every day, every week, every month, I was watching the news to see if there was any improvement with the pandemic so that we could celebrate when we could go back to work in person."

**Pham Thi Viet Ha**  
*Social Worker*

"COVID-19 disrupted our work and projects from all viewpoints. The financial aspect of all the projects were also unstable and hard to maintain due to quarantine. All the fees and needed funds for projects kept increasing."

**Nguyen Hoang Phuong**  
*School Building Program Manager*

## 2021 at a glance

**6** school projects completed

**1,814** scholarships awarded

**544** enrollments in vocational courses and skills training

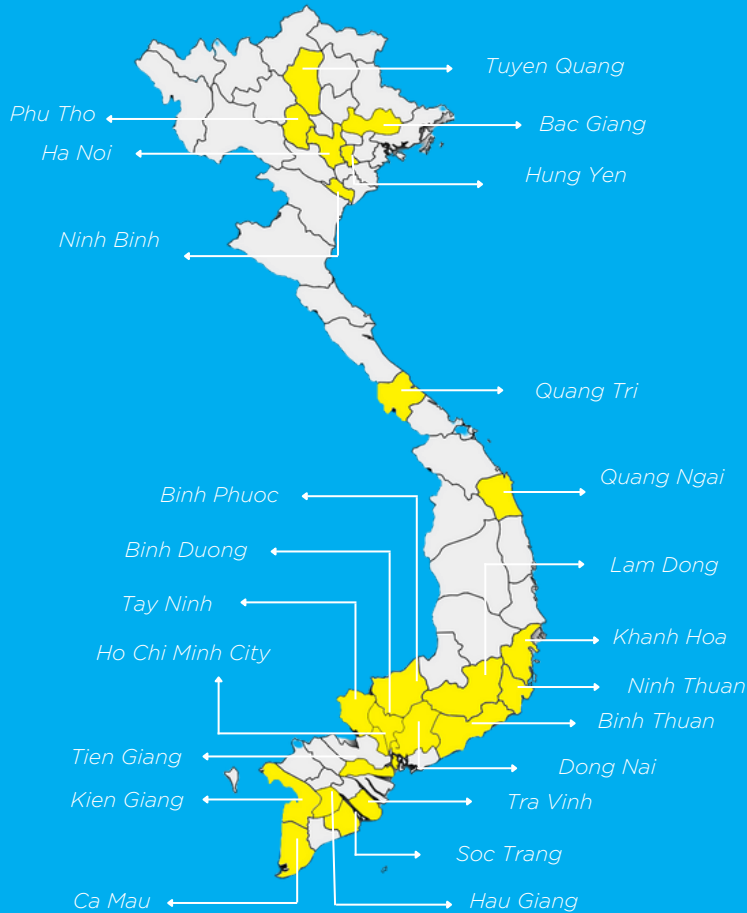
**974** children with disabilities supported

**68,640** people received emergency aid

**213** students supported with online learning

**98** COVID orphans received long-term support

# Where we work



## COVID support areas



Bac Giang  
Ho Chi Minh City  
Binh Duong  
Dong Nai  
Tay Ninh  
Tien Giang  
Hau Giang  
Tra Vinh

# PROGRAMME *School Building*

## School projects:

*4 primary schools*

*1 kindergarten*

*1 toilet block*

**796**  
*students*

**14**  
*classrooms*

**6**  
*school projects*

Saigonchildren builds schools in disadvantaged areas, often serving ethnic minority communities, where existing facilities have become unsafe or unsuitable, and in places where children must travel a long distance to school. We use private donations and government contributions to build publicly owned and operated schools.

We use these schools and our strong community network to strengthen awareness and understanding of various vital issues, including: sustainability, environmental protection, health and inclusion.



# Son Ca Kindergarten

In 2021, with the help of saigonchildren's Sports Ambassador Matthew Donald, we rebuilt Son Ca Kindergarten for 56 kindergarteners. The project offers two new classrooms with toilets, a playground and a warehouse with a total area of 200 square meters. Mr Matthew Donald helped fund this school by organising a boxing event that donated \$60,000 to the School Building programme.



# PROGRAMME

## School Building



In 2021 Saigon Children's Charity opened its 221st school in Nhon Hung commune. B Nhon Hung primary school will support the education of 150 students aged 6 to 11.

# B Nhon Hung Primary School

## PROGRAMME

# Child Development Scholarship

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



1,814  
scholarships

---

130  
emergency  
support  
packages

---

122  
bicycles  
rewarded



"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.

**Cuong - scholarship recipient**

  
Read my story



## No job is beyond a girl's reach

Suong is in her final years at Ho Chi Minh City Industry and Trade College, majoring in Automotive Engineering. In Grade 10, she received saigonchildren's scholarship for the first time. Throughout her three years in high school, she always put her best efforts into everything, being a support system for her mother to lean on and a role model for her younger brother to look up to.

Suong grew up in Dong Nai in a small house filled with her mother's and grandmother's love, but Suong has never felt the love from a father figure. Because of this, Suong supports her mom with everything in the house - from fixing electricity to heavy manual labour.

Suong chose automotive engineering based on her own personal interests, not to prove anything to others. She knows that her strength lies in her meticulousness and resilience - she isn't afraid to work hard, and enjoys working with technology. "Apart from studying, I also participate in movements organised by the faculty. I was also elected to be the deputy secretary of the faculty and was nominated for the school's executive committee. Getting to participate in social work has always been a dream of mine" - an excerpt from the letter Suong sent saigonchildren.

**Suong - scholarship recipient**

  
Read my story



## PROGRAMME *Getting Ready for Work*

The GRFW program aims to ensure disadvantaged young adults have the opportunity to advance themselves, assimilate into work and social life, and increase their employability status through a range of vocational training courses. Courses offered include:

HAIRDRESSER, HOME ELECTRICAL TECHNICIAN, NAILS TECHNICIAN, HOSPITALITY, MECHANICS.

**362**

Students in English skills training

**136**

Disadvantaged youth enrolled in vocational training

**46**

Students in IT skills training



## Getting Ready For Work

"I'm glad that I can study English - whether it be face-to-face or online. Despite obstacles, I'm happy to see my friends and teachers. Thanks to the support of my class, I was able to overcome my weaknesses in communication, and now very much enjoy talking and socialising with my peers. Everybody is easy to get close to - they're kind and patient. Everybody wants to get to know each other better and support one another. The learning material is also incredibly beneficial. Besides teaching material from the textbook, my teacher further expands our knowledge with outside material - and sometimes, even organises fun activities to improve our understanding.

My Thang Long school is like that. Everyone is easy-going. All the teachers are dedicated to teaching us - and in turn, all the students are respectful and listen attentively to the teachers. Whether it be face-to-face or online learning, I still enjoy it because I like Thang Long school. I hope I can achieve something life-changing in the future, and that disadvantaged students have the opportunity to go to school.

**Pham Dinh Thinh - Student at Thang Long English class**

Read my story



# PROGRAMME

## Special Needs Education

The Special Needs Education Programme aims to support access to the best educational opportunities for children with disabilities. With support from physical therapists and specialist organisations, this program enables education and social development activities for children with special needs, including community-based identification, early intervention, and training for parents.

778

*children with  
autism  
supported*

300

*parents  
trained*

166

*wheelchairs  
distributed*

### Projects

- Community based rehabilitation and inclusive education
- Training the Trainers in autism expertise
- Providing early intervention to children with autism
- Distributing wheelchairs to children with mobility impairment
- Sending Tet gifts to children with autism from low-income families
- Online training for parents of children with autism



# Special Needs Education Programme

*"Sometimes teachers of children with autism have to teach them everything - down to things that seem like basic instinct for a child - like sitting on a chair, how to play with a toy, how to go to the toilet by themselves, or self-services such as eating with a spoon and drinking water from a cup, ..."*

**Hien - Saigonchildren's Early Intervention Specialist for children with autism.**

*"These children were born at a disadvantage compared to others - it's an unlucky thing that no one wishes for themselves. We all hope that there will be more safe spaces and financial support for them, so that they can play freely and explore the world. We hope that schools and society will become more understanding and empathetic of the difficulties children with autism face, so that they can have more opportunities to integrate and develop themselves in the best way possible."*

**Ngan - Saigonchildren's Early Intervention Specialist for children with autism.**

[Read my story](#)





## COVID 19 in Vietnam: 2021

**32,394**  
*deaths*

**16.5%**  
*jobs loss*

*over*  
**2,000**  
*orphans*

2021 was the year when Vietnam was most affected by the pandemic. Strict lockdowns that lasted for months at a time and forbid people to go out except for medical emergencies affected millions of people, especially vulnerable families whose livelihoods depended on the street economy.

Saigonchildren's work was also severely interrupted as everything had to be carried out online. However, thanks to the support of our community of donors and volunteers, we managed to still be there for deprived children and their families by providing food and mental health support, online learning devices and Internet connectivity for disadvantaged children, and long-term educational and psychological support for children who have lost a parent due to COVID.

## RESPONSE TO COVID 19

### *Backpacks of Resilience*

The education of children and their mental and physical well-being has faced enormous strains throughout COVID as low-income families began facing the risk of hunger and malnutrition due to food shortages and widespread unemployment.

With children's lives threatened, we decided to send "COVID Backpacks" to thousands of children and their families in COVID-affected areas across the country so they could eat, learn and be protected.

**\$655,404** \*  
*raised*

**68,640** \*  
*people supported*

**14,921** \*  
*food packages  
delivered*

\*total number at the end of the project, from May 2021 to May 2022



## RESPONSE TO COVID 19

### *Back Together*

The pandemic disrupted the education of many children across Vietnam due to limited access to vital learning tools such as computers, online lessons, or the Internet.

Online learning only works when children know how to learn and stay safe online, which is what the Back Together campaign ensured.

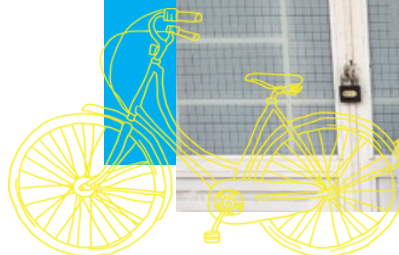
Technology devices, Internet access, online training, and school supplies were provided to disadvantaged students across Vietnam.

94% of children we help do not have a laptop to learn.

**\$16,943**  
*raised*

**58**  
*smart phones*

**213**  
*internet data  
connections*



## T's Story

T is a senior at a junior high school in District 5, Ho Chi Minh City. Her family used to include her father, mother and brother - living together at their grandmother's house in District 10 - until her father passed away after the COVID "storm".

After her father's death, T's mother became the only person to nurture and take care of them, with a salary of 5 million VND (US\$200) from working as a fisherwoman. Pain and difficulties piled up on her learning path and future. But T. did not give up.

"My dream is to continue pursuing my education and enrol in Foreign Trade University so that I can help my mother in the future. My biggest wish is probably for my mother's health so we can overcome this difficulty as a family."

## RESPONSE TO COVID 19

### You Are Not Alone

In 2021, saigonchildren partnered with the Capacity Building and Support Center for Women and Children (CSWC) and the Management and Sustainable Development Institute (MSD) to launch the campaign "You Are Not Alone" to provide holistic support to children from low-income families who have lost at least a parent/primary caretaker to COVID-19.

**\$97,319**  
raised

**98**  
children supported





## OTHER ONLINE CAMPAIGNS

### *Small Steps into the New Year*

In this online campaign for Vietnamese Lunar New Year, the community supported saigonchildren in giving gifts, consisting of development-appropriate toys, to children with autism in our early intervention project.

### *The Mekong Challenge*

Heart of Darkness Craft Brewery created “The Mekong Challenge”, where participants could walk once, run twice, or bike four times the length of the Mekong in Vietnam (226km) to fundraise for children in need. In total, this campaign successfully raised \$56,490 for saigonchildren’s work.

### *The Steps Challenge*

In 2021, saigonchildren’s annual The Steps Challenge, to raise awareness and funds for children with autism, has attracted:

- 1,130 participants
- 22 corporate and associations
- \$18,000

### *Unwrapping Hope*

The Unwrapping Hope campaign raised awareness of the toll the pandemic was taking on children and their families through a series of stories of kids that Saigon Children’s Charity is supporting.

Thanks to the support of the community, \$9,088 was raised in this campaign to go towards saigonchildren’s work.

# Staff Testimonials



*How was working from home different from working in-person?*

**Quế Ngọc**  
*Child Development Scholarship Programme Officer*

"Even though I'm based outside of HCMC and have been used to working remotely, coordinating the work when everyone was working from home was another challenge. However, we learned to adapt as quickly as possible and supported each other when needed because providing timely support to our beneficiaries is our number one priority."



*What is your favorite saigonchildren's event in 2021?*

**Đỗ Thị Bạch Phát**  
*Getting Ready For Work Programme Officer/Social Worker*

"Giving Tet gifts to underprivileged children with our donors was one of my best work memories in 2021. This connection between donors and beneficiaries also helped a lot when the difficult times of 2021 came."

*What did you miss most about the times you worked directly at the office?*

**Thùy Dương**  
*Communications and Engagement Officer*

"I missed being able to talk to my colleagues at the office. I had also missed the Friday fruit parties and other small snack parties we had at the office, but during the lockdowns we also came up with creative ways to stay connected."



*What do you hope for saigonchildren?*

**Nguyễn Thị Vân Anh**  
*Child Scholarship Development Programme Officer*

"I hope all of our staff and their families remain healthy and well; because when we and our families are well, we are able to focus and perform better on our projects and work."



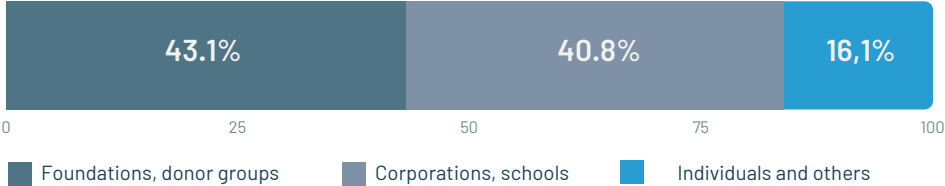
## Financial Overview

Total operating revenue for the year ended 31 December 2021 (USD)			
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
<b>Total operating revenue</b>	<b>247,872</b>	<b>1,472,184</b>	<b>1,720,056</b>

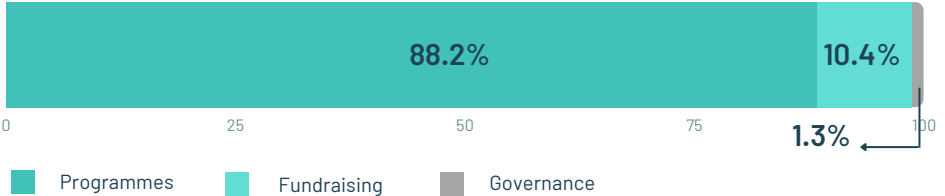
Total expenditure for the year ended 31 December 2021 (USD)			
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
<i>Charitable activities:</i>			
School Building	-	208,743	208,743
Child Development Scholarship Programme	-	391,229	391,229
Getting Ready for Work	-	142,525	142,525
Special Needs Education Programme	-	59,927	59,927
COVID-19 Appeal	-	574,975	574,975
You are not alone	-	84,441	84,441
<i>Cost of generating funds:</i>			
Fundraising	41,510	131,120	172,630
<i>Governance:</i>	3,178	19,124	22,302
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>44,688</b>	<b>1,612,084</b>	<b>1,656,772</b>

# Financial Overview

Where funds  
come from



Where funds  
are spent



# Thank You

*We sincerely thank all the sponsors, including those not present on this page, for their constant commitment to Saigon Children's Charity in 2021.*



Mathew Donald  
Corrina C S Lim  
Tsan My Linh/ Linh Tran



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[www.saigonchildren.com](http://www.saigonchildren.com)