



CHILD DEVELOPMENT
SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME

Annual report

Academic Year 2022-2023





Saigon Children's Charity CIO (saigonchildren) was founded in 1992 to help disadvantaged children get an education and a fairer start in life.

saigonchildren works exclusively across the whole of Vietnam to overcome barriers to education for children, including poverty, geography, knowledge and disability.

About Child Scholarship Development Program

MISSION

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 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 provide students with **financial** and **non-financial assistance** to help them reach their full potential. Our **diverse scholarship packages** depend on students' needs: university students receive assistance to **pay tuition fees**, whereas school students **receive school supplies**. **Soft-skill training and social care** (personal counselling and urgent support for students and their families) play an essential role in the programme.

HOW WE DO

We take a **holistic approach** to keep children in education through a **community-based child development support network** (parents, teachers and community leaders).

The children most in need are identified through a **careful process** and **selection criteria** including the family's financial situation, the family's ability to earn income, limited support from other NGOs or the government.

We **hold regular meetings** with the children and, where possible, with their families to assess and reassess their needs and maintain contact to ensure they continue to have what they need to attend school.



Learning without worries

Learning without worries

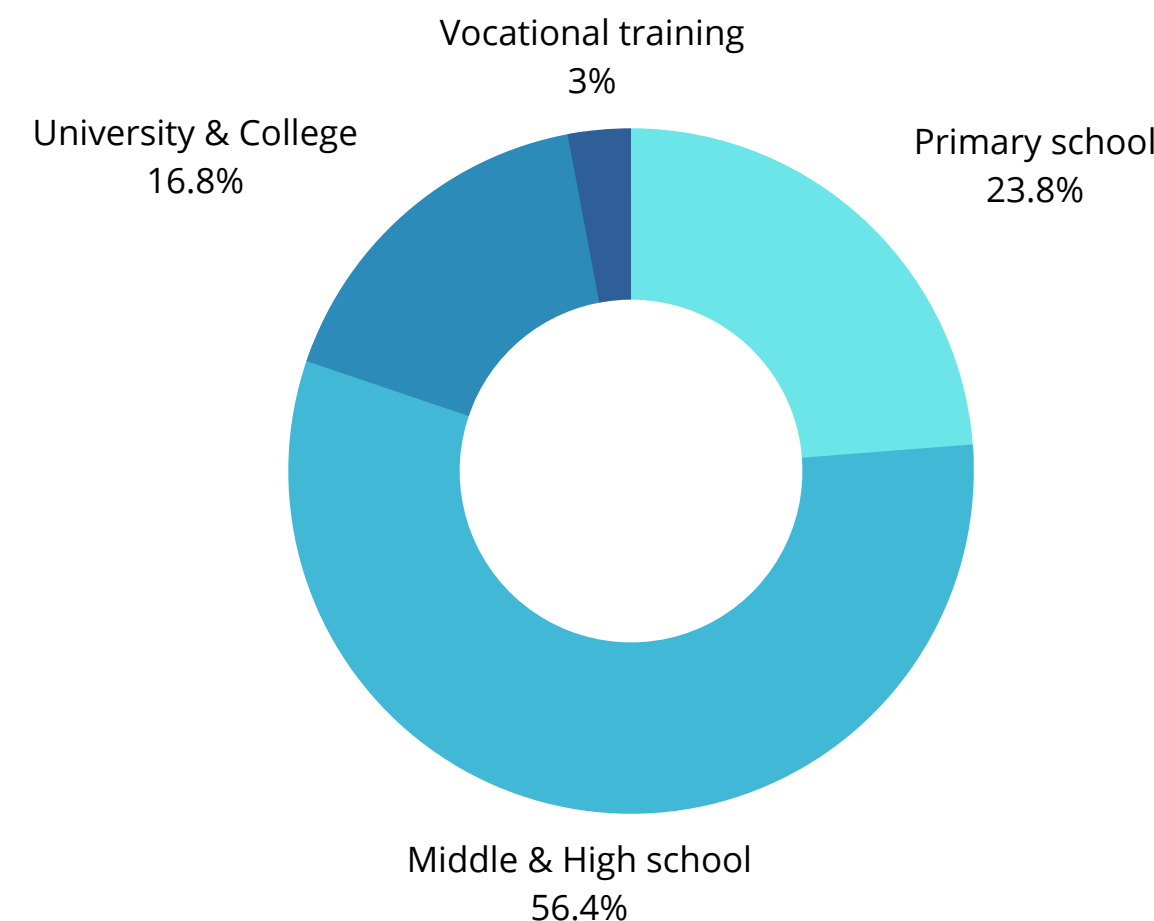
Scholarships funded by our sponsors are used to pay for students' tuition and school fees, thereby alleviate their financial worries and reduce risks of drop-outs.

 **1,899**
scholarships given to
1,989 students

 **1,866**
students finished 2022-
2023 school year

 **50**
students graduating
from tertiary level

Percentage of scholarship
student by educational levels



M.'s story

M. has Thalassemia, a blood disorder which requires her to stay in the hospital for examination for five days each month. Her father does odd jobs, including motorbike taxi, for around 200,000 VND (~\$9) daily. But he has a degenerative spine condition that causes chronic pain, especially when the weather turns cold. As M.'s poor health requires constant care, her mother cannot have a set schedule to pick up a stable job.

M.'s family lives in a government-supported house with a corrugated iron roof and brick walls. The family's most valuable asset is an old motorbike used by her father for work. The family has a total debt of nearly 50 million VND (~\$2,200) borrowed to pay for M.'s treatment and house construction. They pay about 350,000 VND in monthly interest.



The support package from saigonchildren provides some financial assistance, enabling M.'s to continue treatment. Assured by the support, her mother says, *"I'm very grateful to saigonchildren. The support we receive helps me buy food for M. at the hospital and covers part of the transportation expenses. It truly makes the trips easier."*

Five years ago, M.'s mother was overwhelmed with anxiety when the doctor announced that M.'s liver and heart were severely affected, and her overall health was weak. After several conversations and much emotional support, her mother's mental state became more stable, and M.'s eating habits and mobility improved. When asked about her aspirations and wishes for M.'s future, her mother shared, *"I just want her to study as much as she can."*

Beyond



financial



support



Beyond financial support

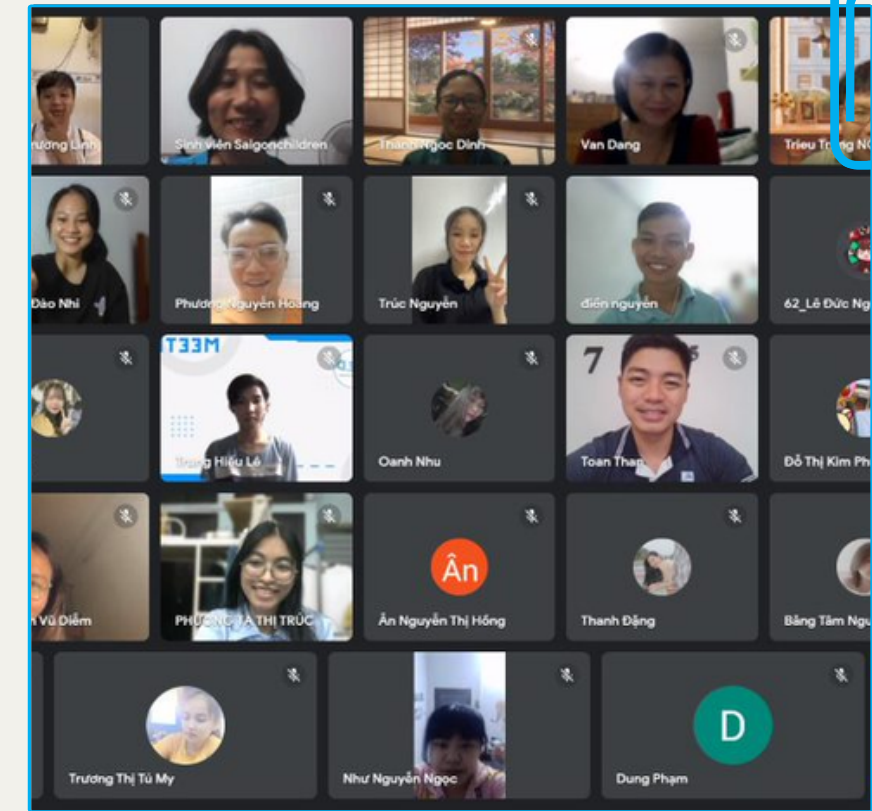
Besides scholarships, saigonchildren provide several soft skill training, counseling and mentoring programs to facilitating children's comprehensive development outside academia.



705 students joined training sessions



76 students received 1-on-1 counseling



62 students joined mentoring program

O.'s story - Small wins, big inspiration



O. is currently a freshman majoring in Management Information Systems. Her father died in 2017 from a traffic accident, leaving her mother the sole provider. O. and her older brother are both university students, so all the pressure is on my mother, who opened her vegetable shop at home to make money. O.'s mother will send 2.000.000 VND (~\$87) to each child monthly for expenses.

O. currently lives in the dormitory at the school. Talking about the difficulties when entering university, she said that she struggled to adapt to the independent lifestyle, which dragged down her academic results during the first semester. However, as the second one came around, she adapted and improved her grades. O. plans to look for a part-time job to afford her living expenses and reduce her mother's burden.

O. is very grateful to receive a scholarship from saigonchildren, which allows her to participate in helpful training and workshops. **O. was particularly impressed with the sharing session on Financial Management Skills, during which the confident attitude and knowledge imparted by the guest speaker and participants motivated her to improve herself.** Besides the inspirational atmosphere, the workshop was practical for O. as she learned the basics of personal finance, which she expects to apply soon after she gets a part-time job and begins to have income.



Beyond financial support

Saigonchildren also provides study supplies packs, resilience packs, and sponsor gifts to enhance living standards of students as well as their families.



43

children receiving
calculators



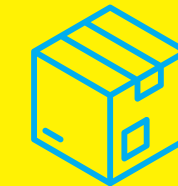
46

children receiving
refurbished laptops



2000+

children receiving
gifts from sponsors



86

children receiving
resilience packages

Beyond financial support

We design the support package to comprehensively cover the needs of students and families



School supplies pack

No.	Item	Amount
1	Book "You can change the world"	1
2	96-page "SNOOPY" notebook	10
3	Gel pen 0.29 mm - Blue	4
4	Thien Long pen 0.5 mm Blue	5
5	2B Thien Long pencil GP-01	5
6	Large Campus Standard eraser	1
7	20cm plastic ruler WinW SR-30	1



Resilience pack

No.	Item	Unit	Amount
1	Rice	kg	20
2	Chicken-flavored Gau Do instant noodle	box	1
3	De Nhi soy sauce 500ml	bottle	1
4	De Nhi fish sauce 900ml	bottle	1
5	Tuong An cooking oil 1L	bottle	1
6	Coba refined sugar	kg	1

No.	Item	Unit	Amount
7	Three-Lady canned fish 155g	can	6
8	Ninja pork sausage 175g	pack	21
9	Vissan Chinese sausage 500g	pack	1
10	Ngoi sao condensed milk 380g	can	2
11	Canned pork	can	2
12	Sunlight lemon dish soap	bottle	1

N.'s story - Simple joy from a calculator

N. is an 8th grader at the local secondary school. She lives with her grandparents after her parents' divorce. Both remarried, but her father refused to pay for child support while her mother, earning a meagre monthly salary of 3 million VND (~\$130), cannot provide consistently.

Her grandmother, jobless at 59 years old, relies on the modest yield of her poorly-cultivated agricultural land and odd jobs to earn a sum of 1,5-2 million VND per month. Her grandfather had a stroke and became completely paralyzed.

As a toddler, N. got polio fever that weakened her left leg and rendered her reliant on leg braces to walk. As the braces must be replaced yearly to accommodate her growth and are only free for kids under 6 years old, her grandmother had to scramble for money or relied on the kindness of donors to afford her new braces for the past years.

Her handicap left N. feeling self-conscious and lonely as she cannot go to school by herself or run around with friends on the schoolyard. Regardless, she manages to achieve good academic performance and after school, supports her grandmother with the odd jobs.

Receiving saigonchildren's scholarship, **N. finds joy in getting new supplies to replace her passed down textbooks. Particularly, having a calculator lifted her grades in natural sciences subjects from average 6 to an outstanding 9 or 10.** N. and her family are thankful for all the support she received and determined to return the kindness.



H.'s story - A happy holiday

H.'s mother is a housewife with no income as she has a leg handicap from childhood polio fever. She also has several health conditions, namely high blood pressure and degenerative arthritis, requiring daily medicine paid for by health insurance. His father passed away from prolonged kidney failure in 2019.

Their house is built on the support of acquaintances and family. Materials were donated, and relatives did construction work. H.'s father only built the front and back walls; the side ones are those of his relatives' houses next door. The only valuable possession is the three-wheeled motorbike H.'s mother uses for transportation.

As for income, the family relies on government grants, 480.000 VND for single parents and 720,000 VND for disabled people every month. Besides the essential expenses, the payment is allocated to paying the 50.00.000 VND bank debt for the father's treatment with an interest of 500.000 VND per month. Needless to say, it has been a constant struggle for Huy and his mother to subsist on such a modest amount every month.

H. received a support package, including food and school supplies, from saigonchildren around December 2022. **As Tet was near, H.'s mother appreciated the support, which included rice and necessities, alleviating her worries as the holiday approached.**



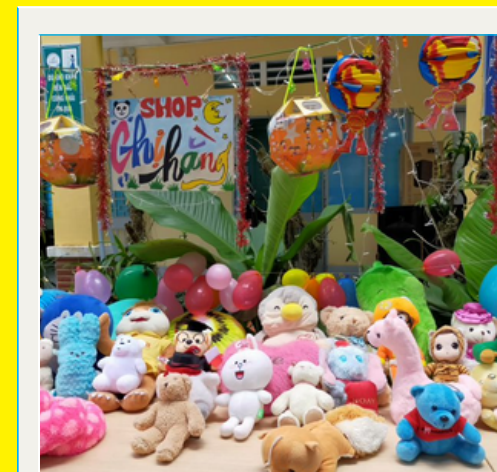
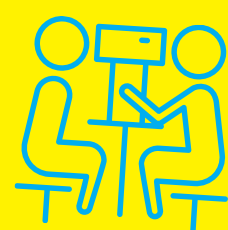
Beyond financial support

In addition to providing necessities, we also strive to take care of children's well-being and social life.

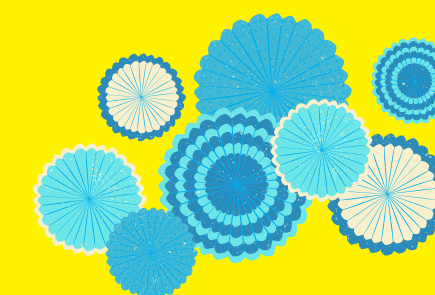
86



children received
an eye check-up

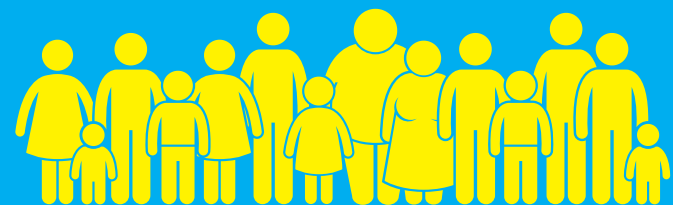


75



children joined the
Mid-Autumn festival

It takes a village...



...to raise a child

It takes a village to raise a child

Despite the progress made, obstacles remain, as **82 children** dropped out of school in the 2022-2023 school year. **Several are at risk of quitting** and **many are struggling** to focus on learning when their basic needs are not being met.

In moments like this, the saying: "**It takes a village to raise a child**" rings truer than ever. Our support is most useful when children also receive the necessary attention and care from their caregivers and surrounding community.



Parent/caregiver engagement

Reasons for dropping out are diverse. In most cases, the child has no say in the decision and remain entirely dependent on their caregivers.

By engaging with parents, we strive to ensure that parents are willing and able to provide necessary care for their children.



Community development

Even for those in school, external factors like family poverty, malnutrition, etc derive them of basic needs, render it hard to prioritize learning.

Community engagement then is essential to care for the kids and ensure that they can focus on their own growth, especially in education.

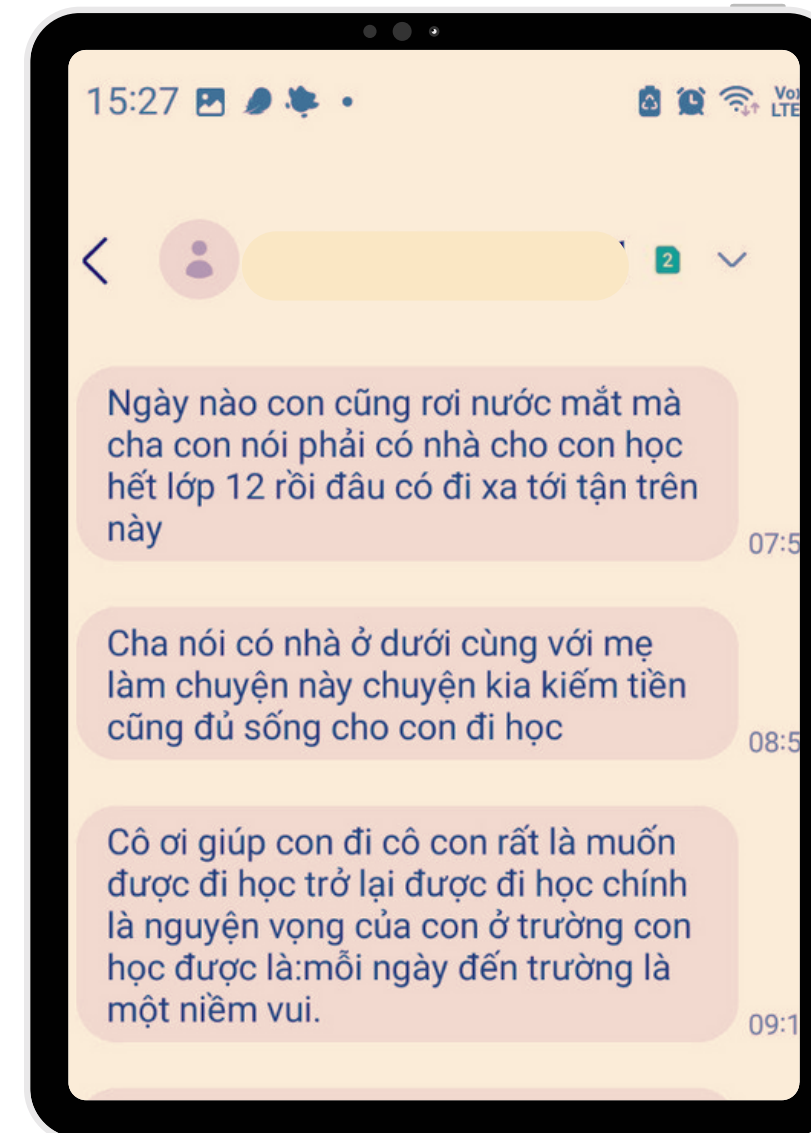
N.'s story: One of our failures (1/2)

Saigonchildren staff first met N. when he received our scholarship in May last year. He struck us as a lovely, studious boy whose biggest dream is to finish 12th grade. Little did we know just a few months later, he would have to end his studies and move to Binh Duong with his family for the prospects of better-paying jobs despite intervention efforts from his school and saigonchildren.

In Binh Duong, N.'s father works in waste sorting for a private company located 5km away from the family's rented house. N.'s father is illiterate so every day, N. would accompany him and read the street names to help his father navigate his way for work.

N. stays in a small, windowless room with nothing else to do. Feeling trapped and bored, N. said: "Every day of my life feels like prison". N. contacted saigonchildren as well as his relatives, hoping someone could convince his father to let him return to school. Saigonchildren staff consistently tried to contact N.'s father but unsuccessfully before N.'s father blocked our numbers, so we decided to go to Binh Duong to persuade his parents directly. ...

Some of N.'s messages to our staff



Translation

- *I cry everyday but my father said there are kids who finish 12th grade but never make it as far as here (in Binh Duong)*
- *He said there are families mom knows that have to do any jobs to put their kids through school*
- *Ms, please help me, I really miss school, going to school and learning everyday is my joy*

N.'s story: One of our failures (2/2)

...Guided carefully by N., we found our way to the family's small rented room of about 16m2 including a toilet, kitchen, and a backrest for N. and his parents. There is no separate room or partition for personal activities. After talking to the parents for 2 hours, we tried to offer solutions to all of their concerns.

First, we offered to take N. back to his hometown where he could go to his old school and stay at his uncle's house. Despite the agreement from the uncle, N.'s father rejected on the ground that N. might be mistreated and exploited by the relative. Then, we suggested he transfer N. to a school in Binh Duong but was turned down again with all kinds of excuses: N. wouldn't be able to catch up, the school is too far away (although the nearest one is only 2km away), the family has no money for tuition, etc.

Despite our best efforts, his father wouldn't relent, saying: "I'm not educated but look, I can still earn a living. Even if he goes to school, he will still end up like me, working for someone in a factory somewhere. What's the point anyway?". So he decided he would just wait for N. to turn 15 and begin working with him.

N. is forced to leave education, in the hope he can help his father make money. Maybe we were too late. At saigonchildren believe that this sacrifice is a tragedy. We have thousands of children with thousands of stories, but every single one of them matters deeply to us and to you, their supporters.

A must to involve parents/caregivers

We had more than **2,000 engagements with caregivers** to understand and assist them with their hardships.

1

Family visits

2

Parent meetings

3

1-on-1 counseling



800

families visited



1,511

engagements with
parents/caregivers at meetings

Community development is necessary

Children are usually hit hard by external circumstances. Many areas or schools we work in lack basic facilities (i.e: drinking water) to ensure a comfortable learning environment. In addition, the weakened post-COVID economy also means their parents, many of whom are factory workers, are laid off and cannot earn enough to provide for their basic needs. To remedy this, we engage with sponsors to improve the school facilities and provide light meals for children



3

schools got purified water systems installed



500

children and parents attended Nutrition Day to learn more about nutritional values of food and hygiene habits before meals



1,018

children receive daily supplementary meals



Safe water for all

This year, we installed purified water systems for **3 primary schools** in Can Gio District that benefit **900 students** and **30 teachers** in total.

School principals said that **fresh water is very precious to mangrove areas such as Can Gio district**, especially An Thoi Dong and Ly Nhon communes, because there is still no main water pipeline from the government. Fresh water is transported locally by barges at a very high cost.

So students attending school must bring their own water bottle or pay a fee to use the large 20-liter bottles provided by the local production facility. But the quality of those bottles is not guaranteed by local private suppliers. Therefore, purified water machine for students and teachers is immensely **necessary to ensure their good health**.

The water purifiers are highly appreciated by local authorities. From now on, students can drink water more comfortably than before. Not only serving students and school staff, local residents living near the area also benefit and contribute to the maintenance of equipment.





CHILD DEVELOPMENT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME

Thank you!

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