



Child Development Scholarship Programme

ANNUAL REPORT

23 - 24

Beyond Support: A Community
of Growth and Giving

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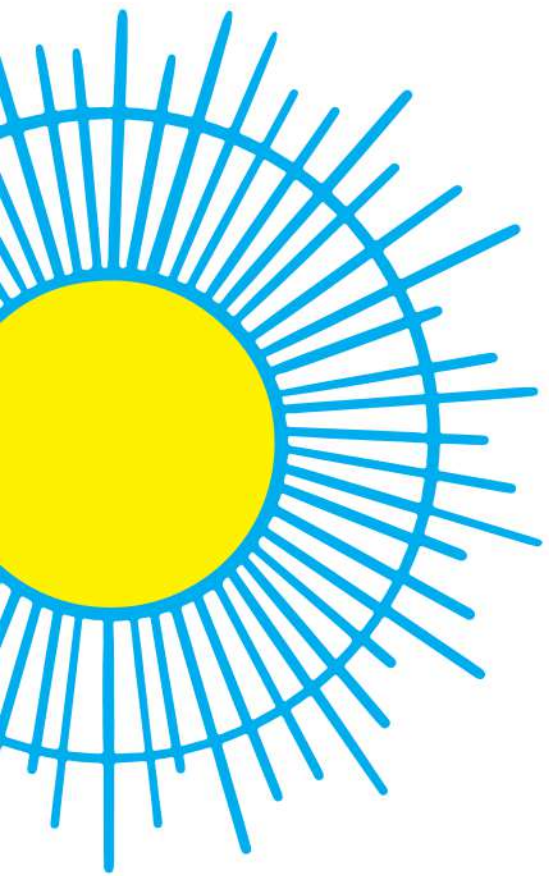
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About saigonchildren

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 disabilities.



Child Development Scholarship Programme

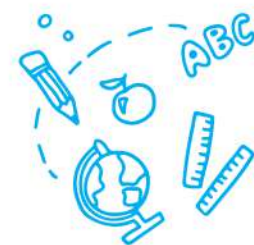
Child Development Scholarship Programme (CDSP) removes barriers to education by providing scholarships – including tuition fees, books, rice, uniforms, stationery and social care – to children from disadvantaged backgrounds from primary school to university.

We know that with targeted financial, practical, emotional and professional support, our youngsters can thrive in education, then secure great jobs and utterly transform their lives forever.



Mission

We 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.



Approach

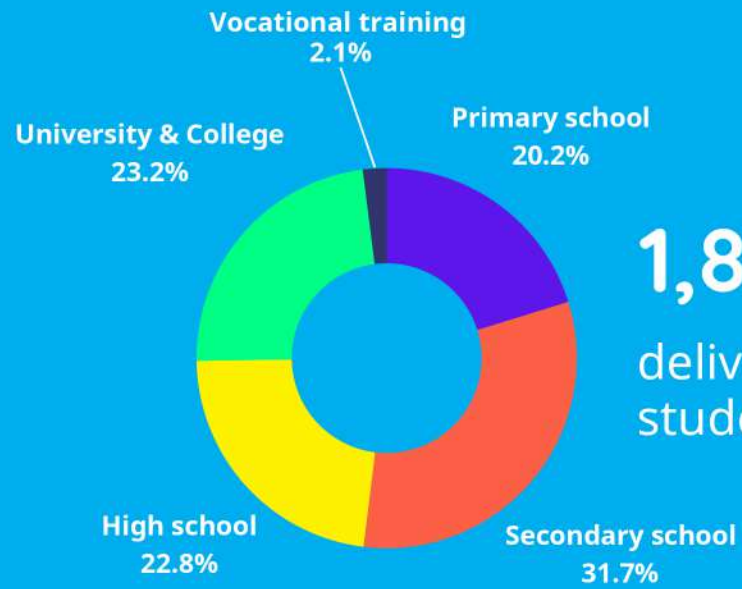
We take a holistic approach to keep children in education through a community-based child development support network (parents, teachers and community leaders).





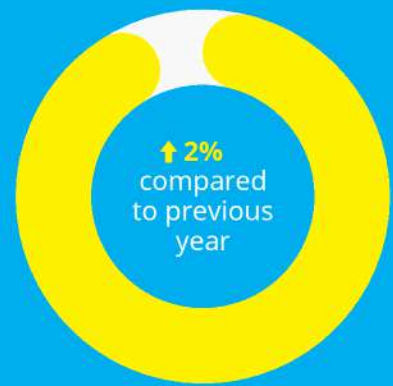
SCHOOL YEAR IN REVIEW





1,845 scholarships

delivered to 1,895 disadvantaged students



1,803 students

completed the 2023-2024 school year



89 students

will graduate from tertiary level

School year milestones

This year, the new scholarship package which covers a larger portion of students' study fees, thus, further relieving the financial burden for families.

A welcome side-effect of the change, moreover, is that it frees teachers from chasing delayed payments of cost items (i.e. health insurance) which were previously not covered by scholarships to focus on their main vocation.





Continuous, bespoke and long-term support

In addition to covering study costs, the scholarships also address other barriers to education including lack of study materials, proper nutrition and necessary transportation. In 2023-2024, together we:

- Distributed **30 notebooks per student**, which are expected to last for a significant portion of the year.
- Distributed **90kg of rice per student** which is the average annual consumption of a Vietnamese citizen*.
- Delivered **46 bikes** to students who otherwise would have to walk over 3km under the scorching heat to school.

Other items including calculators, prescription glasses, hearing aids, etc. are also provided depending on students' specific needs and circumstances.



Internet Safety Training

http://



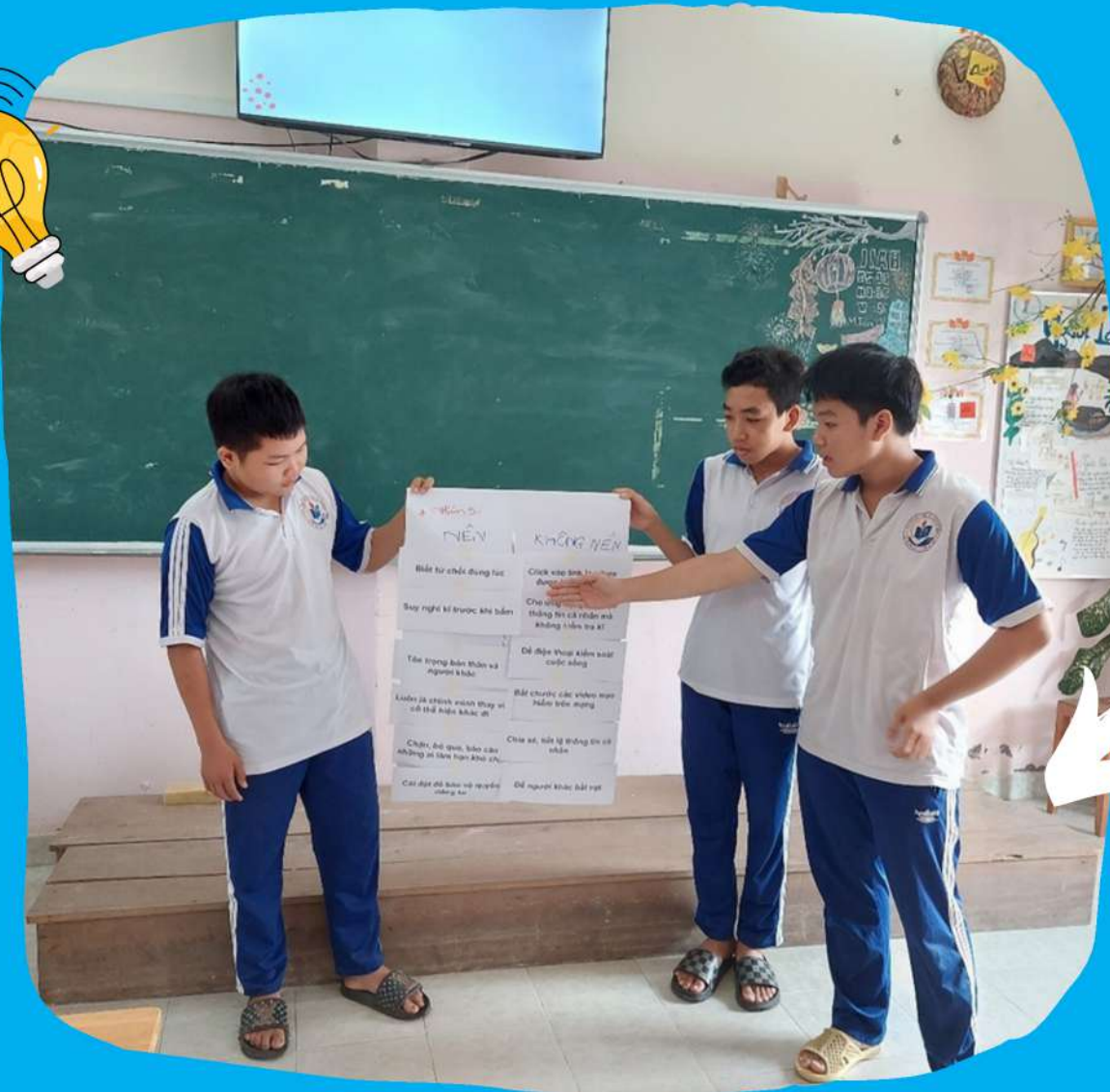
Too often, we see children from disadvantaged backgrounds who are not able to access the guidance or opportunities to keep themselves safe, or to develop social skills and knowledge necessary to flourish.

That's why our scholarship goes beyond financial aid and offers workshops to equip them with skills to help them shine beyond academics. These workshops serve as a breath of fresh air, a chance for them to learn in teams and express their opinions in front of others.

13 workshops on Internet safety
for all students across regions

Universally relevant and
important topics

Interactive workshops
with active participation
from students



Mid-Autumn Festival

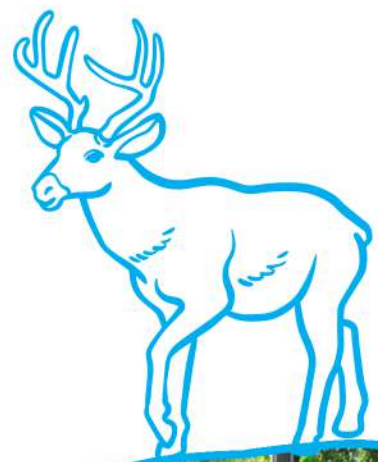
Over 200 students from primary to high school levels in Đồng Nai were treated to a full day of Mid-Autumn Festival fun, with exciting games, music performances, snacks and a captivating play presented by saigonchildren's tertiary students and alumni.



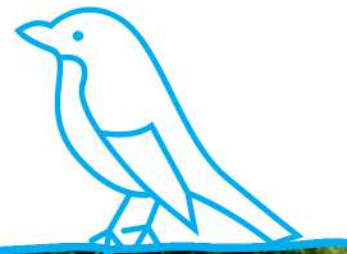
Tết Celebration

Lunar New Year Celebration was held in Cần Giờ district with the participation of around 150 students. Their creativity blossomed as they teamed up to craft beautiful New Year's greetings in calligraphy and decorate clay piggy banks as teams.





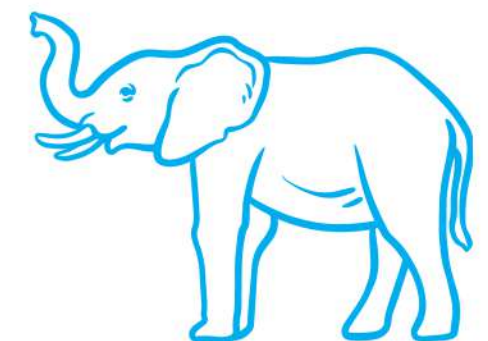
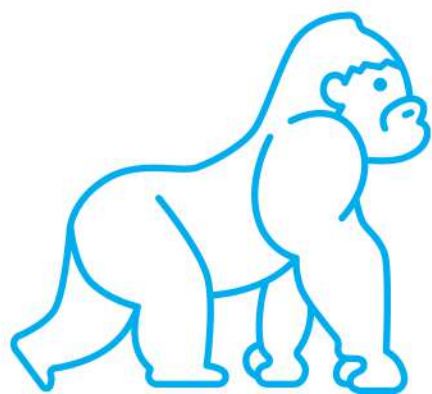
Zoo Gathering for Outstanding students



As a reward for the students' hard work and resilience, a trip to Thảo Cầm Viên Zoo & Botanical Garden was organised for 200 high-achieving students.

For many of them, this is the first time or one of the few occasions they travelled out of their hometowns which was a novel and exciting experience.

At the zoo, they saw and learnt about a variety of animals, participated in group games and met new friends. The trip is an important memory of their childhood and motivates them to study hard despite difficult circumstances.



My's story as a scholarship recipient



Hi! I'm My, and I just finished 9th grade. School is my happy place, so I wouldn't be able to imagine not seeing my friends and learning new things.

Biology is my easiest subject, while English is definitely the most challenging. Remembering all the vocabulary is a big hurdle, which is why I only got average marks last year. I'm determined to improve my English though, and I'm using apps like Duolingo and am considering taking extra classes next year. Even though English is tough, I love my teacher, Ms. Khanh. She's always cheerful and her teaching style is really clear.

In the future, I dream of studying business administration and becoming a successful entrepreneur to provide a better future for my family.

I started receiving a scholarship in 6th grade, and I'm so grateful for it! It helps ease the financial burden on my mom. During the pandemic, my studies were at risk of being interrupted because my phone kept failing. But thanks to the timely support from Saigon Children's Charity, I received a new phone and was able to resume my learning. I still use this phone every day for schooling and communication.

I also participate in many programme activities like the Internet Safety training, the Mid-Autumn Festival celebration, and the zoo outing. I love these activities because they're not only fun but also very useful. They help me learn new things and make new friends.





CONTINUOUS ENGAGEMENT WITH STUDENTS & PARENTS



Semesterly meetings with students & parents

A key principle of the programme is to ensure families are engaged in the education of their children. As parents and caregivers spend most of their energy making a living, we understand some may struggle to actively participate in their children's study. However, parental involvement is crucial. It fosters a love of learning, boosts children's confidence and communication skills, and ultimately improves their life outcomes.

Accordingly, we organise meetings with children and their caregivers every semester during which we discuss upcoming activities and programme regulations. Additionally, these meetings are an opportunity for our social workers to stay abreast of the children's home life, providing guidance or intervention when they face difficulties and challenges.

65 meetings with 1,305 students

59 meetings with 1,258 parents



Semesterly meetings with university students

Perhaps even more than K-12 children, tertiary students need proper guidance and support to navigate young adulthood and academic life in the big cities. Semesterly meetings are when saigonchildren's staff can meet the students and provide relevant training to help them overcome these hurdles.

For the first semester, we hosted a workshop on sex education, sparking lively interaction and a constant stream of questions from engaged students.



During the second semester meeting, a debate was hosted for the first time by a long-time professional supporter.

The topic of career orientation stimulated thought-provoking opinions which our students actively debated. This activity honed their public speaking skills, developed their knowledge and encouraged their depth of thought.



Graduation ceremony 2024



The second semester meeting concludes with a celebration for our graduating university and college students. This year, we're delighted to witness the success of **42 graduates**, alongside the vibrant presence of over 200 current tertiary students. Here are a glimpse into their promising future:

- All of them are the first in their families to finish university/college education.
- **12%** graduated with Distinction and **86%** completed with Good ranking/
- Nearly all students (**98%**) secured full-time jobs within 18 months after graduation and **60%** earn between 250 and 500 USD per month.

This ceremony celebrated their unwavering hard work in overcoming countless challenges, but also provided a platform for our new graduates to share their personal stories and motivate current students.

Congratulations to our new graduates!

HAPPY
GRADUATION



Giving back by saigonchildren's tertiary students and alumni



In addition to semester meetings, tertiary students and alumni have many opportunities to hone various skills and give back to their community by organising programme events.

All annual activities of the programme including Mid-Autumn Festival, Tết Celebration, Zoo Outing, Summer Camp are led by our **110 tertiary students and alumni**.

The organising team would brainstorm event theme, activities, scout location, prepare acting/singing performances, etc. to create the best experiences for participants.

Cát Tường, our student, contributed her own illustration for saigonchildren's 2024 H.U.E Art Exhibition. Her work was on display and purchased to fundraise so that more children have opportunities to continue their education.

Her painting is inspired by a cherished childhood memory when she would hang out, explore the area and do quizzes with her brother in a small "forest" behind school. Through her work, she aspires to capture the boundless curiosity and adventurous spirit that defines childhood.



Sharing by Phương, saigonchildren's programme officer working with tertiary students

"The programme organises several workshops and learning activities for tertiary student every school year. However, some students would regularly miss these events. One such student is M., a second-year student at FPT University majoring in Software Engineering. He has been receiving the scholarship since grade 2. Despite being a long-time scholarship recipient, M. is not active in the myriad activities for university students. Upon speaking with M., I discovered his internal struggle.

Self-conscious about his family's financial situation, M. tends to be withdrawn and not too sociable. During his free time, he helps his parents sell street food at a nearby park. Yet, beneath this insecurity lies an ambitious and resilient young man who simply needs a little guidance and encouragement. He chose FPT University despite the high tuition, believing the high educational quality will prepare him well for his future career.

Through regular chats, I listened to his worries and highlighted the activities' benefits for M.'s growth and career. He took my words seriously, attending his first workshop – a fun and interactive event hosted by our partner. The experience brought smiles and engagement, and he even committed to joining the summer camp.

M.'s story exemplifies how students, beyond financial aid, flourish with guidance and care. That's why we try to closely monitor our students' well-being, offer timely support that empowers them to become their best selves."



Ms. Phương
Programme officer



M. smiling while joining an
activity in the workshop





DONOR PARTNERSHIP AND SUPPORT



Gift delivery & Hosting games with students

Gift Delivery

Hundreds of gifts including essential food packages, personal hygiene products, toys, sport equipment, etc. were gifted to our students by generous and caring donors.

The gifts demonstrated their continuous care and commitment to the development of children and surrounding community.



Hosting fun and interactive games

Besides meaningful gifts, many donors, in order to engage actively with students, prepared games with enthusiasm and care.

The activities brought laughter and excitement to children's faces and made students realise how much care and support they have from the larger community.





Scholarship delivery and sharing by senior corporate leaders

Ten university freshmen, many of whom had never visited a high-rise building before, were awarded scholarships and met senior leaders in the office of saigonchildren's corporate donor.

At the meeting, they were given valuable insights into personal growth and the opportunities and challenges facing the younger generations.



“Nurture your future career with soft skills” workshop

The workshop introduced an exciting format that paired each soft skill with a step in the tree planting process.

Students learnt crucial soft skills while decorating their own small plants to take home.



Cát Tường's sharing on workshops attended

Tường, a soon-to-be junior in Medical Laboratory Technology at Hồ Chí Minh City University of Medicine and Pharmacy, leads a double life. Talented in drawing, she began working part-time and doing freelance illustrations to support herself and her brother. She even contributed her artwork to saigonchildren's 2024 H.U.E. Art Exhibition.

However, the pressure can be overwhelming at times, leaving her with little time for personal development. She yearns to develop soft skills and build connections beyond her university studies. That's where saigonchildren's support proves invaluable.

Tường particularly enjoyed the "Nurture Your Future Career with Soft Skills" workshop. This unique programme combined training with creative and engaging hands-on experience - potting small plants that each student could take home as a daily reminder of the workshop's lessons.

Tường was equally impressed by the activities of the PowHERful campaign, including the Girls' Summit and Gathering. Guest speakers empowered her by sharing valuable wisdom and encouraging students like her to share their own experiences. The focus on respecting diverse viewpoints fostered a safe and supportive environment, motivating her and others to overcome their personal challenges. It's worth mentioning that the events also offered delicious snacks and tea breaks, adding to the positive experience!

Looking ahead, Tường hopes to participate in more workshops and training sessions. She seeks programmes that delve deeper, helping students build essential habits and skills that can blossom into significant changes, impacting their lives and futures.



Student Spotlights

Trúc Mai - Winner of “Outstanding Enterprise Award” by Madrinha Trust

Mai is a senior student at the University of Finance & Marketing. Her parents are divorced, and her father provides no financial support. Her mother has a heart condition that requires monthly treatment. She is the eldest child with a sibling in high school.

Understanding her family's difficulties, Mai strived her best at school. Her grades are consistently among the top in the faculty. Outside of school, she works as a tutor to cover living expenses.

Recognised for her hard work and enthusiastic engagement, Mai was awarded the Outstanding Enterprise Award by Madrinha Trust, a respected British Foundation. She hopes to secure an official position in a major business where she can continue to learn new skills while supporting her family.



“Even though I wasn't born like the sun, I still yearn to shine and hope that my "light" can plant new seeds and warm the hearts around me.”



“I will strive to become an outstanding student and win a postgraduate scholarship to achieve my longstanding dream of studying abroad.”

Trúc Lý - Winner of “Become the British Consul General for a day” contest

Trúc Lý is a rising junior majoring in Chemical Engineering student at the University of Science and Technology. Participating in the contest organised by the British Consulate General HCMC, Trúc Lý made a video discussing the challenges she faces as a girl in STEM and how to overcome them collectively.

Her ideas and strong presentation won her a day shadowing British Consul General Emily Hamblin. This experience inspired and fueled her ambition for further academic success.



NEW DEVELOPMENT & FUTURE PLANS



Programme expansion to Bình Dương



We are in Bình Dương! A fast-growing industrial province in Vietnam, Bình Dương concentrates a high number of low-skilled workers many of whom migrate from their hometowns in search of stable employment. However, as they strive for better lives, their children may need some support to access education.

Staying true to our mission and value, we target the most impoverished areas and those where students are in high need of support to continue their education. With the support of our generous corporate donor, the programme was off to a strong start, providing various types of assistance to over 100 students in the 23-24 school year. We hope to continue providing long-term support for more students in the upcoming years!



**17 university/college students
received laptops**



**100 K-12 students were provided with
long-term scholarships**



**100 K-12 students joined training
sessions on Internet Safety**



Như Ý's sharing on receiving a new laptop



Born in 2004, Phan Thị Như Ý is a current university sophomore (second year) with a clear vision for her future. When asked about her aspirations, she confidently shares her dream of becoming a lawyer, providing legal consulting services to companies and businesses. Since her high school days, she longed for a computer – a resource that would enhance her academic pursuits.

Her mother and sister work as a hardworking manual worker and a waitress at a local coffee shop to support the family. Despite their efforts, the financial strain makes it difficult to cover Ý's university fees, let alone afford a laptop for her studies.

“However, fate intervened when I was selected as a beneficiary of the project” – said Ý. With a big smile on her face, she expressed: “I am very grateful to receive this gift, as it serves as a great motivator, helping me to envision bigger and more beautiful dreams on my path to intellectual achievement. The laptop is so helpful for my study! From now on, it is much more convenient for me to join the teamwork at the university, this laptop will help me a lot in presenting and writing essays! I will also use the laptop to learn more, read more, and prepare well for my future!”



New initiatives in the 2024-2025 school year

Big Buddy, Little Buddy Mentoring Project

The initiative connects tertiary students with experienced professionals for mentoring.

Having organised a number of short-term mentoring projects and observed a considerable need for support among students, we aim to establish a long-lasting initiative that will provide much-needed guidance on career and personal growth.



Training on caregivers' involvement in children's learning

Aiming to encourage parents' involvement in children learning, we piloted a series of training with caregivers in Đồng Nai and plan to conduct them in all regions of the programme in the next academic year.

The training is expected to foster a closer relationship with caregivers, keep more children in school and improve their academic performance.





Thank you for your generous support!

Join us to create another school year of
growth and hope for the children!

saigonchildren.com

Email: cdsp@saigonchildren.com