

ANNUAL REPORT 2009



**EDUCATION ASSISTANCE
PROGRAMME (EAP)**

EDUCATION PROGRAMME



**Christina Noble
Children's Foundation
Vietnam**

WWW.CNCF.ORG

Reporting Period: January - December 2009

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Established	:	2002
Location	:	Ho Chi Minh City, Dong Nai Province, Kien Giang Province, Tien Giang Province.
Target Group	:	Underprivileged children and street children requiring education assistance
CNCF Staff	:	Mr. Nicolas Pistolas, Mrs. Son Thu Trinh, Mr. Tran Ngoc Duong, Ms. Nguyen Thuy Bao Tram
Monitoring visit	:	Daily
CNCF Involvement	:	Continuous involvement
Plans for 2010	:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Continue support to 287 children in the Education Assistance Programme (EAP)- Extend the operations into distant areas of Ho Chi Minh City and Dong Nai Province- Sign the agreement with all government partners- Complete the Manual of procedures for EAP
Report Compiled By	:	Mr. Tran Ngoc Duong

GENERAL OVERVIEW

The reality of dropping out of school is a big problem which Vietnam has been dealing with for many years. In the evaluation meeting for the school year 2008-2009, according to Dr. Truong Cong Danh from The Institute for Educational Research of University of Pedagogy, Ho Chi Minh City¹, the percentage of students dropping out of school in Vietnam is still very high, especially in the Mekong Delta (e.g. Cà Mau (18.67%), An Giang (14.34%), Bạc Liêu (13.23%), Hậu Giang (10.19%). From Elementary to High School the ratio becomes higher and higher, for example, Ho Chi Minh City dropouts: Elementary (0.06%), Secondary (0.45%), High School (0.94%).

According to Mr. Truong Cong Danh and Mr. Nguyen Vinh Hien (Deputy Minister of the Education and Training Ministry), there are many causes of this situation, of which poverty is mentioned the most.

At present, each year in Vietnam thousands of children are still not sent to school or they have to give up their education because their families are too poor to afford school fees or school related expenses for the children. Often the children have to work early to support their families and/or the school is too far from home and the children have no means of transport. Sadly, many of them are very keen to study and do very well in school.



A house of one child in Kien Giang

Therefore it is extremely necessary that someone (or/and organizations) give these children financial scholarship support to help them feel secure to continue with their schooling and get a better future.

Since 2002, the Education Assistance Programme of the Christina Noble Children's Foundation (CNCF) has been in place. Since this time, the foundation has met the needs of many underprivileged children in and around Ho Chi Minh City by the provision of education scholarships. This includes helping children attend mainstream schooling by paying for their school fees and other necessary expenses. For children from the remote countryside, CNCF also distributed bicycles as a means of transport, making their travel to school easier.

All children entering the programme are visited at home by a CNCF social worker to assess their family's living conditions. When a child is enrolled in the programme, fees are paid directly to the child's school. Increasingly this has led to schools themselves introducing children to CNCF who desperately need financial help if they are to have the chance to complete their education and thereby gain the means with which to improve their own lives.

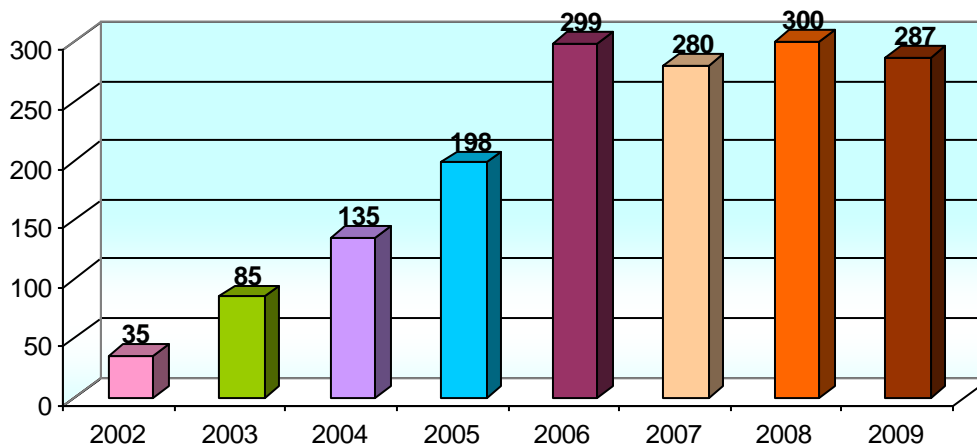
Besides giving financial support, the Education Assistance Programme also supplies children with other non-financial services such as career counselling, psychological counselling, job-seeking, etc.

¹ See more information about the ratio of dropouts in the 2008-2009 school year at: <http://www.ier.edu.vn/content/view/280/160/>

PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

The Education Assistance Programme (EAP) started with 35 children in Ho Chi Minh City in 2002. Years later, the programme has met with the needs of more and more disadvantaged children in Ho Chi Minh City and two surrounding provinces including Tien Giang and Kien Giang. The number of children sometimes increases up to 300 children (see Chart 1).

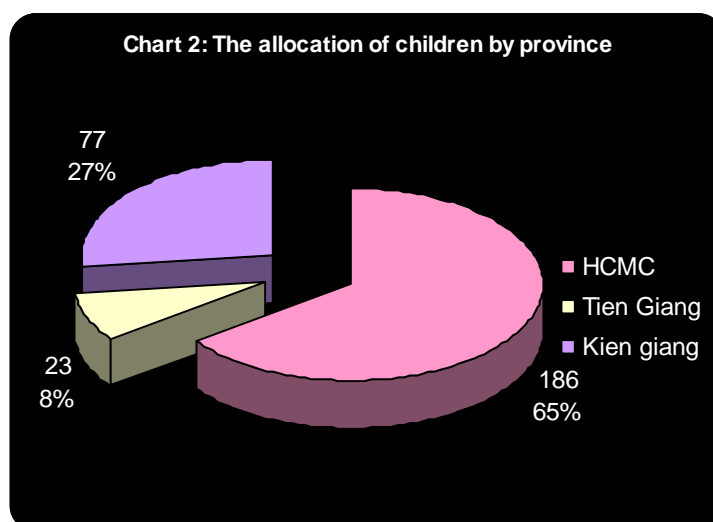
Chart 1: The variation of the number of children by year



Within 2009, EAP enrolled 24 new children, while 37 children left the programme for the following reasons:

- Graduated from high school and started to work
- Family situation improved
- Dropped out of school to go to work
- Other

At the end of 2009, the number of children in the EAP is 287. Among them, 187 children are from Ho Chi Minh City, 77 children come from Kien Giang and 23 are from Tien Giang (see Chart 2).



Children and families accepted into EAP are extremely poor. Most of them undertake odd jobs with low and unstable incomes. After school, children in these families often go to work as street vendors (selling lottery tickets, postcards, newspapers) or shoeshine boys, or they collect recycled materials to support their families. Other children accepted into EAP are:

- orphaned
- disabled
- from a large family, with at least 3 children at schooling age.

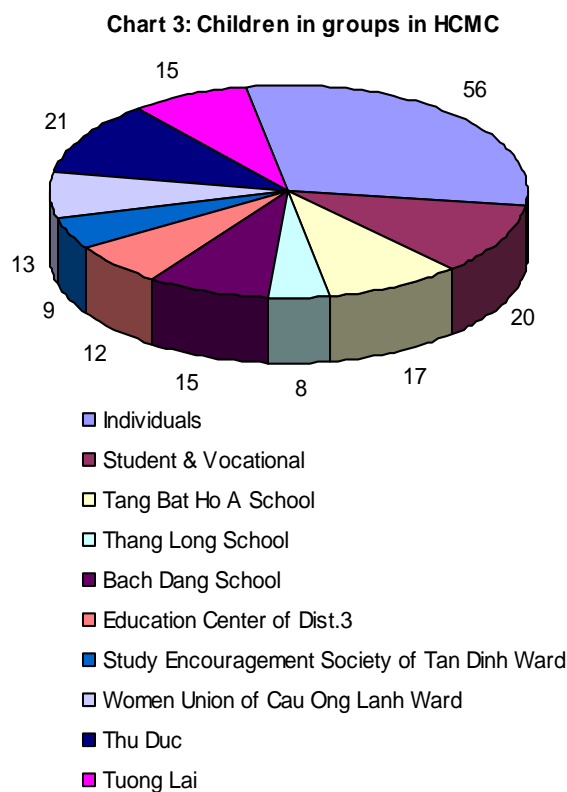
Although the programme is targeted at children only, the fact is the cost burden to families is lessened and hence the whole family benefits to some extent.

PARTNERSHIP

In 2009, EAP conducted the meetings with all of our partners to review the current relationships and discuss signing the official Cooperation Agreement in the future. Most of the partners agreed with us, except Thang Long School. According to the principal of Thang Long School, they cannot handle the workload. We will, therefore, continue supporting this group of children by merging it into the individual group in 2010.

Ho Chi Minh City

At the end of 2009, the number of children in EAP in Ho Chi Minh City is 187. For these children, based on characteristics like location, schools, partners, etc., we divided them into groups. As a result, we have 10 groups as follows (Chart 3):



For individuals who come to apply directly to EAP, we put them into the group titled “*individual*” group and work directly with them. For schools, local authorities, social organizations who recommend children to EAP, we consider them as our partners and support the children through them.

In order to approach more and more poor and disadvantaged children in distant areas of Ho Chi Minh City, EAP will consider extending our operations into the suburbs like Cu Chi, Can Gio, HocMon, District 9.

Tien Giang Province

EAP started supporting 12 students from Long Binh Dien Secondary School in 2005. Since this time, EAP has had very good co-operation with Long Binh Dien School and the local government where this school is located. As a result, the number of children increased to 24 at the end of 2008.

Within 2009, there were 4 children graduating from Long Binh Dien School. Among them, three passed the exams and continued their education in high school and one failed and decided to go to work. At the end of 2009, the number of children in Tien Giang is 23.

Most of the students work very hard at school and many of them received praiseworthy achievements this past school year. Six students achieved excellent school results, 15 students achieved good results, and 3 students were average (including the one who failed the graduation exam).



On the Scholarship Distribution Day, 13 July 2009

Dong Nai Province

As mentioned in the 2008 annual report, EAP has had to stop supporting the group of 34 children in Dong Nai Province since the first term of 2008-2009 school year as the local partner could not sign the official Cooperation Agreement.



In the meeting with Board of Director of Xuan Loc High School on 28 Dec 2009

However, the fact is that there are many children in the distant areas of Dong Nai still in need of educational support to keep up with their schooling. Therefore during 2009, EAP tried hard to establish relationships with some other partners including Xuan Loc High School and Xuan Hung High School. Both schools welcomed EAP and showed much concern about the issue. We are considering ways to cooperate with them in 2010.

Kien Giang Province

Gò Quao is the poorest district of Kien Giang. And Vĩnh Thắng and Định Hoà are the poorest villages of Gò Quao. 5.1% of the population in Vĩnh Thắng is the ethnic minority of Khmer and the percentage of Định Hoà is up to 63%. The majority of people are farming rice and a small number of them are working as fishermen to earn a living. The standard of education of people here is very low and a large part of the population is illiterate. The number of children dropping out of school in two villages, Vĩnh Thắng and Định Hoà, is very high due to the extreme poverty in which they live and the subsequent pressures they face to earn money to help support their families.

Due to this situation, EAP has extended operations into these areas since 2007-2008, starting with 35 children, for the purpose of eliminating illiteracy and decreasing the number of school dropouts. During the years, EAP has received good cooperation from the local authority Kien Giang DELISA and we achieved the results as expected. Within 2008-2009, the number of children has increased to 74 children. Apart from 4 children quitting school for private reasons and 3 children moving away, the rest of them made a huge effort in their studies and finished their grades. Among them, 3 children achieved excellent school results, 26 good, 34 average and 4 below average.



In the end meeting with Kien Giang DELISA on July 27, 2009

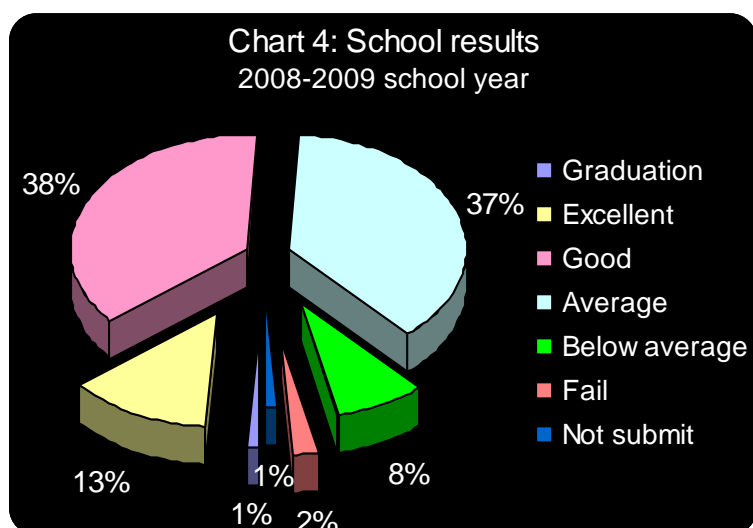


EDUCATION

At the end of the school year 2008-2009, there are 263 children in the programme going to school, not counting 37 children withdrawing. The school results of children are as follows:

- 3 children graduated from college/university
- 1 child finished their vocational training course
- 34 children achieved excellent school results
- 97 children achieved good results
- 98 children got average results
- 22 children got below average results
- 6 children failed
- 2 children did not submit their school results (under consideration)

The school results of children by percentage are as follows:



In 2009, 10 children graduated from high school and took university entrance examinations. Among them, 5 children passed and entered College, two attended the vocational training and 3 failed and went to work.

For the 4 secondary children who failed their exams, we met with them and their parents to discuss the problems and gave them the second chance to sit the exams again.

For the 2 children who did not submit their results, EAP will find out the reasons why before we make the final decision.

For these children, the curriculum was too difficult for them to keep up with. Meanwhile, the subsequent pressures they face to earn a living to help support their families make them give up easily, especially those who live in the remote countryside or who are ethnic minorities.

MENTORING PROJECT

The Mentoring Project always aims to give extra support to potential high school students so that they can improve their ability by attending extra classes, giving them more opportunities to enter University when they finish high school.

In 2009, the Mentoring Project met the needs of 3 following children:



Giau was doing the ability test in the career counselling session

1. **Tran Ngoc Giau:** Giau was supported to study 3 subjects: Mathematics, Chemistry and Physics at Ly Tu Trong Center for 3 months for the cost of VND 1,270,000. After the 2008-2009 school year, Giau passed the university entrance exam. She is now majoring in Business Administration at the Sai Gon University.

2. **Tran Thi Tuong Vy:**

When Vy was first selected for the Mentoring Project, she was in Grade 11 at Bui Thi Xuan School. She did very well at school and got outstanding results, except for Physics. Based on Vy's needs, the Mentoring Project agreed to support her to study Physics at Ly Tu Trong Center. The course lasted for 2 months with the cost of VND 350,000. Thanks to the support from the Mentoring Project, Vy made progress and gained good scores in Physics last school year. Vy now feels confident with her coming entrance exam for the 2009-2010 school year.



3. **Vo Thi Hoa:** Hoa was selected into the Mentoring Project when she was in 10th Grade at the Phu Hoa High School in Cu Chi District. Hoa is a hard-working student who always tries her best to study well at school. However, she sometimes gets into trouble with Physics. Therefore the Mentoring Project agreed to give her additional support to improve in this subject. Hoa appreciated our support and made a big effort in her studies. At the end of 2008-2009 school year, Hoa achieved excellent school results. We are pleased with her achievements and Hoa has proved to be a potential student for the University entrance exam in school year 2010-2011.



In 2010, the Mentoring Project will continue supporting these students who have great potential. Moreover, we will especially pay attention to 9th Graders and 12th Graders who are preparing for their final examinations to enter higher level studies.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

In addition to receiving support for their school fees and school related expenses, children in the Education Assistance Programme also have access to other CNCF programmes such as: Art Class, Music Class, English Class, Family Assistance Programme, Bicycle Support Programme, etc.



Children on the Bicycle Delivery Day on Nov 17, 2009

Bicycle Support Programme: In 2009, 17 children were recommended by EAP to receive new bicycles from the Bicycle Support Programme. Among them, 2 children from Tien Giang group, 4 from Thu Duc group, 4 from Individual group, and 5 from Bach Dang School. These children often live quite far from school and meet with many difficulties in going to school on foot. Therefore, a bicycle becomes a big encouragement for children to go to school.

Family Assistance Programme: Besides directly supporting children, EAP also has the concern toward the family (the parents) who are hard-working but lack of capital to do small business. In 2009, EAP has introduced two families to the Family Assistance Programme (FAP). These two families received the support from FAP to set up small business. These are the families of:

- Le Binh An: Selling noodles for breakfast
- Tran Thanh Truc Linh: Selling sticky rice and soy bean milk for breakfast

EAP hope that this support will partly reduce the cost burden of the family and create the means of doing business for the family so that they can improve their living standard and then take good care of their children, even they can afford the tuition for their children in the future.

In coming years, EAP will approach and introduce more poor families to CNCF who are in need of capital support and willing to work hard to improve their living conditions.



The noodle stall of Binh An's family



The sticky rice cart of Linh's family



Awards and Gifts: At the end of each school year, EAP often gives gifts to children and awards to students who achieve good school results. Last school year, EAP distributed 90 gifts and awards including notebooks, pens, English books, etc to 90 students in Tien Giang and Kien Giang. The gifts are small, however, children in poor rural areas can be given much encouragement for their schooling.

SUCCESS STORY

In this report, we would like to tell the story of one of the best students in EAP **Nguyen Hoang Hong Phuc**.



Phuc is one of the best students in EAP. She is now attending Grade 6 at Bach Dang School, which is often the big challenge for most of Sunshine School's students whenever they are faced with the elementary graduation exam.

Phuc comes from a very poor family in District 3. Her parents cannot afford her tuition at a public school. Therefore, she was sent to CNCF's Sunshine School. Most of the students who finish Sunshine School and integrate into a public school often have to work very hard to keep up with other students. However, Phuc is not the same. She was not only able to integrate well in her new study environment, but has also become one of the best students at Bach Dang School. In the first term of school year 2009-2010, Phuc registered her name onto the Honour Roll of

the school. She was the second who got the most '10 marks' in the competition called "The 10 Mark Flowers". It is a remarkable and amazing success that a former student of the Sunshine School had such an achievement.

Phuc set a very good example for all of students of the Sunshine School. She also made her parents and EAP really proud of her achievement.



Nguyen Hoang Hong Phuc (middle) in the award ceremony on November 20th, 2009

FUTURE PLANS

In 2010, EAP plans to extend its education support into rural areas via partners.

Education Support

- Give financial support and other support (if necessary, such as psychological or educational counselling) to approximately 287 children in EAP to make them feel secure about their education.
- Give additional financial support to 33 of the 9th Graders and 9 of the 12th Graders to help these children attend the courses of exam preparation through the Mentoring Project

Partnership

- EAP will pay special attention to strengthening the relationships with existing partners/schools and establishing relationships with some other partners/schools in the distant areas of Ho Chi Minh City and Dong Nai province.
- EAP will sign agreements (or memorandums of understanding) with all old and new partners

Programme Manual

- Develop a new Manual of policies and procedures for the Education Assistance Programme.

“When children are educated, they possess something which cannot be lost or taken away from them and which offers them some protection from exploitation and abuse. They will have more power in the labour market; they will be better equipped to provide for themselves in a way which protects their integrity and their dignity”

Christina Noble

Report prepared by Mr. Tran Ngoc Duong