

CSDS

Center for Sustainable Development Studies

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Key Achievements in 2015

Center for Sustainable Development Studies is a Vietnamese non-profit organization legally registered in 2009. CSDS is addressing development issues in Vietnam with particular focus on children support through social inclusion, youth development through international exchange and non-formal education, and women empowerment through sustainable livelihood support. Geographically, CSDS is now active in different regions in Vietnam: Ha Noi and surrounding provinces in North Vietnam, and Ho Chi Minh City in South Vietnam.

This month's edition of the CSDS newsletter provides an overview of the key achievements our organization accomplished last year. In 2015, CSDS continued five active projects (Active Citizens, TFT – Nutrition Project, Young@Heart, YDC, and WILL) and started a new project called Moving to Raise. Overall, we hosted 36 workshops for 1299 participant across the whole of Vietnam (including Hanoi, HCM and Da Nang) and interacted with approx. 6500 children and young people across 89 different events such as community classes or various campaigns.

We directly funded and supported 15 social action projects created and implemented by young people; expanded and consolidated our training and youth networks; and created our first Co-Creation Youth Forum with 70 participants. We also updated and developed a more interactive website and started publishing a monthly newsletter. Finally, we developed a new strategic plan that will guide all of our work for the next ten years, and we developed our capacity to run as an effective and transparent CSO in Vietnam.

YOUTH INTEGRITY SURVEY 2014

The Youth Integrity Survey 2014 revealed that youth's values remain firmly rooted in integrity, as young people express a strong belief in their ability to promote integrity and strong willingness to take concrete actions.

94% of Vietnamese youth place honesty over wealth, 87% believe it plays an important role in resistance to corruption, and 85% consider lack of integrity harmful for the country. Compared to 60% of South Korean youth, or 82% of Sri Lankan youth, 95% of Vietnamese youth agree that being honest is more important than being rich; and only 18% of Vietnamese youth agree that lack of integrity is more likely leading to success in life, compared to 30% of South Korean youth or 52% of Sri Lankan youth.

This proves that integrity remains one of Vietnam's strongest qualities and emphasizes the importance of proactive efforts by stakeholders to support Vietnamese youth who are strongly committed to their values and to practice these in a challenging environment.

Our Main Focus - Youth

Youth empowerment is an important aspect of community development and plays an **integral role in creating a sustainable society**. Young people are tomorrow's workers, entrepreneurs, political leaders and policy makers and hold an enormous stake in the present and future, and have a great potential to secure economic growth and prosperity in Vietnam. So far, there have been some dramatic accomplishments in poverty reduction, robust economic growth and a successful achievement of many development goals, however many risks remain. To create a sustainable society in Vietnam, progress against the remaining gaps needs to be more inclusive and proactive in addressing new risks. Young people collectively can be a great asset to development due to their **innovative, creative and dynamic problem-solving and solution-finding skills**. Integrity and strong moral principles are the foundations of leadership and entail long-term success and sustainability of economic and social development.

CSDS recognizes that **youth support is an essential aspect of sustainable development** and subsequently employs a community-based participatory approach to youth empowerment, which engages the gatekeeper's right from the begging. This particular approach focuses on **empowering community leaders**, and **community members can share decision-making authority** with all other partners involved. In addition to this a holistic approach to development is incorporated through **contact with international and local experts and volunteers** in order to sufficiently educate youth on topics such as sustainable and environmental development.

CSDS implements **two mutually reinforcing programs – the development program and global exchange**. The development program focuses mainly on **youth empowerment through non-formal education and capacity building** with the aim to support young people's **efforts towards social action**. Global exchange provides Vietnamese youth with further **benefits and qualities necessary to face global challenges**. Contact with foreign volunteers from a broad range of cultural backgrounds allows young people to develop appreciation for **diversity**, gain a rich understanding of another **culture**, and gives them an opportunity to establish **new connections and relationships**. It also creates an increased **pressure to communicate** which enhances awareness of **group dynamics and personal sensitivity**. Educational benefits of global exchange include **improvement of English language skills** through practical immersion, acceptance and understanding of different cultural and community perspectives, promotion of **life-long learning attitudes**, awareness and adoption of alternative approaches to work and learning, and enhanced interest in global issues as well as **broader general knowledge**. International volunteers are also often more highly educated or trained with more experience and specific skill sets, and can share their knowledge with local youth and work together to develop new and innovative solutions.

Young people are a formidable force for positive change and CSDS' objective is to inform and facilitate social action on areas that need attention, such as social injustice or sustainability. CSDS aims to facilitate discussion through non-formal education practices to improve opportunities for young people and student groups. In particular, non-formal teaching methods focus on young and volunteer training in **social and civic activity, leadership, project management and sustainable development**. The goal is to **create an improved educational platform** that provides Vietnamese youth to connect in order to **initiate a discussion about social and environmental sustainable development**, and additionally provide **internship opportunities** within the development sector.

Active Citizens

Active Citizens is a not-for-profit programme run by the British Council in partnership with civil society organizations who share our vision. The programme works with people who have demonstrated they have local social responsibility, including youth workers, women's groups, educators and faith leaders. Working together, these local influencers build trust and understanding, develop skills and deliver projects on urgent themes such as poverty, literacy, democracy and climate change, and connecting local and international agendas through the programme.

In 2015, CSDS organized 4 workshops within the Active Citizen project (3 workshops in Hanoi, 1 in Ho Chi Minh City) with a total of 83 participants. CSDS also funded 4 social action youth projects and developed a facilitator network to carry out follow-up training.

Moving to Raise

Moving to Raise is a project funded by the U.S. Embassy through Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) program and comprises several anti-human trafficking campaigns conducted in Lao Cai and Yen Bai, two regions of Vietnam where human trafficking became a serious issue. The project aims to hold several events to raise awareness about human trafficking and educate the local communities about prevention, avoidance, combatting, and ways of helping the victims.

In 2015, CSDS secured funding for this project in October 2015 and successfully organised 5 workshops in Hanoi with a follow-up campaign in Lao Cai approaching over 200 participants.

Table for Two

The objective of this nutrition project is to contribute to the development of children in all ways in disadvantaged regions in Vietnam by decreasing malnutrition rate among children in Van Ho Community through provision of regular nutritious lunch. Nutritious meals are provided 5 days a week to 60 children in kindergarten in Pa Che 2, Pa Cop1 and Sao Do. This project aims to increase the health status of local children, reduce the risks of medical expenses and secure better health for education and for the future labour force. It also aims to increase the number of students' attendance in school giving the parents an opportunity to be more productive at work with the extra time that they will not have to prepare food or pick up their children during lunch time.

In 2015, CSDS provided meals to 70 kindergarten students in Son La on a daily basis and established eco-friendly and sustainable vegetable gardens.



Young@Heart

Young@Heart is a global initiative of Oxfam which aims to empower youth to raise their voices in order to articulate their needs and aspirations, create an enabling space whereby decision makers in the public and private sphere are willing to listen to young people and take action to address their needs and aspirations, and utilize innovative approaches for voicing of youth concerns through mobilization and multi-stakeholder collaboration, thus shifting the terms of debate in society. The overall intent is to enhance youth influence on development agenda by moving from interventions for youth to interventions by youth, by placing youth at the central core; the very heart of this project.

In 2015, CSDS organized 5 community classes in Hanoi with 129 participants, 12 workshops with over 200 participants (in Hanoi, Da Nang, Ho Chi Minh City, Tuyen Quan and Ninh Thuan), and 3 competitions (Portraits of Hope Youth and Development Challenges Debate, and Creative Ideas) with over 600 entries (12 teams) and 7 awards. CSDS further developed an Exploration Lab to find specific concerns and interests of young people, an Innovation Lab to create and implement innovative solutions, and a Campaigning Lab to inspire other people. Through this project CSDS also provided funding for 11 social action youth projects, 7 of which were implemented nationwide, and established a youth network through a Co-Creation Youth Forum that took place in December 2015 and hosted 70 participants.

Youth Drivers for Change

The YDC, a programme funded by Irish Aid, implements activities through a variety of channels to engage and build the existing and significant potential of Vietnamese youth in the civil society sector. The YDC project brings to fruition the potent combination of CSDS and partners' experience and the principle that by enhancing young people's access to and engagement with broader grassroots civil society organizations, both the youth and the communities involved benefit, often in innovative ways. This core principle informs the project operational approach, which focuses on inclusive, participatory and holistic training activities. It uses proven good practice training and facilitation methods, thematic expertise and the extensive CSDS and partners' networks to build the capacity of the young people involved.

In 2015, CSDS organized 7 workshops with over 100 participants, and 73 SOCI Hub (Youth Social Incubation & Interaction Hub, a place established to inspire youth voluntary actions and to facilitate youth capacity building and networking activities) events with almost 3800 participants. SOCI Hub therefore increased its profile and became a well-known place for youth and youth group activities. CSDS further implemented an NGO Traineeship for 15 Vietnamese graduates providing them with valuable experience and further internship opportunities, started broadcasting a new radio programme called 'Volunteer for Footprints' for VOV, and took part in a volunteer exchange between Vietnam and Ireland.



WILL

This women empowerment project aims to help communities where people have no, or limited access to capital for economic development, i.e. where there are not yet any friendly, accessible micro-lending projects. Adopting the Grameen Bank Model, the project is currently serving over 1,400 women in two districts Tam Duong and Lap Thanh of Vinh Phuc Province. Both the districts are in mountainous areas with poor infrastructure. The long-term plan of the project is to expand to serve about 3,000 women members in more communities in the next 5 years. The critical point in the micro finance scheme is that the more people you serve, the more effective and sustainable it is.

In 2015, CSDS organized 7 workshops (5 workshops in Hanoi and 2 in Hoa Binh) with 70 participants (including 20 leaders and 50 staff members from 20 different organizations), one forum with over 100 participants from government departments, international agencies and various non-governmental organizations, and two mentoring and three advocacy trips.

TET Holiday at CSDS

On Friday 7th February 2016 CSDS organised a special event for all international volunteers that involved making the traditional TET dish 'Banh chung'.

All participants were introduced to the history and traditions of the TET holiday and the New Year celebrations, and had an opportunity to make their own rice cakes.



Upcoming Events

- **SOCI English Speaking Class**
 - 3rd March 2016
- **'Raising Your Voice' Debate Class**
 - 19th, 20th & 26th March 2016
- **Scandinavian Culture Night**
 - 10th March 2016
- **Recycling Day**
 - 13th March 2016

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