

14 March 2010

For immediate release

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LIN and DRD Host Workshop on Social Media for Not-for-Profit Organizations

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Ho Chi Minh City – On Sunday morning, 14 March, the LIN Center for Community Development (LIN) and Disability Resource and Development (DRD) co-organized a morning workshop for local and international not-for-profit organizations (NPOs) on, “How Social Media Can Help Your Not-for-Profit Organization.” The event, sponsored by GlobalGiving, took place at DRD’s new Club House – Hoi Quan Doi Rat Dep - and featured speakers representing both international and local NPOs.

The keynote speaker, Mr. Bill Brower, Field Program Officer for Global Giving, introduced the concept and spoke about how not-for-profit organizations around the world use social media to help achieve their goals. He shared examples of international NPOs using websites, blogs, YouTube and Twitter to attract people to their causes and to raise funds for their programs. He also explained the role that Global Giving plays in supporting their efforts.

For Vietnam based not-for-profit organizations, Bill explained how Global Giving can help, “to manage and grow an online network of support and increase awareness about [the NPOs] activities.” In addition to providing examples and tips for how other not-for-profits use social media, Bill also shared the ways that Global Giving has successfully employed social media to help keep in touch with supporters and to build and broaden its support network.

Following Bill’s presentation, several representatives from area not-for-profit organizations exchanged experiences about how they have used social media to support their causes. “Through our social media efforts, we’ve been very successful in raising money,” shared Ms. To Oanh, Coordinator for *Thuy’s Dream* - a project of Tuoi Tre newspaper, which provides support to cancer patients. “Fundraising is all about building relationships,” added Ms. Van Ly, Development Officer for East Meets West Foundation, a US-registered not-for-profit organization with three offices in Vietnam. “And through our blog,” she explained, “our donors and prospective donors have an opportunity to get to know our team and more about what we are doing.” Later, Van also shared that social media even helps the East Meets West staff to gather useful information about their donors, so they can design more targeted proposals when asking for money.

In response to a question about ways to reach the larger part of the population in Vietnam who do not currently have access to the Internet, Ms. To Oanh suggested that organizations use a variety of communication tools, “In our experience, it has been very effective to use both traditional (such as newspapers) and online tools. Together, they can even help to reinforce each other and make a bigger impact.”

Mr. Le Trung Hai, one of the founders of *Blue Dreams*, a voluntary organization working to support community initiatives, introduced several creative approaches that his group has used to organize and communicate with volunteers. “However,” he cautioned the audience, “even if [your NPO is] creative in your advertising and successful in attracting people to your events, you will still need to

ensure that your programs are of high quality so that the people that support you will have a positive experience and will want to come back.”

In her closing remarks, Ms. Vo Thi Hoang Yen, the Founder and Director of DRD, observed that, “From today’s workshop, it is clear to see the incredible strength of the Internet for our organizations... And, as we learned from Mr. Hai [*Blue Dreams*], even by asking people to collect their small change, we have the ability to raise a lot of money to support our programs.”

This is the fifth in a series of capacity building workshops that LIN has organized since it launched in August 2009. “We hope that these workshops will promote best practices and greater information exchange among the not-for-profit community in Ho Chi Minh City,” said Mr. Pham Truong Son, LIN’s Community Liaison. “And we are truly grateful to all the volunteers and sponsors who have made these workshops possible.”

About Global Giving

For individuals, Global Giving is an online marketplace that allows people to give and communicate directly with not-for-profit projects all over the world, and hear about the impact their donation has made. For corporations, it is a source of quality, vetted charitable projects to which they and their employees can give. And, for project partners, it is a tool to manage and grow an online network of support and increase awareness of program activities. For more information, please visit the Global Giving website at: www.GlobalGiving.org.

About Disability Resource and Development (DRD)

Founded in 2005 and operating under the Faculty of Sociology, Ho Chi Minh City University, DRD’s mission is to promote the full participation of, and equal opportunities for, people with disabilities. On 12 March, DRD opened *Doi Rat Dep (Life is Beautiful)*, a new Club House for people with disabilities living in or visiting Ho Chi Minh City at their new premises in District 10. For more information, please visit the DRD website at: www.drdvietnam.com, info@drdvietnam.com or: (848) 3868-2770.

About LIN Center for Community Development (LIN)

The LIN Center for Community Development serves grassroots not-for-profit organizations and individual and corporate philanthropists located in and around Ho Chi Minh City. LIN’s mission is to foster a culture of philanthropy and social responsibility while supporting local NPOs by providing technical, management and financial support to help in their efforts to promote equal access to opportunities. At the heart of LIN’s establishment is the belief that local people and local groups are best placed to recognize and respond to the needs of the community. LIN is a licensed not-for-profit organization by authorization of the Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations. For more information, please visit us at: www.LINvn.org, info@LINvn.org, or (848) 3824-6091.