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Narrow the Gap Fund 2013!

**The Numbers**

With the support from over 60 good-hearted individuals and companies, the Narrow the Gap Fund has collected $5,000! We thank all of you for helping us bring hope to our city’s children!

However, we still need your help to reach our goal of $15,000 before September. You can donate any amount by clicking here. Every donation, however small or big, makes a difference! You can also help by inviting your friends and colleagues to donate via a quick email or by liking and sharing our Narrow The Gap page on Facebook.

**The Projects**

14 local not-for-profit organizations submitted proposals for projects that should receive grants from the Narrow the Gap Fund 2013. All of these NPOs work with children facing difficult circumstances: some are working with street children, some are caring for orphans, some help children with disabilities or medical conditions and more. Just as the challenges facing children in our city are diverse and numerous, so too are the programs being offered by the NPOs.

LIN’s Volunteer Grant Evaluation Committee is now working hard to select five (5) project proposals that they feel are the most impressive based on need, objectives, viability and impact. After that, from August 15-22, it will be the community’s turn – your turn – to vote for your favorite project online. Meet the members of the Grant Evaluation Committee online.

**The People**

In July, the team of Blah Blah Film Production donated their time and skills and video making equipment to help us shed light on the real people and real organizations behind the Narrow the Gap Fund 2013. They interviewed several NPO partners and beneficiaries to capture some of the challenges children face and how NPOs work to address those challenges. As they say, images speak louder than words. To view this beautiful video, please follow this link.
What can You do?

**DONATE ANY AMOUNT**

We need your help to reach our goal of $15,000 before September. You can donate any amount. Every donation, however small or big, helps us bring smiles to children’s faces!

**VOTE ONLINE**

*August 15–22, 2013*

From **August 15-22**, vote for your favorite project online! There will be five (5) projects competing to receive grants from the Narrow the Gap Fund 2013. Your vote will help choose three (3) top projects.

**Come to NTG Event on 15/9**

*(Click here to buy tickets)*

Join the **Narrow the Gap Event on 15/09** to meet the people behind the 3 top projects, learn first-hand about their work and how you can help them to address the needs of children. You will also submit your vote for the best project, which will determine how much each project will receive from the Community Fund.

The event is a great way to network with other concerned residents of HCMC all for a great cause. T

We will have fun activities for children, so make sure to buy a ticket for your kids too!

Too many children are left behind in Ho Chi Minh City.

Let’s join our efforts to help them

We can change things if we come together!

**DONATE:** [www.bit.ly/donateNTGfund](http://www.bit.ly/donateNTGfund)

**VOTE:** [www.bit.ly/VoteNTGforChildren](http://www.bit.ly/VoteNTGforChildren)

**ENGAGE:** [www.bit.ly/ticketNTGevent](http://www.bit.ly/ticketNTGevent)
Announcing the Winner of the Narrow the Gap 2013 Photo Contest: Focus on Children!

In July, LIN announced a call for photographers that were interested in photographing the beneficiaries of some of LIN’s NPO partners. Our Volunteer photographers were then given ten days to visit the NPOs and photograph their activities and the people they serve. Those photographs were then aggregated into four unique albums and presented to LIN’s Facebook community. The community was given 11 days to vote for their favorite album online. The albums from Minh Thu, Khánh Duy, Hoàng Việt and Minh Luận were also reviewed by one of HCMC’s most famous photographers, Mr. Na Son.

The winner of Narrow the Gap photo contest was Mr. Nguyễn Minh Luận with the album titled, “Te Phan: imperfect rainbows”. His photos were all shot at Te Phan Loving House. As winner, Mr. Minh Luan received two complimentary tickets to the Narrow the Gap Community Event, which is taking place on 15 September, and a ViewSonic digital frame. All of the remaining Volunteers Photographers each received one ticket to the Narrow the Gap Community Event, a certificate of participation and a LIN souvenir.

In such a short period of time, the five volunteer photographers did an amazing job to adapt with their special shooting circumstances (in some cases, the children’s faces could not appear in the photos), reach out and understand the children being served by local nonprofits as well as the organizations that support them. Their photos created stories and help to humanize the important work of nonprofit organizations. All of the photos that were taken were given to the participating nonprofit organizations in hopes that they can help them with their marketing and communication efforts in the future.

For more information about the contest and selection of the winner, please visit LIN’s blog at:
Workshop to Call for Proposals for Narrow The Gap Fund Community Fund 2013: Focus on Children

After sending information on Narrow the Gap (NTG) Fund 2013 to NPOs through NHỊP CẦU LIN newsletter on June, the LIN Center organized a workshop to call for proposal on 12 July 2013. The workshop helps NPO participants understanding about this grant; improving the effectiveness of proposal writing; and discussing on the fundraising activities being organized by LIN. 20 NPO participants working with children issues were joined this workshop.

Starting the workshop, Mr. Son Pham, Deputy Director of LIN Center, introduced the objectives of NTG Fund this year and the eligibility of NPOs to submit the grant applications. This was a competitive grant round and the budget was up to 150 millions VND. All the grant applications were judged by an independent Grant Allocation Committee. They viewed all the grant applications and gave a score for each application. After a Grant Allocation Meeting on August 10, the Committee will select 5 appropriate projects and these 5 projects will be uploaded in LIN website to encourage the people to vote 3 projects. The most voted projects will be join the NTG event on September 2013.

During the second part of the workshop, Ms. Elizabeth Phạm, LIN’s Director of Consulting, offered participants tips for writing a good and clear proposal. This included suggestions for writing objectives that focus on impact, detailing proposed activities, clarifying relevant experiences in relation to those activities, preparing detailed budgets and suggestions for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plans.

Before the workshop concluded, LIN explained the process of evaluation for applications to the second grant round of 2013, noting the differences between this round and past rounds, including a new, online voting component. LIN also explained how LIN is attracting funds for this grant round and the 15 September event where results will be announced in front of HCMC residents.

For more information about the Narrow the Gap Fund and Community Event, please visit LIN’s website at: www.LINvn.org or call us at 84-8-3512 0092.

LIN Center
Dr. Ngo Van Hieu, Assistant Professor of Social Work Department of Calgary University Canada, came to Vietnam to conduct a study on Not-for-Profit Organizations in Vietnam and expressed interest in supporting LIN’s partners. LIN Center for Community Development jumped on the opportunity to have Dr. Hieu lead a workshop on a topic that he has spent many years studying, Community Based Research.

During his workshop, Dr. Hieu shared his experiences studying violence among multi-ethnic teenagers in Canada. Using this example, he guided the 21 workshop participants in an introductory course on community based research, helpfully explaining theories as well as best practices and lessons to learn from his own experience.

Dr. Hieu then posed several questions to the participants, to help them understand community based research. During the workshop, Dr. Hieu addressed basic theories of human nature, such as: emotions, relationships, intuition and reasoning while discussing specific questions and practical examples from participants. He helped participants to understand how they could apply these concepts about community into their work.

As part of this workshop, Dr. Hieu helped participants to brainstorm ways to build understanding and design better programs for their beneficiaries. He introduced a template survey of beneficiaries, which was designed by LIN, as an example of how organizations can collect opinions and information from the people they serve or seek to support.

"The presentation of Dr. Hieu helped me realize the importance of participation of people in community, what we didn't care much in the past. Before, our group worked more in charity and we have thought of encouraging the participation of people but we still confused and didn't know how to do it, and this workshop, we have a more positive thought of encouraging the participation of community in future actions”, shared by Nguyen Van Anh, Head of Vietnam ECO group.

LIN Center
LIN’s Community Partnership Initiative, generously sponsored by Intel, is a call to companies and skilled professionals in HCMC to apply their professional skills and experience over a six-week period to benefit the community via volunteer placements with one or more local NPOs. As part of the CPI, LIN organized 3 workshops to help NPOs build their skills in communications:

1. “Basic Communication Principles” Workshop

On 10 July 2013, LIN Center for Community Development, in collaboration with eBrand held a “Basic Communication Principles” workshop with more than 20 staff from nonprofit organizations in attendance. Speaker Hoàng Minh Ngọc Hải, Director of eBrand Company, in opening the workshop, let the organizations have a chance to get to know each other in order to create an enthusiastic and comfortable atmosphere for the training. Hai started his presentation by giving the basic definition and the role of communication to social organizations. Using the SMCR module, he explained the 4 communication targets: Sender, Message, Channel, and Receiver. For more information about this workshop, please visit: https://lincenter.wordpress.com/2013/07/22/basic-communication-principles-workshop/

2. Workshop on “Basic Video Editing”

On 18 July 2013, LIN Center for Community Development, again in collaboration with eBrand company, organized a workshop on “Basic Video Editing” with the presentation of Mr. Trần Anh Việt, eBrand’s designer. The workshop attracted staff from 19 local nonprofit organizations.

One of the highlights of the training was the “learning by doing” aspect. Each group of participants was provided with a laptop and the NPO staff not only learned theory but also got first-hand experience in videotaping, editing and sharing a simple video clip.

For more information about this workshop, please visit: https://lincenter.wordpress.com/2013/07/22/cpi-workshop-on-basic-video-editing/

3. Workshop on Effective Communication with Donors

On 27 July 2013, LIN, in collaboration with BrandMaker, organized a workshop on “Effective Communication with Donors” for 20 participants from nonprofits working in HCMC.

Starting the workshop, Ms. Hà Thị Thu Ngan, Planning Assistant at Brandmaker, introduced the basic differences which affect the decision making of 3 types of donors: individuals; Small and medium enterprises; and large enterprise, NGOs and government organizations.

For more information (in Vietnamese) about this workshop, please visit: https://linvn.wordpress.com/2013/07/29/cpi-giao-tiep-hieu-qua-voi-nha-tai-tro/
18 August Sale Day and More

Last July, the Second Chance Store (SCS) continued to receive many donations from individuals and companies, including brand new clothing from Mariposa and high quality household utensils. After the 21 July sale day, all of the household utensils and many clothes found new owners.

However, this time, the Second Chance Store did not receive many toys or clothing for children or men, which were in high demand at previous sale events.

Nevertheless, approximately VND 13 million was donated during the July sale. All of this money will be contributed to LIN’s community work.

LIN team would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the Second Chance Store donors, volunteers and customers for supporting this initiative! We would also like to inform you all that the next sale will take place on Sunday, 18 August 2013.

For more information about supporting or shopping at LIN’s Second Chance Store, please visit: linvn.wordpress.com/category/cua-hang-co-hoi-thu-2/, www.facebook.com/cohoithuhai or contact us at: 08-35120092, info@linvn.org.

A Third Chance for Clothing from the Second Chance Store?

Since our pilot launched in 2012, LIN’s Second Chance Store received many donations of good quality items; however, there were still many items that could not find a found a home.

For the purpose of protecting the environment, LIN volunteers sent some of the remaining items to the Sao Khue Group, a volunteer group managed by young people, who helped to categorize the clothing and donate them to city laborers, homeless people and orphanages. For the items that remained, one of the LIN Second Chance Store volunteers offered to find a home. First, the volunteer categorized the remaining items by age group. The items were then boxed up and delivered to low-income people in Son Ba Town, Son Ha Highland District, Quang Ngai Province during a charity trip that took place on 19 July 2013.
“In other markets philanthropy is seen as a kind of social investment. Instead of complaining that no one is doing anything about social problems, we need to invest in our community in order to get the social returns we are all seeking.” This was just one of the takeaways Ms. Nguyen Tran Hoang Anh gained from attending the “Emerging Societies – Emerging Philanthropies” International Forum in Peterhof, Russia, on 1 and 2 July.

As a finalist for the Olga Alexseeva Memorial Prize, Hoang Anh, Chair of the LIN Board of Directors, received an all expense paid trip to attend the invitation-only event, which brought together philanthropy practitioners from Brazil, China, India, Mexico, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine, Vietnam and the African and Arab regions.

We came together to debate philanthropy’s role and potential for social change in different giving cultures and societies. “For me, the highlight of the forum was the case study of the winners. After hearing their story, I was so impressed and I can see clearly why they won the grand prize. It all started with a lawyer, a financial consultant and 15 residents of a slum community in Nairobi who were threatened with forced evictions...”

“Even though delegates attending the forum were all from emerging markets it was clear that we (Vietnam) were obviously representing an early stage of philanthropy,” reflected Hoang Anh. “Nevertheless,” she continued, “while other markets shared what they have done to educate donors in their communities, some even offering intense training courses, I was surprised that they all focused on educating high net worth individuals. I am glad LIN focuses on educating all donors and I hope we can do more to empower donors to give strategically, regardless of how much they can give.”
How does your NPO compare when it comes to IT utilization?
Take this LIN-VietNet-ICT survey to find out!

The LIN Center for Community Development and VietNet Information Technology and Communication Center (VietNet-ICT) have teamed up to try and advocate for affordable and relevant information technology and training for the not-for-profit sector in Vietnam. For this purpose, we created an online survey to learn from NPOs throughout Vietnam how they are currently using IT and any barriers they may be experiencing when adopting new technology.

To our NPO friends in Vietnam, can you help us to understand your IT needs by completing our survey?

- **You do not need to be an IT expert to fill out this survey.** You only need to be a Vietnam-based staff member of a not-for-profit organization.
- The survey will take about **10 minutes** to complete. You will be able to skip questions that are not applicable to you or your NPO.
- **We will send you the report.** If you are interested to receive our report on the survey findings, be sure to provide your email address at the end of the survey.

Thank you, in advance, for sharing your NPO’s experience with information technology!

Take the survey today, or **before 10 August**, by clicking on one of the following links:

Survey in Vietnamese:

Survey in English:
Extended Deadline for CDEF Talent Prize 2013

Talent Prize Competition 2013: Architectural Ideas for Improving Urban Spaces
New deadline: 16 Aug 2013

From the organizer:

One of the main objectives of the Cultural Development and Exchange Fund (CDEF) is to provide support to contemporary artists in Vietnam. Funds are each year reserved a talent prize awarded an outstanding young Vietnamese artist within a specific arts sector.

Some of the themes during the last few years have been contemporary dance, performance art and paintings.

In 2013, the Talent Prize theme is “Architectural Ideas for Improving Urban Spaces” with inspiration from Danish architect Jan Gehl’s concepts of designing cities for people with emphasis on the space between buildings. The winner of the CDEF talent prize 2013 will get a study trip to Denmark with all expenses paid.

THE DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES IS AUGUST 16th!

The CDEF will continue to support young and up-coming Vietnamese talents (under the age of 35) by organising talent competitions within different genres of art. Three talent competitions are planned during the five-year component phase.

For more information about the CDEF Talent Prize 2013, visit Hanoi Grapevine’s previous post.

Or http://hanoigrapevine.com/2013/07/extended-deadline-for-cdef-talent-prize-2013/
Training Course “Human Resource is the Key for Success”
from Tuong Lai Center

New Member of the LIN Team — Welcome Ms. Vy!

Ms. Lai Hong Vy recently graduated from the HCMC University of Social Sciences and Humanities with a Degree in Oriental Studies. In June, Vy successfully defended her thesis on the subject “Volunteerism—A social integration strategy in Australia and lessons learned in Vietnam”.

Ms. Vy has been volunteering at LIN since October 2011 and officially joined the team in July 2013 to oversee LIN’s social media communications while managing the Second Chance Store and a new website to be launched in September. Her main duties include coordinating information on LIN’s different social media channels; manage and add new photos to LIN’s images database as well as day-to-day management of LIN’s Second Chance Store. With her, LIN is not only a workplace but also a home for her to build a sustainable and effective community.
Making virtual teams work (Courtesy of Richard Male & Associates)

Michael Watkins published a fine article last month in the Harvard Business Review with success strategies for managing virtual teams. HBR is of course by definition focused on the corporate world, but so often we turn to their excellent content for readings in nonprofit leadership and management as well.

Given how many nonprofits have either virtual or combined boards of directors, and with more and more organizations we work with building small groups of dedicated volunteers in “hubs” in discrete locations, we thought Watkins’ suggestions were worth including in a TIP.

Watkins defines “virtual teams” as work groups which (1) have some core members who interact primarily through electronic means, and (2) are engaged in interdependent tasks—i.e., are truly teams and not just groups of independent workers. (This is an intriguing distinction. Is yours a collection of “independent workers” who in fact ought to be more interdependent—but it’s easier not to be?)

Here are Watkins’ principles for virtual teams—which we thought also have tremendous value for effective workgroups whether virtual or not:

1. Get the team together physically early on. It may seem paradoxical to say in a post on virtual teams, but face-to-face communication is still better than virtual when it comes to building relationships and fostering trust, an essential foundation for effective teamwork. If you can’t do it, it’s not the end of the world (focus on doing some virtual team building). But if you can get the team together, use the time to help team members get to know each other better, personally and professionally, as well to create a shared vision and a set of guiding principles for how the team will work. Schedule the in-person meeting early on, and reconnect regularly (semi-annually or annually) if possible.

2. Clarify tasks and processes, not just goals and roles. All new leaders need to align their team on goals, roles and responsibilities in the first 90 days. With virtual teams, however, coordination is inherently more of a challenge because people are not co-located. So it’s important to focus more attention on the details of task design and the processes that will be used to complete them. Simplify the work to the greatest extent possible, ideally so tasks are assigned to sub-groups of two or three team members. And make sure that there is clarity about work process, with specifics about who does what and when. Then periodically do “after-action reviews” to evaluate how things are going and identify process adjustments and training needs.

3. Commit to a communication charter. Communication on virtual teams is often less frequent, and always is less rich than face-to-face interaction, which provides more contextual cues and information about emotional states — such as engagement or lack thereof. The only way to avoid the pitfalls is to be extremely clear and disciplined about how the team will communicate. Create a charter that establishes norms of behavior when participating in virtual meetings, such as limiting background noise and side conversations, talking clearly and at a reasonable pace, listening attentively and not dominating the conversation, and so on. The charter also should include guidelines on which communication modes to use in which circumstances, for example when to reply via email versus picking up the phone versus taking the time to create and share a document.

(Please find more information in next page—>
4. **Leverage the best communication technologies.** Developments in collaborative technologies — ranging from shared workspaces to multi-point video conferencing — unquestionably are making virtual teaming easier. However, selecting the "best" technologies does not necessarily mean going with the newest or most feature-laden. It’s essential not to sacrifice reliability in a quest to be on the cutting edge. If the team has to struggle to get connected or wastes time making elements of the collaboration suite work, it undermines the whole endeavor. So err on the side of robustness. Also be willing to sacrifice some features in the name of having everyone on the same systems. Otherwise, you risk creating second-class team members and undermining effectiveness.

5. **Build a team with rhythm.** When some or all the members of a team are working separately, it’s all-too-easy to get disconnected from the normal rhythms of work life. One antidote is to be disciplined in creating and enforcing rhythms in virtual teamwork. This means, for example, having regular meetings, ideally same day and time each week. It also means establishing and sharing meeting agenda in advance, having clear agreements on communication protocols, and starting and finishing on time. If you have team members working in different time zones, don't place the entire time-zone burden on some team members; rather, establish a regular rotation of meeting times to spread the load equitably.

6. **Agree on a shared language.** Virtual teams often also are cross-cultural teams, and this magnifies the communication challenges — especially when members think they are speaking the same language, but actually are not. The playwright George Bernard Shaw famously described Americans and the British as “two nations divided by a common language.” His quip captures the challenge of sustaining shared understanding across cultures. When the domain of teamwork is technical, then the languages of science and engineering often provide a solid foundation for effective communication. However, when teams work on tasks involving more ambiguity, for example generating ideas or solving problems, the potential for divergent interpretations is a real danger. Take the time to explicitly negotiate agreement on shared interpretations of important words and phrases, for example, when we say “yes,” we mean... and when we say “no” we mean...and post this in the shared workspace.

7. **Create a “virtual water cooler.”** The image of co-workers gathering around a water cooler is a metaphor for informal interactions that share information and reinforce social bonds. Absent explicit efforts to create a “virtual water cooler,” team meetings tend to become very task-focused; this means important information may not be shared and team cohesion may weaken. One simple way to avoid this: start each meeting with a check-in, having each member take a couple of minutes to discuss what they are doing, what’s going well and what’s challenging. Regular virtual team-building exercises are another way to inject a bit more fun into the proceedings. Also enterprise collaboration platforms increasingly are combining shared workspaces with social networking features that can help team members to feel more connected.

8. **Clarify and track commitments.** In a classic HBR article “Management Time, Who’s got the Monkey?” William Oncken and Donald L. Wass use the who-has-the-monkey-on-their-back metaphor to exhort leaders to push accountability down to their teams. When teams work remotely, however, it’s inherently more difficult to do this, because there is no easy way to observe engagement and productivity. As above, this can be partly addressed by carefully designing tasks and having regular status meetings. Beyond that, it helps to be explicit in getting team members to commit to define intermediate milestones and track their progress. One useful tool: a “deliverables dashboard” that is visible to all team members on whatever collaborative hub they are using. If you create this, though, take care not to end up practicing virtual micro-management. There is a fine line between appropriate tracking of commitments and overbearing (and demotivating) oversight.

9. **Foster shared leadership.** Defining deliverables and tracking commitments provides “push” to keep team members focused and productive; shared leadership provides crucial “pull.” Find ways to involve others in leading the team. Examples include: assigning responsibility for special projects, such as identifying and sharing best practices; or getting members to coach others in their areas of expertise; or assigning them as mentors to help on-board new team members; or asking them to run a virtual team-building exercise. By sharing leadership, you will not only increase engagement, but will also take some of the burden off your shoulders.

10. **Don’t forget the 1:1s.** Leaders’ one-to-one performance management and coaching interactions with their team members are a fundamental part of making any teamwork. Make these interactions a regular part of the virtual team rhythm, using them not only to check status and provide feedback, but also to keep members connected to the vision and to highlight their part of “the story” of what you are doing together.

- See more at: [http://richardmale.com/making-virtual-teams-work/#sthash.xPqM20yz.dpuf](http://richardmale.com/making-virtual-teams-work/#sthash.xPqM20yz.dpuf)
LIN serves grassroots not-for-profit organizations and individual and corporate philanthropists located in and around Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam. In addition to providing direct support to local not-for-profit organizations, LIN also serves as a vehicle through which donors can effectively contribute their knowledge, energy and resources to support these NPOs. In our effort to help local people to meet local needs, LIN aims to advance a more efficient and responsive philanthropic environment and strengthen the communities in which we live and work.

**LIN’s Vision**
A Vietnamese society where all members are respected and supported to have equal access to opportunities.

**LIN’s Mission**
To foster a culture of philanthropy and social responsibility by providing support services to local not-for-profit organizations, skilled volunteers and donors that are committed to building strong communities.

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**Helping local people meet local needs**