Happy New Year to all LIN partners, supporters and friends!
I hope you all have entered the New Year full of hope and positive energy and ready to take action!

We are moving from the Year of the Goat to the Year of the Monkey, starting in mid-February 2016. And this year is the year of the Fire Monkey, suggesting financial events (which could be positive or negative). People say the monkey is a smart, wily and vigilant animal so, if we would like to receive a healthy return on our financial investments, we will need to outsmart the Monkey. Investing in the common good is the wisest way to ensure an impactful return on investment, I believe!

LIN is kicking off the year of the Monkey by calling for your investment in community initiatives – as we can all “do good better” by coming together. Do you care about the needs of children, young adults, women and girls, healthcare, the environment, education or any other issues affecting our community? By investing in one of LIN’s programs, you can join local efforts to address different causes:

◆ **Community Partnership Initiative (CPI)** - Good leaders can transform a society: leaders from LIN’s non-profit partner organizations earnestly desire to become better leaders in order to better serve the society. This year, with USD $20,000, LIN’s CPI program will engage business leaders to help develop the leadership capacity of at least 20 nonprofit professionals representing 15 nonprofits through an eight-month, hands-on mentoring program.
You can be part of this transformation! A contribution of USD $500 builds one nonprofit leader. Or, you can offer your leadership skills and become a coach to one nonprofit leader. Imagine the impact you can have by developing the leadership skills of an individual who provides services to members of marginalized groups in HCMC!

- Narrow the Gap Campaign 2016 - Community engagement and cross sector collaboration on social issues will improve access to opportunities and raise the quality of life for all people in our community. LIN’s Narrow the Gap Campaign 2016 - with the theme of “Community Development” - opens the doors for collaboration to develop promising initiatives that can tackle increasingly complex challenges.

We set out to raise a matching amount of USD $43,000 from the community to be invested in up to 19 community development projects, in addition to workshops, trainings and events all designed to build the capacity of grantees and help the projects to realize their potential. Contribute any donation amount: USD $10, USD $100 or more and you will see how your contribution narrows the gap in our community!

- LIN Community Center – Year round, the 10 staff members at LIN are dedicated to supporting our nonprofit partners’ development by providing a place for them to meet, by promoting the work they are doing in the community and by nurturing their organization’s development. We also help to connect skilled volunteers to opportunities and we also provide consultations to donors looking for introductions, advice and background information (often for free!).

If you donate to LIN Community Center, you will help us retain a capable team along with our Community Center. A recurring monthly contribution of just USD $10 will support one start-up nonprofit with a working space at LIN in one month. If you contribute USD $100 every month, LIN staff will be able to provide peer advisory service to mission-based NPOs.

At LIN, we make every dollar count and we prove it to you through our annual reports and audited financial statements! LIN’s Annual Report 2015 is coming soon. Please contact us or click here to make your investment in common good!

The LIN Team is looking forward to the year ahead. We have a calendar full of activities and a focus on quality in every aspect of our work. With your help, we can promise that LIN team will make sure that your investment outsmarts the wily Monkey!

Wishing you all a wonderful 2016! Chúc mừng năm mới 2016!

Tran Vu Ngan Giang
The first Mandala Night event of 2016 took place at GRAIN by Luke Nguyen with the topic “Skilled volunteerism from different perspectives.”

Hosted by the LIN Center for Community Development and France Volontaires, the guests included business professionals, skilled volunteers and nonprofit staff.

The main activities during Mandala Night included networking and three discussions occurring simultaneously on three different topics:

► Tools, information and current resources to match NPOs with skilled volunteers (and vice-a-versa).
► Experiences overcoming differences between the corporate and NPO work environment in order to cooperate effectively.
► Experiences with volunteer management.

*Mandala Night facilitates the networking of professionals who are engaged, or would like to engage, in offering their skill sets to support the development of nonprofit organizations in Ho Chi Minh City. The event is an initiative of the LIN Center for Community Development and the January program was co-hosted with France Volontaires and sponsored by GRAIN by Luke Nguyen and The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme.*

On January 12th, at Hoa Sen University, LIN helped organize and facilitate the workshop, "Successful Fundraising: Working Towards International Ethical Standards".

The workshop had two purposes: to share experiences in fundraising and to solicit input from representatives of the nonprofit sector on the first draft of a “Statement of Ethical Principles in Fundraising in Vietnam”.

The purpose of developing a “Statement of Ethical Principles in Fundraising in Vietnam” is to unify the fundraising community in Vietnam - those who are dedicated to accountability, transparency and effectiveness - behind a single universal declaration of fundamental principles. It is also being designed to foster public trust in the local nonprofit sector; meanwhile discouraging personal gains at the expense of local and international donors and stakeholders.

During the morning workshop, three members of the voluntary consortium responsible for developing the draft Statement joined a panel to share their experiences and perspectives on fundraising with peer organizations.

The panel included: (1) LIN’s Founder and Strategic Advisor - Mrs. Dana R.H. Doan, (2) the Director of Saigon Children’s Charity - Mr. Tim Mullett, and (3) the Director of ICS Center - Mr. Tran Khac Tung. The panel was moderated by a fourth member of the consortium, Ms. Nguyen Phuong Anh - a freelance consultant and local fundraising expert who is spearheading this initiative. [Read more](#)
NEWS FROM DECEMBER ACTIVITIES

"LIN, WHERE ARE WE GOING?" COMMUNITY EVENT

Although the "LIN oi, Where Are We Going?" event was designed with the business sector in mind, LIN offered a customized version for 21 young people on 19 December to give them a better understanding about nonprofit organizations in HCMC and to introduce opportunities for engagement.

During the event, participants were divided into four teams to visit a combined total of six local NPOs. Upon their return from the site visits, participants shared their experiences with each other and with LIN.

Duong Van Quy, one of the participants who joined a site visits to Thien An Shelter and Green Future of Children (GFOC) share: "After I learned about the difficulty that the Shelter faces in regards to legal issues, it really made me want to help their children with the paperwork procedures so that they would all have an opportunity to work and live at the Thien An Shelter easily. As a law school student, it was great to see how I could apply my skills and contribute to nonprofit organizations".

Nguyen Hoang Minh Khang, one of the youngest participants in the program was similarly affected by her team’s visits to CEPORER Hoc Mon and CHUM projects: "I feel that the people who work in these organizations are really enthusiastic. By joining the program, I could observe a colorful picture of nonprofit organizations. I really want to go back and I will definitely go back to visit the kids there. I love the little things in life and I could see that in the actions of the people there. I am ready to become a volunteer for CEPORER Hoc Mon."

Le Anh Thu, who visited Tinh Than Organization and Living Green Organization, said: "Before [the event], I had vague knowledge of the social organizations in Ho Chi Minh City as well as the surrounding areas. But, after just seven hours with LIN, my understanding became much clearer. Mr. Thanh Van's Tinh Than organization and Mr. Viet Ha's Living Green Organization both impressed me and others in my group by what they have accomplished already and by what they hope to do in the future. The trip also introduced me to interesting friends who dream and plan to develop our community".

THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGAGING TARGET BENEFICIARIES IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

On the 30th of December 2015, LIN’s monthly NPO Morning Coffee returned to the subject of Community Development with a focus on "The participation of beneficiaries in the design and implementation of community development projects". The guest speakers were Mr. Pham Thanh Van, Founder and Director of the AIDS Program, and Mrs. Truong Nguyen Bao Tran, Deputy Director of the Research Center - Counseling Social Work & Community Development (SDRC).

Mr. Pham Thanh Van addressed the importance of beneficiary participation in the design and implementation of community development projects.

During the second half of the morning NPO Coffee Talk, Mrs. Truong Nguyen Bao Tran shared her experience running a project to train social workers in 2011. In this example, SDRC encouraged the social workers at the grassroots level to work together with SDRC project staff to develop the training materials for the program. Read more
After two rounds of evaluation, the Community Grant Allocation Committee for Round 3 in 2015 decided to allocate Narrow the Gap Funds to the following projects and NPOs:

- **CEPORER Hóc Môn** - Project “Hoc Mon Community Vegetable Garden” awarded VND 50,000,000.
- **My Library** – Project “Build a Self-Managed Library at Schools” awarded VND 50,000,000.
- **Happier Group of Social Workers in Hospitals** – Project “Provide care and psychological support for children being treated at cardiology” awarded VND 45,405,000.
- **The Jailbreak Vietnam** - Project “The Jailbreak - The Journey of Conquering the Limits” – awarded VND 30,000,000.

LIN will organize site visits to various grantees through 2016. Detailed information about upcoming site visits will be posted on the LIN and Narrow the Gap Fanpages. If you are interested, please register to join a site visit.

LIN Narrow the Gap Community Fund gathers local resources to support local nonprofit organizations who are working to ensure access to opportunities for marginalized groups or improve the quality of life for all people in Ho Chi Minh City. Grant funding comes from individuals, companies and organizations who are committed to working together to solve local challenges. LIN invites NPOs to apply for grant funds three times each year, in March, July and November.

Please take a moment to “Like” the Narrow the Gap fanpage on Facebook or sign up for our newsletter to stay informed about upcoming rounds and grantee reports.

**Click here to learn more about the projects**

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**ENVIRONMENTAL GRANT FROM BVIS**

The British Vietnamese International School in Vietnam (BVIS) cooperated with LIN Center to organize the project, “Mini-Narrow the Gap Grant for the Environment” to help their the seventh grade students (aged approximately 12 years old) to understand more about local environmental issues and projects. The program also gave these students an opportunity to learn review proposals and select one project to receive grant funding in the amount of VND 30 million.

The role of the LIN Center was to:

- Share knowledge and experience about NPOs in HCMC and surrounding Provinces;
- Disseminate call for proposal to NPO Partners;
- Provide tools and resources to support proposal evaluation and grant allocation; and
- Facilitate the grant allocation processs.
The members of a Board of Directors (BOD) of an NPO in Vietnam often stands “behind-the-scenes” of an NPO, so few people may know them. This is the story of Mrs. Ngo Quynh Nhu, a member of LIN’s BOD who supported LIN on all issues relating to the law since 2009 until now.

“During a LIN workshop, some NPOs shared with me that “Our NPO is so small, so I am wondering whether or not we should have a BOD?” This comment reminded me of LIN’s BOD in the early days, which consisted of over 10 members even though LIN only had 3 or 4 staff.

At that time, I was a volunteer for LIN in the role of Director. Other positions in the organization, such as accountant and human resource manager were also undertaken by skilled volunteers. LIN staff almost exclusively focused on implementation of projects. Meanwhile, each Board member would lend their support and expertise in different areas of the operation – from fundraising, marketing, human resources management, finance management, etc... In this way, the BOD supports LIN’s needs.

Gradually, the number of LIN staff members increased and the Board’s workload reduces. The personnel committee and fundraising committee were joined to form a general council, meeting three times per year for issues related to strategic activities of the organization.

A BOD is a very good resource for NPOs to be able to overcome obstacles in its early stages of development. However, to make sure the BOD operates effectively, I think that an organization needs to find people who can make a long-term commitment. The primary motivation of that commitment will be to the mission and vision of the organization and it must resonate with the individuals on the BOD. Each organization has a vision and mission of its own, but the words can sometimes mean something different to different members. For this reason, NPO staff and prospective Board members must sit down together to ensure that they share the same understanding of the mission and vision and how they are both interpreted into actions.

NPOs should also regularly update their Board members on the organization’s activities, so that everyone can understand what the NPO is doing and the impact it is having on the community. Joining as a Board member with LIN, my volunteer work largely relates to preparing legal paper work. So, every time I attended a networking event, or got to meet with an NPO partner of LIN who could tell me about their work and what they learned from a LIN workshop, I would receive a greater motivation to do “my paper work”.

Looking back on the five years that I work as skilled volunteer for LIN, I feel that our life is getting better. Through the activities of social organizations, I have learned about new issues in the community. And I started thinking more about strategic charity.

Previously, I often joined charity activities, donated money to some organizations or directly to people facing difficult situations whom I would read about in the newspaper.

I have a group of close friends and I noticed a change in them over the time I volunteered with LIN. At the beginning, when I shared with my friends about my volunteer work for LIN Center, they would asked me, “what is LIN?” And I would say that that LIN aims to build capacity for local NPOs. Then they would question further, “Why should I help LIN when there are so many people that need to be helped?” Actually, I tried to explain so many times but I soon realized that they just heard my words but did not really understand them. At that time, I invited them to LIN’s community events but no one did come. I would call for contributions, but no one would respond. And, if they did respond, they would do so for me rather than for LIN’s mission, “I will transfer money to you, Nhu, and you can do whatever you like with the funds.”

Until this year, I could see that my friends are beginning to care more about the activities of social organizations. They read the grant proposals and voted for the projects they think deserves funds from Narrow the Gap Community Fund. They know more about the impact of philanthropy.

I do understand that it takes time to make charity become more sustainable and to invest in making a deeper impact into our communities in Ho Chi Minh City. Our efforts and our persistence now are shaping a positive change in the future.

Lâm Nghi (transcription of an interview with Ms. Ngo Quynh Nhu)
Supporting CPI 2015
Bùi Đức Liêm
Chế Thị Thu Thảo
Dação Hoàng Trung
Dao Lê Duyễn
Hoapace Ngô
Huỳnh Thị Thu Nga
Lâm Ngọc Ánh
Lê Minh Triết
Lục Trọng Hiếu
Mai Thủy Trang
Mao Tuấn Văn
Mr. Edwards Tran
Mr. Matthieu Ghins
Ngô Thị Bích Ngà
Nguyễn Bình Thuận
Nguyễn Đức Quý
Nguyễn Liên Khả
Nguyễn Phước Cát Phương
Nguyễn Thành Danh
Nguyễn Thành Nga
Nguyễn Thị Kim Lý
Nguyễn Thị Lại
Nguyễn Thị Lệ Hiền
Nguyễn Thị Ngọc Bình
Nguyễn Thị Phương Lâm
Nguyễn Thị Thanh Trà
Nguyễn Thảo Trúc Uyên
Nguyễn Thùy Liễn
Nguyễn Thùy Trang
Nguyễn Trần Anh Huy
Nguyễn Trần Anh Tuấn
Nguyễn Trường Bảo Khuyên
Nguyễn Văn Anh
Pham Thanh Thúy Vy
Pham Thu Hà
Pham Vũ Hoàng Giang
Trần Lê Thị Lại
Trần Thị Nguyệt Minh
Trần Thị Quỳnh Mỹ
Trần Thị Thu Huong
Trần Thị Thụy Vy
Trần Thị Thụy Vy
Trinh Thái Bảo
Trịnh Thụy Trang
Vũ Ngọc Đông Phương
Vũ Trân
Supporting NTG 2015
Bùi Thị Thúy
Dinh Nam Như
Dổ Hồng Liên
Dổ Thùy An
Hồ Ngọc Thiên Trang
Hoàng Ngọc Thiện tâm
Huỳnh Ngọc lam
Lâm Trung Quân
Lê Anh Hải
Lê Thanh Tuấn
Lương Bảo Uyên
Nguyễn Anh Vũ
Nguyễn Hoàng Tuấn
Nguyễn Khang An
Nguyễn Thị Dương
Nguyễn Thị Hải Dương
Nguyễn Thị Minh Châu
Nguyễn Xuân Hương
Trần Đỗ Thu Trang
Trần Hoàng Phúc
Trần Lê Thị Lại
Trần Thị Anh
Trần Triệu Nga Huyền
Trịnh Thụy Trang
Trần Thị Thúy An
Trần Thị Thúy An
Trần Thị Thúy Quỳnh
Trần Thị Thu Hương
Trần Thị Thu Huong
Trần Thị Thụy Vy
Trần Thị Thụy Vy
Trần Thái Bảo
Trịnh Thụy Trang
Vũ Ngọc Đông Phương
Vũ Trân
Supporting LIN Center
Vũ Thị Hà
Vương Ngọc Vy Văn
FIND A NONPROFIT OR CAUSE TO SUPPORT USING VIETNAMCAUSES.ORG
– AN ONLINE DIRECTORY OF LOCAL NONPROFITS!
In order to help local people find causes and organizations to support and to help NPOs introduce their organizations, news and events to prospective volunteers and donors, LIN created an online, searchable directory of local nonprofits. VietnamCauses.Org now features information about over 190 nonprofit organizations. Each NPO profile page offers information about the organizations mission, objectives, key activities, recent accomplishments, legal status, current needs and stakeholder testimonials. If you are a Vietnamese nonprofit, you are eligible to join the directory at no cost. Sign up here.
If you know a Vietnamese nonprofit that is not yet listed, you can encourage them to join! Contact Ms. Cam Tien at: community@linvn.org or 3512-0092, to introduce an organization, club, team or volunteer group.