

2016

# STEPPING STONES

ANNUAL REPORT





- MISSION -

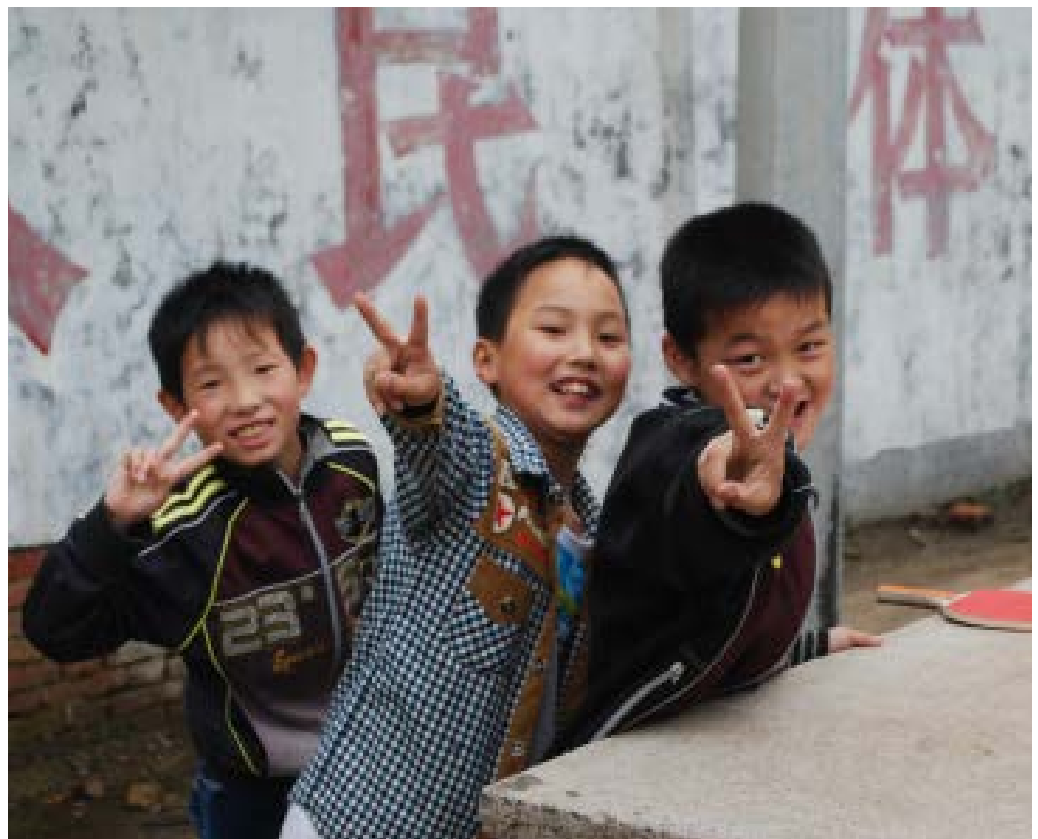
TO IMPROVE  
THE EDUCATION  
AND GENERAL  
WELFARE OF  
DISADVANTAGED  
CHILDREN  
IN CHINA.



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\*Photos on pages 1-3, 6, 8-10, 18-22, 26, 28, 31, 33 courtesy of  
Attila Balogh.







# INTRODUCTION

## to Stepping Stones

2016 was an exciting year for Stepping Stones, as we celebrated our 10th anniversary, launched a new brand image and opened three new programs!

Stepping Stones' work started in October 2006 when long-term expatriate Corinne Hua started to organise volunteers to teach English at a school for migrant children in Shanghai. The school, in common with many other schools for rural children, was struggling to teach English to their students. English is one of the three core subjects in the Chinese school curriculum, and the one that poses most challenges to rural children. English ability is the biggest differentiator between urban and rural Chinese children, perpetuating the gap in educational and employment opportunities. Shanghai benefits from a large English speaking community, with both locals and expatriates eager for high-impact volunteering opportunities. Stepping Stones was founded to match this rich resource to the need in the community.

Stepping Stones now recruits, trains, supplies and supports

hundreds of volunteers to teach thousands of students in more than 30 migrant schools and community centres in Shanghai and Zhejiang province each week, and arranges for individual volunteers and groups to teach English to children in rural Chinese schools, many of whom are left behind by parents who have migrated to the cities for work. Stepping Stones' volunteers come from all over the world and from all walks of life, including high school students, university students and company employees.

Stepping Stones' vision is equal access to a quality education and general welfare for all children in China.

Over the years, Stepping Stones has diversified into other areas, including a program to provide free eye care for children. In 2016, we started three new programs, including an English teacher training project in three migrant schools in Shanghai; a Videolink Program, to teach English to left-behind children in rural China through the internet, and Stepping Up, a program to teach digital literacy and life skills to migrant children in Jiashan (Zhejiang Province).



## **Objectives**

- To increase students' confidence and self-esteem;
- To optimise students' access to better quality education and work opportunities in the future;
- To connect communities and to promote inter-cultural understanding;
- To promote responsible and high-impact volunteering.

## **Legal Status**

In December 2013, Stepping Stones was officially registered in Minhang, Shanghai as a non-profit organisation. Stepping Stones' official Chinese name is 上海闵行区华漕铺路石青少年发展中心 (Shanghai Minhang District Huacao Pulushi Youth Development Centre).

Stepping Stones is subject to the laws of the People's Republic of China. Stepping Stones is strictly non-political and non-religious.





# STAFF TEAM

## 2016

Our staff team increased from 9 to 13 in 2016, matching the increase in our projects. Founder Corinne Hua continues to lead the team, supported by Program Director Sebastien Carrier.

We were sad to lose Anupama Sharma at the beginning of the year when she returned to India, as well as Nicki Trinh who left for Australia. Sherry Jia took over the Tutoring Program from Nicki, and kicking off the new Videolink Program. Lynn Yeh was employed first as an intern before becoming the Tutoring Program Coordinator.

Morgan Banaszek stepped into Anupama's role as Training Manager, and began managing the rural tours. Sally Wangsawijaya succeeded from Lawrence Chow in fall as Classroom

Teaching Program (CTP) Coordinator. Gao Xiaolan joined us in April to provide extra support to our growing team.

Former volunteer Ross Pitcairn joined Stepping Stones in summer to run our new English Teacher Training and Videolink Programs. Teddy Shi was hired as Computer Teacher for our new Stepping Up Program.

Gloria Han continued to manage the I Care Program, Wang Cui continued as Fundraising and Communications Manager, and Eva Hua proceeded to look after our finances. Gao Xiaolan assisted with HR duties until volunteer Dora Havassy took a new part-time role as HR Manager at the end of the year.



*From Left to Right:  
Back Row: Dora, Lynn, Morgan, Eva,  
Iveta, Corinne, Ross, Teddy, Sally  
Front Row Left: Sebastien, Cui  
Front Row Right: Xiaolan, Sherry, Gloria*

# VOLUNTEERS & BENEFICIARIES

## 2016

In 2016, across all Stepping Stones' English teaching programs (including regular teaching programs, individual volunteer placements, corporate events, and rural tours), 1,460 volunteer teachers donated a total of 6,795 English lessons (1 lesson ~ ~40 minutes), increasing from 6,254 lessons in 2015. Thanks to all our dedicated volunteers, around 15,246 migrant and left-behind children benefited from Stepping Stones' English teaching activities in 2016!

Two new teaching programs were started in 2016, Stepping Up Digital Literacy Program and English Teacher Training Program. 15 volunteers supported our professional trainers in delivering 171 digital literacy and life-skill lessons, and eight teacher training sessions. 172 migrant students in Shanghai and Zhejiang province and 41 English teachers from 3 migrant schools in Shanghai respectively benefited from these programs.

Lastly, 6,105 migrant children benefited from Stepping Stones' I Care Project in 2016. They were given eye examinations and free treatment as required. Through this project 971 children received a pair of spectacles and 7 children successfully underwent eye surgery!

Volunteers also assisted with diverse activities such as training, curriculum development, marketing, IT, accounting, fundraising and photography.

On behalf of our beneficiaries, Stepping Stones sincerely thanks all of our volunteers, without whom our work would not be possible.

### Number of Beneficiaries

**15,246** Children (English Teaching Programs)

**6,105** Children (I Care Project)

**172** Children (Stepping Up)

**41** Teachers (English Teacher Training)

### Number of Volunteers

**1,475** Volunteers

### Number of Lessons Taught by Stepping Stones

**6,795** English Lessons

**171** Digital Literacy & Life-skill Lessons

**8** Teacher Training Sessions

### Number of Children Receiving Spectacles

**971** Children





### 1. WEEKLY ENGLISH TEACHING PROGRAM

During the Spring and Autumn semesters of 2016, Stepping Stones had around 350 volunteers regularly teaching to more than 5,000 migrant students in the below-mentioned schools and community centers, reaching a total of 5,121 English lessons.

#### Classroom Teaching Program (CTP)

Since 2006, teaching oral English lessons to migrant children in a traditional classroom setting has been Stepping Stones' core program. Our CTP continued at Huabo Lixing Hang School (both the Jiwang and Huacao campuses), Huahong School, Zhenxing School, Wenhe School and Sunflower Centre (Minhang district); New Citizen Life Centre Guijing Village, Tangsi School and Wanliao School (Pudong district); Shanghai Young Bakers (Putuo district); Tangshan Road School (Hongkou district); Jiuqian Community Centre, Shanhai School and Yangdong

School (Baoshan district); Xujing School (Qingpu district); and Educating Girls of Rural China.

Our program at Yongmei School (Minhang district) and New Citizen Life Centre (Changqing Road, Pudong) came to an end, but we launched 4 new programs in Shanghai at Liuyinglu School (Hongkou district), New Citizen Life Centre Tanzhong Road, Jiwang Community Centre and Shibojiayuan (Pudong district). We are also grateful to Teaching Nomad for their continuous volunteering participation at Liuyinglu and Yangdong school in 2016

Meanwhile, thanks to the sponsorship from Australian telecoms company Optus and IDKIDS FOUNDATION, we have expanded our Classroom Teaching Program in Xixiang Guangyuan School and started the program in Nanshu school, both are migrant schools located in Jiashan county, Zhejiang province. Stepping Stones' volunteers taught English in these schools to more than 1,000 students every week.



## **After School Tutoring Program (ASP)**

Launched in 2012, the ASP continued to thrive as 279 volunteers, mostly high school students, joined to provide small- group tutoring to around 329 migrant children on weekends. In total, our volunteers gave 1,948 English tutoring sessions throughout 2016.

We continued to teach at Xupu Village Community Centre (Minhang district), Lotus NGO Centre (Changning district), Xinqiao Community Centre (Songjiang district), New Citizen Life Centre (Hongkou district), Xujing School (Qingpu district), while expanding our program to Huahong School, Wuliugang Community Centre (Minhang district), Liuyinglu School (Hongkou district), Wanliao School and New Citizen Life Centre Tanzhong Road (Pudong district).



## **2. SUMMER PROGRAM**

During this summer, 89 dedicated Stepping Stones volunteers braved the heat and rain to deliver 400 English classes to 266 students in 9 community centres in different parts of Shanghai. This is the first time that Stepping Stones sent volunteers to provide daily lessons at Wuliugang Community Centre in Minhang district throughout the summer.



### 3. VIDEOLINK PROGRAM

In 2016, Stepping Stones piloted its own Videolink program at two sites, in Zhenlong School Guangde (Anhui province) and Xing'guang School (Fengxian district, Shanghai). Furthermore, we are proud to have continued our partnership with Chiheng Foundation to operate another videolink program at Zhumadian (Henan province). This program reached more than 220 children, where volunteer teachers supported the education of disadvantaged children through an online teaching environment. 16 volunteers in 2016 taught a total of 25 English lessons during the year.

### 4. RURAL VOLUNTEERING TOURS

In 2016, Stepping Stones organized 5 rural tours, taking 77 volunteers to teach 531 lessons to local children in rural China. Our rural tours were in partnership with rural schools in Henan, Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces.

This year, we organized two rural trips for employees from PricewaterhouseCoopers China to teach left-behind children at rural schools in Henan province. We also partnered with EF (Education First) to take 15 staff members to teach migrant children in Wuxi, Jiangsu province.





## 5. INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEER PLACEMENTS

Previously called “Short- and Long-Term Volunteer Placements,” our Individual Volunteer Placements program sends volunteers to rural China for a minimum of one week to provide English lessons to migrant, rural and left-behind children. We stepped up its focus on this program due to interest from volunteers and beneficiaries. In 2016, 19 volunteers were trained and sent to 8 partner schools in Shanghai, Anhui, Zhejiang, Gansu, Guizhou, Jiangsu and Henan provinces. 459 English lessons were provided to benefit 2,962 disadvantaged students.

The students were not the only ones who benefited. One volunteer described her experience as follows:

*“I highly encourage anyone, and especially those who only have experience in the eastern cities of China, to volunteer in rural areas. Open your eyes and mind to the depth of Chinese life and culture that can be found across the country, and contribute a gift of language and knowledge that students will carry with them for years to come”*  
(Olivia Bergen, Gansu, August 2016).





ne Apple  
Apples  
Apples

One Banana  
Two Bananas

Sagar  
Sara

跟踪了解  
加强锻炼  
关闭消毒

## 6. TRAINING AND CURRICULUM

In terms of curriculum, the most significant step we took in 2016 was to begin laying the foundations for the development of a brand-new Stepping Stones syllabus for Grades 1-5 that will follow the basic content of the standard Shanghai curriculum while better reflecting the more fun and communicative approach taken by Stepping Stones with regards to language teaching. We also produced a bespoke Grades 1-8 syllabus for our outlying schools in Jiashan, meaning our volunteer teachers there no longer have to rely solely on the textbooks.

We also continued to improve the training materials for all our programs, while at the same time analysing and refining our overall approach to training, observation, monitoring and evaluation, with a view in 2017 to building a comprehensive and integrated approach to how we train, observe, evaluate and give feedback to our teaching

volunteers, and how this then impacts the effectiveness of the programs as a whole. We also developed training materials for the Videolink Program which have so far been used to train 100+ remote teaching volunteers, as well as researching and developing a ground-breaking new teaching approach, with a full set of PPT materials, for teaching primary-age children over the internet.





## 7. I CARE PROJECT

The objective of Stepping Stones' I Care Project is to improve the vision of disadvantaged children in China in order to increase their chance of educational success, through the free provision of essential eye-care equipment and services.

In 2016, with the support of Shanghai Singapore International School (SSIS), Shan Xin Lian Xin (善心莲心), Shanghai Women's Federation, Consular Spouses Shanghai, Paper Stones Scissors, Wing Hang Bank and many generous individual donors, we secured sufficient funds to arrange eyesight screening for 6,105 students in seven migrant schools in Shanghai and two schools for migrant children in Jiashan, Zhejiang province. Thanks to our sponsors, 971 children received a pair of spectacles and 7 children successfully underwent surgery to correct strabismus in 2016!





## 8. TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM

In 2016, we ramped up our teacher training program, hiring a full-time teacher trainer and partnering with three Shanghai migrant primary schools: HLH1, HLH2 and Wanliao. Prior to the training sessions, an in-depth needs analysis was conducted which enabled us to plan a specific training curriculum for each group. They featured modules in areas such as teaching methodology, using English in the classroom, materials development and communication strategies. In all, eight three-hour training sessions were conducted during the fall semester of 2016, with a further ten more planned for spring 2017. A total of 41 trainees have so far participated. The training sessions were supplemented by volunteer-led speaking classes to help improve the trainees' oral English confidence.



## 9. STEPPING UP DIGITAL LITERACY PROGRAM

Stepping Up is a digital literacy program established by Stepping Stones in 2016 inspired by Orphan Impact's digital literacy program in orphanages in Vietnam, and sponsored by the Chao Foundation and Transparent Fish Fund. Stepping Up helps rural and migrant Chinese children to be better prepared for their futures after leaving school by teaching digital literacy skills common to the modern workplace. The program learning environment is designed to unleash creativity, encourage communication, develop critical thinking, and increase each student's confidence while helping them look toward their future with excitement.

In 2016, thanks to the support of 10 trained volunteers, our professional computer teacher provided 171 digital literacy and life-skill lessons to classes of 10-15 migrant students in Shanghai and Jiashan, Zhejiang Province. 172 students (135 middle school students and 37 primary school students) benefited from this program. They learned how to use a search engine, an email system, Microsoft Office, Baidu Cloud, etc, as well as how to enhance their life-skills such as critical thinking.



# CORPORATE & SCHOOL PROJECTS

## 2016

In 2016, Stepping Stones took 494 volunteers from 20 various corporate, university and high school groups to visit migrant schools and community centres in Shanghai. These volunteers taught 266 English lessons and 17 lessons on eye care to migrant students and engaged in inter-cultural exchanges and learning activities. Visitors came from London Business School, Target, Disney English, HYMD, Concordia University, Berlin University, Christie's, We Communications, Bloomberg, Kurt Salmon, Imperial College, New York University, Duke University, Shanghai Livingston American School and Georgia Institute of Technology.

### An exciting afternoon at Christie's

On July 28th, Stepping Stones and Christie's Auction House of Shanghai co-hosted a fun and immersive painting workshop for 20 local migrant students, alongside Christie's employees. Each employee paired with one student to paint one of three pictures that was picked from the auction house's catalogue.

This event not only allowed the migrant children to experience a part of Shanghai that they were unfamiliar with, but to receive professional art mentoring from one of the world's premiere art auctioneers as well. At the end of the day, they were able to bring their own pieces of art home, which will serve as a memento of a memorable afternoon.





### Disney English brings Christmas Fun to Jinding School

On Dec 14th, 30 volunteers from Disney English Shanghai taught an exciting Christmas-themed English lesson to migrant children in grade 2 at Jinding School, featuring dancing and singing. All of the students loved the lesson, concentrating hard on following the instructions. At the end, Santa Claus showed up in each classroom and distributed Christmas gifts to all the students. From March 2017, Stepping Stones and Disney English will collaborate to send volunteers regularly to teach in Jinding School.



### Nestle EMBA's at LBS made four visits to migrant schools in Shanghai

Stepping Stones has built a long-term partnership with the EMBA program of London Business School. In 2016, Stepping Stones organized four groups of Nestle EMBA students to visit migrant schools in different districts in Shanghai. Our Program Director talked to each group about the current situation for migrants and NGO work in China. After a short training, each teaching group conducted interactive English activities with the migrant students in a small-group setting. We believe that these activities allow more people to understand disadvantaged groups and to donate their expertise and time to contribute back to society.





# TESTIMONIALS

## 2016

### English Teachers

Tuesday afternoons are the happiest time, when Stepping Stones volunteers come to our school to teach the children oral English. The children love these classes, interacting enthusiastically with the volunteers.  
(Lily, HLH1)

Our trainer is very responsible and devoted. The training atmosphere is active and the courseware is very attractive. He is not very strict so most of us are willing to speak out. The training lesson is very logical with lots of teamwork activity. We rarely joined such trainings before.  
(Ms. Guo, HLH2)

### Students

I like my foreign teacher to teach me English by playing games. She is pretty and humorous.  
(X.R. Su, Xujing School)

My foreign teacher always taught me what I didn't know and learnt before. He helped me to improve my oral English though sometimes the class is a bit noisy.  
(L. Gan, Xinqiao Center)

### Volunteers

These kids really make my day! Since I'm not a native speaker, I wasn't sure if I could teach the Chinese students, but I must say I'm so glad that I started doing this. I feel my English level is good enough and these kids give me so much back every week. I'm always happy after spending the time with them all.  
-Randi Lur



### English Teaching Programs

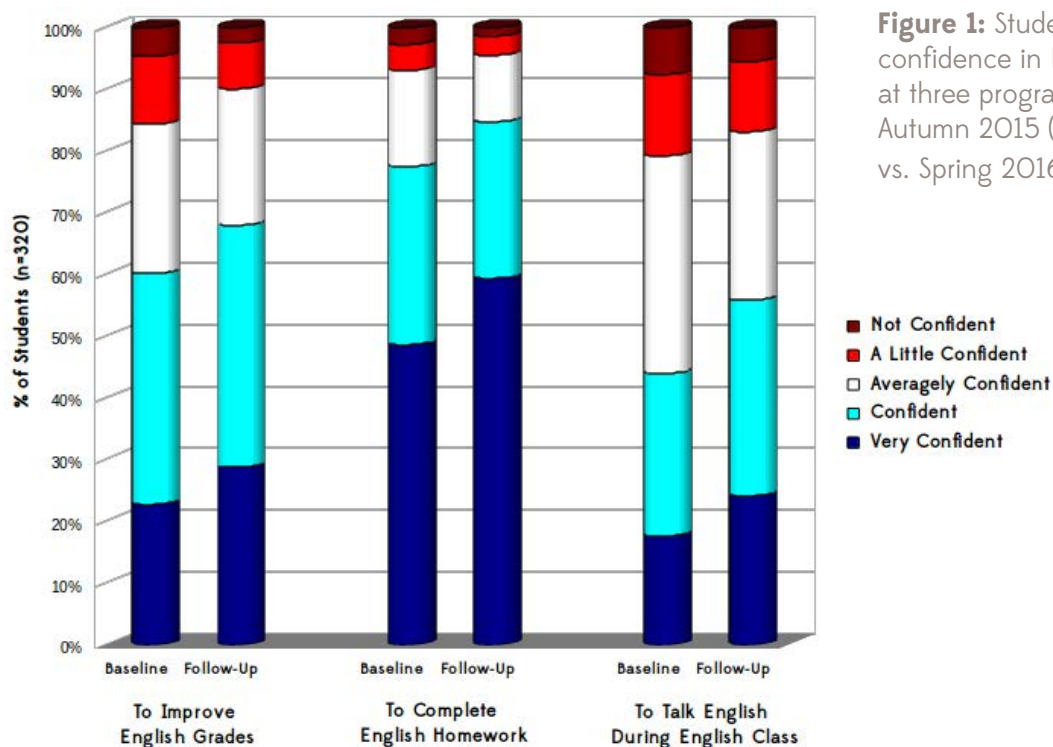
Stepping Stones conducted three main evaluation studies in 2016 to measure the impact of its programs on students' interest and confidence in English. We are pleased to report that 2016 was another successful year for our programs! Based on data gathered through baseline and follow-up questionnaire surveys, the results indicate that many of our beneficiaries improved their confidence in several areas such as completing English homework, understanding and using English, and even improving English grades.

The first study conducted by Stepping Stones in 2016 was on its 2015-2016 Classroom Teaching Program. The study took place in three program sites (two migrant schools in Shanghai and one migrant school in Jiashan, Zhejiang province), measuring changes in pre-survey and post-survey responses (320 students). The results of the study show a significant increase in students' interest in English at the end of the program. Across all grades, the

percentage of children 'liking' or 'liking very much' learning English rose by 11 percentage points, from 69% to 80%.

The study also compared the baseline and follow-up results of the questions concerning students' confidence in English. As can be seen from Figure 1, the results indicate a significant rise in the percentage of children feeling 'confident' or 'very confident' in improving their English grades, completing their English homework and using English in class. The most notable increases were in the children's confidence to improve their English grades and to talk English in class, which rose in the follow-up survey by 8 and 12 percentage points respectively.





Stepping Stones' second study in 2016 assessed the impact of its 2015-2016 Tutoring Program at two sites in Shanghai (33 students). The most encouraging result found in the study is towards students' confidence in completing their English homework. By the end of the program, the number of children feeling 'very confident' in completing them rose by 18 percentage points, from 64% to 82%.

Another highlight of the study is the proportion of students

reporting high confidence in using English in class and to talk to a foreigner, which rose by 25 and 12 percentage points respectively.

Lastly, Stepping Stones' third study assessed the impact of its 2016 Summer Program. Results of the study - which was conducted at two sites in Shanghai (29 students) - show that the majority of students gained confidence in conversational English after having been taught by a Stepping Stones volunteer. By the end of the Summer Program, 69% of participants felt at least 'confident' or 'very confident' that they would

understand something said in English as compared to 55% before the program. 66% of them also felt confident to speak to friends and classmates in English at the end of the program compared to just less than 52% before the program. The most noteworthy change was in the children's confidence to speak to a foreigner in English – the percentage feeling at least 'averagely confident' rose from 59% to 78% in the follow-up survey. Another highlight of the study is the number of students who very much liked learning English, which rose from 39% to 64%.

Stepping Stones is encouraged by these positive results which suggest that students under its programs become more confident in English, and are subsequently more prepared for completing their homework and examinations, as well as for engaging in English-speaking situations. Stepping Stones will continue to collect and analyse survey data to validate the impact of its programs.

Detailed reports can be found at <http://steppingstoneschina.net/impact>.





# SPONSORS

## 2016

Stepping Stones is grateful to all its many generous donors, in particular the following, who provide the majority of our funding:

- Shanghai Soong Ching Ling Foundation
- HuaQiao Foundation
- Target Foundation
- United Way Worldwide
- Shanghai United Foundation
- HB Fuller through Global Giving
- Shanghai Charity Foundation
- Chao Family Foundation
- Transparent Fish Fund
- Optus
- Bloomberg
- Mr Le Xing
- Chifan for Charity
- İDKIDS FOUNDATION
- HMYD

A special thank you also to the following providers of high quality pro bono services:

- O'Melveny & Myers
- I.D. Creations
- Paper Stone Scissors
- NisseiWell
- Attila Balogh
- Epsilon
- Big Bamboo
- Mingdao



# NON-PROFIT PARTNERS

2016

Stepping Stones is proud to have partnerships with many other community organisations. Stepping Stones works with the following organisations to bring more services to a broader community of disadvantaged people in China: Aboro Foundation, Chi Heng Foundation, Children's Helpers Worldwide, Clowns without Borders, Educating Girls of Rural China, Hua Ai, Jiuqian Community Centre, Morning Tears, New Citizen Life Centre, Netspring, Shanghai Young Bakers, Sunflower Education Program for Migrant Children, Youdao Foundation, Yuting Action.



# FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES 2016

## Stepping Stones' 10th Birthday and New Brand Image!

On Sunday 8th May, more than 800 people gathered at Wellington College International Shanghai to celebrate Stepping Stones' 10th Birthday. Our partner schools, volunteers, board members, sponsors and their families were invited to the party. The performances presented by migrant children and professional dancers kept up the excitement and the raffle and auction raised almost 90,000RMB, all of which will be used to support Stepping Stones' work.

One of our best birthday gifts was a new brand image donated by communications company Paper Stone Scissors, with a sleek new logo which featured prominently at the party.

The party was a great tribute to Stepping Stones' first ten years and a fitting way to thank all the old friends who have supported us from the very early days, as well as all the new friends we have made along our ten-year journey. A big thank you to everyone who supported the event, and who have supported us through the years in numerous ways.



### A convenient way to donate through the WeChat store

Stepping Stones launched its online WeChat Store at the end of 2015. Through the online store, people can make donations and purchase our t-shirts and bags, as well as other merchandise. In 2016, the WeChat store became one of the main online payment methods for our donors, especially at our 10th Birthday party. During the year, we received more than RMB50,000 donations and revenue through the WeChat store. We'll explore more innovative ways to get more people involved in the future.

### Crowd Funding Campaigns

Partnered with Shanghai United Foundation, Stepping Stones joined the Egg Walkathon for the first time this year. Thanks to the commitment and perseverance of our walkers, Stepping Stones surpassed their original target of 20,000 RMB. Stepping Stones also participated in Tencent's Charity Day Crowd Funding Campaign, and managed to raise another 20,030 RMB to meet the goal in just two days. All the money will be used to help us reach more children left behind in rural China by recruiting and training volunteers to teach in rural schools, via rural trips and the Videolink Program.



*Our 2016 Super Stones Team (left to right): Jennifer Wang, Wang Cui, Gloria Han, Yikai Zhu, Loching Chow, Morgan Banaszek.*



Over recent years, education has improved in Shanghai's migrant schools, and the economic situation of the families with children in those schools has also improved. There is still a gap in the quality of English education, and our core English teaching programs will continue, with a growing emphasis on quality over quantity with regards the English lessons provided.

We plan to launch an online orientation for volunteers to take before coming to our training, so that our training can focus on teaching skills, such as classroom management and lesson planning. We plan to increase our services to the children who are not able to move with their parents to the cities, and are left behind in rural Chinese schools. We will recruit

and train volunteers all over the world to teach these children through Videolink, and enable volunteers to travel to those schools to teach those children in person.

We plan to expand our Stepping Up Digital Literacy Program to 2-3 more schools in 2017, and provide English Teacher Training in 3 new schools.

The focus of our I Care program will be on increasing the usage rate of donated glasses. We are working on a short, professional infomercial to communicate clearly why children should wear glasses if they are short-sighted.

There has been much talk in the press and among the non-profit community about the new China Charity Law which came into effect in September 2016 and the new Foreign NGO Management Law which comes into effect in January 2017. We are working closely with all the relevant departments and are confident that we are able to meet all the requirements of the new laws. We look forward to continued sustainable growth under the new legal framework in 2017.

