



2025

STEPPING STONES

ANNUAL REPORT

IMPROVING THE EDUCATION AND GENERAL WELFARE OF
DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN IN CHINA

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Director's Words

Last autumn, I found myself back in Shanghai at what is, to me, the city's most beautiful time of year. But it wasn't just the golden trees and the warm sunshine that made it special – it was the sense that something long imagined was finally about to become real.

For eighteen years, Stepping Stones has brought volunteers into community centers serving disadvantaged children across Shanghai and beyond. Over the years, we often spoke about what it might mean to have a space of our own – a place where we could do more, reach further, and stay closer to the communities we serve. In 2025, that vision finally began to take shape.

On the very evening I returned after seven months away, I sat down with a group of colleagues whose excitement was impossible to miss. They shared their ideas, their plans, their hopes for what a Stepping Stones center could be. From the very next day, that shared vision turned into action. My autumn quickly filled with visits to potential venues, long discussions over budgets and feasibility, and countless small decisions that slowly built toward something much bigger.

Then, less than two months later, it happened: our first students walked through the doors.

That moment was the result of years of persistence. Our team had worked tirelessly with partners, donors, and community stakeholders, navigating challenges and uncertainties along the way. In the end, everything came together with the support of Shanghai United Foundation, who helped connect us with the right donor, and the Party and Masses Service Center at Aibo No. 7 Village, who opened their doors to us. What once felt distant suddenly became real.

The center is located just north of Hongqiao Airport Terminal 2, in a community shaped by migrant families – many working long hours in logistics and related industries. This is not a new place for us. Huacao Township has been Stepping Stones' legal home since 2013, we have been working in local schools even earlier than that, and have run holiday camps with the Youth League here year after year. And yet, having a permanent home in the community has given us the unique opportunity to get to know the community so much better.

People sometimes ask whether our work is still needed today, given how much has improved in China since we began in 2006. And it's true – so much has changed. I still remember visiting rural schools where children had no English teachers at all, learning in buildings that were barely fit for purpose. Today, many of those conditions have improved beyond recognition. Schools are better equipped, teachers are better trained, and opportunities have expanded.

But when you look more closely, you see that not every child is flourishing.

There is still a huge gap in access to quality education. Wealthier children go home to parents who can guide them through their homework, while their classmates from migrant families may be left to struggle alone. Some children have access to enriching activities, new technologies, and opportunities to explore the wider world; others do not. And beyond academics, some children continue to face challenges that are harder to see – family separation, instability at home, poor nutrition, or undiagnosed learning difficulties.

These are not problems that disappear with economic progress alone.

This is why the center matters.

Each afternoon, it becomes a place where children can simply arrive, be welcomed, and feel safe. A place where homework is no longer a lonely struggle, where friendships are built, and where laughter comes easily. On weekends and during holidays, it fills with energy – classes, activities, and outings that open up new experiences and possibilities.

But perhaps most importantly, it gives us the chance to do something we have rarely been able to do before: to build deeper relationships. To notice when a child is struggling, and not only take the time to understand why but also to be able to do something about it. To work not only with students, but with their families, offering support that is consistent, personal, and sustained.

I will never forget how quickly the first group of children made the space their own. Within days, the center was no longer "new" – it was theirs. You could see it in the way they settled into routines, in the easy conversations with volunteers and staff, in the quiet concentration over homework, and in the bursts of joy during games and shared moments.

Those early days were a powerful reminder of what is possible when care, commitment, and community come together.

None of this happened by chance. It is the result of extraordinary dedication from our staff and volunteers, who brought the center to life while continuing to deliver our existing programs with the same care and consistency as always.

And, as ever, it is made possible by the support of our donors.

Everything you will read in this report – the stories, the progress, the small but meaningful changes in children's lives – happens because of you. Your support has helped turn an idea into a place, and a place into a community.

And for the children who walk through those doors each day, and their families, that community is already making all the difference. Thank you all for your great support.

Corinne Richeux Hua
Executive Director

Year in Review

Empowering Under-Served Children with Essential 21st-Century Skills

In 2025, with the generous support of our partners, Stepping Stones continued to advance its mission of expanding access to quality education for under-served children across China. We recruited, trained, and supported 1,287 volunteers, who reached 8,088 students nationwide. Through programs in English learning, digital literacy, and social-emotional learning, our volunteers and trainers delivered 9,357 interactive lessons, helping students build essential 21st-century skills. The average number of lessons per student increased from 21.2 in 2024 to 24 in 2025, enabling students to make significant progress in language, emotional, and digital skills.

Children benefited from our programs through online learning in thousands of students' homes as well as offline at 73 program sites across 19 provinces and municipalities – Shanghai, Henan, Anhui, Jiangxi, Hubei, Fujian, Guangxi, Shaanxi, Yunnan, Gansu, Guangdong, Jiangsu, Shandong, Tianjin, Sichuan, Jilin, Beijing, Hebei, and Hunan – reflecting the truly national reach of our work.

Helping Children Understand and Manage Emotions

In response to growing community needs, our Social-emotional Learning (SEL) Program reached 1,444 students in 2025. Our teachers and volunteers delivered 875 lessons designed to help children recognize, understand, regulate, and express their emotions.

Special attention was given to so-called “negative” emotions – often misunderstood or suppressed – by creating safe spaces where vulnerability was respected and emotional expression encouraged. Through storytelling, reflection, and group discussions, children developed greater self-awareness, empathy, and resilience. As one child reflected, “It helped me know myself better.”

Enhancing Digital Literacy Skills

Building on the strong momentum of 2024, our Digital Literacy Program continued to thrive in 2025, reaching a total of 2,076 students. Through in-person and online delivery, our volunteers and teachers conducted 1,486 lessons across under-resourced communities.

The curriculum integrates project-based learning with collaborative, hands-on activities, covering key digital competencies such as STEM education, coding, programming, computer fundamentals, and artificial intelligence. In 2025, we further refined existing courses and introduced new AI and online coding modules designed to meet the needs of both younger learners and more advanced students.

In partnership with Netspring, we also deployed 170 refurbished computers to equip nine Green IT Classrooms, directly benefiting 2,500+ teachers and students with access to digital literacy, science, and innovation lessons. Ongoing maintenance ensures sustainable use and lasting impact.

Elevating English Learning Experiences

In 2025, marking its 20th consecutive year, Stepping Stones continued to support disadvantaged children across China in improving their English proficiency. Over the year, we reached 6,657 students, delivering 5,845 engaging online and offline lessons.

Our learner-centered curriculum emphasizes interactive activities, stories, picture books, songs, and games, giving children ample opportunities to practice vocabulary, sentences, and dialogue in fun and confidence-building ways. Phonics-based instruction further strengthened pronunciation and oral communication skills, helping students express themselves more fluently and comfortably in English.



Average Lessons per Student



Volunteers



Lessons



Students



Staff

Holiday Camps

Another highlight of 2025 was our winter and summer holiday camps, organized for over 325 children in Huacao Township (Shanghai) in collaboration with the Youth League. Alongside core English, digital literacy, and SEL lessons, the camps offered a rich variety of activities, including reading and literature appreciation, handcrafts and creative arts, mathematical thinking, STEM projects, environmental education, painting, poetry, and physical education. These camps provided children with joyful and enriching learning experiences during school holidays while supporting their holistic development.

A Major Milestone:

Opening of the Stepping Stones Center

One of the most significant milestones of 2025 was the successful opening of the Stepping Stones Center in Huacao, Minhang District, Shanghai. Established in response to long-observed community needs, the Center now provides a safe, welcoming, and structured environment for children – many from migrant and low-income families.

Having a dedicated space allows us to deliver consistent, high-quality programs under one roof. More importantly, it offers children a sense of stability, belonging, and continuity – all of which are essential to their well-being and long-term development.

About Us

Who We Are

Stepping Stones is a non-profit organization registered in Shanghai and with 3A status. With a mission to improve the education and general welfare of disadvantaged children in China, and a commitment to promoting responsible volunteerism, Stepping Stones has implemented a wide range of programs focused on children's education and well-being since 2006. We recruit, train and support teachers and volunteers to teach essential 21st-century skills to under-served children and youth in China, focusing on digital literacy, English language, and social-emotional learning.

Our program delivers lessons to thousands of students each year across many provinces. Students who participate in our programs demonstrate increased interest and confidence in their studies, equipping them not only with the skills needed to succeed in a rapidly evolving world, but also with the emotional resilience, confidence, and social awareness to navigate life with purpose. This, in turn, enhances their access to future educational and employment opportunities. Additionally, students are exposed to diverse cultures and gain early experience with volunteer programs, fostering a strong sense of volunteerism and social responsibility.

Our Mission

To improve the education and general welfare of disadvantaged children in China.

Our Vision

Equal access to a quality education and general welfare for all children in China.

Our Values



Our Program 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 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 private non-enterprise organization. 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 Center). 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

2025 was a year of remarkable stability for the Stepping Stones team. Founder Corinne Hua continued to lead the organization on a part-time voluntary basis as Executive Director. We were delighted to see Meng Huang, who brings years of team management experience, step into the role of Deputy Executive Director following his promotion from Fundraising Manager earlier in the year – allowing him to support Corinne in leading the staff team while continuing to contribute to fundraising efforts. Sebastien Carrier continued as Program Director, Eva Hua as Operations Director, Teddy Shi as Outreach Director, and Claire Ding as Curriculum Director.

The smooth operation of our programs would not have been possible without the dedication of our program managers. In 2025, Julie Li continued as Senior Manager of the Home Classroom Program, Miki Gu as SEL Program Manager, Yining Yao as Digital Literacy Program Manager, and Tiansing Ma as English Program Manager. Each of our teaching programs moved forward steadily under their guidance.

The opening of the Stepping Stones Center brought new energy – and new responsibilities – to Rural Programs Senior Manager Sherry Jia. In addition to continuing to manage the Rural Videolink Program and Holiday Camps, Sherry took on oversight of the Center's operations. We were therefore delighted to see intern Tony Shen successfully transition into the role of Program Assistant, joining the team to support Sherry and inject fresh energy into the management of her various projects.

On the communications, HR, and operations fronts, Viviana Chen continued as Communications Manager, Nova Shao as HR Senior Manager, and Lydia Liu as Finance Manager. Their contributions have also been essential to the smooth operation of our programs and the organization as a whole.

We remain deeply grateful to long-term volunteer Stella Wu, who continued to offer her professional assistance in operations. Special thanks go to long-term volunteer photographer Attila Balogh, whose stunning images grace the pages of this annual report. His lens not only captures the dedication of our volunteers, but also allows us to share that spirit with a wider audience.

With the addition of Tony Shen, our total number of paid staff grew to 14 – a more robust team structure, laying a stronger foundation for the future.

Corinne Hua	Executive Director (Volunteer)	Julie Li	HCR Program Senior Manager
Sebastien Carrier	Program Director	Tiansing Ma	Offline English Programs Manager
Eva Hua	Operations Director	Yining Yao	Digital Literacy Program Manager
Teddy Shi	Outreach Director	Miki Gu	SEL Program Manager
Claire Ding	Curriculum Director	Viviana Chen	Communications Manager
Meng Huang	Deputy Executive Director	Lydia Liu	Finance Manager
Nova Shao	HR Senior Manager	Tony Shen	Program Assistant
Sherry Jia	Rural Programs Senior Manager	Stella Wu	Operations Assistant (Volunteer)

Staff Team (from left to right):

Tiansing Ma, Julie Li, Lydia Liu, Viviana Chen, Nova Shao, Corinne Hua, Tony Shen, Eva Hua, Miki Gu, Sherry Jia, Teddy Shi, Yining Yao, Homer Huang



Board of Directors



Hua Lei
Chair

Architect
- Retired



Eva Hua
Vice Chair

Stepping Stones
- Operations Director



**Whooper
Huang**
Director

PAAT (Shanghai) IT Co., Ltd.
- Partner



Leo Jia
Director

Inclusion Factory
- General Manager



Rita Jia
Director

KOL



Wang Lin
Supervisor

CSR Consultant
- Retired



Steve Pan
Supervisor

Freelance Consultant
and Charitable Worker



Aaron Xin
Supervisor

O'Melveny & Myers
- Senior Legal Counsel



Programs

A New Home for Learning: Stepping Stones Community Center

In 2025, a milestone for Stepping Stones was the opening of our own Community Center in Huacao, Minhang District, Shanghai, in collaboration with the local government, neighborhood committee, and Shanghai United Foundation. Established to meet long-standing community needs, the Center provides a safe, welcoming, and structured environment for children, many from migrant and low-income families.

The Center allows us to deliver high-quality programs under one roof, offering children stability, belonging, and continuity – foundations essential to their well-being and long-term growth. It serves as a warm haven after school, on weekends, and during school holidays, where children can receive homework guidance, engage in educational and creative activities, and enjoy structured play. In its first months of operation in the fall, the Center welcomed 89 students, delivering 308 lessons that helped them learn, explore, and develop new skills beyond the classroom.



Children participate in programs that strengthen English proficiency, digital literacy, and social-emotional development, all delivered in a student-centered and interactive way. Activities are designed to foster curiosity, creativity, confidence, and resilience, supporting both academic progress and personal growth.



We are deeply grateful to our partners, supporters, and the local government for helping turn this vision into a lasting resource. While the Center strengthens program delivery in Shanghai, Stepping Stones' commitment continues nationwide, ensuring high-quality educational opportunities remain accessible to children across China.



English

Since its inception, Stepping Stones has been dedicated to providing engaging and interactive English learning opportunities for disadvantaged children and youth across China. Our programs aim to strengthen communication skills, foster a love for language learning, and build the confidence students need to express themselves in English. Over the years, the program has expanded significantly, reaching students across multiple provinces through a combination of in-person classes and online initiatives, ensuring access to quality English education in both urban and rural communities.

Our approach emphasizes interactive, student-centered learning, with a strong focus on speaking and listening to maximize participation. Volunteers and teachers use dynamic methods – such as picture books, storytelling, games, songs, and dialogue-based activities – to create an engaging learning environment. In addition, specialized courses including phonics, movie dubbing, and drama further enrich the curriculum, helping students improve pronunciation, build confidence, and use English creatively in real-life contexts.

The curriculum is structured across six learning levels, adapted to different age groups and delivered both online and offline. Each lesson is supported by carefully designed interactive materials, enabling volunteers to deliver consistent, high-quality instruction. Developed in-house, the curriculum aims to equip students with the skills, motivation, and confidence needed to pursue further education and expand future opportunities.

Curriculum Development in 2025

In 2025, the English curriculum team continued to refine and expand teaching materials to ensure fresh and engaging content for all learners. Building on the progress made in 2024, we developed two additional 12-lesson courses for students in Grades 3–5, ensuring they benefit from updated and varied content. These materials were also adapted for the Home Classroom (HCR) online format, supporting effective and consistent delivery.

Innovation and targeted learning remained key priorities. We enhanced the curriculum provided to our partner organization, Shanghai Young Bakers (SYB) – which delivers training in French bakery to marginalized Chinese youth aged 17 to 23 – by incorporating feedback from students currently undertaking training and work placements, ensuring stronger alignment with real-world skills and professional environments.

Thematic content was also expanded in 2025, including eight Chinese New Year-themed lessons for winter camps and a series of English news-based lessons designed for middle school students during summer programs.

In addition, our Online English Corners (OEC), delivered in partnership with the Chi Heng Foundation, entered its second year. To sustain and further develop this initiative, we created a new 12-lesson course, supporting the continued delivery of high-quality, conversation-focused English sessions for middle school students.



Shanghai English Program

1,988

Lessons

19

Sites

183

Volunteers

1,292

Students

As the educational landscape in Shanghai continues to evolve, children and youth from disadvantaged backgrounds still face significant challenges in learning English. Stepping Stones' Shanghai English Program remains a vital resource, helping students strengthen their language skills, build confidence, and cultivate motivation to learn. In 2025, the program reached 1,292 students across 19 teaching sites, with our dedicated volunteers and teachers delivering a total of 1,988 lessons.



The program serves a diverse group of beneficiaries, with volunteers deployed in schools for migrant children, community centers, a specialized center for children with special needs, and a vocational training center for disadvantaged youth. Through these varied interventions, we are making a tangible impact on children's lives, equipping them with essential English skills that open doors to future educational and career opportunities.

We are deeply grateful for the unwavering commitment of our volunteers, many of whom travel weekly to Shanghai's far suburbs to teach. In 2025, 183 volunteers from a wide range of organizations, institutions, and companies – including New York University, Shanghai Qibao Dwight High School, Donghua University, Fudan University, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, and East China Normal University – played a vital role in helping us achieve the program's goals. Their dedication and passion continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of the students we serve.

Out-of-Shanghai English Program



Lessons



Sites



Volunteers



Students

Stepping Stones' English program outside Shanghai focuses on rural, under-served, and remote communities, bringing high-quality language education to children who face limited access to English learning opportunities. In 2025, we trained and supported 48 dedicated volunteers who travelled to nine sites across China in Henan, Jiangsu, Gansu, Anhui, Tianjin, and Fujian provinces, providing intensive English courses to 1,719 students. Over the year, our volunteers delivered a total of 699 lessons, significantly enriching students' educational experiences.

Partnerships with corporate supporters amplified our impact. For example, ten volunteers from PwC dedicated several days teaching English at a partner school in Henan, while 19 Bosch employees contributed a day of lessons at a school in Anhui. In the summer, we strengthened collaborations with the Bird's Nest and Tong'an Library in Fujian, sending four volunteers to teach English for several weeks across three library sites. New partnerships in Gansu also enabled five volunteers to provide additional instruction to under-served students.

Through these immersive placements, our volunteers formed meaningful connections with students, inspiring a love for language learning and building confidence in English communication. These experiences also enriched local teachers and provided volunteers with life-changing insights into rural communities and the challenges faced by under-served populations.



Rural Videolink Program

1,048
Lessons

37
Sites

149
Volunteers

3,336
Students

The Rural School Videolink Program provides online English courses to children aged 8 to 15 in remote areas, offering an efficient and scalable solution to reach under-served communities. While lessons are delivered online, students gather in classrooms at rural schools or community centers, creating a collaborative and interactive learning environment that combines the benefits of digital access with in-person engagement.

In 2025, the program achieved significant reach, supporting 3,336 students across 37 teaching sites in nine provinces, in the nine provinces of Henan, Jiangxi, Fujian, Yunnan, Gansu, Anhui, Guangdong, Guangxi, and Shaanxi. To deliver these lessons, we recruited and trained 149 dedicated volunteers, who conducted a total of 1,048 English lessons, demonstrating the program's continued growth and its effectiveness in expanding access to quality education in rural areas.

We further strengthened partnerships with key organizations, including the Chi Heng Foundation, as well as library networks such as the Bird's Nest Library and Tong'an Sangzi Library in Fujian, alongside additional community partners including Shifang Library in Longyan (Fujian), Liuquan Puhui Shushe, and Xingbang Center in Lanzhou. These collaborations play a critical role in sustaining and expanding the program's reach.



We also extend our heartfelt gratitude to Bloomberg and Equinix for their continued support. Many of their employees have generously volunteered their time to teach online classes, making a meaningful and lasting contribution to the program's success.

Through the Videolink Program, we continue to bridge geographic barriers, bringing high-quality English education to children in remote communities and opening new pathways for learning and opportunity.

Home Classroom Program



281
Volunteers

796
Students

2,110
Lessons

For the sixth consecutive year, the Home Classroom (HCR) Program has continued to provide accessible and personalized oral English practice activities to disadvantaged children across China. Through this initiative, volunteers teach small online classes of 4-10 students aged 7 to 18, enabling a low student-to-volunteer ratio that supports individualized attention and effective learning outcomes. The online format offers a flexible and scalable solution, breaking down geographical barriers and reaching children in remote and under-served communities.

In 2025, 281 trained volunteers delivered 2,110 online English lessons to 796 students in Anhui, Beijing, Fujian, Gansu, Guangdong, Guangxi, Hebei, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Jilin, Jiangsu, Shandong, Shanghai, Tianjin, and Yunnan. University and high school students continued to form the core of our volunteer base, serving as teachers and class coordinators. Their enthusiasm, relatability, and energy helped create a supportive and engaging learning environment, encouraging students to participate actively and build confidence.

A key highlight of the year was the expansion of phonics instruction, beginning with winter courses and continuing through intensive sessions across the year. These courses strengthened students' understanding of pronunciation rules, leading to improvements in phonemic awareness, vocabulary development, and reading fluency.

We also delivered online English corners for 97 middle school students from our partners, including the Chi Heng Foundation, Shanghai Sunrise Library, Beijing Dandelion School, as well as students from Shanghai Jiuqian Volunteer Service Center and the Wuqing Zaichengzhang Life Center in Tianjin. These sessions focused on developing conversational skills, helping students prepare for school applications and English examinations.

We are especially grateful to volunteers from a wide range of schools, universities, and non-profit organizations – including Shanghai Concordia International School, Shanghai World Foreign Language Middle School, YK Pao School, Shanghai SMIC Private School, Shanghai Korean School, Singapore International School Suzhou, Yiwu Academy, North London Collegiate School Singapore, Shanghai Normal University, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Fudan University, the China Rural Education Initiative (University of Melbourne), Teaching for China, Melyard Education and Support Center, and The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen – for their dedication and support.

We also extend our sincere thanks to our partner Empower Education Online (EEO) for providing access to the ClassIn platform, which has been instrumental in delivering a seamless, interactive, and high-quality online learning experience.



Digital Literacy

1,486

Lessons

33

Sites

266

Volunteers

2,076

Students

In today's rapidly evolving world, digital skills are essential for success in both education and the workforce. Yet many children from rural and low-income communities in China continue to face limited access to digital learning opportunities. With the continued invaluable support from Transparent Fish Fund and The Chao Family Foundation, Stepping Stones' Digital Literacy Program bridges this gap by equipping students with the knowledge, confidence, and practical skills needed to navigate the digital world, expanding both educational and future career opportunities.

Building on strong momentum from 2024, the program reached 2,076 students in 2025 through a combination of in-person and online learning. Supported by 266 volunteers and teachers, a total of 1,486 lessons were delivered across 33 program sites and to students learning online from home, covering provinces including Shanghai, Tianjin, Gansu, Shandong, Jiangsu, Anhui, Henan, Guangdong, Yunnan, Sichuan, and Hunan.

The curriculum emphasizes project-based, hands-on, and collaborative learning, developing core digital competencies in STEM, coding, programming, computer fundamentals, and artificial intelligence. In 2025, both the curriculum and partnerships were strengthened, allowing more students to engage with high-quality digital learning and explore advanced topics in coding, robotics, and AI. Existing courses were refined, and new AI and online coding modules were introduced to support learners at both beginner and advanced levels.

Student feedback remained highly positive, with participants describing the program as engaging, creative, and interactive. Programming and game design – particularly using tools such as Scratch – were frequently cited as favourite activities. Many students highlighted the sense of achievement gained from creating their own games, animations, and digital projects, contributing to increased confidence, problem-solving skills, and motivation to learn.





The dedication of our volunteers continues to drive the program's success. In 2025, volunteers not only delivered lessons but also provided mentorship and encouragement, fostering a supportive and inspiring learning environment. Key partners, including Texas Instruments, PwC, Equinix, IHG, Joyview Education, and Datawhale, played an important role in mobilising skilled volunteers. Corporate engagement further enriched the program through on-site initiatives, such as Bosch volunteers teaching in Tianjin, Equinix volunteers supporting classes in Henan, and IBM and Equinix bringing 39 students to participate in 3D printing museum activities.

Several students demonstrated advanced technical skills and earned recognition in regional and international robotics competitions, underscoring the program's ability to nurture talent and inspire educational ambition. Notable achievements include:

- A student won third prize in Botball Beijing.
- A student advanced to the Asian Finals of Robotex, showcasing exceptional technical skill and creativity.
- In January 2026, three students received third prize in Robotex robotics programming, while the Stepping Stones team won first place in the RobotexAll-Star Performance Competition.

These accomplishments highlight how the program identifies talent, supports skill development, and provides opportunities for high-achieving students. More broadly, they reflect the program's role in fostering confidence, innovation, and long-term readiness for future learning and technological challenges.

We are proud to have supported these young innovators and are confident that they – and those inspired by their achievements – will continue to excel and shape the future of technology.





Green IT Classrooms

◆ **Refurbished Computers
deployed: 170**

◆ **Students and Teachers Benefiting
from Green IT Classrooms: 2,500**

◆ **Schools equipped with
Green IT Classrooms: 9**

In partnership with Netspring Ltd., we established, upgraded, and maintained nine Green IT Classrooms in under-resourced schools across Jiangsu, Anhui, Jiangxi, Sichuan, and Shanghai provinces. A total of 170 refurbished computers and essential networking equipment – including routers, switches, mice, and mouse pads – were deployed, providing reliable technology for teaching and learning.



These classrooms now benefit over 2,500 teachers and students, supporting digital literacy courses as well as science, robotics, and innovation lessons. Beyond installation, ongoing maintenance and technical support are provided to the schools, ensuring sustainable use and long-term impact. By equipping schools with these resources, the project bridges the digital divide, enriches learning experiences, and expands students' educational opportunities.

Social-emotional Learning (SEL)



Lessons



Sites



Volunteers



Students

Through our Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Program, Stepping Stones cultivates essential emotional skills in children, including self-awareness, self-management, and social awareness. By fostering these abilities, we help students develop confidence, resilience, empathy, and stronger relationship skills, nurturing a positive motivation to learn and engage with the world around them.

In 2025, the SEL program reached 1,444 students across 22 sites in Shanghai, Gansu, Anhui, and Fujian. With the support of 55 dedicated teachers and volunteers, a total of 875 lessons were delivered, helping children recognise, understand, regulate, and express their emotions. We also piloted a program for 24 vocational school students in Shanghai, extending SEL support to older learners and addressing the growing demand for emotional education across diverse age groups.

A key focus of the program is addressing emotions often labelled as “negative” and frequently suppressed. By creating safe and respectful spaces, children are encouraged to express vulnerability through storytelling, reflection, and group dialogue – building self-awareness, empathy, and resilience. As one student shared, “It helped me know myself better.”



Beyond direct student engagement, SEL in 2025 continued to support local educators. We provided targeted workshops for 10 teachers in Gansu, deepening their understanding of emotional development and strengthening their capacity to guide children's growth. This holistic approach equips both students and teachers with the tools to foster emotional well-being in their communities.

Our curriculum is grounded in CASEL's Social-Emotional Learning framework, providing an evidence-based foundation for safe, interactive, and developmentally appropriate activities. In 2025, we expanded our SEL offerings for Grades 1–6, introducing tailored courses for both lower (Grades 1–2) and upper primary students (Grades 3–6). Through interactive discussions, games, and hands-on activities, students developed skills in emotional self-awareness and regulation, empathy, collaboration, and goal-setting.

To enhance program accessibility and understanding, we also updated SEL resources for parents, volunteers, and partners, helping them better support children's emotional growth at home and in the community.

Building on this success, we plan to expand SEL programming in 2026 by introducing additional emotional regulation techniques, providing training and support for local teachers and staff, offering more individualized support to children and families, and strengthening engagement with parents and the wider community.



Holiday Camps

1,382

Lessons



Sites



Volunteers



Students

In 2025, we were honoured to collaborate once again with the Huacao Town Youth League to organize full-time holiday camps during both the winter and summer breaks in Huacao Township, Minhang, Shanghai. We successfully delivered two-week winter camps and six-week summer camps, continuing our commitment to providing meaningful and enriching experiences for local children. In addition to our volunteers, the camps also engaged dozens of high school volunteers from the Youth League, offering them a valuable opportunity to develop their sense of social responsibility and volunteering spirit while supporting younger children.



A total of 325 children participated in the camps, gaining opportunities to explore new interests, build friendships, and engage in structured learning beyond the classroom. Alongside our core programs in English, digital literacy, and social-emotional learning, the camps offered a diverse range of activities, including reading and literature appreciation, arts and crafts, mathematical thinking, STEM projects, environmental education, painting, poetry, and physical education.

These thoughtfully designed activities catered to the varied interests and developmental needs of the children, creating a joyful, engaging, and supportive environment that fostered both learning and personal growth during the school holidays. By combining academic enrichment with creativity and play, the camps helped children build confidence, curiosity, and a lasting enthusiasm for learning.



I Care



10 children received glasses

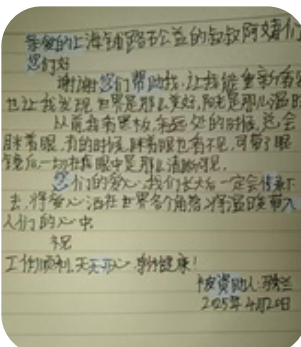
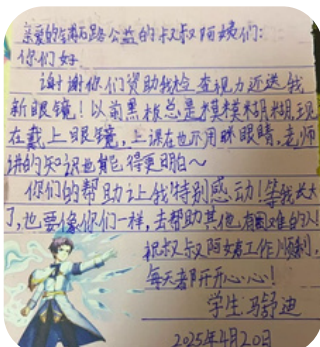
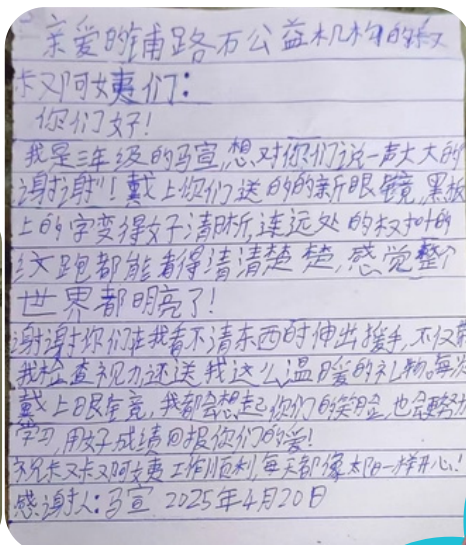
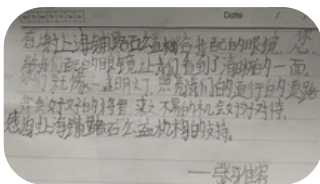


In rapidly growing urban environments, migrant children often settle quietly on the margins, bringing with them curiosity and resilience. Many have moved to the city with their families from other regions, yet face barriers to accessing essential services, including eye care. This is often primarily due to financial constraints, but also linked to limited awareness of eye health and differing cultural perceptions around vision care, meaning regular eye examinations are frequently overlooked. For this reason, we launched our I Care program in 2009 to provide essential ophthalmic interventions to our students.

During our outreach in Gansu, we observed that some children had significant vision problems – including cases of severe myopia exceeding 400 degrees – that had remained unaddressed for extended periods. For these children, access to proper diagnosis and prescription eyeglasses was a critical need. In response, Stepping Stones, in partnership with Gansu Xingbang Social Work Service Center, implemented a targeted vision care initiative in 2025, supporting migrant children in Lanzhou.

Through this initiative, professional medical staff conducted comprehensive eye screenings for over 50 children, identifying 10 in need of corrective glasses. Each child received a tailored vision correction plan, with careful attention given to every step of the process, from testing to fitting.

As one student shared, “Everything on the blackboard was blurry. Now I can see clearly!” Beyond restoring vision, this initiative reflects a broader commitment to ensuring that children feel seen, supported, and able to fully participate in their learning environments.



Thank-you letters from the kids who received the donated glasses.

Training & Capacity Building

Volunteer Training

Across all programs and activities, Stepping Stones is committed to equipping volunteers with the skills, knowledge, and resources needed to deliver high-quality, student-centered learning. As most of our volunteers are not professionally trained teachers, comprehensive training and continuous support are essential to ensuring consistent and effective program delivery. Training is provided before and throughout each assignment, alongside access to structured lesson plans, teaching materials, and ongoing guidance from our program teams.

In 2025, with the on-going support of Target Foundation, we delivered extensive training across our English, Digital Literacy, and Social-emotional Learning programs, equipping volunteers with skills in classroom management, student engagement, safeguarding, communication strategies, and program-specific methodologies, including interactive and project-based learning approaches. For SEL, additional training focused on emotional development and facilitation techniques, while Digital Literacy training emphasized hands-on, collaborative instruction. Ongoing mentoring and support ensured that volunteers could confidently deliver the curriculum and adapt to students' diverse needs. The team also produced three short videos and five posters offering practical teaching tips and classroom management advice.

Over the year, we conducted 141 online and offline training sessions for English volunteers, including 8 large-scale offline sessions for Shanghai-based volunteers, 16 training sessions for Digital Literacy volunteers, and 10 training sessions for SEL volunteers.

Beyond our regular programs, we provided tailored training for corporate and other volunteer groups participating in one-off or group volunteering activities. In 2025, more than a dozen partners – including PwC, Equinix, IBM, Bosch, Texas Instruments, and Target – took part in specially designed sessions to prepare employees and volunteers for classroom interaction. These training sessions ensured that volunteers could engage effectively with students, enriching learning experiences through fun activities, creative projects, and interactive exchanges that expose children to diverse perspectives and ideas.

Through this structured and ongoing investment in volunteer development, Stepping Stones ensures that all programs are delivered with consistency, quality, and impact, ultimately enhancing both the learning experience of students and the engagement of volunteers. We would like to thank Children's Helpers Worldwide for continuing to provide teaching resources to our volunteers.



Capacity Building

Young Changemakers Bridging to Impact

In July 2025, Stepping Stones, with support from our long-term partner the Shanghai Guofeng Charity Foundation, hosted a three-day Youth Changemakers Forum, bringing together 13 young leaders. The program immersed participants in NGO operations, ethical research methods, and strategies for social impact, guiding them to design SMART research projects and conduct interviews with migrant families in Shanghai. The focus was on understanding barriers to English learning and broader educational challenges faced by migrant children.

Through hands-on field research, participants gained first-hand insights into intergenerational educational gaps, structural barriers, and the high demand for affordable after-school programs. The forum fostered cross-cultural dialogue, empathy, and problem-solving, enabling participants to produce actionable recommendations for youth-focused interventions. By bridging theory and practice, the program strengthened participants' research skills, expanded their understanding of marginalized communities, and equipped them to contribute meaningfully to social and educational initiatives.



Capacity Building

Empowering University Volunteers for Rural Impact



In 2025, facilitated by the Shanghai Guofeng Charity Foundation, Stepping Stones collaborated with the Xiyu Platform to support university volunteer groups delivering summer programs in rural communities across Henan, Hubei, and Shandong provinces. We shared our expertise, curriculum, and teaching approaches to help student-led initiatives enhance the quality and impact of their programs.

We supported six university volunteer groups from institutions including Jilin International Studies University, Huazhong Agricultural University, and Weifang Institute of Technology. This included a series of volunteer trainings across our three core program areas – English, Digital Literacy, and Social-emotional Learning – alongside guidance across all three areas, helping volunteers apply the curriculum effectively and respond to practical classroom challenges.



During the 2025 summer period, these university groups collectively reached 501 rural children through engaging activities such as English drama and dubbing, phonics, coding, and SEL workshops. This collaboration extended the reach of our programs while strengthening the teaching capacity of emerging youth leaders, ensuring that more children in under-resourced communities benefit from structured and meaningful learning experiences.



Volunteers Overview

As a small-sized nonprofit, Stepping Stones' greatest resource has always been our strong community of volunteers and interns – individuals committed to creating tangible impact in China and beyond. In 2025, 1,287 volunteers joined our efforts, representing 37 countries and regions. Asia remained the most dynamic hub of volunteer engagement (85.41%), with particularly strong participation from the younger generations: over half of our volunteers were aged 18–25 (52.9%), and nearly 70% were women (66.9%). They bring not only diverse cultural perspectives but also distinct generational insights and gender dynamics to our volunteer community.

We remain dedicated to empowering every volunteer. Across programs from English teaching to digital literacy and social-emotional learning, as well as supporting roles in administration, communications, fundraising, and finance – volunteers contribute in ways that best leverage their skills. High schools, universities, and corporate teams continue to serve as vital pillars of program delivery, while our growing national diversity and broad age range demonstrate the expanding potential for volunteerism to take root and thrive in China.

Among volunteers in 2025, 61.8% contributed for a single semester. The remaining volunteers had participated in multiple semesters, either during 2025 or in previous years: 18.4% had completed two semesters, 9.64% three semesters, and 4.95% four semesters. Nearly 2% had completed five semesters, another 2% six semesters, and a remarkable few had carried their commitment through seven, eight, nine, or even eighteen semesters. Each of these figures reflects a story of dedication, passion, and long-term impact. We salute all our long-term volunteers and look forward to walking further and longer alongside many more.

Schools

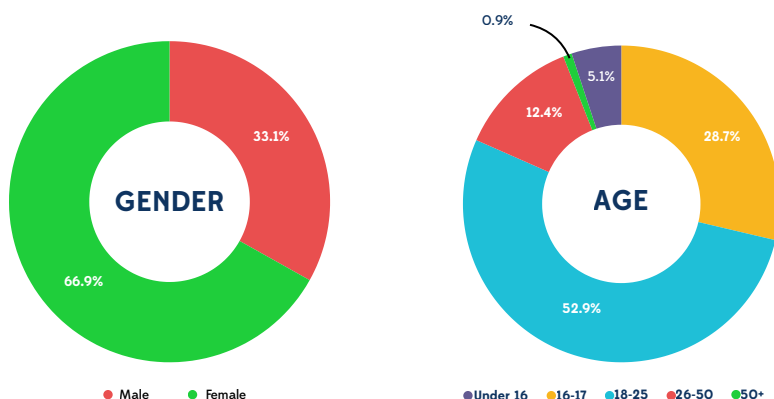
- Concordia International School Shanghai
- North London Collegiate School (Singapore)
- No. 2 High School of East China Normal University
- Shanghai Qibao Dwight High School
- Shanghai SMIC Private School
- Shanghai World Foreign Language Academy
- Suzhou Singapore International School
- Yiwu International Academy
- YK Pao School

Companies & Social Organizations

- Bloomberg
- Bosch
- El Fuego
- Equinix
- Fitch Ratings (Beijing) Ltd
- IBM
- JoyviewEdu
- Omron Electronic Components Trading (Shanghai) Ltd
- Melyard Education and Support Center
- Peng Lai Hua
- PricewaterhouseCoopers
- Shanghai Mamas

Universities

- Beihang University
- Chinese University of Hong Kong (Shenzhen)
- China University of Political Science and Law
- Curtin University
- East China Normal University
- Fudan University
- New York University Shanghai
- Shanghai Jiaotong University
- Shanghai Normal University
- University of Melbourne
- XianDa College Of Economics And Humanities, Shanghai International Studies University



Volunteer's Sharing

Co-creation | Connection | Growth

Social-emotional Learning (SEL) as a Gift

In July, Xi Xia, a teacher from the SEL summer volunteering program, carried out a three-week volunteering service at the Xiamen Gaodian Public Library. She has many memories to share with us about this experience.



CO-CREATION | Building a Safe Umbrella

"Let's open the umbrella together!" Every time I gave this instruction, the students' eyes would light up as they made the motion of opening an umbrella, and only then would the class officially begin.

This seemingly somewhat childish action is actually a visualization of a classroom agreement: here, we will collectively follow the group agreement, building a safe umbrella over this space. Under this invisible umbrella, there is no judgment or criticism; everyone is trustworthy and mutually respectful, and each person can try to reveal their true self.

CONNECTION | Through Understanding and Acceptance



Unlike subject-based classes with clear knowledge points, the learning outcomes of Social-emotional Learning courses are more implicit and cannot be judged solely by whether knowledge points are mastered. When we study and share in class, the "co-created safe umbrella" plays its role - genuine connections grow from acceptance and understanding.

After a few days of class, I noticed a young boy in the class who usually didn't interact much with other students and would clearly resist when collaborative activities were required: "I don't want to be in a group with others," he would say.

I sought help from the program leader, Miki, who reminded us to offer him more support and attention. First, we needed to accept him, ask for his opinion, allow his unwillingness, and then kindly invite him to take a small step.

Slowly, he stopped fiddling with tank models in class and began participating more in classroom discussions, allowing us to understand him better. It turned out that his hostility stemmed from negative experiences with making friends, harsh treatment from his parents, and a "toughness" that came from lack of attention.

Even more unexpectedly, during an activity where we drew concentric circles of interpersonal relationships, he wrote down only a few names but placed the names of us two teachers in the second closest circle - the position representing the closest people.

After class, I asked him why, and he said, "Because I'm happy every day I come here, and you listen to me." Touched and reflective, in just three weeks, we had actually established a genuine, trusting connection.



GROWTH | Being A SOWER

The three weeks of summer volunteering teaching were not all smooth sailing.

When I was a volunteer teacher in Shanghai, as part of a weekly Social-emotional Learning course in schools, the students were fixed, and they all had the willingness to learn independently and quickly get into the classroom mindset. This time in Xiamen, we were collaborating with a local public welfare organization in a different location, welcoming mixed-age students from second to sixth grade, and we also had to face the frequent turnover of students during the summer and their different expectations of treating the class as relaxation and entertainment.

At first, I felt somewhat disappointed and troubled: the course has continuity, and I truly hoped that students could participate more to provide effective help for their growth.

This also made us reflect and adjust the course model: repositioning the class as a Happy Growth Camp, interspersing more drama games instead of lecturing, replacing blackboard writing with artistic creation.

Students who enjoyed that course began attending classes regularly, even arriving half an hour early to wait in the classroom; those who had spoken harshly now expressed themselves more gently; and the shy students started raising their hands voluntarily to share their thoughts.

In the Social-emotional Learning classroom, we are more like entering a growth fitness center. Whether students or teachers, we repeatedly practice emotional awareness, a growth mindset, and focus on what we can change.

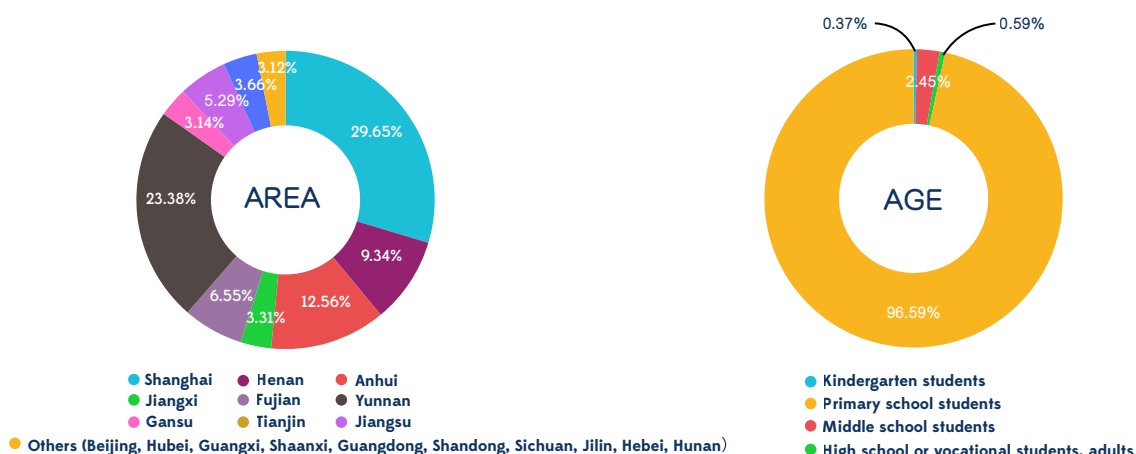
This adjustment in mindset made me more acutely aware: teaching Social-emotional Learning courses is like being a sower. Perhaps all we can support now is a small garden, but with diligent care, the right seeds will take root and sprout, and everyone will reap their own growth.

Beneficiaries



Stepping Stones' beneficiaries are children and youth who face significant disadvantages in accessing quality education and resources in China. These include:

1. Migrant children and youth;
2. Rural children and youth, including many left-behind children and minorities;
3. Children and youth from low-income families in Shanghai and other urban areas;
4. Children and youth with special needs.



While we serve a broad spectrum of under-served children and youth from various backgrounds and locations, the majority of them have been deeply affected by rural-urban migration trends in China. Some children have moved with their parents to cities but are unable to attend regular public schools due to residency restrictions. As a result, they are often enrolled in schools designed for migrant workers' children, which typically have lower educational standards compared to urban public schools. Other children may attend public schools but struggle academically, with little parental support to help them keep up with their studies. Many migrant children who manage to attend primary school in cities like Shanghai face the challenge of having to return to rural areas where their families are registered once they reach middle school.

In other cases, some children are unable to follow their parents to the cities for school, and are left behind in rural areas, living in boarding schools or with extended family members. These "left-behind" children, especially those in minority regions, are further disadvantaged due to the lower educational standards of rural schools and the absence of parental involvement in their education.

While most of our students are of primary school age, we also support students in kindergartens, middle schools, high schools, and vocational schools. As the number of migrant children in Shanghai decreases and educational provisions improve for those who remain, we have been approached by local social work organizations to extend our support to other disadvantaged communities, particularly low-income families and children with special educational needs.

Corporate Events

In 2025, Stepping Stones organized corporate engagement activities in partnership with Bosch, Target, Texas Instruments, PwC, Equinix, IBM, Hang Lung Properties, Nanguo Group, Royal Caribbean, Omron, Rotary Club Shanghai, and Woods Consulting across Shanghai, Tianjin, Anhui, and Henan. These activities ranged from teaching support and STEM workshops to cultural visits, nature exploration, and experiential learning programmes, reflecting both the breadth and flexibility of our partnerships. From the excited cheers in AI classrooms to the focused attention in rural teaching sites, and from immersive company visits to inclusive community outings, these collaborations combined technology, creativity, and human connection – bringing our mission to life by providing disadvantaged children with meaningful learning experiences and opportunities to grow, explore, and be inspired.



In a Stepping Stones classroom in Shanghai, a fifth-grade student pointed excitedly at the screen, proudly introducing the “little dog” she had created – her very first AI-powered virtual pet. With just a few lines of code, it could respond to commands and simulate simple behaviours. Supported by Bosch China, this introductory AI session illustrates how corporate partnerships help bring innovative learning opportunities to children who might otherwise never access them. That same spirit extended beyond the city: during the winter, volunteers travelled to Wuqing, Tianjin, delivering a three-day digital literacy programme to over 60 children, introducing them to computer basics and programming.

Corporate engagement also opened doors to hands-on, real-world learning experiences. At Texas Instruments, students designed and built their first electronic badges, discovering the excitement of technology through direct experimentation. Meanwhile, partnerships with Equinix and IBM enabled students to explore 3D printing through museum visits, broadening their understanding of innovation and future careers. Activities such as factory visits, baking workshops, and cruise ship tours – organized with partners including Nanguo Group, Hang Lung Properties, and Royal Caribbean – offered children rare opportunities to connect classroom learning with the wider world.

Beyond academic enrichment, these collaborations also supported children’s social and emotional development. Volunteers from Target, PwC, and Rotary, among others, participated in community activities such as visits to the Shanghai Zoo and nature-based learning experiences, including programmes with children with autism. Through patience, empathy, and shared experiences, volunteers helped build confidence, trust, and a sense of belonging among participating children.

In rural areas, long-term partners such as PwC, Bosch, and Equinix continued to support teaching initiatives in provinces including Henan and Anhui. Through short-term teaching placements and immersive volunteer experiences, they contributed not only to students’ learning but also to deeper mutual understanding between volunteers and local communities.

These collaborations are essential to advancing Stepping Stones’ mission to improve the education and general welfare of disadvantaged children in China. Corporate partners contribute not only financial support, but also time, expertise, and diverse perspectives, enriching our programmes and expanding opportunities for children. By connecting volunteers with students in meaningful ways, these partnerships help foster confidence, curiosity, and aspiration, while building bridges between communities.





Fundraising

As we reflect on the fruitful year of 2025, we extend our deepest gratitude to all the individuals and organizations that have generously supported us. It is with your support that we are able to provide quality education to under-served children in China, creating more opportunities for their future development. Your invaluable assistance has enabled us to expand our programs, enhance our educational content, and create a lasting and meaningful impact in the communities we serve.

Through the international crowdfunding platform GlobalGiving, we raised 229,912.25 RMB this year. This record of continuous growth not only reflects the international community's commitment to education in China, but also strengthens our resilience in navigating complex challenges.

2025 has been a breakthrough year for Stepping Stones in diversifying fundraising and achieving sustainable development. We are delighted to see charitable trusts emerging as a key area of growth for the organization. This year, we received 495,050.8 RMB in funding from China Resources SZT Trust Co., Ltd., marking a strong recognition from the professional social sector of Stepping Stones' governance standards and program transparency.

We are also especially pleased to announce that International Business Machines (China) awarded Stepping Stones the Most Influential Nonprofit organization Award, along with a grant of 72,953 RMB.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to everyone who placed their trust and support in us in 2025, to every individual donor, foundation, and corporate partner. Your support is not only the foundation of our work, but also the driving force that moves us forward. It is because of you that we can boldly take on challenges and continue to bring about positive and lasting change in the lives of under-served children.

Donors

Thank you to everyone who donated to Stepping Stones in 2025. Every donation of whatever size is always appreciated.

Donor	Amount (CNY)
Bibliovores Community	85,890.15
IBM (China) Company Ltd	72,953.00
Homeslice Pizza	51,860.00
Rotary Club Shanghai	46,000.00
Ms Rita Jia	20,000.00
Consulate General of Canada in Shanghai Staff Charity Fund	10,000.00
Mr Zijie Zhuang	10,000.00
Wellington College International Shanghai	6,922.92
Ms Kerstin Kaehler & Friends	5,538.00
Other Donations	262,656.00
DONATIONS SUB-TOTAL	571,820.07

In addition, Shanghai United Foundation (SUF) received the following donations on behalf of Stepping Stones in 2025.

Donor	Amount (CNY)
Liu Yilei's Family	180,000.00
Texas Instruments Semiconductor Technologies (Shanghai) Co., Ltd	165,200.00
British Chamber of Commerce in China	51,500.00
TMF Services (China) Co., Ltd	9,450.00
Other Donations	183,317.00
SUF DONATIONS SUB-TOTAL	589,567.00

Thank you to the following program partners for their financial support.

Partner	Amount (CNY)
Donations received through Shanghai United Foundation	1,346,069.94
China Resources SZITIC Trust Co., Ltd	495,050.80
Shanghai Minhang Huacao Government	268,178.22
GlobalGiving Foundation, Inc.	229,912.25
Netspring Ltd (through Stepping Stones China Ltd)	122,970.30
Bosch China Charity Center	86,435.64
Beijing PwC Zhong Tian Charitable Foundation	60,196.04
Joyview Education	9,901.00
PwC China	9,900.96
Omron Electronic Components Trading (Shanghai) Ltd	7,217.82
Fitch Ratings (Beijing) Ltd Shanghai Branch	5,940.59
Shanghai GuoFeng Charity Foundation	4,950.50
Other Service Charges	54,162.58
SERVICE CHARGES SUB-TOTAL	2,700,886.64

Donors



Pro Bono Supporters

A special thank you to the following companies, who generously contributed high-quality professional services to us for free, thus helping us to significantly reduce our operational costs and improve the quality of our programs.



EEO for providing a professional integrated online teaching platform ClassIn.



GFCF for providing free office and training spaces.



EF Education First and Kidsland for providing free training venues.



Homeslice Pizza for providing refreshments for important meetings and the venue for our Appreciation Party.



Mingdao for providing an office management solutions platform.



Nisseiwell for printing services.



O'Melveny & Myers LLP for professional legal services.



PricewaterhouseCoopers for donating computer hardware.



Rödl for professional accounting services.



The LosMansion Chinese Restaurant and Jiachun Enterprise for providing the venue for our Appreciation Party.



Non-Profit Partners

Stepping Stones is proud to have partnerships with many well-known community organizations, as follows:

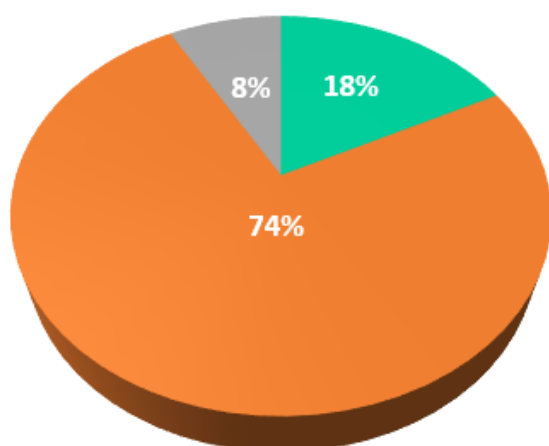


Finance

In 2025, Stepping Stones' revenue was CNY3,275,490.85, and expenses were CNY2,863,321.12, making a net gain of CNY412,169.73. The opening balance was CNY808,925.74 and the closing balance was CNY1,223,752.68.

Stepping Stones' accounts are audited annually by an independent accountant.

Revenue 2025



- Donations
- Government Service Charges
- Other Service Charges

Revenue (CNY)	
Donations	571,820.07
Other Service Charges	2,432,708.42
Government Service Charges	268,178.22
Others	2,784.14
TOTAL REVENUE	3,275,490.85

Expenses (CNY)	
Program Costs	2,774,258.60
Accommodation	35,375.26
Communications	11,486.00
Labour Costs	37,191.88
Meals	210,182.71
Medical Cost	6,264.00
Miscellaneous Costs	16,852.26
Office Equipment & Supplies	11,232.77
Professional Fees & Insurance	161,691.30
Salary & Bonus	1,640,050.85
Social Security & Housing Fund	470,744.21
Teaching Materials	44,169.17
Transport	129,018.19
Management Costs	87,010.26
Office and Utilities Expense	49,816.93
Office Supplies	8,780.28
Social Security & Housing Fund	17,332.81
Tax & Others	2,876.25
Transport	2,594.47
Welfare	5,609.52
Fundraising Cost	2,052.26
TOTAL EXPENSES	2,863,321.12
NET GAIN	412,169.73



Looking Forward

As we step into 2026, Stepping Stones enters a landmark year – celebrating 20 years of expanding educational opportunities for disadvantaged children across China. We are currently planning a big, joyful and inclusive event on 7th November to mark this major milestone. All Stepping Stones students, volunteers, donors, staff and other supporters past and present are all warmly invited. Please do contact us if you are interested in attending, sponsoring the event or getting involved in any capacity!

Over the past two decades, we have partnered with more than 250 program sites and reached over 130,000 students nationwide. This anniversary is not only a moment of reflection, but also a powerful reminder of what sustained, collective effort can achieve.

We also proudly mark 10 years of partnership with the Transparent Fish Fund and The Chao Family Foundation, whose steadfast support has been instrumental in launching, shaping and strengthening our Digital Literacy Program. Together, we have helped equip thousands of students with essential skills for the modern world.

2026 also marks 10 years since we began collaborating with the Youth League in Huacao to organize summer camps. This initiative, to provide a safe and nurturing space for children during their school holidays, started with one class in summer 2016, expanded to multiple venues and later included the winter holiday, providing holiday support for more than 300 students and their parents each year.

Looking ahead in 2026, we remain firmly committed to our core mission, continuing to deliver high-quality programs in English, Digital Literacy, and Social-emotional Learning. We will expand our reach to rural, remote, and under-served communities, while maintaining the quality and consistency that define our work – through both online and in-person delivery models.

A central focus this year will be deepening our impact in Shanghai, particularly in Huacao, Minhang, where Stepping Stones has been rooted for over a decade. Our Community Center stands as a milestone in this journey, enabling stronger connections with the families we serve and more consistent, holistic support. Through this space, we will continue to strengthen all programs – with a particular emphasis on Social-emotional Learning – while creating opportunities for personalized guidance, greater family engagement, and deeper community involvement.

As we look forward, we are inspired not only by how far we have come, but also by what lies ahead. With the continued support of our partners, volunteers, and communities, we are confident in our ability to grow, innovate, and create lasting change – ensuring that every child we serve is equipped not only to learn, but to thrive.



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