



# 2022 STEPPING STONES IMPACT REPORT

IMPROVING THE EDUCATION AND GENERAL WELFARE OF  
DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN IN CHINA



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# Impact Report

Every year, we undertake impact evaluations to collect information about our programs and to assess the impacts produced by our online and offline interventions. In 2022, evaluations were conducted using two different methodologies. First, consistent with previous years' evaluations, 'pre-program' (or baseline) and 'post-program' (or follow-up) survey questionnaires were distributed to a sample of our beneficiaries. Survey questions assessed students' abilities, knowledge, skills, and interests both before and after completing our programs. This was done to ensure comparisons could be made, and the impact of our programs could be evaluated in more depth. Second, pre- and post-speaking assessments were conducted to evaluate students' progression in English.

## English Programs

We have been running English Teaching Programs in China for 17 years, serving thousands of children every week. The main objectives of our English programs are to increase students' self-esteem, motivation, and confidence in English, and to better prepare students for their future. The purpose of this impact evaluation is to assess whether these objectives have been met and if there are areas for improvement.

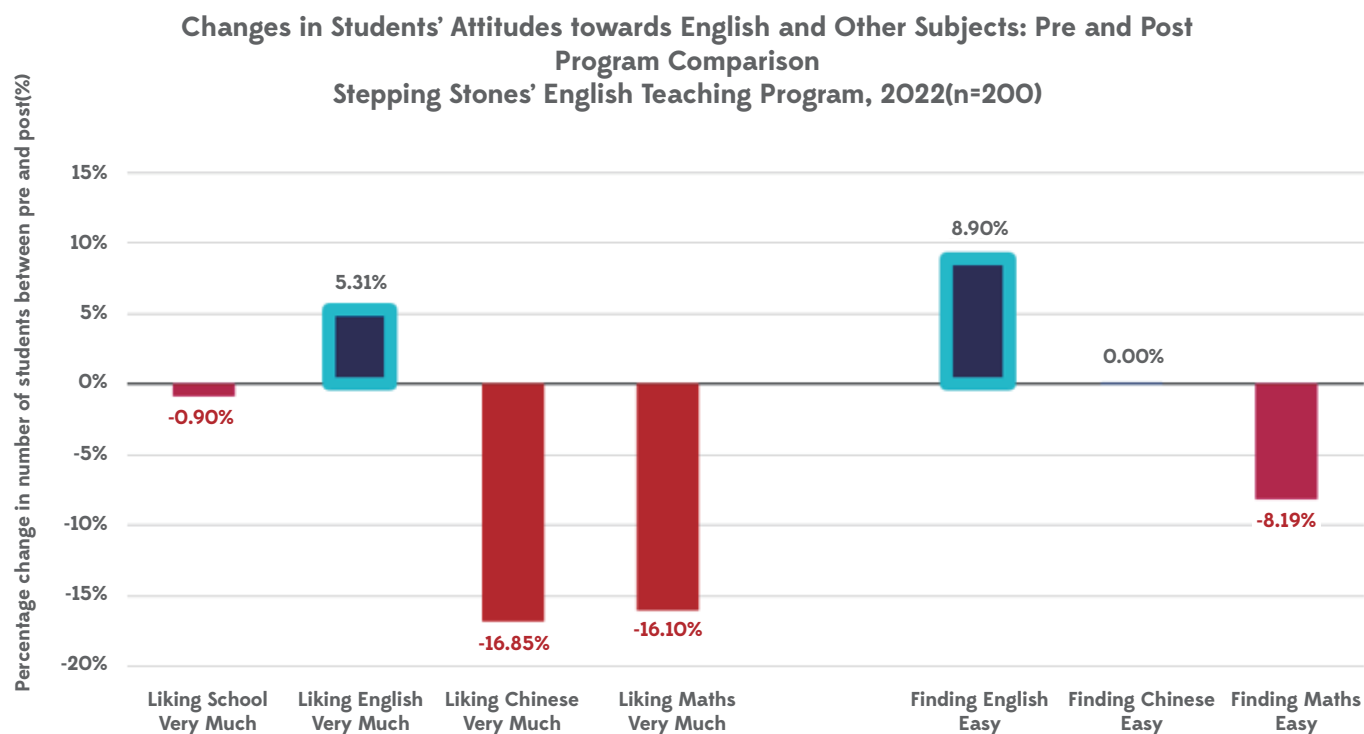
Pre- and post-program survey questionnaires were distributed to a sample of 200 students to assess the impact of our online and offline English programs in 2022. The questions in the surveys focused on the student's attitudes towards school, English and other key subjects, and the Stepping Stones program they engaged with. The data that is discussed in this section includes data collected in 2022 from our Home Classroom, School Videolink, Rural Individual Volunteering, and Shanghai English Teaching programs.

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## Impacting students' attitudes towards English

To assess whether our objectives of increasing students' motivation and self-esteem in English were met, students were asked their opinions on not only English but other core subjects, as well as their opinions on school more broadly. The students were asked whether they liked English, Chinese, and Maths and whether they thought these subjects were difficult. They were asked to rank their views on a 4-point Likert scale with response choices ranging from 'disliking' to 'liking very much', or from 'difficult' to 'very easy'. Such questions were asked so that changes in students' attitudes towards English throughout the program could be compared with other subjects that did not receive our interventions.

The results show that the greatest improvement in attitudes was towards English in comparison to the other core subjects (see Figure below), which is consistent with the findings from previous years. There was a 5.31% increase in children who expressed a strong liking for English (from 56.5% to 59.5%) and an 8.90% increase in children who found English easy (from 73% to 79.5%). As English is where our interventions are focused, it can be suggested that our programs have a positive impact on students' attitudes toward English. Such positive attitudes can be translated to an increased motivation to work hard, which results in better English attainment and thus improving prospects.



It is interesting to note the significant percentage increase in students finding English easy compared to their other subjects. For English, this percentage increase was 8.90% compared to no increase in Chinese and a strong decrease in Maths (-8.19%). This data is encouraging as it shows that more students have an increased positive attitude towards English after our interventions.

Another observation worth mentioning is the massive percentage decrease of students strongly liking Chinese (-16.85%) and Maths (-16.10%), in comparison to English. These subjects did not receive any extra support or intervention. This data suggests that while interventions led to improvements in attitudes, subjects that do not receive the same support can lead to a decrease in attitudes. Our students may benefit from the extra intervention in Chinese and Maths in the same way that they have benefitted in English from our programs.

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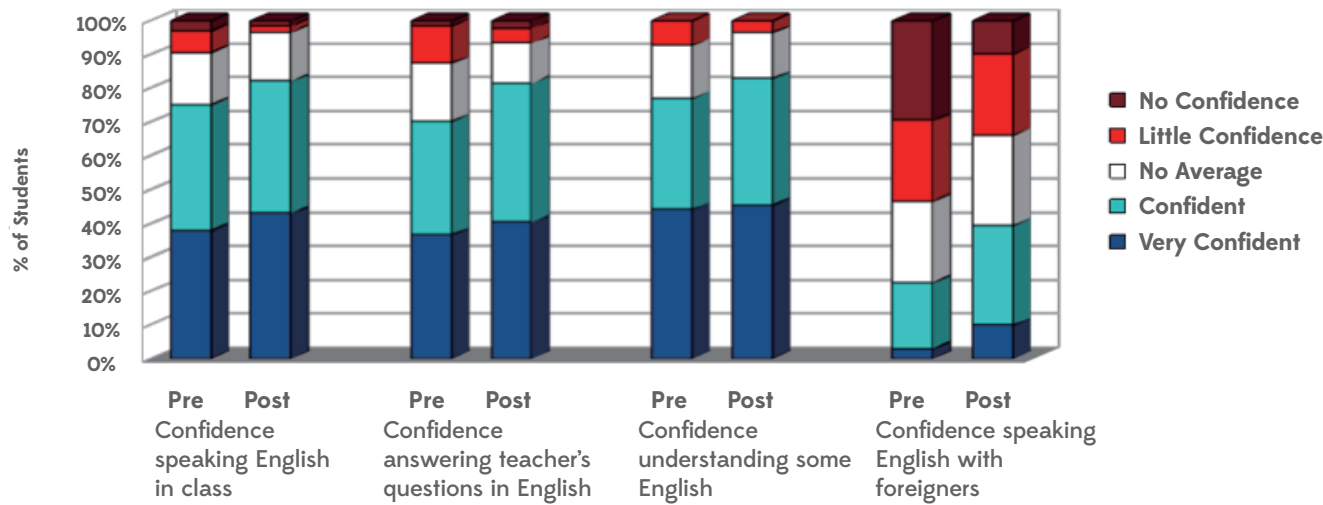
# Increasing Students' Confidence in English

Another one of our key objectives is to improve students' confidence and motivation in English. To assess whether this objective was met, the baseline and follow-up surveys included questions that asked students about their confidence levels in speaking and understanding English. Students were asked to rank their responses from 'not confident' to 'very confident'. The figure below indicates a significant rise in the number of students feeling 'confident' speaking English in class (9.33% increase, from 75% to 82%), answering teacher's questions in English (15.96% increase, from 70.15% to 81.34%), understanding some English (7.77%, from 76.87% to

82.84%), and speaking English with foreigners (75% increase, from 22.54% to 39.44%). These significant percentage increases suggest that our interventions succeeded in making students more prepared and confident to engage in English-speaking situations. They are subsequently more inclined to exert effort in learning English, which can arguably be translated into greater English proficiency.

Students' confidence to speak and understand English  
Pre and Post Program Comparison

Stepping Stones' English Teaching Program, 2022(n=200)

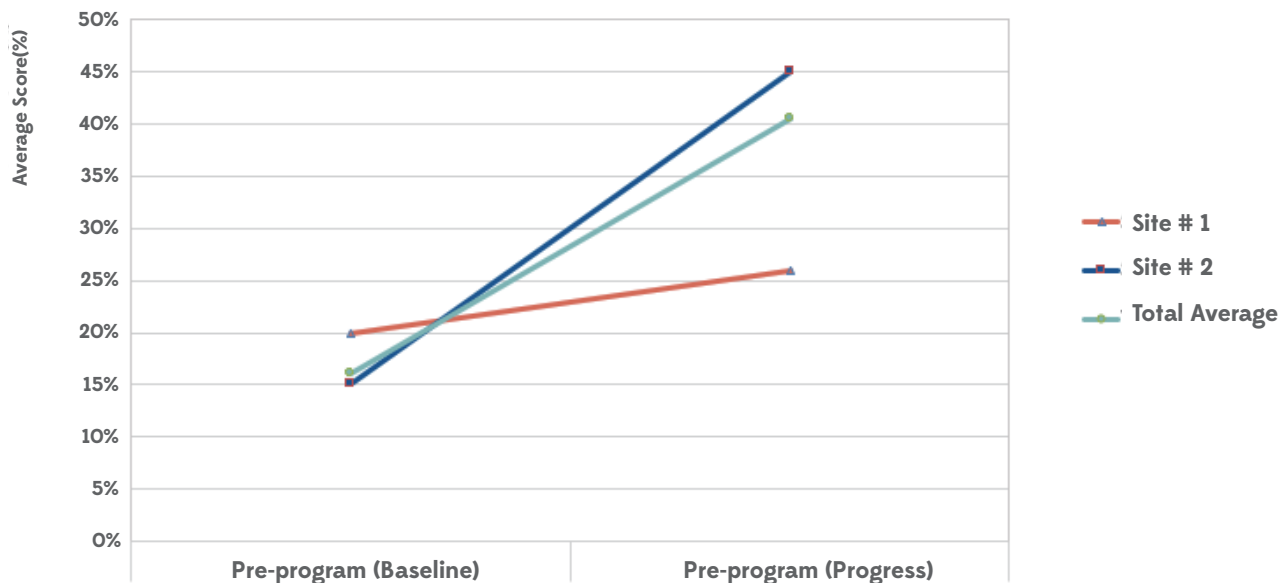


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## Acquiring English Speaking Skills

For the fourth year running, we have conducted pre- and post-speaking assessments to evaluate student's progress in English over the course of our programs. In 2022, the assessment was focused on our phonics course, evaluating 20 students' phonics skills both before and after the completion of our program. The assessments were conducted by our trainers at two sites in Shanghai. 19 primary school students took part in the tests and they were scored for each question "yes" or "no", where "yes" represents complete skill proficiency (i.e., a score of 100%).

**Students' English Phonics Test - Average Score per Class**  
**Stepping Stones' Phonics Test, 2022(n=19)**

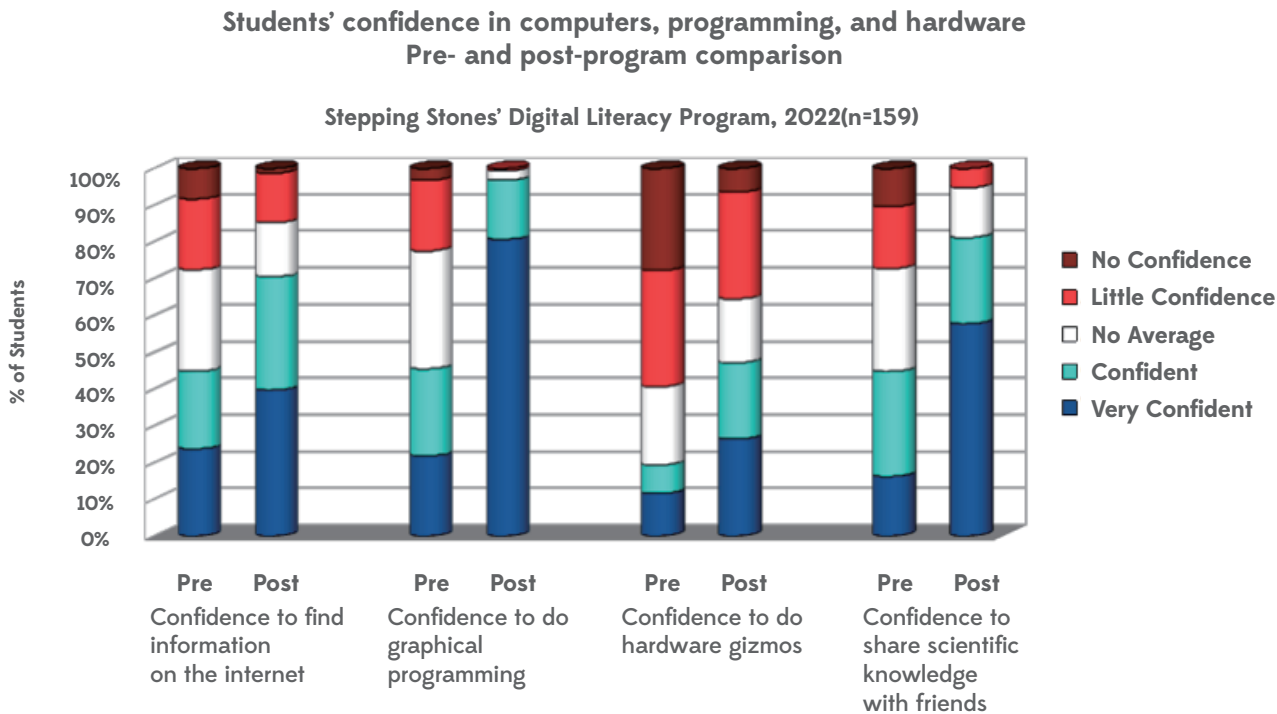


The figure above shows that in each site, the student's average score rose between the baseline and follow-up speaking assessments. In both sites, the total average score increased from 16.07% to 40.44%. As was the case in the previous years, the assessment suggests that our students acquired knowledge through our English Teaching programs, thus making progress in English.

# Digital Literacy

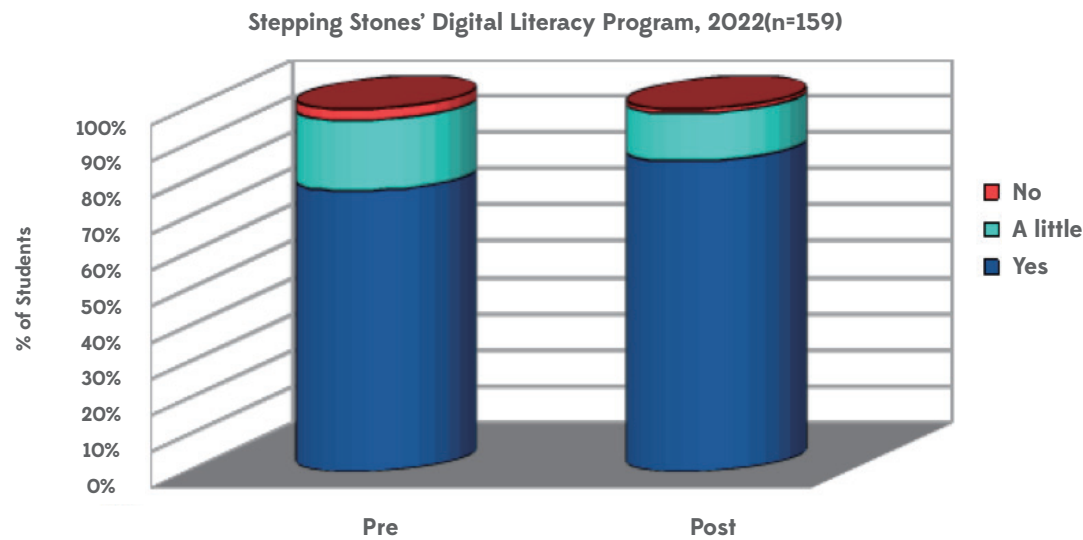
The key objectives of our Digital Literacy program are to improve students' digital literacy and life skills and to increase their self-esteem, critical thinking, and confidence in order to optimize their access to appropriate further education and better work opportunities in the future. To assess the value and impact of our program on students' confidence and attitude towards life, computers, and technology, evaluations were conducted at many of our offline and online program sites in 2022, distributing survey questionnaires to a total of 159 beneficiaries.

One of the ways that we strive to help students become more proficient and confident in computers and technology is through project-based, coding, programming, and hardware design activities. To assess the impact of these activities, students were asked four questions about their confidence levels in skills related to these activities and were asked to rank their responses from 'not confident' to 'very confident'. The figure below compares the baseline and follow-up results of these questions. When compared to the program evaluations from previous years, the results of the 2022 evaluation are even more impressive. They indicate a significant rise in the number of students feeling 'confident' to find information on the internet (57.14% increase), do graphical programming (112.68% increase), do hardware gizmos (143.33% increase), and share scientific knowledge with their friends or classmates (81.16% increase).

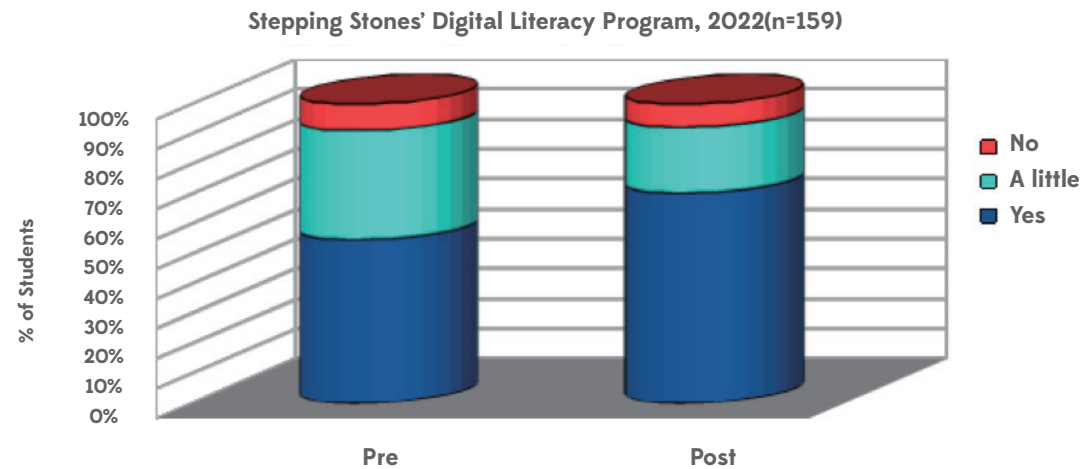


Students were also asked if they like using computers and if they think studying computers will be beneficial in their future endeavours. The data shows significant increases between the baseline and the follow-up surveys. As shown in the figures below, across the programs, the percentage of students who like using computers rose by 10.57% (from 77.36% to 85.53%) and the percentage of students thinking that studying computers will benefit them in the future rose by 25.29%, from 54.72% to 68.55%. These results are extremely encouraging as they show that more students have more confidence and interest in IT and computer systems and knowledge after our interventions. Students can use the knowledge that they have gained through our classes to further explore prospects that involve computers, programming, and the use of hardware.

**Do you like computers? Pre- and post-program comparison**



**Do you think Studying computer will benefit you in the future?  
Pre- and post-program comparison**



We are encouraged by the results of our 2022 Impact Evaluation. In many ways, they are consistent with the results from previous years, which suggest that our interventions continued to have a positive impact on our beneficiaries' motivation, confidence, and skills, and contributed to our mission of improving education for disadvantaged communities in China.



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