

# STEPPING STONES

## ANNUAL REPORT



2012





## MISSION

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



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## Introduction to Stepping Stones

Stepping Stones was founded in October 2006 in response to requests from Principals of local migrant schools. English is one of the three core subjects in the Chinese school curriculum, and the one that poses most challenges to rural teachers of English, including those who have migrated to urban centres where they are teaching migrant children. English level is therefore the biggest differentiator between urban and rural Chinese children, and this above all perpetuates the gap in educational and employment opportunities.

Shanghai benefits from a large expatriate and local English-speaking community, many of whom are eager for meaningful volunteering opportunities. Stepping Stones was founded to match this rich resource to a real need in the community. We are committed to promoting responsible, meaningful volunteerism among China's citizens and expatriates, from all walks of life.

Stepping Stones is Shanghai's first and only city-wide voluntary English teaching program in the schools for migrants in Shanghai. We are proud to contribute to bridging the gap between the privileged and under-privileged in China. Our vision is a quality education for *all* children in China.





Stepping Stones fulfills its mission through teaching disadvantaged students to help them gain confidence in English and other subjects, in order to help these students pass their key examinations and access a brighter future. In addition, Stepping Stones also bridges the gulf between the privileged and the under-privileged communities of Shanghai. The classroom setting is a forum where two polarized sectors of Shanghai's population can get to know each other better, actively breaking down prejudices.

Over the years, Stepping Stones has expanded its activities to address other needs in the beneficiaries' community, including material donations and infrastructural improvements to the schools and provision of eye care, as well as expanding the programme to outside of Shanghai, in line with Stepping Stones' internal capacity.



Stepping Stones recruits volunteers from all walks of life, offers relevant training and deploys them as appropriate to teach under-privileged children. Classes may be held in the schools where such children are studying (for example, schools specially established for migrants or rural primary schools), in community centres or other facilities. The classes may be held in regular school time, after school, at the weekend or during the school vacation. Most classes occur on a weekly basis.

In the Autumn term 2012, Stepping Stones supplemented its original oral English classes with small group after-school English homework tuition in four community centres.

Stepping Stones originated in Shanghai, and will continue to focus efforts on education in Shanghai, but has already expanded its activities to rural China, and expanding the programme to other cities is not ruled out if resources allow. Stepping Stones looks forward to a time when all children living in urban centres have equal access to high quality education, at which stage Stepping Stones may turn its focus to rural China.



## Cooperation

Stepping Stones is committed to working with other organisations with similar missions, to achieve mutual and complementary objectives. Some of the not-for-profit partners that Stepping Stones worked with in 2012 are Charyou, INCLUDED, Jiuqian Community Centre, New Citizen Life Centre & Xintu Community Health Promotion Centre, Shanghai Charity Foundation, Shanghai Soong Ching Ling Foundation, Shanghai Young Bakers, Sunflower Education Programme for Migrants Children, Youdao.



## Legal Status

Stepping Stones China Ltd. registered in Hong Kong in November 2011. Stepping Stones is working towards registration in mainland China, and in the meantime operates as a project under its parent organisation Charyou Youth Services Centre ([www.charyou.org](http://www.charyou.org)).

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

## Stepping Stones' Volunteers

In 2012, 492 volunteers donated 26,180 hours to Stepping Stones. 169 volunteers taught English to 3,857 students in 19 migrant schools and community centers each week. Besides teaching English, volunteers also helped us with such diverse activities as volunteer training, curriculum development, research, accounting, fundraising and photography. This amounts to RMB 1.4 million worth of time based on conservative hourly pay rates.

Stepping Stones and Shanghai's migrant community are indebted to all of our hundreds of volunteers who make the work we do possible.



Volunteer Appreciation Party, Summer 2012



## 2012 Activities

### English Classroom Teaching Programme

In 2012, Stepping Stones continued to have 169 volunteers teaching around 3,857 migrant students each week during the spring and fall terms in the following schools and community centres: Jiuqian Community Centre (Baoshan District); INCLUDED Community Centre, Huabo Lixing Hang School (both the Jiwang and Huacao campuses), Huahong School, & Wenbo School (Minhang District); Dabieshan School, New Citizen Life Centre, Tangsi School, and Wanliao School (Pudong District); Jinding School (Putuo District); and Shanghai Young Bakers (Zhabei District).

In 2012, our programme at Dongjiadu Lu primary school ended because the school was closed and a new teaching programme was established in East Red School in Qingpu District. At the same time, volunteers started to be assigned at the Sunflower Community Center, after successfully partnering for a summer program. We also welcomed Credit Suisse employees as new volunteers.

### Summer Programme

During the summer, 78 dedicated Stepping Stones volunteers braved heat, rain and typhoons to deliver 322 free English classes to 365 students in 9 community centres in different parts of Shanghai.







## After School Tuition Programme (ASP)

In the autumn of 2012 we launched our new After School Tuition programme in initially 2 government-run community centers in Xujing Town (Qingpu District) and Xupu Village (Minhang District) and two New Citizen Life Centres in Hongkou District and Sumin Village (Minhang District). In this new initiative, we paired two to four students with one volunteer who will help them review their lessons, do their homework and prepare for exams. This programme is especially attractive for younger volunteers such as high school students in international schools. To guarantee the best results, Stepping Stones has developed a special training for this new programme.

## Training and curriculum

In 2012, Stepping Stones continued to provide support to its volunteers through various initiatives, such as training sessions, workshops, and networking events among volunteers. At the same time, curriculum support for the various summer programs was stepped up, more regular visits to the teaching sites were conducted, and sample lesson plans for modules taught during the regular semester were completed and standardized.

## Rural volunteering visit to Henan Province

Stepping Stones organised two rural volunteering trips in April and November 2012, taking altogether 26 volunteers to teach English to students at 2 primary schools in rural Zhecheng County, Shangqiu Municipality, Henan.



## I Care programme

Between 2011 and the beginning of 2013, Stepping Stones raised RMB 88,538 for our I Care programme thanks to the contributions of Rainbow Bridge International School, the Hilton Shanghai Hongqiao, Caiyun Choir, Wing Heng Bank and Shanghai United International School Gubei Campus.

## 2012 Corporate Events and Activities

### Halma Visits a Migrant School in Zhejiang Province

Stepping Stones arranged for 14 visiting participants of Halma's Executive Development Programme to travel to Xixiang Guanyuan School in Jiashan County, Zhejiang Province for a day of English learning activities and interaction with migrant children on May 24<sup>th</sup>.



### More Corporate Events

Leaders' Quest brought visitors from Bain & Company to meet Stepping Stones students at New Citizen Life Centre in Jiufeng Village, Sanlin on 25<sup>th</sup> July, and Stepping Stones organised a tailored volunteering week for The Education Abroad Network in Xujing Town community centre in August. We also collaborated with Real Travel to take visitors from Grundfos Company to visit the United Bilingual Kindergarten in Caolu Township, Pudong at the beginning of September.

### CIEE Global Community Service Day

On 14<sup>th</sup> November 2012, visitors from the Council of International Educational Exchange visited Jinding School in Putuo District to learn about education for migrants in Shanghai and to teach English to the students, supported by Stepping Stones. The theme of the activity was "Thanksgiving".



### **UBS excursions for children from Puguang School**

With Stepping Stones introduction and support, on June 30<sup>th</sup> 26 UBS volunteers took 43 students from Jiufeng Village in Sanlin to the Shanghai Aquarium as an end of year treat. And on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> December, 40 excited 5<sup>th</sup> grade students from Puguang School for migrants in Pudong visited Shanghai's Science & Technology Museum in Pudong with 17 employees of UBS in Shanghai.





## 2012 Fundraising Activities

### Journey to South America

In June, Shanghai Voices International Music Group performed a fundraising concert “A Journey to South America” at the China Welfare Institute Children’s Palace to raise funds for Stepping Stones. Inspiring performances from musicians from all over the world helped to raise RMB 22,000 for Stepping Stones.

### Night of Thrills and Skills

On May 25<sup>th</sup>, Stepping Stones delivered a successful Night of Thrills and Skills at the historical Shanghai Mansion Hotel, to celebrate Stepping Stones new partnership with the prestigious Shanghai Soong Ching Ling Foundation (SSCLF) and their generous donation to Stepping Stones. The new After School Programme (ASP) was also launched at the Gala. Thanks to the dedication and hard work of the fundraising team, the Gala raised RMB 140,000 which will enable us to take the first steps to getting our ASP programme up and running.



### Shanghai Charity Foundation Gala – Love Under a Blue Sky

On 7<sup>th</sup> January, 2012, 23 Stepping Stones volunteers participated in SCF’s annual charity gala “Love under a Blue Sky” to sing Michael Jackson’s “Heal the World” along with 27 local university student volunteers and 50 migrant students from Yangdong School at Shanghai Oriental TV station. The show was broadcast live in Shanghai on Shanghai Oriental TV Entertainment Channel and was then re-broadcast to the whole country on Dragon satellite TV.





## Stepping Stones' Impact



Stepping Stones conducted two impact evaluation studies in 2012. First, in Spring 2011, Stepping Stones started a class-teaching program in grades 3, 4, and 5 at a Migrant Primary School in Minhang District. Stepping Stones surveyed the same students before the start of the program, and one year later, at the end of Spring 2012, to measure the change in the students' interest and confidence in English over the period. A key finding from the study shows an overall improvement in the students' interest in English. **The percentage of students who consider English their favorite subject increased from 32.72% in Spring 2011 to 47% in Spring 2012. Similarly, the percentage of students who listed English as their least favorite subject decreased from 26.73% to 14.29%.**

While the results are encouraging, these positive gains cannot necessarily be attributed to the Stepping Stones interventions, in the absence of bona fide control and experimental groups, where the only difference is exposure to Stepping Stones programs. Nevertheless, the principal of the School acknowledges the major contribution of the Stepping Stones program in achieving these positive results.

Stepping Stones also conducted a study on the impact of the After School Program (ASP) that it launched in Fall 2012. Stepping Stones surveyed the students before and after the program and is pleased to report the positive impact that the program has had on the students. **Before the ASP began, 44% of students said they find English difficult. After the programme had run for one**

**semester, only 8% said that they find English difficult! Another highlight is the percentage of students that expressed confidence to complete their English homework correctly, which rose from 82% to 97%.**

Stepping Stones is encouraged by these positive results and will continue to collect and analyze survey data to validate the impact of its programs. Detailed reports can be found at <http://steppingstoneschina.net/impact>.





## What Our Partners Say about Us



Wang Jiayu, Tangsi School

*"Stepping Stones volunteers come to our school and teach us English. These English courses correct my pronunciation, create a relaxed study atmosphere, and make English easier. I have improved my English grade from 80 to 90. Our greatest improvements are in listening and writing. We would miss the foreign teachers a lot if they would stop coming to our school."*

*"Volunteers do what they do out of their own interests and determination. I need to thank Stepping Stones' volunteers for their passion and their benevolence. They do not want any back from us. ...No matter how bad the weather is, the volunteers come here on time and are very devoted."*



Teacher Zuo, Huahong School



Volunteer Julianne Wu

*"I think Chinese students need more interesting learning experiences (which most Chinese schools lack), and Stepping Stones provides this. Every class that the volunteers teach at Wenbo School is much better than any class I had at primary school. I wish I could have had this kind of class when I was a child. There is no doubt that Stepping Stones classes can help the students get more interested in learning English and overcome their timidity in talking with foreigners. I believe these Wenbo students will fully realize this when they become adults."*



## Volunteer Feedback Survey

Our volunteer feedback survey (fall 2012) showed continued high overall satisfaction with Stepping Stones' programmes. In our Classroom Teaching Programme (CTP), 85% of our volunteers were highly satisfied regarding interaction with other volunteers and 93% were highly satisfied regarding their interaction with Stepping Stones' staff. Interaction with co-teachers and with children was also highly satisfactory (91% and 86% respectively) as was the teaching experience itself (82%). We are delighted that 95% of our volunteers considered their overall experience positive!

Our new After School Programme (ASP) has also proven satisfactory to volunteers. Here interaction with other volunteers reached a level of 70% satisfaction and with our staff 65%. Satisfaction regarding the interaction with the children was at 70% while teaching itself was 85% satisfactory. Overall satisfaction with the new programme was at 80%. This is a good start for the ASP, yet at the same time an incentive to continuously work on improving this new programme so both, children and volunteers will have the most satisfactory experience possible.

Thanks to all who participated in the survey for the positive feedback and helpful suggestions!



## Thank you to our sustaining Sponsors

Stepping Stones would like to extend a special thank you to our regular sponsors, especially HuaQiao Foundation for providing us with free office space, English First for providing free space for our volunteer training, PAAT consulting for providing pro bono accounting services, Epsilon for donating their e-marketing system, Staples for providing free stationery and Big Bamboo for providing us with free coffee mornings and end of term parties for our volunteers. If we value at market rates the pro-bono and in-kind donations it would be worth RMB327,527! This generous and sustained support significantly reduces our pressure on the fundraising front.



## Plans for 2013

In 2013, Stepping Stones will create a new position for a full time training manager, to allow the continued improvement of the English teaching programmes, by offering more support, training and teaching resources to the volunteers. Stepping Stones also plans to expand its rural volunteering programmes, and spend money raised in 2012 to provide free eye care to 1,600 migrant children at Huabo Lixing Hang School in Minhang District in January 2013.

