



STEPPING STONES

ANNUAL REPORT



2014



MISSION

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



NGO Centre, 12 Floor, Asionics Technology Centre, No. 6, Lane 1279, Zhongshan West Road,
Shanghai 200051.

中山西路1279弄6号国峰科技大厦12楼公益中心 邮编：200051

Tel电话：32090516.

<http://steppingstoneschina.net>

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. We teach migrant children in schools and community centres throughout Shanghai. We are proud to contribute to bridging the gap between the privileged and under-privileged in China.

Our vision is equal access to a quality education and general welfare for *all* children in China.



Stepping Stones' objectives are:

- 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.

Stepping Stones teaches English to disadvantaged students to help them gain confidence in English, in order to help these students pass their key examinations and access a brighter future. Stepping Stones' programs bridge 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, including teaching English to disadvantaged youth and homeless people, and since 2006 has also been taking volunteer groups to volunteer in rural China. Stepping Stones' I Care project provides eyecare services to migrant children.

As well as organising volunteering for individuals, Stepping Stones works with a wide range of volunteering groups, including high school students, university students and companies.



Stepping Stones' Volunteers

In 2014, across all Stepping Stones' programs and projects (including regular teaching programs, corporate events, and rural tours), 884 volunteer teachers donated a total of 5,587 English lessons (1 lesson ~ 40 minutes), increased from 3,724 lessons in 2013. Thanks to all our dedicated volunteers, around 13,650 children benefited from Stepping Stones' activities in 2014!

In addition, volunteers also helped us with such diverse activities as volunteer training, curriculum development, research, marketing, I.T., accounting, fundraising and photography.

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



2014 Activities

1. Weekly English Teaching Program

Throughout fall and spring 2014 semesters, Stepping Stones had around 300 volunteers teaching regularly to more than 4,730 migrant students in the following schools and community centres (teaching a total of 4,630 English lessons in the year):

Classroom Teaching Program (CTP)

Since 2006, teaching oral English lessons to migrant children in a traditional classroom setting has been Stepping Stones' core programme. Our original CTP continued at Dantu Road School (Hongkou District), Huabo Lixing Hang School (both the Jiwang and Huacao campuses), Huahong School, Wenbo School, Zhenxing School and Sunflower Centre (Minhang District); New Citizen Life Centre Shuanglin Kindergarten, Tangsi School, Wanliao School (Pudong District); Shanghai Young Bakers (Putuo District), East Red School (Qingpu District), Jiuqian Community Centre (Baoshan District); and Renewal Centre (Zhabei District).

Our program at Puguang School came to an end, but we launched four new teaching programs in Lequn Centre (Pudong District), Xinqiao Center (Songjiang District), Shanhai School (Baoshan District) and Yongmei School (Minhang District). Meanwhile, we resumed our teaching program at Yangdong School in Baoshan District which was suspended in 2013.



After School Tuition Program (ASP)

Launched in 2012, the ASP continued to thrive as more young volunteers, mostly high school students, joined to provide small group tuition to migrant children on weekends. We continued to teach at Xupu Village Community Centre (Minhang District), New Citizen Life Centre in Hongkou District, Sumin Kindergarten (Minhang District) and Mulin Community Centre (Pudong), while expanding our program to teach at Sanqiao market and Shuanglin Kindergarten in Pudong District, and Lotus NGO Centre in Changning District.



2. Summer Program

During the summer, 100 dedicated Stepping Stones volunteers braved the heat and rain to deliver 320 free English classes to 417 students in 11 community centres in different parts of Shanghai.



3. Training and Curriculum

In 2014, Stepping Stones continued to support its volunteers through training, workshops, and social events, as well as by the provision of teaching resources. By setting up a “Cloud Resource Centre”, Stepping Stones' volunteers can now easily access online a wide array of teaching material (e.g. flashcards, teaching ideas, teaching tools, textbooks and lesson plans). Stepping Stones has also provided on request these teaching resources to volunteers on a USB.

While respecting the Chinese teaching methodology and following the Shanghai curriculum, Stepping Stones' has developed over the last 10 years a large collection of lesson plans that introduce elements of western pedagogy (e.g. the active participation and engagement of children in the teaching-learning process). In 2014, lesson plans for all grades have been edited, standardized and uploaded to Stepping Stones' Cloud Resource Centre.



Rural Volunteering Tours

In 2014, Stepping Stones organized seven rural tours, taking 93 volunteers to teach 296 lessons to 3,673 local children with 101 volunteers. Our rural tours are in partnership with rural schools in Anhui, Henan and Jiangsu Provinces. This year we organised our first tour specifically for high school volunteers, taking a group of 25 students from SUIS Gubei campus to teach in Anhui Guangde.



Volunteers teach English in a village school in Jiangdu

Videolink English Teaching program

Stepping Stones is proud to have partnered with Chiheng Foundation in 2014 to operate a videolink teaching program at 3 different locations in rural China (Zhumadian [Henan], Fuyang [Anhui], and Lincang [Yunnan]). This pilot program reached 40 children and created an environment where 7 volunteer teachers supported the education of disadvantaged children through online teaching (teaching a total of 41 English lessons).



I Care Project

In 2014, with the continued support of the Australian Chamber, Wing Heng Bank and many generous individual donors, we arranged eyesight screening for 3,218 students at three migrant schools. Over 50 volunteers delivered classes on good eye care to the students. 565 students received spectacles and 2 students were given operations to correct a squint.



Fundraising – Now & Them Exhibition

From December 6th to 12th, Now & Them, a non-profit art platform created by the brand communications agency Paper Stone Scissors, held an art charity event at The Gallery to support Stepping Stones. This exhibition was pure innovation and creativity, and included collaborations from artists, photographers, illustrators, a chocolate factory, a graffiti artist and a Beijing opera singer. More than RMB100,000 was raised to support our I Care Project in 2015.



New Programs 2014

Short/Long-term Volunteer Placement

In response to requests from our school partners in Shanghai and rural China, as well as to applications from volunteers, Stepping Stones expanded its volunteer opportunities in 2014 to include short- and long-term volunteer English teaching placements at schools in Shanghai and rural China.

In June 2014, volunteer Lucy Miller taught English in Jiashan, Zhejiang Province full-time for 3 weeks. At the school, she taught two lessons per week to primary students, and one lesson per week to the middle schoolers. Sponsorship from Optus will allow us to continue to teach at this school in 2015.

Adding in two weeks of teaching by volunteer Sarah Robinson in Anhui Guangde and two weeks by 15 students from Singapore Management University in Chenchun School in Songjiang, this new program allowed us to teach an additional 195 English lessons to 3,390 children.



Lucy Miller with students during school assembly



Stepping Stones' Impact



English Teaching Programs

Stepping Stones conducted three evaluation studies in 2014 to measure the impact of its programs on students' confidence and interest in English. We are pleased to report that 2014 was another successful year for our programs! The results of the studies indicate that many of our beneficiaries improved their confidence in several areas such as completing English homework, understanding and using English, and even improving English grades.

The first study conducted in 2014 was on our After School Tuition Program (ASP) and took place over the course of the spring semester, measuring changes in pre-survey and post-survey responses. The results show that in most of the sites running the ASP, the percentage of students finding it 'very easy' to learn English rose significantly in the follow-up survey, varying from a change of +7.2 percentage points to +40 percentage points. Along with this increase, the total proportion of students across all sites reporting little or no confidence in 'completing their English homework correctly' fell by 12 percentage points in the follow-up survey, from 12% to 0%, with one site showing a particularly dramatic fall from 67% to 0%.

Stepping Stones' second study in 2014 assessed the impact of its Summer Program. The most encouraging results found in the study are towards students' confidence in understanding English and using it. By the end of the Summer Program, 100% of participants felt at least 'averagely confident' that they would understand something said in English as compared to 85.7 % before the program.

80% of them also felt confident to speak to friends and classmates in English at the end of the program compared to just less than 50% before the program. The most notable change was in the children's confidence to speak to a foreigner in English – the percentage feeling confident rose from 34% to 68% in the follow-up survey. Another highlight of the study is the number of students who liked learning English, which rose from 80% to 89%.

Lastly, Stepping Stones has completed in 2014 a study of its Classroom Teaching Program at two new teaching sites. An interesting aspect of this study was that it included both an experimental group, consisting of students who took part in the program, and a control group, consisting of students of the same grades and from the same schools who did not take part in the program. It was encouraging to find that, after only one semester in Stepping Stones' program, the proportion of students feeling very confident that their English grades would improve increased from 58% to 64% amongst students with a volunteer teacher compared to a decrease from 73% to 59% amongst those without. The study also showed a positive relationship between taking part in Stepping Stones' program and enjoying learning English. 71% (up from 31%) of students with volunteer teachers liked learning English 'very much' by the end of the program compared to 53% (up from 51%) of those without a volunteer teacher.





Stepping Stones' Impact



I Care Project

Stepping Stones, subscribing to a results-based approach in its work, has developed in 2014 a baseline and follow-up survey to assess whether the provision of eye treatment to students has an effect on their quality of life.

In two of the schools covered by the I Care Project in 2014, the 310 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders who received glasses were asked how well they could perform a variety of activities that their peers with good vision would take for granted. The results of the evaluation show that there is a significant improvement in children's abilities of performing daily activities and academic orientated tasks since wearing glasses, indicating that they gained benefits not only at school but in their wider lives. The most noteworthy result is the 87% who reported that wearing glasses is helping with their studies. These results suggest that, overall, the children are likely to feel much more secure and independent in their learning than before receiving the glasses.

We also found a considerable improvement in the children's perceptions of their vision and the limitations it imposes on them after wearing glasses. The results indicate that most of them feel much less dependent on others for help, which we believe will lead to increased feelings of confidence and independence as learners.

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>.

Volunteer Feedback Survey

Completed by 75 volunteers in 2014, our volunteer feedback survey showed continued high overall satisfaction with Stepping Stones' programs. We are delighted that 92% of surveyed volunteers considered their overall experience positive! Comments included:

"The orientation and training conducted by Stepping Stones staff was really useful and provokes the preconceptions that volunteers have about teaching, then directing those preconceptions into effective teaching methodologies. [...] This orientation training sets the stage for volunteers to make meaningful engagements with the students whom they are going to teach."

"Stepping Stones' Orientation and Training is a really useful course with some excellent 'boiled down' teaching advice. [...] If only all teacher training sessions were so informative and useful!"

"I recommend this kind of teaching volunteering experience to other people. In teaching, we volunteers are no longer simply following orders, we are in fact taking charge of the classroom and discovering ourselves more than anything. This in itself makes this experience extremely enriching and highly recommendable for other people."

Moreover, the results of the survey indicate that 88% of volunteers were highly satisfied regarding interaction with children. The interaction with co-teachers and other volunteers was also highly satisfactory (80% and 77% respectively) as was the teaching experience itself (82%).

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

2014 Other Events and Activities

Over the year, we took 149 visitors in six corporate and student groups to visit migrant schools and community centres in Shanghai to teach 93 English lessons to 1,660 students and engage in inter-cultural exchange and learning activities. Visitors came from UK technology group Halma, New York University, IE Business School, Duke University and many others.



SMU students volunteer for 2 weeks



Duke MBA graduates teach for the day

Singapore Management University students teach English for two weeks in Shanghai

A group of 15 students from Singapore Management University (SMU) arrived in Shanghai on December 8th to volunteer with Stepping Stones. After teacher training and lesson observation, the university students taught up to 16 lessons per day to migrant students from grades 1 to 4 for two weeks. The students provided not only English lessons, but also physical education, arts and dental care classes.

2014 Other Events and Activities

Collaboration with various organizations

In July 2014, we teamed up with Habitat for Humanity, the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Optus for a collaborative project at one school in Jiashan. For two days Stepping Stones and Optus employees worked alongside school staff teaching English words and songs to elementary school children. Meanwhile, Habitat for Humanity worked with hundreds of volunteers while they painted two vibrant murals for the school.



SSC volunteers and Optus employees teach English words and songs



Optus and Habitat for Humanity volunteer paint school walls

Migrant students' Winter Fun in Bloomberg's Office

On the 12th of December, Bloomberg kicked off a year-long project with Stepping Stones by hosting a winter themed English class in their office. After an office tour, 26 migrant students, accompanied by two of their teachers, were led in learning English winter vocabulary and participating in winter activities by five Bloomberg employees.

2014 Other Events and Activities



Migrant students learn winter vocabulary in Bloomberg's Lujiazui Office

Stepping Stones' Legal Status

In December 2013, Stepping Stones was officially registered in Minhang, Shanghai as non-profit 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 Centre).

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

Cooperation

Stepping Stones is committed to working with other organizations with similar missions, to achieve mutual and complementary objectives. Some of the not-for-profit partners that Stepping Stones worked with in 2014 are Shanghai Soong Ching Ling Foundation, Charyou, Chiheng, Jiuqian Community Centre, Lequn Social Work Service, New Citizen Life Centre, Renewal Centre, Shanghai Charity Foundation, Shanghai Social Worker Agency For Public Affairs, Shanghai Young Bakers, Sunflower Education program for Migrant Children, Youdao Foundation & Zhecheng



上海宋庆龄基金会
Shanghai Soong Ching Ling Foundation



智行基金會
Chi Heng Foundation



Shanghai
Young Bakers
海上青焙坊



上海公益社工事务所



上海乐群社工服务社
Shanghai Lequn Social Work Service
卓越服务 社工先锋

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, PAAT consulting for providing pro bono accounting services, O'Melveny & Myers for providing pro bono legal advice, Epsilon for donating their e-marketing system, Big Bamboo for providing us with free end of term parties for our volunteers, Sherpa's for sponsoring our t-shirts, Nissei Well for printing our flyers for free and Dream Studio for assisting with video services. If we value at market rates the pro-bono and in-kind donations it would be worth around half a million yuan RMB! This generous and sustained support significantly reduces our pressure on the fundraising front.



Plans for 2015

In 2015, Stepping Stones plans to continue to grow organically the core Classroom Teaching, After School & Summer programs, and Rural Tour program, with an emphasis on promoting rural tours to student and corporate groups, building on those successes with PwC and SUIS Gubei in 2014. We also plan to increase our videolink teaching program, building on our successful pilot with Chiheng Foundation this year, and also further develop our short- and long-term volunteer placements, building on two successful pilot placements in 2014.

In response to frequent requests from school teachers and Principals, we also plan to pilot a new teacher training project in 2015, at the same time as continuing to develop our volunteer training with new interactive, visual and online training tools.

With the help of sponsors, we hope to be able to cover a record six schools with our I Care program in 2015.

