

# 2019 STEPPING STONES ANNUAL REPORT

IMPROVING THE EDUCATION  
AND GENERAL WELFARE OF  
DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN IN CHINA



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# Director's Words

Things have changed a lot since I first went with a group of volunteers to teach English in rural Henan Province 13 years ago. Then, you would often find dilapidated school buildings, poorly lit classrooms and leaky roofs. Now, the schools in the areas where we teach are generally brightly lit and in decent condition, and many even have multi-media equipment, allowing us to offer online English lessons to schools where we cannot easily send volunteers. But the gap in the quality of education between rural and urban schools in China is still vast.

At the end of 2019, I accompanied our volunteers to visit our partner schools in rural Jiangxi and Henan Provinces, and was very struck by what I saw. At a rural boarding school that we visited in Henan, the children's eyes sparkled with excitement as they surrounded us in the playground, eager for an opportunity to practise their English skills. The children at a central primary school in rural Jiangxi confidently answered most of our volunteer's questions. But at a village school not far from that central primary school, the students hardly dared to look at us, never mind open their mouths to speak to us.

We have been sending volunteers to teach English at the first two schools for some years now, and our volunteers are also providing weekly online English lessons to the children in Henan through videolink. Having just seen the big difference between the schools with and without our programs, I am all the more excited about starting online courses for the children at the village schools in 2020, and sending volunteers to teach them when possible.

During these visits, we were greeted enthusiastically by local teachers who had attended our teacher training. They told me how the training had increased their confidence to use English in the classroom, and they spoke with great affection about the kindness and patience of our trainers. We are delighted that our education bureau partners in Jiangxi want to support us to deliver training to their English teachers in 2020.

These two site visits gave me just a small snapshot of the impact of our English teaching programs are having in rural China. I was also very encouraged by a reunion dinner with our very first batch of "Stepping Up" students in Jiashan, who are now already working, but had fond memories of their teacher, and were able to reflect back on the positive impact the digital literacy and life skill lessons had had as they prepared to leave school and enter the workforce a few years ago.

This positive impression is strongly backed up by the great stories and testimonials we hear from our students, teachers and volunteers, some of which you can read in the following pages, as well as from the monitoring and evaluation work we do, which is summarised in the enclosed impact report.

Sincerest thanks to all our donors and supporters, to our staff team and of course our amazing volunteers, without all of whom none of this would have ever happened.

Corinne Richeux Hua  
Executive Director



Corinne Richeux Hua  
**Executive Director**



# Year in Review

In 2019, 1,350 people volunteered with Stepping Stones.

Our volunteers delivered **6,234** English lessons to **13,581** disadvantaged children at **33** project sites in Shanghai, as well as in **21** sites in **9** other provinces.

Our Stepping Up program's teachers and volunteers provided **1,007** digital literacy lessons to **712** students at **7** teaching sites in Zhejiang Province, Jiangsu Province and Shanghai.

Our corporate and summer camp volunteers delivered **473** lessons in subjects other than English and digital literacy - such as arts and crafts, music, drama, science, geography, dance, life skills, environment and martial arts - to **299** students in Shanghai.

We supplied professional training and follow-up support to **74** English teachers, impacting the English education of more than **9,000** children each year.

Our I Care Program donated spectacles to **113** children and youth, and covered most of the costs of amblyopia treatment for **34** children.



Staff



English Teachers Trained



Volunteers



Lessons Taught  
(not including Teacher Training)



English Students



Children Receiving Spectacles



Digital Literacy Students



Children Receiving Amblyopia Treatment





# About Us

## 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 Objectives

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

## Legal Status

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

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

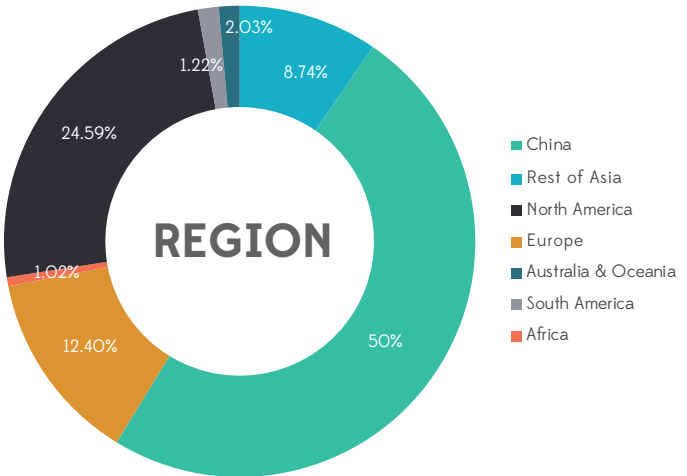
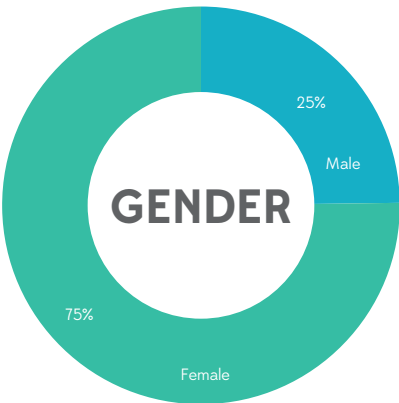
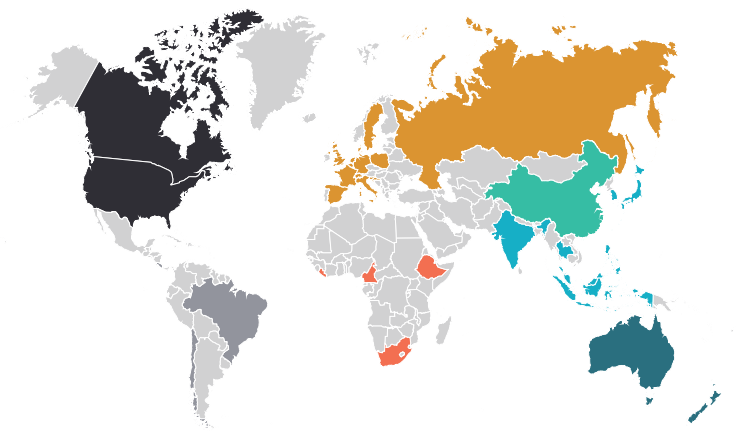
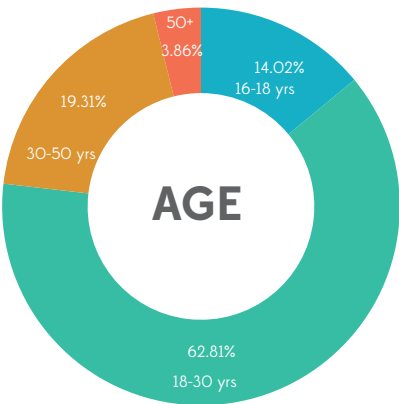
# Volunteers

Stepping Stones’ greatest asset is its large community of volunteers, who are eager for high-impact volunteering opportunities in China.

Stepping Stones’ task is to recruit, train, support, resource and coordinate volunteers to provide services needed by our beneficiaries.

Our volunteers come from 34 different countries and from all walks of life, including high school students, university students, company employees and retirees. As well as teaching English and digital literacy to our students, they also take a myriad of other roles, including fundraising, communications, design, photography, curriculum development, volunteer coordination, translation, etc.

In 2019, thanks to funding from Porsche, we were able to build a new volunteer management platform in Volgistics, allowing us greater efficiency in coordinating increasing numbers of volunteers.



# Beneficiaries

Stepping Stones' main beneficiaries are children and youth, whose education has been negatively impacted by rural-urban migration in China. Some of these children have moved with their parents to cities where they do not have access to regular public schools due to residence issues, and are enrolled in schools for the children of migrant workers, whose educational standards fall behind the urban public schools. Others are enrolled in public schools, but need extra help with their schoolwork, which their parents are often unable to provide.

Other migrant workers' children are unable to go with their parents to the cities, and are left behind in rural boarding schools or living with other family members. The educational standards in rural schools lag significantly behind urban schools, and these "left-behind" children also lack parental support.



Most of our students are primary-school age, but we also have middle-school, high school, vocational school and university students.

This was the year that we started to turn our attention in a new direction. For some years, the founder of Qingcongquan School for autistic children in Shanghai had been asking whether we could teach English to their students, and in 2019, we were ready to take on a new challenge. We were fortunate to find a volunteer with the requisite experience to start to develop a program to serve children with special educational needs.



# Staff Team



At the end of 2019, Stepping Stones' staff team stood at 17 staff members led by Founder and Executive Director, Corinne Hua. Sebastian Carrier continued as Program Director to oversee the strategic direction of our programs and their impact; while directly supervising the Stepping Up and the Videolink Teacher Training program.

On the operations side, we recognized the ever-growing responsibilities of two crucial and long-term staff members, and were pleased to promote Wang Cui to Fundraising Senior Manager and Eva Hua to Finance Senior Manager. Naya Wang continued her role in the finance team and Ada Xu took over as Finance Officer from Lucy Lu, who relocated overseas in the summer. Zhu Yikai took over communications management from Zhang Xuejuan, who left at the beginning of the year, assisted by volunteer Gao Jian. Huang Yili joined in a new part-time role as our Events Manager. Dora Havassy continued as part-time HR manager.

On the programs side, we bade farewell to our Training & Curriculum Director Ross Pitcairn and our Teacher Trainer Desiree Nieto as they relocated overseas. Ross had paid a key role since 2016 in designing and launching our videolink and teacher training programs, as well as revamping our volunteer

training and English curriculum. To fill the considerable gap left by his departure, Sally Wangsawijaya was promoted to Senior Program Manager, taking responsibility for all our English teaching programs, and Claire Ding stepped up to take responsibility for volunteer training and curriculum development. We took a strategic decision not to hire a teacher trainer to replace Desi, and instead sub-contracted the teacher training work to two external professional trainers.

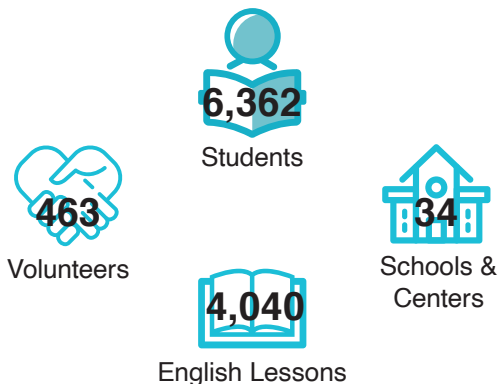
Susana Kiehnle joined in the Spring term to manage the Shanghai English Teaching program, while Julie Li continued as Program Officer to coordinate and liaise with program partners in Shanghai. Gao Xiaolan took over the management of the Rural Individual Volunteering program, while Sherry Jia continued to manage the Videolink Program and rural partner relations. Teddy Shi and Ben Hu continued to run the Stepping Up Digital Literacy Program and I Care program, Yili assisting with the latter.

In March 2019, we moved into a new and comfortable co-working office space in Xuhui District provided by Tiny Tots Educational Group.

# English Teaching

English is one of the three core subjects in the Chinese school curriculum, and the one that poses most challenges to rural and other disadvantaged children. English ability is the biggest differentiator between urban and rural Chinese children, perpetuating the gap in educational and employment opportunities. Stepping Stones' work began in response to requests from the principals of migrant schools in Shanghai and rural Chinese schools to teach English to their students.

## Shanghai English Teaching



In 2019, Stepping Stones opened three new project sites in Shanghai. Volunteers taught English to students at one new school and two new community centers: Shanghai Shen'ai Social Work Development Center and Shanghai Yanze Social Work Development Center.

463 volunteers in the Shanghai English Teaching program taught a total of 4,040 lessons, benefitting 6,362 students. Our training managers and staff provided timely advice and support for volunteer teachers. To better assess the impact of our program, Stepping Stones devised and conducted a pre- and post- oral English-speaking test in line with our Shanghai English Teaching Program curriculum and lesson plans. We are encouraged to see from the results that students' oral English has improved greatly.

We are grateful to Teaching Nomad and Disney English for arranging professional teachers to teach at our partner schools and community centers in Shanghai. We continued to work with Shanghai Young Bakers and Shanghai K Foundation to provide vocational oral English courses for adults and youth, and maintained good relationships with all the other schools and community centers we work with.

Stepping Stones is delighted to share our 14 years of experience and operational expertise with Mother's English, a non-profit English teaching organization in Dalian. In addition, we are excited to start our pilot collaboration with Shanghai Qingcongquan Training Centre for Children with Special Needs and provide English lessons to their students.

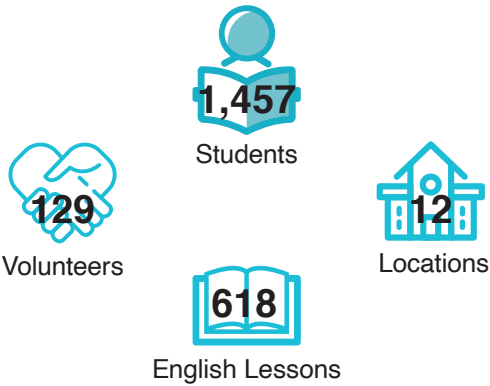


"The experience of volunteering to teach English at Stepping Stones is very meaningful to me. Sharing and learning together can help both volunteers and students to take a step towards a better world."

– High school volunteer at Yishan Road Community Center

An especially big thank you goes to Shanghai Soong Ching Ling Foundation for continuously supporting our Shanghai English Teaching program since 2012!

# Videolink



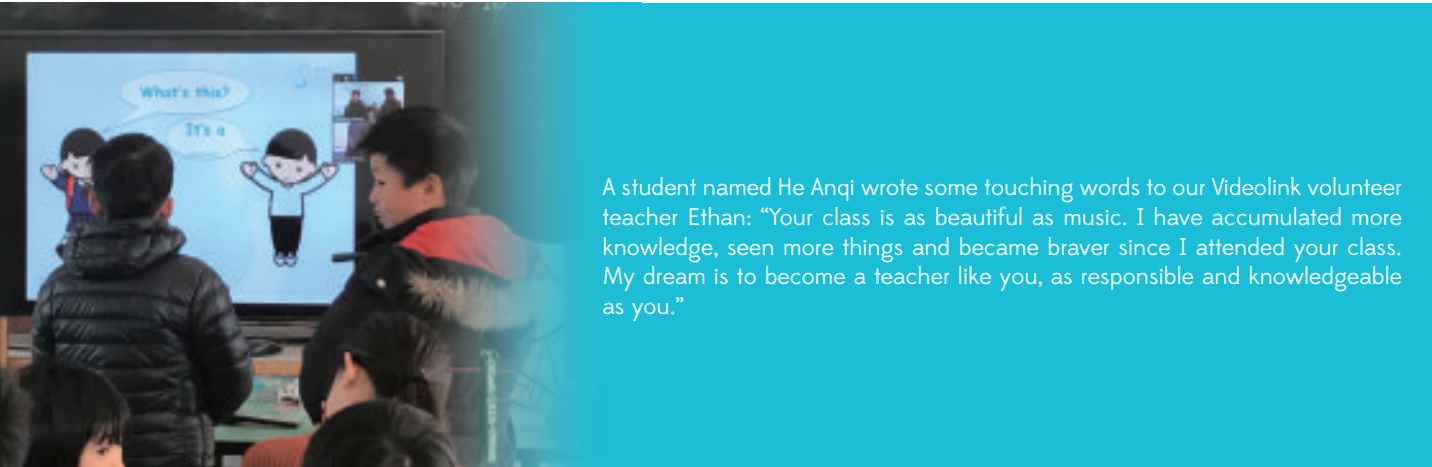
In 2019, our videolink program expanded significantly to benefit more students in the rural areas. Our program partners continue to value the benefits of regular online classes to improve their students’ oral English abilities. We scaled up the number of sites this year, with 12 schools and centers delivering our classes in Anhui, Fujian, Henan, Hunan, Shanghai (Songjiang) and Yunnan.

In line with our growth, we continue to review and update our teaching materials to ensure they stay relevant and engaging. This year, thanks to the generous support of Porsche, we are proud to introduce the new Stepping Stones Videolink Curriculum and a full set of 120 new Videolink PPTs (24 lessons per year for 5 student levels) as well as an improved version of volunteer training materials. Next year, we aim to add supplementary worksheets and recordings for students to review after the class, making our teaching materials even more holistic and comprehensive.

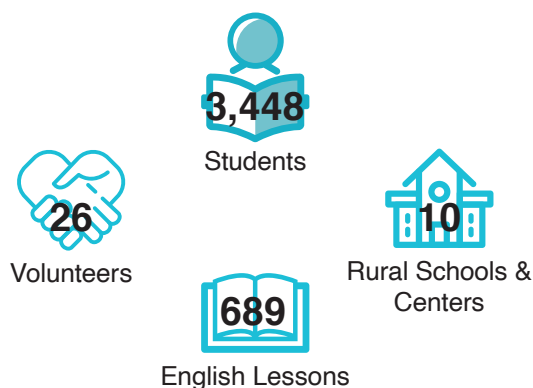
We continued to teach Chi Heng Foundation’s students in two primary schools in Henan, and kick-started a new online English Corner program for their middle school students. We opened a new site in Fujian, and collaborated with Shanghai Shen’ai Social Work Development Center to deliver videolink English classes in Yunnan. At the invitation of the local education bureau, we visited schools in small towns and rural areas in Jiangxi, and hope to start new programs there next year.

A special ‘thank you’ to Bloomberg for supporting this program both through donations and through staff volunteering to teach our students in Hunan, Henan, Anhui and Yunnan.

Our volunteers continue to be the backbone of our program. With the advances of technology, we are pleased to facilitate a meaningful and enriching interaction between people from different places and backgrounds. We are hopeful for another successful year in 2020.



## Rural Volunteering – Individual



This year, we are glad to facilitate memorable volunteering experiences for our volunteers from Australia, Belgium, Britain, Canada, mainland China, France, Hong Kong, Malaysia and the USA, and to teach students in many small towns and rural areas. Thanks to funding from the Egg Walkathon and donations from the German school, volunteers taught for up to four weeks each in schools and community centers in Anhui, Fujian, Gansu, Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Hunan, Henan and Zhejiang.

Through a new collaboration with Xiezuozhe, a non-profit organization based in Nanjing, Jiangsu, our volunteers taught English to migrant children in the area. Our partnership with Educating Girls of Rural China (EGRC) continues, and our volunteers spent a week in Gansu tutoring EGRC students in oral English. Over the summer, we worked together with Shixingzhe, a non-profit organization based in Jiaxing, Zhejiang and organised volunteers to teach English to children of migrant workers working in the Lego factory there. We also started a new collaboration with an English tuition center which opened charity classes for disadvantaged children in the small town of Pucheng in Fujian Province.

In the Fall, two of our volunteers experienced the rural lifestyle by choosing to stay in boarding schools in Anhui and Henan. They enjoyed the daily interaction with the students, and some even helped out with the students' tuition in the evening.

Below are accounts of our volunteers' enriching experiences in the rural schools:



Lim Hooi Hoon, 51,  
is a university teacher  
from Kuala Lumpur.

As a rural English volunteer, Hooi Hoon admits, it's hard to say how much a month of volunteer teaching can help these rural children -- the challenges they face in the future are not just academic, but also in their living environment. But the presence of foreign volunteers exposes children to new worlds and gives them a chance to make some connections with volunteers that will have a lasting impact. "They can remember that they had this volunteer from some foreign country who came to their village school. So I am sure it will leave a lasting impression on the children."

Andy Chan is a volunteer  
from PricewaterhouseCoopers  
in Hong Kong

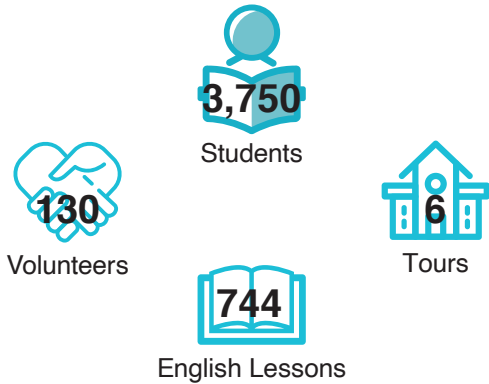
Andy said: "There was pleasure for me being there and then inspiring them to be more interested in learning English, which was what I wanted to do - basically to send the message to students that learning English is fun. And that they should all have that opportunity to try." He says the Stepping Stones rural English teaching program brings outside resources to local students. Andy states, "The students can get different exposure. The exposure to get to speak to other people ... will be beneficial to them, because they do not have that kind of practice."

Linda Li is an accountant  
from Canada

Linda said the Stepping Stones' rural English teaching program provided an excellent opportunity for foreign volunteers to learn about China, "Because China still for a lot of people is a land unknown."



## Rural Volunteering – Group



Stepping Stones has been leading volunteer groups to teach oral English lessons to children in rural China over a weekend or for a full week since 2007. In 2019, we took groups from PricewaterhouseCoopers, Bollore Logistics, and the Shanghai French School to teach children in Anhui, Jiangsu, Hunan, and Zhejiang.

PwC volunteers taught additional life skill classes in Chinese to students in two primary schools in Zhejiang. A big 'thank you' to PwC for sharing life skills lesson plans with their volunteers to use in our classes. In one school, our volunteers were invited to give out awards for students who were performing well in their English writing competition. One volunteer took to the stage and delivered a touching speech, encouraging all students to never give up their dreams.

Four teachers from the French School volunteered their time to organise and facilitate Stepping Stones rural volunteering tours for their students. High school students learnt as much about service and teaching as the left-behind and rural children learnt about English.

We look forward to facilitating more mutual learning opportunities for volunteer groups in 2020!

"It's over my expectation. The kids are so lovely and they deserve to get good education."

Bollore Logistic volunteer  
Taohuajiang, Hunan

"I enjoyed the moment when a little boy told me that he loves the lesson so much that he hopes it will last longer."

PwC volunteer  
Pujiang, Zhejiang



"I learnt that being a teacher is very tiring and it is hard to stay energetic and motivated during all the classes. Overall, it was a very good experience, I really like it."

French School Shanghai high school volunteer  
Jiangdu, Jiangsu

# Curriculum & Training Development

## Curriculum

In 2019, we developed 120 PPTs for the Videolink Program based on Stepping Stones' syllabus for grades 1-5, as well as extending the existing 40-minute lesson plans to 90 minutes, thus helping our weekend and summer volunteers teach English more effectively.

In 2019, with the support of our intern Priscila Sobreira and volunteer Dian Nusantara for over one semester, we created a flashcard database for Stepping Stones' syllabus with the purpose of better recycling the current flashcards and reducing paper waste in printing. In 2020, we plan to produce one set of professionally-printed flashcards and pilot the flashcard database and library at one teaching site to test its effectiveness.

In 2020, we will continue to revise our current syllabus and update the lesson plans based on the ever-evolving learning needs of our beneficiaries and the feedback from our volunteers. We will also develop a homework pack for the Videolink Program, which includes a homework sheet and an audio clip for each Videolink lesson. The pack will enable school teachers or parents to help students review the learning content after our classes.

We'd like to say a big 'thank-you' to Porsche, for generously funding our curriculum development work in 2019. With their help, and thanks to the hard work of professional curriculum developers and volunteers, we can achieve our ultimate goal of providing all our English-teaching volunteers with professional-grade materials that are tailored to their teaching context.

## Training

In 2019, besides the induction trainings we deliver to all new volunteers, we offered a series of trainings to help the World Academy for the Future of Women (WAFW) in Henan to start their own English teaching program at a local community site.

We developed three training videos for WAFW, which help to maintain the training quality, in spite of the long distance between Shanghai and Henan. In 2020, we will continue to develop training videos for our English teaching program, as we can increasingly see the advantage of easy accessibility for all our volunteers, both online and offline.



**PORSCHE**

# Teacher Training



## Shanghai Teacher Training

In June 2019, we successfully completed the third full school year of teacher training to 28 more English teachers at three Shanghai primary schools, involving 6 training sessions delivered at each school, and 30 lesson observations. Four volunteers visited the schools regularly to offer English corners, where the teachers could practice their English skills.

We also continued to support 14 teachers at the 6 schools that were involved in the first two years of this program through Champions Training. The Champions Training trains high achievers from the previous year's training in how to observe, give feedback and identify the needs of their teaching groups, allowing us to keep in touch with our former trainees and return to their schools for 'just-in-time' training sessions based on the teaching group's needs.

The Impact Report at the end of this report testifies to the success of our approach, with trainers observing an increase in the amount of English being used in the classroom by teachers and students alike. Our Teachers' Appreciation Party in June 2019 was a fitting celebration at the end of this year of hard work, and also a bitter-sweet farewell for Desi Nieto, our teacher trainer.

Shanghai Charity Foundation's three years' funding for this program came to an end in June 2019. Since there is still demand for this program in the Shanghai schools, we are glad to have secured funding from Jiaqi Foundation for one more year of teacher training at one more school in 2020.

# Videolink Teacher Training

Based on the success of the first term of online teacher training in Lixin County Anhui in autumn 2018, the British Chamber of Commerce Shanghai continued to sponsor this program throughout 2019.

A total of 32 local English teachers attended 6 online trainings each, and our teacher trainers visited Lixin twice in the year to interview the new trainees and to observe the previous term's trainees in the classroom and provide feedback. 7 volunteers helped teachers to improve their spoken English confidence and ability through online Teachers' English Corners.

The participating teachers reported a significant increase in the amount of English they and their students were using in the classroom by the end of their training.

Thanks to all the people who donated to us through Tencent's 99 Giving Day campaign, we are excited to be able to offer in 2020 a similar training course to English teachers at our new project base in Xin'gan County, Jiangxi Province, supported by the local education bureau.



Teachers Trained



Trainers



Teachers' English  
Corners



Training Sessions



# Summer Camps

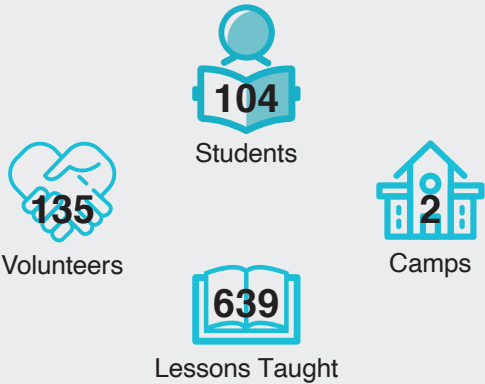
For the third year running, Stepping Stones successfully organized two two-month full-time summer camps in cooperation with the Huacao Town Youth League. Thanks to our volunteers, we gave 104 students a safe, fulfilling and enjoyable summer vacation.

Trained volunteers taught a variety of subjects and assisted our class teacher to ensure the smooth progression of the summer camp. This year, three teachers helped to manage the summer camps, and two of them were English teachers who had participated in Stepping Stones' teacher training program before.

In addition to last year's lessons (English, multi-media, arts and crafts, music, drama, dance, life skills, environmental protection and board games, we added science, geography and martial arts to increase diversity and fun. A generous grant from UPS enabled us to hire professionals to teach the drama and martial arts classes this year.

Thanks to the participation of volunteers from various companies, students enjoyed a different kind of summer this year. As with the previous year, volunteers from Target Global Sourcing conducted crafting classes for the children. PwC volunteers joined this year too; they not only took over the regular classes in the last week of the summer camp, but also taught children the basics of personal finance and other life skills. Teaching Nomad and Disney English provided students with professional oral English and English drama courses; B人BEL contributed creative craft lessons, and Christies invited students to a macaroon baking workshop.

At the end of the summer camps, the children were happy and proud to perform their drama, singing and martial arts to their parents, volunteers and teachers. Children were sad to say goodbye, and parents expressed gratitude for the hard work of volunteers and teachers. They hoped that their children could come to the summer camp again next year.



# Stepping Up



Digital literacy is basic for survival in the modern world. Unfortunately, many rural and migrant Chinese children have no computers at home or school, and no computer lessons, so their digital literacy skills are very poor. This contributes to a low rate of high school or vocational school enrollment, and the risk of exploitation, abuse and disadvantage when they enter the workplace from junior middle school.

By providing the schools with the necessary hardware, along with a carefully planned curriculum and properly trained teachers and volunteers, our “Stepping Up” program helps children develop the life skills and digital literacy skills they need to meet the challenges of a tech-focused future.

In 2019, thanks to the continued support of Transparent Fish Fund and The Ping and Amy Chao Family Foundation, we were able to provide regular computer/life skills lessons to 712 primary and middle school students at seven teaching sites in Shanghai, Zhejiang and Jiangsu. We would also like to extend our thanks to a growing number of local and international partners - in particular Carrefour, Deloitte, Eden, Goodyear, Google, Just Code and Typing Club for contributing to the program in different ways.

One of our major achievements in 2019 is to have mobilised more than 70 regular volunteer teachers, which helped us increase the reach and impact of our program. Our volunteers include university students from Sanda University Jiashan Campus, Tongji Zhejiang College, NYU University (Shanghai), Fudan University and East China Normal University, and employees of Google (Shanghai office).

We are grateful to Irish Aid for funding a study to explore the vulnerabilities, challenges and opportunities faced by at-risk teenagers in China as they enter the workforce, so that we could refine and further develop our program accordingly. The study highlighted that most of our beneficiaries enter the workforce unprepared and with extremely limited information about the local labour market. Neither school nor family provide them with relevant and up-to-date information on available jobs and on the skills and education they require. Following the recommendations of the study, we are seeking funding to increase the time allocated to career exploration and development for our middle school students, and to start providing individualized and follow-up support to our students after they have dropped out of school.



# I Care



Spectacles Donated



Amblyopia Treatments  
Received

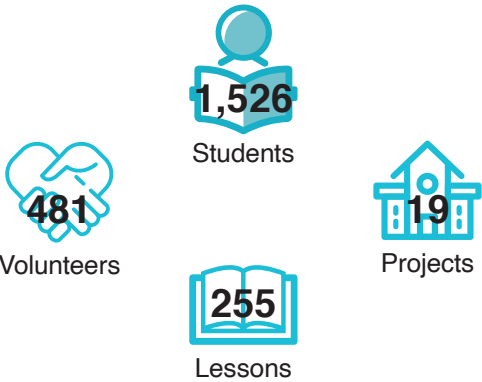
Rural and migrant Chinese children have roughly the same levels of myopia and other vision issues as urban children, but their parents rarely buy glasses or fund corrective surgery or treatment for lack of funds and medical insurance, and above all lack of understanding of the importance of correcting poor vision. Studies show that vision problems can seriously impact a child's educational success. We have witnessed a sudden improvement in the grades of children receiving glasses or eye care treatment through our I Care program.

In 2019, we offered eye-care services to the migrant communities of Jiaxing and Zhejiang, as well as to all the beneficiaries of Shanghai Young Bakers, one of our long-term nonprofit partners. In total, we provided eye glasses to 113 migrant children or youth and covered most of the costs of amblyopia treatment for 34 disadvantaged children. Our aim for the coming year is to continue to provide eye care services to our beneficiaries in a cost-effective and time-efficient manner, prioritising children and youth whose families buy into the project, either with their time, or through an affordable financial contribution.

# Corporate & School Projects

In 2019, Stepping Stones arranged one-day projects for volunteers from various corporate and university groups to engage in inter-cultural exchanges and learning activities with disadvantaged primary school and kindergarten children. These volunteers took children on outings or taught them English, arts and crafts, sports or life skills, and for the first time, we had corporate groups delivering digital literacy lessons with our Stepping Up team.

Volunteers came from Duke University, Georgia Institute of Technology, New York University, Christie's, Deloitte LLC, Google, Michael Page, Nielsen, PwC, Target, Texas Instruments, Disney English, and UFC.



“Welcoming Stepping Stones to the Performance Institute Shanghai was a wonderful experience for all involved. It was our first Walk the Walk event since our grand opening in June, an unforgettable opportunity for our staff to interact with children from disadvantaged backgrounds and hopefully share with them a positive experience thru sports.”

-Vice President for Asia from UFC



# Fundraising

On the evening of 10th January, Stepping Stones organized a private fundraising event at Glam at M on the Bund to host a New Year Soiree for Stepping Stones' top donors. British Consul General John Edwards presented the British Empire Medal certificate to Stepping Stones founder Corinne Hua, followed by great speeches made by leading Chinese economist Professor Fan Gang and Rupert Hoogewerf from Hurun Report. 30 Guests attended this event and pledged more than 1 million RMB to support establishing Stepping Stones' own foundation.

On 28th May, M on the Bund again generously provided the beautiful space to host Stepping Stones' second fundraising luncheon. The highlight of the lunch was a live auction and silent auction, which helped us raise around 450,000RMB in total.

Earlier that month, Stepping Stones recruited 3 teams to join the Egg Walkathon, an annual fundraising campaign initiated by our long-term partner Shanghai United Foundation. The first team was Tiny Tots, a Shanghai-based kindergarten group, who also provide office space for Stepping Stones. The 2nd team was individuals from finance and real estate industries who are passionate about marathon and charity. The 3rd team was staff members from Heetravel. More than 75,000RMB was raised by the 3 teams.

September brought the annual 99 Giving Day Crowdfunding Campaign. In less than 60 hours, with 860 public donations, 100,000 yuan from corporate donors, matching funds from Shanghai United Foundation and Tencent Foundation, as well as an offline event at Tims Coffee house, we raised in total 171,106.34 yuan to support Stepping Stones' Videolink Teacher Training program in 2020.

Thanks to all individual and corporate donors and foundation partners, Stepping Stones was able to continuously develop and improve our fundraising capacity, and explore new ways to better serve our beneficiaries sustainably.



# Sponsors

Stepping Stones is grateful to all its many generous donors, in particular the following organisations and individuals, who provided the majority of our funding in 2019.

Donor	Amount (RMB)
Shanghai Soong Ching Ling Foundation	¥ 500,000
Ping and Amy Chao Family Foundation through Transparent Fish Fund	¥ 427,404
Tiny Tots Education Group	¥ 288,000
British Chamber of Commerce Shanghai	¥ 167,680
Bloomberg	¥ 159,218
Wendy Shi through Shanghai United Foundation	¥ 100,000
Global Giving	¥ 83,279
Jiaqi Foundation	¥ 80,080
Wanlin Modern Logistics Co. Ltd.	¥ 75,000
Homeslice Pizza	¥ 69,856
CAF America on behalf of the generosity of Target Corporation	¥ 68,764
Steve Pan	¥ 65,000
Cao Zhihao	¥ 50,000
Henry Sun	¥ 50,000
Mona Wang & Simon Gong	¥ 50,000



# Pro Bono Supporters

A special thank you to the following service providers, who generously provided high quality professional services to us for free, thus helping us to significantly reduce our operational costs and improve the quality of our programs:



Disney English, Teaching Nomad & Tiny Tots for providing professional English lessons to our students.



Giraffe English, Just Code, Eden and Macmillan Education for providing teaching resources.



id creations  
branded content



I.D. Creations for continuing to produce high quality videos for us, and Nisseiwell for free printing services.



Qidong Wise & Honest Education, TLY Education in Pucheng, Fujian Province and Youlan Training Centre for hosting our classes and recruiting students for us.



Epermarket and Homeslice Pizza, who generously provided food & beverages for volunteer trainings and appreciation functions as well as staff and board meetings throughout the year.



Rödl & Partner



O'Melveny & Myers and Roedl & Partner for professional legal advice and financial accounting services respectively.

Mingdao for providing an office management solutions platform.



miaozu



Sandbox Community and The Bridge for providing us with temporary accommodation when we were between offices.

# Non-Profit Partners

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



Mingde Foundation



Educating Girls of Rural China

Sunflower Education



Qingcongquan Training Centre



World Academy for the Future of Women



Shanghai Hua Ai Charity Foundation



# Looking Forward

## New Challenges

The new year has started badly, with the outbreak of Covid-19, which tragically continues to claim more victims each day as I write this. While it is impossible to predict exactly how this will affect us over the whole year, it is clear that the start of our many of our projects will be significantly delayed in the Spring term.

We are currently working on a new project, to adapt our online English lessons and digital literacy classes to teach students who are quarantined in their homes. We hope that our volunteers can bring some comfort, encouragement and fun to those children until they can return to their schools. And of course, above all, we hope that we will be able to put this terrible epidemic behind us very soon and resume all of our regular activities and normal lives, the world over.



## New Opportunities

In the long term, there is much to be optimistic about. The educational situation is constantly improving, and the trend towards online education and great improvements in available technology, both of these further accelerated by the coronavirus outbreak, offer exciting opportunities to reach children in remoter parts of China which have been slower to develop.

We see more and more platforms available for fundraising in China, more people donating in both large and small amounts, and increasing numbers of people volunteering. We are hopeful that our foundation will be successfully established in 2020, which will improve our ability to fundraise, as well as our long-term sustainability.

As our experience and reputation grow, opportunities have arisen to support newer organisations running volunteer English programs in other parts of China. In 2019, we continued to provide training and teaching resources to English teaching volunteers with Starfish Rescue in Jiaying, and started doing the same for the World Academy for the Future of Women in Zhengzhou. We were pleased to get to know Mother's English, a group of English teaching volunteers in Dalian, and to be able to share experiences with them and offer logistical and technical advice and support. This is a great way of amplifying the impact of both organisations, and we hope to continue to develop these kinds of partnerships in 2020.

We are excited about developing an integrated program base in Xin'gan County, Jiangxi Province, in collaboration with the local education bureau, where we can run English teacher training, videolink and rural individual volunteering programs concurrently. We also very much look forward to developing our experience in teaching English to children with special needs.

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# Impact Report

To assess the value and impact of our programs on our beneficiaries, evaluations were conducted at 18 program sites in 2019, employing two different methodologies. First, as was the case in previous years, 'pre-program' (or baseline) and 'post-program' (or follow-up) survey questionnaires were distributed to a total of 884 beneficiaries, asking a variety of questions to assess, for example, students' confidence and interest in English and other subjects, or teachers' perceptions of the improvement in their teaching skills. Second, for the first time since our inception, a pre- and post-speaking assessment was conducted at one of our teaching sites to evaluate students' progress in English.

## 1

### Impacting students' attitude towards English

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Stepping Stones has been running English teaching programs in China for more than 14 years, serving thousands of children every week. Our main objectives are to improve students' motivation and confidence in English, which are two key dimensions of learning a second language.

While most of our students attend our program for many years, many of them are enrolled for a period of only one year. Based on data gathered during the 2018-2019 school year, the Figure below (next page) outlines the impact of our program on a sample of 'new' students (n = 497) - all of which were attending our program in a community centre, a migrant school or a rural school - by comparing their attitude towards English with their attitude towards other subjects and school in general.

Consistent with findings from previous years, results clearly shows that, by the end of the program, the percentage of new students finding English 'easy' rose more than the percentage of them finding Chinese or mathematics 'easy'. A noteworthy comparison is between the number of students finding English and mathematics 'easy', which rose by 13.48% and decreased by 3.94% respectively.

These perceptions towards core subjects are also reflected in the students' confidence to improve grades. As can be seen from the Figure below (next page), the percentage of students feeling confident to improve English grades increased by 4.64%, while the percentage of students feeling confident to improve school grades increased only by 1.32%.

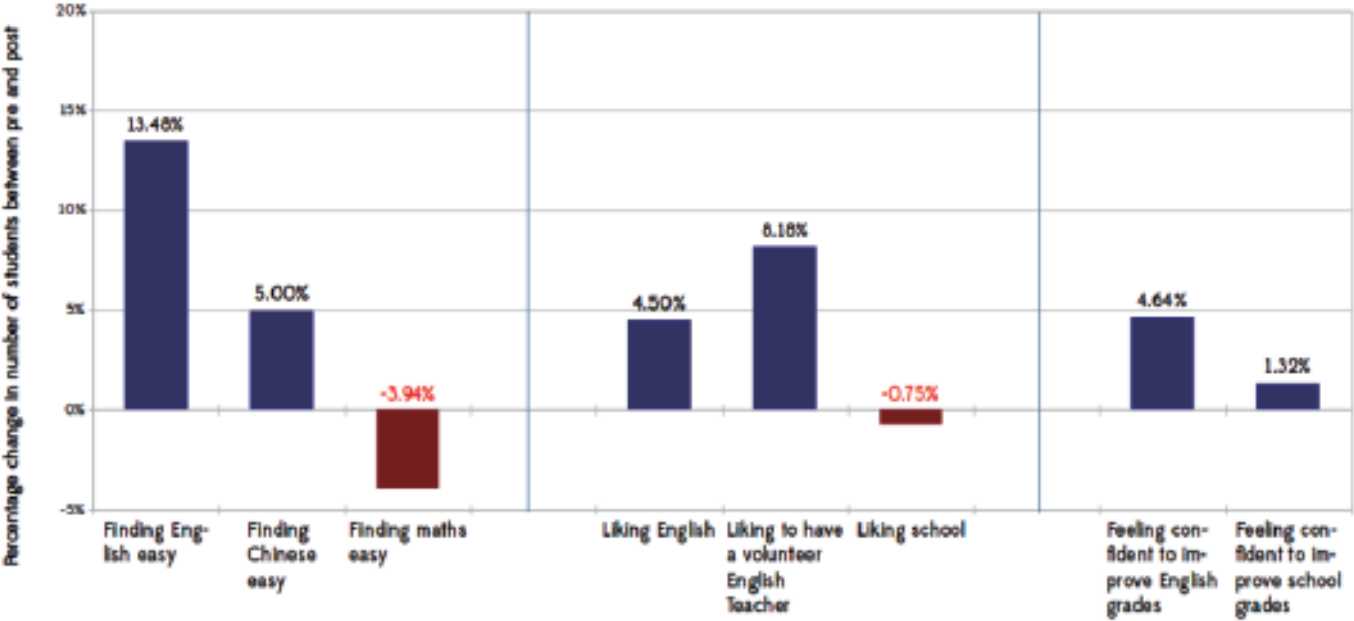
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Another highlight of the study is the proportions of students reporting liking English and liking volunteer teachers, which rose by 4.50% and 8.18% respectively in the post-survey, compared with a decrease of 0.75% in the number of students liking school.

These results are consistent with the findings of previous years' impact evaluations. They suggest that a majority of students who join our program become more confident and interested in English as time passes, despite experiencing an average lower increase - or even a decrease - in motivation and confidence in school and other core subjects.

The relative changes in students' difficulties, interest and confidence in English and other subjects - Pre- and post-program comparison

New students enrolled in Stepping Stones' Program, school year 2018-2019 (n = 497)



## 2

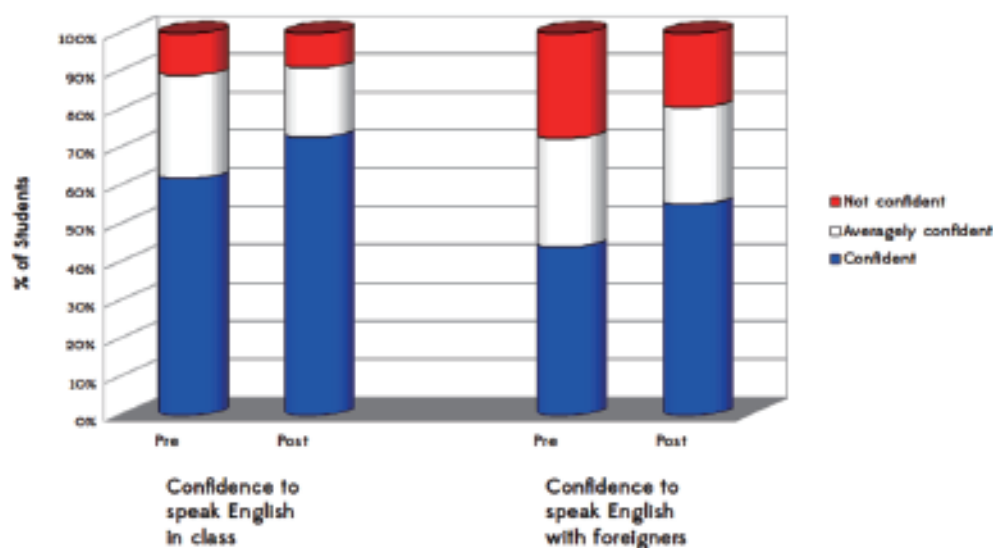
## Enhancing students' English speaking confidence

Stepping Stones' English curriculum is designed to place emphasis upon teaching English through speaking and listening activities. Our volunteers and teachers are trained to provide and develop fun and interactive oral English lessons, which motivate and engage students by using only English in the classroom.

As can be seen from the Figure below, two questions were asked to assess the impact of our program on the students' confidence in speaking English (n = 446). As was the case in previous years, the results of our evaluation indicate a rise between the baseline and the follow-up surveys in the number of students feeling 'confident' to use English in class (17.39% increase) and to speak English with foreigners (25.39% increase). These increases suggest that students under our program become more prepared and confident to engage in English-speaking situations and subsequently may be more inclined to exert effort in studying English, which can arguably be translated into an actual language ability outcome.

### Students' confidence to speak English - Pre- and post-program comparison

New students enrolled in Stepping Stones' program, school year 2018-2019 (n = 446)



3

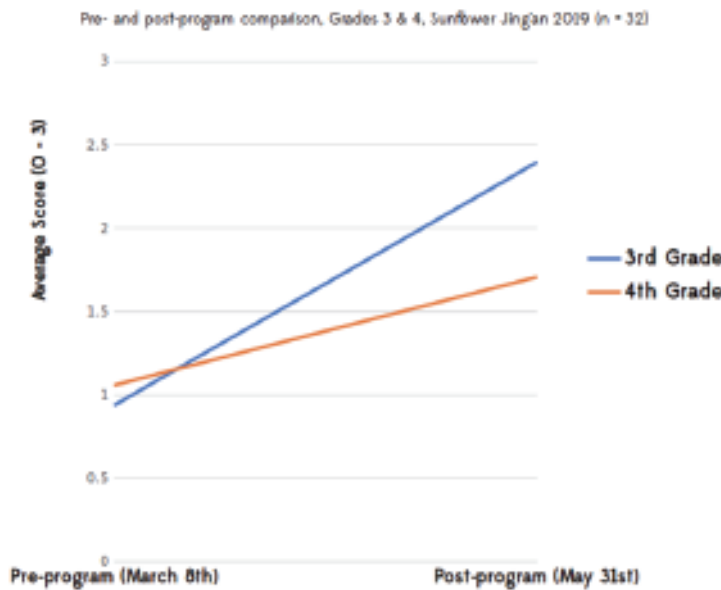
## Acquiring English speaking skills

For the first time since our inception in 2006, we have conducted a pre- and post-speaking assessment to evaluate student's progress in English over the course of one semester (Spring 2019). The assessment consisted of short questions asked at both "pre-test" and "post-test". The questions were based directly on Stepping Stones' curriculum, which is designed to place emphasis upon teaching English through speaking and listening activities.

The assessment was conducted orally by our Training Manager at one of our teaching sites. 32 students from grade 3 (12 students) and grade 4 (20 students) took part in the pre- and post-tests, and they were scored for each question on a scale from 0 to 3, where 3 represents complete oral proficiency.

As can be seen from the Figure below, the average score of the students has risen between the baseline (pre) and the follow-up (post) speaking assessments, from 0.94 to 2.40 for grade 3 students and from 1.06 to 1.70 for grade 4 students. The assessment suggests that most students have acquired knowledge and made progress in English.

Students' English Speaking Assesment - Average Score per Grade



4

## Improving English teachers' confidence and ability

Motivated by a desire to make a long-term and sustainable impact on rural and migrant students' academic achievement, Stepping Stones started a Teacher Training Program in 2016 to train English teachers in Shanghai's migrant schools, as well as in rural areas through the internet. In 2019, 74 teachers have benefited from this program.

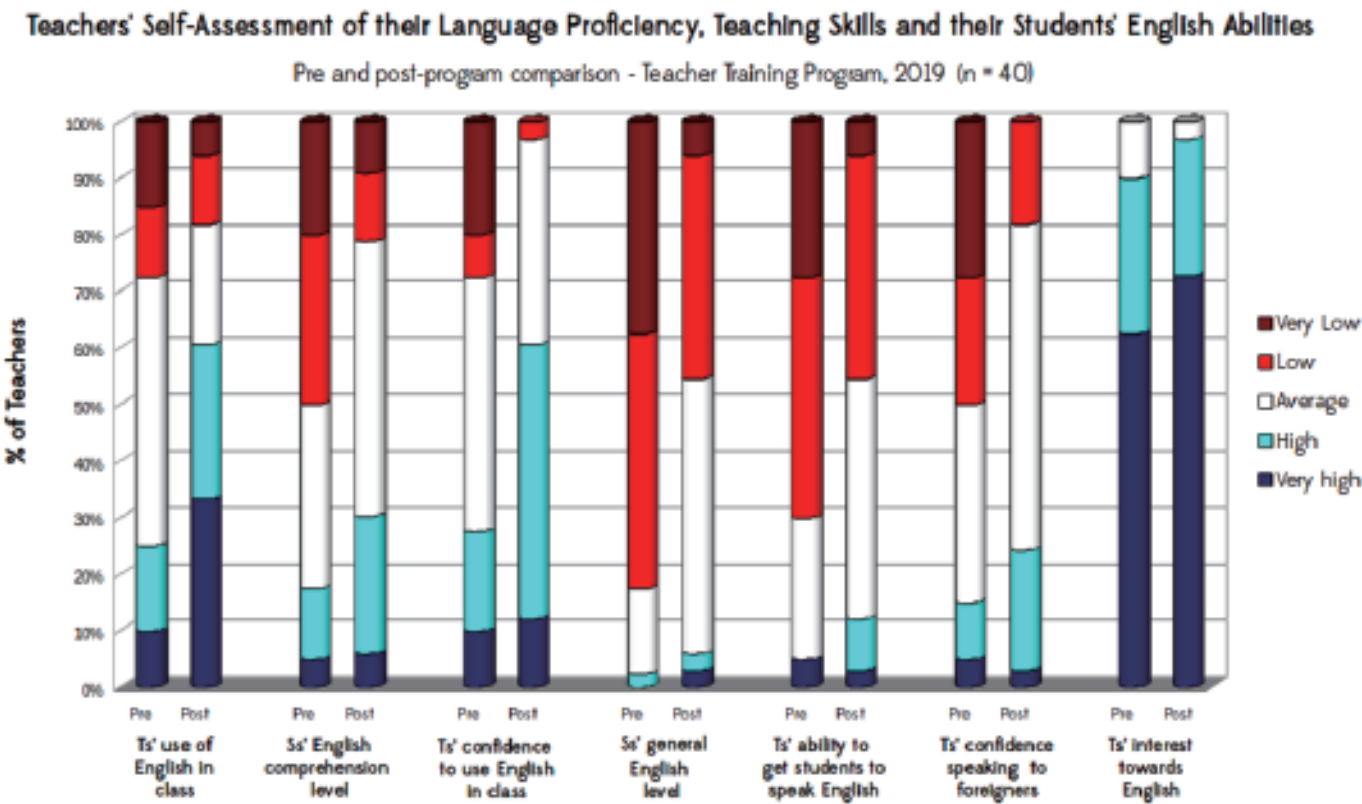
As can be seen from the Figure below (next page), a variety of questions were asked to a sample of trainees (n = 40) to assess the impact of the program on their confidence and ability to teach English. All seven metrics show a significant increase in the post-survey. Two of the most notable findings of the impact evaluation are that by the end of the program, 142% more teachers (Ts) were using English in class and 120% more teachers felt confident to speak English in class. These extremely significant increases highlight one of the many important goals of Stepping Stones' Teacher Training Program, which is to help teachers provide an enriched English learning environment for their students.

Another highlight of the impact evaluation is the proportion of teachers reporting an increase in their ability to get their students (Ss) to speak English in class. The number of teachers who thought this ability was 'average, high or very high' increased by 81% in the post-survey.

These overarching positive results are very encouraging and are also consistent with "pre-program" and "post-program" lesson observations conducted by our trainers at 3 program sites in Shanghai. These observations were designed to evaluate trainees' teaching abilities while teaching their regular English class, and evaluations were made using a scale from 1 to 5. According to our trainers, teachers across all schools started off (i.e., pre-program observations) with low scores on many metrics, including delivering their lessons (methodologies, vocabulary and grammar), using English in the classroom and getting students to participate fairly and to speak English. In comparison, post-program observations have showed increased results. Not only were trainees delivering their lessons mostly in English after the program, but they have also shown better abilities than before in engaging their students in the learning process and, most importantly, in getting them excited about learning and speaking English. At the same time, post-program observations highlighted students being able to understand and produce English orally



much better than before. Findings from the impact evaluations are extremely encouraging. They indicate that teachers under our Teacher Training Program are likely to become more confident to use English in class, thus feeling more prepared for engaging their students in their English classes.



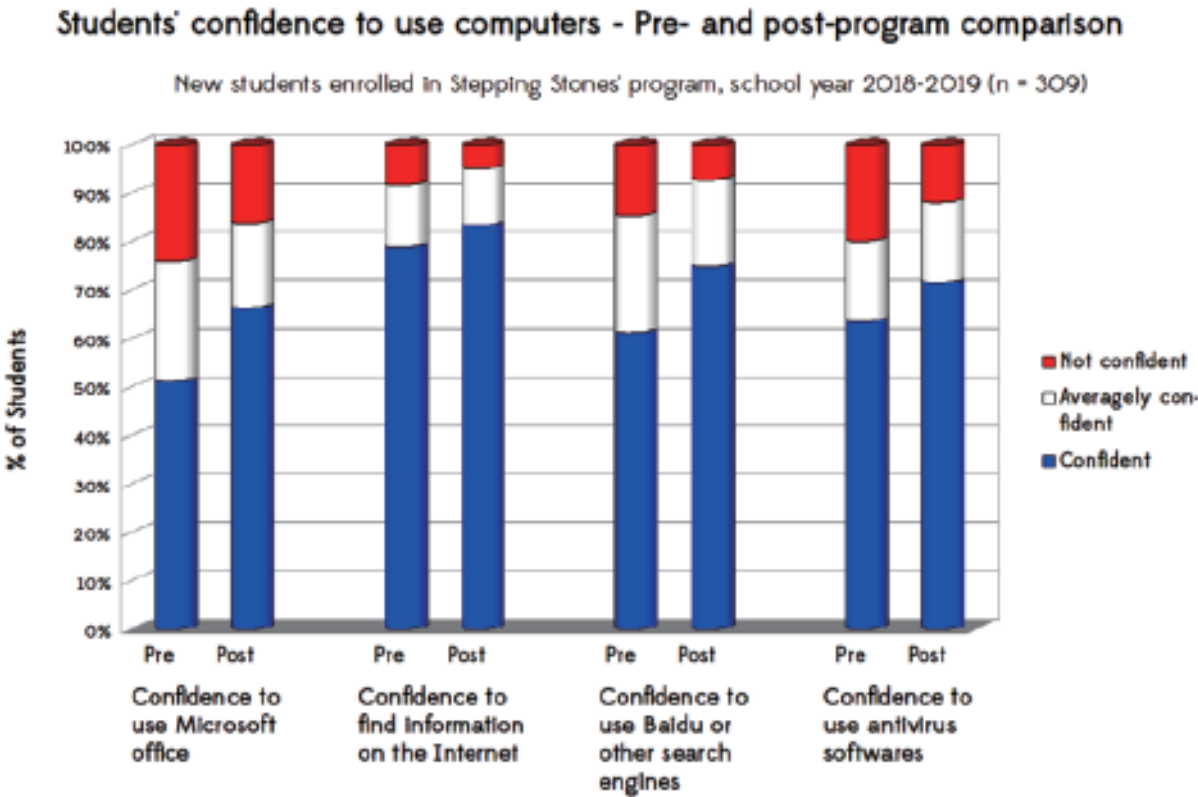
5

## Developing students’ confidence and proficiency in computers

To assess the value and impact of our Digital Literacy Program (Stepping Up) on students’ confidence and attitude towards computers, impact evaluations were conducted at four program sites in 2019, distributing ‘pre-program’ and ‘post-program’ survey questionnaires to a total of 338 beneficiaries.

One of the ways that we strive to help students become more efficient in using computers is to practice typing every week. As was the case in the previous years, we are pleased to report that the

number of students who thought their typing speed was either ‘average’ or ‘fast’ increased by 20% at the end of the program, from 67% to 81%. At the same time, students were asked if they like using computers. The data shows significant increase between the baseline and the follow-up surveys. Across the four teaching sites, the percentage of students liking using computers rose by 12%, from 67% to 81%.



The Figure above (previous page) compares the baseline and follow-up results of four questions concerning students' confidence in computers. Consistent with findings from previous years, the results indicate a significant rise between the pre-survey and the post-survey in the number of students feeling 'confident' in finding information on the Internet (5.7% increase), using Baidu or other search engines (22.2% increase), using antivirus softwares (12.8 % increase) and using Microsoft Office (29.3% increase). These increases highlight one of the many important goals of the program, which is to become more comfortable with using computers to gather information, solve problems, and communicate knowledge.



Stepping Stones is encouraged by the results of its 2019 impact evaluations, which suggest that our programs have continued to have a positive impact on the confidence, motivation and skills of our beneficiaries. We will continue to collect and analyze survey data to validate the impact of our programs.







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