

# STEPPING STONES

## ANNUAL REPORT



2013





## 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 by long-term Shanghai expatriate Corinne Hua 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 programme in the schools for migrants in Shanghai. We are proud to contribute to bridging the gap between the privileged and under-privileged 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 offer volunteers a meaningful way to give back.

Stepping Stones teaches English 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' programmes 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.

Stepping Stones has expanded its activities to address other needs, including the provision of eye care, as well as expanding the programme to rural areas outside of Shanghai. From 2012, Stepping Stones started an After-School Tuition Programme at community centres in Shanghai, providing volunteering opportunities for high school volunteers. In November 2013, Stepping Stones launched a weekend rural trip to Jiangsu, extending rural volunteering opportunities to volunteers only available on weekends.



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.

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.

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



## 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 2013 are Shanghai Soong Ching Ling Foundation, Charyou, Jiuqian Community Centre, INCLUDED, New Citizen Life Centre & Xintu Community Health Promotion Centre, Shanghai Young Bakers, Sunflower Education Programme for Migrants Children, Youdao, and Renewal Centre.



## 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.

## Stepping Stones Board of Directors

Stepping Stones Board of Directors has been chaired by **Nicolas Ly**, CFO of Veolia Water and long-term Stepping Stones volunteer, since September 2012. Investment consultant **Yu Rui** joined the Board in April 2012 and is the Board's Vice Chairman. **Huang He (Whooper Huang)** joined the board in the middle of 2012 and took over **Wang Sheng's (Alan)** role as Board Treasurer, while Wang Sheng continued to serve as Board Director. **Gao Tao (Winston Gao)**, Cooperation Project Supervisor at Shanghai Soong Ching Ling Foundation joined as Board Director in Summer 2013.

Continuing Board Directors were: Freelance translator and Stepping Stones volunteer **Ellen Loasby**, and **Zhang Ning (Nick)**, Chairman of Shanghai Charyou Youth Services.



Nicolas Ly  
Board Chair  
(from Sept. 2012)



Yu Rui  
Vice Chair  
(from Sept 2012)



Whooper Huang  
Board Treasurer



Ellen Loasby  
Board Director



Alan Wang  
Board Treasurer



Nick Zhang  
Board Director



Winston Gao  
Board Director

## Stepping Stones' Volunteers

In 2013, around 500 volunteers donated 3,724 lesson hours to 6,300 students. 300 volunteers taught English to around 3,500 students in 17 migrant schools and community centres, and 100 volunteers tutored 150 students each semester for 1,715 after-school hours. 42 volunteers participated in three of our rural tours and taught English to 1,500 local students, providing 182 lesson hours of service, and our corporate volunteering events covered 20 schools and community centres and offered 3,990 lesson hours. In addition, volunteers also helped us with such diverse activities as volunteer training, curriculum development, research, accounting, fundraising and photography. This amounts to RMB 1.54 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.



## Stepping Stones management team

Stepping Stones' office team was led by Executive Director and Founder Corinne Hua. Long-term Stepping Stones volunteer Karen Chow took over the Training Manager role from Philip Dy in January 2013, while Philip took up the position of Project Manager until July when he left for his MPA degree at Harvard. After Philip left, Karen stepped into the Programme Manager role.

The English Teaching Programme was coordinated at the beginning of the year by Huang Guan. Tara Zou took over the Programme Coordinator role in August 2013 when Guan went to Britain for higher education. Youjia Li joined the team in August and specialized in coordinating the After-School English Tuition Programme, while Tara is in charge of coordinating the Classroom Teaching Programme.

Eva Hua joined the team in January 2013 as Administrative Officer.

Sebastien Carrier became our eighth team member in November, taking on an operational role.



Stepping Stones' office staff from back left to front right: Sebastien Carrier, Corinne Hua, Eva Hua, Oliver Pointer, Tara Zou, Gloria Han, Karen Chow, Youjia Li, December 2013

## 2013 Activities

### English Teaching Programme

In 2013, Stepping Stones had 229 volunteers teaching around 3,703 migrant students in the following schools and community centres each week (teaching a total of 3,287 English lessons in the year):

### Classroom Teaching Programme (CTP)

Our original CTP continued at Huabo Lixing Hang School (both the Jiwang and Huacao campuses), Huahong School, INCLUDED Community Centre, Wenbo School, Zhenxing School (Minhang District); Dabieshan School, New Citizen Life Centre, Tangsi School, Wanliao School (Pudong District); East Red School (Qingpu District), Dantu Road School, New Citizen Life Centre (Hongkou District), Jiuqian Community Centre and Youdao Centre at Panlong (Baoshan District); Renewal Centre & Shanghai Young Bakers (Zhabei District).

Our programme at Yangdong School came to an end, but we launched two new teaching programmes in Dantu Road School in Hongkou District and Zhenxing School in Minhang District. Meanwhile, we reconnected with Puguang School in Pudong District and started a new teaching programme there with volunteers from Shanghai American School.



## After School Tuition Programme (ASP)

The ASP continued to thrive as more young volunteers, mostly international high school students, joined to provide small group tuition to migrant children on weekend. We continued to cooperate with Xupu Village (Minhang District) and two New Citizen Life Centres in Hongkou District and Sumin Village (Minhang District), while expanding our partnership with Mulin Community Centre in Pudong District. To ensure good results, Stepping Stones has developed a set of worksheets for tuition sessions and a special training course for ASP volunteers.



## Summer Programme

During the summer, 144 dedicated Stepping Stones volunteers braved the heat and rain to deliver 342 free English classes to 277 students in 9 community centres in different parts of Shanghai.

## Training and Curriculum

Stepping Stones continued to support its volunteers through training, workshops and social events. Curriculum support for the summer programmes 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 Trips

In 2013, Stepping Stones organised three rural trips, with 42 volunteers teaching 182 lessons to 1,500 local children. In addition to two week-long rural trips to Henan, we also organised our first weekend trip to Jiangdu (Jiangsu Province) in November.



## I Care programme

In partnership with Ai'Er Hospital, Stepping Stones provided eyesight screening to 1,519 students, and eye care classes to 1,600 students with the help of 40 volunteers. 313 students received free spectacles, and 2 students had free surgeries to correct a squint. Thank you to the Australian Chamber of Commerce, Wing Hang Bank, Shanghai United International School Gubei Campus and other generous donors.

## 2013 Corporate & School Partnerships

### Corporate programme partners

Stepping Stones has long term partnerships with Hogan Lovells, PwC and Walmart, whose staff volunteer regularly in Stepping Stones' Classroom Teaching Programme in Shanghai.



### Corporate Events

Stepping Stones arranged a one day volunteering event for visitors from the University of Illinois in January 2013, and for a half day visit to a migrant kindergarten for visitors from UK company TPP in September. Leaders' Quest brought visitors from Oxford University Press to meet Stepping Stones students at Zhenxing School on 14<sup>th</sup> October, and Stepping Stones organised for visitors from TPP to deliver English lessons other students the same school on 21<sup>st</sup> October.



### School & University partnerships

International students with CIEE (Council on International Educational Exchange), NYU in Shanghai and University of California in Shanghai volunteered regularly in our Classroom Teaching Programme. Our After-School Programme has provided volunteering opportunities for students at international schools such as Jincui High School, Shanghai High School International Division and SUIS. And students studying with educational service providers such as CYPA, New Pathways and TEAN (The Educational Abroad Network) volunteered during our summer programmes. In addition, our founder Corinne Hua gave talks to students at Fudan University, I.E. Business School and NYU University in Shanghai.

## 2013 Other Activities

### **Migrant Children go bowling with Regal International East Asia Hotel managers**

On 15<sup>th</sup> March, 20 Stepping Stones students had fun when they went bowling at the Regal Hotel in Shanghai with their managers, who were visiting Shanghai from all over China (including Hong Kong).



### **Migrant Children sing carols at German Chamber Christmas party**

A group of grade 5 students from Zhenxing Primary School charmed guests attending the Christmas party hosted by the German Chamber of Commerce's partners programme.



### **A Little Bit of Jazz**

Shanghai Voices International Choir & Shanghai Community Band performed two fundraising concerts at the China Welfare Institute Children's Palace to raise funds for Stepping Stones. "A Little Bit of Jazz" in March and "The Spirit of Rhythm" in November between them raised RMB 49,000 for Stepping Stones.

### **Charity e-cards**

With the great help of volunteer Melody Lai, Stepping Stones launched its new charity e-card service to allow people to donate to Stepping Stones or buy in-kind gifts by sending customised greetings cards from Stepping Stones website.



## Stepping Stones' Impact



Stepping Stones conducted several impact evaluation studies in 2013 to measure the impact of its programmes on students' confidence and interest in English.

The first study was on the After School Tuition Programme (ASP) and took place over the course of the Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 semesters, measuring changes in pre-survey and post-survey responses. **The percentage of students who considered English their favourite subject increased from 11.8% in Fall 2012 to 29.4% in Spring 2013. Along with this increase, those who were very confident completing their English homework correctly rose from 35.3% to a notable 58.8%!**

Stepping Stones' second study on the ASP surveyed the students before and after the Fall 2013 semester programme. We are pleased to report continued positive impact on students' English education! **After one semester of English tuition with our volunteers, the number of these students finding English difficult significantly decreased from 49% to 29%. 80% of students, up from an initial 64%, reported being very confident in completing their English homework.**

Stepping Stones also conducted an impact report on the Summer 2013 programme to determine its success. The most encouraging results found in the report are towards students' confidence in understanding English and using it with foreigners. This is very positive for the Stepping Stones programme because we believe that exposing students to fluent speakers of English helps increase students' confidence and self-esteem.

Lastly, Stepping Stones has completed in 2013 a longitudinal study of its Classroom Teaching Programme. The study compared over a three-year period the responses of the same students to questions pertaining to their interest and confidence in English. Study results showed a **positive increase from 53% to 67% in confidence towards completing English homework and an increase from 43 to 48% in confidence towards improving English grades.** The study also highlighted a positive increase in students' opinions of English as a class subject and a decrease in the overall difficulty of the subject.

Stepping Stones is encouraged by these positive results and will continue to collect and analyze survey data to validate the impact of its programmes. 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.”*

*“My time as an intern at Stepping Stones provided me with the opportunity to work directly with the migrant population in Shanghai. Through this experience I learned what it really meant to add a meaningful contribution to underprivileged children’s education. I feel empowered going forward in my own life to continue making this type of impact in the world.”*



Ned Dana



Rebecca Snider

*“Volunteering at Stepping Stones gave me insights into the migrant population that I would never have gained from studying China in my graduate programme. I have developed a deeper and more nuanced understanding of what is needed to make a significant difference in the lives of the migrant children.”*

## Volunteer Feedback Survey

Our volunteer feedback survey (Fall 2013) showed continued high overall satisfaction with Stepping Stones' programmes. In our Classroom Teaching Programme (CTP), 94% of our volunteers were highly satisfied regarding interaction with other volunteers and 75% were highly satisfied regarding their interaction with Stepping Stones' staff. Interaction with co-teachers and with children was also highly satisfactory (84% and 91% respectively) as was the teaching experience itself (91%). We are delighted that 95% of our volunteers considered their overall experience positive!

Our After School Programme (ASP) has also proven satisfactory to volunteers. Here interaction with other volunteers reached a level of 90% satisfaction and with our staff 70%. Satisfaction regarding the interaction with the children was at 85% while teaching itself was 80% satisfactory. Overall satisfaction with the programme was at 90%. 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 us with training rooms, PAAT consulting for providing pro bono accounting services, Epsilon for donating their e-marketing system, Big Bamboo for providing us with free coffee mornings and end of term parties for our volunteers, De Refter for providing post-trip gatherings for our rural tours, O'Melveny & Myers for providing pro bono legal services 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 RMB470,220! This generous and sustained support significantly reduces our pressure on the fundraising front.



## Financial Situation

In 2013, Stepping Stones' revenue was RMB 1,343,589.74, and expenses were RMB 1,112,397.80 making a net gain of RMB 231,191.94 The opening balance was RMB 273,548.43 and the closing balance was RMB 504,740.37

This includes all foreign currency revenue and expenses at the exchange rate at the year end.

### Breakdown of Revenue:

<i>Funding Source</i>	<i>RMB</i>
Grant	614,850.73
Corporate donations	229,140.56
Private donations	178,352.80
Charity Concert & Gala (not including donations)	63,450.00
Rural volunteering	13,989.96
Merchandise sales	8,066.00
Service fees (corporate events)	235,739.69
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>1,343,589.74</b>

Note: This summary of donations does not include the value of many significant in-kind and pro bono donations (see page 20), and the huge value of donated volunteer time (see page 8)

Breakdown of expenditure:

<i>Expenses</i>	<i>RMB</i>
Management costs	906,811.20
Meals	40,647.23
Other Third Party	30,511.20
Printing	10,035.00
Hotel	11,759.00
Teaching Material	31,818.56
Labor	5,800.00
Transportation	2,092.22
Finance Expense (bank charges minus interest, exchange rate gain/loss)	12,923.39
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>1,112,397.80</b>

Stepping Stones' accounts are audited annually by an independent accountant and the audit is available on the website.



## Plans for 2014

In 2014, Stepping Stones plans to continue to grow organically the core Classroom Teaching, After School & Summer Programmes, and increase the number of rural tours from 3 in 2013 to 5 or 6 in 2014. We also plan to start an exciting new project in collaboration with Chiheng Foundation, to provide English lessons to children in rural China through video link.

We plan to cover two more new schools with our I Care programme, and hope also to be able to return to two schools that we already covered in the past to do a follow up check of the children's eyesight. We also plan to increase our visibility by expanding our social media activities.

