



**Trinh**  
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AUSTRALIA



## Needs Assessment on Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) Education in Vietnam

As part of our five year partnership with MCNV (Medical Committee Netherlands – Vietnam) a 3 month research project into the needs for SALT education in Vietnam has been completed. The needs assessment team gathered data from a cross-section of stakeholders: clients and families, clinicians, managers, education personnel, Ministry officials and graduates from speech therapy training programs. Over 3 weeks of data collection, 81 focus groups were interviewed across 8 Provinces in Vietnam and all 65 graduates from UPNT courses were invited to complete a written survey. The participants were asked about the current situation of SALT services and training in Vietnam and their visions for the future of the profession.

The project team included Technical Consultants in Research: Emily Armstrong (visiting Vietnam in December) and Seth Koster (long-term volunteer based in Danang). TFA trained Interpreters Ngô Y Sa, Dr Cao Bích Thủy, Trần Thị Hà My and Lê Thùy Nhung have been

critical to the project's progress. The project is being managed by Dr Phạm Dũng (Country Director, MCNV) and Mrs Nguyễn Thị Thanh Thủy (Program Manager, MCNV).

The research will provide documented evidence about speech and language therapy needs in Vietnam. The research will be used to advocate for strategies to develop sustainable, high-quality human resources and services to improve the quality of life for people with communication and swallowing disabilities. Emerging key findings focus on linking research, training and service delivery. The results of this research will be used to support the development of a proposal to Vietnamese Government Ministries for permission to run Bachelor and Master level SALT training in Vietnamese Universities.

A quote from a client gives voice to some key findings:

*"I hope that every humanitarian organisation can help so that we are supported with financial aspects so that we feel secure in our treatment. But not only financial, also technical aspects. I still worry that it (stroke) will come back, when it comes back, it will be worse. I really expect that the organizations like MCNV of Netherlands and organisations from Australia can help to support the scientific capacity to treat and cure people, that is the first point: we need research capacities to help improve life quality.*

*Every human being who is born wants to be healthy; no one wants to be like this. In the days in the hospital, I cannot swallow, cannot speak, it was so hard for me. We (my family and I) were frightened.*

*If international science, together with Viet Nam's science, can train people to help to develop and increase Viet Nam's scientific foundation in this area ... everyone in Viet Nam will treasure that."*

Client in a provincial area,  
December 2017

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## Reflecting on Achievements in 2017



### 1. Volunteers

2017 began with a mix of 5 Australian lecturers and Vietnamese speech therapists teaching the 3<sup>rd</sup> Term of the Paediatric Speech Therapy Course at Pham Ngoc Thac University of Medicine. This was followed by a further 11 volunteers from Australia and USA providing supervision for the final 4<sup>th</sup> Term clinical block, with some also providing mentoring and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions during their time in Vietnam. The group of 32 students graduated in September so there are now 65 qualified Vietnamese speech therapists (SLTs) working throughout the country; and more than 20 hospitals and early intervention centres with qualified SLTs around the country.

In March a new Scope Global volunteer Ms Sarah Day commenced as the Clinical Coordinator and played a critical lead role in ensuring the success of the Paediatric Speech Therapy Course. On the completion of the course Sarah met with SLTs across Vietnam to provide mentoring support and assisted them to develop their own professional development plan. Their goals are wide and varied but the *Beyond Borders Skype Mentoring Program* Sarah worked on, which will be launched in 2018, should further support their needs. Sarah also initiated an Early Language Development Special Interest Group through the Speech Therapy Club. We are looking forward to Sarah returning to Vietnam to take up her Scope Global volunteer posting in Danang.

Averil Ivey completed her volunteer placement in August at the Center for Special Education and Training Research in Hanoi as part of the Australian Volunteers for International Development (AVID) program. Apart from her work with Vietnamese special education teachers and leading workshops and mentoring sessions to support treatment of children with

speech and language difficulties, Averil developed a Vietnamese Language Screener, which has been normed and reliability tested, pending publication in early 2018. This has been a huge project that will be a lasting legacy of Averil's time in Vietnam and a wonderful resource for Vietnamese speech therapy.

Seth Koster is an American volunteer speech pathologist working for TFA in Danang. As well as assisting with the MCNV needs assessment project Seth has been working with the Danang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy. He is providing focused clinical mentoring to Vietnamese speech therapists, that includes individualised goals and improvement plans. Seth is also conducting continuing education short courses, which are open to hospital therapists and students.

Recent CPD sessions were provided by volunteers Bianca Jackson at Hanoi Rehabilitation Hospital and Tori Frost at Dong Nai Hospital. Further details on these will be posted on Facebook shortly.



## 2. Establishing Further Speech Therapy Training Courses

As previously reported TFA have been working with the Medical Committee Netherlands-Vietnam (MCNV) providing technical advice and support for new masters and bachelor courses at universities in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Danang, Hai Duong and Hue. A formal Memorandum of Understanding and a contract has been signed for the first year of this five year project. As mentioned the needs assessment has begun. Professor Lindy McAllister and Emily Armstrong presented at the MCNV workshop in HCMC on '*Development of a training framework for a speech and language therapy course at Masters degree level in Vietnam*'. The results from this and the research will accompany a formal submission to the Ministry of Education and Training seeking approval of a masters course at the University of Medicine and Pharmacy in Ho Chi Minh City, which will adopt the curriculum developed with TFA support.

We have also been working with universities and organisations in addition to those being targeted in the MCNV project. Mentoring and support has been provided to the Vietnamese SLTs in Hue, to develop a sustainable delivery model, and to develop critically needed educational materials and clinical resources, at the same time supporting the expansion of a Speech Therapy Clinic in Hue to promote skills transfer and participation. Similarly, we are supporting speech therapy education and training for existing health professionals and

assistance to develop and establish a two year course in Danang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy (DUMTP). Two DUMTP staff participated in the paediatric speech therapy course, which will help to consolidate the development of services and training.



### 3. Achievements of Vietnamese Speech Language Therapists

Mr Le Khanh Dien from An Binh Hospital, HCMC was awarded a scholarship from TFA and University of Newcastle to undertake a research masters degree. Mr Dien commenced his studies in December 2016. Mr Dien also presented papers at the 2017 Speech Pathology Australia Conference.

In May, UPNT celebrated the incredible work of Speech Therapists across Vietnam, by hosting a scientific conference for local graduates to present about their research projects or resource development happening in their local workplaces. Mr Dien and Ms Le Thi Thanh Xuan were two of the presenters.

Dr Le Van Cuong and Ms Truong Thanh Loan presented papers at the Asia Pacific Conference of Speech, Language and Hearing in September.

Dr Cao Bich Thuy is studying at the University of Tartu, Estonia to gain her PhD through an Edushare Scholarship and Ms Do Thi Hien is studying to gain her Masters at the University of Birmingham through a Chevening Scholarship.

Ms Tran Thi Anh Thu and Mr Nguyen Quang Binh continue to carry on with the successful implementation of the stroke rehabilitation group at An Binh Hospital, HCMC.

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# 2018 off to a flying start!

## 1. TFA - Handicap International Collaboration

TFA are very pleased to announce the signing of a formal collaboration agreement with the Belgian Organisation, **Handicap International** (HI) who have been working in Vietnam for 25 years. TFA have agreed to support HI with their current **USAID funded Rehabilitation project**, by assisting in the development of speech therapy services in their partner hospitals. TFA will source and support speech therapy volunteer placements in various sites, as well as provide in country training and assistance in the development of resources and guidelines for the new speech therapy services. Please refer to our website and social media for more information about these volunteer placements.

## 2. TFA awarded Speech Pathology Australia Grant

In a further exciting development TFA have been awarded a **2017 Majority World Countries and Developing Communities Grant from Speech Pathology Australia** for the support and delivery of an integrated e-mentoring program for speech therapy graduates in Vietnam, including the provision of a framework, structure and set of tools for volunteer mentoring clinicians. TFA are very grateful to SPA for enabling this exciting initiative to be implemented. TFA will be looking for volunteer mentors in the very near future, please watch out for further information.

We would also like to acknowledge the exemplary work done by our staff in Vietnam Ms Quyen Pham (to September) and Ms Ashley Le (to June). Likewise, the team of TFA interpreters and translators supporting all of our volunteers during their time in Vietnam.

Everyone at TFA wish all our volunteers and supporters a very Happy New Year. We look forward to a very productive 2018 in Vietnam!

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## New Baby



Another TFA baby arrived in 2017 when Merran (our Project Officer Volunteering) and her husband welcomed their baby Rose on 12 October. Our congratulations to them on her safe arrival.

We would also like to thank Jenna Butterworth who has been filling in for Merran for the past 3 months. Jenna is an experienced TFA volunteer based in Switzerland and we are delighted with how quickly she has taken up the role - and dealt with a range of time zones to work with us.



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Trinh Foundation Australia is proud to be a partner for Project J594 Vietnam Speech-Language Program with Global Development Group. GDG (ABN 57 102 400 993), an Australian DFAT approved Non-Government Organisation [NGO] carrying out quality humanitarian projects with approved Partners

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