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Supporting speech therapy in Vietnam

It is estimated that almost 16% of the 94 million population of Vietnam (WHO, 2018) have a disability and nearly 30% of these people have functional limitations in relation to hearing, cognition and communication. This equates to about 15 million Vietnamese people who are living with a disability, at least 4.5 million of whom have communication and swallowing disabilities, as a result of the legacy of defoliants from the war, poor maternal and child health and nutrition. The incidence of these disabilities is not declining. (Needs Assessment on Speech and Language Therapy Education in Viet Nam, 2018).

As social beings, we have a basic human need to be able to communicate with each other. Trinh Foundation Australia (TFA) is a voluntary, non-profit non-government organisation, established in Australia in 2009. We are committed to improving the quality of life of Vietnamese people with communication and swallowing disorders. We work with our Vietnamese partners to support the emerging speech therapy profession in Vietnam. TFA is independent and does not have any political or religious affiliation.

Speech therapists are trained to support people of all ages across all areas of speech therapy practice and can treat people with a wide range of difficulties, including: adults who have had strokes, brain injuries and cancer; children with autism spectrum disorders, syndromes, cleft lip and palate, and developmental delays; people with voice disorders, Parkinson’s Disease, cerebral palsy and stuttering.

Our approach is focused on capacity building and skills sharing to promote sustainability and independence of the emerging speech therapy profession in Vietnam. Despite the enormous need for speech therapy in Vietnam, until 2010 there were no comprehensive or fulltime training courses for speech therapists. With our Vietnamese partners TFA instigated, developed and supported Vietnam’s first ever, two year postgraduate speech therapy training course. The first group of 18 generalist Vietnamese Speech Therapists graduated from University of Medicine Pham Ngoc Thach (UPNT) in Ho Chi Minh City in September 2012, followed by the second cohort of 15 in October 2014. Between September 2016 and May 2017 TFA supported a postgraduate paediatric speech therapy course at UPNT resulting in a further 32 graduates.

In 2017/18 UPNT independently conducted another paediatric speech therapy course, with 45 graduates, implementing TFA’s train the trainer model. Further courses are underway in 2018. Consequently the number of generalist and paediatric speech therapists will continue to increase. There are now Vietnamese speech therapists (SLTs) working throughout the country, ensuring that more Vietnamese people can find the help they need to manage communication and swallowing difficulties.

Since 2010, up to 110 volunteer speech pathologists and academics on 141 occasions have contributed over 1,825 days of specialist expertise in teaching, clinical education and...
mentoring with our programs in Vietnam. In addition, 58 different interpreters have completed more than 7,330 interpreting hours and 48 translators have translated almost 1.5 million words.

Demand for speech therapy in Vietnam is growing as awareness about speech language therapy increases, the number of services and qualified therapists grows and evidence of successful treatment becomes more widely known. Services are reporting a minimum 300% annual growth in demand particularly for paediatric and rehabilitation speech therapy.

With Vietnamese partner organisations TFA’s work is expanding into new areas. Our partnership with Medical Committee Netherlands Vietnam (MCNV) will result in master and bachelor courses at four universities by 2021 and, through our work with Humanity & Inclusion (HI) (formerly Handicap International), the placement of specialist volunteers in selected hospitals to provide training, mentoring and develop resources and service guidelines to support clinical practice.

“Communication is the most fundamental of human capacities.

People need to be able to communicate to fulfil their social, educational, emotional and vocational potential. Everybody has the potential to communicate.”

International Communication Project

Mission and Goals

TFA’s mission is to support Vietnamese people to develop skills in the management of communication and swallowing disorders. We achieve this working with partners to establish the speech therapy profession in Vietnam – providing education and training, clinical expertise, mentoring and resources. In the long term, our work will make sustainable change to improve the quality of life of many people with communication and swallowing disorders throughout Vietnam and build local capacity to develop the profession without external assistance.

Our goals are:

1. To improve the quality of life of the many Vietnamese children and adults who suffer from communication and swallowing disorders.
2. To raise awareness in Vietnam of Speech and Language Therapy as a profession.
3. To provide the knowledge, clinical skills and funding support to establish formal educational courses in Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) in Vietnam.

The TFA Strategic Plan 2018-2020 has objectives and strategies in four key result areas: Vietnam Operations; Volunteers; Communication and Strengthening our Organisation. TFA Directors volunteer their time and skills so each Director takes responsibility for driving specific projects and outcomes, which focuses our efforts and distributes our activities according to each member’s expertise.

This report addresses our progress against our current priorities, which are to:

- Continue to support education and training courses in SALT in Vietnam, including formal university programs, continuing professional development and mentoring.
- Assist the Vietnamese people to develop and implement a four year bachelor's
course in speech and language therapy, through our partnership with MCNV.

- Support the development of speech therapy units in hospitals and schools across Vietnam.
- Develop and assist in funding clinical resources for practitioners, parents and carers and make them accessible.
- Raise funds to train and supply highly skilled interpreters and translators to support our programs.

**Activities and Outcomes 2018**

**Highlights**

- Successful completion of 10 years work resulting in training of 65 qualified Vietnamese speech therapists (33 generalists; 32 paediatric specialists)
- Graduation of 32 paediatric speech therapists, including seven recipients of TFA scholarships to students from outside HCMC (September 2017)
- New strategic partnerships with Medical Committee Netherlands Vietnam (MCNV) and Humanity & Inclusion (HI) confirm TFA as a recognised leader in SALT development in Vietnam
- Five year Memorandum of Understanding (2017-2022) signed with MCNV for SALT in Vietnam Project- Comprehensive needs assessment research project completed; curriculum development workshops held with stakeholders to develop Master in SALT and Bachelor level curricula
- Memorandum of Understanding signed by the University of Sydney, University of Medicine and Pharmacy (Ho Chi Minh City), MCNV and TFA to provide academic support for course development and delivery
- Two year Collaboration Agreement (2018-2020) signed with HI to source volunteers to work in selected hospitals in Vietnam, provide training and clinical resources- 3 volunteers placed in various sites in HCMC, Hue and Hanoi
- *Beyond Borders Skype mentoring pilot project* launched (May 2018), supported by Speech Pathology Australia grant, with 21 participating triplet groups - Vietnamese SLT, Australian speech pathologist mentor, translator/interpreter
- Through partnership with Australian Volunteers International (AVI) a new fulltime in-country program coordinator appointed in Da Nang
- Continued collaboration with University of Newcastle and support from their students producing resources and visiting Vietnam
- Supported 3 volunteers who visited clinic sites throughout Vietnam
- Speech Therapy Club is the major provider of continuing professional development
- Website further improved with useful resources added and accessible in Vietnamese and English
- Increased social media profile through Twitter and Facebook in Vietnam and Australia

The qualified Vietnamese SLTs are a catalyst for change and expansion of the profession as they develop and promote their services and their professionalism throughout the country. This is a major step towards sustainability and ownership of speech language services in Vietnam.

**Vietnam Operations**

This key result area encompasses the major strategies and projects we are undertaking in Vietnam with our Vietnamese partners. A key driver is to build capacity and develop sustainability among Vietnamese SLTs and to promote and support speech therapy training and services throughout the country.

TFA is a recognised specialist in the development of speech and language therapy (SALT) training and services in Vietnam and we are on track to achieving our core aims as the speech therapy profession becomes established in Vietnam. Since 2010 we have led and facilitated the training and graduation of 65 Vietnamese speech therapists, including 32 paediatric speech therapists. Further training courses are being managed independently by Pham Ngoc Thach...
University of Medicine in Ho Chi Minh City without TFA direct input but implementing TFA’s training model. Courses managed by other universities are also being implemented and the number of qualified Vietnamese SLTs will continue to grow.

Qualified Vietnamese SLTs are critical to the success of the next phase of development and we are delighted that they are actively providing training, developing services and programs in their local areas and workplaces and are committed to their personal professional development as well as promoting speech therapy to their colleagues and the community as whole.

This was clearly demonstrated by the involvement of Vietnamese SLTs in the paediatric speech therapy courses being run by UPNT, providing lectures, clinical supervision and support to the students. Courses are now being run without TFA involvement, which is a significant step in the development of SALT services in Vietnam and confirms that we are achieving our goals to support the future capacity and sustainability for the profession within Vietnam.

Some specific achievements of Vietnamese SLTs during 2017/18 include:

- Vietnam was represented by a number of SLTs at the Asia Pacific Conference on Speech, Language and Hearing at the Narita International University of Health and Welfare, Japan in September 2017. At the conference of over 450 delegates:
  - Dr Le Van Cuong presented his first oral seminar in English, *Training for speech therapists to use GRBAS scale to assess voice quality in Viet Nam*
  - Ms Truong Thanh Loan gave a poster presentation on *A guide for mentally retarded children to articulate vowels, consonants and single words*
  - Ms Ben Pham presented two seminars - *Validation of the Intelligibility in Context Scale with preschool children in Ha Noi, Viet Nam*; and *Acquisition of consonants, vowels and tone by children in northern Viet Nam*. Ms Ben has completed her PhD at Charles Sturt University and has finalised testing of the Vietnamese Speech Assessment in Northern Vietnam, for which she received a TFA development grant in 2016.
- Mr Dien (An Binh Hospital, HCMC) continued his postgraduate research degree, which has been converted to a PhD program due to the high quality of Mr Dien’s work. The University of Newcastle has extended Mr Dien’s scholarship for his PhD candidacy.
- Mr Dien presented papers at the 2018 Speech Pathology Australia Conference in Adelaide and along with Ms Ben worked with TFA on the conference stall.
- Increasing involvement in mentoring and support to speech therapy and other professional colleagues, which is building clinical supervision skills and expanding the local knowledge and expertise of Vietnamese speech therapists.

**New Partnerships**

This year has seen exciting developments with new partnerships and projects implemented, while at the same time maintaining our existing relationships with long term partners, primarily in HCMC and Da Nang.

**Medical Committee Netherlands-Vietnam – Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) in Vietnam project**

In late 2016 TFA began discussions with the Medical Committee Netherlands-Vietnam (MCNV) which has received USAID funding to establish further speech therapy training courses in Vietnam. This five year project involves TFA providing technical advice and support for master and bachelor courses at universities in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Da Nang, Hai Duong and Hue.
In July 2017 TFA Directors met in Sydney with Dr Pham Dung, Country Director for MCNV; Ms Tran Quynh Trang, Program Coordinator, MCNV; Ms Pham Thi Cam Hung, Head of Rehabilitation Department and Lecturer at Hai Duong Medical and Technical University, and Ms Le Thanh Van, Head of Rehabilitation Department, Ho Chi Minh City University of Medicine and Pharmacy to discuss the scope, terms and budget for the project and develop mutual understanding of the timelines and personnel needs.

A five year Memorandum of Understanding and a contract for the first year of the project were signed to commence on 1 October 2017. The contract states that the aim of the project is “to set up professional pre-service training in SALT (speech language therapy) in Vietnam via building capacity in the SALT training field at Master and Bachelor levels to contribute positive changes in comprehensive rehabilitation intervention for the improvement of quality of life and inclusion of people in need of SALT in Vietnam”.

The activities for the first year comprised:

- a needs assessment research project
- workshops with key stakeholders to develop a SALT training framework and to develop subject outlines for the Master degree
- writing of content for the proposal to the Ministry of Education and Training seeking approval to commence a Masters in SALT
- identifying and commissioning Australian academics and speech pathologists to write syllabus content, who will eventually be lecturers in specific SALT subjects
- writing of the syllabus and course content for the SALT Master course.

The project was formally launched on 4 April 2018 with a one-day workshop in HCMC attended by government officials, university representatives, aid agencies and non-government organisations. Director Dr Sally Hewat represented TFA and delivered a very well-received presentation on *Speech and Language Therapy Training and Professional Standards: an international review*.

**Needs assessment**

TFA contracted a consultant and former TFA volunteer, Ms Emily Armstrong, to conduct the needs assessment which included quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis to obtain stakeholder and community advice on the needs and demands for SALT education and services in Vietnam. Ms Armstrong was supported by Mr Seth Koster, a TFA volunteer based in Da Nang. During the project Ms Armstrong:

- Completed a desktop review of Vietnamese policy and documents and existing published research on SALT in Vietnam
- Visited 8 provinces in Vietnam and conducted 73 focus group interviews with a total of 180 stakeholders to gather the evidence base through structured qualitative research interviews. Participants included government officials, educators, academics, SALT and other health professionals, patients, parents and carers
- Administered an online questionnaire for the quantitative phase of the project, to gather information from Vietnamese speech therapists who completed training provided by TFA in partnership with the University of Medicine Pham Ngoc Thach (Ho Chi Minh City) (UPNT)
A comprehensive report, Needs Assessment on Speech and Language Therapy Education in Vietnam, October 2017 – January 2018, was submitted to MCNV on 31 January 2018. The report provides detailed qualitative and quantitative evidence of the need and demand for SALT education and training and services throughout Vietnam. The research findings confirm that there is a high level of need, demand and expectation for the benefits and needs for SALT in Vietnam.

The needs assessment report met its objectives to provide the supporting documentation for submission to the Ministry of Education & Training to seek approval for a masters course at the University of Medicine and Pharmacy in Ho Chi Minh City (UMP). Graduates of the masters course will be qualified to teach and manage future bachelor courses proposed at Ho Chi Minh City (UMP), Hanoi, Hue and Hai Duong.

The Vietnam Ministry of Health has recommended that the report be published in relevant journals in Vietnam. The research provides validated data for future research and publication and consolidates the current understanding of SALT in Vietnam. TFA supports publication of the report and further analysis and discussion of the findings and recommendations in professional journals and at conferences in Vietnam and elsewhere.

**Workshops**

TFA appointed Director Professor Lindy McAllister as the technical consultant for this part of the project due to her knowledge and expertise as an academic at the University of Sydney and her extensive work in curriculum development, teaching and supervision of TFA’s courses in Vietnam.

Professor McAllister designed and facilitated a number of workshops to develop the course structure and processes for the education components of the project. These comprised a workshop in HCMC in December 2017 to develop the training framework for a SALT Master course; and a workshop in HCMC in January 2018 to develop the Master course subject outlines. Participants included government officials, academics, Vietnamese SLTs and other health professionals.

In July 2018 UMP nominated Professor McAllister as the team leader for the Master course program writing team, working with UMP academics to finalise the training framework and syllabus outline for submission to the Ministry of Education and Training. The submission was presented to the Ministry in November 2018 and it is hoped that the Ministry will approve the course for it to commence at UMP in April 2019.

**Curriculum development and syllabus content**

TFA had prepared a SALT curriculum in collaboration with Australian and Vietnamese academics in 2010-2014, which is the basis for the curriculum framework for the proposed Master and Bachelor courses. However preparation of syllabus content – lecture notes, clinical practice exercises, resource lists and assessment protocols are required as part of the approval process.

In July 2017 TFA facilitated negotiation of a Memorandum of Understanding between the University of Sydney, MCNV, TFA and UMP. The three year MOU provides for the participation of University of Sydney academics in writing syllabus content and ultimately lecturing and undertaking clinical supervision for the Master course.

Since February 2018 Professor McAllister has worked with 15 Australian academics from the Universities of Sydney, Newcastle, Melbourne and the Australian Catholic University (Melbourne) to prepare the syllabus, write lecture notes, support materials and reading lists for each subject, all of which will be translated into Vietnamese.

The identified outcomes will be a Master course in SALT that is comparable with international standards and that meets the legal management requirements and training needs of Vietnam. Participants in the Master course are intended to become the leaders of Bachelor courses proposed to be run through the Rehabilitation Departments.
of Universities in HCMC, Hanoi, Hai Duong and Hue.

IN 2018-19 TFA will facilitate workshops to develop the Bachelor degree syllabus and provide lecturers and clinical supervisors for the Master course.

**Humanity & Inclusion – Strengthening of Speech and Language Therapy Services in Vietnam**

Humanity & Inclusion (HI) has received USAID funding for a Rehabilitation Project to improve the quality of life of persons with brain lesions, specifically to develop services and models of care in targeted hospitals in Vietnam. In March 2018 TFA signed a Collaboration Agreement with HI to 2020 to place volunteers in identified locations; develop SALT treatment guidelines; provide in-country training and to produce and share clinical resources.

A priority is to source volunteers for three to nine months duration primarily in adult services, especially with a neurology focus. A solid base of volunteers is being developed who are providing innovative services and support to Vietnamese SLTs and assisting to establish new services in target sites. Volunteers have been placed in HCMC (Jenna Thompson), Hue (Janella Christie and Leila Ball), Da Nang and Hanoi.

**Continuing professional development**

Continuing professional development (CPD) is an important step towards sustainability and building the capacity of Vietnamese SLTs to develop and take the lead in clinical services and education and training in Vietnam. It is also vital for the continued skill development and expertise of individual practitioners.

TFA coordinates CPD activities including workshops, information sharing and mentoring, which is provided by volunteers and TFA directors, and includes onsite visits from volunteers as well as Skype sessions and email exchanges between Australia and Vietnam.

**Mentoring and support**

For some time Australian speech pathologists and academics have played an important role in providing mentoring and professional support to Vietnamese SLTs and when possible visit them in their workplaces, thus expanding professional connections and local knowledge and expertise. Vietnamese SLTs have increasing involvement in supporting student clinical placements and mentoring helps to develop their supervision and mentoring skills by working alongside experienced clinical educators from Australia.

While based in HCMC Ms Sarah Day was proactive in meeting with Vietnamese SLTs in their workplaces to provide mentoring support. Each SLT developed a personal professional development plan to focus on their dreams and aspirations. While specific to each SLT the plans are providing useful insights into common areas of interest and need which also guide CPD priorities.

In Da Nang TFA volunteer Mr Seth Koster is working with DUMTP providing focused clinical mentoring to SLTs that includes individualised goals and improvement plans. Seth is also conducting continuing education short courses, which are open to hospital therapists and students.

**Beyond Borders Skype Mentoring Program**

In March 2018 TFA launched a new mentoring by Skype program, *Beyond Borders*, with Australian speech pathologists mentoring Vietnamese SLTs, assisted by a translator/interpreter. We gratefully acknowledge a grant from Speech Pathology Australia to pilot the program.
Interpreter courses were held in HCMC and Hanoi to train 26 new translators/interpreters; a mentoring guide and toolkit were prepared and 21 triplets (mentor, mentee, interpreter) were selected, matched according to the expertise of the mentor and the needs of the mentee. The initial program will conclude in October 2018 and a formal evaluation will be conducted which will inform future developments for the program. TFA is committed to the project as a means to engage volunteers who cannot visit Vietnam in person and as a cost effective means to match specialists with the needs of individual Vietnamese SLTs.

Given the early indications of success, TFA has committed to continuing the Skype mentoring program and from 2019 it will focus on working with Vietnamese SLTs to develop leadership capability and increase awareness of the challenges and skills needed by future leaders of the profession.

**CPD activities**

It is essential that CPD activities are relevant and informative to meet the needs of Vietnamese SLTs as they increase their knowledge and skills, and establish services in their local areas. SLTs are identifying their special interests and needs and are requesting TFA to support them with CPD activities.

As well as CPD provided by visiting volunteers, workshops, talks and other activities are increasingly being presented by Vietnamese SLTs, which is further evidence of the profession being managed by local specialists. Topics covered this year include:

- Treatment of speech sound disorders - a one-day workshop provided by Vietnamese SLT Ms Thuan
- Dysphagia management
- Paediatric feeding workshop, the value of play and the paediatric speech therapist role
- Development of communication workshop
- Swallowing and communication issues
- Communication assessment, goal setting and therapy planning workshop
- Children’s eating, drinking and swallowing problems workshop
- Becoming an effective clinical educator workshops
- Developing professional development plans
- The role and value of speech therapists in Vietnam

We thank all volunteers who supported the CPD program and particularly acknowledge students and staff from the University of Newcastle for their assistance, which is providing valuable experience and skill development for the Australian students and their Vietnamese counterparts, as well as shared cultural exchanges.

**Capacity building for future leaders**

To continue running Vietnamese speech therapy courses will require Vietnamese leaders who have higher qualifications in speech therapy. In addition to the master course being developed with MCNV we are actively supporting applications from Vietnamese health practitioners to obtain higher qualifications at universities both in Australia, the USA and elsewhere:

- Ms Ben Pham from Hanoi completed a PhD in Speech Pathology, focused on speech sound disorders, under TFA-supported volunteer lecturer Professor Sharynne McLeod at Charles Sturt University in
taking responsibility for developing the program to address current needs and encourage collaboration and information sharing among its members. All of the Club’s office holders are Vietnamese SLTs; Club meetings are supported by staff at UPNT and professional development opportunities are also provided by visiting lecturers and academics.

The Club is the genesis of a future Speech Language Therapy Association of Vietnam and is an important step towards the sustainability of the profession in Vietnam. TFA supports the development of a national association with regional and special interest groups to cater for local needs and specialist interests.

Developing and distributing resources

Our Glossary of Speech Therapy Terms continues to be a highly valued resource to support effective and consistent interpreting and translation of speech therapy terms. The terms and definitions are currently being reviewed and an updated edition will be available later in 2018.

A major project this year has been completion of a Vietnamese Language Screener (VLS). It has been developed by TFA volunteer, Ms Averil Ivey during her placement in Hanoi, with support from Director Dr Sarah Verdon. The VLS has been normed and reliability tested, with culturally appropriate illustrations drawn by a Vietnamese graphic artist. Dr Verdon is coordinating the printing and publication of the screener which will be given to Vietnamese SLTs free of charge and made available for sale elsewhere. 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.

Vietnamese SLTs are increasingly writing and developing treatment resources, information and guidance for their colleagues to assist with professional development and clinical practice. TFA facilitates the distribution of these resources, which are accessible on the TFA website, through the attribution of an appropriate Creative Commons licence.

University of Newcastle students have developed fact sheets in a range of topics, which are available in Vietnamese and English, also on the TFA website. We have also facilitated the distribution of Speech Pathology awareness materials and other resources in Vietnamese direct to practitioners and others in Vietnam and to Vietnamese communities in Australia and

Bathurst. Ms Ben also taught speech sound disorders to the paediatric speech therapy course in January 2017, and will teach this subject in the Masters in SALT to commence in 2019

- Ms Hiep (2012-14 course participant) has completed a PhD in Thailand and is Heading up the Rehabilitation Department at UPNT
- Ms Thanh (previous TFA Interpreter) completed a Masters in Speech Therapy Assistantship in 2017, at William Patterson University outside New York, USA
- Mr Dien (2012 graduate) commenced a Masters by Research in Speech Pathology at the University of Newcastle in Australia in December 2016. This has been converted into a PhD program with scholarship support from the University
- Dr Thuy (DUMTP) is undertaking a PhD at the University of Tartu, Estonia
- Ms Hien Do (2017 paediatric SLT graduate) received a Chevening Scholarship to study the Autism (Children) Masters course at the University of Birmingham, UK.

TFA special grants

TFA is committed to providing grants to support new services and continuing professional development for Vietnamese SLTs. In future TFA hopes to promote the grants through the Speech Therapy Club and to give priority to Club members. This will be particularly important as the number and diversity of SALT courses grows, without TFA participation. The grants will also be promoted on the TFA website.

Speech Therapy Club

The Speech Therapy Club is the main way in which speech therapists engage with CPD, with the Club
elsewhere; primarily via the website. All of these resources are valuable tools for Vietnamese speech therapists and give Vietnamese people access to important information that has not been previously available in their language.

TFA was grateful for a donation of textbooks from AGOSCI Australia which have been sent to Vietnam to support students’ learning. Access to quality texts is a challenge for SLT students in Vietnam due to cost and availability. Strategies need to be developed to provide textbooks for students as master and bachelor courses are implemented.

Training and supporting Interpreters and translators

Access to experienced interpreters and translators is critical to the success of the training and services we provide. Understanding of specialist terminology and techniques is essential and the assistance of all interpreters and translators is warmly acknowledged.

Ms Quyen Pham continued to provide high quality interpreting and translation services to TFA on a contract basis. In anticipation of the Beyond Borders Skype mentoring program, Ms Quyen led interpreter training courses in HCMC and Hanoi for new interpreters/translators to support the program. A total of 26 participants successfully completed the course and committed to providing 30 hours service to the program.

Interest in the course was high, and all participants gave very positive feedback in their evaluations of the course. Ms Quyen also provided professional development support for all new interpreters and translators to ensure they could provide consistent, high quality services. The course built on the model developed in collaboration with Ms Han, and funded through a special grant from Speech Pathology Australia to TFA in 2016.

Support the development of speech therapy units in hospitals and schools across Vietnam

On graduation from their training Vietnamese SLTs establish clinics in their home workplaces, with clinical education support from visiting specialists and through the mentoring program. Clinics and speech therapy departments are being established in a number of centres in addition to those in HCMC, Hue, Hanoi and Ba Ria.

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Vietnam Increasing variety of partnerships

There is a growing awareness of the need for qualified speech therapists in Vietnam, and an increasing interest in expanding the profession. To this end we are working with universities and organisations in Hanoi, Da Nang and Hue on developing courses and services, in addition to those being developed under the MCNV project.

Through our Memorandum of Understanding with Da Nang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy (DUMTP) we are supporting speech therapy education and training for existing health professionals and assistance to develop and establish a two year course. Two DUMTP staff participated in the paediatric speech therapy course, which will help to consolidate the development of services and training. In March 2018 Ms Sarah Day took up a Clinical Coordinator AVI volunteer placement at DUMTP and is working
with TFA to implement the terms of the MOU. DUMTP is also involved in the MCNV SALT project and staff are active advocates of the program. Extensive preparation is currently underway for the Bachelor course to begin in 2019.

Our Memorandum of Understanding with the Office of Genetic Counseling and Disabled Children at Hue University (OGCDC) facilitated mentoring and support to the Vietnamese SLTs in Hue, to develop a sustainable delivery model, and to develop critically needed educational materials and clinical resources. We also supported the expansion of a Speech Therapy Clinic in Hue to promote skills transfer and participation.

Volunteers

TFA is totally dependent on volunteers to help us achieve our goals, particularly working with Vietnamese SLTs and our partners to develop the profession and demonstrate its value and capabilities in Vietnam.

We are supported by a committed and expanding group of volunteers primarily from Australia and we have strategies in place to engage with the increasing number of Vietnamese people who will support our work in the future. Volunteers have conducted events, fundraisers, and information sessions at small community activities and at larger scale events such as the Speech Pathology Australia conference.

Five volunteers visited Vietnam during the year, three working as consultants and volunteers for HI and two providing CPD and clinical education. See page 14 for our volunteers in 2017/18.

In March 2018 AVID volunteer Ms Sarah Day commenced as the Clinical Coordinator based at DUMTP in Da Nang. Ms Day was previously the Clinical Coordinator at UPNT and provided outstanding leadership to TFA staff at UPNT and in support of the paediatric speech therapy course. Ms Day has provided a range of professional development activities and is working closely with DUMTP staff to support establishment of courses and clinical services in Da Nang. Ms Day has also supported TFA in reviewing our records management processes and policies, including document retention and archiving.

Ms Jenna Butterworth succeeded Ms Merran Peisker in managing the volunteer program as our part-time Volunteer Project Officer. We thank Merran for her work in establishing the role and volunteer management processes. Jenna is a former TFA volunteer now based in Switzerland and has been working successfully with TFA Directors and overseeing the appointment and matching of mentors for the Beyond Borders mentoring program and identifying volunteers for placements in hospitals throughout Vietnam through the HI partnership.

In August 2017 Ms Averil Ivey completed her time volunteering at the Training and Development Center of Special Education in Hanoi as part of the Australian Volunteers for International Development (AVID) program, an Australian Government initiative. Through her placement Averil developed a Vietnamese Language Screener for Vietnamese SLTs.

Our volunteer program is our major public face to the speech pathology profession in Australia and we are grateful for the interest and support of our professional colleagues in our work in Vietnam as clinical educators, lecturers and mentors, and in Australia as mentors, fundraisers and supporters.

Communication

The Communications Plan enables the Board to focus on priority communication strategies and confirm our key messages to stakeholders, supporters and the wider community, in English and Vietnamese.

In January/February 2018 we contracted Mr Shane Day to assist us with a review of our social media strategy and website. This provided us with some useful insights into the better management of our website and priorities for our use of ICT to better communicate with our stakeholders and supporters.

Further enhancements to our website are being implemented gradually and use of the site as a resource and information source continues to grow. The site showcases our work and priorities, and is a platform for Vietnamese SLTs to highlight their activities and the services they are developing in their workplaces.
Web analytics for the year show continued increase in access:

- Sessions (number of visits): 10,315 (33.3% increase)
- Average number of pages viewed per session: 2.67
- Total unique page views throughout the year: 20,835 (16.8% increase)
- Average duration of each session: 2min 49sec
- Majority of our website visitors are first time visitors to the site (85.1% of total sessions)
- Visits from Vietnam (63.29%) and Australia (16.33%) account for the majority of site traffic.

Our social media presence is also expanding, with an active Twitter profile (130 followers) (@TrinhTFA), LinkedIn page and Instagram site. Our Facebook presence, in English and Vietnamese, continued to grow and drove the majority (89%) of traffic to the website. We now have over 2,150 followers, an increase of 650 followers in the past year, with an increasing number of our followers being Vietnamese. Facebook provides a key channel for communicating with both Australian supporters and Vietnamese SLTs and supporters.

Twitter also provides an opportunity for our volunteers to update us on their experiences in Vietnam and share these in a timely manner. Director Dr Sarah Verdon provided a live Twitter feed during the Speech Pathology Australia Conference in Adelaide in May 2018, which enhanced our profile and increased our number of followers.

We continue to publish a periodic electronic newsletter in Vietnamese and English that is emailed to key stakeholders and supporters, and is accessible on our website. Print copies are also provided to our major donors.

As part of the MCNV project Directors Dr Sally Hewat and Professor Lindy McAllister presented at conferences and facilitated workshops with key stakeholders, further raising the profile of SALT as an essential health service in Vietnam.

Other communication activities include a well visited stall at the Speech Pathology Australia conference, presentations at conferences and to community groups, talks to service clubs and articles about our work in professional magazines and journals.

![TFA stall at the Speech Pathology Australia conference](image)

**Strengthening Our Organisation**

As a small, volunteer organisation, it is essential that we maintain our energy and creativity and encourage supporters to work with us. Through the strategic plan Directors take responsibility for leading each of our key result areas. This streamlines our activities and helps to more evenly distribute workloads among our Board members, all of whom are predominantly volunteers. The Board met eight times during the year and held a successful planning day in March 2018. Together board members contribute approximately 1,000 hours pro bono each year.

Due to work commitments Mr Craig Margetson did not seek reappointment to the Board at the annual general meeting in November 2017. As our finance specialist Craig provided strategic advice and support for the management of our financial resources and we thank him for his expertise during his time on the Board.

Dr Diane Jacobs resigned from the Board in March 2018. Di provided us with academic expertise during Professor Lindy McAllister’s leave of absence in 2017. We are grateful for Di’s support during this time and will continue to engage her professional knowledge and understanding of our work in Vietnam in the future.

In addition to her board role Professor McAllister has undertaken the technical consultancy role for curriculum development and syllabus preparation for the master course being developed under the MCNV project. Lindy’s extensive experience as an academic and her foundation role with TFA has ensured the success of the first year of our partnership with MCNV and will result in an international standard SALT curriculum for Vietnam.
Ms Quyen Pham concluded her employment with TFA at UPNT in September 2017 to pursue her career in other areas. However Ms Quyen continues to be a valued member of the TFA team, providing ongoing support for our activities in Vietnam. In March 2018 Ms Quyen organised the Vietnam end of the Beyond Borders Skype mentoring pilot program; selected interpreters/translators and provided the training courses in HCMC and Hanoi. She has also assisted with interpreting and translating for visiting Australian speech pathologists.

**Key partnerships**

We continue to build ties with our partners and stakeholders in Australia and Vietnam.

TFA’s MOU with UPNT is in place to 2020 and focuses on CPD, mentoring and resource sharing. Similarly our MOUs with the Office of Genetic Counseling and Disabled Children at Hue University and with Da Nang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy (DUMTP) continue to achieve their goals. We are pleased to maintain and strengthen these long-standing partnerships, which complement our new relationships with MCNV and HI.

Our participation at the Speech Pathology Australia (SPA) conference is further enhancing TFA’s relationship with the peak body and interest from the profession to support our projects. In particular we are grateful for support for Vietnamese SLTs to participate in the annual conference. We are pleased to maintain and strengthen these long-standing partnerships, which complement our new relationships with MCNV and HI.

We acknowledge the role of GDG in governance and monitoring our activities, and have met all accountability requirements. In 2018 we have concluded two projects with GDG: the first for the postgraduate training courses, and the second for service development and training in Da Nang and Hue. A third project proposal is being developed which will focus on leadership capacity building for Vietnamese SLTs.

**Fundraising**

Volunteers in Australia continue to lead our fundraising activities and the success of our projects in Vietnam is heavily reliant on their work. Directors and returned volunteers have conducted events, fundraisers, and information sessions at small community events, with service clubs and other organisations, and we thank them for their continued support and innovative fundraising ideas.

Fundraising has been our main source of funds through which we are able to provide funding for:

- Volunteers by means of a stipend and funding of certain expenses
- Interpreters in Vietnam for all clinical educators, mentors and supervisors
- Training for interpreters and translators
- Production and purchase of resources, supplies and textbooks for professional development and workshops
- Scholarships for students to participate in courses and CPD
- Service Development Grants for Vietnamese SLTs to develop new services and programs
- Professional Development Grants to assist Vietnamese SLTs to attend and present at conferences in Vietnam and overseas
- Support for Vietnamese SLTs to undertake postgraduate courses at overseas universities.

This year our activities have included:

- Items sold and promotion of TFA activities at the Speech Pathology Australia conference in Sydney (complimentary stall in the trade exhibition provided by SPA and staffed by TFA volunteers)
- Presentations to community organisations, including Wynnum (Qld) Probus by Director Ms Katie Walker-Smith
- Donations received with thanks from Bernadette Dutton and texts donated by AGOSCI Australia as well as a number of private donors.

**Texts donated by AGOSCI Australia**
We thank our very generous donors and supporters for their contributions and continuing interest in our activities, including Speech Pathology Australia and our partner AVI.

We will continue to seek grant and special project funding for our work as a valuable means of promoting our activities, demonstrating our skills in delivering projects on time and on budget and in particular to enable us to achieve our vision for speech therapy in Vietnam.

We gratefully acknowledge the dedication and skills of our part-time administrative officer, Ms Jan Tochowicz, who has worked with us for the past eight years. Jan manages our day to day financial matters, including donations, payments and fundraising; liaises with volunteers and interpreters; is secretariat to the Board; edits our newsletter and maintains our records of documents, photos and publications, including our web presence.

We also acknowledge the assistance of Mr Grant Tomkinson of WT Martin and Associates in the preparation of our financial statements for 2017/18, and provision of financial advice. Further information is available on request.

Who we are

Patron
Mr Graeme Swift, Australian Consul-General, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, 2009 – 2011

Directors
Professor Lindy McAllister PhD MA (Hons) (Sp Path), BSpThy, Life Member SPAA
Professor Emerita, Faculty of Health Sciences, The University of Sydney

Mrs Sue Woodward DipSpThy
Speech Pathologist, Private Practice, Central Coast, NSW. Conjoint Fellow in Speech Pathology, University of Newcastle

Dr Sally Hewat PhD, BAppSci (Sp Path) CPSP
Head of Speech Pathology Program, Faculty of Education and Arts, University of Newcastle, NSW

Ms Bronwyn Coop (Secretary) (Chair) BA (Hons)
Private Consultant

Dr Sarah Verdon PhD BAppSci (Sp Path)
Member of Excellence in Early Years Education Collaborative Research Network, Faculty of Education, Charles Sturt University, Albury NSW

Mr Craig Margetson (Finance Director)
GradDipCA BBus(Acc) (To 30 November 2017)
Financial Accountant, The Salvation Army Australia Eastern Territory

Ms Katie Walker-Smith B Speech Pathology, Grad Cert Dysphagia, Grad Cert Health Management, MBA
Director of Speech Pathology - Children’s Health Queensland, Brisbane QLD

Associate Professor Diane Jacobs PhD BAppSci (Sp Path), Grad Dip Psych, Grad Cert Univ Learning & Teaching (To 17 March 2018)
Associate Professor of Speech Pathology, Course Coordinator (Melbourne) Speech Pathology School of Allied and Public Health, Faculty of Health Sciences, Australian Catholic University

Voluntary Executive Officers

Ms Huyen Nguyen BA
Translator / Interpreter and Advisor in Cultural Affairs

Staff

Ms Quyen Pham
Administration Manager and Senior Translator, Ho Chi Minh City (To September 2017)

Ms Jan Tochowicz
Australian based Administrative Assistant (part-time)

Ms Merran Peisker (To September 2017)
Australian based Project Officer (Volunteer Program) (part-time)

Ms Jenna Butterworth (From September 2017)
Project Officer (Volunteer Program) (part-time) (based in Switzerland)

Volunteers 2017/18

Providing mentoring and CPD

Tori Frost
Bianca Jackson

Volunteering with HI

Leila Ball
Janelle Christie
Jemma Thompson
Skype Mentors

Cat Andrew
Gisela Artola
Alex Austin
Wenonah Barber
Jason Bransby
Georgia Burn
Avril Chiat
Aimee Chua
Louise Dobbie
Jaimee Dutton
Thuy Frakking
Ali George
Lauren Gray
Kylie Gough
Tien Khuc
Kate Kinch
Lorie Koll
Amina McFarlane
Carla Mangion
Jodie May
Leah Paice
Lauril Sachet

Testimonials

Volunteer Bianca Jackson reports on her time providing workshops and CPD in Hanoi:

“In October 2017 I was warmly welcomed to the Hanoi Rehabilitation Hospital. The hospital staff showed their commitment to both their clients and to lifelong learning. Over 40 professionals attended a four day workshop, from around the country. Two days covered children’s communication assessment, goal setting and therapy planning. The second two days were focused on children’s eating drinking and swallowing difficulties. Dr Chi was a wonderful host and Mr Nhat was a valuable interpreter.

The hospital staff were left with ideas about arranging their clinical spaces as well as specific strategies for their children and families. It was a pleasure to work with such enthusiastic learners and to experience a Vietnamese-style of therapy. Additionally, the food was wonderful, and it was fun to travel each day by motorbike-taxi.”

Volunteer Tori Frost describes her volunteering experience:

“My recent volunteer work through TFA was my first time in Vietnam, and I had a great experience. At Dong Nai General Hospital, I had the pleasure of working with Ms. Phuong and Ms. Hien (two physiotherapists who are taking on the additional role of speech therapist as well) to assist in further developing their recently formed speech therapy unit. One of the things we did was a presentation for the doctors and nurses of the hospital regarding the role of the speech pathologist and when to refer for services - later that week, we had a new outpatient referred - a small but rewarding success!

I also provided a dysphagia workshop at UPNT to the graduates of the speech therapy training program. I can't imagine being a speech pathologist and then also taking on an additional role as a physiotherapist or otherwise - so I think it’s amazing that doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, etc. are taking on dual roles to also work as a speech therapist (sometimes with limited training). Thank you to everyone for welcoming me and for the great time in Vietnam!”
Sarah Day, AVID volunteer and Speech Pathology Clinical Educator with University of Medicine Pham Ngoc Thach (HCMC), reports on how she met with speech therapy graduates across Vietnam in their workplaces to provide mentoring support:

“Each speech therapist developed their own professional development plan and have been sharing their dreams and aspirations with Sarah.

The graduates are employed across a variety of workplaces and so their goals for future development are varied and usually specific to their interest areas and workplace needs. However, many speech therapists working within paediatric service delivery are keen to increase their understanding of and develop their skills in the area of speech sound disorders. In September Ms Thuan, a graduate of the first TFA-UPNT speech therapy course, provided a one-day workshop to newer graduates to support this. They are also keen for more direct supervision and mentoring within their workplaces to improve their clinical skills across all areas of clinical management.

Speech therapists working within adult service delivery have requested further support from TFA to organise an advanced dysphagia management workshop in HCMC, which TFA will work towards organising in the coming months.

Many speech therapists have also discussed their intent to either set up private clinics or improve their current clinics’ practice and have requested support around developing service models to meet the demands of the communities they work in, while also considering the financial implications of these goals.”

HI Volunteer Jemma Thompson reports on her volunteering experience so far...

“Living and working in Ho Chi Minh City means no two days are ever the same. I had little idea of what to expect when I boarded my flight in Brisbane back in April but have been overwhelmed by a sense of love for this country and its people.

Although my daily commute is consistently on the back of a motorbike, each day at work is unique and interesting. Many days I work directly with the therapists and patients, providing support and guidance to develop confidence and skills. Other days involve formal teaching or development of resources. No two days are the same but every day I am met with enthusiasm and gratitude. I genuinely feel a part of the team and am greeted so warmly wherever I am on the hospital campus by staff, patients and families.

The local team and I share lunch each day and provide support in any way I need. They have taken me out for dinner and constantly share local traditions and culinary delights with me. I feel so fortunate to have found Trinh Foundation and been given the opportunity to come to Vietnam. Not only am I developing the profession I love, but I’m also growing and learning so much along the way.”

Ms Sarah Day, Australian Volunteer with the Australian Aid program reports on returning to Vietnam and her new assignment is at the Da Nang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy (DUMTP) for 12 months

Sarah writes: “I’m so pleased to be back in Vietnam! I’m here again with my family, husband Shane, and three children Sienna (12), Harlow (6) and Matilda (4). We are now settled in a little apartment very near to the beach and enjoying the relaxing walks each evening. Da Nang is
certainly very different to Saigon where we spent most of 2017. The pace of the city is much slower and we are really enjoying the relaxed atmosphere here. The people are kind and friendly. There is still plenty of culture here to absorb, and when you stand on the beach and look around you, the view is quite magical with the mountains in the background on the peninsular to the north. We are looking forward to exploring the city and its surrounds in the coming months.

The speech therapy and extended rehabilitation team here at DUMTP are just so supportive and have embraced me so beautifully. Some familiar faces with Dr Thuy and Dr Hien from the HCMC Paediatric Course I coordinated in 2017, being an important part of the department, I now find myself working within. There are another three local speech therapy team members, and part-time TFA volunteer, Mr Seth Koster, who are make up the team. I'm really looking forward to working with each team member to support and provide development opportunities to them whenever I can.

I look forward to continuing to work closely with TFA over the coming year and supporting as many projects as possible. With the interpreter short courses already underway, we look forward to welcoming some University of Newcastle students in the coming week to develop and deliver a workshop for parents of the DUMTP clinic. Watch this space for more exciting news about the projects we are working on, especially as we roll out the pilot Bachelor of Rehabilitation (Speech Pathology).

Reflections of Attendees of the Paediatric Feeding Workshop in Danang:

“Hello, I am Tran Phi Hung and I work at City Children’s Hospital. On average per day, I work with three children with feeding and swallowing difficulties and children with behavioural feeding disorder. This encouraged me to enhance my knowledge in this particular field to efficiently support these children and their families.

The workshop provided very useful knowledge for my professional development such as the typical development of paediatric swallowing and feeding, swallowing disorders and especially assessment and intervention for infants, and children with behavioural feeding disorder and food aversion.

Currently, I am applying all the knowledge I have learnt into treatment for children with swallowing disorders, intervention for children with behavioural feeding disorders and providing instructions for parents. Additionally, I have shared the knowledge I gained from the workshop with the colleagues of my department via specialized meetings and lessons for them.”

Ms Doan Lan Oanh says...

“I don’t work with children with swallowing disorder, but I see 3 children with feeding difficulties, including feeding behaviour. That’s the reason why I attended this workshop.”

Ms Doan Lan Oanh during a therapy session
their kids. They have told me that they now understand their kids more and it has helped them to reduce behaviours.

Thank you again for this opportunity. I’m waiting for next workshop.”

**Ms Bui Nhu Huyen says...**

“I am currently working in the Center of Special Education (Hanoi), which provides services for disabled children having drinking and eating difficulties (not eating various food, not chewing, not eating solid food, eating normally but not gaining weight...). This is the reason that I attended the Paediatric Feeding workshop hosted by Ms Sarah. During the workshop, I found all the knowledge and information well organized and presented precisely and scientifically by Ms. Sarah. Therefore, even though I do not have medical background, I was still able to understand and absorb most of the knowledge from the workshop. Her enthusiasm for the development of Speech Therapy in Vietnam touched me and has motivated me to try harder to improve and develop my profession. I felt very lucky I was able attend the workshop.

Thanks to the knowledge gained from the workshop, I renewed and broaden my understanding from what I learned during the ‘Paediatric Feeding’ class of Paediatric Speech Therapy Course. I will utilise this knowledge to provide more services for the children that I am working with in my workplace as well as organising discussions about this knowledge to the caregivers in my workplace and community; consulting and supporting parents when identifying children having eating difficulties, realising and identifying children having eating difficulties and referring to other suitable professions for efficient and immediate intervention; advertising and creating awareness of parents about the importance of creating joy at mealtimes and the potential consequences when parents don’t feed properly.

In addition, I have a good connection with other therapists in Vietnam and my region so that we can share, discuss and search for long term support when encountering difficulties in the specific cases. We can also outline the ways to publicise and support the community more efficiently, list the address and roles of other professions to refer when necessary.

Sincerely thanks to Ms Sarah and all the supporters for providing me and my colleagues the chance to attend this workshop. I am grateful for everything Ms Sarah have done and wish her all the best.”

**For further information and access to resources, past publications, newsletters and news bites please visit our website or like us on Facebook Twitter and Instagram.**

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