



SINGAPORE IATSS FORUM ALUMNI  
CONNECTING COMMUNITIES WITHIN & BEYOND

## VIFA and SIFA Project Report

### Growing & Strengthening School Communities in ASEAN

Bac Giang City, Hanoi, Vietnam

30 & 31 March 2018



## 1. VIFA- SIFA Project Outline

<b>Title</b>	Growing & Strengthening School Communities in ASEAN
<b>Goal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To provide basic training to help local teachers and volunteers learn English, and empower their skills so that they can help over 800 students in Bac Giang to learn English as well.</li> <li>- To impart good reading habits among the students so that the interest in English can be sustained. SIFA has collected over 400 books to be placed within two libraries of primary &amp; secondary schools in Bac Giang to support the reading movement.</li> </ul>
<b>Objective(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- VIFA &amp; SIFA join hands to support education in a remoted province of Viet Nam via books reading / making playground activities</li> <li>- Inspire other IATSS Alumni Association to conduct cooperative activities</li> <li>- Activities to help the children within the village and enable them to learn through different platforms through interactive activities.</li> <li>- Enhance leadership qualities of SIFA and VIFA members</li> </ul>
<b>Beneficiaries</b>	896 primary & secondary school students in Bac Giang Province, Vietnam. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vo Tranh Primary School</li> <li>• Vo Tranh Secondary School</li> </ul>
<b>Duration</b>	2 days: 30 – 31 March 2018
<b>Location</b>	Bac Giang Province, Hanoi (~3 hours drive from Hanoi)
<b>Project Team</b>	<p><b>Vietnam IATSS Forum Alumni (VIFA) Association &amp; Singapore IATSS Forum Alumni (SIFA) Association</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mr. Pham Duy Khuong (Pham), President of VIFA</li> <li>- Ms. Nguyen Huyen Chau (Jo), Vice President of VIFA</li> <li>- Mr. Le Dinh Nghia, Vice President of VIFA</li> <li>- Ms. Nguyen Thu Phuong</li> <li>- Mr. Pham Xuan Hoan</li> <li>- Ms. Nguyen Le Tram</li> <li>- Ms. Tan Swee Leng, Vice President of SIFA</li> <li>- Ms. Wilna Tan, Member SIFA</li> <li>- Ms. Siti Maishara, Member SIFA (Talent Management/Recruitment/Welfare)</li> <li>- Mr. Andy Tan, Member SIFA</li> <li>- Ms. Corinne Kang, Publicity and Communications, SIFA</li> <li>- Mr. Glen-Boy Wong Nan Cheng, Member SIFA</li> </ul>
<b>Other Partners</b>	<p><u>Singapore partner:</u> Marsiling-Yew Tee GRC Youth Clubs (Books Donation Drive)</p> <p><u>Local partners:</u> Vietnam IATSS Secretariats and Coordinators, Bac Giang Volunteer Club, Bac Giang Books &amp; Action Club, Collective Art &amp; Architecture Library (CA' Library)</p>

## 2. Project Background

High schools and universities are located in the main cities, and those with a strong foundation in English will have an advantage should they apply to study there. For students in rural areas, having access to a good English education is a luxury and this places students from the villages at a disadvantage when they apply for higher education.

In 2017, VIFA visited the Vo Tranh Primary and Secondary schools and spoke to the principals where they wish to have to support on a more efficient English education for the local children through reference books and communication opportunities with foreigners. For students in rural areas, having good education to English is luxury, while English skills is getting more and more important for them to obtain higher education (highschools and universities are located in the main cities, with high competition rate). During the visiting, the principals expressed their desire to have greater support and learning opportunities for the local children to learn English and they suggested to that this could be done through story/reference books and having communication opportunities with foreigners.

Traditionally, these two schools have been supported by two youth organisations – Bac Giang Volunteer Club and Bac Giang Books & Action Club. Both organisations comprise student volunteers who run frequent activities (such as English teaching, book donation) for the schools. These organisations have also expressed that they needed more support in terms of organising skills, exercises and advice on improving their activities for the children.

As part of IATSS Forum's (IF) Vision of working across IF ASEAN region, SIFA and VIFA came together to collaborate on this project to build up the local school communities. The idea was to collect and donate books to the schools and kick start of a reading movement to encourage them to read more. This would help pique their interest in reading and improve their command of English through the cultivation of good reading habits among them.

SIFA worked with a grassroots organisation – Marsiling-Yew Tee GRC Youth Clubs to organise a Books Donation Drive in order to collect the books to be donated to the schools.

In addition to contributing books towards the schools' libraries, VIFA and SIFA planned to run activity sessions for the schools so the students can have fun and learn English at the same time.

At the same time, volunteers from the Bac Giang Volunteer Club and Bac Giang Books & Action Club would observe how VIFA and SIFA run the programmes and activities and pick up new ideas, organising as well as presentation and communication skills and be empowered to run future activities/ initiatives on their own.

### **3. Project Preparation**

Originally, the project was supposed to take place in September 2017, however, this was postponed to March 2018 to enable more alumni to participate.

This was the project schedule and plans:

- Notify and publicise project to alumni members of VIFA and SIFA (Mid 2017)
- Notify the local schools and clubs (Mid 2017)
- Schedule and plan for activities (Nov 2017)
- Work with local clubs for organising interactive activities (??)
- Project meeting and discussion on activities for the students in Bac Giang City (Nov 2017 )
- Organise Book Donation Drive in Singapore (Nov 2017)
- Work with tourist agency for arrangement of cars, meals and accommodations (Jan 2018)
- SIFA team flies to Hanoi (Mar 2018)

### **4. Activities of the Project**

Date/Time	Activity	Remarks
<b><i>Friday, 30 March 2018</i></b>		
7.30am	VIFA and SIFA travel to Bac Giang Province from Hanoi	
10.30am	Arrival at Vo Tranh Secondary School <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute story books collected</li> <li>• Activity at school assembly with students and teachers (Performances, interactive English songs)</li> </ul>	About 500-600 students?
12.00nn	Lunch and interaction with school principal and teachers	About 12 teachers
2.00pm	Activity with students – Learning presentation skills	About 40-50 students
4.00pm	End of activity	
6.00pm	Dinner, reflection and rest at homestay	
<b><i>Saturday, 31 March 2018</i></b>		
8.30am	Arrival at Vo Tranh Primary School	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distribute story books collected</li> <li>Activity at school assembly with students and teachers (Interactive English songs)</li> <li>Activity with students – Learning to sing English songs and basic presentation skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>About 300 students</li> <li>About 50 students</li> </ul>
12.00pm	Lunch	
2.00pm	Travel back to Hanoi	
6.30pm	Dinner and farewell party hosted by VIFA	



*Teaching the students at Vo Tranh Primary School the “Baby Shark” song with actions*



*Teaching presentation skills at Vo Tranh Secondary School*

## **5. Project Result**

Overall, the project went smoothly and achieved its goals and objectives of encouraging the students of Vo Tranh primary and secondary schools to be exposed to learning and speaking English via interactive English songs, performances and sharing sessions. We hope that they will also pick-up the books contributed and read them.

Although we planned to build a playground....this did not materialise because we did not have enough time to have the internal proval from the local authority approved the project which was requested by the last minute.

#### Feedback from beneficiaries

The teachers and students had shared that they were very grateful to SIFA and VIFA on the project and were motivated to improve their English language skills. Some hoped that we can continue this on a longer term basis instead of a once-off project. Some of the students have added the SIFA members on Facebook and the conversations on speaking English has continued.

#### Feedback from Project Team - VIFA

We have completed the objectives of bringing books to two schools and English learning encouragement to students and teachers. The schools were warmly welcome the project between SIFA and VIFA and we could realise their excitement during the project. It is very seldom for them to meet and talk with foreign people which shall encourage them to learn English more.

In addition, we have equipped them with abundant books suitable to their age including English book from SIFA which are very valuable to students living in remote area like them.

We also introduced image of IATSS Forum from Japan and also the friendship relationship between Vietnam and Singapore in particular and also between ASEAN countries.

#### Feedback from Project Team - SIFA

The overall objectives of bringing English books to the two schools in Vietnam, encouraging the students to learn English and promoting the inter-ASEAN countries relationships via meaningful collaboration have been achieved. We hope that the books will act as teaching aids and resources for the teachers to teach the students. Besides the 800 physical students present at the two schools, the impact achieved is exponential as these students will share their knowledge with their siblings and friends studying in other schools.

The collaboration between SIFA and VIFA is important as Singapore is chairing ASEAN for 2018. This collaboration shows that Singapore is working closely with our ASEAN counterparts, in this instance Vietnam on thinking and learning together on improving the lives of the communities. As a result of the collaboration, stronger bonds have been forged between SIFA and VIFA as all of our shared a common bond from our experiences in IATSS Japan. We hope that this will inspire other alumni to also collaborate on joint projects.

#### Learning points from SIFA

Feedback from IF for the first proposal provided us with a clearer idea on how to plan our project. They key takeaway for us was to plan early and properly – we learnt that proper brainstorming for ideas by members and proper delegation of job scope so responsibilities were clear were required to make the programme/activities successful.

SIFA had some issues clearing the immigration on the first day. Although the issue was resolved via a phone call to one of the VIFA member, one learning point is that the hosting alumni could consider issuing a letter for the visiting alumni to bring along or assign a member to be at the airport if any such cases arise.

For the long term benefits of the projects, the alumni could consider re-visiting the project every 2-3 years to ensure sustainability and continuity instead of embarking on new projects. It might be more beneficial to focus on a few projects and do it well to achieve more impact than to distribute the limited resources across many projects.

#### **6. Financial Report**

- Original Budgeting (IATSS Forum grant, sponsors from other organisations)
- Actual Expenses

### 1. SIFA Project Statement

Funding Received - \$1380 USD (31,400,000 VDN Dongs)

#### Total Expenditure

S/N	Description	Qty	Cost (SGD)	Total Amount (SGD)	USD
1	Air Tickets for 5 pax	5	\$ 326	\$ 1,630	\$ 1,245
2	Air Ticket for 1 pax (Ticket was purchased later)	1	\$ 390	\$ 390	\$ 297
3	Accommodation for 1st night in Hanoi (29 Mar 2018) Hanoi Babylon Garden Hotel & Spa	3			\$ 195
4	Accommodation for 3 <sup>rd</sup> night in Hanoi (31 Mar 2018) Hanoi Babylon Garden Hotel & Spa	3			\$195
5	Airport Transfer to Hotel accommodation on 29 Mar 2018	1			\$ 30
6	Airport Transfer from Hotel accommodation on 1 <sup>st</sup> Apr 2018	1			\$ 20
Total					\$1982

### 2. VIFA Project Statement

No	Component	Unit	Unit Price (VND)	Unit Price (US\$)	Quantity	Sub-total (USD)	Note
1	Additional Books & stationaries for children						
	Pencils (Thien Long 2B1)	Box of 10	20,000	USD 0.89	30	USD 26.67	For primary school
	Notebooks (Hong Ha Pupil Friendship)	Block of 5	25,000	USD 1.11	60	USD 66.67	For primary school
	English & reference books	Book	45,000	USD 2.00	50	USD 100.00	For secondary school
2	Vehicles + tips for driver 45 seats bus	Package	6,800,000	USD 302.22	1	USD 302.22	Big bus for storage of books and donated items / logistics
3	Accommodation in Bac Giang (1 night)	Dorm	50,000	USD 2.22	29	USD 64.44	Including breakfast Mar 31 <sup>st</sup>
4	Breakfast (30th)	Pax	50,000	USD 2.22	29	USD 64.44	
5	Lunch with the school (30th)	Pax	-	USD 0.00	0	USD 0.00	Sponsored by the school
6	Dinner on Mar 30th	Meal	1,500,000	USD 66.67	1	USD 66.67	
7	Lunch on way back Mar 31st	Meal	2,430,000	USD 108.00	1	USD 108.00	
8	Drinks on the way and other necessities	Package	580,000	USD 25.78	1	USD 25.78	
<b>Total</b>						<b>USD 824.89</b>	
<b>Total including optional items</b>						<b>USD 824.89</b>	

### 3. TOTAL VIFA and SIFA Expenditure

**\$1982 + 824.89 =2806.89**

## **7. Conclusion**

Given the benefits and learning points on this joint project, we could possibly work towards another joint project in 2020/21 revisit the schools.



*Team VIFA and SIFA with teachers of Vo Tranh Primary School and volunteers.*



*VIFA & SIFA at the farewell party*