

UNIQUELY



WINTER 2018

BUILDING A LEGACY

30 years of learning to inspire | P.12



30th BIRTHDAY
EDITION

**A Heart
for Service**

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UNiquely UNIS!

The first international school in Vietnam. The original IB World School in Asia. One of only two United Nations international schools in the world.

Currently, the school of choice for a record 1123 students representing 64 different nationalities and over 300 faculty and staff from 25 countries.

Without a doubt UNIS Hanoi is unique. But what makes us UNiquely UNIS?

Is it the UN Principles that underscore all that we do, or our core Values? Is it our overarching commitment to **Learning**? Or is it that we expect **Responsibility** from every member of a **Community** that we treasure above all else?

Yes! UNIS Hanoi is guided by all of the above - every single day - and in partnership with every single member of our community.

Our Vision to be a learning community that is an inspirational role model for a better world is the driving force behind all that we do.

This is our identity. And within the pages of this bi-annual magazine, you'll soon see that this is what makes us UNiquely UNIS.



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From Values to Vision

UNIS Hanoi is an exceptional place to learn - It is the ideals and principles of the United Nations in action every day!

We are proud to be a learning community that celebrates cultural diversity, unleashing the creativity and innovation that comes from bringing the world together on one campus. Our students are curious, compassionate and confident. They understand, and are committed to building a better world. And they are undaunted by the boldness of a vision that is both inspiring and intimidating.

We are a learning community committed to every child's happiness and believe that it is the quality of relationships within our community that empower exceptional learning.

We are determined that our students are challenged and nurtured by exceptional faculty in order to realise their full potential and test their most aspirational goals, both in and outside the classrooms. Our teachers' passion for innovative learning, both for our students and for themselves, inspires excellence.

And it is that ambition for excellence for all, driven by a shared vision and underscored by shared values, that shaped our strategic plan for the School and our students' futures.

The plan, Strategy 2020, uses our core Values as the driving force to shape the future: Learning, Community and Responsibility are the Values that both underpin and impel all that we do at UNIS Hanoi.

Those Values have shaped goals which were crafted during three years of careful consultation with, and by listening to, our community's many voices and it is our commitment that we will continue to strive for our community's hopes and dreams together.

The depth and breadth of Strategy 2020 can be discovered in detail on the UNIS Hanoi website but in brief, it is three goals which put our Values into action, each with detailed objectives to turn vision into reality.



Excellent Learning

Excellent Learning will be the focus and the result of the efforts of all members of the school community. UNIS Hanoi is committed to moving all learning to new levels, so that every hour of every day spent at UNIS Hanoi provides excellent learning opportunities. If we want our young people to thrive in the future we need to be clear about what this means.

Strategy 2020 Goals

Connected Community

In an increasingly turbulent and uncertain world, it has never been more important to connect on a human level. Relationships matter and they start with our local community. The networks we create in the wider world will lead to collaboration and a building of collective knowledge that would be unachievable if we were to act alone. Our connected learning community will generate our sense of who we are now and what we will become.

Community with No Bystanders

Because we belong to the UNIS Hanoi community, we have unique opportunities to make a positive impact on others. Our impact can be global or local, influencing what goes on in Vietnam and what happens in the school playground. This means not standing on the sidelines when action is needed, building bridges and extending our responsibility beyond our own immediate concerns and by seeing ourselves as responsible and principled individuals who are truly able to make a difference to the community as a whole.



Excellent Learning

At UNIS Hanoi we define learning as the “process of creating meaning through acquiring, applying and synthesising new skills, understandings and knowledge.”

We believe that Excellent Learning is taking place at UNIS Hanoi when learners are:

- Extending their thinking and making thinking visible
- Modifying their thinking, behaviours and attitudes
- Developing new understandings and perspectives
- Reflecting on their learning experiences, their strengths and areas for development
- Transferring their learning to other settings and contexts
- Making connections to what they already know and can do
- Cooperating, collaborating and communicating in a variety of social contexts as well as being confident to learn independently
- Appropriately challenged and actively engaged
- Active, have frequent opportunities to move, transition and to process information
- Aware of the significance and relevance of their learning
- Encouraged and nurtured in learning environments characterised by supportive and mutually respectful relationships.





‘The world we want, make it happen!’ For the 30th year, this poignant United Nations (UN) Day message was the rallying cry to action for the whole School community.

UN Day, an annual highlight in the School calendar acts as a vibrant reminder of the commitment UNIS Hanoi has made to champion the UN principles and goals. And this year was no different. In front of students, faculty, staff, parents, members of UN agencies and the diplomatic community, the School celebrated its diversity and reaffirmed its efforts to live the UN values.

The two-hour event comprised choruses, cultural dance, speeches and poetry, while students paraded the flags of all 193 UN Member states and the two observer states.

Mr Kamal Malhotra, Resident Coordinator for the UN in Vietnam congratulated the School on its milestone anniversary and in his address to students he said, “As

30 YEARS OF MAKING THE WORLD WE WANT, HAPPEN!

30th BIRTHDAY EDITION

UNIS Hanoi students, you are guided by the UN values of peace, freedom, human dignity, justice and respect - all elements that are at the core of the UN’s sustainable development agenda – and you

therefore understand the need for the Sustainable Development Goals to be fulfilled.



A Birthday to Inspire!

We have a calendar of special events to celebrate 30 Years of Learning to Inspire:

- September 19 was our 'First Day' of school with our special assembly and all school photo featuring nearly 1500 people (front cover)!
- Also in September, our parents, faculty and staff kicked off the year in style with the Sparkly Social Birthday Bash!
- UN Day was a moment to mark the significance of our Mission, Vision and Values
- Our series of global alumni birthday parties from London to Tokyo keep the celebrations going all year long with our world wide family!
- A new School Anthem commissioned for our 30th Birthday was premiered at our Amazing Arts event in February supporting the Birthday Gift Fund.
- Sunday **March 25** the Birthday Spring Fair will bring our community together for food, fun and festivities!
- A special weekend in May will conclude our Birthday celebrations and also give our community a chance to celebrate our longest serving Head of School in his 10th and final year! Saturday **May 5** will be a 30th Birthday Party with alumni joining current community for a special event at The Sheraton, followed by a Sunday of Service on Sunday **May 6** for parents, students, faculty and alumni to join together and give back.

“You are the future, and will play a big role in building the kind of world we all want to see – a world that is fair and has eradicated poverty by 2030, a world without war or conflict, and a world that values the environment and addresses the climate change challenge.”

The friendship between the UN, UNIS Hanoi and Vietnam was further celebrated when guest speaker Mr Le Hoai Trung from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs thanked UNIS Hanoi for the contribution the School has made to Vietnam. He said, “UNIS Hanoi is the symbol of the commitment of the UN to Vietnam. The School is also a symbol of the expansion of the cooperation, and through the growth of UNIS Hanoi, you also see the achievements of Vietnam.”

Mr Trung, an alumni guardian, also commended the School for its

dedication to providing talented, underprivileged children from Vietnam the once in a lifetime opportunity to study at UNIS Hanoi through the School’s stellar Scholarship Programme. His remarks were followed by a speech from the Head of School, Dr Chip Barder, on what this milestone anniversary represented for him personally. His 10th UN Day in the School’s 30th year, Dr Barder shared how privileged he felt to have headed the School for so long and how his students ‘will always be [his] heroes’. Reinforcing the theme, ‘the world we want, make it happen’, Dr Barder said each student should take action when they see that there is a need.

He continued, “My message today is another reminder that every interaction we have is an opportunity to create the world we want. It is right in front of us each time we are with people. It is how we treat each other, knowing that we can have some impact in a small but meaningful way.”



UNIS Hanoi's Pioneers

Breaking New Ground

30th BIRTHDAY
EDITION

August 1988. Entering four dusty derelict classrooms at the back of the prominent Hanoi Amsterdam School, a young Vietnamese teacher, petite in stature, pumped her chest out and surveyed the rooms, slowly sizing up the task ahead of her. As the newly appointed secretary to the Head of Vietnam's very first international school, Tran Thi Lien knew a new era was dawning.

“When I heard that an international school was going to be established, I was excited for Vietnam” revealed Madam Lien, as she has always been known. “I would read and listen to CNN, the BBC, and other international news and I knew what change an international school could bring to Vietnam.”

So when UNDP approached Hanoi Amsterdam School for help recruiting a few staff members, the school in turn advertised the vacancies. Madam Lien, then a High School English Teacher and diplomat's wife, applied for the position of secretary to the Head of School, Dr Alice-Ann Winner. And got it.



Alice-Ann Winner at UNIS Hanoi's 25th Birthday Celebration

Her first assignment? Turning dilapidated rooms into a school. “Oh there was so much to do!” Madam Lien recalled. “But we were fortunate because we had the assistance of UNDP. Everything we needed, we called the UNDP for. They provided us with the chairs, tables and generator.”

Her new boss, on secondment from UNIS New York, arrived in Hanoi shortly before Ms Lien began her new role. Later claiming she came here to only be a teacher, not an administrator, Dr Winner said she received a warm welcome from the people of Vietnam.

Tran Thi Lien at Hanoi Amsterdam Campus





Graham Cherry welcomed UNIS Hanoi's 50th student.

She added, "At the time, I was the only American here, but people would often tell me they were happy to have me here because they loved teachers."

Madam Lien says of Alice, "She was a very nice, strong woman. "Back then it was very hard to run an international school, but she did it. To come from New York to Hanoi at that time, it was very different and to adjust to life here was very hard."

Bonding over a common goal to succeed, the two women rolled up their sleeves and within a short time, the doors to Vietnam's newest school opened with five part time teachers instructing just 12 students. "All of our students were children of UNDP employees" said Madam Lien. A School that was permitted by the Government of Vietnam to serve UN agencies and a new international community, soon grew. "Because the UN helped Vietnam a lot, it was essential that there was a school for UN families and the Government recognised that. And soon after, children of Ambassadors started coming too."



Graham Cherry visited UNIS Hanoi in 2013-2014

With a mandate to increase the student population, Alice advertised the new school on television, radio and in newspapers. By the time she departed Hanoi in 1990, the student body had quadrupled, leaving the future of the School in the hands of fellow UNIS New York teacher, Graham Cherry. As student numbers increased, so did the need for more space and better resources. UNIS Hanoi began occupying more classrooms, soon taking over the entire ground floor of their rented facilities, creating room enough to establish a library. Graham recalled, "I would attend regional school fairs where book publishers were represented and they couldn't believe there was an international school in Hanoi at that time so they would give us masses and masses of donated materials. We really established our first library based on donated materials."

Not only were library books donated, so too were textbooks. "You can imagine, we did not have a very large budget" explained Graham. "And so the curriculum we delivered did very much depend on the textbooks we were given." Although the curriculum was a 'mish-mash', Graham made



great strides to move the School towards inquiry-based learning, thanks to the few Primary Years Programme resources he'd garnered.

Madam Lien, then juggling two roles as a secretary and Vietnamese teacher, recalled the one-to-one learning that took place. She shared, "As a Vietnamese teacher it was very interesting to work at UNIS Hanoi because the teaching was so different to what we knew. At UNIS Hanoi I learned to teach the what, the when and the how. I watched students cooperating and through them, I learned the values of sharing."

By Graham's third year, student population spiked by an incredible 500 percent. "There was so much change and development at that time. It was enormous." recalled Graham. "Vietnam was opening up somewhat to the world and UN agencies and the diplomatic community were growing so we were popular. I was adding classrooms all the time."

Alongside classroom management, Graham, as the School's only administrator began putting policies in place. "I won the support of the Board to start recruiting teachers from other international schools instead of relying on expatriates who happened to be in Hanoi" he said.



Jim Ambrose at UNIS Hanoi's 25th Birthday Celebration

Five years old, and UNIS Hanoi was coming into its own. "In my fourth and final year, the School was ready to make the move towards self study and accreditation." Taking over the reins from Graham, was new Head, Jim Ambrose. Arriving from a long stint in Abu Dhabi, Jim, a career international educator was keen to build upon the foundation laid by Alice and Graham. "I'd had experience of international schools and I had a clear vision of what UNIS Hanoi needed to become - a world class learning institution. I saw my job as one of being a change agent; to take a school that was underfunded, that was in a poor facility with teachers who had vastly different teaching styles, and change it."

With the support of the School Board, Jim tightened policy, insisting on teacher certification from all faculty members. In addition, he began ordering textbook series' which provided a 'de-facto curriculum'. But one other task remained; that of requesting a permanent site for UNIS Hanoi.

Madam Lien interjected "We'd long hoped for a campus of our own, and there were many stops and starts during Alice and Graham's time. When Jim arrived, and knowing that Vietnam's economic policy had changed, I encouraged him to persuade the Government of Vietnam about the importance of building schools and hospitals. This was the Doi Moi era. It was now or never!"

Following advice from Madam Lien and with the support of the School Board, Jim set up meetings with officials from the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) and the Hanoi People's Committee.

Jim said, 'The initial discussions centered around the size of the campus. The School Board were the people I was working closely with, and getting land the size I thought we needed in order to build a world class institution was not going to be easy. The officials thought we'd be looking for one hectare of land, but I was asking for ten times more!'

Eventually, Jim kick-started discussions with Government officials; and in the most memorable of ways. He recalled, "There were six of us invited to dinner at the snake village by Mr Quang, the Head of Service Department. The purpose of that meeting was to open negotiations for land. [At the meeting] we had the Head of UNDP (and previous Board Chair), as well as the Head of the World Bank and his wife, who was our current Board Chair. They brought out the beating cobra heart vodka which traditionally goes to the most senior person at the table [to drink]. I knew that wasn't me. But the Heads of UNDP and the World Bank diplomatically declined, so they turned to me and lifting the glass, I said, 'Mr Quang here's to 10 hectares and I swallowed it!'"



BUILDING A LEGACY



Plan for UNIS Hanoi 2004



UNIS Hanoi 2016

Sitting proudly on 9.2 hectares of prime real estate, UNIS Hanoi's Ciputra campus, with its state-of-the-art facilities, remains the largest school campus in Vietnam. Ten modern buildings, playgrounds, a sports centre, swimming pool and playing fields are dotted across the enviably vast land, facilitating the learning of more than 1,100 students each and every day.

It's a far cry from the facilities the School started out with thirty years ago. "Back then we had rented four classrooms and an office space from Hanoi Amsterdam School" recalled Graham Cherry, UNIS Hanoi's second Head of School. Leap forward to 1997, and driven by the sheer number of students, the third Head of School, Jim Ambrose began conversations with the Government of Vietnam to have a 10-hectare purpose-built campus, rather than a one hectare site - an agreement sealed with a bold gulp of snake vodka, as was tradition.

Laying the foundations

In 1998 (UNIS Hanoi's 10th year) then Head of School, Dr Frances Rhodes, set the wheels in motion for a world class international school campus. School enrollment was increasing at an incredible rate and the allocation of classrooms at Hanoi Amsterdam School no longer sufficed. Board Chair at the time and mother of two, Jane Guy recalled, "Our son was in Grade 9 and our daughter was in Grade 5, and at the time the School only went up to Grade 10 because the building that we were in didn't have any more classrooms! So we didn't have a physical space to even go up to Grade 11 or Grade 12. To me that was really important, so that our son could continue on at the School and it was the main reason I joined the Board because I thought something could be done about this."

With the backing of the 10-member Board, Dr Rhodes set up a New Campus Committee; its first member, Peter Ryder.

"David Baggs, a member of the School Board and finance committee gave me a call one day" said Peter, a New York property magnate based in Vietnam. He continued, "We played softball together and he knew I was involved in real estate here. David asked if I would be interested in chairing a New Campus Committee,





and I agreed, not realizing how all consuming it was going to be!" Although not a parent at UNIS Hanoi at the time, but knowing that he wanted his twin boys to study there in the future, Peter dived straight into action. "I was the Chair and only member of the committee" he mused. On hearing the vision Dr Rhodes had for the School, Peter recommended Ciputra as the ideal site.

Working closely with Dr Rhodes and Jane, and recruiting American lawyer and UNIS Hanoi parent, Tony Foster into the mix too, Peter began negotiations with Ciputra.

Peter recalled, "Almost immediately it just struck me that the opportunity to convince the Ciputra Group to provide us with some sort of arrangement made sense and was the only thing we really pursued [as a committee]."

Tony Foster added, "Ciputra had enormous amounts of land and it would have been quite straightforward to sublease land from Ciputra, but we did not want to sublease from them because we thought they would go bankrupt! So in 1998, they ended up carving out 9.2 hectares of land and giving it back to the Hanoi People's Committee who we would eventually sublease from. We had to go to Ciputra who were quite happy to give up [the land] because it was something to kickstart and anchor their project. We had endless meetings and petitions that were signed by over 100 ambassadors, including the first post-war US Ambassador, Pete Peterson."

But negotiations would continue for another two years before Dr Rhodes and Jane would sign the agreement. "Our agreement with the Hanoi's People's Committee was literally the

very last thing I signed before I left Hanoi in December 2000 for Dhaka, Bangladesh" Jane revealed.

During the two years it would take for a contract to be signed, the School had vacated Hanoi Amsterdam's premises and occupied two five storey apartment buildings in Van Phuc, refurbishing them into classrooms as a temporary solution for the 398 enrolled students.

Dr Rhodes said, "It was during my fifth year at UNIS Hanoi that we finally had a land site with space for gyms, playgrounds, performing arts and other facilities. An architectural firm from Australia was hired to design the campus and I and my administrators spent several months that year designing a three-phase construction plan for the campus which has now become a showcase international school campus in Asia."

But the story does not end there. “One huge goal remained” stated Dr Rhodes. “That of securing funds with which to build the facility, a truly gut-wrenching task.”

“On a Sunday, we [the finance committee] were summoned to the old school” shared Tony. “Fran said we just can’t do the deal anymore. The costs had just come in from the contractors and it came in at USD1 million more than we had available through loans and the amount in the School’s Kitty. But after considerable deliberations, Peter subsequently drew up a plan that would mean that the development could go on.”

Construction begins

Work to construct the world class learning institution began in earnest in 2003, by which time Dr Rhodes had left for retirement, handing the baton over to British national, Alun Cooper. ‘I arrived at an interesting time!’ exclaimed Alun, Head of School from 2003 to 2008. “We’d received the ‘Red Book’ to build in Ciputra but we’d just lost our project manager and the site was one boggy, marshy, derelict piece of land with an occasional splodge of sand. And that was it!”

Undeterred, Alun spent his days commuting between his office in the Russian Towers in the old Van Phuc campus and Ciputra navigating a host of issues to be expected with such a pioneering project. Working with the New Campus Committee, Board Members and construction firm, AIC, Alun was able to ensure the school relocated to their new permanent home by August 2004 as promised, albeit two weeks over schedule.

The student body which had grown to more than 600 by 2004, suddenly mushroomed as a result of the ‘magnetic’ campus. Alun relayed, “As



soon as we moved onto the campus, student enrollment grew every single day. It was incredible. People suddenly arrived in Hanoi.”

Now in UNIS Hanoi’s 30th year, long term residents of Vietnam and parents of UNIS Hanoi graduates, Tony and Peter affirm the School’s incredible contribution to the country. Tony said, “There is not a single school in Vietnam that has the facilities we have and on a site like ours. There’s no school that has this space. 9.2 hectares of land was a good size and the reason [the campus] could be done was that it was done at the right time with passionate visionaries, Fran and Jane.”

“And if I hadn’t come up with the idea of Ciputra, it couldn’t have been done either” quipped Peter.

Speaking from Victoria, Canada, Jane remembered, “When we went to Hanoi in 1996, student population was 357 and at that time we knew it was going to grow. Everything that we did, every step we took, we took knowing that more people were going to be coming and we had to pave the way for new people. I remember having a meeting with parents and explaining that we had to increase the capital fees and they were unhappy. But I remember my

theme in trying to explain it; it was something along these lines: ‘we are laying the foundation today for future generations and just as previous people sacrificed and started the School from scratch so that we had a school for our kids to go to, we should do the same’. You can’t do these things for yourself, it has to be for the future. What you put in, someone else is going to reap. I look now and I say ‘My! We actually got to 30 years!’ This is what we wanted. Now the School is entrenched. It’s never going to fail, never going to go away. UNIS Hanoi is not only bricks and mortar, it’s also everything else that the School stands for. And people are going to Hanoi to live and work and they are always going to know that this is the school to go to. And this is exactly what you hope for at thirty years.”



A School that was founded on the principles of friendship and service to Vietnam would first receive a helping hand from local teachers in order to carry out their ambitious mission.

UNIS Hanoi famously began lessons in three classrooms located at the reputable Hanoi Amsterdam School. But it wasn't just a campus the two schools shared, it was a handful of teachers also.

Teachers such as Dao Thien Khai, a former Headmaster of Hanoi Amsterdam School. In 1988, as UNIS Hanoi's first math teacher, Mr Khai would spend half of his day teaching a class of five foreign students, before striding across the expansive school campus to teach the same subject, but to 30 Vietnamese high school students.

Thankfully, as Mr Khai pointedly remarked, 'math is universal', thus teaching the subject to non-Vietnamese students was not a problem for him. However, he continued,

“Teaching in English was new to me and it took time for me to learn how to do so. I remember visiting the library in my spare time and reading the book, ‘Mathematical Dictionary for Schools’ and learning from it.”

Intrigued by the new international school, Mr Khai enjoyed shuttling between the two distinct education systems, something he did for one year. He explained, “I was interested in understanding the model of education at UNIS Hanoi.” And Mr Khai wasn't the only one. He revealed, “At the time, there were three other part

time teachers who were Vietnamese - Madam Lien, Ms Ly and Mr Thong. We all enjoyed our time at UNIS Hanoi, but for me, working in two different schools was too much, so I had to give up the teaching at UNIS Hanoi after a year.”

Continuing his career at Hanoi Amsterdam School, Mr Khai rose up the ranks to become its Headmaster, enjoying good relationships with the faculty at UNIS Hanoi. So much so, that when UNIS Hanoi grew in size and administrators were looking for new staff, Mr Khai encouraged his daughter, Dao Huang to apply for a position. She has worked at UNIS Hanoi ever since.

Now 80 years old and retired and still living just a short drive away from UNIS Hanoi's Ciputra campus, the octogenarian math master remains heartened by the School's achievements, thirty years on.

30th BIRTHDAY EDITION

THE FIRST OF MANY



A Career to Inspire

A teacher who was handpicked to help set the language curriculum for every International Baccalaureate school across the globe credits UNIS Hanoi for her professional success.

Vietnamese language teacher, Hoa Phan, found herself in The Hague four times in the last 18 months collaborating with nine other educators from every corner of the world in a bid to develop a comprehensive Language A curriculum for the IBO from 2019 onwards.



She says the experience was the greatest privilege of her career to date, a career that started and has flourished at UNIS Hanoi. Hoa said, “I joined the School straight after graduation. A friend saw a vacancy for a part time Vietnamese teacher and I applied. I’ve been here for 22 years now and in that time, I’ve been able to grow professionally, completing a Master’s degree and several courses over the years.”

From part time Teacher to an Examiner and Workshop Leader and now as a Curriculum Contributor,

Hoa’s decision to dedicate more than two decades to the School was an easy one. She revealed,

“As a person I feel respected and listened to. The School environment is multicultural and I have learned so much from my international colleagues and their cultures. UNIS Hanoi has also been a place where I have been able to keep on learning and developing. I’m happy here.”

As well as being the source of professional success, UNIS Hanoi offered Hoa a surprising extra. “I met the love of my life here eight years ago” she explained. Now a mother of two, with a daughter graduating from UNIS Hanoi this Summer, Hoa said she has no plans of ever leaving the School she loves so much. She continued, “Because of all the good things I have experienced, I feel more devoted to the School. And I’m looking forward to teaching the new curriculum in 2019 and showing my students the sections I wrote and explaining to them the rationale behind the new curriculum content. Being able to do that makes me so proud!”



The Loyal Gatekeeper

30th BIRTHDAY EDITION

Everyday, more than 2,000 people flow in and out of the School campus to learn, to teach, to inspire. Helping to keep them all safe is UNIS Hanoi's longest serving member of staff, Hanh Tran, who has worked at the School for more than a quarter of a century.

Now a security guard, Hanh originally joined the workforce as a cleaner in the day and a security guard at night when the School was still based in rented accommodation at Hanoi Amsterdam School. He described feeling 'lucky' to work in a multicultural environment where he knew he would learn from others - a dream of his. More than two decades later, and astonished by the growth of the school he considers his second family, Hanh said UNIS Hanoi truly changed his life. He added, "The School was so small when I joined that I knew everyone by name and they were so friendly. I was 21 years old and it was the first time I had ever interacted with foreigners. But even though UNIS Hanoi has become bigger, the spirit of family at the school still remains, and that's the reason I have chosen to remain here for more than 26 years.



"I'll be here until I retire. Thanks to UNIS Hanoi, I've found more than just a job, I've found a family and friends too. Occasionally, old students will return and they'll remember me. Or students who joined when they were in Kindergarten and are now in High school, still say hello to me. That's very special to me."

As one of the School's eagle-eyed gatekeepers, Hanh has seen the good, the challenging and the comical. He recalled, "When we

were on our first campus, the PE department organised a sports day. Unfortunately it rained heavily the night before the event and we turned up to work with water above our ankles. We hurriedly helped the faculty members sweep the water away and restore the obstacle courses and other activities the PE teacher had set up. It was so strange to me, seeing the whole faculty and staff coming together to save an event that I had never heard of before."

On a personal level, Hanh has also witnessed first-hand the benefits of international education. "Because of UNIS Hanoi I learned English and I encouraged both my children to learn English when they were small too. Now my daughter is an English teacher at a local school and my son is studying Hospitality Management in Finland!"

A proud member of the UNIS Hanoi community, Hanh says the School's impact on Vietnam has been phenomenal - more than he could have ever imagined. "UNIS Hanoi has changed education in Vietnam and has inspired many of us here, not just as a country but as individuals too."

UNIS HANOI'S BOOMERANG EFFECT

30th BIRTHDAY EDITION



A brother and sister duo who studied at UNIS Hanoi back in 1997 have found themselves living and working a stone's throw away from their alma mater.

Ken and Anna Langrish-Smith who hail from New Zealand were students at UNIS Hanoi at a time when a state-of-the-art campus and a rigorous IB programme were but a figment of the imagination. Now two decades on, the siblings spend their days delivering delicacies from their family restaurant, Jafa, to the school they once belonged to but no longer recognise.

"The School we went to was nothing like the UNIS Hanoi of today!" Anna, 32, exclaimed. "Rats would jump out of lockers, the classrooms would flood and whenever we had an activity we'd be bussed to another venue" added Ken, 34.

By 1998 though, Ken remembers feeling 'stoked' by the prospect of the School relocating to new, albeit

temporary facilities in the Van Phuc area. "The classrooms in Hanoi Amsterdam School were becoming run down" he explained.

However, despite the stark difference in the School's physical structure over the years, the siblings believe the spirit of UNIS Hanoi remains unchanged.

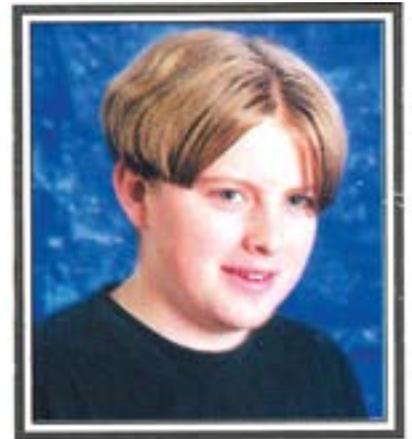
Anna shared,

"UNIS Hanoi is special because of the diversity of the people that are there. Everyone has these different expat stories and it's quite cool to meet people who lived in other places."

Now as owners of popular spot, Jafa, Anna cherishes the chance to continue meeting people from all walks of life. She continued,

"Not a day goes by that we don't have some interaction with UNIS Hanoi. When old friends contact me, I say to them, 'you're not going to believe this but we work next to the School!'"

Whether it's long serving UNIS Hanoi teachers regaling stories of the siblings to Jafa customers whenever they stop by, or fellow alums getting in touch for an impromptu reunion, UNIS Hanoi has left an indelible impression on the duo. So much so, that the two support the School's Scholarship



programme by hosting fundraisers at their premises too.

Ken, a father of one who made Vietnam his permanent home in 2011, said, "If I had hated my experience back then, I wouldn't have come back and get involved with the School professionally."

Anna who relocated to Hanoi from New Zealand eleven years ago, agreed. She said, "Hanoi is such a special place, and UNIS Hanoi certainly played a part in why we have loved it here. And that's why we were delighted to join the School's efforts to raise funds to support a talented yet underprivileged Vietnamese student through High School at UNIS Hanoi."



30th BIRTHDAY EDITION

Making Lasting Waves in Vietnam



A formidable swim coach who kick-started UNIS Hanoi's expansive aquatics programme and academy says it all started when a small group of children inspired her into action.

Ella Healy joined UNIS Hanoi in 2006 as an Early Childhood Centre (ECC) PE Teacher. But it didn't take long for her to realise that her past experience as an aquatics director was in great demand. Especially, she revealed, when she witnessed the sheer dedication a handful of students and their parents had demonstrated.

"The School had a nice new pool by the time I joined but there was no swim programme in place" recalled Ella. There was however, a swim team called the Hammerheads who were made up of UNIS Hanoi students, coached by their parents. The parents heard that I had been a coach in the past and they approached me."

Despite holding down a full time job as a PE teacher, the mother of two knew that the community needed someone who could develop a programme that would 'make the most of the beautiful facility'. Ella continued,

"There were simply no opportunities to swim in Hanoi, yet the interest in a specialised programme was ahead of us by so many steps; I thought to myself, if I didn't do it, who would?"

For a year, Ella skillfully juggled two roles before becoming UNIS Hanoi's very first full time Aquatics Director in 2007, rolling out a Discovery to Grade 12 curriculum that was based on American Red Cross courses and guidelines. Ella pulled together



ways UNIS Hanoi could help, beyond the ad hoc invitations the School extended to youth NGOs, KOTO and Blue Dragon Children’s Foundation.

“We started looking at different models and I visited different schools to see if they had any Learn-to-Swim classes we could adopt and adapt. Our biggest challenge was that we had a lot of different instructors who would come and go, yet we wanted to establish a programme that was sustainable.”

Ella and her team soon realised that UNIS Hanoi students held the solution. Thanks to a \$10,000 grant from the School’s 25th Birthday Gift Fund, Ella developed a unique student-led service learning initiative called Swim for Life. Students 16 years and above were given the chance to gain the American Red Cross Water Safety Instructor’s certificate, equipping them to expertly deliver water safety skills to their underprivileged beneficiaries. Empowering UNIS Hanoi students in this manner was important to Ella. She said, “I really tried to stay in the background. I wanted to empower our students to lead and direct the programme. We spent a lot of time thinking about how to teach children

a team of coaches by scouring the pool of existing talent within Hanoi’s expatriate community, each one eventually trained to American Red Cross instructor level. By 2010, the School joined the Asia Pacific Activities Conference (APAC), giving students the chance to compete against international schools in Vietnam, China, and South Korea.

But Ella’s efforts did not end there. In 2012 she learned that 796 Vietnamese children died from drowning that year alone. What was more shocking to hear was that the vast majority of the deaths, UNICEF confirmed, were preventable. Spurred into action, Ella started researching



of different abilities, plan the lessons, think through challenges as well as conduct the teaching.”

In July 2017, after an 11 year stint at UNIS Hanoi, Ella left the School for a new role in Hong Kong. But she says, UNIS Hanoi will forever hold a special place in her heart. She added, “Before coming to Vietnam, a friend of mine said to me: ‘when you go to a developing country, think about what you can give.’ Vietnam was the first developing country I’d ever worked in. Throughout my time, I always thought not only about what I can give, but what my students can also give to a country that has hosted us so kindly for all these years.”

With more than 2,300 people now using the swimming pool year in year out, and a service learning programme that continues to save lives, Ella’s early hopes of giving back continues to impact.

Modelling Best Practice

30th BIRTHDAY EDITION



More than 100 students in Grades 8 to 12 are getting first hand knowledge of how the United Nations operates thanks to the exemplary Model United Nations (MUN) programme that's run at the School.

Now in its tenth year, the MUN has become UNIS Hanoi's most popular Middle and High School co-curricular activity, giving globally minded students the opportunity to collaborate and debate about current world issues. With three conferences scheduled throughout the school year, students soon learn how the UN fulfils its ambitious mission and reaches resolutions when international conflicts arise. And for UNIS Hanoi students, that's essential learning. Grade 12 student and one of the MUN student leaders, Yoav Shahar explained,

"I think that it is important for a UN school to have MUN because it helps students like me understand the processes which drive the UN, and this should be an important part of being in a UN school."

Originally from Israel, Yoav has been a part of MUN for the past four years. He says he was first attracted to the group because his mother, formerly Israel's Ambassador to Vietnam, once worked for the UN. He added, "Some of the stories my mother told me were so exciting I decided I had to see it for myself!" Intrigue and a desire to understand others, were also reasons fellow MUN participant and Filipino/US national Bea Campilan joined. The Grade 11 student who has been a part of MUN for three years, revealed that as a UNIS Hanoi student she also felt it was her duty to get involved.

She explained, "As one of only two UN schools in the world, I believe it is especially important that students at our school understand the opportunities we have been given and take advantage of them so that we can better the situations of others. Model United Nations is exactly as the title says - a model, or a simulation, of what the United Nations does. Through this programme, we receive insight into what world leaders go through in order to resolve problems that have consequences on a global scale, and as a school that represents the United Nations, I believe it is



essential for us to understand what they do."

UNIS Hanoi's SDG*-linked curriculum coupled with students' genuine interest in world issues is why MUN has achieved 'rock star glamour' status among students, explained Middle and High School Humanities Teacher and MUN patron, Sandra Schneiderman.

Donna Frose, Head of Department for Individuals and Societies and MUN stalwart patron concurred, "There are students who want to actively look at and solve the world's problems. Their desire to get involved in some way is heightened because we are a UN school. It is just the mindset that the students come to the group with."

A record breaking 18 schools are expected at the upcoming



conference, hosted by UNIS Hanoi in March. Entitled, 'Our World - taking care of our home!', the tenth conference will debate hot topics such as the Syrian Civil War, biodiversity conservation and combating the growth of economic inequality. The event, as always, has been organised by the students, with Donna and Sandra 'steering' them through the process. And if the behind-the-scenes hustle and bustle is anything to go by,

the conference is set to be the best yet. Yoav shared, "What makes the conference we host special is that it's fairly inclusive as we let new schools join. I also think that the conference is special because of the diversity of committees. We have seven different committees which can be quite varied in their nature - and for a relatively 'small' conference of 300 people this is quite an achievement!"

UNIS Hanoi's MUN conference takes place from March 1-3, 2018.

**SDG - Sustainable Development Goals*



Connected Learning Community

In an increasingly turbulent and uncertain world, it has never been more important to connect on a human level. Relationships matter and they start with our local community. The networks we create in the wider world will lead to collaboration and a building of collective knowledge that would be unachievable if we were to act alone. Our connected learning community will generate our sense of who we are now and what we will become.



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Hanoi Activities Conference
Youth Sports Volleyball





From UNIS Hanoi student to an advisor to the UN, one alum says his time at the School was the making of him...

30th BIRTHDAY EDITION

An international aid expert who implements high level development strategies in some of the world's poorest nations, says his lifelong passion for service was ingrained in him at UNIS Hanoi.

Sam Sternin, a consultant who has worked with UNFPA, UNICEF and the Gates Foundation among others, says the UN principles he learned at the School gave him a strong sense of social justice and social values.

“The School was very clear that we were a privileged school in a lower income environment,” recalled Sam. “So there was always a focus on giving back to our host community.”

As the 53rd student at UNIS Hanoi, Sam remembers a School that was very close, a School where

THE GLOBAL GAME CHANGER

every student, teacher and staff member was known by name and valued by each other. From 1990 to

1995, Sam, a French and American national, experienced a ‘hodge podge’ of a curriculum, delivered in



very poor at the time, the Vietnamese were very proud of their history, proud of their struggle and proud of the fact that they rebuilt their country without very much outside support. That was important for me [to know] because it helped me understand that international development is not about wealthy Europeans going somewhere to save the poor, but it's actually about empowering [indigenous] people to improve their own lives. That's something I've definitely taken away from my time at UNIS Hanoi."

In addition to the profound life lessons he picked up, Sam recollects the 'Fire of 1992' that saw the entire school body evacuated from their building while a corner of Hanoi Amsterdam School - occupied by a rubber factory - burned long into the night.

"I also lead protests!" 37 year-old Sam enthused. "One hot summer, we had serious power cuts for several days. We had no electricity and of course when there's no electricity, there's no running water. The classrooms were just ovens and a bunch of the students complained to the Acting

Head of School at the time, saying 'we can't study like this', but she refused to let us go home. Eventually, in protest about 30 of us walked out of the classrooms that day."

Sam continued, "Just when we felt we had made our point, we returned to School the very next day with notes from our parents consenting to an early dismissal if the classrooms were still too hot. When the Acting Head once again refused to allow us to go home, virtually all the students walked out." Sam concluded, "The Acting Head left UNIS Hanoi shortly after."

Five years of adventure, camaraderie, and the privilege of living in a country that was rapidly rising, made Sam appreciate the UN's mission of tolerance and commitment to building a more peaceful and just world.

Vietnam, a country that holds a special place in Sam's heart was naturally the first country he worked in right after his graduation from Harvard and Princeton at the turn of the 21st century. And now, almost twenty years later, the globetrotting nomad who is currently based in Istanbul, hopes to make Hanoi his home once again. His itchy feet, he says, a consequence of living an expatriate life.

He shared, "I've lived in the Philippines, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Singapore, Ethiopia, the United States of America, and now Turkey. It's interesting, of the UNIS Hanoi kids I've been in touch with, half I'd say have found a place they like and have settled down, and the other half like me, choose to move around. But whatever field we've chosen, there is a definite international element."

Internationally minded stewards of our global society making an impact; certainly a true embodiment of what it means to be an alum of UNIS Hanoi.

an environment that in its simplicity, reminded him and his peers that 'they were really in Vietnam'. But, Sam stressed, the exposure to the harsh realities of life for many ordinary Vietnamese people during that time was something he cherished. He explained, "Although Vietnam was



SCHOOL FOR PARENTS TOO!

For thirty years, UNIS Hanoi has been a beacon of learning and discovery, not just for students but for parents too. As a School that embraces parent involvement in a variety of ways, UNIS Hanoi has earned a special place in the hearts of thousands of moms and dads.

Sojin Lee, whose Grade 10 daughter, Shin Young, started at UNIS Hanoi when she was three years old, credits the School for teaching her the value of agency through volunteering. She said “In Korea, parents do not get involved with school life in the way we do here



and that was new to me. My daughter struggled to settle into School when we first arrived in Hanoi. As a result, I got to know her teacher very well. It wasn't long before I was asked to volunteer, reading books in Korean to my daughter's Discovery class. That was the first time I had volunteered and I enjoyed it.” Ever since, Sojin has been an active parent volunteer and now plays an integral role as a representative for the School's Korean Parent group.

Seeing her daughter experience a childhood and education that was different to her own, Sojin says she's learned from her daughter's example of independence and going after what she wants.

“I see my daughter making her own choices and I'm inspired by that.”

Another parent who cherishes UNIS Hanoi's values of lifelong learning, diversity and community, is mother of two, Hien Nguyen from Vietnam. As the School's former receptionist, Hien was familiar with UNIS Hanoi long before her children joined as students. She said her strong relationship with the



staff, teachers and families confirmed to her that UNIS Hanoi was the only school she wanted her children to attend. She explained, “UNIS Hanoi does more than teach, it is a place where each child has the chance to understand themselves deeply and in turn understand and respect other people.”

Hien who has been a champion for the Scholarship Fund and has also been involved in the Spring Fairs annually, says being an active parent has enriched her children's school experience and she has benefitted from the close relationships she's nurtured with teachers.

Her daughter, Chi, graduated from UNIS Hanoi in 2014 and her youngest is in Grade 10.

“For 17 years, UNIS Hanoi has been a huge part of my life. I can't see that changing.”

*** What have you learned from UNIS Hanoi? Share your story in UNiquely UNIS. Contact stories@unishanoi.org**



SPURRING COMPETITION

A sports and activities league that was conceived by one UNIS Hanoi faculty member has become a lifeline to other international schools in the city.

The Hanoi Activities Conference (HAC) was spearheaded by UNIS Hanoi's Activities Director, Tarique Al-lesa at the end of the 2014-15 school year in a bid to introduce structure, set expectations and encourage higher standards among ten 'like-minded' schools.

Formed to foster better collaboration and healthy rivalry, HAC, has given international school students mutually agreed seasons and tournaments for them to participate in. To date, approximately 1,200 students take part in as many as 19 sports tournaments and events such as the Math Olympiad and Film Festival throughout the academic year.

Explaining the importance of the league, Tarique, who has chaired the programme for the past two years, said,

“There was collaborative work between schools before we set up HAC but it was ad hoc. Establishing HAC gave a structure for

schools to develop their season and their calendar so we all know the schedule ahead of time. These tournaments also give something for the kids to shoot for and take pride in locally because we have travelling trophies that feature the winning schools.”

Tarique also recognised that regional conferences such as MRISA and APAC were not open to other international schools across the city, thus through HAC, other schools benefited from a much needed structured activities organisation they could join when there were none available to them.

UNIS Hanoi's efforts to ensure such a programme exists has been appreciated by competitor schools, confirms Concordia International School Hanoi's Head of School Steve Winkelman. As one of the founding schools, Concordia, he says, has benefited immensely from the initiative and it's all thanks to UNIS Hanoi's efforts. He shared, “HAC really exists because of UNIS Hanoi's willingness

to take a lead on it. There was a point in time where none of the schools really had facilities in place yet, so UNIS Hanoi was shouldering a big part of the burden when it came to hosting the tournaments and games. If they had not done that, none of this would have happened. To me that falls entirely on Tarique and his willingness to step up when he and UNIS Hanoi really didn't have to.

“UNIS Hanoi is involved in APAC and involved in MRISA, and I realise that locally the level of competition from a UNIS Hanoi standpoint wasn't really there. Yet we appreciate that a lot of time and energy and resources went into this to make this happen when there wasn't a direct benefit for UNIS Hanoi at that time.”

The ten schools that make up HAC are:

- UNIS Hanoi
- Concordia International School Hanoi
- British International School
- Saint Paul American School,
- British Vietnamese International School
- Hanoi International School
- International School Vietnam
- Olympia School
- Wellspring International School
- Singapore International School-Ciputra.



Community with No Bystanders

Because we belong to the UNIS Hanoi community, we have unique opportunities to make a positive impact on others. Our impact can be global or local, influencing what goes on in Vietnam and what happens in the school playground. This means not standing on the sidelines when action is needed. It means building bridges and extending our responsibility beyond our own immediate concerns. It means seeing ourselves as responsible and principled individuals who are truly able to make a difference to the community as a whole.

Community Programmes -
Science Discovery Project





One of Vietnam's most prominent retail interior designers Luu Viet Thang who is renowned for creating store fixtures and outlets for major international brands credits his current success to the two year scholarship he was awarded by UNIS Hanoi.

Unknown to many, Thang, together with his cousin Luu Tu Anh and another local adolescent, named Thach, became UNIS Hanoi's very first Vietnamese students.

On a trial two year scholarship programme, the trio joined UNIS Hanoi as middle schoolers, back in 1992.

Thang, who heads up Hexagon, a company with 400 staff and multiple offices across Vietnam, recalled,

“Studying at UNIS Hanoi changed my life. I was going to a local school when my uncle, who worked with UNICEF, told my school that UNIS Hanoi was offering scholarships. I remember sitting a lot of exams and meeting the Head of School, Graham Cherry, not really knowing what this opportunity meant.”

Pleased to have passed the rigorous tests, Thang, Tu Anh and Thach became a part of the UNIS Hanoi community during the middle of the school year. And the three loved the experience. “Everyone made us feel very welcome and I remember we were invited to all the parties. They used to also have some parties at a restaurant where the burger was USD2.00 and we couldn't afford it. That was a lot of money to us at the time. But when the teachers and students realised we weren't joining those parties because of the cost, they started covering the cost for us. We were very much a part of the School. It was a special time.”

UNCOVERING SCHOLARSHIP SUCCESS

30th BIRTHDAY EDITION

Thang recalls how some teachers went the extra mile. He said, “An Australian teacher called Sara Smith, whom I’m still in touch with, would often invite me to her house for dinner or to play with her children. And just last year I met up with her daughter, Emily, in Cambodia where she is working.”

Although Thang, Tu Anh and Thach were students at UNIS Hanoi for just two years, Thang says that learning in English as well as benefiting from a different teaching method left a lasting impact. He explains, “In Vietnamese schools, you learn to memorize information. At UNIS Hanoi, we learnt to explore and understand what we were being taught.”

Thang remembers Chemistry being his favourite subject. “I loved to experiment” he revealed. “I liked having fun. That was the difference between my experience and that of my cousin Tu Anh; I was playing, she was studying.”



Thang, who is also a Vice Dean of Faculty of Interior and Exterior Design, University of Industrial Fine Art of Hanoi, reported how his cousin continued to be studious, achieving a law degree decades later. “She’s now a successful international lawyer based in the UK.”

According to records, the one-of-a-kind scholarship programme was initiated by the Board of UNIS Hanoi at the time. Very few details exist but what has remained is the remarkable impact the scheme made on three once unknown recipients.



INVESTING IN FUTURE SUCCESS

“It was little Linh who saw a wife abused by an aggressive husband and decided to stay silent. With education, little Linh could have persuaded the miserable wife to raise her voice knowing that violence against women is unacceptable in the 21st century. Yet, it was a worker who got fired because his manufacturing skills were not adapted for the modern services industry. If he would have been trained and educated to adapt the change in society, he wouldn’t live in hunger.”

After four years of learning at UNIS Hanoi, this startling mature conclusion was reached by one of the School’s current scholars, 17 year-old Linh Nguyen. The only child of a single mother, Linh grew up witnessing a lot of suffering, both before and after her father’s untimely death in 2004. Not knowing what life had in store for her and living below the breadline, Linh



powered ahead in school desperate for a way to improve her lot. Her path to a better life, she discovered, could be found through quality education.

Linh explained, “To me, education is indeed a protective shield, empowering those who are in need.”

And with these words Linh, encapsulates a key driver for the



Scholarship Programme. The other, is to ensure that need is no obstacle to truly achieving full potential for the most talented youngsters. And Linh is proof of that, especially as she’s received a full four year scholarship to prominent US college Vanderbilt University.

Started six years ago by Head of School, Dr Chip Barder, the Scholarship Programme was designed to offer exceptional Vietnamese High School students from disadvantaged backgrounds

the once in a lifetime opportunity to study and graduate from Vietnam’s international school of choice.

Dr Barder passionately believed that lives of promise, such as Linh’s, could be transformed so that they could in turn transform the lives of others, and of the country. This is the vision he had for the programme, a vision that’s already reaping rewards. To date, four scholars have successfully graduated, with nine, including Linh, currently learning at the School.

This story of success has only been made possible through the generous support of the UNIS Hanoi community. Linh’s transformation has been supported by a UNIS Hanoi family and the creation of the Bitexco Founders Scholarship, and two additional scholarships have been funded through annual community fundraising campaigns.

Among the scholars are aspiring doctors, artists, marketers, teachers

and entrepreneurs. Linh for example, hopes to study abroad before returning to Vietnam to dedicate her life to making the dreams of children once like her, come true. With such ambition unearthed in the scholars, it is no wonder that Dr Barder remains resolute in his commitment to the programme, a commitment that will continue well after his departure this summer thanks to the establishment of the Dr Charles Barder Scholarship.

A ten year fund to mark his ten years as UNIS Hanoi’s Head of School, the Dr Charles Barder Scholarship will support a series of talented High School Vietnamese students over the next decade. A legacy which will ensure many more remarkable Linh’s may be discovered.

To learn more about Linh and the other nine scholars, visit www.unishanoi.org/scholarshipfund

Lives Transformed



Nam at Hanoi Alumni Reunion

Sitting in an Oxford University math lecture alongside 100 of the world's best and brightest, Nam Nguyen is feeling fortunate. The modestly ambitious 21 year-old son of a motorbike taxi rider from Vietnam never imagined he'd one day be studying at the globally renowned British university that has once again been ranked number one in the world*. But thanks to UNIS Hanoi's Scholarship Programme, the impossible has become possible.

Nam shared, "Just six years ago, I was a shy student at an ordinary Vietnamese High School who didn't have any idea of what life could be like beyond Vietnam." That all changed when Nam became UNIS Hanoi's very first Scholar, securing a three-year full scholarship to study at the School from Grades 10 to 12. An impressive young man from the beginning, Nam seized all opportunities available to him to achieve a perfect score of 45 in his IB Diploma, joining only three other

students in UNIS Hanoi's thirty year history to do so.

Not surprising, his academic brilliance and all-round character won him his second full scholarship, this time to study at the highly reputed Williams College in Massachusetts to join their math and computer science programme. Now, as part of the College's study abroad initiative, Nam has won another highly competed opportunity and finds himself in Oxford, England for this academic year.

It's an extraordinary step in an already extraordinary transformational adventure for Nam who's keen to embark on a career in finance soon after college. He revealed,

"I remain very grateful to UNIS Hanoi for the incredible opportunity they gave to me. I couldn't have wished for a better High School environment and now looking back, it was a remarkable journey I was on that has helped me to go further than I could have ever imagined."

Commenting on Nam's soaring success, Dr Chip Barder said, "Our school has been, and always will be, about helping students to have as many opportunities as possible when they leave us. This is true for all students regardless of age, nationality, talents, abilities and interests. When it comes to our



Phuong at Lafayette College

scholarship students, this goal is even more pronounced since by offering a scholarship, we have offered them an opportunity that they otherwise could not afford.”

Dr Barder continued, “It is still up to all of our students to work hard in order to help create and develop those opportunities. Nam, is a testament to this, making the most of the opportunity he was provided as a UNIS Hanoi Scholar six years ago. He is truly on a transformative journey and continues to confirm what a good decision it was by our Board of Directors to begin the scholarship programme in 2012. And with UNIS Hanoi now providing the opportunity for nine scholars each year to attend our School, the impact of this programme has been significantly magnified. The future bodes well for these students, for UNIS Hanoi, and we hope for Vietnam too.”

Since Nam’s departure from UNIS Hanoi, three other scholars have successfully graduated, namely Phuong Ly, Linh Vu and Lam Luu.

Now a pre-Med and international relations student at Lafayette College in the United States of America, Phuong Ly continues to chase her dream of being a doctor. She said, “As part of my course in international relations, I study a lot about society and I’ve learned that there are a lot of factors that can count towards a person’s success. When I think of my success I know that much of it is down to UNIS Hanoi.”

She continued, “Because of my parents’ condition, I could not have received much help from them, and because I was an entire newbie who didn’t know how to apply to college, I had to gain all of my knowledge from UNIS Hanoi. The School helped me

get into college and I can’t think of anything more important than that. Because of UNIS Hanoi, I’m on track to becoming the doctor I always dreamed of being.”

In addition to equipping Phuong Ly with the skills to continue being academically successful, Phuong Ly says UNIS Hanoi has given her lifelong friends, people she’s still in touch with to this day.

She said, “UNIS Hanoi is so inclusive. It was a place where I never felt isolated, not once. The School is an awesome place because of its values and even though there are other international schools opening up, they are not UNIS Hanoi and that’s because they can never be as inclusive or as diverse as we know UNIS Hanoi to be. I wish to see UNIS Hanoi grow because I think as many students as possible should have access to the education and



Linh in Abu Dhabi

curriculum available at the School.”
 Linh Vu is equally full of praise for UNIS Hanoi and the Scholarship programme she benefitted from. Currently based in Abu Dhabi as a full scholarship student of NYU Abu Dhabi, the 18 year old credits UNIS Hanoi for teaching her to take risks. She said, “Being a part of UNIS Hanoi made me more confident and helped me find my value as a person. I learned that even during a time of struggle, I know that eventually everything will be okay and that comes from the confidence I’ve found within myself.” For Linh Vu, her learning journey is far from over. “I’m still not sure what I’m going to do in the future, but I’m getting closer” she confided. What she is certain of though, is that UNIS Hanoi has helped her bridge the gap between her previously narrow perspective as a Vietnamese student to a more international, open minded one. “I find I’m more open to accepting the differences in others than if I had remained in a local Vietnamese school.”



Linh and Lam at Hanoi Alumni Reunion

Graduating alongside Linh was Lam Luu. A talented artist and performer, Lam opted to take a gap year, building his phenomenal portfolio of art before setting off to college. Reflecting on his time at UNIS Hanoi, Lam said, “I learned to take pride in my Vietnamese heritage, something I had struggled to embrace before. In addition to that, I realize now that UNIS Hanoi helped me to learn to think critically, reflect on things and know how to connect with people and work with others to achieve better outcomes. UNIS Hanoi has turned me into the person I am today, and I’m grateful for that.”

** Times Higher Education world rankings 2018*

LEARNING FOR THE COMMUNITY, BY THE COMMUNITY



UNIS Hanoi's expansive community programme will undergo a makeover in a bid to better foster learning for the community by the community.

The move comes as part of the School's resolve to guarantee that quality learning remains at the front and centre of every workshop, class and course offered. And with a phenomenal 1600 adults and children taking advantage of the 155 different activities every year, there is a real

opportunity to inspire and make sure real learning happens.

Activities Director, Tarique Al-lesa is leading the service audit which has highlighted the strengths of the programme while pinpointing the areas for improvement. He said, "As part of our review, we hope to implement changes that will ensure the programme is accessible, user friendly and meets a high standard each and every time."

Community programme sessions are currently delivered in 8 - 9

week bursts, three times a year. Activities such as swimming, music, photography, cooking, Saturday Soccer and learning Vietnamese prove popular with participants of all ages and abilities. Open to both members and non members of the UNIS Hanoi community, the initiative has long been the bedrock of the School's community outreach mission.

Tarique continued, "We realize the programme plays an integral role in Hanoi, serving the needs of adults and children who may not otherwise have had a chance to use our facilities. We are committed to delivering the programme to the highest standard and part of this review is to evaluate ourselves and ensure that we continue to do what we aspire to do as a School. Our core business is learning and this needs to be reflected in the programme's new mission statement."

The audit is set to be completed in the Spring with proposed adjustments implemented shortly thereafter.

To learn more about the School's community programme, please log onto our website: www.unishanoi.org

A Heart for Service

“Maybe I’m a lucky one...When all the difficulties made me feel hopeless, I saw the light of mercifulness from you...my sister...” These words, crafted originally in Vietnamese, were from Bui Duc Trung, a young boy who was at the brink of certain death, but given a new lease of life thanks to the generosity of one UNIS Hanoi student, Linnea Niklasson.



On paper, Trung and Linnea seem to have little in common. One hails from a small village just outside of Hanoi, the son of farmers. The other comes from Sweden, the oldest daughter of a technology business owner. Yet, incredibly the two have formed an unbreakable bond thanks to an initiative borne through Linnea’s Primary Years Programme Exhibition project.

Sixteen year old Linnea explained, “In Grade 5, I wanted to use the PYP project as an opportunity to learn more about my heart problem as I was just beginning to learn why I had had many surgeries during the first five years of my life. I was born with a condition known as ASD VSD Transposition of the Aorta and I wanted to research this more. My research got me thinking about children in Vietnam who may be born with the same or a similar condition and what kind of medical care is available to them. I visited multiple

hospitals in Vietnam to see how they looked and I found they were so different to hospitals in Sweden; with three patients sharing one bed even!”

Shocked to see inadequate provisions of care for children with heart defects, Linnea was spurred on to make a change.

“I just really wanted to help somebody” she says. As part of her project, Linnea connected with an organisation called East Meets West who put forward the boy who would later become her first fundraising recipient - six year old Trung.

Linnea recalled, “I went to visit him in hospital. We met his Mom and Dad and his doctors. I remember he was very very sick. His doctors said I was like a miracle to him. A year later, Trung wrote me a letter telling me he was back at school and his doctors had assessed him and confirmed that he had ‘totally recovered’”.

It’s this positive outcome that motivated Linnea to continue raising awareness and fundraising in a bid to save more lives. And thanks to the Service Learning department at UNIS Hanoi, this goal is now being achieved year on year. Known as Operation Healthy Heart, every year since 2013, a group of 20 Middle and High School students meet regularly to organise fundraising events and visits to bed-bound children, giving them the gift of hope, friendship and ultimately life. To date, four children have been supported and cured through this programme, with plans in the pipeline to help a further two this year. The students’ fundraising efforts will also be matched by the Birthday Gift Fund, a community fund established five years ago to celebrate the School’s 25th Birthday which supports the School’s Service Learning programme.

Looking back, Linnea says she never imagined her project would continue



“I loved it because it came from an individual student’s experience. It was clear to me that Linnea was so passionate about it, and the effects of her actions had been so tremendous, it was hard not to go ahead with it. We also knew we could identify external support and we knew it was something that could be sustainable.”

Today Operation Healthy Heart is just one of 32 Middle School and High School Service Learning initiatives currently running at UNIS Hanoi, carrying out a core mission of the School; to serve communities.

Current Service Learning Coordinator, Colin Campbell said Operation Healthy Heart stood out as a shining example of what Service Learning at UNIS Hanoi aims to achieve. He explains, “We’re deeply committed to establishing programmes that meet a direct need in the local community and offer our students the opportunity to make meaningful relationships with the beneficiaries of the project over a sustained period of time. As a School we love to support students who are passionate about making a difference, and Linnea’s Operation Healthy Heart is a shining example of this.”



beyond the fifth grade. Now, with just one more year left to go until graduation, Linnea whose efforts were recognized by her home country when she was named Sweden’s Child Hero of the Year in 2012, says she’s delighted UNIS Hanoi continues to be dedicated to the cause. She added,

“I’m thankful to the Service Learning Coordinators at UNIS Hanoi for believing passionately in this

programme. Without their support, Operation Healthy Heart would not have lasted as long as it has.”

Former Service Learning Coordinator and now English Teacher, Nick Whatley was responsible for establishing Operation Healthy Heart as a School Service Learning initiative. Explaining why he supported the programme, he said,



For Every Child a Fair Chance



The Birthday Gift Fund project that gave Vietnam's forgotten children a bright future



The future of education for some of Vietnam's most isolated children is being shaped thanks to a groundbreaking programme supported by UNIS Hanoi.

Since 2015, 36 youngsters with a range of disabilities at the Huong La Centre are learning how to read, write and count thanks to a programme devised by two Teaching Assistants at UNIS Hanoi. They have created Individual Learning Programmes which take into account the children's learning abilities, and in a unique step that guarantees

continuation of learning, Hoa Dang and Mai Dang are training the children's carers how to teach.

It's an initiative that began in response to an appeal by the Centre's Manager, Sister Hai. The Nun, who has dedicated her life to caring for Vietnam's most vulnerable children, made several attempts to find teachers to deliver education to her wards, but to no avail. Until that is, a UNIS Hanoi parent Flavia Breu-Kobler, suggested the unique collaboration.



She said, “When I heard about the School’s Birthday Gift Fund a few years ago, I applied for a US\$4,500 grant on behalf of the Huong La Centre, asking the School to devise a learning programme that would be effective and sustainable.”

Now, following two years of training by Hoa and Mai, the innovative scheme, is reaping rewards and gathering attention for the futures of children often considered to be outside the spectrum of education in Vietnam.

Hoa said,

“The results of the learning programme is much more than we ever dreamed it would be. When we first started visiting the Centre, we knew we could make a difference but we didn’t realise by how much! It’s been wonderful to see children learning and growing.”

“A child who couldn’t sound one syllable now say three, and a wheelchair-bound boy now follows simple instructions given to him.”

As well as teaching the Nuns to deliver lessons, both Hoa and Mai have shown them how to decorate the

Centre’s classroom and implement a reward system - ideas the Nuns have appreciated.

Mai revealed, “The Nuns are always happy to see us and they show an enthusiasm to learn. They always want us to teach them more and just like us, they’ve seen children we didn’t think could learn do so. The same children have also learned how to carry out chores for the first time in their lives.”

Sister Hai added, “ We now have a better understanding of pedagogy and the children in our care. Before we received the training, we sometimes found the children to be too demanding and we easily lost patience. Now that Hoa and Mai have educated us about our children’s conditions, we know more about what it is like to live with a disability, and as a result, we know how to interact with them better and teach them effectively.”

For Flavia, the parent who initiated the partnership, the project has surpassed her expectations. She said, “The work accomplished by Mai and Hoa is what I call sustainable development assistance. Thanks to UNIS Hanoi, education was brought to kids who were once denied it and it was wonderful to receive feedback from the Sisters that overwhelmingly

proved the project has had the desired impact. The Nuns have learned a lot and so have the children, and it’s all thanks to UNIS Hanoi.”

The initial two-year project came to a close last year, but The Birthday Gift Fund has been able to extend funding for one more year. Hoa and Mai, together with the Nuns believe there’s still more that can be achieved. Mai said, “We’ve applied for some more funding because the Nuns have truly valued the knowledge we’ve given them and want to learn more. They would like to understand their children’s disabilities even further so that they can improve the overall care their children receive.”

And the story of their success is now set to be shared more broadly to engage partners for the project’s future and to demonstrate the value of investing in children, otherwise outside of the system. Hoa explained, “We have shown the teachers how to teach literacy, numeracy, music, art and movement, but we want to work with them further to establish a routine that guarantees the children receive a class Monday to Friday and not every other day like they do now.”

Sister Hai revealed, “My vision has always been to see the children receive basic education in order for them to find a job in the future so that they can live independent, meaningful lives.”

With UNIS Hanoi’s continued involvement, this vision will soon become a reality honouring the commitment of the UN in Vietnam, “For every Child a Fair Chance”.

In the next edition of UNiquely UNIS

In your next edition of UNiquely UNIS we will bring you another collection of outstanding stories from an outstanding school. Don't miss the next edition to be published Summer 2018 including...

Birthday Blast!

A special commemorative edition featuring all the celebrations from the School's milestone anniversary.

Birthday Gift Fund

What better way to celebrate the School's birthday than by giving birthday gifts to others? Discover the gifts that keep on giving.

Class of 2018

Celebrate our graduating class and find out about their hopes, dreams and aspirations as they take their next steps.

Parent Partnerships

Children learn best when parents are engaged in their learning and their school. Helping that special relationship has been the focus of a community taskforce.

A Culture of Coaching

As we commit to being lifelong learners we develop ourselves as coaches - a learning metaphor developed from the vehicle used to transport a person from one place to another!

Technology and Advancement

UNIS Hanoi takes the lead in delivering vital professional development for both local Hanoi teachers and for Universities contemplating new possibilities.



UNiquely UNIS would like to thank the following for their contribution to this edition:

UNIS Hanoi Storyteller,
Akofa Wallace
UNIS Hanoi Photographer,
Tim Barnsley
Design and Layout,
Iris Creative
Production Editor,
Quyen Nguyen
Editor,
Emma Silva

A special thanks to all the Students, Faculty and Staff, Administration, Board Members, Parents and Alumni of UNIS Hanoi that feature in these stories and for sharing what makes us UNiquely UNIS.

For any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact the UNiquely UNIS Editor, Emma Silva: advancement@unishanoi.org

Or if you have a story you would like to share or read more about: stories@unishanoi.org



IT'S OUR BIRTHDAY

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Spring Fair

Sunday 25 March
11am - 3pm at UNIS Hanoi



Entrance Fee:

120 000 VND in advance | 150 000 VND at the gate | Children 3 and under free



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