

December Newsletter

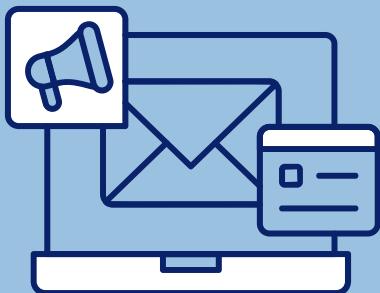
Vietnam Education Initiative | December 2025



Left to right: Nam, Tu, Tuyen, Thanh, & Minh

It took us 6 hours (including lunch and coffee breaks) to travel 170 Km from Hanoi to Nui Hong. This is our last rest stop of the day.

**Newsletter by
Thanh Tazumi,
ICO Lead**



I thoroughly enjoy all my interactions and experiences with students, volunteers, and students' families when I am in Vietnam.

One of the highlights from my most recent trip to Vietnam between August and October was an overnight visit at Nui Hong (Pink Mountain) village. Mark and I visited this village for a day back in June. It was during this visit that we decided we would continue supporting students from this community and surrounding areas.

On October 3rd I travelled back up to this mountainous village along with our field coordinator Minh, a recent university graduate Tu, and two local volunteers Tuyen and Nam. Minh and Tu were responsible for interviewing past recipients, and connecting with new students, Nam was our photographer and chauffeur, Tuyen was our connection to community leaders and parents. My role was to meet students and families, share about ICO and the Vietnam Education Initiative, and of course pose for photos.

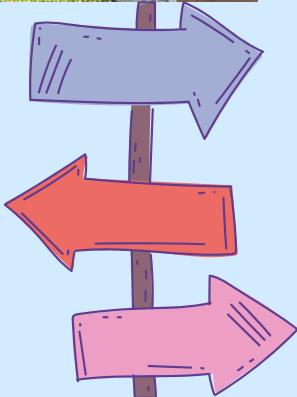


Dzong prepared a delicious dinner for us.

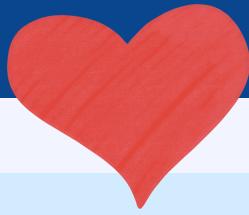
Dzong, her husband, and her son were incredibly kind and caring hosts and guides. They coordinated all our home visits and meals during our 2 days in the village. I was grateful they gave me and Minh a room to sleep in while the guys slept on the floor in the living and dining room.

“a picture is worth a thousand words”

After some brief greetings with our hosts we headed out and visited half a dozen families. Sua and her dad are serving us tea on their homemade tea table set. Sua is in grade 9, and her dream is to continue to high school and eventually university. We visited several other families after dinner.



**On Saturday,
parents came to
the church early in
the morning to
prepare lunch for
everyone.**



While the parents were preparing lunch, my team and I made the rounds and visited more students and their families. We caught up with Say and her two younger sisters at home early in the morning. Say's dad works in another province and he comes home 2 or 3 times a year. Her step mom was out in the field harvesting rice. She is in grade 8 and she loves music.

She can play the guitar and her dream is to learn to play the piano someday.

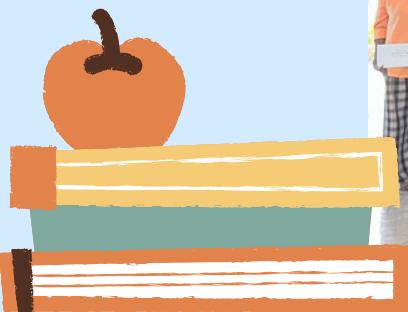


The spirit of hospitality and generosity is on full display here. Eating meat is a rare occurrence for most families in this village, yet the community generously offered this beautiful feast for a crowd of 80+ people, including scholarship recipients, parents, and community leaders.



MEMORIES

Through his interview Tu learned that Ly A Cu is the 5th child in his family, and an 11th grade student who wants to learn a trade so that he can support his family.



SCHOLARSHIPS

Thirty middle & high school students received scholarships of 2 million VND (approx. \$120 CAD) for 2025-2026. Several students were missing as they were attending schools far from this community; their parents came on their behalf and we spoke to them via video calls.



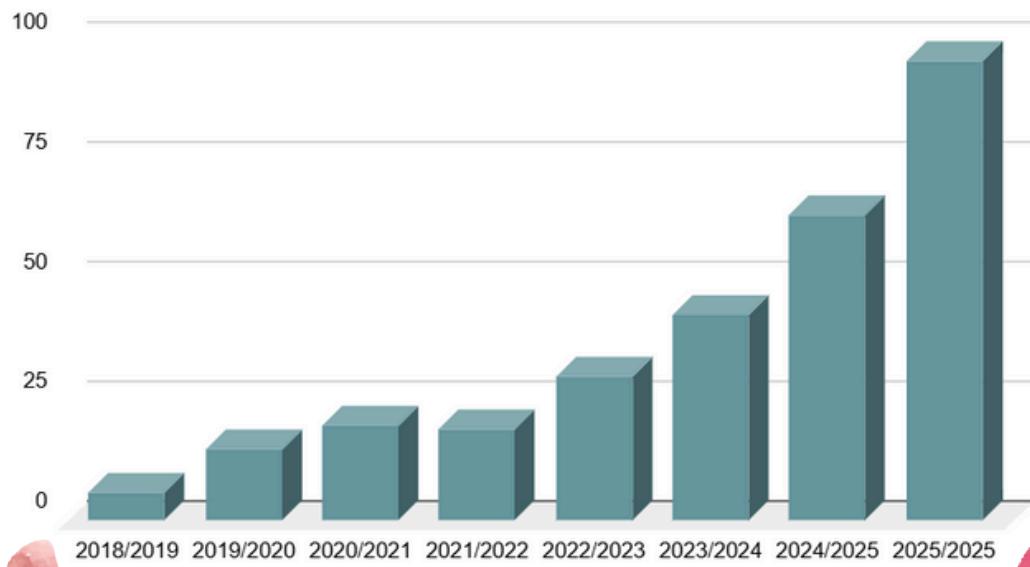
EXCITING NEWS!

We are thrilled to announce that we are able to provide scholarships for 96 students this year (2025-2026).

When we started this project in 2018, we solely focused on post-secondary education. However last year we expanded the project to include 25 scholarships for younger students.

Thanks to the 43 individuals and families across Canada, and three service groups in Campbell River, this year we are able to provide 50 scholarships to grade students, and 46 scholarships to post-secondary students.

Vietnam Education Initiative Scholarships Provided:



THANK
YOU

A mountain of gratitude to:

- Carihi Interact Club for their 2nd year as a post secondary sponsor. This year Carihi Interact doubled their donation to \$1200.
- Altrusa Campbell River for their commitment to sponsor 10 high school students for the second year.
- CR Daybreak Rotary Club for coming on board as a sponsor.

MORE HIGHLIGHTS



Visiting alumni in Bac Ninh



Food Tour w/ 2 students





Hot pot dinner at Thanh's Airbnb in September 2025 with post-secondary students from Bac Ninh & Ha Nam



Hot pot dinner at Thanh's Airbnb in October, with a group of new post-secondary students

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OUR VISION

ICO is founded on the premise that friends working together can harness the power of innovative ideas: Through the common goals of communities and volunteers around the world, ICO develops processes and community-led initiatives to advance education and alleviate poverty.

A Trip to Son La

https://youtu.be/j187J3wtkJU?si=7_5NQfOiEz8Nz1f

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