



# BACKPACK OF RESILIENCE

A childhood during  
COVID doesn't have  
to mean a childhood  
that is wasted.



 saigonchildren

# PROJECT REPORT

# PROJECT BACKGROUND

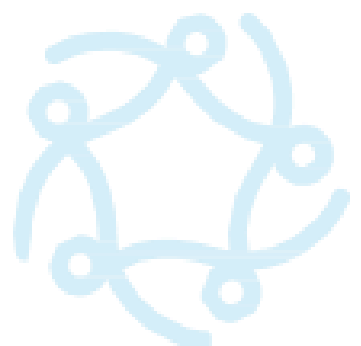
Vietnam has been going through its worst wave of COVID-19, with over 835,000 cases reported since 27<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

The strict social distancing measures, high unemployment, food shortages and overwhelmed hospitals have made many struggle to survive. It was hardest for low-income families and laid-off migrant workers. Impoverished children suddenly became the most vulnerable group, urgently in need of help when their parents could not afford to feed them daily, facing the risk of hunger and malnutrition.

COVID disrupts their education and affects their physical and mental well-being, which can have devastating long-term effects on the children.

## HOW COVID IMPACTS CHILDREN

- The pandemic has led to increased stress, anxiety and depression among children.
- 70.4% of study participants from urban areas reported that their children had fewer meals during the day, compared to 29.6% of those in rural locations.
- Problems accessing online learning compounded inequality in education for the most disadvantaged groups due to the digital divide and lack of digital literacy.



# PROJECT OBJECTIVE



Saigon Children's Charity, with nearly 30 years of looking after and providing a better future for disadvantaged children across Vietnam, could not be a bystander as this crisis harmed children and threatened their futures.

We decided to send "COVID backpacks" to thousands of children and their families in COVID-affected areas in the country so they could eat, learn, and be protected.

We have distributed cash support and food staples to relieve the stress of families that cannot afford food.

We gave books, toys, and games to take care of the children's development and mental well-being in the hope that their childhood during COVID does not have to mean that their childhood is wasted.



# WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED SO FAR (Since 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021)

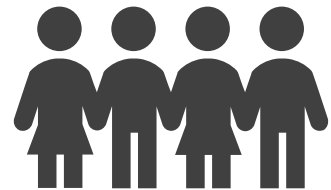
**\$655,404**

**FUND RAISED**



**>68,640**

**PEOPLE HELPED**



**253,970**

**kgs of rice**



**14,621**

**Food packages<sup>(1)</sup>**



**2,437**

**Backpacks<sup>(2)</sup>**



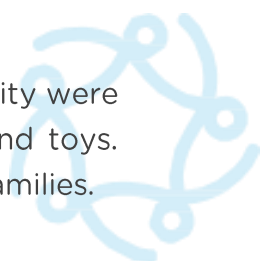
**2,539**

**Cash Support**



<sup>(1)</sup> The food packages were adjusted based on the market availability at the time of distribution. Each package would include cooking oil, fish sauce, soy sauce, sugar, seasonings, canned sardines, condensed milk, dried/instant sausage, dishwashing liquid, soap, and more, all **for a family of four for at least a month**.

<sup>(2)</sup> Since mid-August, stricter movement controls throughout Ho Chi Minh City were imposed, causing delivery delays for the children's backpacks of books and toys. Therefore, [saigonchildren](#) decided to replace with even more food for the families.



# WHERE WE WORK

We started our help in Bac Giang when it was the first province to face a severe outbreak in late April. And Ho Chi Minh City later became the worst-affected area in Vietnam, leading to the fast spread to other southern provinces.

[Saigonchildren](#) has reacted quickly to reach across these areas, including Binh Duong, Dong Nai, Tay Ninh and Mekong Delta.



## Number of packages distributed in areas

330	BAC GIANG
11,201	HO CHI MINH CITY
4,036	BINH DUONG
417	DONG NAI
107	TAY NINH
133	TIEN GIANG
184	HAU GIANG
752	TRA VINH

# OUR BENEFICIARIES

**>99%**

of the packages  
were distributed to  
impoverished  
families with  
children



**72%**

of the beneficiary families are  
migrant workers who lost their  
jobs during the lockdown



# OUR BENEFICIARIES

COVID has made our beneficiaries' lives harder than ever. Thanks to our "COVID Backpacks", the children did not risk hunger; the workers could afford their rental and food for weeks; some people used our cash support to pay for their vital medical treatment. Most importantly, together, we helped Vietnam's most at-risk people to survive the greatest challenge Vietnam has faced in a generation.

**Because of you, children survived and still have hope for their future.**



## BENEFICIARIES' TESTIMONIALS



T.'s father uses a wheelchair as he has a disability in his right leg, and is also missing a hand. Prior to the current COVID-19 outbreak, her father sold lottery tickets in his wheelchair, and her mother and 2 sisters worked as labourers in Binh Duong. The pandemic had a major impact on their family. Her father could no longer sell due to social restrictions, and her mother and sisters became unemployed as their workplace was forced into lockdowns after an employee tested positive.

Currently, T.'s family faces a multitude of financial burdens - being unable to afford food and pay bills. Her father shared: "Amidst our hardship, our struggles with putting food on the table to survive through the day, with no one to depend on for help, *we received this relief package; the most valuable and meaningful gift we have ever received.* This gift serves as an encouragement for us to overcome this pandemic."

”

“

Before the pandemic, my father worked at a car wash and my mother was a blue-collar worker. With that income, my family was already struggling with paying the rental, tuition, food, and many other necessities. Unfortunately, my parents lost their jobs when the pandemic hit the country. There are ten members in my family (including my grandparents, my parents, me, and five younger siblings). The whole family was deeply troubled—we had no money for the house rent or even food.

Others around heard about our situation and gave us some of their food to get through the day, but it was quickly running out. Thankfully, I received the news from local volunteers that the saigonchildren is sending us a gift. [...]. *I feel extremely blessed to have received such a meaningful gift, brought to me by such a dedicated group.*

-Khanh Linh-

”





# BIG DREAMS INSIDE A SMALL FRAME

Thuong is 15 years old, but she is frail and small, like a five-year-old child, due to a syndrome she was born with.

Thuong's father works as a street peddler, selling household items such as brooms and mops. Her mom has been paralysed for three years with myelitis. Thuong has two sisters who are also in school. Her family is considered one of the most impoverished in their ward since the family income depends on her father.

Their family faces even more hardship during this pandemic as the father, unable to go out on the streets, has earned nothing for the past four months. Their worries are magnified by the regular medical bills they still need to pay for their mother.

Being aware of her family's situation and her disabilities, Thuong has always studied diligently. For nine consecutive years, she has been awarded as an excellent student at her school. She also won first place in the city's 8<sup>th</sup> Technical Skills Competition.

Seeing Thuong's tiny frame next to the students towering over her on the competition stage is a stark reminder of the struggles she faces and overcomes every day.

We are proud that our "Backpacks of Resilience" support meant her family has had some proper meals and one less worry.



# OUR APPROACH



## QUICK REACTION

Our team had immediately contacted the local partners to identify the neediest families and planned for the distribution as soon as the first outbreak in Bac Giang and then quickly access areas in Ho Chi Minh City and southern provinces.

## EXTENSIVE NETWORK

In 30 years, we have been building a strong and extensive network of coordinators across Vietnam that allows us to come closer to affected areas and faster approach those in need.



## SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT

Hundreds of vulnerable people reached out to [saigonchildren](#) on our social media channels to seek help, ensuring we could access more places where people did not receive enough support during the lockdown.

# OUR APPROACH



## MAXIMISE BUDGET

With a good relationship with our local suppliers, we buy in bulk from wholesalers that we can negotiate the best prices, saving delivery costs and other expenses. We also tried to adjust the cost of the packages to maximise the budget but still ensure the quality of each while expanding the number of families receiving support.

## ADAPTABILITY



The packages were pragmatically adjusted to adapt to different periods of the pandemic and lockdown measures to bring timely support and make the most effective use of all donations.





# OUR APPROACH



## WELL COLLABORATION

Thanks to a good collaboration and strong relation with our local partners, we have been supported to collect information and complete the distribution quickly and safely.



# PROJECT IMPACT

**>34,320** children from poor families were fed for at least a month.



**10,045** migrant families could survive the pandemic and did not have to leave the city, preventing the labour shortage from worsening after COVID.







“It has often been complex, unpredictable and occasionally frustrating, but together we have been able to give real hope to thousands of Vietnam’s most vulnerable children and their families.”

Damien Roberts – Saigonchildren’s Executive Director





## COVID-19 Backpacks 2021

# SPONSORS



May 2022

# THANK YOU

HUNDRED OF COMPANIES AND  
THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE  
FOR YOUR DEDICATION TO SUPPORT  
UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN IN VIETNAM!



**saigonchildren**

removing barriers to education

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