

LIN CENTER FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Narrow the Gap Fund & Community Event

Ho Chi Minh City

Together, we can build a strong community!

5/13/2013



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This document introduces the community fund concept and a community event, which are designed to engage community members in a collective effort to address the needs of vulnerable groups in Ho Chi Minh City. This proposal consists of several parts, including: purpose and objectives, target audiences, planned activities, budget, and evaluation strategy.

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Introduction

Charity is important and provides critical support to people in difficult situations. However, solving problems and preventing escalation of existing issues requires collaboration and planned philanthropy.

For most of us, if we act alone, charity is the only option. Addressing a root cause of a social problem requires a lot of time and resources. By coming together and uniting local resources; however, we can take on larger and more difficult tasks, such as the social problems that allow inequality to grow and limit the potential our city has to offer.

Since 2009, LIN Center for Community Development has helped to bring together donors and not-for-profit organizations with a shared vision: strengthen the communities in which we live and work by ensuring that all people have access to opportunities. One of the unique ways in which LIN has brought people together is by managing a Community Fund.

A Community Fund plays a vital role in supporting critical needs in and near Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC). By engaging people with a shared vision, by pooling available resources and by investing in viable projects that address local needs, a Community Fund is able to offer bigger impact with each intervention and greater potential for long-term effects. A Community Fund not only helps to connect people who care with causes that matter, but also helps make it easier and more rewarding for people to become more strategic with their giving.

For local, not-for-profit organizations (NPOs), LIN's Community Fund provides a level of support that was previously missing in Vietnam:

- **Investing in the capacity of NPOs and their staff** – if NPO staff do their jobs better, the people they serve will reap the benefits.
- **Providing a regular source of funding** - with grants offered up to three times each year NPOs have time to plan and prepare proposals.
- **Offering transparency in expectations** - clear eligibility criteria, reporting guidelines, and consultations to applicants ensures that good ideas can be realized.
- **Connecting NPOs to other donors** – By engaging many different people in the process, NPOs have access to a broad network of prospective donors and volunteers.

Meanwhile, LIN's Community Fund offers unique benefits to philanthropists, whether they wish to contribute money and/or time:

- **Good governance** – LIN is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors and Advisors and submits to an annual, external audit by Ernst & Young.
- **Effective management of funds** – LIN team monitors and reports on all pooled philanthropic investments.
- **Peer networks** – Connect with a community of donors who share a similar vision.
- **Expertise** – Donors receive support from a specialist community grantmaker, with deep HCMC expertise.
- **Choices** – Donors are offered multiple options and opportunities for contributing.

The LIN team is calling on all HCMC residents to get involved in LIN's Community Fund!

LIN Community Fund from 2009 to 2013

“The concept of community philanthropy has always been with us. Every country and culture has its traditions of giving and mutual support between family, friends and neighbours... the LIN Center, in Vietnam, works to foster giving for small grants to social causes among young middle- class professionals as a strategy for strengthening social cohesion in Ho Chi Minh City.” – Civicus Report (2013)

Since 2009, LIN’s Community Fund has pooled funds from various sources and managed the selection and allocation of small grants to local NPOs that are addressing a variety of critical community needs. Through January 2013, LIN has facilitated the allocation of 80 grants to local NPOs, valued at over 1.7 billion Viet Nam Dong.¹

Over the past three years, calls for grant applications were issued two to three times each year. The Community Fund received support from hundreds of sources including domestic and foreign individuals, domestic and foreign corporations, not-for-profit organizations and foreign aid organizations. A committee, including two LIN Board Members and two to six volunteers from the community, reviewed applications and selected projects to receive funding. During this time, LIN also managed customized; donor advised funds, administer grants to NPOs designated by the donor.

To strengthen the community fund, LIN plans to make the following adjustments:

- Raise the maximum value of grants available to grassroots organizations, from VND 30 million to VND 50 million.
- Add depth to our pre- and post- grant support activities to NPO staff, with regular workshops and consultations to strengthen project design and implementation.
- Refine the grant evaluation and reporting processes to identify challenges and help NPOs in the process of finding realistic solutions.
- Forge new relationships between those giving and those receiving aid by introducing fun and interactive opportunities for engagement and communication.

To make these changes, LIN will need your help! If you are an individual, a company, a local or an expatriate, you can support one or all three of the following goals:

- **Goal 1: Raise at least VND 420 million for small grants in 2013.** We need VND 300 million for 3 competitive grants to be allocated in September plus at least VND 120 million for the December grant round. We also hope to begin raising funds for grantmaking in 2014 and beyond. Any donation size is welcome and appreciated.
- **Goal 2: Engage more stakeholders in the application evaluation process.** We are seeking individuals, community leaders, children’s rights experts and corporate employees who can lend their time to review grant applications, narrow down the top three projects and/or vote online or in-person for projects that should receive community funds. If you live and/or work in HCMC and you want to build a stronger community, you meet the criteria to vote!
- **Goal 3: Help to organize our flagship community event - *Narrow the Gap*.** The event is designed to connect community members involved or interested to engage in

¹ A list of LIN grantees is available here: <http://www.linvn.org/?mod=content&act=view&cid=9§ion=npo>. A complete list of grantees is available, by year, within the respective LIN 2009 to 2012 Annual Reports.

solving challenges in our community. The LIN team is seeking support from volunteers and in-kind sponsors to organize an exciting annual event, in early September 2013, that brings people together, while engaging and inspiring them to invest in long-term community solutions.

How Does the Community Fund Work?

The community fund is an on-going project, involving multiple steps that are repeated up to three times each year. Ideally, each year LIN will offer three opportunities for local NPOs to apply for small grants.

The first and third grant rounds take place in April and December. During these rounds, a committee comprised of LIN Board Members and HCMC residents, all of which are volunteers, will select the grantees from among the submitted applications based on a standardized evaluation form and group discussion. The number of grantees for each round will depend on the amount of funds raised and the number of eligible applications.

The second grant round works differently:

- **Thematic Focus** - First, in addition to the standard criteria, the call for proposals will have a thematic focus that is selected by HCMC residents in the year prior.² (In 2012, LIN's stakeholders chose "children's issues" as the thematic focus for our 2nd grant round of 2013.)
- **Fewer, Larger Grants** - The second difference is that we will offer only three grants, which are larger in size (In 2013, the third prize is worth VND 50 million, second prize is worth VND 100 million and first prize is worth VND 150 million).
- **Broader Public Engagement** - The final difference is the process by which grant awards are allocated. During the second round, the evaluation committee is responsible for nominating three applications from among the applications received. Those three nominees are given an opportunity to introduce their projects at a community event, in hopes of securing votes from attending guests. Guests attending the community event are asked to vote for the best project and the number of votes received determines the size of grants awarded to each of the three finalists, which is announced at the end of the event.

Below is a summary of steps taken to prepare for a typical LIN Community Fund grant round:

1. **Fundraising** – Throughout the year, LIN is raising funds for the Community Fund. Donations to the Community Fund can be made at any time and donors are welcome to specify the grant round they wish to support. There is no minimum or maximum donation size.

Contributions to LIN's Community Fund can be made by:

- Bank Transfer (please note: LIN Community Fund)
- Credit card or cash payment at LIN Community Center or LIN events
- Expats: Contributions to LIN via Give2Asia or Global Giving may be made using a foreign credit or debit card and/or PayPal account
- **Donation boxes at X, Y, Z locations (TBD)**

² At a LIN community event in 2012, participants were asked to select the thematic focus of LIN's 2013 grant round. After tallying all the votes, children's issues turned out to be the clear winner.

LIN Community Fund - Fundraising Targets for 2013 and 2014

	#	Value	Total	Contributions Received	Outstanding Amount
1st Grant Round of 2013	6	30,000,000	180,000,000	180,000,000	-
2nd Grant Round of 2013			300,000,000		300,000,000
First Prize	1	150,000,000			-
Second Prize	1	100,000,000			-
Third Prize	1	50,000,000			-
3rd Grant Round of 2013	6	50,000,000	300,000,000	180,000,000	120,000,000
1st Grant Round of 2014	6	65,000,000	390,000,000	328,329,170	61,670,830
2nd Grant Round of 2014			300,000,000		300,000,000
First Prize	1	150,000,000			-
Second Prize	1	100,000,000			-
Third Prize	1	50,000,000			-
3rd Grant Round of 2014	6	65,000,000	390,000,000	328,329,170	61,670,830
			1,860,000,000	1,016,658,340	843,341,660

2. *Call for Proposals* - LIN disseminates a call for grant applications via email and social media to local NPOs. The call for proposals details eligibility requirements and deadlines for each grant round. At least once a year, LIN hosts a workshop to support NPO staff with proposal writing. In addition, LIN staff are available to answer questions and provide support to NPO staff who are seeking help with their proposals. (Note: The LIN team is not eligible to evaluate grant applications, which allows them to provide such consultations.)
3. *Completion & Eligibility* - Upon receipt of grant applications, the LIN team ensures that applications are complete and proposed projects meet basic eligibility criteria, as detailed in the call for proposals. General eligibility criteria includes:
 - Geographic: Eligible applicants must operate a program that is located in/near HCMC.
 - Not-for-profit: Applications must come from community organizations and voluntary groups that possess charitable aims and are not-for-profit.
 - Needs Based: The project must demonstrate that it is addressing a community need by identifying a quality of life issue and/or limited access to opportunities for a particular group.
 - Transparency: Applicants must demonstrate a commitment to reporting and a willingness to share information and experiences with others, if necessary.
 - Time: Projects must be completed within one year from the project start-date.
 - Volunteer Opportunities: The proposed project must include opportunities for skilled volunteers to engage in support of the project.
 - Budget: Fund requests may not exceed VND 50 million in Year 1 and VND 65 million in Year 2.
 - LIN Partner: Grant applicants must complete the LIN NPO Partner Application Form.

If an incomplete application is submitted early, the LIN team will inform applicants and invite them to resubmit prior to the deadline.

4. *Grant Evaluation Committee* – The Grant Evaluation Committee includes members of LIN’s Board of Directors as well as a rotating group of Volunteers. Prior to each grant round, the LIN team announces a request volunteers to join the grant evaluation committee. When we have a thematic grant round, LIN also specifically targets a thematic area expert to join the Committee. First time volunteers participate in an orientation session, which explains the purpose of the community grant, the grant application process, LIN’s grant application

evaluation form as well as LIN's core values, which are intended to help guide volunteers in making funding decisions.

5. *Individual Review and Evaluation* – Members of the Grant Evaluation Committee are given one to two weeks to review eligible applications using a LIN grant application evaluation form, which allows them to score different components of the proposal on a numeric scale.
6. *Q&A with NPOs* – Depending on the project and format, the LIN team may arrange for grant reviewers to make a site visit to an NPO and/or meet with the applicants off-site. In the past, the LIN team and evaluators found that a face-to-face meeting helps the Committee to better understand and evaluate the written proposals. The meeting also provides the applicant with an opportunity to receive feedback on their proposals and to address concerns.
7. *Grant Committee Meeting* – Members of the Grant Evaluation Committee are asked to meet together to discuss the proposals, share individual evaluations and recommend applications for funding. The possible outcomes include: (1) proposal approved without reservations; (2) proposal approved on condition of certain clarifications or minor changes; and (3) proposal is denied and applicants are invited to apply again in the next round.
8. *Public Vote* - Upon approval by the Evaluation Committee, the project proposals would be presented to the public, either online or offline (note: Public vote will not take place during rounds dedicated to NPO Capacity building). The public would then be asked to vote for their favorite project and/or help to raise funds for those projects. The public vote and funds that are raised, together will determine the size of the grant for each project. LIN piloted this approach in December 2011 and repeated it again in December 2012 using the previous experience to fine tune the process. The purpose of the public vote is to bring together VNPOs, target beneficiaries, donors and volunteers from the community to decide the order of the top three project proposals. Public vote can be organized in two ways:
 - Online vote: **TBC (possibly via Vietnam Causes, Facebook or LIN website)**
 - Offline vote: Networking 4 a Cause event that will aim to raise awareness about a particular social problem, to raise funds towards projects that address that problem, to bring together HCMC residents and staff of local NPOs, and to give the HCMC residents an opportunity to determine how the funds will be distributed between the selected projects.

Annual Community Event (Narrow the Gap)

The main purpose of this event is to empower HCMC community members to build a stronger community. We do this by raising awareness about local challenges, introducing organizations working to address those challenges and providing a variety of opportunities for individuals and companies to get involved. The purchase of a ticket to the event automatically engages the ticket holder in two ways: (1) donor to the Community Fund, and (2) decision maker in the public vote for first, second and third place grants. At the same time, the fun and interactive event facilitates networking among different community members including representatives of not-for-profit organizations, local and foreign businesses, community leaders, students and residents.

Event Agenda

Each year a new committee of volunteers decides the format for the annual event; however, the general content always includes the following components:

- Project updates/reports from recent grantees³;
- Interactive games to promote information sharing and raise awareness about the thematic issue;
- Short presentations and information booths by three finalists for LIN Community Fund grants;
- Public vote;
- Announce winners and prizes; and
- Networking.

The volunteer committee is encouraged to design a creative, interesting and fun event that is accessible to all residents of HCMC, regardless of age, race, education level or socio-economic status.

Target Audience for the Event

People based in HCMC who are interested in NPOs, philanthropy, volunteerism and/or community development including, but not limited to, the following:

- Representatives of NPOs and INGOs;
- Representatives of local and foreign companies;
- University students and faculty;
- Current and prospective donors;
- Current and prospective volunteers; and
- HCMC residents.

Why People Attend?

Appeal to Prospective Donors & Volunteers

- Chance to hear, first-hand, about the challenges NPOs face and the strategies they have introduced to address those challenges.

³ The report is meant to keep donors connected to the causes they supported in the past. It also provides an opportunity for grant recipients to share challenges they experienced and engage the community in trying to help them find solutions.

- Identify opportunities to support NPO efforts to build a stronger community
- Low pressure way to learn about NPOs operating projects in HCMC

Event Appeal to NPOs

- Chance to raise awareness about their organizations
- Build their networks of prospective donors, volunteers and strategic partners
- Practice their networking and communication skills
- Connect with individuals and organizations whose work may be complimentary

Additionally, the event offers the following benefits:

- Participate in fun games with a chance to win cool prizes;
- A fun and meaningful way to connect with people who share a similar vision for community improvement; and
- Ensure that the work of the LIN Center for Community Development continues!

Whether your mission is the environment, education, elderly care, civil society, gender rights, arts and culture, or the well being of people or animals living in our region; participation in *Narrow the Gap* helps to improve the lives of people in HCMC and helps to boost our city's vitality for generations to come. LIN's Community Fund addresses local needs through grantmaking and capacity building to NPOs, connecting donors and skilled volunteers to worthy NPOs and providing leadership on common challenges facing our community.

Logistics

Date: Saturday, 7 September 2013 (TBC)

Time: 2pm to 5pm (TBC)

Event Budget

Estimated Event Expenses			
Item	Unit	Unit Price (VND)	Total (VND)
Venue	1		10,000,000
F&B	200	77,000	15,400,000
Entrance ticket and raffle ticket printing	1000	1,000	1,000,000
Expenses for organizing games			6,000,000
Sound System Rental	1	2,000,000	2,000,000
Simultaneous translator & headsets	1	5,000,000	5,000,000
Laptop, Projector and Screen	1	0	0
Printing of Standees	10	250,000	2,500,000
Printing of flyers and posters	10	100,000	1,000,000
Miscellaneous expenses			2,000,000
Total Event Expenses			44,900,000

Note: LIN received a grant of USD 2,000 from the Global Fund for Community Foundations (GFCF) to organize the 2013 community event.

Fundraising Goals & Sponsor Benefits

Fundraising Goals

To realize its goals for the Community Fund and Narrow the Gap annual event, LIN is seeking partners who can offer one or more of the following types of support:

- **Cash Donations for Small Grants:** LIN is seeking cash donations from individuals, companies and INGOs to achieve its Community Fund grantmaking targets. We seek to raise at least VND 420 million (USD 20,000) in years 2013 and 2014 in order to be able to allocate at least 15 grants each year. We also hope to begin raising funds for grantmaking beyond 2014. No donation is too small or too big.
- **In-Kind Contributions:** LIN is seeking in-kind contributions to support activities relating to the Community Fund and Narrow the Gap event. Highly sought after contributions include:
 - Donated food & beverages for meetings, workshops and the Narrow the Gap event
 - Raffle prizes (e.g., vouchers for hotels/restaurants/spas/salons/travel and other services, retail products such as clothing, accessories, cosmetics, jewelry, etc)
 - Event venue for Narrow the Gap (a centrally located site with capacity up to 500)
 - Advertising and event promotion services
 - IT expert to advise and/or support development of an online public vote function
 - Graphic designer to support development of attractive IEC materials
 - Professional translation services
 - Color printing for communication materials (i.e., tickets, brochures, standees, banners)
- **Volunteers:** LIN seeks a number of volunteers to support implementation of the Community Fund and organization of the Narrow the Gap event:
 - *Grant Application Reviewers* – LIN seeks individuals, community leaders, children’s rights experts and corporate employees who can lend their time to:
 - Review grant applications and narrow down the top three projects
 - Participate in an online and/or offline vote for the best project among the three finalists.

If you live and/or work in HCMC and you want to build a stronger community, you meet the criteria to select the best project!

- *Narrow the Gap Event Organizing Team* - LIN seeks support from a team of skilled volunteers to organize an exciting Narrow the Gap event, in early September 2013, which brings people together, while engaging and inspiring them to invest in long-term community solutions.
- *Narrow the Gap Event Volunteers* – LIN seeks support from at least 20 energetic individuals who can support logistics on the day of the event (from MC and raffle prize manager to guest registration and F&B service).

Partner Benefits

In recognition for contributions to the LIN Community Fund and/or Narrow the Gap event, we offer the following benefits:

	Logo on Event Flyer	Logo/Name announced in LIN E-newsletter (>3,000 emails)	Invite to Donor Reception	Free Community Event ticket(s)	Name/Logo on LIN website (One Year)	Name/Logo in Event Report and LIN 2013 Annual Report
Cash & In-Kind Contributions						
Up to VND 500k						*
Value over VND 500k, under VND 10m		*		1	*	*
Value over VND 10m	*	*	*	2	*	*
Volunteers						
Over 4 hours, under 16 hours				1		*
Over 16 hours, under 40 hours			*	1		*
Over 40 hours		*	*	1	*	*

The LIN team is open to discussing opportunities to add/modify benefits to key sponsors. Please reach out to a LIN team member at donor@LINvn.org to share your ideas.

With LIN's mission to build strong, well-connected communities and our network of socially responsible individuals and enterprises, our upcoming Community Grant event presents a unique opportunity to promote your company, attract new business and network with like-minded individuals while supporting the projects serving children in HCMC.

Testimonials

Deaf Community Organization of Ho Chi Minh City (2012 Grantee)

In 2012, the Deaf Community Organization of Ho Chi Minh City (DCOH) applied for LIN's last grant of the year, Community Grant for Women. In its proposal, DCOH utilized the information it had documented about its female members and their situation with regard to domestic violence, overall presenting a persuasive rationale for their project. After passing the first round and receiving the greatest number of votes at a public event attended by nearly 200 community members, DCOH won the first prize, worth VND 150,000,000 (approximately USD 7,500) the largest one time financial aid in the DCOH's history.

5 Gio Sang (2010 and 2012 Grantee)

"Our organization has 'grown up' and is becoming more independent every day... Such professionalization is an aggregate result of LIN grants that helped us implement our ideas and 'learn-by-doing', along with the many complementary services, including training, networking and skilled volunteer matching, which LIN has provided to 5 gio sang. When we are transparent, committed to a cause and organize quality activities, people will be happy to make a financial contribution. That's really one thing we learned from LIN..."

...Through its grants and various technical support to our organization, LIN ensured that 40 children in our care could regularly play football and - through this form of sport - discover themselves and experience the value of equality."

Ms. Nguyen Tran Lan Anh, ViiVue Company (2009-2013 Donor)

"Since [working with] LIN, we've realized there is more we can do as a company besides donating money. From the bottom of our hearts, we'd like to thank you for giving us this opportunity to be more involved..."

Sarah Jubb, Charity Cabaret Committee Member (2010-2013 Donor)

"...LIN made the process of grantmaking very simple... we had one point of contact who could help us to ensure that the outcome of our grant was what we expected."

Vu Nhat Tan (2012 Volunteer)

"I'm very happy to have had a chance to work with DRD's staff members, who are friendly, enthusiastic and devoted. This project is not only an opportunity for me to do some meaningful work to the community but also a way to improve my awareness about social problems which I've neglected under pressures of life. I'm really thankful to LIN Center for this opportunity to help others and myself!"

Ms. Huynh Hong Nhung (Volunteer)

During 6 months volunteering at LIN, I could gain a better understanding of non-profits, expand my network and improve my communication skills. And above all, I knew that I was able to use my expertise to contribute to community development.

Supplementary Documents

- [LIN Grant Application Form](#)
- [Past LIN Grantees](#)
- Volunteer Job Description – Community Fund/Narrow the Gap Team (*available upon request*)
- [Introduction to LIN Community Center](#)
- Detailed Report on the LIN Community Event for Women held in December 2012 (*available upon request*)
- Detailed Report on the LIN Narrow the Gap Community Event held in August 2012 (*available upon request*)
- Marketing Materials for LIN Community Event for Women and Narrow the Gap Community Event (*available upon request*)
- [LIN 2012 Annual Report](#)
- [LIN 2011 Audited Financial Statements](#) (*Note: 2012 statements are currently being audited by E&Y Vietnam and will be available soon*)