



PeaceTrees VietNam

Healing the Land • Building Community • Planting Futures



2013 Annual Report

About PeaceTrees Vietnam

PeaceTrees Vietnam is a Seattle-based humanitarian 501(c)(3) organization working in Central Vietnam to assist those whose lives and livelihoods are threatened by the explosive remnants of war. Founded in 1995, PeaceTrees was the first international non-governmental organization given permission to engage in humanitarian demining work in Vietnam after the war.

Quang Tri Province, where our work is focused, is one of the poorest and most war-torn provinces of Vietnam. Over the last thirty five years, more than 10,800 people in the province have been killed or maimed by landmines and unexploded ordnance. In one out of every five cases, the victim is a child.

PeaceTrees believes that mine action involves more than clearing war-contaminated land. Today, our mine action work has expanded to include sponsoring the removal of landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO); promoting mine risk education and accident prevention education; engaging in environmental and community restoration projects; conducting tree-planting and citizen diplomacy programs for environmental restoration and friendship building; offering assistance to UXO victims and their families; micro-credit lending; and sponsoring economic and social development.



OUR MISSION

PeaceTrees Vietnam is a humanitarian organization dedicated to healing communities affected by war. We accomplish this through landmine removal, education, survivor assistance, and citizen diplomacy.

OUR VISION

To create a safe and healthy future for the children and families of Central Vietnam.

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Volunteers

A special thank you to all our dedicated volunteers who graciously give of their time and talents to support the work we do.

Our Programs

LANDMINE AND UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE CLEARANCE

PeaceTrees Vietnam's core work is sponsoring the clearance of landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) in Central Vietnam. There is a great need for this clearance work since nearly 84 percent of land in Quang Tri Province is still designated as potentially unsafe.

Over the last 18 years we have achieved remarkable results, removing from the land more than 80,000 dangerous weapons – landmines, bombs, mortar shells, and grenades. In those cleared areas, farmers can once again plow their fields without fear and, in turn, feed their families.



MINE RISK EDUCATION

The prevalence of landmines and UXO in Central Vietnam makes mine risk education a priority. Because many unexploded bombs and landmines look like toys, children pick them up not knowing of the consequences until it is too late. One out of every five landmine victims is a child.

The center of PeaceTrees' mine risk education program is the Danaan Parry Landmine Education Center, the only center of its kind in Vietnam. The Center provides education to children by displaying interactive materials about landmines and UXO. Additionally, the Center serves as a training center for Vietnamese volunteers who return to their own communities to teach mine awareness.

Since 1995, PeaceTrees has provided mine risk education to over 85,850 children and adults in Quang Tri Province.

CITIZEN DIPLOMACY TRIPS & TREE PLANTING

PeaceTrees was founded with the goal of promoting peace, friendship, and renewal by building understanding and respect between Americans and Vietnamese. By bringing people together to plant trees, share a meal, a laugh or a tear, we create affirmative experiences for people and reach beyond stereotypes. Travelers experience Vietnam from a unique and rewarding perspective.



Our Programs

MICRO-CREDIT LENDING

Quang Tri Province is one of the poorest in Vietnam. The extensive landmine and UXO contamination impedes full participation in a wide range of productive economic activities.

To help improve the standard of living, PeaceTrees supports a micro-credit program, administered jointly with the Quang Tri Province Women's Union. Modest loans provided to women permit small business enterprises, such as tailoring, and family-based income generation through animal husbandry and farm-to-market agricultural production.

Since the micro-credit loan program started, PeaceTrees has made 150 loans to women entrepreneurs in Quang Tri Province.

SURVIVOR ASSISTANCE

As part of its life-saving work, PeaceTrees Vietnam offers assistance to UXO victims and their families through emergency medical treatment, long-term medical or health care, nutritional support, household economic support, educational scholarships, and micro-credit lending.

During our 18 years of work, we have provided survivor assistance to more than 946 UXO victims and their families.

COMMUNITY BUILDING: HOMES, KINDERGARTENS & LIBRARIES

The landmine and UXO contamination in Quang Tri Province creates barriers to community development. PeaceTrees Vietnam believes that community building is an essential part of mine action. Therefore, PeaceTrees constructs kindergartens and libraries throughout the province. We work with local government organizations to identify those communities in the province with the greatest need and then partner with US citizens, families, and service groups to raise construction funds.

Over the last 18 years, PeaceTrees has built 100 homes, 11 libraries, 8 Kindergartens, and 1 computer lab.



2013 Year In Review

It was an exciting year at PeaceTrees! We hit many milestones in 2013 and are proud that, with your support, we are able to continue to promote peace and friendship as we work to reverse the legacy of war in Central Vietnam.

In early 2013, a number of officials from the United States government visited our Vietnam team. One visitor was U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam David Shear, who joined our Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams for a UXO demolition demonstration. The EOD teams were also joined by a delegation from the U.S. State Department, which included Rear Admiral Samuel Perez, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Plans, Programs, and Operations in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, and Emma L.S. Atkinson, East Asia and Pacific Program Manager in the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement. In addition to observing the EOD teams, the State Department delegation visited PeaceTrees' community projects and planted trees at the Danaan Perry Landmine Education Center. All our visitors were very positive about PeaceTrees' work in the region, and we were honored to have them visit our operations.

Later in March, members of Grace Episcopal Church visited Quang Tri Province to participate in a citizen diplomacy trip and celebrate the groundbreaking for Grace Kindergarten in Khe Sanh Townlet. Grace Kindergarten was completed in August 2013 and Grace Church members were also in Vietnam for the fall dedication ceremony.

During the summer, a U.S. State Department grant enabled us to expand our Huong Hoa EOD team. This expansion is particularly noteworthy because of the impact it had on the capacity of the EOD teams to handle community UXO needs. To read about the impact EOD teams had on one family in Quang Tri, turn to page 8.

In October, PeaceTrees' Co-Founder Jerilyn Brusseau spoke in Hanoi at Vietnam Economic University's Conference on the Empowerment of Women. Her speech was inspired by women in Vietnam as well as her own experience as an entrepreneur. For PeaceTrees, supporting woman and girls to be leaders in their communities is a high priority and a focal point of many of our programs, including our micro-credit loan and scholarship programs. We were proud that Jerilyn was able to share her personal story with the amazing women who attended the event.

The 18th Annual Luncheon in November was another milestone for PeaceTrees. We changed venues to a larger space at the Four Seasons, which allowed over 380 friends of PeaceTrees to gather, share a meal, and celebrate. Together, we raised over \$177,000! Thank you to all who participated.

As 2013 came to a close, we began looking forward to all of the good work we had planned for 2014. We also reflected on the friends and partners that make our efforts possible. Donations and grants, like the Global Program Grant for organizations working globally on women's empowerment that we accepted at the end of 2013 from Seattle International Foundation, provide essential support that will allow us to achieve an even greater impact in 2014. To learn more about one new and innovative community project that we initiated in 2013 and will continue in 2014 turn to page 7.

From all of us at PeaceTrees, thank you again for your support in 2013 and for your ongoing commitment to creating a safe and healthy future for children and families in Central Vietnam. Please, join us again in 2014 as we continue our life-saving work!



Key Accomplishments 2013

43 travelers participated in **5** Citizen Diplomacy Trips.

1,430 indigenous trees planted.

7,730 pieces of UXO removed and destroyed.

26.8 acres of land cleared of ordnance.

853 families benefited from UXO clearance and removal.

6 mine survivors provided medical and economic assistance.

1 kindergarten and **1** computer lab were completed.

4 new building projects were initiated.

231 scholarships were provided to students.

10,304 people visited PeaceTrees' **11** libraries.

1,599 new library cards were issued.

Investing in Communities



Executive Director Michael Auch in Ba Long Commune



In 2013, PeaceTrees began a community project of a new scale: a multiple phase, large scale development effort that we hope will improve the safety and nutrition of the local population and expand and enhance economic opportunities in the community. The project is being done in partnership with local leaders in Ba Long Commune, Quang Tri Province, and it began in 2013 with an effort to fund the clearance of 90 hectares (222 acres) of land in Ba Long.

Ba Long Commune is located in the south central part of Quang Tri Province, in Dakrong District. The terrain in Dakrong is mountainous and mostly the land is of poor quality and eroded. The Dakrong

River runs through Ba Long Commune, and many ethnic minority families make their homes and tend small farms on the river's banks. These families are mostly very poor and have taken this land because it is available and the soil is more suitable for farming due to its proximity to water.

Unfortunately, due to UXO contamination, the land these families live and work on is very dangerous. During the Vietnam War, Dakrong District was littered with mines, mortars, and other bombs. It is estimated that 97.2% of the land in Dakrong is still contaminated with unexploded ordnance. And more, the land is highly susceptible to punishing flooding that occurs during the annual "wet season" in Vietnam. Every year during this winter rainy season, many of these families lose their homes, livestock, and even their lives. Poverty keeps these families from seeking safer areas to make their homes.

The clearance work that was initiated in 2013 in Ba Long Commune is part of the Ba Long Pilot Village Project, which will enable families in this dangerous flood prone area to move to nearby land that is outside the flood plain and not contaminated with UXOs. Once PeaceTrees' EOD teams complete clearance, families will have the opportunity to acquire a new home and a small farm plot on the cleared land. During the second phase of the Pilot Village project, PeaceTrees will continue to help the community in Ba Long to develop and support its members by sponsoring infrastructure and other development projects, as well as community, environmental, and farming education. In 2014, be on the lookout for more information about getting involved in this exciting second phase, which will include the Ba Long Community Center, a project also initiated in 2013 by project sponsor Dan Gilman.

Impacting Individuals

Since its founding, PeaceTrees' Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams have removed over 80,000 pieces of unexploded ordnance (UXO). In the past few years there has been a significant increase in removal requests from individual community members, most likely because of effective mine-risk education efforts, improved UXO tip hotlines, and increased familiarity with our EOD teams' work. Unfortunately, the substantial increase in removal requests was taxing on our EOD teams, who were finding it difficult to effectively meet the new demand.

Thankfully, in 2013 PeaceTrees was able to expand one of its two EOD teams. The EOD team expansion was a milestone for PeaceTrees and it had an immediate impact on the health and safety of children and families in Quang Tri Province. Ha, a family farmer in Quang Tri, was just one of the many people who benefitted from the teams' increased ability to handle UXO clearance tasks and respond to UXO removal requests from individual community members.

During the summer of 2013, Ha was planting a new crop of green bean in his field when he came upon several rusted metal objects in the soil near the edge of his patch. Fortunately, Ha recognized the objects as UXO material and he decided to stop planting activities in the area.

Because Ha's farm is located in the mountainous Dakrong district, in the past, he may have had to wait a significant period of time before the shells he discovered could be properly removed from his land. Because of the delay, Ha, who like many people in Dakrong relies on farming activities for survival, may have been unable to continue planting near the shells. Alternatively, Ha may have tried to remove or dismantle the shells himself. Either of these alternatives could have led to devastating outcomes for Ha and his family: loss of vital income resources, severe injury, or death.



PeaceTrees' EOD team members search Ha's field.



Fortunately, Ha was able to contact PeaceTrees' EOD team via their tip-line. The team was then able to travel to Ha's field to carry out clearance work in a timely manner, so that he could again safely tend to his green bean field. The total time for response and clearance was less than one day.

The shells found in Ha's field were phosphorous shells. The EOD team reported that the accidental explosion of these shells likely would have left Ha with severe and debilitating burns and could have killed him. PeaceTrees hopes that by expanding the capacity of the EOD teams and continuing mine-risk education efforts in Quang Tri, more stories in 2014 will end like Ha's story ended, with a positive outcome.

Partners and Grants

U.S. Partners

United States Department of State – Office of Weapons Removal & Abatement
Vietnamese Friendship Association
Sahale Snacks
Fran's Chocolates

Vietnam Partners

The Vietnam Union of Friendship Organizations
The Vietnam-USA Society
People's Aid Coordinating Committee
The Vietnam Women's Union
People's Committee of Quang Tri Province
Foreign Relations Department of Quang Tri Province
The Vietnam Women's Union of Quang Tri Province
People's Committee of Ba Long Commune
People's Committee Dong Ha Town

Grants & Awards

Hayward Family Foundation
Grace Episcopal Church
McKesson Foundation
Seattle International Foundation
The David and Patricia Giuliani Family Foundation
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PeaceTrees Vietnam is grateful to our supporters whose remarkable contributions have allowed us to continue to renew relationships with the people of Vietnam and promote a safe, healthy future for its families and children. We are extremely thankful for the outstanding support from longtime friends and new donors. We offer our heartfelt thanks to the thousands of supporters we do not have space to list, including the many who gave of their valuable time.



Financial Snapshot Year End 2013

Audited financial statements for 2013 are not yet available. However, if you would like information regarding our unaudited financials for 2013, please contact our office at **206.441.6136** or **info@peacetreestvietnam.org**.

Audited financial statements for 2012 are available online at <http://www.peacetreestvietnam.org/about-us/financials-annual-report> or you may contact our office at **206.441.6136** or **info@peacetreestvietnam.org**.

Thank you!



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