



2023 STEPPING STONES ANNUAL REPORT

IMPROVING THE EDUCATION AND GENERAL WELFARE OF

DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN IN CHINA



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Director's Words

2023 was an exciting year for Stepping Stones, as things started to return to normal after three years of disruption from the epidemic, and our program numbers shot up. We were delighted to be able to resume in-classroom teaching in more and more program sites, including several new schools and community centres, and the number of lessons we taught exceeded our previous record numbers in 2019.

We were honoured to be awarded 3A accreditation by the Civil Affairs Bureau, recognising that our programs are well-managed according to their strict guidelines, and we are now winning more contracts to provide lessons in government-run facilities.

Numbers and awards are all very well, but what really keeps us going is the impact that we see and hear about in our community.

We started teaching English to primary-school-age migrant children in 2006, but since most of them have to return to their home provinces for middle school, it's hard for us to know the long-term impact on their future education and work, although we do regularly hear that our students out-perform the others in English at middle school. It was therefore very heart-warming this year to hear about several of our former students who managed to study English at university, and who ascribed their success to the support and encouragement they received from our volunteers many years ago.

The last few years have been tough on everyone, but especially on children and youth. We saw that students were struggling to cope with study and family pressures as well as the new challenges presented by social media, and decided to launch a new Social-emotional Learning (SEL) Program focussed on helping children to recognise and manage their emotions. By creating a safe space for children to share their thoughts and feelings with a trained volunteer, we have learned so much from them and have been very impressed by their energy and openness.

Some of our long-term digital literacy students were very excited to take part in a coding competition and win a place in the final round! You can read more about this and all our other stories in the following report.



For me personally, it was a year of change. After 12 years of working full-time for Stepping Stones, and 16 years after starting the program, I decided it was time to step back into a part-time volunteer role, and to allow the staff team to take on more responsibility. I am delighted to say that as expected, they rose to the challenge very well, taking our programs to new levels of accomplishment in 2023.

I am so proud of them, and all our volunteers, for the amazing work they do every day to provide a better education to ever more children and youth in China. As a volunteering assignment, teaching English, digital literacy, social-emotional learning and other such subjects to under-served children and youth is not an easy matter, and I am constantly amazed by the high quality of teaching I see in our classrooms.

On behalf of all our beneficiaries, I would like to thank all our volunteers for empowering our students with the language, digital and social-emotional skills required for success in the 21st century, and all our donors for their invaluable support. Together, as you can see in the following pages, we truly are making a difference to the lives of thousands of children and youth.

Corinne Richeux Hua
Executive Director



Year in Review



Staff



Volunteers



Lessons Taught



Students



Average Lessons
Per Student

Increasing our program activities across China

In 2023, we experienced a significant rebound in our program activities, reaching 8,627 under-served students in Shanghai, Anhui, Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi, Guizhou, Hebei, Henan, Hubei, Jiangxi, Ningxia, Shaanxi and Yunnan provinces.

Across all our programs, 996 volunteers joined forces to deliver a total of 9,215 lessons at 82 offline and online program sites, as well as thousands of students' homes through the internet. Our students received on average 16.3 lessons each over the course of the year.

Elevating English learning experiences

In 2023, for the 18th year in a row, we have helped disadvantaged students in China to improve their English proficiency. Throughout the year, we have provided English education to an impressive total of 7,441 students located in several Chinese provinces. Our volunteers and teachers delivered to them a total of 7,311 online or offline lessons.

Providing more STEM and coding classes

In 2023, we have provided digital literacy classes to 1,478 students, which is our highest number of students for one year since the inception of the program in 2016. Our volunteers and teachers delivered an impressive total of 1,300 online or offline lessons. New classes in STEM, logic, mathematics, coding (Scratch 3.0), graphical programming, and embedded system design (Micro:bit) were added to our curriculum to enhance our students' knowledge and learning experience.

Launching a social-emotional learning program

After several years of focusing primarily on improving students' English and digital skills, we expanded the reach of our activities in 2023 by providing social-emotional learning (SEL) training to our beneficiaries. Our trainer and volunteers provided 604 lessons to 744 students. Through our SEL intervention, they have learned to recognise and manage emotions and to be aware of their thoughts, feelings, and actions.

About Us

Stepping Stones is a non-profit organisation registered in Shanghai. With a mission to improve the education and general welfare of disadvantaged children in China, and a commitment to promoting responsible volunteerism, Stepping Stones has hosted numerous programs focused on children's education and well-being since 2006. We recruit, train and support volunteers to teach essential 21st-century skills to under-served children and youth, focusing on digital literacy, foreign language, and social-emotional learning. We also provide professional training to foreign language teachers.

Our program delivers lessons to thousands of students each year in 11 provinces. Students who participate in our program show increased interest and confidence in their studies, which improves their access to educational and work opportunities in the future. Additionally, students are exposed to different cultures, and get early experience of volunteer programs and volunteering spirit.

Our Mission

To improve the education and general welfare of disadvantaged children in China.

Our Vision

Equal access to a quality education and general welfare for all children in China.

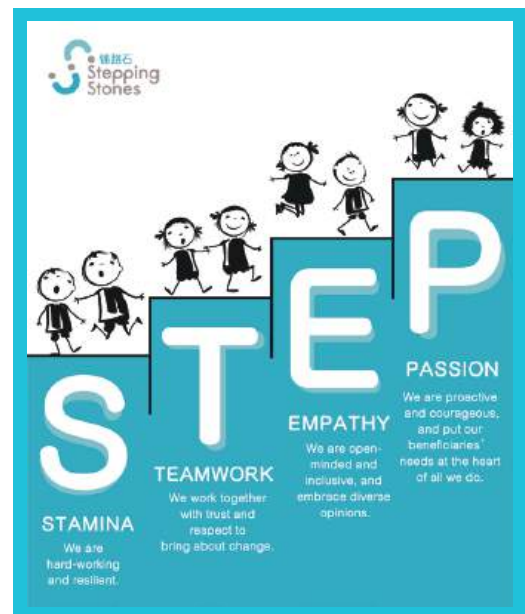
Our Program Objectives

- To increase students' confidence and self-esteem.
- To optimise students' access to better quality education and work opportunities in the future.
- To connect communities to promote inter-cultural understanding.
- To promote responsible and high impact volunteering.

Legal Status

In December 2013, Stepping Stones was officially registered in Minhang, Shanghai as a private non-enterprise organisation. Stepping Stones' official Chinese name is 上海闵行区华漕镇路石青少年发展中心 (Shanghai Minhang District Huacao Pulushi Youth Development Centre). Stepping Stones is subject to the laws of the People's Republic of China. Stepping Stones is strictly non-political and non-religious.

Our Values





Volunteers

Stepping Stones' greatest asset is its large community of volunteers, who are eager for high-impact volunteering opportunities in China. We are committed to promoting responsible volunteerism and believe that well-trained volunteers can make a huge difference in the community.

Stepping Stones recruits, trains, supports and resources qualified volunteers to provide services needed by our beneficiaries.

Volunteers registered in 2023 came from 47 countries around the world, and the volunteers participating in our programs were spread across 29 countries globally, coming from all walks of life, including high school students, university students, corporate employees, and retirees. In addition to participating in teaching English, digital literacy, and social-emotional learning, they also took a myriad of other roles, including administration, fundraising, communications, design, photography, curriculum development, translation, etc.

In 2023, volunteer groups from high schools, universities and companies played significant roles in our programs. We are grateful to all the organisations listed below for providing high-quality, committed volunteers.

Schools:

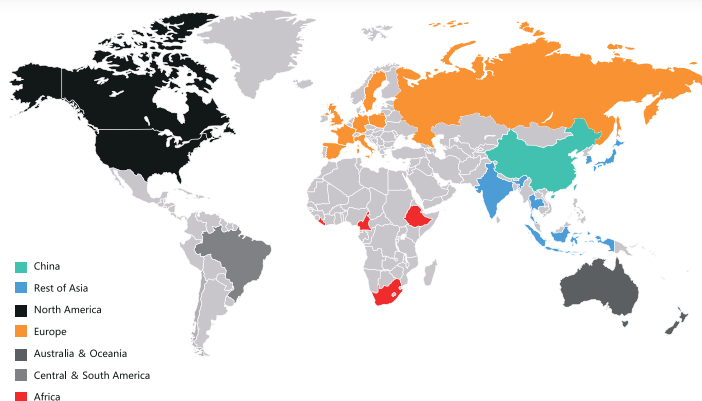
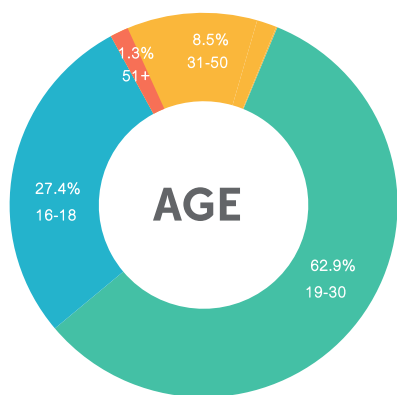
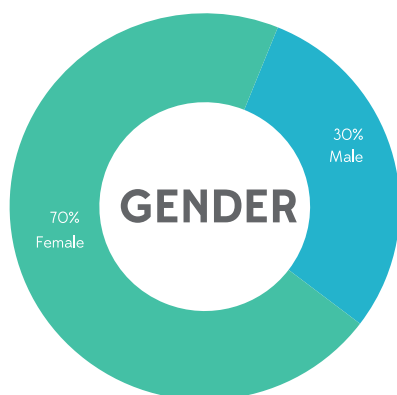
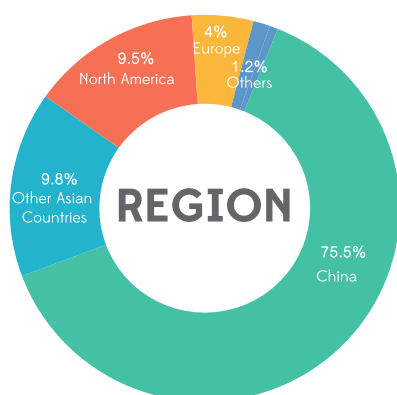
Concordia International School Shanghai
Dulwich College Shanghai
No. 2 High School of East China Normal University
Shanghai Korean School
Shanghai SMIC Private School
Wellington College International Shanghai
Xiangming High School (Pudong)
Yew Chung International School
YK Pao School

Companies:

Bloomberg
El Fuego
Equinix
JoyviewEdu
Pricewaterhouse Coopers
Times Academy
TMF

Universities:

Bluesky Volunteers' Association of BUAA
China Rural Education Initiative, University of Melbourne
Chinese University of Hong Kong (Shenzhen)
Fudan University
New York University Shanghai
School of Social Development, East China Normal University
Shanghai Jiaotong University
Shanghai Normal University



Beneficiaries

Stepping Stones' beneficiaries are children and youth who are disadvantaged in terms of access to quality education and resources in China. These include:

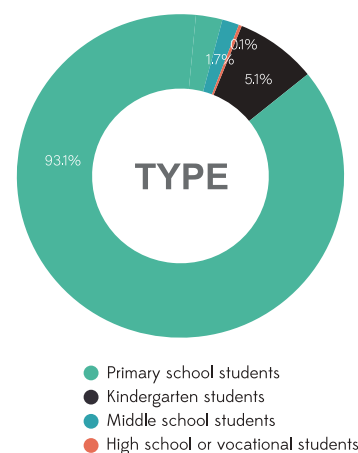
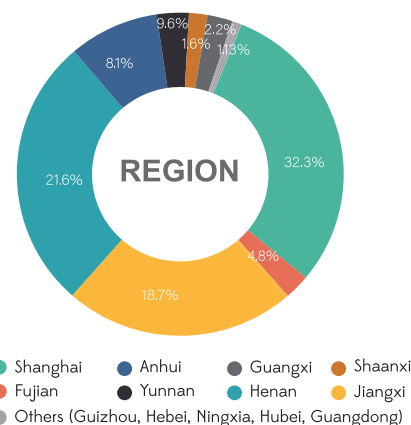
1. Migrant children & youth;
2. Rural children & youth, including many left-behind children and minorities;
3. Children and youth from low-income families in Shanghai and other urban areas;
4. Children and youth with special needs.

While we serve a wide range of disadvantaged children and youth from different locations and backgrounds, the majority of them have been negatively impacted by rural-urban migration in China. Some of these children have moved with their parents to cities where they do not have access to regular public schools due to residence issues, and are enrolled in schools for the children of migrant workers, whose educational standards fall behind the urban public schools.

Others are enrolled in public schools, but need extra help with their schoolwork, which their parents are often unable to provide. Many of those migrant children who are able to attend primary school in Shanghai will have to go back to the rural areas where their families are registered when they enter middle school.

Other migrant workers' children are unable to go with their parents to the cities even for primary school, and are left behind in rural boarding schools or living with other family members. The educational standards in rural schools lag significantly behind urban schools, and in addition to the disadvantages faced by rural children, these "left-behind" children also lack parental support, especially those in minority areas.

Most of our students are primary-school-age, but we also have kindergarten, middle-school, high school and vocational school students. As the number of migrant children decreases in Shanghai, and the educational provision improves for those who remain, we have been approached by local social work organisations to provide educational assistance to other local disadvantaged communities, in particular low-income families and children with special educational needs. Since 2016, we have increased the impact on our students' English education by providing professional and language training to their English teachers in rural and migrant schools, though we were unable to provide this service in 2023.



Staff Team

Organisations that depend on donations are always under pressure to manage staff costs carefully. Experience shows that we cannot optimise the quality of the educational services we provide to our beneficiaries without a professional and dedicated paid staff team to recruit, train and support our volunteers, as well as a small, full-time support team. However, we have always benefited from a huge resource of experienced and qualified volunteers, some of whom donate their time generously to assist with support functions, helping us to reduce our overheads where we can.

In 2023, the number of paid staff decreased again from 13 in 2022 to an average of 11 people, though we finished the year with one vacancy for a manager of our digital literacy program to replace Teddy Shi, who moved into the role of Outreach Director, with specific responsibilities for fundraising and corporate relations. Corinne Hua continued in a part-time voluntary role to lead the team as Executive Director. Sebastien Carrier and Eva Hua both reached their 10-year anniversary with Stepping Stones, leading the program team and operations function respectively. Claire Ding continued in the Curriculum Director role, supported by many volunteers.

On the programs side, thanks to the growing experience and abilities of our English Teaching Program managers, we were able to restructure their roles so that they could add responsibility for our other programs in their respective sites. Sherry Jia took on responsibility for all our videolink programs, as well as our summer and winter camps. Ann Zhao managed all of our offline programs in our Shanghai teaching sites as well as in rural areas, and Julie Li managed all the programs we delivered in the Home Classroom format.

Our social-emotional learning (SEL) expert Miki Gu handed the fundraising role over to Teddy Shi so that she could focus on her role as coordinator of the new SEL program.

Nova Shao continued as Volunteer and Internship Manager, and Viviana Chen continued her role as Communications Manager. After one year helping us out in the finance department, Rebecca Mao handed over to new finance officer Mike Gao.

We are grateful to volunteer Stella Wu, who continued to offer professional assistance in operations, as well as Linda Li, who helped on the HR front until mid-year.

Corinne Hua	Executive Director
Sebastien Carrier	Program Director
Eva Hua	Operations Director
Teddy Shi	Outreach Director
Claire Ding	Curriculum Director
Sherry Jia	Rural Programs Senior Manager
Julie Li	HCR Program Manager
Ann Zhao	Offline Programs Manager
Nova Shao	Volunteer & Internship Manager
Viviana Chen	Communications Manager
Miki Gu	SEL Program Coordinator
Mike Gao	Finance Officer
Stella Wu	Operations Assistant



Board of Directors



Hua Lei
Chair

Architect - Retired



Eva Hua
Vice Chair

Stepping Stones - Operations Director



Whooper Huang
Director

PAAT (Shanghai) IT Co., Ltd. - Partner



Leo Jia
Director

Inclusion Factory - General Manager



Rita Jia
Director

KOL



Wang Lin
Supervisor

BSR Advisory Services Ltd. - Director



Steve Pan
Supervisor

PricewaterhouseCoopers Zhong Tian LLP
- Partner



Aaron Xin
Supervisor

O'Melveny & Myers - Senior Legal Counsel

English Teaching

Since the early establishment of Stepping Stones, volunteers have been teaching fun oral English classes to disadvantaged children and youth in China. We are committed to helping kids improve their communication skills and discover the joy of learning a foreign language, making them more open-minded and more confident to express themselves in English.

Shanghai English Teaching



Students



Volunteer Teachers



Lessons



Teaching Sites

In 2023, we were delighted to provide after-school extracurricular lessons in more primary schools for migrant kids, and the numbers of students, volunteers, and lessons picked up over the course of the year. Teaching contents were enriched with games, songs, video animations, and picture books, together with pair and group work to foster the children's ability to speak in English through collaboration. Not only did the kids discover the joy of learning English, but the school English teachers observing our classes updated their teaching methods, especially in the areas of encouragement and timely feedback. We appreciate our volunteers' dedication and our school partners' organisation.

In 2023, at the community centres where we have been giving oral English classes for so many years, dozens of volunteers, including some professional teachers, volunteered during the weekends. Our learning through a fun class atmosphere engaged the students very much. Every week, there was nothing more joyful than seeing familiar and lively faces greeting you in English.

At Qingcongquan, a specialised centre for children with special needs, we had two brilliant volunteers from Shanghai Drama Institute, who sang and played games with the kids. We also had a professional teacher who volunteered at this site, preparing various teaching aids to allow the kids to touch and feel while learning.

Thanks to our recently achieved 3A status, we also won a government contract to provide educational services at the party offices in Huacao. English and SEL classes started there in the summer, and due to their popularity among the local community, these classes continued through the autumn semester.

Service-learning teams from Yew Chung International School, Wellington College International Shanghai, New York University Shanghai, and other schools played their part in helping us to achieve the goals of this program.

Our 202 volunteers delivered 2,013 English lessons to 1,728 disadvantaged children and youth at 24 teaching sites.

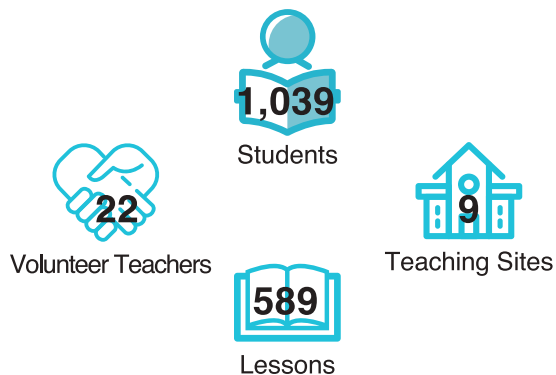


Teacher Zhang from the JiuQian Baoshan program site said, "Stepping Stones English classes are more open and interesting, using the method of 'learning through fun' to motivate students. This can spark students' interest in learning, and this is what education should look like."

Teacher Chen from the Jiu Qian Pudong program site remarked, "After the first week of classes, the children here said they were very willing to participate in Stepping Stones' classes, thus the number of students kept going up. The volunteers have a high attendance rate and are very serious and responsible in their service. Thanks to Stepping Stones and its volunteers."

Teacher Han from the Sunflower Jing'an program site observed, "Everyone (volunteer teachers) started as strangers, but now they can adjust the classroom pace according to the students' adaptability. This all stems from the teachers' diligent practice. Everyone treats each child sincerely, and a good emotional bond has also been established between teachers and students. Thanks to the Stepping Stones teachers and all volunteers for their support to Sunflower, and for the love and companionship they give to the children!"

Rural Volunteering



Our Rural Volunteering Program was one of the worst affected by epidemic controls in 2022, with only four such activities taking place during the whole year. We were therefore delighted that the program was able to bounce back in 2023 with no less than 22 volunteers teaching 1,039 students during rural volunteering assignments of between three and four weeks in nine different teaching sites.

Our ever-reliable school partner in Henan Luyi hosted five individual volunteers over the course of the year, two in the spring and three in the autumn. In May, the school also hosted a group of 10 volunteers from our partner company PwC, who taught English and social-emotional learning to the children there for a whole week. We applaud the principal of the school for her strong commitment to bringing valuable resources to her students regardless of the challenges. Not only did the children and teachers benefit, those trips also gave our volunteers new life experiences.

In the spring, we were also able to send one volunteer to our partner school in Henan Dengfeng for the first time since the epidemic. She not only taught the students, but also shared her experiences with the teachers there.

During the summer, through our partnership with The Bird's Nest and Tong'an Library, four volunteers taught migrant children in four different libraries in Xiamen, Fujian province. Two volunteers also launched a two-week SEL program at two of the libraries there. Former Rural Individual Volunteering Program volunteer Ashley Vicary also returned to teach with us for a second time in the summer, this time in a new site of Yangdong Library in Guizhou province.

In the autumn, for the first time, we sent a volunteer to teach English at the Hundred Thousand Charity Library in Longyan, Fujian Province. In addition, an unforeseen circumstance at our regular program site in Henan had the fortuitous outcome that we were able to send a volunteer for the first time to a children's home in Jingyang County, Shaanxi Province, where until now we had been providing videolink programs, thus opening up another new program site for our Rural Volunteering Program.

We hope to send more volunteers to our new partners in 2024, and to increase the number of volunteers teaching at our regular program sites mentioned above.



Volunteer Yu Jianxing's feedback: "I'm deeply grateful to Stepping Stones, which gave me the opportunity to teach in Xiamen. I will always remember the kids and one of the most beautiful three weeks of my life. I received so much love from students and other volunteers. Again, thanks for giving me support when I struggled to teach at the beginning. I'm looking forward to volunteering with Stepping Stones in the future."

Xiamen Houzhai Public Welfare Library teacher's feedback: "This is Stepping Stones' fourth year partnering with Houzhai Public Welfare Library to provide volunteer teachers. The volunteer teacher interacted tremendously well with the students and taught them through experience that English was a vocal cord muscle exercise which could help students learn to speak confidently. We could clearly see progress in the students' speaking ability in the second week, from the students' original awkward stutters and evasive postures to almost fluency and confidence with simple and common phrases. New confident smiles on the kids' faces were proof of the gain in their knowledge."

Rural Videolink



Students



Volunteer Teachers



Lessons



Teaching Sites

The Rural Videolink Program provides educational courses through videolink to children living in rural areas. While some of these children live with one or both of their parents, the majority live with grandparents or other relatives, because their parents have to migrate to cities to make a living.

In 2023, our Videolink Program experienced a significant uptick in student enrollment, reaching 3,485 under-served students at 43 teaching sites in Anhui, Fujian, Guangxi, Guizhou, Hebei, Henan, Jiangxi, Shaanxi, and Yunnan provinces. By 2023, our Videolink Program had expanded to 30 teaching sites. However, due to the consolidation of rural schools in some areas, some of our partner schools closed during the year. Consequently, we increased our collaboration with urban partners such as public libraries to serve the migrant children living in urban villages.

As the program expands, we constantly review and update our teaching materials to ensure their relevance and applicability and enhance the quality and effectiveness of our teaching. English courseware developed by the Curriculum Director assists volunteers by making our teaching resources more systematic and comprehensive. Additionally, since our lessons are only once a week, we prepared post-lesson review sheets for multiple levels to reinforce students' learning.

We continued to collaborate with partners such as the Education and Sports Bureau of Xin'gan, Jiangxi, Chi Heng Foundation, and the Bird's Nest Library and Tong'an Sangzi Library in Xiamen. Our collaboration with Tongji University's "Beautiful Hometown" project deepened, with the number of program schools in Baofeng County, Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan, increasing to five primary schools and expanding to include grades three and four. As part of the Hand-in-Hand Plan commissioned by the Civil Affairs Bureau (under the auspices of Shanghai Shen'ai Social Work Development Centre), we plan to add remote English Corner activities at two middle schools in Zhouqu and Wen County, Gansu in 2024.

Special thanks to Bloomberg for their continuous support of the Rural Videolink Program. Many Bloomberg employees have generously taken time out of their busy schedules to volunteer to teach students in Yunnan and Henan. We also appreciate the support of Equinix, who organised corporate volunteer teams to participate in our volunteer teaching, providing assistance to students in Yunnan and Jiangxi.

Students' feedback: "At the beginning of the English classes, we were a little shy. Teacher Chen continuously encouraged us by giving us little stars, and we became more and more confident. We were all very happy in his class. Teacher Chen taught us English and English songs, which made us feel that it was not difficult to learn English. We would like to say, 'Teacher Chen, thank you. You've been a great help!'"



Home Classroom

For the fourth straight year, our Home Classroom (HCR) Program provided English education to under-served children across China through online intervention. In 2023, 275 trained volunteers delivered an impressive total of 3,138 online English lessons to 1,412 students from 26 primary schools or children's welfare institutions located in Henan, Hubei, Jiangxi, Shanghai, Ningxia and Guangdong provinces. A highlight of the year was to have welcomed for the first time students from Lengshui in Zhaoqing, Guangdong.

In addition to conducting oral English activities focused on vocabulary, sentences and dialogues, we added phonics learning to our curriculum to cultivate children's ability to "see it and read it" and make vocabulary learning easier. We also provided an online English Corner course for Grade 7 students, allowing them to express themselves informally on different topics with the guidance of teaching volunteers, thus intensifying their oral English ability by having the opportunity to apply what they have learned.

High school and university students continued to make up the majority of HCR program volunteers in 2023, with some volunteers serving four semesters or more since the program started. We provided essential training for volunteers before the program started each term. In order to ensure the smooth running of the classes, we also arranged for a coordinator to be on duty to monitor the classes simultaneously and support the students and volunteers in a timely fashion when needed. At the same time, we continuously improved the program by gathering and considering feedback collected informally from students and volunteers as well as through formal surveys and class auditing.

As always, we are sincerely grateful for the commitment of our volunteers, the participation of our students, and EEO for continuing to provide us with the integrated online teaching platform ClassIn. In 2024, we will further optimise the program operation and management and improve the quality of the classes, in order to help children to express themselves more confidently in English and provide volunteers with good volunteer service experience.



Students



Volunteer Teachers



Lessons

Student Liu Xinyi said,

"There are so many great memories! The volunteer teachers loved interacting with us. When we got something wrong, the teacher encouraged us to try again. Everyone got a chance to answer questions. We got rewards whether we answered correctly or not. The teacher was very kind, she always said goodbye to us after class and chatted with us before class."

Student Chen Chen said,

"The teachers were so gentle. Their encouragement made me confident in speaking and learning English."

Student Yin Ruihan said,

"I really appreciate the volunteer teachers' encouragement and patience. There's nothing I don't like."



Curriculum Development

In 2023, we delivered 12 new Level Two lesson PPTs for our Rural Videolink Program and adapted those PPTs for our Home Classroom Program. Volunteers and interns joined at different times of the year to support our curriculum work. Sibyl Wang continued this year as a remote volunteer to work on nine Phonics lesson PPTs. Yitao Liu and Kelly Chin joined in June to draft 12 English Corner PPTs based on Cambridge Think series and 10 PPTs on the Reading Explorer series of National Geographic Learning. Hui Zhi and Haoyu Peng joined in the summer to draft 24 new English song PPTs and another 12 Phonics lesson PPTs. Tony Chen and Timothy Zhou also joined in the summer to draft 20 lesson movie dubbing lesson PPTs based on the clips we sourced in the previous year. Sara Park joined in the fall semester to draft the movie dubbing lesson PPTs based on 3 movie clips. Three interns from Concordia Shanghai, Mulan Li, Jordan Sun and Sarah Wang worked together to create 24 preview videos for HCR Level 1.

Time was also spent on developing materials for several ad hoc projects, i.e., the Children's Service Program at Huacao, the Shanghai Winter Camp and corporate events with Texas Instruments, Inter-Continental Group, and Rotary Club Shanghai.

Aside from the materials, assessment and observation tools were also developed in 2023 to monitor the quality of the teaching materials as well as obtain feedback from students and volunteer teachers.



Volunteer training

This year, we continued to provide our volunteers with trainings and workshops to help improve teaching quality and optimise the quality of interactions with students, both offline and online.

A total of seven public training sessions were conducted for the Shanghai English Teaching Program, of which five were on-site and two online, and two training sessions were organised for the Rural Individual Volunteering Program. Thanks to Venice Yang, who has been teaching drama to a group of middle school students at one of our sites, and did a demo class at one of the offline English teaching trainings in the Spring. In addition, we conducted training sessions for high school students from Yew Cheung International School and Wellington College International Shanghai. Besides, one training session was conducted for the Online English Corner Program, and one teacher training for the English teachers in Jiangxi to enable them to teach phonics using the videos we created.

Two teaching workshops were conducted in 2023, one of which was run by our training consultant Zenith Qu on the topic of Classroom Management. The same topic was also offered online to online program volunteers.



Digital Literacy



Teaching
Sites



Lessons



Volunteers



Students

In a society increasingly reliant on the internet, digital literacy has become a crucial social skill and asset. However, for many marginalised Chinese youths, this necessity is a privilege that they struggle to access. Realising this un-met demand, Stepping Stones' Digital Literacy Program strives to help students become more proficient and confident in their computer skills, improving their access to further education and opening a wider range of work opportunities in the future.

In 2023, thanks to our growing number of partners such as the Transparent Fish Fund, PwC, Texas Instruments, Goodyear, New York University, Fudan University, Joyview Education and the Government of Ireland, we were able to expand the reach of our program to under-served children in several Chinese provinces including Shanghai, Henan, Hubei, Anhui, and Jiangxi. Our digital literacy program experienced a significant increase in volunteer and student enrollment, reaching more students in schools for migrant children and through online interventions. Many of our volunteer teachers were provided by the donor companies listed above.

This year's Scratch course volunteers primarily consisted of high school students from international schools or from the international departments of prestigious local high schools. Our high school volunteers are not only familiar with STEM knowledge and PBL (Project-Based Learning) methods but also, due to their similar ages, are able to relate to the beneficiary students, creating a positive teaching atmosphere. By expanding and cultivating the volunteer team, Stepping Stones has fostered a sustainable, mutually beneficial cooperation. This not only provides children in need with excellent educational resources, but also offers volunteers a valuable growth opportunity, shaping them into well-rounded teachers driven by a sense of mission through Stepping Stones' training.

Another highlight of 2023 is our partnership with Texas Instruments, which enabled Stepping Stones beneficiary Sijin Chen to lead her

team to win first place in the global LEGO FLL STEM competition. Like many other Chinese youth, Sijin lacked the educational resources to pursue her interests. Through Stepping Stones' Digital Literacy Program at her local community centre, Sijin discovered her passion for computer programming and experienced tremendous growth by exploring Scratch, Autodesk, and AI.

This year, with the help of 250 volunteers, Stepping Stones provided 1,300 online and offline lessons to an impressive total of 1,478 students, increasing our number of beneficiaries by 103% compared to 2022.

Yang Xiaolong, a sixth-grader who has left Sunflower Community Centre after two years of digital literacy training and several competitions, said, "Coding has made me more confident, sharpened my thinking skills, and even improved my maths."

Song Yize, a member of Tianhua'an New Citizen Life Centre, has been participating in our digital literacy program for two years. "I am extremely grateful for the help Stepping Stones has given me. Besides teaching me the concepts and skills of digital literacy, the program aims to spark my creativity, encourage communication, develop critical thinking, and boost my confidence and courage to learn independently."



Curriculum Development

We continued to improve and expand our curriculum, adding new classes in STEM, logic, coding (Scratch 3.0), C++, Lego Spike, graphical programming, 3D printing, and AI. Our variety of courses makes it easier for students to grasp programming concepts, and develop creativity and problem-solving skills.

Volunteer Training

We continued to refine our training for digital literacy volunteers. We conducted three large-scale offline training sessions, two online training sessions, and one workshop, equipping volunteers with techniques to help them maintain classroom order and improve their management skills. Additionally, we focused on enhancing volunteers' teaching methods, striving to create a highly interactive, student-centred small class teaching environment. This approach aims to deliver our carefully designed courses more precisely and effectively to students, while encouraging volunteer teachers to provide timely and positive feedback to ensure every student keeps pace with the class.



Social-emotional Learning



Teaching Sites



Students



Lessons



Volunteer Teachers

In 2023, we officially launched our Social-emotional Learning (SEL) Program. Reflecting on the past year, the SEL Program has overcome many challenges with the support of our dedicated team and has ultimately achieved goals that initially seemed “impossible”. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers and partners who supported this program. Your encouragement and feedback have enabled us to continuously provide students with engaging courses.

Following the well-established model of our English program, the SEL Program trains volunteers and provides them with teaching materials and support throughout the term. This sustainable approach allows us to reach more students effectively. In 2023, we delivered 604 sessions to 744 students, primarily in grades 3-5. As well as our in-person teaching in Shanghai, we also conducted a semester of online courses in Xianyang, marking our first foray into online SEL. Additionally, we sent volunteers to teach in Luyi and Xiamen for one to two weeks.

The SEL program strives to create a safe space for children to express themselves freely and explore their interests. Maintaining an atmosphere of mutual respect is at the core of our program. We revisit group agreements before each session and conduct check-ins to help children ease into class mode. Emotions are a frequent topic in our classes. We start by encouraging students to be mindful of their current state of mind and share their feelings, believing that self-awareness can support children in their daily lives.

Guiding students to unlearn and re-think about things they have long overlooked is challenging. Over the summer, we started incorporating more readings, animations, paintings, and other crafts into our classes. These diverse mediums have helped students better understand abstract topics and left a strong impression on them.

Our ultimate goal is for students to use SEL skills to solve real-life challenges and reach their full potential. To support this, we are exploring ways to help parents integrate SEL principles into daily life by providing them with practical activities and strategies for home use. Looking ahead, we aim to extend SEL learning beyond the classroom and embed it into various aspects of children's lives. By doing this, we hope to strengthen their ability to navigate life's challenges with resilience and confidence.

Curriculum Development

Our program is based on Yale University's SEL theory. It is committed to providing a safe discussion space for children to help them face challenges such as interpersonal communication and self-awareness as they grow. Over the year, we developed a 12-lesson course for children aged 8-10. Through discussions and interactive games and activities, they learned to recognise and manage their emotions better, respect others, work in teams, show empathy, and explore their short-term and long-term goals.



Volunteer Training

We conducted seven formal training sessions and workshops, including regular training on SEL as well as workshops focusing on the specific needs of our volunteers. The regular trainings were designed to help volunteers understand SEL concepts, explore various teaching formats, and develop foundational teaching skills. The workshops, on the other hand, provided a platform for sharing and discussing the difficulties and challenges volunteers faced during their teaching experiences.

In the coming year, we aspire to offer more support for our volunteers through regular mini-trainings and opportunities to connect with each other. We aim to create environments where they can support one another throughout the term. We also hope to provide more teaching tips for volunteers that they can use directly in their sessions.

Students who took part in the SEL classes said,

"Teacher, thank you for letting me know my strengths."

"Social-emotional learning has helped me a lot because it reduces my stress, makes me happier, and allows me to express myself freely. My favourite part is answering questions because I can say what I want without worrying about right or wrong."

"I liked the part where we used weather to express emotions because the rainbow was very beautiful."

"I loved the little angry lion exercise because it taught me how to make peace with the little lion and not get angry."

"Social-emotional learning has been extremely helpful! It has taught us many things beyond just language, maths, and English, improving our mood. Doing kind acts benefits both mind and body! Love yourself, love others, and make the world colourful."

Summer Camp



Volunteer Teachers



Students



Teaching Sites



Lessons

This year marks the fourth year that Stepping Stones is proud to accept the trust of the Huacao Town Youth League and successfully hold a six-week full-time summer camp. Thanks to our volunteers and interns, 105 students had a safe, fulfilling, meaningful and enjoyable summer.

This year, two teachers helped manage the summer camp, one of whom was a local English teacher who had previously participated in the Stepping Stones' English Teacher Training. The theme of this year's summer camp was the Silk Road. In addition to our regular English, digital literacy and SEL lessons, trained volunteers also provided geography and history classes, reading classes, and picture book reading classes relating to the theme.

At the end of the summer camp, the children were proud and happy to showcase what they had learned during the summer camp through song, poetry, dance and drama performances for their parents, volunteers and teachers. The children said that our summer camp was exciting and that they had had a great summer holiday. The parents were very grateful to the volunteers and teachers for their hard work and hoped that their children could join the summer camp provided by Stepping Stones next year.

Children say



After spending a week here, how do you feel about the summer camp?

I had a good time. My favorite classes are English and Digital Literacy.

--Student Cao

I like the PE class most. I am looking forward to playing football next week.

--Student Huo

I really like the volunteers here. They are nice to me.

--Student Liu

Parents say



Parents, how do you feel about our summer camp? Any advice?

I really appreciate the work of all the volunteers!

Thank you all for offering the kids this meaningful summer.

Thanks to all young teachers!

Our Student Stories

Reflections from our students - Fu Jingze & Yuan Tianhao

The Shanghai English Teaching Program has impacted thousands of students in China. We invited two students, Fu Jingze and Yuan Tianhao to share their experiences in learning English with Stepping Stones and how it has influenced their academic and personal lives.



Yuan Tianhao

I'm a 15-year-old high school student from Jiangsu Province, currently studying in Shanghai. I really enjoy taking English classes at Stepping Stones!



Fu Jingze

I'm 21 years old and I come from Xi'an, Shaanxi Province. I participated in Stepping Stones' Shanghai English Program's courses as a student in its partner Shanghai Young Bakers' (SYB) project.

My Unexplainable Connection with English

Fu Jingze

Before taking English classes at Stepping Stones, I used to be quite sensitive and lacked confidence. I felt that I wasn't good at anything.

In the classes at SYB, my head was always down and I didn't speak much, which made me seem introverted. One of the teachers said, "Fu Jingze is introverted and doesn't talk much." But in Stepping Stone's English classes, I was excited and energetic. Every time the teacher asked a question, I eagerly raised my hand to answer. It was quite different.

During one English class at Stepping Stones, we played a really fun game. The rules were that each person had an English word tagged on their forehead with an action they couldn't do. For instance, the word on the tag is "smile", so that person won't be allowed to smile, or he/she will be out. In the first round, the word on my tag was "smile", and I didn't realise it. I smiled at everyone when my classmate put that tag on my forehead, unfortunately I got eliminated immediately. At that moment, I was very confused, wondering what had happened. Now, I'm looking back, it was incredibly interesting, and that moment is still vivid in my mind.

For teenagers, English is a necessary subject because learning an extra language in today's society is always beneficial for better communication. After learning English with Stepping Stones' teachers, my English, especially my oral English, improved significantly.

On my first day of internship at JW Marriott Hotel, I was stationed on the 38th-floor buffet as a baking assistant. The hotel had many foreign guests, and I was nervous because I had to make pancakes for them. Truth be told, I wasn't very skilled, and the pastry chef showed me how to make pancakes only twice before leaving. I was left alone and didn't know what to do. A foreign guest approached me, and I panicked because I was worried that I wouldn't understand him. However, when he started talking, I realised I could communicate well with him. At that moment, my confidence skyrocketed. I believe it wouldn't have been possible without the help of Stepping Stones' teachers!

There was another awkward situation. I made a mistake when I was flipping the pancake. I felt bad and began to cry, it was my first official workday. Luckily, the foreign guest was kind, he noticed my nervousness and didn't scold me. Instead, he patted my shoulder and said, "Come on, you can do it!" The encouragement from him, a stranger, really touched me!

I did live broadcasts on TikTok for a short period, and some foreigners watched live streaming. Thanks to Stepping Stones' training, my spoken English improved a lot, allowing me to better introduce my live broadcasts to them. Once, a foreign watcher asked me to sing the song "My Heart Will Go On" from Titanic. Coincidentally, I knew its lyrics, and the performance went smoothly. He sent me many appreciative emojis which boosted my confidence immensely.

From Unfamiliarity to Familiarity

Yuan Tianhao

I used to think that foreign teachers were somewhat unfriendly or intimidating, and this stereotype lingered in my mind for a long time.



Yuan Tianhao (against the wall, middle) was active during the class of Shanghai English Teaching Program.



· Fu Jingze (right) listened carefully in class.

I believe that English is a very important subject as its influence can be seen everywhere in daily life, and that's why I love English classes. I enjoy attending all the English classes because it allows me not only to read words and texts aloud but also to gain insights into foreign cultures.

One day, I found myself in a Stepping Stones' class, and to my astonishment, the teacher was a foreigner! I was initially quite anxious, fidgeting restlessly during the entire lesson, and harbouring worries about comprehending her words or the possibility of receiving harsh criticism for any errors.

However, this sense of fear was rapidly dispelled. There was one particularly long and difficult word, "phenomenon". Without hesitation, I raised my hand and inquired, "Teacher, may I ask what the word's meaning is?" In that fleeting moment, I held my breath, my face flushing as red as a ripened apple. Unexpectedly, the foreign teacher responded with a warm and sweet smile. She explained in Chinese, "The word means xianxiang (Chinese pinyin). For example, the growing number of foreign teachers instructing Chinese students is a phenomenon." In an instant, my heart soared, and I felt deeply appreciative of her thoughtful response. Her image in my mind also became better.

Afterwards, I entered each English class full of energy, and proactively answered questions without fear. I grew increasingly close to this endearing foreign teacher. She guided me through the transition from an unfamiliar and chilly path to a familiar and heartwarming avenue. This remarkable mentor significantly bolstered my confidence in speaking English, contributing substantially to my marked improvement in English performance.

At Stepping Stones, I have acquired a wealth of knowledge. The curriculum extended beyond the acquisition of vocabulary and essay-writing skills; it encompasses the application of this knowledge in both exams and real-life situations.

During class, I listened attentively, always striving to acquire as much knowledge as possible. Even the acquisition of a single new word felt valuable, as one could never predict when it might become useful. Embracing this mindset, I took part in my first Stepping Stones' exam. Prior to the test, I had entertained the fanciful notion that I might miraculously guess all the correct answers. However, the test proved to be far from challenging. Many of the questions closely resembled those covered by

Stepping Stones' teachers, and a significant portion of the words were those I had diligently practiced in my assignments. Once I comprehended the meanings of these words and sentences, the exam no longer seemed daunting. As anticipated, my score was great! Stepping Stones' education has substantially enhanced my English proficiency and intellectual breadth. My heartfelt gratitude extends to the teachers at Stepping Stones!

I profoundly appreciate Stepping Stones offering me the opportunity to elevate my English listening and speaking skills. These experiences are unparalleled, introducing me to a realm I've never encountered before. Nowadays, I can fearlessly talk to foreigners and confidently respond to English exams.

"In the future, I want to..."

Fu Jingze:

I would love to become a volunteer for Stepping Stones to let more people and more children learn about Stepping Stones' programs and experience its courses. I want everyone to feel the joy of learning English in the classroom and understand its significance. This is a very meaningful thing.

I'm currently residing in Suzhou, where there is a considerable population of migrant workers. They bring their children to the city to work, and their lives are quite challenging. The education these children receive is not very good. I really want to bring Stepping Stones' courses to them. Additionally, I believe Stepping Stones could also offer drama classes. Many children these days are afraid to show their true selves outside, and drama classes might help them with that. I'm really looking forward to Stepping Stones opening a project site in Suzhou. When that happens, I will definitely sign up as an offline volunteer!

Yuan Tianhao:

If one day Stepping Stones needs my help, I won't hesitate to lend a hand.

I think Stepping Stones' curriculum could expand further. For example, subjects like Chinese, math, and physics are considered challenging but essential for students. If Stepping Stones can better understand the current needs of students and provide a more proactive response, I'm sure it will become better and better in the future.



Our Volunteer Story

My days being embraced by village children – Ida Wang

Our volunteer Ida Wang recently went to teach at a school in Jiatan, a rural town in Luyi County of Henan Province. Let's listen to her volunteer teaching story and get to know Stepping Stones' Rural Individual Volunteering (RIV) Program.

My first volunteer experience with children

It was a sunny day when I embarked on my teaching trip, and I set off from Shanghai with the sunrise. The moment the high-speed train closed its doors, like a coin tossed high, my life flipped from side A to side B.

On my second day in Luyi County, I went to school. It was a downpour that day, and the water made the road a little muddy. But I was relaxed and felt that the heavy rain washed away some of the anxiety and tension in my heart.

Headteacher Ms Liu picked me up early in the morning. Along the way, she gave me some basic information about the students. Surprisingly, there was only one class in each grade, and the smallest class had only ten children. Many of the students there were left-behind children whose parents had gone to work in the city, leaving their young children behind in the village, which makes many children feel rejected by their families. For them, school was more like a shelter, where teachers not only taught them knowledge, but also embraced them in their lives and gave them a second home.

After a brief conversation with the teachers, I realised that the support of young English teachers here was needed more than I thought. Teachers should not only supplement the content in the textbooks, but also raise the children's interests in English learning and encourage them to progress.

Compared with urban children, children here are not exposed to English classes until the third grade. Therefore, English is an unfamiliar "new friend" compared with other subjects. I put a lot of effort into encouraging them to become good friends with English, hoping that they can have more fun in studying.

The Charm of English filled the Classroom

In class, the most important thing is to create an English atmosphere for everyone, so I basically communicated with children in plain English.

From a simple "How are you?" to "What's the weather like today?" I tried to make every conversation in English from listening to speaking. When students encountered new words and expressions, I used body language and association to let them guess and express their understanding. This stimulated the interest of the children and encouraged them to learn independently, which was great!

For many shy kids, I also invited their friends to help. Compared with the teacher's words, the encouragement and help from peers can make the children feel the joy of progressing together.

Different People Different Ways

Different grades need to be taught different content according to students' aptitude.

For children in grades one, two and three, I preferred to maximize teaching through lively activities, such as using children's songs, paintings, riddles and games to stimulate their interest and let them feel the joy of English.

For the fourth and fifth graders, in addition to consolidating the basic textbook knowledge, I paid more attention to putting words into sentences and practicing pronunciation, hoping to help them develop the habit of accurate expression. The sixth graders were under pressure to advance to higher education, so I worked on their grammar, sentence formation and self-expression to improve their English level more comprehensively.

English in the Farm

In addition to practicing textbook knowledge, I also encouraged the kids to leave their classrooms to play and learn outside!

This year, the school opened up a vegetable patch, and each class was given an allotment, which made the children very excited and became a top priority for them. Therefore, after discussing with the English teacher, a "hands-on planting lesson" combined with the content of the lesson "Farm" in the book was given to the fourth graders: it focused on "seed", "soil", "fertilizer" and other planting words, which expanded a lot of vocabulary for the children. I thought that it was a bit beyond their level, but the students mastered it in no time. Sure enough, interest is the best teacher!



Fundraising

Good Teacher & Helpful Friends

The children's feelings were so pure and sincere that it was touching. We promised to meet again.

After a few classes, more and more students actively spoke. Everyone began to speak English bravely out loud, and some children even asked me to give them English names. The children were gradually more familiar with me. Every day when I arrived at school, a lot of students greeted me with "Good morning!", "Are you coming to class today, teacher?", "Teacher, can I come to play with you after class?" At lunch time, there were also children who took my hand to buy a meal together and helped me bring it to the table. I was often infected by the innocent and lovely smiling faces of the children and I felt very happy when I was with them.

The three short weeks flew by, and it was the last day. I got a lot of gifts after class: self-written postcards, precious snacks and handmade hairpins, all of which were children's treasures, stuffed into my arms one by one. The moment I took the last group photo and stepped out of the classroom, the children rushed to hug me. Some of them couldn't help but shed tears and didn't want to let go of my hand.

Besides spending time with students, the time I spent with the teachers in the office was also unforgettable. Every teacher was full of love for education, sparing no effort to help their students, and paying great attention to the physical and mental condition of the children. For some children falling slightly behind, they never gave up on them but always encouraged them and spurred them on. The teachers treated students as their own children, loving and caring for each little petal.

Pass on the Volunteer Spirit

Being away from the heavy traffic of the city allowed me to see another side of life and introduced me to a world beyond my knowledge. It was not so much that I went to help as that the village chose to embrace me.

This trip shows me that rural education still has a long way to go and what children need is not only knowledge from textbooks but also help and encouragement to touch the bigger and unknown world. The wheels of social development are rolling forward, and those children who miss the bus should not be left behind by the times. I hope more people can pay attention to rural education and support for rural education can be more powerful so that every child can enjoy the sunshine.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, 2023 was a fruitful year for Stepping Stones. We were fortunate to sustain many of our long-term supporters and welcome new partners to support Stepping Stones' mission. As always, we continue to reflect upon the organisation's sustainability and work towards diversifying our fundraising in the future.

In September, we took part in Tencent's 99 Donation Day. Through our great efforts and the support of our partners to raise awareness of Stepping Stones' cause, we raised a total of CNY22,052. We are grateful that public fundraising events like this shed light on the many difficulties under-served children face, and the urgency to take action. Meeting potential new partners who share our values is always encouraging. In addition to special fundraising events, we continue to carry out regular fundraising on the Shanghai United Foundation and Global Giving Platforms. We are grateful to conclude the year with 51 monthly donors and 574 public donations on the Shanghai United Foundation website, totaling CNY68,871.75, and to receive an incredible income of CNY179,993.49 through Global Giving!

As well as our annual summer camp with Huacao Youth League, thanks to achieving 3A status, we were able to increase our share of government procurement projects. We were invited to teach English and SEL in Huacao Party Office, and also won a contract to provide lessons to under-privileged students at Huacao's Social Work Station.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to all our donors, who are listed on the donation page, as well as our many other supporters for their continued support. We couldn't do any of this without you!



Scan QR code to become our monthly donor.

Corporate Events

Corporate events are an excellent and much-cherished way for Stepping Stones to collaborate with companies to give back to the community. This year, thanks to our generous partners, we continue to explore and innovate new ways to provide and advocate for under-served children and youth in China.

Many memorable events took place this year with the participation of numerous outstanding organisations, including PwC, Texas Instruments, Equinix, Qifu Technology, Cook Medical, Rotary, Henkel, TMF and Homeslice Pizza. Thanks to Texas Instruments, Stepping Stones led two groups of students to participate in the global LEGO FLL STEM competition, in which our Digital Literacy and English Program beneficiary, Sijin Chen from the Sunflower Minhang program site, led her team to win first place. It is a great honour to witness our students' rapid advancements supported by our corporate partners.

Our long-standing corporate partner PwC asked us to organise another rural volunteering tour for their staff in May, resuming an annual tradition which began in 2014. 10 staff travelled to our partner school in Henan Luyi to teach English and social-emotional learning to 117 rural children studying there.

Our online programs continue to receive dedicated attention and support from corporate volunteers. In 2023, Equinix, TMF, and PwC corporate employees provided a series of classes to our students across all domains, such as English, Cyber Safety, practical maths and digital literacy. The classes were interactive and well-received by the students and schools.

Inspired by our new SEL Program, Cook Medical's corporate volunteers conducted two outdoor social-emotional learning sessions with migrant students. Volunteers and students both benefited from learning to express their emotions better in a natural setting.

Our corporate activities have steadily increased and diversified. As always, our educational partners, such as El Fuego, JoyviewEDU, New York University Shanghai and Yew Chung International School continue to support our cause by providing a steady stream of quality student volunteers and donations.

Stepping Stones continues to explore different ways for corporate partners to give back to the community. Bridging corporations and local communities, Stepping Stones continues to raise awareness of education equality issues in China and the needs of under-served Chinese children and youth. We hope to reach corporations in all fields to join our cause.

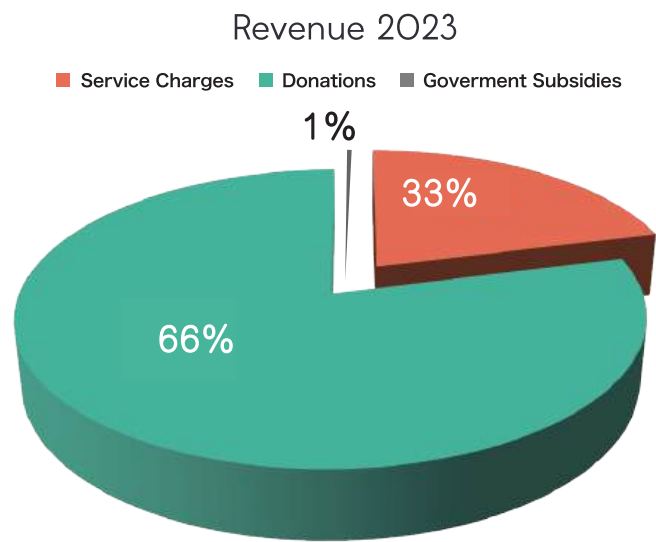


Finance

In 2023, Stepping Stones' revenue was CNY2,406,202.26, and expenses were CNY2,556,518.59, making a net loss of CNY150,316.33.

The opening balance was CNY474,316.32 and the closing balance was CNY324,846.52.

Stepping Stones' accounts are audited annually by an independent accountant.



Revenue (CNY)	
Donations	1,586,610.53
Service Charges	782,946.35
Government Subsidies	36,645.38
TOTAL	2,406,202.26

Expenses (CNY)	
Operational Costs	2,516,064.39
Accommodation	28,531.00
Communications	15,380.73
Labour Costs	63,000.00
Meals	118,485.78
Miscellaneous Costs	9,613.00
Office and Training Space	390,000.00
Office Equipment & Supplies	12,474.20
Professional Fees & Insurance	42,981.04
Salary & Bonus	1,298,217.39
Social Security & Housing Fund	399,756.09
Teaching Materials	46,832.24
Transport	90,792.92
Management Costs	38,757.16
Meals	1,860.00
Office Supplies	15,168.18
Social Security & Housing Fund	14,197.60
Tax & Others	820.17
Transport	799.52
Welfare	5,911.69
Fundraising Costs	1,697.04
TOTAL EXPENSES	2,556,518.59
NET LOSS	-150,316.33

Donors

Thank you to everyone who donated to Stepping Stones in 2023. Every donation of whatever size is always appreciated.

Donor	Amount (CNY)
Donations received from Shanghai United Foundation	503,207.39
United Parcel Service of America, Inc (through Stepping Stones China Ltd.)	238,926.61
Transparent Fish Fund (through Stepping Stones China Ltd.)	187,500.10
GlobalGiving Foundation, Inc	179,993.49
Target (through Stepping Stones China Ltd.)	133,558.28
Consulate General of Ireland in Shanghai	61,881.60
Rotary Club Shanghai	50,000.00
Shanghai Soong Ching Ling Foundation	49,504.95
Homeslice Pizza	47,196.60
Ms Huadan Zhao	25,277.00
Mr Henry Sun	20,000.00
Other Donations	89,564.51
DONATIONS SUB-TOTAL	1,586,610.53

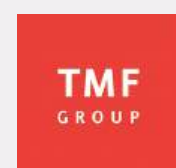
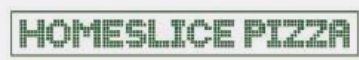
In addition, Shanghai United Foundation (SUF) received the following donations on behalf of Stepping Stones in 2023.

Donor	Amount (CNY)
Ms Binbin Yang	500,000.00
Texas Instruments Semiconductor Technologies (Shanghai) Co., Ltd.	67,000.00
Cook (China) Medical Trading Co., Ltd.	35,853.25
Shanghai Yiwuyu Management Consulting Co., Ltd.	30,000.00
Homeslice Pizza	28,174.40
Shidai College	27,835.75
TMF Services (China) Co., Ltd.	18,400.00
Henkel (China) Investment Co., Ltd.	11,035.00
Other Donations	273,088.93
SUF DONATIONS SUB-TOTAL	991,387.33

Thank you to the following program partners for their financial support.

Corporate Partner	Service Charge (CNY)
Tiny Tots Education Group	386,138.56
Shanghai Minhang Huacao Government	128,492.67
PwC China	122,352.48
Yew Chung International School of Shanghai	20,792.08
El Fuego	18,267.34
Joyview Education	9,901.00
New York University Shanghai	4,678.22
Other Service Charges	92,324.00
SERVICE CHARGES SUB-TOTAL	782,946.35

Donors



Pro Bono Supporters

A special thank you to the following companies, who generously contributed high-quality professional services to us for free, thus helping us to significantly reduce our operational costs and improve the quality of our programs.



EEO for providing a professional integrated online teaching platform ClassIn.



Homeslice Pizza for generously providing refreshments for important meetings.



Mingdao for providing an office management solutions platform.



Nisseiwell for printing services.



O'Melveny & Myers LLP for professional legal services.



PricewaterhouseCoopers for donating computer hardware.



Rödl & Partner for professional accounting services.



Shanghai Hurui Industries Co., Ltd.

Shanghai Hurui Industries Co., Ltd. for providing storage space.

Non-Profit Partners

Stepping Stones is proud to have partnerships with many well-known community organisations, as follows:



桑梓图书馆
Sangzi Library



Looking Forward

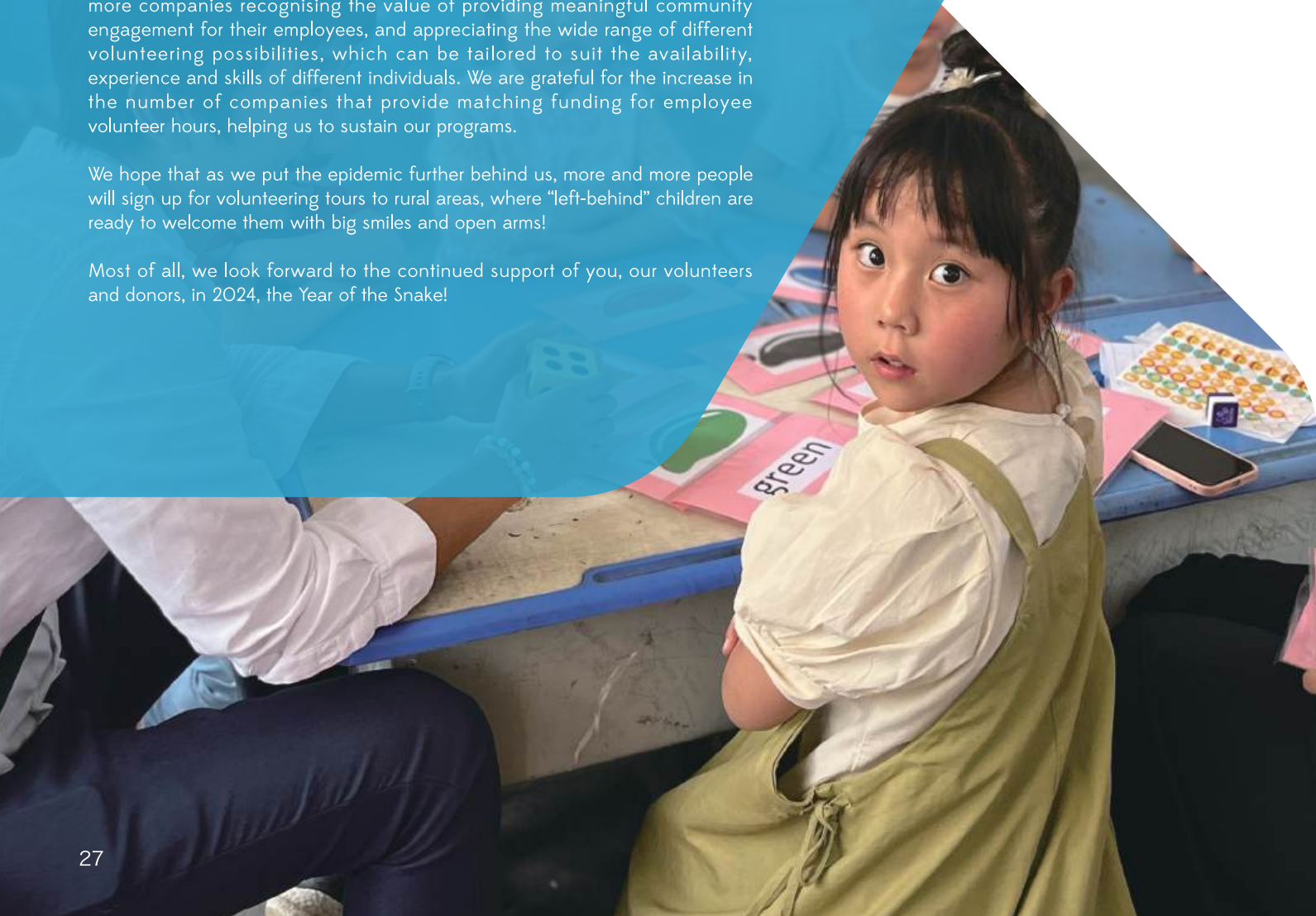
As our organisation enters its 18th year, it is really coming of age, and becoming ever more mature and stable. In order to continuously improve our services to our beneficiaries, we plan to develop ever more and ever better curriculum, to empower our volunteers to deliver ever-higher quality lessons. We will also facilitate as many site visits as possible to offer our volunteers the best possible support and feedback.

In response to feedback from our volunteers, we will also increase our focus on their experience, providing more activities designed around building a community.

We expect the up-tick in corporate volunteering to continue, with more and more companies recognising the value of providing meaningful community engagement for their employees, and appreciating the wide range of different volunteering possibilities, which can be tailored to suit the availability, experience and skills of different individuals. We are grateful for the increase in the number of companies that provide matching funding for employee volunteer hours, helping us to sustain our programs.

We hope that as we put the epidemic further behind us, more and more people will sign up for volunteering tours to rural areas, where “left-behind” children are ready to welcome them with big smiles and open arms!

Most of all, we look forward to the continued support of you, our volunteers and donors, in 2024, the Year of the Snake!





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