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Friends of the Underprivileged (FOU) members and supporters traveled at our own expenses to remote areas in Vietnam this summer. We assessed current educational, social, and health-care projects, as well as evaluated new projects to benefit the underprivileged.

At the Ben San leprosy community in Binh Duong province, we distributed gifts to elderly patients, and awarded the outstanding students in our FOU scholarship program. At Bu Dang and Long Dien in Binh Phuoc province, the Catholic Sisters gave us a tour of their dormitories and informed us their current issues with raising and educating Montagnard children. Per our request, a Sister and we took a "daring" ride on motorbikes to remote tribes located at the end of a winding and slippery trail. We saw the tribal people, old and young, peeling raw cashew nuts by hand, while earning about \$0.25 for every kilogram. We surprised the shy tribal kids with unexpected toys and candies. Upon returning to the Convents, we discussed the needs with the Sisters and donated funds to support lepers in tribal villages, provided scholarship fund, and then participated with the children in their group activities (Figs 1-3).

The leprosy community at DiLinh in Lam Dong province has been the most successful model among all FOU supporting sites. This is due to the clear vision, effective operation and management of the leading Sisters. Nearly 50% of students in DiLinh scholarship program received honor recognition in spite of the social taboo against leprosy and their economical hardship. The number of scholarships in DiLinh has quickly risen from 10 in the 1990s to 145 students in 2013; this includes five students who continue their college programs this year. We distributed food gifts to families of all patients, handed out desserts to the children, and awarded gifts to honor the students who have worked very hard over the year despite their underprivileged status (Figs. 4-5).

We called on other tribal villages in Daklak province where the Montagnard people are still living in primitive conditions. We donated basic medicines to the "clinic" for free-distribution to the sick and pledged support to the evening illiterate classes for adults. We also assessed the progress of the clean water project to the tribal villages. The general contractor and his dedicated team completed four wells and were working on the remaining four systems at the time of our visit. All eight wells were named in honor of the contributors. Each well is centrally located in a tribe to conveniently supply clean water to its people. A maintenance program was also implemented to provide long-term usage of the wells (Figs. 6-12). FOU also support a micro-farming program to help tribal people starting their own gardens. Dr. Chu and his wife advised the locals on how to improve their current crop yield, helped to start new crops with donated seeds, and trained workers on productive farming techniques (Fig. 13).

Our summer mission would not be successful without your kind help. We would like to thank all FOU supporters and donors who have contributed to our projects to benefit and improve life quality for the underprivileged in Vietnam.



Fig. 1: The proud minority students with their honor certificates [Bu Dang].



Fig. 2: Ms. Ly (at arrow) with a young tribal mother and her children [Binh Phuoc].



Fig. 3: Ms. Ly and Dan (left) distribute toys and candies to Montagnard children [Binh Phuoc].



Fig. 4: With patients at the leprosy community [DiLinh].



Fig. 5a: Honor students and their certificates [DiLinh].



Fig. 5b: Ms. Audrey with her son Tim (at arrows) and children at leper community [DiLinh].



Fig. 6: Sister Mau (at arrow) prescribes free medicine to ill Montagnard patients [DaTong].



Fig. 7: Dan shares the collected toys and candies with new friends [DaTong].



Fig. 8: Ms. Ly (left) and tribal people (right) enjoy fresh and clean water from new wells.

Fig. 9: Illiterate but studious adults in an evening class.



Fig. 10: Ms. Ly (at arrow) with some tribal women and their children at a construction site for new well [PhiLieng].



Fig. 11: Newly complete wells and water tanks



Fig. 12: Eight wells are named in honor of the respective sponsors.



Fig. 13: Dr. Chu (left) instructs farmers on farming techniques [DaTong].
The hard-working Montagnard mothers often carry their children while working in the field.



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