

# UNIQUELY



UNIS  
HANOI

WINTER 2017

## WHAT DO YOU VALUE?

Find out what we value | P.10

## Teachers Teaching Teachers

Early childhood champions  
transforming lives | P.45

## Legacy of Lifelong Learning

Our alumni as global gamechangers | P.34

# Uniquely UNIS!

The first international school in Vietnam. The original IB world School in Asia. One of only two United Nations international schools in the world.

Currently, the school of choice for a record 1121 students representing 66 different nationalities and 300 faculty and staff from 27 countries.

## Without a doubt UNIS Hanoi is unique. But what makes us Uniquely UNIS?

Is it the UN Principles that underscore all that we do, or our core Values? Is it our overarching commitment to **Learning**? Or is it that we expect **Responsibility** from every member of a **Community** that we treasure above all else?

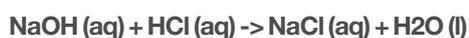
Yes! UNIS Hanoi is guided by all of the above - every single day - and in partnership with every single member of our community.

Our Vision to be a learning community that is an inspirational role model for a better world is the driving force behind all that we do.

This is our identity. And within the pages of our new bi-annual magazine, you'll soon see that this is what makes us Uniquely UNIS.



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An aqueous solution of sodium hydroxide and phenolphthalein was added to an aqueous solution of hydrochloric acid and universal indicator. Thanks to MSHS Chemistry Teacher Rebecca Bechard for creating the beautiful chemistry!

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# From Values to Vision

UNIS Hanoi is an exceptional place to learn - It is the ideals and principles of the United Nations in action every day!

We are proud to be a learning community that celebrates cultural diversity, unleashing the creativity and innovation that comes from bringing the world together on one campus. Our students are curious, compassionate and confident. They understand, and are committed to building a better world. And they are undaunted by the boldness of a vision that is both inspiring and intimidating.

We are a learning community committed to every child's happiness and believe that it is the quality of relationships within our community that empower exceptional learning.

We are determined that our students are challenged and nurtured by exceptional faculty in order to realise their full potential and test their most aspirational goals, both in and outside the classrooms. Our teachers' passion for innovative learning, both for our students and for themselves, inspires excellence.

And it is that ambition for excellence for all, driven by a shared vision and underscored by shared values, that shaped our strategic plan for the School and our students' futures.

The plan, Strategy 2020, uses our core Values as the driving force to shape the future: Learning, Community and Responsibility are the Values that both underpin and impel all that we do at UNIS Hanoi.

Those Values have shaped goals which were crafted during three years of careful consultation with, and by listening to, our community's many voices and it is our commitment that we will continue to strive for our community's hopes and dreams. Together.

The depth and breadth of Strategy 2020 can be discovered in detail on the UNIS Hanoi website but in brief, it is three goals which put our Values into action, each with detailed objectives to turn vision into reality.



## Excellent Learning

Excellent learning is the focus and the result of the efforts of all members of the school community. UNIS Hanoi is committed to moving all learning to new levels, so that every hour of every day spent at UNIS Hanoi provides excellent learning opportunities. If we want our young people to thrive in the future we need to be clear about what this means.

# Strategy 2020 Goals

## Connected Community

In an increasingly turbulent and uncertain world, it has never been more important to connect on a human level. Relationships matter and they start with our local community. The networks we create in the wider world will lead to collaboration and a building of collective knowledge that would be unachievable if we were to act alone. Our connected learning community will generate our sense of who we are now and what we will become.

## Community with No Bystanders

Because we belong to the UNIS Hanoi community, we have unique opportunities to make a positive impact on others. Our impact can be global or local, influencing what goes on in Vietnam and what happens in the school playground. This means not standing on the sidelines when action is needed, building bridges and extending our responsibility beyond our own immediate concerns and by seeing ourselves as responsible and principled individuals who are truly able to make a difference to the community as a whole.



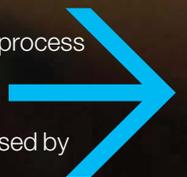


# Excellent Learning

At UNIS Hanoi we define learning as the “process of creating meaning through acquiring, applying and synthesising new skills, understandings and knowledge.”

We believe that Excellent Learning is taking place at UNIS Hanoi when learners are:

- Extending their thinking and making thinking visible
- Modifying their thinking, behaviours and attitudes
- Developing new understandings and perspectives
- Reflecting on their learning experiences, their strengths and areas for development
- Transferring their learning to other settings and contexts
- Making connections to what they already know and can do
- Cooperating, collaborating and communicating in a variety of social contexts as well as being confident to learn independently.
- Appropriately challenged and actively engaged
- Active, have frequent opportunities to move, transition and to process information
- Aware of the significance and relevance of their learning
- Encouraged and nurtured in learning environments characterised by supportive and mutually respectful relationships.



# The Third Educator

Alongside parents and teachers, the spaces within which our children learn are often referred to as the third educator. Professionals believe that providing an environment to maximise learning is a vital part of any planned programme.

This year at UNIS Hanoi our students are already beginning to experience the value that we place on learning environments with the opening of the new School playground, and our community is watching with anticipation as the construction continues to realise the first phase of our exciting Campus Master Plan.



Our students are turning risks into child's play thanks to the School's new adventure playground. Opened in October, as part of the third phase of the School's five year campus redevelopment plan, the outdoor area is designed to challenge.



The new school playground has become immediately popular with students in both Elementary and Middle School but it is designed to be more than fun.

These challenges, says Megan Brazil, Elementary School Principal, are crucial for a child's development, especially for a generation that typically spends more time indoors and engaged in sedentary pursuits. She explains, "In an increasingly cautious world, many of the risks that were a



# RISK-TAKING? IT'S CHILD'S PLAY!

natural part of childhoods past have become rare opportunities for our children.

**“Yet we know that children learn essential life lessons when they engage in a range of activities that contain some elements of risk. So, having a safely constructed and well supervised playground in which students are encouraged to challenge and extend their physical abilities is an important resource in our school.”**

The physically challenging playground is the culmination of months of

consultation and planning by a large team of teachers and administrators. As a result, every one of the 12 major structures that feature, were purposefully selected because of their health and social benefits.

To improve cardio-vascular fitness and coordination, there's a half court basketball area, trampolines, logs, ropes and a tether ball court. To encourage problem-solving, there's the 'bouldering' mountain and water play area and to inspire creativity, there are tunnels and spiderweb climbing frames. A variety of swings, slides and monkey bars offer a good workout too, and for balance, a range of seating options are dotted around to give students a chance to rest and catch up with friends.

And it is not just the IB Learner Profile of Risk Taker that is being lived by our students in this new education space, they have also taken the initiative to turn Caring Communicators into action.

The School playground has become a chance for students to demonstrate leadership and peer collaboration. With risk and challenge at the heart of the playground's success, the Elementary School Student Council decided this was also a responsibility for students to own and conducted a survey among their peers about safe play rules. Their findings are not only informing adult supervision, but are also the basis for a new student designed and led Playground Behaviour Campaign proving that risk taking truly pays off in more ways than one!

# BREAKING GROUND



Ground work has commenced on six new, eagerly anticipated, facilities, heralding the dawn of the next phase of the School's ambitious five year campus development plan.

Referred to as Phase 3A of the Master Plan, the construction of the School's brand new dining area, testing centre, new wing for the Elementary School, artificial turf soccer pitch and the new eco-friendly central air conditioning system has all begun. In addition, the covered court area is being extended and refurbished too!



**Architect's impression of the completed campus redevelopment. Phase 3A highlighted.**

■ ES New Wing  
■ Soccer Pitch

■ Canteen and Testing Centre  
■ Covered Court

The rapid progress means the project is on track, with the new builds expected to be completed by August 2017. Len Archer, Director of Finance and Operations at UNIS Hanoi, said, "We aim to complete these buildings in time for the start of the 2017-2018 academic year. It's a short and ambitious schedule but we're really excited to be able to provide these enhanced facilities that are designed to support teaching and learning in a dramatic way."

Last year, the School launched a five-year strategic plan with a goal of Excellent Learning, including objectives to ensure learning spaces empower programmes.

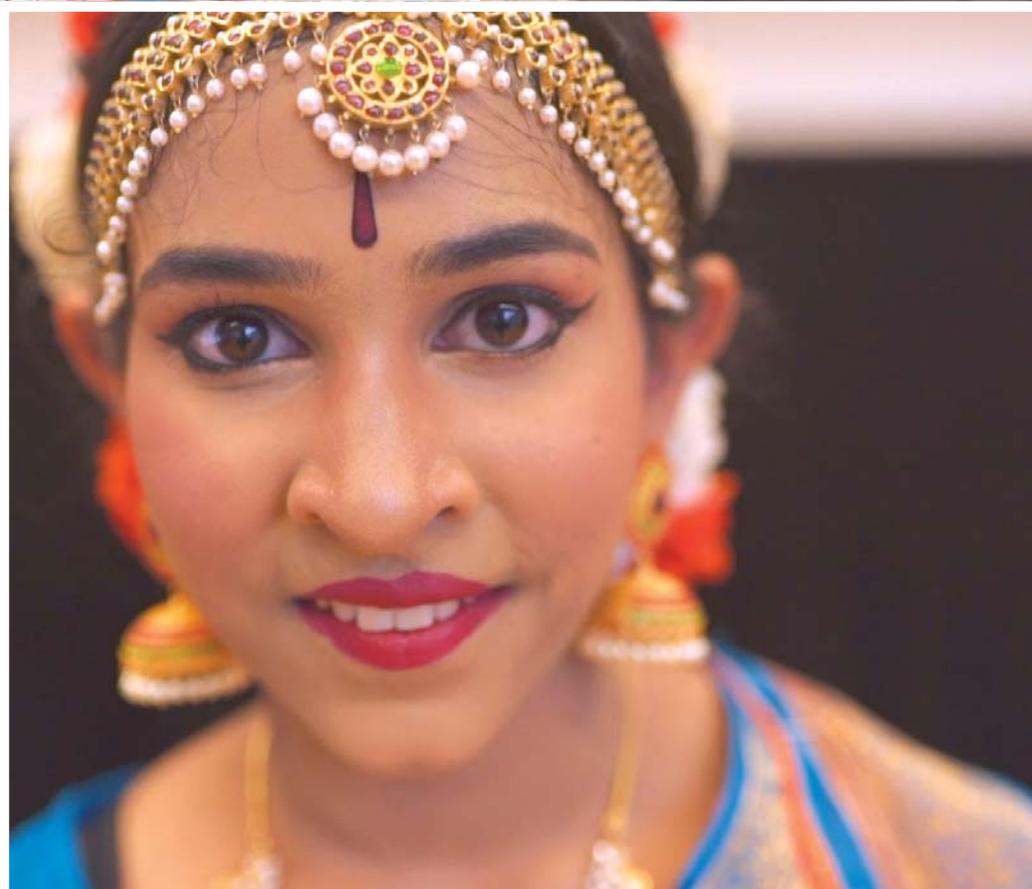
**Dr Chip Barder, Head of School explained, "As part of our plans, we have included some areas around the campus which can be used in a myriad of ways, to give us the flexibility as educators to innovate in these spaces in response to the educational programme we provide."**



#### THE FINAL COMPLETED CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT WILL ALSO INCLUDE:

- A UN Plaza Welcome Centre and new campus security design
- A World Language and Media (Library) Centre
- A new performing arts Black Box
- An activities area in the Early Childhood Centre
- Track and Field facilities
- Demonstration areas for Solar and Wind Power technology
- A Food Science section
- Additional covered Gymnasium and 50m Swimming Pool

For more information on the campus development plans including our design and construction partners, please visit UNIS Hanoi's website: [www.unishanoi.org/newcampus](http://www.unishanoi.org/newcampus)



# The 360 Degree Student

Joshua Scott, a 15 year-old student from India is a boy who drums to his own beat. Quite literally! He picked up drumming as a hobby some years ago as a result of growing up in a household of music lovers. “My parents introduced me to lots of music so it was bound to happen that I’d learn an instrument” Joshua explained.

But it was through the UNIS Music Academy that he found support to hone his talent and expand his interest. As well as drumming, Joshua plays the guitar and ukulele, rocking with his band, The Groove, at weekend gigs all over Hanoi. But if you thought Joshua was all about the bass, you’d be mistaken. He’s an avid fan of Chemistry too. He said, “Last year, I began to really enjoy Chemistry because my teacher made the subject interesting.”

Joshua is just one of eight students who feature in UNIS Hanoi’s new film, The 360 Degree Student.

**The film is a series of snapshots highlighting just a handful of the many 360 Degree Students at UNIS Hanoi. These are students whose broad ranging, and often traditionally contrasting interests, are nurtured and encouraged in School.**

Take for example, Grade 12 student Afia Adu-Gyamfi who is a star soccer player on the Varsity team, yet creates afro-inspired fashion in her spare time. While green-fingered Grade 11 student Johana Jarkulischova loves writing poetry when she’s not tending to her organic garden. Other students featured are Nguyen Viet Ha - a mathematician and budding product design pro; Yoav Shahaar, leader of the School’s Model United Nations and jazz musician; Tae Young Jeong a badminton playing filmmaker; Amani Parvathaneni, a passionate environmentalist who studies the art of traditional Indian dance; and Ryan Lim, the coding whizkid swim team member.

Filmmaker, Paul Zetter, says the film aims to show the diversity of the students and the educational opportunities that are available to them at UNIS Hanoi. He continues, “I hope the visual language that I use will allow the viewer to engage with the passion and talents of the students and feel their commitment”.

This is the latest in a series of films designed to illustrate and demonstrate our Values in action. As with the first four films, the final frame asks, ‘What do you value?’

Paul explains, “The great power of this concept, is that we’re positioning UNIS Hanoi as an institution that asks questions. When you watch it, it’s really up to the viewer to decide what

## WATCH IT NOW!

Experience our 360 Degree Students in augmented reality! Thanks to the power of technology, you can watch our latest Values film come alive on your phone direct from the printed page! Simply download the app called, Aurasma, point your phone camera over our Uniquely UNIS cover and watch it come alive!

the School values, what the student values, and finally asks the viewer what they value.”

As for this latest film, it goes to the heart of what we aim to achieve through the International Baccalaureate programmes, nurturing ‘broad and balanced’ students. Major efforts are made to provide a varied and dynamic co-curricular programme for all students, from the Discovery years through to Grade 12, to be a part of. At UNIS Hanoi, 191 After School Activities are available for children and young adults to choose from. There are a phenomenal 58 active sports teams who compete in a range of seasonal tournaments in Hanoi and beyond. Alongside the sports options, there’s a variety of opportunities for each student to explore their creative side as well; whether that’s through the UNIS Music Academy, choir, band, orchestra or one of the four major plays and musicals staged every year. In addition, other clubs such as Model United Nations, the Geek Squad and Cooking Club provide a platform for students to discover new passions and interests.

**To view the full list of co-curricular activities, please visit our website: [www.unishanoi.org/co-curricular](http://www.unishanoi.org/co-curricular)**



# ‘BI’-PRODUCTS OF INTERNATIONALISM

More than 40 languages are spoken at UNIS Hanoi and for a third of our students the School provides a programme that supports home language progress.

An impressive 351 students from Grade 1 right through to Grade 12 are taking additional classes to maintain and develop their first language as they would ‘at home’. The School’s Home Language initiative has been in existence for more than 20 years, and gives students whose first language is not English, the opportunity to retain their ‘home’ language within their school setting; something that is in line with the values and philosophy of the International Baccalaureate. Head of School, Dr Chip Barder says

the School does what it can to support what is also called ‘mother tongue’ instruction as it’s an integral part of a person’s identity. While Clark Stroupe, the School’s Diploma Programme Coordinator remarked,

**“These courses are great for populations like UNIS Hanoi and allow bilingual students to develop their native language skills commensurate with the intellectual level they experience in their other classes, which is a big part of the IB philosophy.”**

In the Elementary School, students

are given the chance to learn French, Vietnamese or Mandarin in School as a second ‘additional’ language, or they have the option to continue learning their home language, and sometimes they have the opportunity to do both! Organised by parents, the Home Language classes take place during the School day and after school, depending on the needs of the children. From Grades 1 to 5, students are learning Vietnamese, Mandarin, Danish, German, Japanese, Korean and Swedish on a weekly basis. The trend to nurture bi-lingual individuals continues into Middle School and High School, where more than 144 students are learning Vietnamese, Korean, Swedish, French, Mandarin, Dutch and German between them.



And among the IB Diploma cohort, an impressive 67 students are working towards the coveted bi-lingual diploma.

Explaining the options available to the most senior group of students at the School, Clark said, “In the Diploma Programme (DP), we offer students the choice to select our School Supported Self-Taught Language (SSSTL) programme in addition to their English A Language/Literature course. Following IB guidelines and using an off-campus supervisor over the course of two years, students sit the formal IB examinations in order to receive the prestigious IB Bi-lingual Diploma.” Clark revealed that 53% of our successful Diploma graduates last

year were awarded the Bi-lingual Diploma which already exceeds the world average of 22%. And the team expects that percentage to increase to as much as 60% in the near future.

And with a brand new World Languages Centre appropriately planned to stand at the heart of the campus, Dr Barder affirms the School’s continued commitment to the Home Languages Programme. He said, “For our World Languages Centre to be situated in the centre of our campus is a statement that as a UN School, we really do value languages.”

**To find out more about the Home Languages Programme, please speak to the division Principals; Megan Brazil, Elementary School Principal ([esprincipal@unishanoi.org](mailto:esprincipal@unishanoi.org)) or Pete Kennedy, Middle School and High School Principal ([mshsprincipal@unishanoi.org](mailto:mshsprincipal@unishanoi.org))**

# IMPLEMENTING A NEW SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

A new approach to teacher development that's modeled on the International Baccalaureat's focus on inquiry, is revolutionizing the way UNIS Hanoi delivers its professional training for teachers.

Known in the Elementary School as the Professional Inquiry Circles (PICs) and in the Middle School and High School as Action Research, the initiatives give each teacher the opportunity to be responsible for their own learning. Relevant yet visionary, the themes explored by the teachers result in real benefits to students and the School as a whole. From coding in Kindergarten to nutrition and neurology, faculty

members are practicing what they preach by participating in meaningful learning experiences

Pete Kennedy, Middle School and High School Principal said, "Teachers are enjoying learning about topics they are passionate about.

**"By adopting an action research inquiry process, not unlike what we ask students to undergo, teachers are also gaining insights into what our students experience when they engage in this type of learning.**

"It can get messy, and we get stuck but even this leads to richer learning. These experiences also offer new perspectives that we hope will also create empathy for our students."

The PICs were launched last year by the new Elementary School leadership team who were keen to borrow the IB's approaches to learning framework in a bid to excite their teachers. It was a resounding success, resulting in tangible outcomes like Maker Day and new learning space designs for the new Elementary Wing that are based in scientific research. Furthermore, one teacher has embarked on a PhD to





further investigate the impact of music on brain development, after she was inspired by her PIC project last year.

Elementary School Principal, Megan Brazil said, “The success of the PICs is exciting because through this, we’re changing the culture of adult learning at the School. Being a part of a Circle is almost like group therapy - designed to encourage teachers to really clarify their thinking, probing and forcing them to explain themselves which leads to a more comprehensive learning experience.”

This year, a quarter of Elementary School teachers are continuing to research the same goal they chose last academic year, while the remaining 75 per cent are pursuing new professional goals. In addition, the division’s Teaching Assistants have also formed their own PICs which they are conducting in Vietnamese. Megan, who together with her leadership team, has presented a workshop on this initiative at the regional EARCOS\* Leadership Conference, adds, “Our approach is in line with the Centre for Creative Leadership’s 70-20-10 rule which refers to research that found that successful learning takes place within three clusters of experience - challenging assignments (70%), developmental relationships (20%) and coursework and training (10%). The PIC initiative provides a platform for these types of learning to take place.”

The Middle School and High School formed their new Action Research programme this year on the basis of

sound research too. Pete, referencing a report on professional development and effective teaching practices by expert consultant, Peter Cole, highlighted the importance of ‘job embedded learning’. He elaborated, “There’s a growing body of evidence that says that Schools need to become learning communities in which professional learning is a part of the teacher’s everyday work. At UNIS Hanoi, we know that professional development is an ongoing process.”

Unlike the Elementary School’s Circle initiative, the Middle School and High School’s Action Research structure exclusively encourages group work. This year, the division’s 80 teachers have been divided into 10 groups. The groups meet regularly to explore education themes such as wellness, the UN Sustainable Development Goals and responsible technology use. Mirroring the learning journey IB students undergo, the teachers will continue to spend their professional development sessions researching and reflecting the themes they have chosen. Pete added, “Our teachers are immersing themselves in the same kind of learning we expect from our students.”

By the end of the year, our teachers in Middle and High School will have pursued areas for further investigation, developed action steps resulting from their inquiry, and critiqued the inquiry model their team adopted to inform our ongoing work with student inquiry. We anticipate that action steps resulting from such a wide range of inquiry

topics will look quite different as they start to culminate. For example, the action team focusing on feedback already has plans to present some of their findings to colleagues at our upcoming Professional Development Day. The team looking at schedules is hoping to see their research support changes to next year’s daily schedule, and the team looking at nutrition is currently exploring ways to apply their learning in our own context by connecting with management and the canteen operators. Who knows exactly where that might lead. One thing is for sure, our teachers are learning to be change agents and learners looking for impact.

Exceptional professional development has always existed at UNIS Hanoi, but it is now that we start to see the potential of systemised, institution wide inquiry based professional learning. The outcomes are anticipated to be as transformational individually as they will be for the learning programmes at UNIS Hanoi and we look forward to sharing the detail of the new programmes’ results with our community in future editions of Uniquely UNIS.

We are building a community where lifelong learning becomes part of our daily routine.

*\*EARCOS: East Asia Regional Council of Schools*



# Aligning Our Goals

Shared values between the United Nations and the International Baccalaureate (IB) has provided an ideal framework for learning at UNIS Hanoi.

Since their launch in September 2015, the School has made intentional efforts to integrate the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the IB Units of Inquiry. This means students from Discovery through to Grade 10 actively explore and reflect upon the aspirational goals as part of their science, maths, languages, humanities, arts and sports lessons.

Devised to tackle global concerns such as gender equality, climate action, clean water and sanitation, peace and justice and education, the SDGs aim to make the world a better, safer place for all. Furthermore, the United Nations has challenged itself to achieve firm targets by 2030, the same year our five and six year olds will graduate from school.

**The 15 year duration of the SDGs proves beneficial for whole school learning and means that students will receive multiple chances over the years to know more about the Goals, but also about the UN and its overall mission.**

The architects behind the integrated curriculum at UNIS Hanoi are Primary Years Programme (PYP) Coordinator, Angela Meikle and Middle Years Programme (MYP) Coordinator, Cindy Barnsley. The duo mapped out the links between SDGs and the School's programme of inquiry, ensuring all opportunities to explore a Goal are taken. And what seemed a difficult task at first, revealed Cindy, was quickly achievable because the SDGs effortlessly lended themselves well to the IB curriculum.



## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS





## SDG Curriculum at UNIS Hanoi

**Some grade by grade examples of Unit of Inquiry (UOI) or subject links to the SDGs. For full details at each grade level please contact the IB Programme coordinators: [pypcoordinator@unishanoi.org](mailto:pypcoordinator@unishanoi.org) or [mypcoordinator@unishanoi.org](mailto:mypcoordinator@unishanoi.org)**

**Discovery:** UOI - People's actions impact living things - Goal 15

**K1:** UOI - People organize themselves through a process to create goods and services for the community - Goal 12

**K2:** UOI - A variety of factors help to form personal identity - Goals 3 & 5

**Grade 1:** UOI - Communities have a set of routines and systems to help them function - Goals 16 & 17

**Grade 2:** UOI - Materials can be changed and used for different purposes - Goals 12 & 13

**Grade 3:** UOI - Understanding forces can help humans to design effective machines - Goal 9

**Grade 4:** UOI - Our body systems are affected by our choices - Goal 3

**Grade 5:** UOI - We can each make a difference to the world through community action - All Goals

**Grade 6:** Arts - Wild Vietnam - Goal 15

**Grade 7:** Science - Earth's Amazing Resources - Goals 6 & 15

**Grade 8:** English - "The choices we make" ethical debate - Goals 1, 4, 10 & 16

**Grade 9:** Humanities - Human security and Industrialisation - Goals 9 & 11

**Grade 10:** Humanities - UN as peace keepers - Goal 16

The Diploma curriculum is prescribed by the IB and allows for less integration but examples taken from UN's work are used whenever possible.

Angela further observed, "The values of what the IB wants in an internationally minded student and what the United Nations wants, is closely aligned."

Cindy continued, "Integrating the SDGs with our curriculum helps us live the mission statements of both UNIS Hanoi and the United Nations and helps us really see how we connect together."

In the Early Childhood Centre and Elementary School, all Sustainable Development Goals are taught in age-appropriate ways. Despite some potentially daunting topics, such as SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production, children are effortlessly grasping the issues. In Grade 2, for example, as part of their humanities class, students were tasked to select one of the SDGs and redesign them to reflect what they mean [pictured opposite]; while Grade 1 students convey their understanding through poetry. In the Middle School years up to Grade 10, students delve into these global concerns in much greater depth, often required to debate, research and write compelling assignments, or even dramatize some of the scenarios around the SDGs.

Both Coordinators stress it's not just the themes that make the integrated approach successful, it's also the calls to action they garner - a key component of the IB. Cindy explained, "One of the things that differentiates us as an IB community is the focus on action."

Angela added, "We want students taking action - in the local community and global community. As students move through our programme their knowledge and understanding of these goals will continue to deepen, combined with how they would take action to make a difference. I think it's exciting to keep putting the question back to the students to say, 'what will you do, because it's your world?'"



# Flying the Flag for a Better World





A host of students marched into this year's UN Day ceremony proudly waving a flag from every one of the 193 UN member states - a first for UNIS Hanoi.

**A break away from the traditional flag parade, this year's event embraced a message of unity over nationalism in an effort to symbolize the true spirit of the United Nations.**

Although a controversial break with tradition, the move was commended by the Acting Resident Coordinator, Dr Kristan Schoultz who said the parade represented a 'strong force for good' that made her feel very proud to be a part of the United Nations. In her address to invited guests and the entire School community, Dr Schoultz further encouraged everyone present to take to heart the UN Vision. Offering examples of what she meant, she said, "You are contributing to the UN Vision every time you stick up for what is right and good, even when other people are trying to lead you in the wrong direction. You are contributing to the UN Vision every time you protect someone from a bully. You are contributing to the UN Vision every

time you reach out to be friends with the new person at school even if her skin is a different color, or she has a disability or has a different religion from yours. Every time you do any of these things you are making a contribution to the UN dream of making the world a better place, a kinder place, and a more hopeful place."

Dr Chip Barder, UNIS Hanoi Head of School, followed on from the Acting Resident Coordinator's message with a rallying cry to make the world we want happen. He said, "We've been talking to students over the last year about resilience, grit and the ability to bounce back.

"[International] events over the last 18 to 24 months have reminded us how difficult it can be to live in a world where there are competing ideologies, beliefs and philosophies. We've gone too quickly from disagreements to deep anger. Words have been used and actions have taken place that unfortunately have led to negativity, mistrust, animosity and deep divisiveness. This is not a time to disengage. This is not what the UN does, this is not what UNIS Hanoi does. We get engaged. It is a time to intensify our efforts to be impactful, as hard as it may be, to listen and find

value in what we learn from others even though we may disagree. So we have a lot of work to do and it's not easy. In the spirit of our UN Day theme 'the world we want, make it happen', we are at that point to not give up, to not give in, so we can deal with the challenges [ahead]."

As always, Dr Barder finished off his message in song, this year singing a rendition of Try Everything, accompanied by a 90 member school choir and musicians.

Also speaking at the event was Mr Pham Chi Cuong, Vice Director General, International Cooperation Department from the Ministry of Education & Training who highlighted the contribution UNIS Hanoi makes in Vietnam.

With more than three quarters of our students directly involved in our UN Day Assembly, the event continues to be a School calendar highlight, demonstrating our core values of Learning, Community and Responsibility. As the School plan's for its 30th Birthday celebrations next year, new traditions will be built together involving our entire community.



# SDGs IN THE SPOTLIGHT ON UN DAY

**As only one of two United Nations Schools in the world, UN Day has become more than just an assembly for the UNIS Hanoi community. It has become a day to celebrate, further examine and reflect on the work of the United Nations.**

And this year for the first time, from Discovery to Grade 12, through song, crafts and even maths, students spent the morning of UN Day exploring different Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and what they mean to the development of the world. For many grades, their morning sessions proved to be a continuation of what they were already learning in their units of inquiries or class lessons.

Kindergarteners continued their lesson on SDG 4 Quality Education. In their handmade book entitled, *We love School!* The class compared their school life with the lives of other children around the globe. Some, they soon discovered, could not go to school because they were girls, or they were poor or their country was in war.

K1C Homeroom teacher, Deborah Vermeire said their UN Day exercise gave her students the opportunity to appreciate what they have as well. Simultaneously Grade 3 students were busy sharing unique facts about their own cultures through colourful imagery as they learned about sustainable cities and communities around the world.

While Grade 5 students ambitiously researched the electricity usage per capita of all 193 member states only to discover that just 88 of them offered their citizens reliable power. The project, inspired by SDG 7 Affordable and Clean Energy and SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production, found that Iceland was the UN member state with the



highest electricity consumption while Nigeria was the lowest. And once their investigation was complete, students skillfully charted their findings along the construction fence near their classrooms honing their math skills.

Middle School and High School students delved deeper, with debates taking place on a variety of SDG topics or through role play.

In Grade 7 our Middle Schoolers played a game exploring the spectrum of SDGs in which they found themselves as refugees struggling to survive. All were forced to run the gauntlet with corrupt police and smugglers, face unjust repatriation, attempt to find legitimate work or education and with limited access to food and medical supplies, swathes

of our 'student' refugees 'died' in their endeavours for freedom and justice.

In Grade 11, each home room selected one of the 17 SDGs to collaboratively explore the goals, presenting their findings with each other through posters and powerpoints.

And Grade 9 students went a whole step further to take action, teaming up with each other to creatively communicate and advocate action on hot topics such as the devastation plastics causes sea life.





# Connected Learning Community

In an increasingly turbulent and uncertain world, it has never been more important to connect on a human level. Relationships matter and they start with our local community. The networks we create in the wider world will lead to collaboration and a building of collective knowledge that would be unachievable if we were to act alone. Our connected learning community will generate our sense of who we are now and what we will become.



# URBAN ART MAKES A SPLASH!

A series of creative collaborations with a group of young artists known as the Mau Colour Collective are brightening up our campus - and the lives of students, teachers, staff and parents this year too!

Introduced to the School by DP Art Teacher, Michelle Wise, the Mau Colour Collective who are renowned

in Hanoi for their thought-provoking graffiti art, have been sharing their skills with a range of groups.

In September, the artists worked with High School students to produce an Urban versus Wild art piece on one length of a campus reconstruction fence. The mural was designed to depict the conflict between urban development and nature, while giving students a chance to experience an alternative form of art.

Over a period of two weeks, 30 students spent approximately 8 hours spray painting their concept drawing into a mural reality.

Seventeen year-old Thomy Duong confirmed it was a great opportunity for him and his friends to learn about street art from the professionals. He





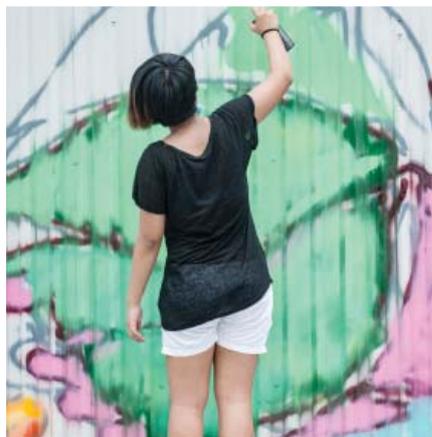
continued, “I found that there was a lot of technical aspects to spray painting, such as knowing how to paint a straight line, how to take into account the size of a design and layers of paint needed in order to achieve detail.”

**Grade 11 student Zoe El-Hage added, “I feel like I gained a lot of experience in many different ways, such as working together and planning. This is because most of what we did relied on teamwork and forming an understanding of what individual ideas were and how it would fit together with other ideas in the final artwork.”**

The urban art gained popularity across the campus; so much so that the School Community Organisation (SCO) commissioned the services of the Mau Colour Collective too! This time though, art would be used to express thanks to faculty. As part of the SCO’s efforts to acknowledge teachers on Vietnam’s Teacher Appreciation Day, the Mau Colour Collective boldly painted a select number of the 500 positive words collated to describe UNIS Hanoi teachers. Now, every day, along with the gift of ‘word-up’ mugs, every teacher is reminded how much they are valued.

Commenting on the popularity of the urban art ‘movement’ at the School, Michelle said, “Street art is provocative and engaging and it’s an art form that is ideal to use when you want to create a large scale art piece.”

The success of this first project has already inspired multiple student pieces and with kilometres of construction fences around the campus, the Mau Colour Collective will return to collaborate with other groups in the school community in this ongoing project giving opportunities for everyone to pick up a paint can!



# WE UNIS

Relationships. They are the bedrock of our community and written into our Values and Beliefs; UNIS Hanoi believes in **'proactively connecting with others to make supportive, long-lasting and diverse friendships'**. And as you will discover over the next pages, sometimes these friendships evolve, leading to magical long-lasting unions that change lives!



## From Classmates to Mates for Life

A newlywed couple has made UNIS Hanoi history by becoming the very first alumni students to marry. 25 year-old Nguyen The Dai and Bui Tu Phuong, 24, tied the knot on September 16, 2016, solemnising an accidental love that was borne out of their connection to UNIS Hanoi.

“This was very unexpected!” insists Phuong who first met her husband when they were just 12 years-old. “I came to the School in Grade 6, a year before Dai joined. In Grade 7, we were in the same homeroom but we were not friends. We didn’t even know each other. We hung out in different groups and didn’t have anything to do with each other.”

And so it would have remained if it wasn’t for an alumni reunion 10 years later. Phuong explains, “In Grade 9, Dai and his family moved to Vientiane

in Laos, but he stayed in touch with people from UNIS Hanoi. After I graduated in 2010, I went to Switzerland to study hospitality at L’Ecole Hoteliere de Lausanne. In the holidays, I’d return to Hanoi and arrange to meet up with the old gang. Dai, by this time was studying marketing at Greenwich University in the UK and he’d come home and hang out with us too.”

Over the next couple of summers, Dai and Phuong spent more and more time together and in 2015, they began long distance dating.

Yet, that wasn’t enough for Dai, who realised early on in their relationship,

that Phuong was ‘The One’. So on New Year’s Eve 2015, in Phuong’s family home and in front of a backdrop of fireworks, Dai dropped to one knee and proposed. Immediately she accepted.



At their spectacular Autumn wedding this year, Dai gave tribute to his step-father whose relocation to Hanoi in 2004 led him to meet Phuong at UNIS Hanoi. Surrounded by family, well wishers and their old school friends, Dai said, “I would like to thank my step-father, Dominique, because without him, I wouldn’t be where I am today; [in particular], I would not have met my wife, Phuong.”

Now the couple who have set up home in Hoan Kiem, are already planning for their children to follow in their footsteps.

**“We’re looking forward to our children going to UNIS Hanoi one day,” said Phuong.**

When Head of School, Dr Chip Barder, offered Melissa Arias a teaching role at UNIS Hanoi, he jokingly cautioned that ‘if you’re looking for the love of your life, UNIS may not be the right place for you’. Yet, fate, it seemed had other ideas.

Melissa was not looking for love. In fact, love was the last thing on her mind when she applied to work at UNIS Hanoi. She recalls, “I was working at UNIS New York and I was looking for a change. I wanted to travel around the world, possibly taking voluntary teaching opportunities along the way and so I resigned.”

Initially determined to stick to her travel plans, for weeks Melissa resisted the temptation to apply for a UNIS Hanoi position recommended to her by a UNIS NY colleague, but eventually she caved. And within days of submitting her application, she was hired!

It was during her new faculty orientation that Melissa would first meet the man she would later marry. Technology expert and gadget enthusiast, Paul Swanson had been working at UNIS Hanoi for one year and when Melissa arrived he liked her immediately. But the road to love, they would find, was not going to be smooth.

Opportunity after opportunity evaded them, until their paths crossed one evening when Melissa was out with friends, and Paul was invited to join them. Plans for a date shortly ensued.

**“For our first date I took Melissa to a little street food spot I know and then on to the Hanoi Social Club. And that was it! We hit it off and began dating from then.”**

By the following weekend, the duo had booked their first enchanted holiday together - a trip to Siem Riep in Cambodia. A month later they were living with each other and by Spring Break, Paul was secretly making plans to propose that summer.

Surprised and delighted, Melissa accepted the proposal and also his romantic plan to marry that very week while in Honduras! And so on July 7, 2015, exactly ten months after their first date, they became Mr and Mrs Swanson.

And the perfect end of what turned out to be a life-changing first year for Melissa at UNIS Hanoi was the discovery that they were also to become parents! On April 22, 2016 Hazel Abril Arias Swanson was born.

From singletons to a family of three, it is not so much lifelong learning for this couple but more lifelong loving - thanks to UNIS Hanoi.



## Loving to Inspire

“My mother gave me my great grandmother’s engagement ring to propose with. But I knew I had to wait to ask Melissa’s parents for her hand in marriage before I could ask her if she’d be my wife.”

The chance came during their visit to Melissa’s childhood home in Honduras. “I’d been practising my Spanish, and in particular how to say ‘I would like to marry your daughter’” Paul reveals. When he eventually uttered the phrase, Melissa’s father and mother enthusiastically gave him their blessing.



# A Meeting of Minds

**International mindedness discovered at their workplace is the secret for success of UNIS Hanoi's first love match!**

Nguyen Nga Mi, a Teaching Assistant and Le Trung Hai, an Operations Assistant hail from different parts of Vietnam and differing social classes. As a result, their family and friends considered the duo a complete mismatch. Mi explains, "Hai only finished his high school education before he left school to find work and provide for his family. I, on the other hand, have been to university. Because of this, our families were not happy about our relationship. It was so difficult."

Yet despite the opposition to their union, the two determined to stay together. "I think I chose him because he was so different. And maybe he was different because he'd worked for a long time at UNIS Hanoi. When we were dating, I realised that we saw things in the same way and I saw that the way he plans things is different too. He's also very calm, funny, honest and treats me like his equal."



Jokingly, Mi adds "I think he's my international Vietnamese man."

Fast-forward to the present day and it's not just their relationship that is influenced by UNIS Hanoi values and principles; the way they choose to raise their two young children is too! The couple, who now live in Cau Giay, have a five year old boy, Vu, and a two year old girl named Tu Anh. Although the children will not be attending UNIS Hanoi, they do benefit from the School's approach to learning. Mi, who works in the Early Childhood Centre explains, "All the things we learn and observe in this School, we try to do at home. It's a good thing that my husband and I share the same point of view and so we don't argue about how we teach our children. My parents do not agree with the way we raise our children because



it's so different to the old ways. But because my husband is also in this environment, he understands the approach and agrees with it."

In March, the couple will be celebrating their ten year wedding anniversary. For them the School has proved to be more than a place of work; it's become a meeting of minds and where their hearts lie.





# SUPERHERO TALES INSPIRE

A quest to seek justice for the forgotten creators of famous superheroes, has sparked new perspectives on literature for UNIS Hanoi students.

During his four day visit, Marc Nobleman, children's author of popular titles such as *Bill the Boy Wonder* and *Boys of Steel: The Creators of Superman*, regaled students, teachers and parents about his personal search for the facts behind comic fiction. Through it, he said, he's been able to right a wrong, and reinforce values he already believed in. And this is the ultimate message he chooses to share with his young audiences. "I have a story that I tell" Marc says. "It's my story of why persistence is essential and that anybody can make a difference. Through my presentations, I also want to show the students that research and writing can be an adventure and that they can have fun with it."

In grade-specific sessions with UNIS Hanoi students, Marc also brought the art of storytelling alive, urging children as young as three to use their imagination and be descriptive when they write.

UNIS Hanoi Librarians, Julie Conroy and Deborah Wells-Clinton who organised the visit are pleased with its success. Julie continued, "We were

lucky to have him. We chose to invite him because he writes both fiction and nonfiction books and we knew that everyone could connect with his stories."

With his books already stocked in the library, many students were familiar with Marc's work, resulting in a more meaningful experience. One young fan was Penny Carter, a Grade 4 student from Australia who had read two of Marc's books before his arrival to Hanoi. She said that thanks to his visit, she now has a new perspective on the stories. She explained, "In *Bill the Boy Wonder*, I accepted the story, but when he told us how he got the story, it made me think more about it. I like that he went all over the world to find out where the people who created comics went. I think he was really dedicated."

## About Marc Nobleman

Marc Nobleman has written 75 published books during a career that spans 20 years.

Alongside his writing projects, he also travels extensively across the globe speaking to students in international schools in far flung destinations, from Thailand to Tanzania.



# The Life Blood of the School

At the heart of the UNIS Hanoi community is a growing army of parents and friends which quietly works behind the scenes at School, volunteering time, skills and energy on projects and initiatives that enhance school life. UNIS Hanoi Volunteers are special people who make huge contributions in the classroom, in sport and arts, on the social scene and in governance. Over the next pages, we feature four stories from dedicated volunteers about why they choose to get involved.



Long term parent volunteers are becoming an integral part of the rich fabric of School life thanks to their phenomenal contributions. Calendar highlights such as the Sparkly Social, Teacher Appreciation Day, UN Day, Book Sale, Healthy Snack Sales and Spring Fair could not take place without their hard work.

One parent who has played a part in organising all these events and more, is mother of two, Malin Niklasson. Originally from Sweden, Malin came to Hanoi six years ago with her husband and daughters. She had no intention of volunteering, she recalls, until her youngest daughter, Vilma joined the

# Leaving Legacies through Volunteering

Discovery grade. She said, “It then became natural to start volunteering because the teachers were reaching out to us as parents, asking if we’d come in and read to the children for example.”

Step-by-step Malin found herself taking on further roles, starting with Bake Sales and Book Sales to her biggest initiative yet - the School Shop. The fort holder for three years, Malin is a familiar face to the hundreds of students, teachers and parents who visit the shop every week. As Shop Coordinator, she organised the volunteer schedule, kept track of merchandise and tallied the sales at the end of each day. Her passion for the initiative has seen the shop blossom from a stall run solely through the School Community Organisation (SCO), to a flagship outlet now managed in conjunction with the School administration. As much as she revelled in participating in a range of events year on year, Malin says the success of the Shop gives her the most pride.

**She remarked, “I take pride in the fact that I’ve grown the shop from something small to something big.**

“ I’m also happy that UNIS Hanoi saw the potential with it and decided to find a way to take the Shop to the next level, taking on my recommendation for a paid Shop Coordinator. I feel 100% backed by the School as a result.”

Although Malin has handed over most of her shop duties to the new Shop Coordinator, Phuong Nguyen, she remains involved. “I’m now the Shop Volunteer Coordinator, helping to scout for volunteers because we are now open every weekday from 8am to 5pm” she remarked.

True to form, Malin has no plans to slow down anytime soon! She revealed, “This year, I’m the Middle School and High School SCO Chairperson and I also helped to organize the Fund Run which took place on January 14. All monies raised went towards the School’s Scholarship Fund.”

With enthusiastic volunteers such as Malin, the contributions harnessed from the community continue to evolve, ensuring a lifelong learning environment that inspires all.



# ‘It Takes a Village’



When Australian national, Reece Guihot arrived in Hanoi with his wife and daughter back in January 2016, he did so determined to make the most of his time in the city by volunteering.

As soon as he landed, he signed up to volunteer with NGOs KOTO and HELVETAS, lending them his wealth of project management experience. Jovial, astute and committed, Reece soon won a reputation within the expatriate community for his willingness to give up his time, a virtue a fellow Australian saw and seized upon.

“One day my daughter came home and said, ‘a lady with red hair wants to speak to you’” recalls Reece. The lady in question was former Middle School and High School Chair of the School Community Organisation (SCO) and long-term, active parent volunteer, Pippa Wood. Pippa, a mother of four who has been a UNIS Hanoi parent for nearly a decade, was keen to recruit Reece onto the SCO Executive Committee. She wanted him to consider joining the Committee as the Communications Officer, a

position that had long been vacant. “I was surprised” admits Reece. “I love volunteering and enjoy the roles I have with KOTO and HELVETAS, but I’d never considered volunteering in a school before. And although I’ve some knowledge of communications, I had never carried out a Communications Officer role before, so that interested me a lot.”

It did not take long for Reece to step up to the challenge and join the SCO. Since June 2016, Reece, whose daughter Madeline is in Grade 10, has thrown himself into the communications task and relishes the opportunity to get to know his daughter’s school better. He said, “Before I joined the SCO, the only contact I had with the School was with my daughter’s teachers. I didn’t know much about the School but this has been a great way for me to gain a better understanding of what UNIS Hanoi is trying to achieve and how the School works.”

Reece is drafting up a communications plan that will reflect what the SCO

hopes to achieve this academic year, as well as a helpful communications map, intended to clearly guide parents to the right people for the right purpose. The SCO, he says, is the informal, light-hearted component of the School community, while also representing the feelings of parents.

**He continued, “They say it takes a village to raise a child. But I’d add that it takes more than bricks and mortar to make a village. And we are the people in that village, all wanting to work together to achieve success. That to me is what the SCO is about.”**

Nathalie Grun, the Schools Community Liaison Officer says the contribution parent volunteers like Malin and Reece make, is invaluable. She said, “Parent volunteers selflessly devote their time and professional skillsets to enhance the educational experience of their children. They are the ‘agents of change’ within our SCO! here to create community and strengthen the parent-school partnership by being in constant dialogue with the School. It’s great to be part of a school that values parent volunteerism as we’re all here to learn from each other and grow together.”

**There are many ways to be involved with the school, from being a guest speaker in class to organising the Spring Fair. Explore the SCO website under Community Life to find out more. And to get involved in the School, please contact Nathalie Grun via email at: [clo@unishanoi.org](mailto:clo@unishanoi.org) or pop into the Advancement Office.**



# Future Thinkers

Campus development, financial planning and leading the search for the next Head of School are just a handful of the heavyweight projects to oversee for one special set of volunteers.

Unassuming yet focused, the volunteers in question are the School's Board of Directors. Made up of nine volunteer voting members and the Head of School, the Board quietly and diligently works behind the scenes to ensure the future health of the School.

Their interest, stresses Board Chairman, Nguyen Van Hieu, lies very much with the 'strategic, not the operational issues'. He's been a parent at the School since 2008 and joined the Board three years later as a parent elected member. He believes in the Board's role to maintain UNIS Hanoi's position as the best school in Vietnam, both in terms of quality of education and facilities. Hieu, a businessman, is also keen for UNIS Hanoi to preserve its status as the only non-profit school in the country. In order to accomplish their work the Board spends a lot of time discussing and researching trends in education and learning. A feat that is both challenging and stimulating for a group of people with no previous background in education. However, Hieu believes that's where the Board's strength lies - in its diversity.

Fellow Board member, Dr Amie Pollack agrees with Hieu's sentiments.

Amie who is currently the Board Secretary, Chair of the Committee on Directors, and Chair of the new Head of School Search Taskforce, said, "I think we have a group of very smart, committed people who all want the same thing - a school that continues to grow and flourish. Yet, we all have different views and backgrounds which makes working with each other really interesting."

Amie, a psychologist working with Vanderbilt University and a mother of two, says she's happy to be on the Board, simply because UNIS Hanoi is an amazing school. She elaborated, "I'd heard good things about the Board and their professionalism and I was keen to work closely with people who were just as passionate as I am about the School and making it better."

Both Hieu and Amie along with their Board colleagues serve for four year terms. There's much to do, they both agree. With the changing dynamics and demographic of Hanoi, what does the future look like for the School? Hieu intimates that UNIS Hanoi still has an important contribution to make to the educational landscape, not just for the expatriate community but for the wider community in Vietnam too. Exactly what that contribution will look like in years to come is in the capable hands of UNIS Hanoi's highly regarded Board members.

## Did you know?

- The Board is responsible for the financial and strategic stability of the School.
- The Board has only one employee, the Head of School, who they appoint, support and evaluate annually, and to whom they defer all operational decisions. The Head of School is a non-voting member of the Board.
- When a new Board Member joins our Board, they receive three separate orientation trainings and six different books on governance and organizational development which they are expected to read during their first year.
- In addition, a 50 book Board resource library is housed in the Head of School's office with references and resources from Board Source, NAIS, and other organizations that support Board governance.
- Board members attend the four-day East Asia Regional Council of Schools Leadership Conference every year.
- The UNIS Hanoi Board of Directors lead an international workshop on Governance as Leadership each year (see p.38)
- In addition to monthly Board meetings, each Board member chairs, and/or sits on a variety of monthly Committees with parent volunteer members. They also attend a two-day meeting at the start of each school year.
- Board members are volunteers and receive no financial reward or preferential treatment for their commitment.

**For more information about the structure, function, goals and members of the Board of Directors please visit the website:**  
[www.unishanoi.org/BOD](http://www.unishanoi.org/BOD)

# Our Global Family

## THE GLAMOROUS GAMECHANGER

Fronting international TV shows or juggling the training needs of more than 1,400 teachers is all in a day's work for one UNIS Hanoi alum. Ngo Phuong Lan, 29, who is best known as the former anchor of VTV4's flagship English programme, Talk Vietnam is now heading the training and international relations department at Vincom Schools.

The diversity of roles she effortlessly turns her hand to, she says, is a result of being a risk-taker - a skill she picked up during her time at UNIS Hanoi. Lan was a student at the School from 1999 to 2001 when her family returned to their country of origin from a posting in New York. As a Middle School student, she seized the opportunity to join the Student Ambassador programme that had just launched. Recalling the experience, Lan revealed,

**“It was the first time I learned I could represent something. From that point on, I felt I could just do anything I put my mind to, and it was the first step in giving me that confidence.”**

Ever since, Lan has not looked back. After a short stint in Vietnam, Lan relocated to Switzerland with her family, eventually studying international relations at the University of Geneva. A series of life changing events brought her back to Asia, first



to Hong Kong before she settled down in Hanoi with her British husband.

As the daughter of an ambassador, globetrotting is in her blood. But she admits, the long-lasting friendships she formed at UNIS Hanoi means she knows she could go anywhere in the world and she will know someone. “I have a lot of friends working all over the world. Some work for the UN, some work in embassies and some work for big companies” remarked Lan. “Knowing I could visit them wherever they are gives me the confidence to be a true global citizen.”

Yet despite Lan's love of travel, her feet are firmly planted in Vietnam for

the time being. As the Director of Training and International Relations for Vietnam's largest private school group, Lan is committed to inspiring the next generation of risk-takers. She explained, “Vietnam is changing and as a result, we need to do things differently. We see the advantages of exposing our students to new ways of thinking. For me, as a former UNIS Hanoi student who's benefitted from international education, I know how to put forward my own point of view. And we need that. We need people who dare to say things, who dare to take those risks.”

Lan is just one of 6,709 people living and working in 73 different countries, who make up our global family. And like all families we take time to stay connected with our alumni community. Every year, scores of alumni pop in for a visit to the School when they are in Hanoi, keen to take a trip down memory lane. Even more attend the multiple reunion events that are organised exclusively for our alumni in cities such as London, Bangkok, Washington DC and Seoul, or global family reunions!

**To reconnect with UNIS Hanoi, please visit our Alumni page on our website: [www.unishanoi.org](http://www.unishanoi.org). Alternatively get in touch with our Alumni Officer, Le To via email at: [alumniofficer@unishanoi.org](mailto:alumniofficer@unishanoi.org)**

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# ACTIVE SERVICE

When former UNIS Hanoi student Annie Gainsborough decided she needed to take time out before launching her fledgling career, the first stop in her travels was to the place that shaped her life's purpose - UNIS Hanoi.

British citizen, Annie was just 11 years old when she was a student at the School, back in 2005. Although a student for just one academic year, Annie recalls it was a year that forever changed who she was and how she saw the world.

**She said, "I remember my year at UNIS Hanoi as being one of the happiest years of my life. I loved that the School celebrated our differences yet through our everyday experiences and friendships, we also found that we were all so similar. UNIS Hanoi united us, however short our time at the School was."**



Yet it wasn't just the people that left an indelible mark on Annie, it was the School's service programme too.

She revealed, "UNIS Hanoi was the first place I really became involved in volunteering and service, and I loved it! I've continued volunteering ever since and in fact, it was my work outside of school that helped me secure my position as the Activities Officer at Sheffield University. In that role, I've encouraged students to make time for co-curricular activities, hobbies and service.

"I've also had the opportunity to campaign for more international students in the UK. I'm passionate about this issue because, as a former UNIS Hanoi student, I don't see the point in the artificial barrier created between home students and international students here in the UK.

"At Sheffield we launched a campaign entitled #WeAreInternational which tries to highlight the value of international students and cultural

integration, and to bring people together in a world so often divided. Because of my time at UNIS Hanoi, this campaign is something I feel that I really embody. I may have been classified as a 'home' student while I studied at Sheffield University but I have had international experiences which have really shaped who I am, because at UNIS Hanoi #WeAreInternational."

Annie was delighted to reconnect with her former teachers during her return trip, including Colin Campbell [pictured above] who like Annie has pursued a passion for Service Learning, since the days he taught her. Back then he was a Grade 6 teacher, and now he is the Middle School and High School Service Learning Coordinator .

As Annie continues with her expedition around the globe, she's not sure exactly what role she's going to pursue next when she returns to the UK. But one thing is for sure, it will involve service to others and giving a voice to minorities.



# Community with No Bystanders

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Because we belong to the UNIS Hanoi community, we have unique opportunities to make a positive impact on others. Our impact can be global or local, influencing what goes on in Vietnam and what happens in the school playground. This means not standing on the sidelines when action is needed, building bridges and extending our responsibility beyond our own immediate concerns and by seeing ourselves as responsible and principled individuals who are truly able to make a difference to the community as a whole.





# Governance as Leadership

At UNIS Hanoi, we're not just a community of learners, but a community of leaders too! From first graders to our Head of School and Board members, we believe in active governance. We have a collective desire to truly share ideas and serve those around us, as you'll discover through these next few pages...

## International Leaders Converge

More than 100 leaders descended upon UNIS Hanoi in September for the Governance as Leadership workshop.

Now in its third year, the workshop is a two-day event tailored to bring Heads of Schools and their Board members together to learn best practice governance. Conceived by the UNIS Hanoi Board, the conference has grown in popularity over the years.

This year, delegates came from 24 schools and organisations in Asia and Africa. Facilitated by governance

experts Dr Bill Ryan and Bambi Betts, the event offers a deep dive into governance theory best practice, partnered with real case studies and practical tasks that are typically experienced by School Boards of all sizes and structures.

Andy Page-Smith, the Head of Schools at the American International School of Johannesburg has been attending the event alongside a handful of Board members from his school since the workshop first began.

**He said, “We have 11 members on our Board and each member has attended at least once. We’ve benefited a lot from the workshop. From the learning we’ve gained here, we’ve been able to refine a few things that we’ve faced as a school, but we’ve also learned to value the things we do well and recognise that.”**

Pamela Gutmann, the Board Chair of the American International School of Johannesburg has attended the event twice. She added, “The workshop has been good for coming up with a language to describe what we want to do. It has allowed us to have a framework to tackle issues that we see are looming, yet we weren’t thinking broadly about. This workshop teaches us to have critical conversations much earlier on than we would have done.”

For Tim Stuart, the incoming Head of Schools at the International Community School of Addis Ababa, the workshop provided him and his new team with a chance to commence their relationship on the same wavelength. “My Board members recommended we attend in order to start forging a common language and a common role. We have found the weekend to be very insightful. We’ve heard the war stories from other schools, benefitted from world class



facilitators and as a Head of School, I’ve learned how to engage board members.”

The main facilitator of the Governance As Leadership workshop and co-author of the seminal text by the same name, Dr Ryan, confirmed that the annual event was designed to meet the real needs of school governing bodies. He revealed that he wanted delegates collectively thinking about the strategic, generative and fiduciary issues that regularly arise.

He commended UNIS Hanoi Head of School, Dr Barder, and the School Board for devising such an integral workshop. Dr Ryan who regularly advises non-profit boards alongside teaching at Harvard University said, “What is unique is that a school took its network and looked at the needs of its community and established something with the intention to lead in service to that wider community.”

Explaining why he felt a workshop involving Heads of Schools and Board members was important, Dr Barder said, “Our Board initiated this workshop three years ago as we sought help in our own journey of striving for best practice in international school board governance. We decided to open it up to other schools and boards to help defray the expenses. In the end, the power of the board member to board member interaction has become one of the most magnificent outcomes of this workshop. Having other schools and boards represented has given us far more than we expected.”

Touching upon the success of the Governance as Leadership Conferences, Dr Barder added, “board members and heads around the world have begun to associate best practice in board governance with our School. We have had three successful workshops in a row each year, with numbers growing. Our Board has been a major presence at the annual East Asia Regional Council of Schools leadership conference each year and they have also made a name for themselves in the region by presenting to other board members; something they have done for the last five years.”

**For more information on the work of the Board members, please see page 33.**



When the IB Learner Profile calls on all students to be risk-takers and thinkers, to be caring and knowledgeable, to inquire and reflect, it's no surprise to learn there are a lot of young leaders among us as a result!

Leadership from tots to teens is actively encouraged at UNIS Hanoi in a variety of ways. But for the student looking to experience democratic leadership and governance, the Student Councils and High School Senate offer the ideal platforms.

In Elementary School, from Grades 1 to 5, two students per class are selected by their friends to represent their interests and give a voice to their concerns. In Middle School, Student Council runs as a Service Learning group, with members led by one of their own, Ryan Lim, a Grade 8 student who's this year's President. In the High

School, a collective of talented teens who successfully underwent a rigorous democratic selection process, make up the High School Senate.

All three governing bodies operate under their own mandates, in partnership with teachers. They lead assemblies, organise major social events for their peers, and make recommendations to School management with the aim of improving School life.

Stephen Lush the Elementary School (ES) Assistant Principal and supervisor of the ES Student Council says students learn that they can represent not only their views, but also the views of the quietest student they may know. He continued, "Children need to know they can change things and through the Council, we are empowering them to identify what the issues are and we



empower them to address it."

The burning issues at Elementary School level include devising playground rules that will ensure their new outdoor area will be a fun, safe space for all who use it. In addition, the committee put forward a list of the skills and values ES students want the new Head of School to possess.

## 'Our World' Leaders



## In their Own Words

**“Our students know there’s a personal responsibility to get involved and make the changes we want to see. We’re creating little activists!” Stephen mused.**

In the same vein, activism has become the driving force for Ryan. The 13 year-old from Singapore enjoyed his first foray into governance last year when he joined the Middle School Council for the first time. Recognizing a glaring opportunity for the Council to offer the student body more, Ryan stepped up to be the President this year. And thanks to the phenomenal manifesto he delivered in front of the Middle School, he has secured his position at the top.

Explaining why he wanted to lead, Ryan said, “I wanted to be President because I noticed that in the past, Student Council has always focused on organising events, but in the future, we might look at how we can improve communications with the student body and how students can give us feedback. It’s something on my agenda, but I know it’s not something that can happen overnight. It’s a process.”



A process is exactly how the High School Senate President describes his four year journey as an active member of the group. Once a shy boy who would barely speak in meetings, Son Dao, says he loves public speaking now, and it’s all thanks to his time on the Senate. Son and his committee meet up once every week to organise the much-loved Prom and annual Talent Show. Furthermore, they provide student feedback to the School’s leadership team on issues such as the uniform policy as well as raising general concerns on behalf of students, with teachers. Son reveals that the Senate aspires to ‘be the bridge between the students, teachers and staff’.

Elaborating on Son’s comments, Senate member and new Grade 10 student, Nadya Suprobo from Indonesia says the Senate plays an important role in School life. She said, “We are the student voice and I think it’s important that students have a say. If only teachers and parents have a say, it won’t benefit School life. I think it’s also important to have a student government. It’s democracy in action.”

Dr Chip Barder, the Head of School concurs with Nadya. He remarked that “the Student Councils and High School Senate provide a wonderful learning opportunity to help students understand leadership, give them a voice and helping them to know how to mobilize and take action. In addition, their role is much valued in our administrative decision making.”

Botand (Bobo) Karolyi from Hungary is in Grade 4. He says, **“I wanted to be on the Student Council because I like being involved in extra things. It’s good to see other people happy with our choices.”**

Grade 5 student, Kevin Chung from Korea and the USA, has long aspired to be on the Council, he said, **“I’ve wanted to be on the Council for the last four years but I never got elected until now. Being a part of the Council was important to me because I want to inspire others to show learning, community, and responsibility.”**

Grade 7 student Shani Taibel from Israel joined the Student Council for the first time in August. She says, **“I love to organise things and I like to get involved in School life and help by sharing my idea and thoughts.”**

Australian national Grace Cenero, Grade 8 has been on Student Councils since she was in Grade 4. She says, **“I was always really involved in leadership and I like to share my ideas and thoughts about how we can improve different parts of the school. I also want to make a difference.”**

Vietnamese student Son Dao, Grade 12 says, **“I want to be the person who can motivate others to be more positive about life. I want my energy for life to rub off on others.”**

# Investors in Success



UNIS Hanoi has committed to a five-year, \$2.5 million US fundraising campaign to expand the School's Scholarship Programme. It might sound like an ambitious goal, but we believe with the support of our entire community we can establish three new scholarships funded for perpetuity, creating opportunities to transform lives and helping build the future of this country.

As we enter the third Annual Community Campaign for The Scholarship Fund we talk to those that are committed supporters of the campaign and ask them, "why do you give?"



As a seasoned educator, Middle School math teacher, Medeha Zahid understands the power of education. Having taught in inner city schools in the United States before joining UNIS Hanoi, she's seen the impact education can make in elevating a child out of the trenches of poverty. This holds true moreso for girls, an issue she's passionate about. She says, "Everyone here has a commitment to learning, and when we know that education is the most powerful tool a person can have, why shouldn't we support it? As a member

## 'It's a domino effect of positive change'

of the expatriate community here, I see how extremely privileged we are and I think the least we can do is to give back to a community we get so much out of."

But making a donation to the Scholarship Programme is not just about being charitable, insists Medeha; it's also worth the investment, if the success of the first two graduates is anything to go by. She explains, "Two of our scholars have since graduated and have done very well and the impact they can have is tremendous. I think the programme is life changing and is a domino effect of positive change."

Although Medeha has been teaching at the School for the past four years, this year she finds herself teaching a scholar for the very first time. This, she says, has given her a new perspective and deepened her commitment to the initiative. Medeha added, "Right now we have eight scholars at our School. But wouldn't it be great if we had a larger percentage of our student body on scholarships? [The Scholarship Programme] is one thing we can do to give back in a meaningful way. It would be great to see all members of the UNIS Hanoi community giving. Any amount shows that we truly believe in making a difference. We should walk the walk, not just talk the talk."



# ‘Charity begins at home, and Hanoi is currently our home’



UNIS Hanoi parents Maeve O’ Donovan and Dan Hamer have been staunch supporters of the School’s Scholarship Fund since its inception five years ago. The couple, who have two college-age sons and one daughter, Sorcha in Grade 11, believe that helping people who are less fortunate than themselves, is an essential part of being a good global citizen.

Maeve explains, “I am originally from Ireland, which is a very giving nation and so I grew up giving to good causes. I’m not in Ireland right now but I am here and so I ask myself; what can I do

here? What I can do is contribute to the Scholarship Fund.” Dan, who works in the energy sector adds, “There is an old saying that charity begins at home. Well, Hanoi is currently our home and we believe in giving. Charitable giving is a way to stay connected to our community.”

Although the couple readily acknowledge the needs in Vietnam are many and varied, they say that giving to education changes more than one life and more than one circumstance in time. Dan elaborates, “We believe that education and healthcare for women are the two most effective ways you can help foster development and reduce poverty in nations such as Vietnam. Aside from UNIS Hanoi’s Scholarship Fund, we also support children whose parents have health issues. We pay their school fees so that the child’s education is not impacted. With education, a child can take care of themselves and their families on a different level.”

Maeve who is also the Board Administrator at UNIS Hanoi says it is evident that the scholarship programme at the School is shaping futures. “Just look at what our scholars have already achieved and imagine what they might go on to achieve!” she says. Dan continues, “What we love about giving to the Scholarship Fund is that we know pretty much dollar for dollar is given to a child and is not going towards administrative costs. We know that big charities have become big business. This is not a business, this is making a difference in someone’s life. I’d urge everyone to donate. Just think: for the price of a family meal at a nice restaurant you could help improve lives.”



A mother who witnessed the influence UNIS Hanoi's first scholar, Nam Nguyen, had on her oldest child, has become an ardent supporter of the Scholarship Fund. Kelly Kim who hails from Korea would often hear how impressive Nam was - as a person and as a student, from her daughter, Joanne. Her interest piqued by Joanne's glowing reports, Kelly decided to donate to the Scholarship Fund.

## 'The Diversity is good for the School'

Kelly reveals, "By coincidence, Joanne was in some of the same classes as UNIS Hanoi's first scholar, Nam. I quickly learned that Nam was bright, innovative and a natural leader. I was very impressed by the fact that Joanne learned a lot from him even though they come from different worlds. I think this diversity in the school is very good and that's why I believe the programme should continue."

Since Nam and Joanne graduated from UNIS Hanoi in 2015, Kelly has continued to support the programme.

"Last year, I was one of the Scholarship Champions, encouraging parents that I know to make a gift to the Fund."

Kelly hopes to continue supporting the Scholarship Fund, both as an individual and as part of the strong Korean community who make a donation collectively. She says, "UNIS Hanoi is a very good School and I believe we should all do something to support the School and uphold the reputation of the School."



Former Board Chairman, Nguyen Quang and his wife Pho Hai Chi are firm believers of the Scholarship Programme, making a generous donation every year towards the Scholarship Fund. The couple, whose oldest child studied at UNIS Hanoi from Grade 1 right through to graduation, and whose second child is currently in Grade 7, say the Scholarship Programme is good for Vietnam.

Chi says, "We are privileged to have this life and we know that our two sons have both benefited from learning at

## "No Gift is Too Small"

UNIS Hanoi, academically, socially and physically. We see the benefits in them every day. We believe that every child should have the right to quality education, no matter their economic situation, that's why we support the Scholarship Programme. And just look at the results so far! I see that many of the children who won a UNIS Hanoi scholarship have achieved very good results. Some have left UNIS Hanoi and won full scholarship at very prestigious universities. We admire the effort of less privileged children who came to the School and did well. With the education that they are getting from UNIS Hanoi, they will advance further than they would if they were just supported through a local high school. They can achieve more because UNIS Hanoi prepares them well for their future, opens their eyes and gives them

confidence. Whether they will return to Vietnam or work overseas, we know they will be very good at what they do and we will be very proud that they are Vietnamese. I say let's give these kids a chance!"

With an appreciation that there are many other ways in which people can contribute to the development of people in Vietnam, Chi says that as much as someone can, they should also consider donating to the Scholarship Programme. She explains, "I hope many parents will join us by making even small gifts that together will make the fund large enough to make a real difference. I also hope that people will come to see the benefits in the Programme, like we have, and give more and more."

**To find out more about The Scholarship Fund and to read the inspirational stories of our scholars please visit the campaign website where you will also find information about how to make a gift: [www.unishanoi.org/scholarshipfund](http://www.unishanoi.org/scholarshipfund)**

Thousands of young children in Hanoi are benefitting from inspired learning in the classroom thanks to a special partnership between their schools and UNIS Hanoi.

Since 1998 as many as 25 different kindergarten schools across Hanoi have taken part in an innovative training programme conceived by the Hanoi Department of Education and Training. The programme, known as the Early Childhood Education Renovation Programme (ECERP), was established in a bid to improve kindergarten education by sharing UNIS Hanoi's best international teaching practices with local teachers.

And now as UNIS Hanoi rolls out further training this year, Head of School Dr Chip Barder says ECERP remains a shining example of the School's deep commitment to Vietnam's national development. He said, "I was proud to inherit and grow this programme. It has proved to be a hugely successful initiative among our teachers and teachers in our beneficiary schools; not to mention the impact it has made in the lives of young learners. We remain keen to continue serving our community in this way."

Deputy Principal of local kindergarten, Truong Mam Non Mai Dich, Nguyen Thi Le Huyen says the initiative has raised standards at her school. She remarked, "I started at my school ten years ago when it was first built. I remember being a young teacher and



**PART 1**

# TEACHERS TEACHING TEACHERS

being sent to UNIS Hanoi for training. It really introduced me to a new way of teaching and learning. Since then, I have overseen the training of 13 of our teachers who have put into practice what they've learned. We have also attracted more families because the parents know about our partnership with UNIS Hanoi."

Local kindergarten teacher, Le Phuong Hang agrees. "We've seen our students excel and our parents comment on it all the time. Our first class of students to benefit from our new way of teaching, succeeded in gaining admission to Hanoi's top bilingual primary schools. Because of the UNIS Hanoi training programme, our parents know that their children will have the best start in life."

Tran Bao Ngoc the ECERP Coordinator at UNIS Hanoi is responsible for the programme which runs two intensive sessions for nearly 30 local educators each year. She reflected, "To see the difference

we have made in the ten years that I have worked on this programme is heartening. At first, most of the schools we were working with had 50 to 60 students in one class with one teacher. Now, our partner schools have reduced their class sizes by half and added teacher support too.

"School has also become less about the teacher dominating the lessons and more about the child leading the learning. It has been a valuable programme for the Hanoi Department of Education and Training, UNIS Hanoi and the schools we work with."

**Look out for Part 2 of Teachers Teaching Teachers in the Summer 2017 edition of Uniquely UNIS, in which we turn the spotlight onto our faculty members who provide expert workshops and conference presentations to their global peers.**

# THE TALE OF THE PHOENIX AND THE DRAGON

Once upon a time an unusual friendship started between a Phoenix and a Dragon. Both the Phoenix and the Dragon wished to protect Vietnam's most vulnerable children... Now, discover the 'happily ever after' of the long standing partnership between UNIS Hanoi and the Blue Dragon Children's Foundation.

A mutual desire to improve the lives of thousands of children is at the heart of a success story epitomizing UNIS Hanoi's efforts to make meaningful contributions to the development of Vietnam.

For more than a decade, UNIS Hanoi students, teachers and parents have supported the charity that makes providing care and security for vulnerable children, often trafficked and abused, its raison d'être. What had started through ad hoc individual voluntary commitments has now developed into whole-school programmes that offer a range of additional services for the children that Blue Dragon supports. From fun runs and walkathons to swimming lessons and sports socials, the School

community is getting fully involved. And that's a good thing, confirms Blue Dragon founder Michael Brosowski.

A former teacher from Australia, Michael believes the collaboration between Blue Dragon and UNIS Hanoi is a 'natural fit'. And despite the often dark realities of life for the children who find their way into the warm embrace of Blue Dragon, UNIS Hanoi students relate well with them. Michael adds, "I love the idea of kids helping kids and what I find with UNIS Hanoi kids who visit our centre is that there's no differentiation between them and our kids. They're just all kids, and I think

that's special and it's something that the School should be proud of."

As well as visiting Blue Dragon's main drop-in centre, UNIS Hanoi students also organise Saturday sports events and they welcome groups to the School to learn safe water skills as part of the Swim for Life Service Learning programme. What's more, for the past ten years, the Elementary School has come together to host a walkathon with all donations directly benefitting Blue Dragon clients. "The walkathon is quite an institution now" remarks Michael. "It's so lovely that it's a community event that the





students and parents enjoy. I hope that everyone benefits in some way from taking part and that it's not just seen as a money-raising activity but a physical way for the School community to feel further involved with what we do." To date, a total of \$120,000 US has been raised, with all funds used to pay school fees - a provision Michael, as a former teacher is so passionate about. For every \$100 US raised, a child somewhere in Vietnam is able to stay on in school, and in turn transform their lives. This cause, Michael says, offers perfect synergy between the School and Blue Dragon.

He continued, "Our relationship with UNIS Hanoi is the longest established relationship we've had with any school. But that's because UNIS Hanoi has really positioned itself as a community and that's how we see ourselves as well.

**"For the School community, it's not just about turning up somewhere to receive an education or to get some benefit; it is also about what each person puts back into that community. UNIS Hanoi is an outward looking school which wants to get involved in local issues. We're inspired by that example."**

**Visit the Blue Dragon Children's Foundation website to find out more about and how you can support them: [www.bluedragon.org](http://www.bluedragon.org)**

## About Blue Dragon

The Blue Dragon Children's Foundation (or Blue Dragon as it's more commonly known) started life as an English drop-in centre back in 2004 by Michael Brosowski. Currently, the charity employs 82 staff members who help as many as 1,500 young people in a variety of ways at any one time. Some clients benefit through the scholarship programme which currently includes 80 young adults studying in university, while others find safety and care in one of the five Blue Dragon shelters around the country. To date, Blue Dragon has also rescued 600 children and young adults from trafficking, both in Vietnam and from China.

# In the next edition of Uniquely UNIS

In your next edition of Uniquely UNIS we will bring you another collection of outstanding stories from our outstanding School. Don't miss the next edition to be published Summer 2017 including...

## Printing prosthetics!

Our Elementary School students are designing and 3D printing prosthetic limbs for local Service Learning 'clients'.

## iTime

Students in Elementary School are leading their own learning with iTime scheduled for them to explore and research any project of passion.

## How does your garden grow?

Our organic gardening Service Programme has bloomed from small seeds to supplying our canteen! We highlight this impressive all school endeavour.

## What Does it Mean to be A UN School?

As one of only two UN International Schools in the world, our relationship with the United Nations in Viet Nam is at the core of our School identity.

## You Speak, We Listen!

Engaging parents in their child's education has proven benefits for success, but how can we better help our parents forge lifelong partnerships with our School? Discover the work of the Parent Partnerships Taskforce.

## Teachers Teaching Teachers - Part 2

We turn the spotlight onto our faculty members who provide expert workshops and conference presentations to their global peers.



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For any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact the Uniquely UNIS Editor, Emma Silva: [advancement@unishanoi.org](mailto:advancement@unishanoi.org)

Or if you have a story you would like to share or read more about: [stories@unishanoi.org](mailto:stories@unishanoi.org)



# ... Make it happen!

**1** Everyone Gets What They Need



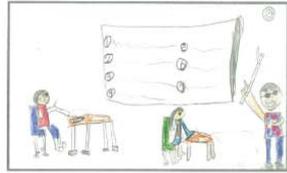
**2** No One goes Hungry.



**3** Be healthy and live a long time



**4** Everyone gets a good education



**5** Boys And girls are treated the same



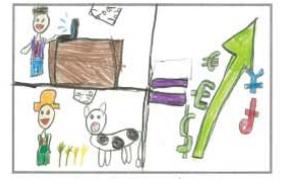
**6** Safe water



**7** Clean power



**8** Safe jobs, getting paid to work and banks that help people



**9** Making New And Better Ways To Do Old things



**10** Be equal



**11** Strong Cities and communities Lasting forever



**12** Only tax What you Need



**13** Pollution free



**14** Life in the water



**15** LEVING CREATURES ON LAND



**16** Peace and following laws



**17** People working together for the goals



UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



United Nations International School of Hanoi  
 G9 Ciputra, Tay Ho, Hanoi, Vietnam  
 Telephone: +84 4 3758 1551 Fax: +84 4 3758 1542 Email: info@unishanoi.org  
 www.unishanoi.org