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##### LIN Releases a 3rd Volume in its Series of "Volunteer Stories"

We are pleased to announce the completion of our third volume in our series of Volunteer Stories, which is titled, "The Road Less Traveled". The volume includes a collection of stories, in English and Vietnamese, about the work of skilled volunteers who support local nonprofits. The stories were selected from among the submissions to LIN's Volunteer Stories Contest 2013. [Read more>>>](#)

##### The Femme Factor

In April, LIN launched a pilot program, "Empowering female nonprofit professionals", which offers coaching and mentoring for female staff from local not-for-profit organizations. The project is supported by one certified coach and 16 mentors from the private sector. [Read more>>>](#)

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##### How Creativity Helps to "Narrow the Gap"

In this issue, we invite you to meet the skilled volunteers who are designing most of the visuals and creative products you are receiving as part of LIN's Narrow the Gap campaign for EDUCATION. [Read the story on page 5](#)



*"The arts should benefit the community. It has been the philosophy of people like us, those who are young, enthusiastic and pursuing the art of design."*

- **Lưu Thanh Tú**

#### EXPERIENCE

##### Skill-based volunteers: The "right brain" approach

Behind each and every creative work at LIN is the passion to help the community from volunteer designers, videographers, website developers, photographers and more. They came to the rescue when LIN is in need of professional work, and impressed us with their pro bono, top quality products. [Read more>>>](#)



#### CONNECT

##### Pay it forward

Each meeting and event organized for the 2014 CPI project has been meticulously planned and carried out by a team of students from the International Relations Department at the HCMC University of Social Sciences and Humanities.

Why do these students volunteer? What do they receive from the experience? Phan Tran Thien Thuan, a member of the CPI volunteer team, shares his thoughts. [More>>>](#)

##### Volunteer Opportunities

LIN is recruiting skilled volunteers for the following positions.

- **6 communication coaches** [>>>Read job description](#)
- **1-2 PR volunteers** [>>>Read job description](#)

Special thanks to Lai Phuong Thanh, who contributed articles for this newsletter!

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Community Partnership Initiative (CPI) 2014:

## Experts join hands to improve nonprofits' financial sustainability

*The LIN Community Partnership Initiative (CPI) 2014, one of LIN's signature projects - connecting skill-based volunteers to local nonprofits - was officially launched on 23 May with a "Meet & Greet" event.*

*Irish Aid, Embassy of Ireland in Vietnam, is the sponsor for this year's CPI, which rallied experts with backgrounds in Marketing, Communications and Finance to form teams that would support local not-for-profit organizations (NPOs) in their efforts to strengthen their fundraising strategies and become more financially sustainable.*



### 1. Meet & Greet

The purpose of this event was for NPOs and volunteers to find their good match. After spending time chatting with each other, three teams of professionals from three companies (VNG, BMC and MASH), along with six groups of individual volunteers, were each matched with one NPO of their choice for a four-month partnership.

From June until late September 2014, these teams of volunteers are coaching their NPO partners to improve their donor stewardship plans, build a fundraising strategy and carry out one fundraising activity together. As part of the program, LIN provided a small amount of funds to each NPO so they could attend

networking events held in Ho Chi Minh City, which could help to expand their database.

### 2. Orientation Meetings

In the first two weeks of June, LIN facilitated the first orientation meetings with each team to set their expectation and objectives for the partnership. After that, each team has arranged to work together, according to their own pace and schedule. Most teams are meeting once a week to plan for their activities, and several teams have taken advantage of opportunities to present about their organizations during local networking events.

### 3. Action Learning

To support CPI teams' with their planning and building strategies, HSBC Vietnam offered five Action Learning sessions in which professional trainers and staff from HSBC worked, one-on-one, with five different NPOs. The goal was to help NPOs solve their primary challenge in trying to achieve financial sustainability. In each three-hour session, which took place at the LIN Community Center, the HSBC team and the skilled volunteer teams walked the NPO through their problem using the technique of Questioning & Answering.

For more information about CPI 2014, please [visit our website](#).

## Meet the teams

There are nine teams participating in CPI 2014. Each team is comprised of one NPO and one team of volunteers who work together to improve the NPO's strategy in fund-raising and donor acquisition. Find out more about the teams by clicking on their team photo below:





## LIN Releases a 3rd Volume in its Series of Volunteer Stories: The Road Less Traveled

We are pleased to announce the completion of our third volume in our series of Volunteer Stories, which is titled, "The Road Less Traveled". The volume includes a collection of stories, in both English and Vietnamese, about the work of skilled volunteers who support local nonprofits. The stories were selected from among the submissions to LIN's Volunteer Stories Contest 2013.

This is one of the few resources, which highlights stories that rarely make headlines in Vietnam: the stories of professional volunteers lending their skills to build stronger communities. As an organization fortunate enough to have worked with many amazing skilled volunteers over the past four years, the LIN Center for Community Development believes that a movement has taken root – one that is slowly but steadily growing in Vietnam.

This movement is being pushed forward by the likes of people like Nguyen Hong Van, Thinh Nguyen, Phan Cu and other inspiring changemakers whom you will "meet" over the 100 pages of this book. These individuals, to put it in Robert Frost's words, "took the road less traveled by, and that has made all the difference."

For LIN, it is essential for us to collect and share the stories about the early journeys of skilled volunteers. We hope these stories will inspire more people to take action and join us on this discreet, yet passionate journey.

Copies of the book are being sent to all of the volunteers and NPOs that submitted their stories. An online version of the book can also be found via this link: [Volunteer Stories Vol 3: The Road Less Traveled](#)



## The Femme Factor

In April, LIN launched a pilot program, "Empowering Female Nonprofit Professionals", which offers coaching and mentoring for female staff from local not-for-profit organizations. The project is supported by one certified coach and 16 mentors from the private sector.

During the six-month program, each female nonprofit professional is matched with at least one mentor, a female professional from the private sector, with whom she is expected to meet with at least once a month. The mentees participated in a two-day workshop, taught by Ms. Luong Ngoc Tien, on "The Art of Coaching" and all are taking part in a monthly group session, which is facilitated by Ms. Tien – a certified coach. The participants also receive complimentary tickets to local networking events to support their networking skills.

In the coming months, mentees will be invited to attend two luncheon meetings with successful women from who will speak on topics of shared interest. The first roundtable luncheon will take place on 17 July and will feature the U.S. Consul General Rena Bitter who will talk about work-life balance.

On June 13, the mentors were invited to an informal chat with Ms. Tien and Andrei Mikhailenko, a professional coach from Russia, who shared tips and strategies for mentoring other women.



Mentors and mentees getting to know each other at the matching event in April 2014. Photo: Quang Trầm

## Skill-based volunteers: The “right brain” approach

*Behind each and every creative work at LIN is the passion to help the community from volunteer designers, videographers, website developers, photographers and more. They came to LIN's rescue when we are in need of professional work, and impressed us with their pro bono, top quality products.*

**Phạm Vũ Hoàng Giang (Giang Phạm)**, a Saigoner of few words, enjoys roaming, café đá, observing and telling stories through his photos.

“I'm passionate about photography and using it to contribute to the community. I knew LIN by chance via a friend. The working environment at LIN is very friendly. I was supported by the staff and other volunteers to finish my work. I find the flexible time commitment suitable to the work of a freelance photographer. I appreciate the opportunity to work with other nonprofits and to learn from LIN's various programs.”



### My favorite work:

- Photo album about Binh Loi Social Center, which highlighted the portrait of Mdm Luu Kim Cuc, the center's director, in the most genuine way.
- Illustrators on LIN's blog, my trial with a new skill which was not my strength but was used effectively.
- LIN's event photo albums, which serve as a journal to document LIN's activities and achievement.



Photo taken by Giang Phạm at LIN Narrow The Gap event in 2012.  
For the full album please go to: <http://on.fb.me/1pGngmk>

**Đỗ Quang Vũ**, HCMC game designer with a passion for designing, photography and game.



“I always love to design creative, interesting products that benefit the community. It is a way to live my passion besides my paid job.

LIN has created an open and respectful working environment for all volunteers. All members here share the same objective, to strengthen the community we are living in, a philosophy I resonate with.”

### My favorite work:

- LIN Volunteer Stories Vol 1 and 2 (book cover and illustration)
- LIN Tet cards
- LIN Brochure
- Website layout

Actually, I love all the work I have created for LIN because I put all my heart into each product.

*Products designed by Do Quang Vu*





## How Creativity Helps to “Narrows the Gap”

*Volunteering for not-for-profit organizations (NPOs) is currently very popular among high school and college students. It is a chance for students to contribute to the community while also building skills and experiences for their future careers.*

*In this issue, LIN invites you to meet the volunteers who are designing most of the visuals and creative products for our current [Narrow the Gap campaign for EDUCATION](#).*

The design team consists of four, full-time students at RMIT Vietnam University and a RMIT Lecturer. These five individuals set aside a portion of their precious time and resources to support [LIN's Narrow The Gap campaign for Education](#).



**Olivier Llouquet**

Lecturer, Advanced Web Authoring,  
RMIT Vietnam



Narrow The Gap Fund logo, designed by RMIT students



**Nguyễn Thụy Thực Uyên**

Student, Multimedia Design.

Wants to experience in as many fields of career as possible before settling down with an official job.



**Lưu Thanh Tú**

Student.

Loves cats, movies, game, bánh mì, pizza, spaghetti, “trolling”, digital compositing (visual fx)...



**Võ Quốc Huy**

Student, Multimedia Design.

Enjoys design projects for personal use or at school, daily exercise and reading.

### The LIN “faith”

With the introduction of their teacher, Olivier Llouquet, it took Uyen, Tu and Huy almost no time at all to decide that Narrow The Gap Community Fund is a project worth their efforts. Uyen said she found in this project the opportunity to engage in the community, to be exposed to a real working environment and to expand her current network.

Since all team members and their mentor (Olivier Llouquet) have studied and worked together prior to starting the project with LIN, they understand each other quite well and could provide timely support to the rest of the team. The fact that they study in the same faculty also proved to be an advantage as they often meet each other at school so it has been easy to update and exchange information.

The biggest challenge that most volunteers face is how to keep balance between school/work and their volunteer commitments. With only a limited amount of free time, volunteers often have to put in double the effort in finding ideas, creating first drafts and tweaking those drafts until they have the final product that they want.

In each nonprofit campaign - how to attract sponsors, donors and participants is very important. For a fundraising campaign like [Narrow the Gap](#), good public relations is a matter of “life and death.” Understanding this, the team is motivated to improve the image of the project with fresh and creative ideas.

(Continued in next page)

## When creativity helps to “narrow the gap”

The team had their goal set on making sure that the product meets the communication standards of the project: attract viewers and help them gain access to the information as quickly as possible. Therefore the product is often simple and focused on typography and an easy-to-use interface. This, according to Uyen, gives the campaign a strong and long-lasting impression to its communication targets.

By discussing the theme of [Narrow the Gap](#) this year, which is access to education, the team has learned and matured a lot. They know how to care and give back to the community where they live, work and grow. All of the ideas and messages are based on the slogan of the campaign: “Raise your hand for education”.

“I see myself as a child contributing my effort for a better community; this is something precious and positive when I have a chance to do it,” said Huy.

For these volunteers, nothing is better than when their products are being used for the community in a meaningful way. This is how their passion, dreams and hard-work come together to build the community.



Visuals designed by the design team, from left to right:

Website [www.linnarrowthegap.org](http://www.linnarrowthegap.org), poster for Community Cocktails, poster for Ladies' night

Thanks to the support from these four RMIT students and lecturer, LIN's Narrow the Gap Community Fund has received attention and support from donors, volunteers and community members who share our desire to *narrow the gap* in education. The LIN team is extremely proud of the efforts of each member of the design team and of each and everyone of their products.

Narrow the Gap 2014 | Rút Ngắn Khoảng Cách 2014



*“The arts should benefit the community. It has been the philosophy of people like us, those who are young, enthusiastic and pursuing the art of design.”*

- Lưu Thanh Tú

The intro clip for Narrow The Gap Community Fund



*Each meeting and event organized for the 2014 CPI project has been meticulously planned and carried out by a team of students from the International Relations Department at the HCMC University of Social Sciences and Humanities.*

*Why do these students volunteer? What do they receive from the experience? Phan Tran Thien Thuan, one member of the CPI volunteer team, shared his thoughts with the LIN team...*

*"I was having difficulty looking for an internship when my friend, a LIN skilled volunteer, asked me to join the CPI team - a vibrant, meaningful project which just suits me. I can hardly believe that I have been supporting LIN Community Partnership Initiative (CPI) for two years in a row. Honestly, the time working for CPI is no doubt one of the most cheerful and vibrant memories that I will retain from my college years.*

*I have learned and experienced so much as a communications intern. Some of my friends are working with me on this project. LIN is not only a friendly workplace but also an inspiration to motivate every one of us. We are encouraged to break the limit, to challenge ourselves for even the craziest ideas. Sure we will learn from our mistakes and receive helpful advice from the LIN team.*

*I have in mind this so-called "leadership lesson": An open communication environment serves as a fundamental factor to maximize effectiveness. I also learned the rule of "give and receive", which I learned from experience during my first year working on the CPI project. I have passed that lesson on to the next generation of volunteers when they joined me for my second year. By paying it forward, we are building a sustainable, well-united organization.*

*As a Project Assistant, I often contact and stay in touch with not-for-profit organizations (NPOs) that are participating in the CPI. This task enhances my communication skills, especially how to put myself "in their shoes". Therefore, I got a chance to understand NPOs and their challenges. I feel more comfortable meeting with people with disability. For the first time in my life, I sympathize with the NPOs and get inspired by the way they put their hearts and minds into all their work to add more value to this world.*

*Enthusiasm! Contribution!*

*All in all, I believe that my efforts and contribution have made an impact, both direct and indirect, on my local community. As a person, I find for myself the sunshine to grow.*

*Written by **Phuong Thanh***



**The team behind CPI, from left: Thiên Thuận, Vân Anh, Phương Thanh, Thảo Nguyên, Mỹ Ngọc**

*Photo: Quang Trâm*

## Volunteer Opportunities

LIN is recruiting skilled volunteers to support our projects. Will you help us?

- **6 communication coaches:** Help one NPO to communicate effectively about their project online, in front of a large group and via one-on-one conversations with stakeholders, in order to gain buy-in for their project, attract support from donors and volunteers, and, ideally, win the most votes and top prize in LIN's Narrow the Gap Fund competition. [>>>Read job description](#)
- **1-2 PR volunteer, Blue Bees project:** LIN is seeking to recruit a team of pro bono PR professionals from an agency or individual PR experts to develop a PR plan to promote a new website, [www.BlueBees.org](http://www.BlueBees.org), scheduled to be launched in July 2014. [>>>Read job description](#)

Interested candidates please send your CV and cover letter to [Volunteer@LINvn.org](mailto:Volunteer@LINvn.org). Thank you for helping us forward this information to those who might be interested.

## Real Corporate Philanthropy Starts with Real Stories

By Ryan Scott

(Read the original article: [Real Corporate Philanthropy start with real stories](#))

Storytelling is a hot marketing buzzword these days, and for good reason; in the business world, it's the newest form of smart corporate communications. Telling your story is imperative for many aspects of business, and a particularly important practice when it comes to strategic philanthropy.

Administrators of successful volunteer and giving programs understand that storytelling makes a big difference in how their corporate philanthropy efforts impact their chosen causes as well as their employees and business community. How, what and to whom you communicate information about your volunteer and giving program all play a critical role in whether your volunteer program soars or flops.



### Let's start with the **WHAT**:

- What is your program all about?
- What, if any, single major issue is your company championing as a part of its volunteering efforts? Or is your company supporting a menu of many different causes?
- What activities is your program engaged in to support its dedicated causes?
- What, if any, corporate giving initiatives are tied to your program?
- What about matching gifts, in kind donations, dollars for doers, competitive crowdfunding and other such initiatives?
- What are you doing to customize your program to suit the particulars of your corporate culture? For example, are you creating an approach where employees vote on a different cause focus each year? If not, what other fresh angles are you bringing to the table to keep your program engaging?
- What - if anything - is the special sauce of your volunteer and giving program that makes it unique or worth talking about?

### Next, the **WHO**:

You want engagement from your employees, and participation - or at least awareness - from your greater community. Assuming you have a good story and you tell it well, the more people who know your story, the more likely

you'll find people who want to get involved with your program and your company. So ask yourself this; are you communicating your story to:

- Your company's staff?
- Your board?
- Your strategic partners?
- Other corporate stakeholders?
- Existing customers?
- Potential customers?

### Finally, the **HOW**:

It's important to make storytelling easy for everyone involved in your program. That's why some volunteer platforms arm employees with built-in social media tools to tell their company's story for them, which is the most authentic and credible way to shine a light on an organization's good works. Other marketing vehicles - from the lowly email to full-fledged marketing programs - also come into play as you plot the best way to engage your community in your cause vision. So consider these two questions:

- How are you getting your story out into the world?
- How are you engaging your employees to participate in your efforts and what sort of initiatives are you including in these efforts?

Read the full article [here](#).