

VIET NAM

Implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Viet Nam: Dinh Tien Hoang Primary School – a Pilot Work on CRC

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1. Introduction

In the last few years, even though bearing many challenges, Viet Nam has made progress in eco-social development and political security maintenance. Particularly, Vietnamese regulations have changed positively in the light of establishing legal boundaries so as to ensure as much effectiveness as possible for the implementation of international commitments on human right. Viet Nam, as the first Asian country and the second country of the world, has signed and adopted Convention on the Rights of the Child which came into force in the 1990s.

Viet Nam has adopted Law on taking care, educating and protecting children; Law on sex equality, Law on providing primary education for all children. In addition, Prime Minister approved in a decision dated 31st May 1999, a Planning Act on the protection of the children and those children in specially difficult circumstances.

Furthermore Viet Nam has conducted many exchange programs on rights and education with other countries and associations. To name but a few, Sweden, Switzerland, Canada, Denmark, Australia, Laos, UNICEF, Red Cross, etc. These

activities are to exchange practical experiences on human rights implementation and enhance human rights protection, in which child rights is one of the key issues.

Nevertheless, some child rights violations still exist. For example, Vietnamese enterprises has over-used child labors as their salary and insurance payment cost much less than those of adult labors at same level. Also, the enterprises have not yet taken into account about other child rights. Children in some families have been treated so badly, both mentally and physically. Some private kinder-gartens have been so negligent that children have caught severe diseases, became disabled and even died. Therefore, the understanding about Convention on the Rights of the Child will play a crucial role in order to bring the best to our children and that could be named “Children today – World future”.



Nguyễn Thục Phi, a 10-year-old child, in treatment in Quang Ngai Province Hospital seriously injured. Her face, eyes and body parts are bruised because of the violent punishment from her adoptive parents.



It is actually a scene of a play in which a child is exploited to get sympathies from the people in the streets.

2. Frame of Reference

HCMC (Saigon) is in the southern part of Viet Nam. HCMC is widely accepted as the biggest cultural, economical and educational center of Viet Nam. There are 24 districts in HCMC of which its inhabitants are about 8 million. It is noteworthy that city government has always paid much attention to the education development activities. Among others, HCMC has conducted many educational programs cooperating with domestic and foreign counterparts in a number of subjects, especially about the training programme on child rights. The educational programs done by HCMC are always ranked in the highest positions compared to those of other cities and provinces.

There are so far (2014) 33 Change Agents in Viet Nam participating in the international Sida-Lund University training programme “Child Rights, Classroom and School Management”. 17 change agents are coming from HCMC. *Dinh Tien Hoang primary school* is established in 1997, which is under the administrative supervision of Educational Department of District 1 which has 60 schools (26 kindergartens, 20 primary schools, 10 secondary schools and 4 high schools). We apply many Child Rights in different environments – and *Dinh Tien Hoang Primary school* is one of the three schools in HCMC joined in the Sida-CRC-project.

During 26 years of development, owed to many good consideration of the local administrative authorities and parents, *Dinh Tien Hoang Primary School* has achieved many compliments. Thus, the government approved and invested to re-build and re-decorate the campus, which changed from 2 floors to 4 floors with 4567m² in total. It included 33 classrooms and 26 functional rooms.

There are 1597 pupils and 57 teachers and 43 staffs in the school. It is well-known school in the sense of teaching and learning activities. We are always bearing in mind about bringing the most beautiful things to our students. Therefore, we volunteer to implement the educational project on CRC in education sponsored by SIDA and carried out by Lund University, Sweden. The project have been performed in 2 classes at the fourth grade, where there are 84 pupils in total, 20 teachers and other volunteers such as teachers, staffs, parents of the pupils and local education officials at the district level.

Before participating in the training programs, most of the participants have not known anything about CRC. Therefore, the pupils have not been treated so well. Most of the 84 pupils living in Dakao Ward of District 1 have shared different standards of living. Namely, 50 which have lived in good conditions, 18 which have lived in normal situations and 16 pupils that is left, are in difficult situations. Some

pupils are from poor families that could not fully provide school equipment, clothes, and food. Therefore, to some extent, they are not treated favorably by their teachers. Nevertheless, their parents have spent very little time to take care of the children and also treated them bad as the parents are very tired after working very much and hard to earn money to be able to afford the family's daily life.

3. Purpose

Dinh Tien Hoang primary school volunteered, as mentioned above, to implement the educational school project on CRC with the following purposes:

- Understanding of CRC should be improved by school managers (principal and vice principals), teachers, staff and child's parents, local government through training;
- Abilities to use positive education/learning methods should be increased by school managers, teachers and students;
- A safe and friendly study environment should be built and life skills by students should be increased;
- Good behaviours as respect used by school managers, teachers, staff and child's parents, and local government and they use participation and friendliness to students;
- Students' self-confidence in active learning and self-control in following rules in the classroom is increased;
- Students will enjoy going to school.

4. Methodology (Activities)

In order to implement the project, we prepared the following activities and here mentioned in the order they were performed and done after coming back from Sweden and Lund University. First to anchor the project with all our heads and then anchoring at the school with the teachers, the students and then the parents

15/10/2012, the school reported to the governor of Department of Education of HCMC, Office of Education of District 1 about the project and the project implementation.

24/10/2012, the school held a first meeting to provide the training on CRC for its administration staffs, teachers, staff, pupils and local authorities and parents of the pupils, in which particular tasks also was directed to every participant. Namely:

- Gathering information and images on CRC;
- Collecting, editing the materials for (1) pupils, (2) teachers and (3) parents;
- Preparing training materials;
- Organization preparation (invitation letter, venue, equipment, etc.);

3/11/2012, providing training CRC for 20 administration staffs, teachers, staff;

10/11/2012, providing CRC training for local officials of Office of Education of District 1, parents of the fourth grade pupils;

6/12/2012, providing CRC for the fourth grade pupils;

20/12/2012, the group contacted to *Nguyen Thai Binh primary school* (another, earlier Sida-CRC project school) to prepare the organization plan for Executive Board of the school, parents of the fourth grade pupils to visit the school in 3/2013 about CRC implementation;

24/1/2013, the group contacted to *Chinh Nghia primary school* (also another, earlier Sida-CRC project school in HCMC) in order to prepare the organization of study tour for the two fourth grade pupils on CRC implementation and active class administration in 3/2013.



Ms Lan, team member and principal, is reporting the plan for implementation of the CRC project to Mr Đinh Thiện Căn, Head of Doet Department



Viet Nam team here has one of its many meetings for preparing and organizing the CRC project in the Dinh Tien Hoang primary school

Outcome 1: Improve the knowledge of CRC for school managers, teachers, staff and children' parents, local government (from October 15 to April, 2013)

3/11/2012, Vietnamese team trained for 20 administrative staffs, teachers and staffs. We really enjoyed that. Everyone participated very actively in CRC lessons. We made hypothesis cases and played roles and give solutions to CRC situations in the classroom.



The group trained CRC for Dinh Tien Hoang teachers and staff



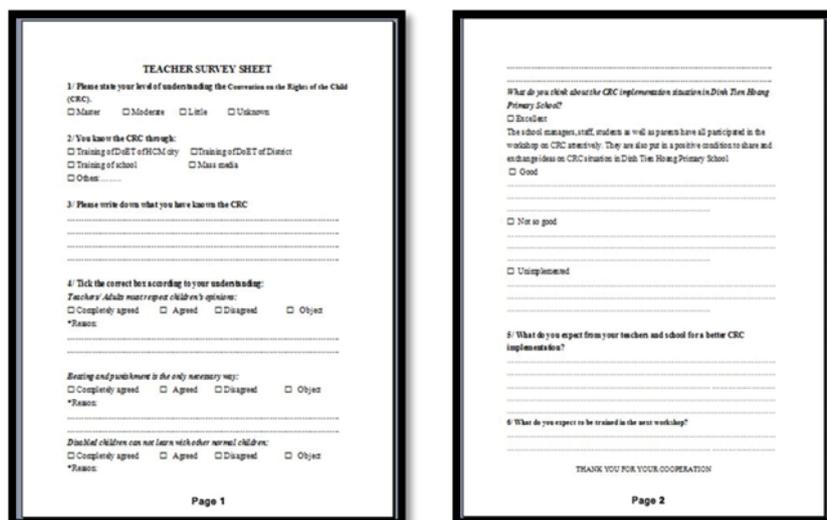
Teachers – staff answered CRC questionnaires



Group of participants reported about their own topics and discussed with the class



Role-playing in CRC situations training



10/11/2012, our group held training for nearly 70 persons, including representatives of Education and Training Office of District 1, and parents of the two fourth grade pupils. They did share their initial thoughts on CRC.

In beginning, the parents hesitated to present their own understandings about CRC. Nevertheless, after the group has made their CRC presentation, they were really excited and participated very actively in the CRC discussions. We learned that:

- The parents have taken care of their children so closely that the children became passive. To some extent, the children lost the chances to improve their self-served techniques.
- Beside the class provided officially by *Dinh Tien Hoang*, the parents put their children to many classes in extra schoolings/activities. The children do not have enough time to relax and explore the surrounding world. As a result, they lacked living skills.
- Simultaneously, this resulted in bad habits for children. Namely, they have waited for being served by others. They also became selfish.

At most, the parents accepted that they had some misunderstandings about CRC enforcement. For example, they did not take into account the children's opinion. Most of them did not put an eye on what their children did with computers.

They still beat the children when they are hot-tempered. Normally, they strictly required the children to obey their opinions. Interestingly, they confessed that they were not ideal parents.



Student's parents reported about their own topics and discussed with the others



Role-playing in CRC situations training of students' parents

06/12/2012, the team had training for the two fourth grade pupils at Dinh Tien Hoang primary school. Besides the provision of some main points of CRC, the group helped the pupils to recognize and distinguish the right and wrong behaviors in schools, classes and public areas. Consequently, we want the pupils to participate more actively and responsibly in classroom administration. Especially, the children built up CRC situations which normally happened in the classrooms. Then, they discussed and drew some conclusions to solve the CRC problems. Some students presented themselves as confident and creative ones whereas most of them are passive and so embarrassed. Nevertheless, due to the active methodologies classroom administration, the students became more excited. Besides, our team has used many images of CRC in school information board for reminding purpose.



Students presenting their group's ideas





Students giving feedback to CRC



CRC propaganda posters

Outcome 2: Increased abilities of school/classroom management of principal, vice principal, teachers by positive education methods (started from April 2013)

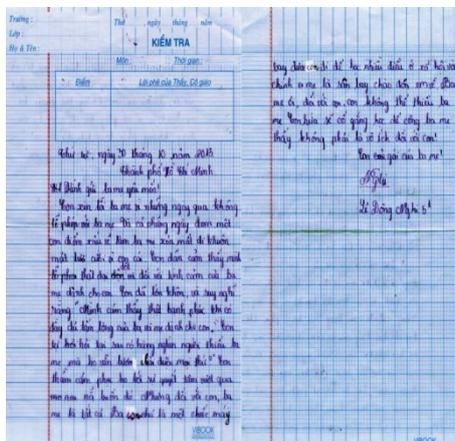
In April, our group visited classes, observed and consulted teachers the way to organize positive learning and teaching methods. There is a huge development in students' confidence. In order to boost the coordination between the school and the family in term of living skill, we cooperated with pupils' parents in order to remind them to change pupils' bad habits in passive learning style by active researching material and textbook, self-study at school and at home. We organized for students to write letters to their parents for exchange of ideas and experiences: "Difficult things that children feel hard to talk to Mom and Dad".



Students study more actively in class



Ms. Lan, principal, is listening to students when they tell their opinions



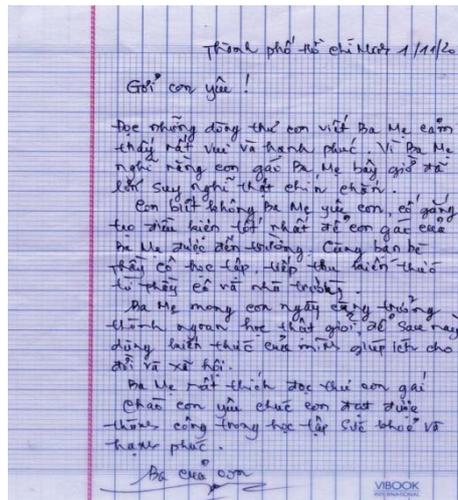
Student Le Dong Nghi wrote:

Dear mom and dad,

I'm so sorry for not being good to you. Moreover, when I got bad score in class, I knew I made you sad. I feel upset about that. I'm growing up, and I think that: "I'm so happy because I know you love me so much. I wondered if many children live without

their parents, they are good citizens now. I feel great admiration for their determinations. To me, mom and dad are everything". Dad is a plane, which drive me to everywhere to learn new things. And mom is the airport that always welcomes me home. I can't live without you. I promise to study hard to requite the self-sacrifice of yours.

Your daughter



Dong Nghi 's father wrote:

Dear my darling,

I was very happy as reading your letter. We thought that, our daughter was a mature person. Do you know that we love you so much and try to have good conditions for you to go to school? You can play with friends, can study, and acquire knowledge from teachers.

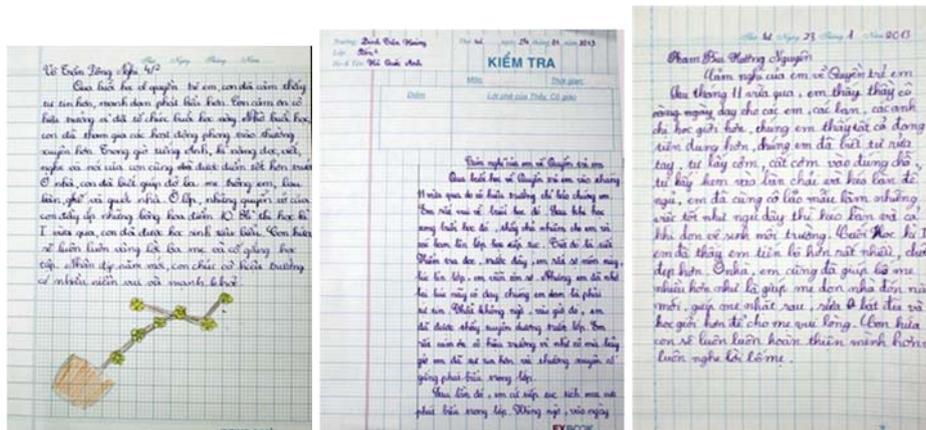
We hope that you will be grow up, study hard. And in the future, you can use your knowledge to help society. We love reading your letter.

Wish you get more and more success in studying, health and happiness.

Your daddy



Our team established a small mailbox named “What we want to talk about” so that the children can present their own problems happening in the class or school.



Vo Tran Dong Nghi, 4th class: After CRC training done by Dinh Tien Hoang’s principal, I feel more confident so that I can express my thinking smoothly. I would like to give my sincere thanks to her for organizing the class. As a result, I also participate in more actively in the school activities. During English class, I got higher marks on reading, writing, listening and speaking. At home, I am keen on helping my parents to take-care my younger sisters, clean the house. In classroom, I got full of 10 marks in my notebooks. In the first semester examination, I was recognized as one of the most outstanding pupils of the class. I promise to obey the parents’ sayings and try my best to study. For the New Year Eve, I wish Ms. Principal full of joy and health.

Ha Quoc Anh, 4th class: During CRC lesson done by Ms. Principal in the last November, I was very happy. After the lesson, my teacher let my friends and I go into our class again. That period is the reading lesson. To be honest, I used to be afraid of reading hours. Nevertheless, the CRC lesson indeed came to my mind and

encouraged me to be more self-confident. Unbelievable, I was consequently commended by our teacher. Thanks to the CRC lesson, I get to be more confident and frequently answer the teachers' questions.

Pham Bui Huong Nguyen, 4th class: After November, I found that teachers helped us to be better pupils. Also, we think that everything now would be more convenient. I, by myself, know how to wash my hands; take and turn back our lunch box properly; spray toothpaste into toothbrush; move back and forth the table for taking a nap purpose. Another, I support classroom monitor to clean our classroom. At the end of first semester, I found that I have made long progress. At most, my handwriting was getting better. At home, I helped my parents to do more housework, for example, vegetable picking, dish washing, better studying. I promise to improve myself more and obey my parents' saying better.

At the same time, our team trained the two fourth grade classes on self-serving techniques in whole-day class.

Outcome 3: The school has a safe and friendly study environment and has increased students' life skills. (from November 2012 to December 2013)

Our team always control food and teaching tools to ensure students' health in every lunch as well as every teaching aid. Besides, we organized for students to participate in social activities such as Hung King Anniversary, Charity Fair to create funds for building houses to those who are financially difficult, gender and vocational educating in Kizciti, reading circle club, sports club, music club, aerobic club, volley ball club. We also designed School Report to educate soft skills, train civilized lifestyle for pupils at home and at school.

On 25th March 2013, Dinh Tien Hoang Primary School students attended a workshop on "*Useful habits and expressing love in family*" in order to be aware of how to self-serve and take care of family members.

On 27th March 2013, 4th grade students are doing their extra activities at Kizciti, hold by Viet Nam team together with the board of school management. The students are instructed how a certain job is and what the job requires such as how to make a cake, keep a baby clean or design a costume and so on.



Student joined Club Reading Circle



Students are learning how to make cakes and how to trim vegetables into beautiful shapes



In a chess class; and a music class



Martial arts; basketball



Students are listening attentively in the schoolyard.



Students are practicing how to take care of a baby at Kizciti.



How to take care of sick people; How to put out fires as firefighters

On 28th March 2013, the school staff, students, teachers and parents' representatives are visiting *Chinh Nghia Primary School*, District 5 (one of the earlier Sida-CRC schools with other Change Agents in HCMC).

April 13th 2013, teachers, staff, parents and students of Grade 4/1 and 4/2 visited *Nguyen Thai Binh Primary School*, District1, HCMC (another of the earlier Sida-CRC schools in HCMC). Through the visit, students learn how to conduct and behave politely.



Ms Đinh, Thi Kim Phuong – Chinh Nghia Primary School Principal in District 5 – warmly welcomes Dinh Tien Hoang Primary School



Viet Nam Team and students, teachers, staffs and parents' representatives from both school are taking pictures together



Students from both schools are enjoying together



Tug of war” from DTH school & NTB school



Basketball match between 2 schools

April 7th, 2013: 800 students' parents has joined in “*Teaching children in digital age*” workshop – chaired by Mr Nguyen Thanh Nhan, CEO of Asia pacific Youth Training Centre. The workshop attracted deep interests and highly appreciated for its meaningful and practical lessons. Parents also suggest more workshops should be held in near future.



Parents are attentively listening to “Teaching children in digital age”, held in Dinh Tien Hoang Primary School-District



Mr Nguyen Thanh Nhan, CEO of Asia pacific Youth Training Centre



Parents eagerly support the meaningful content and suggest more workshops should be held in near future.

Dinh Tien Hoang primary school hold “*Hung King’s Death anniversary*” aiming to educate children to gratitude good deeds from ancestors and heroes who have been sacrificed for the country’ independence and development. The performance focused on main stages of Viet Nam history. On the same day, our students are encouraged to join the charity activities on building Houses of Gratitude (built for war invalids or martyrs’ families) in Tien Giang provinces.

Below are some pictures on school performance hold by DTH teachers and students aiming to educate children to gratitude good deeds from ancestors and heroes who have been sacrificed for the country’ independence and development.





Auction room where handmade works of teachers and students will be reserved for charity

Parallel the project, Dinh Tien Hoang Primary School organized “*Friendly learning environment – Active pupils*” movement with five following contents:

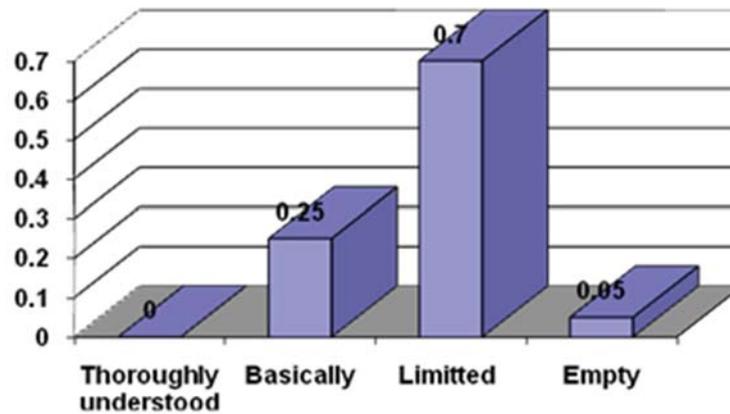
1. Building the “Green-Clean-Beautiful-Safe” classroom and school;
2. Teaching effectively and suitable methods for age characteristics and helping pupils to be more confident in studying;
3. Training soft skills for pupils;
4. Organize collective activities;
5. Pupils participate in finding, taking care and living up historical heritage, culture and revolution in local.

5. Results

5.1 Questionnaires on CRC knowledge for administrative staff, and teachers

As per the questionnaires, it is learned that the number of people who have fully understanding about CRC is limited (0% thoroughly understood; 25% basically understood; 70% limited understood and 5% empty). After the training, the participants were excited as their CRC knowledge were improved significantly (32% thoroughly understood; 65% basically understood; 3% limited understood and 0% empty)

Before:



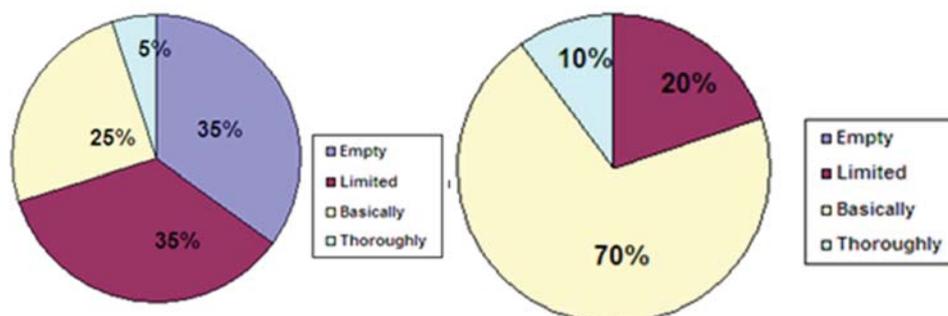
5.2 Questionnaires for parents

Before the training, the number of empty CRC knowledge is accounted for 35%; that of limited understood is 35%; that of basically understood is 25% and that of thoroughly understood is 5%.

After the training, this figure has changed dramatically. Empty understood is accounted for 0%; limited understood is 20%; basically understood is 70% and thoroughly understood is 10%.

In the beginning, most of teachers and staffs were embarrassed in guiding the children on CRC implementation. Now, not only the two fourth grade pupils but also all of our pupils have participated in the training. Their activities are gradually much better. Students have self- confidence in learning and self- serving skills.

Before and After:





Students have self-serving skills (Students can do without teacher or staff helping them).



Students can do in homework to help their parents

Students became more confident in communicating to foreigners. Besides compulsory subjects, students are trained to develop skills through clubs and field trips comfortably and enjoyably.



Students are very confident in communicating to Change Agents CRC – Batch 18

We keep listening to the comments of parents on the behavior of teachers and staffs toward our children. Children's parents highly appreciated helpful teaching activities from school; however, some still paid enough attention to their child due to their work. We asked our teachers to closely focus and help those children to make it up for them.



Ms. Lan is exchanging ideas with Parents



The scholarship awarding

6. Discussion and Reflection

After the trainings, our team kept an eye on the participants so as to follow-up and examine their improvement. Actually, we hold one meeting after every two weeks to discuss and share experiences. At most, we present the successes and shortcomings with each other so that we can adjust the programs in the appropriated extent. The discussions are conducted in opened mind and direct manner.

On the way home from the Progress Workshop for batch 17 in Sri Lanka, things to do have been discussed by the team to achieve outcome 2 and outcome 3. In the implementing phase, we always listen to feedback from teachers, staff and parents in order to adjust the plan forward on the right track.

7. Way Forward

After the implementation of the project, we draw those conclusions:

Strengths

- Supervisors make good condition for CRC project implementation.
- School managers, teachers, staff, parents often participate actively and look forward to CRC.
- HCMC network always help us to apply CRC.

Threats

- Team Participants' job responsibilities – it is difficult to get together.
- The difficulty of the CRC-project according to the large-scale expansion is the control units and associated funds.

Opportunities

- Government has a resolution directing the education reform.
- All levels of government, schools interested in implementing child rights.
- Educational level has been raised.

- The school has been rebuilt.
- Economical increase by taxes in HCMC.
- Always received mentors' help.

We really hope that our CRC project in our school will continue to be successful. So in the future, we will expand the project to all classes in Dinh Tien Hoang School. Besides, we will also introduce CRC to parents and students in other schools in District 1 and use public media such as TV and newspapers, etc.

Network between Change Agents will continue to be formed in new ways and continuously maintained to exchange ideas on school management positively – not only in Dinh Tien Hoang School but in many other schools in HCMC.

To expand the scale of the project, Mr. Dung will apply CRC in primary schools in District 3 (where Mr Dung is working) and Ms. Trang, who has a central position in HCMC Education Office, will carry out CRC and school management positively to a cascade to the rest of schools in HCM City.

8. List of References

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