

Hornby Educational Trust

Active and Inclusive Teaching and Learning for Minority Students

Vietnam

2022-2023 Teacher Association Project Report

Taybac University, VietTESOL and An Nguyen Duc



Hornby Teacher Association Projects

Project Overview

Title	Active and Inclusive Teaching and Learning for Minority Students
Country	Vietnam
Dates of project	2022-2023

1. Background and rationale

What are the main issues in your English teaching and learning context? How did these issues influence your choice of project? Were there also other important contextual factors to consider?

The current status quo of teacher education and development in Vietnam is the insufficient training for both pre-service and in-service teachers in how to teach minority students. Lack of context-specific teacher training courses inflicts sizable effects on the students' academic performance and language competence. Therefore, the project desires to offer 3 offline workshops and online mentoring and support on effective approaches for the active and inclusive teaching and learning.

The targeted project participants are 25 ELT in-service schoolteachers who have been teaching and working with minority students in the mountainous underserved provinces in the North-west. Each workshop will be held in 2 days. The project involves six local experienced teachers (2 teachers/ workshop) who have successfully implemented innovative practices or problem-solving strategies in their own classrooms and are eager to share their best practices. Selecting local teachers rather than seeking out for foreign 'experts' is the highlight of the project. Taking advantage of their talents and their deep understanding of the context, the six experienced teachers will present and share various practical teaching tips, techniques, and their experiences in a friendly (and non-judgmental) manner, so that more ELT teachers, particularly those who work in remote areas with very limited PD activities can benefit from this project.

We have also consulted the peer coaching model (A handbook for exploratory action research | TeachingEnglish | British Council | BBC) for our mentoring process.

2. Project objectives

The activities are organised for 25 EFL teachers in an underserved province for the purposes of:

- equipping teachers with responsive teaching methods to reduce their stress;
- engaging, empowering and inspiring EFL teachers to promote innovative practices and problem-solving strategies;
- advancing their professional learning and innovating EFL teaching by creating a network and a forum to share teaching practices, difficulties and solutions to learn from each other;
- removing students' anxiety, then boosting their English competency;
- empowering local experienced teacher trainers;
- stimulating local DOET to facilitate effective training programs for ELT teachers of minority students.

Evaluation

1. Project objectives

To what extent do you feel your objectives were met? If they were not met, or only partially met, can you explain why?

Upon reviewing the outcomes of our training program, our goals enhancing the quality of English language teaching in the ethnic minority regions of Northwestern Vietnam were generally met. The program was instrumental in engaging, empowering, and inspiring EFL teachers to adopt innovative practices and problem-solving strategies. This was facilitated through the introduction of adaptable teaching methods and the integration of modern technologies like AI for material creation, which spurred creativity and innovation among the teachers. After each circle, teacher participants were assigned to design teaching materials or activities for their later usage, the three best products were selected and awarded.

Moreover, the initiative advanced professional learning and fostered innovation in EFL teaching by creating a robust network and forum. Through this platform, teachers shared their teaching practices, discussed challenges, and exchanged solutions, significantly enriching their collective expertise. After the project concluded, participants remained connected through social networks like Zalo—a cost-free Vietnamese telecommunication platform—and Facebook. They continue to engage with one another, exchanging information and sharing both their practices and the challenges they encounter in their real-world contexts. Support from peers, trainers, and organizers is frequently provided. It's been nearly a year since the project ended, yet trainee participants continue to share their practices almost every week.

Additionally, the program is sustained because it focused on utilizing and empowering local experienced teacher trainers, particularly selecting prominent Vietnamese educators, some with extensive experience in teaching students from ethnic minority areas. This choice emphasized the power of decentring ELT in the context of Vietnam, promoting a framework that is more aligned with local educational needs and contexts. These empowered trainers are now pivotal in cascading knowledge and innovative teaching strategies with authentic examples, ensuring a sustainable impact on the broader teaching community. Furthermore, our trainee participants experienced significant savings on travel, accommodation, and other expenses.

Overall, the project has helped lay a foundation for ongoing educational development. Further details on specific impacts and future strategies will be discussed in subsequent sections of this report.

2. Project impact

What was the impact of your project on:

- a) your Association(s) / Institution(s)?
- b) the people involved in your project?
- c) the wider community?

What evidence do you have to demonstrate this?

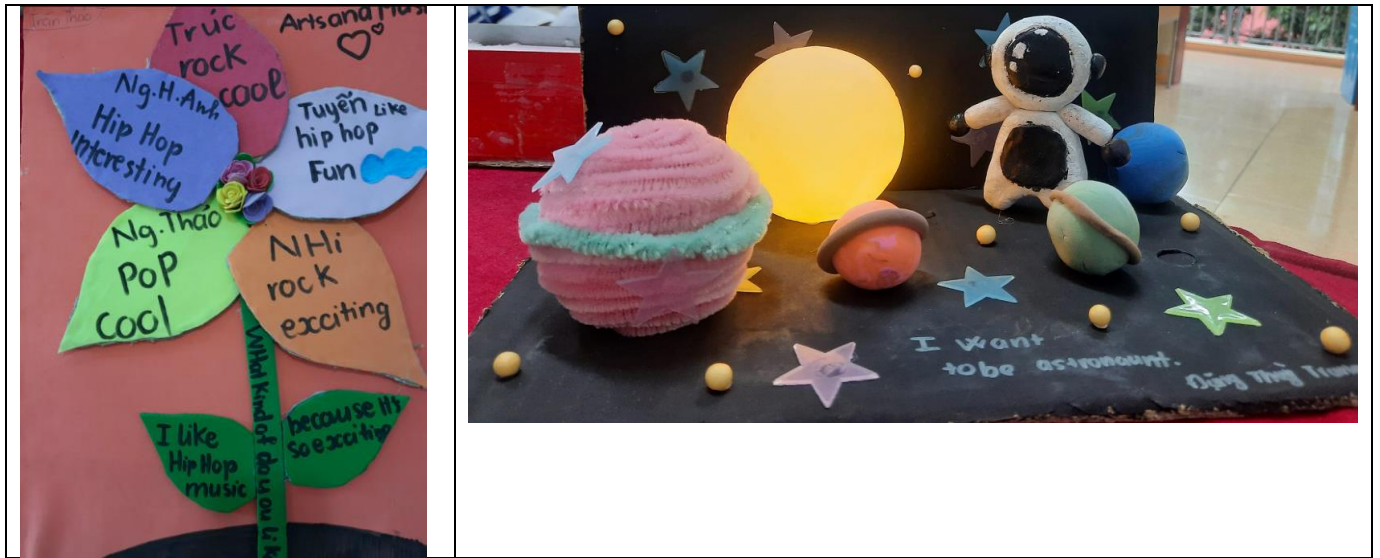
The project has reinforced the pivotal role of the VietTESOL association in providing targeted teacher education across diverse regions of Vietnam. By focusing on areas with significant educational needs, VietTESOL has strengthened its capacity and reputation as a crucial resource for teacher development. This initiative has also enabled the EdTech Special Interest Group (SIG) under VietTESOL to plan and launch a second session. This upcoming session is specifically designed to address the needs of ethnic minority teachers in the Central Highlands of Vietnam, expanding the association's reach and impact.

For the participants, the project has been immensely valuable. Teachers living in some of the most remote areas of Vietnam have expressed their appreciation for the training sessions with effective instructional methods, highlighting how rare such opportunities are in their regions. The training provided not only essential educational resources but also a sense of inclusion in the broader educational community. The trainee teachers can mobilize themselves to protect and reaffirm their agency as responsive and responsible teachers and actively give rise to meaningful pedagogical transformations. These testimonials, supported by forthcoming photos, will further illustrate the personal and professional growth experienced by the participants.

For trainee teachers' minority students, they indirectly benefit from the project including the appropriate instructional methods and new teaching materials from each circle assignment. Teacher winners after each circle were awarded some new teaching aids to support their students' learning.

The project's influence extends beyond the immediate participants and institutions; it has begun to lay a foundation for broader educational enhancements within the wider community. By equipping teachers with innovative tools and strategies, the project has indirectly benefited countless students who now experience more engaging and effective learning environments. Additionally, the project also provides insights and approaches to promote teacher agency, especially for teachers who work with limited socio-economic and minority backgrounds. The success of this initiative serves as a model that can inspire similar educational efforts in other regions, potentially leading to widespread improvements in educational practices across Vietnam and beyond.

Below are some pictures of the project:



Toys made by one teacher (Phase 1)



Teacher's material design using AI and Microsoft Word (Phase 3)



THE MAGIC MILLSTONE

They also wanted the millstone. The old man whispered something into his wife's ear. The wife smiled and nodded her head. When it was dark enough, the greedy old man went to the woodcutter's house. He quietly went to the yard and picked up the millstone out.



The greedy old man and his wife went far away. "I am tired," said the wife. "Keep going," commanded the old man. As they went to the sea, they saw a boat. Soon, they decided to rode out to the sea. As they reached the middle of the sea, the greedy old man turned the millstone. Immediately, the salt began coming out. However, the salt would not stop.

Teacher storybook using Bing Image Creator. Full story can be found here:
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1eEYUjKjUOOqhpH4M1WM3ssM4avsVVIwR/edit?usp=sharing&oid=102541485409953037613&rtpof=true&sd=true>



My little girls and boys in class 4C at Thi Tran Primary School- Phu Yen- Son La
 Chants thật tuyệt vời và đầy hứng thú
 Các bạn ấy bắt nhịp rất tốt
 Link beat: <https://youtu.be/SXmnU-16aAw?si=EE4YUTtHgVOEGu78>
 Link video: <https://youtu.be/KSfFEDIs03s>



Teacher composed chants which suit students' hobbies and local conditions to teach grammar structures and vocabulary. Students chant both in class and at home.

3. Sharing with a wider audience

Who did you share information about the project with? Why, when, and how did you do this?

What reactions did you get?

Do you have any further plans for sharing more widely?

The AI component of the project, led by Khoa Do, was presented at the Vietnam-New Zealand TESOL conference (VNZ TESOL) in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The presentation was well-received by participants, particularly among teachers who expressed interest in integrating AI tools into their teaching practices. The positive reactions underscored the relevance and potential impact of incorporating innovative technologies in language education.

Moving forward, we have plans to share the outcomes of the project on a broader scale. This includes participating in the upcoming VietTESOL Edtech webinar series, as well as presenting at other regional conferences such as CamTESOL (Cambodia) and LaoTESOL, and international TESOL Convention where both project leaders (An Duc Nguyen and Khoa Do Nguyen Dang) presented and were awarded (2017 and 2024). These platforms offer opportunities to reach a wider audience and engage with educators and stakeholders from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, we are exploring the possibility of launching another season of the project, contingent upon securing appropriate funding. This would enable us to continue our efforts in supporting teacher development and enhancing English language education in underserved communities.

4. Overall reflections

As a result of planning, implementing, and disseminating the project, what did you learn about:

- a) organising / managing a project?
- b) the strengths / weaknesses and future needs of your TA(s) /Institution(s) and / or working context?

Would you do anything differently next time?

Would you like to suggest anything to another TA planning to undertake a similar project?

Through the process of planning, implementing, and disseminating our project, several key insights emerged regarding project organization and management. Firstly, we encountered the challenge of accommodating the diverse schedules and responsibilities of teachers in mountainous areas. Many teachers juggle multiple commitments beyond teaching, such as school documentation, additional jobs and family responsibilities. Additional jobs after the working hours and at the weekends made many of trainee teachers impossible to fully participate in the project; thus, all the three circles were held in summer when teachers were freer from the school documentation. Conducting training sessions at night, albeit convenient for some, conflicted with family time for many teachers, hindering their ability to fully engage in hands-on activities. Additionally, the heavy workload resulted in some teachers being unable to complete their assignments, highlighting the importance of flexibility and understanding in project planning.

Managing a relatively large group of approximately 25 participants presented its own set of challenges, particularly in terms of connectivity and engagement. Conducting online training sessions via Zoom revealed the limitations of internet connectivity in remote areas, with some participants experiencing frequent disconnections. To address this issue, we provided recordings of the sessions for participants to review at their own pace, proving to be a valuable solution in ensuring access to the content despite connectivity issues.

Furthermore, we observed that teachers in these areas tended to be more reserved, as evidenced by the reluctance of many to turn on their cameras during online sessions. Despite this, effective communication was maintained primarily through the chat function, demonstrating the adaptability of online platforms in facilitating interaction.

Reflecting on our experience, there are several areas where we would consider adjustments for future projects. Firstly, providing guidance on camera usage and emphasizing the importance of connectivity during the recruitment process could better prepare participants for online sessions. Additionally, scheduling sessions during morning or afternoon hours may accommodate participants' schedules more effectively and mitigate connectivity issues. Exploring alternative venues such as local universities with better connectivity, like Tay Bac University, could also enhance the overall experience for participants.

In offering suggestions to other teaching assistants undertaking similar projects, we emphasize the importance of anticipating and addressing logistical challenges, such as scheduling conflicts and connectivity issues, from the outset. Providing clear guidance and support to participants, along with leveraging available resources for improved connectivity, can contribute to a more successful project outcome. By prioritizing flexibility, communication, and accessibility, teaching assistants can better support the diverse needs of educators in remote areas.

5. Next steps

How do(es) your TA(s) or Institution(s) plan to continue and / or build on what has been achieved through this project? Why? How might you begin?

Building on the achievements of the current project, our teaching assistants and institution are devising plans to expand and enhance educational initiatives in Vietnam's Central Highlands region. One avenue for continuation involves launching a second season of the project, with a strategic shift in focus to the Central Highlands. Securing funding for this endeavor is paramount, and we are exploring options such as crowdfunding or applying for grants, such as those offered by the Regional English Language Office (RELO, US. Embassy). By adapting the core content of previous sessions to align with emerging trends in English language teaching (ELT), such as creating short videos and animated movies, we aim to ensure relevance and innovation in our approach.

In addition to the project's extension, we envision the establishment of a Pecha Kucha webinar series, serving as a platform for educators from the targeted regions to share their insights and experiences with peers across Vietnam. This initiative aims to foster knowledge exchange and collaboration among teachers, empowering them to learn from each other's practices and successes. By encouraging participation and facilitating dialogue through webinars, we seek to cultivate a community of practice that transcends geographical boundaries and enriches the professional development landscape in Vietnam.

By aligning our efforts with the evolving needs and dynamics of the education landscape in Vietnam, we aspire to catalyze positive change and empower educators in underserved regions to thrive. Through strategic expansion and collaborative platforms, we aim to create lasting impacts that transcend individual projects, ultimately contributing to the advancement of English language teaching and learning nationwide.

Permissions

This report is primarily for the Hornby Trustees and British Council internal review and records. However, we do want to promote your hard work and would like to share what you have done with other Hornby awardees and publicly via the Internet.

- Can you please tick here if you give your permission to share your report?
- Please tick here if you would like your project to be considered for presentation at the 2025 IATEFL conference (the Hornby Trust will select from reports submitted and will support one team member from each of these projects to attend the conference).

Please indicate who would give the presentation if selected:

An Nguyen Duc (Name of presenter)

Name

An Nguyen Duc

Date

April 30, 2024

Appendices

Appendix 1: Expenditure

Were there any **significant differences** from your planned budget? By significant we mean you spent far more than planned, or you were given a donation from a partner that was not expected, for example.

Note any costs below that exceeded the original budget by £200 (below this amount does not need including). Please also tell us what caused these changes in the *Reflection* section below the two tables.

a. local funding

Description	Breakdown	Total cost	Final cost
Need survey and analysis (£60/ workshop * 3 workshops)	£60 * 3	£180	
Stationary set (pens, notebooks, name tags...)	£3/ teacher * 25	£75	
Workshop content designing	£150 * 3 workshops	£450	
Venue for 3 workshops (2 days/ workshop)	£50/ day	£300	
Honorarium for trainers (£20/ day * 2 days/ trainer * 6)	£20/ day * 12	£240	
Honorarium for project team members (£40/ day * 6 days * 5 members)	£40/ day * 30	£1200	
Accommodation for teacher participants (£20/ day * 6 days * 25 teachers)	£20/ day * 150	£3000	
Accommodation for project team members (£10/ day * 6 days * 5 members)	£10 * 30	£300	
Project administration, contacting local institution	£200	£200	

Online mentoring & follow-up supporting (£20/ month * 10)	£20 * 10	£200	
Totals:			

b. Hornby funding

Description	Breakdown	Total cost	Final cost
Tea break (2 sets/ day * 2 days/ workshop * 3)	£20/ set * 12	£240	
Honorarium for trainers (£20/ day * 2 days/ trainer * 6 trainers)	£20/ day * 12	£240	
Accommodation for trainers (£20/ day * 2 days * 6 trainers)	£10 * 12	£120	
Accommodation for project team members (£20/ day * 6 days * 5 members)	£10 * 30	£300	
Travel for local trainers (£20/ workshop * 6 trainers)	£20 * 6	£120	
Travel for project team members (£50/ workshop * 3 workshop * 5 members)	£50 * 15	£750	
Backdrop & standee	£70	£70	
Photographer (\$20/ day * 6 days)	\$20 * 6	\$120	
Totals:		1960	

Reflections:

Appendix 2: Planned activity

Review your planned activity below and then reflection on any changes that were needed and explain why these were necessary.

	Dates	Description of activities	Duration
Circle 1	Mar 2023	Recruitment teacher participants	2 weeks
	Apr-May 2023	Needs analysis 1	1,5 months
		Workshop content designing	2 weeks
	Jun 2023	Training workshop 1	3 sessions 2-2.5 hours/ session
	Jun 2023	Online mentoring & supporting	1 month
		Reflection 1 & Assignment 1	2 weeks
Circle 2		Needs analysis 2	2 weeks
	Jul 2023	Workshop content designing	2 weeks
	Jul 2023	Training workshop 2	3 sessions 2-2.5 hours/ session
	Jul-Aug 2023	Online mentoring & supporting	3 months
		Needs analysis 3	2 weeks
	Jul 2023	Reflection 2 & Assignment 2	2 weeks
Circle 3	Aug 2023	Workshop content designing	2 weeks
	Aug 2023	Training workshop 3	3 sessions 2-2.5 hours/ session
	Aug-Oct 2023	Online mentoring & supporting	3 months
	Sept 2023	Reflection 3 & Assignment 3	2 weeks
	Oct 2023	Project evaluation	2 weeks
		Project closing	1 hour

Reflections:

The project was planned to be conducted during the year, however, many of the trainee teachers were struggling among their busy teaching schedules, school documentation, additional jobs and family responsibilities; therefore, the training sessions were moved to summer when they had more time for the reflections and assignments.