

IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE

# VIETNAM SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT



IMPLEMENTED BY CARGILL CARES COUNCIL

APRIL 2020

Study & report by

**TTC**  
connecting ideas  
for impact

**Cargill**

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# LIST OF ACRONYMS

S.No.	Acronym	Full Form
1	CCC	Cargill Cares Council
2	CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
3	DAC	Development Assessment Criteria
4	ECD	Economic Construction Department
5	IEC	Information Education Communication
6	MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
7	OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
8	PC	People’s Committee
9	SBP	School Building Project
10	SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
11	TLM	Teacher Learning Materials
12	TTC	Thinkthrough Consulting
13	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
14	USD	US Dollar
15	WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene





# BACKGROUND

Cargill Incorporated, established in 1865, is the largest privately owned American Corporation by revenue and has operations across 70 countries worldwide with over 160,000 employees.

In 1995, Cargill became one of the first foreign companies to establish its business in Vietnam, after the normalization of relations between Vietnam and the U.S. It currently employs more than 1,500 people across almost 20 sites in the country.

Cargill's business operations in Vietnam include food & beverage ingredients, protein, metals, agricultural supply chain, unique aqua macro feed ingredients (Empyreal), and animal nutrition & health.

Cargill's journey in Vietnam is also a testament to its resolute commitment to community development and has received widespread

praise from its diverse stakeholders at various platforms, time and again. True to its corporate mission of nourishing the world, enriching lives and helping communities thrive, Cargill, since its inception in Vietnam, has undertaken several community development initiatives. These include livelihood training and assistance for over 1.6 million farmers and community support during natural disasters through relief and rehabilitation measures. One such initiative, focused on educating young children, was conceptualized and initiated in 1997 and gradually converted into a mission and Cargill's biggest flagship intervention- the School Building Project (SBP).





Figure 1: Core business areas of Cargill Vietnam

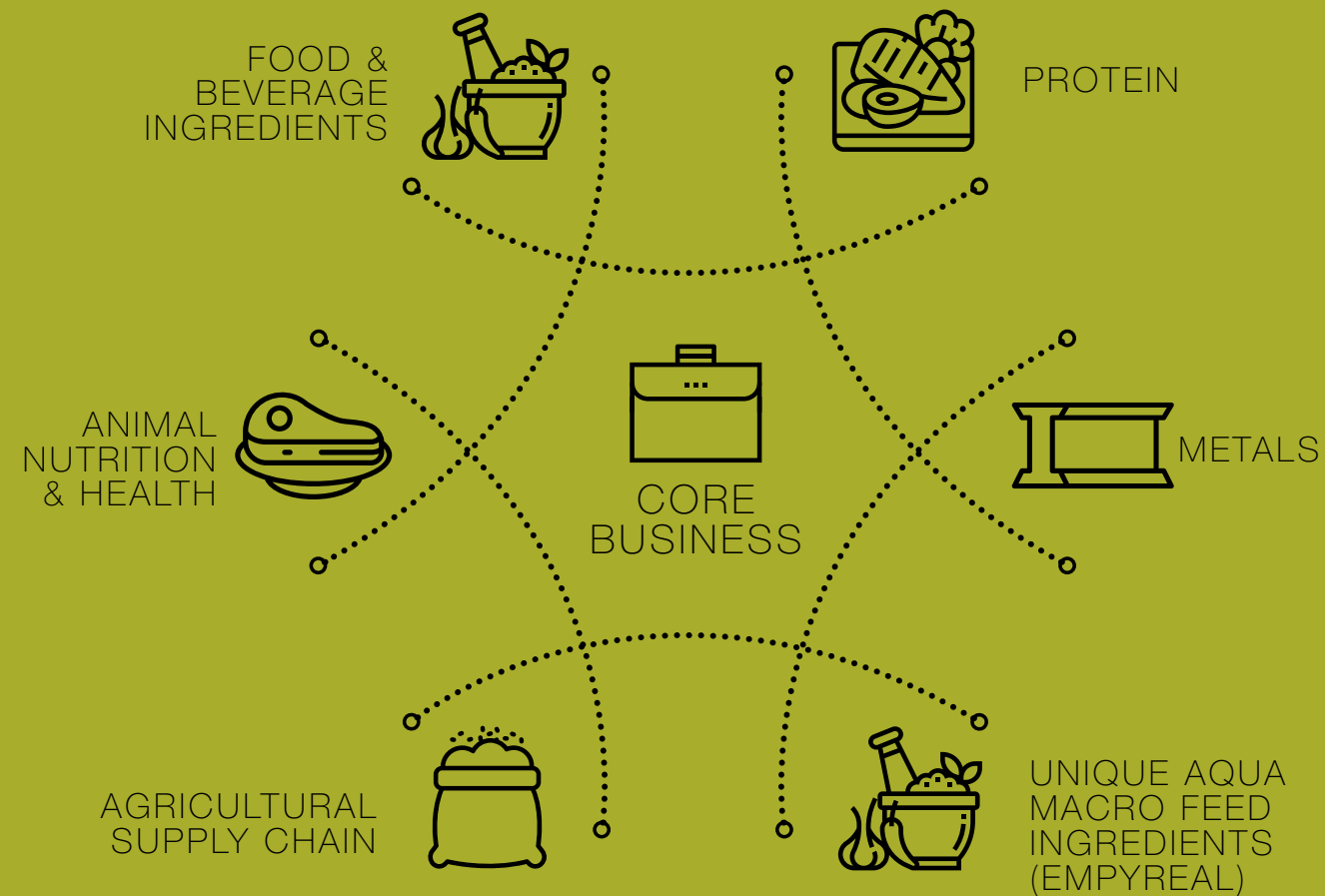
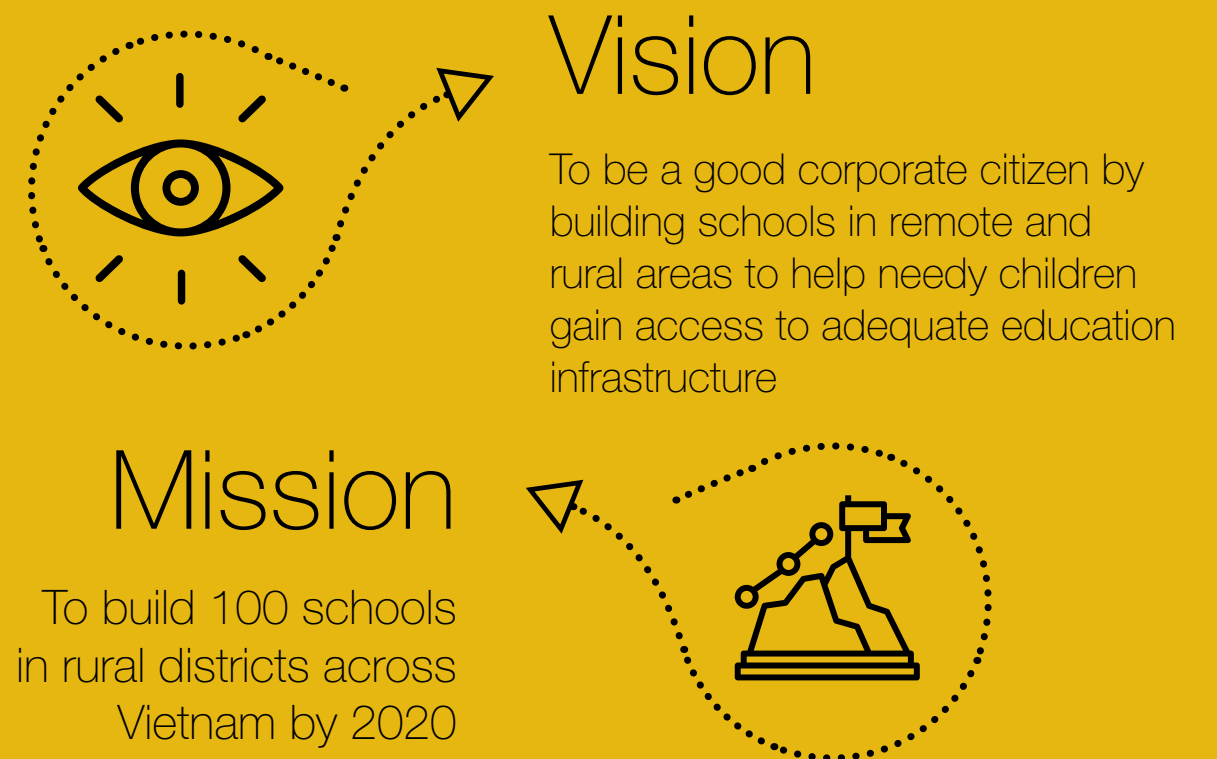


Figure 2: Vision &amp; Mission of the SBP



The SBP project was aimed at contributing positively towards achieving Vietnam's national priority of improving access to education across remote and rural Vietnam, while driving further engagement between the company and its customers. Cargill set itself a mission to establish and handover 100 schools across Vietnam by the year 2020. In August 2019, the company handed over its 92<sup>nd</sup> school, Quang Long primary school in Quang Binh province and is expected to achieve its mission comfortably within 2020. The most distinctive aspect of the SBP is that it is fully employee-led and managed through the Cargill Cares Council (CCC).

This report brings out the findings of a third-party assessment study of Cargill's SBP. The

study examined the role of the CCC in building schools in rural and remote villages at a time of economic and social transformation in Vietnam, and the impacts and achievements of the project over the past 23 years. The approach was guided by the OECD-DAC framework for development evaluation using the criteria of relevance, execution excellence (effectiveness and efficiency), impact and sustainability. It was conducted in three stages using mixed methods research and involved comprehensive review of secondary literature, stakeholder interactions and visits to schools selected on a sample basis<sup>1</sup>, ensuring proportionate representation of schools across geographical regions and across time periods of the intervention.

**CARGILL SET ITSELF A MISSION TO ESTABLISH AND HANDOVER 100 SCHOOLS ACROSS VIETNAM BY THE YEAR 2020**

<sup>1</sup> 21 schools were covered out of 92 schools. List of sample schools is enclosed in the annexure.







# RATIONALE AND RELEVANCE

The CCC-led school development intervention was initiated at a time when Vietnam was experiencing rapid economic development and social change owing to the series of economic reforms introduced during the Doi Moi (meaning “Renovation” in Vietnamese) era from 1986-2000.

The Vietnamese government, in order to fully harness the potential of the young and growing workforce and emerging economy, mandated rural development and overall improvements in education, healthcare and infrastructure.

**Figure 3: Vietnam at a glance**

Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>63 provinces, 10732 communes</li> <li>People's Council is an elected authority that elects a PC to carry out its work</li> </ul>
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>long struggle for autonomy through foreign domination, war and conflict</li> <li>unified in 1975 as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam</li> </ul>
Geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>occupies a strategic position in South East Asia (SEA)</li> <li>vast coastline provides trade opportunities</li> </ul>
Demography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>population of 97 million comprising 54 ethnic communities</li> <li>70% under 35 years of age</li> <li>62% lives in rural areas</li> </ul>
Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>largely agrarian economy</li> <li>value of agricultural sector is USD 302 billion with an annual growth rate average of 9.24%</li> <li>SEA's fastest growing middle class</li> <li>poverty rates declined; now a lower middle-income country</li> </ul>
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>primary schooling (grades 1-5) in public schools is free of cost</li> <li>only five years of schooling from 6-11 years is mandatory</li> </ul>

Despite the extent of socio-economic development over the years, several communities in remote villages and those belonging to ethnic minorities, continued to face deprivation and exclusion, especially in terms of access to basic healthcare and quality education facilities. For the local communities dependent on agriculture and livestock rearing or industrial work, the lack of creche and pre-primary schooling facilities forced many women to stay home, excluding them from the formal workforce.

At the same time, the public schools in towns and villages reported significantly high pupil to classroom ratios leading to overcrowding in classes and exerting an increased pressure on already stretched infrastructure. The school building and classrooms had temporary or semi-permanent structures which lacked

basic amenities and facilities for teachers and students. With multiple development priorities and large investments required for infrastructural improvements, the local governments/ People's Committees (PCs) faced difficulties in raising funds for school development.

**Figure 4: Tran Quoc Toan school building pre-Cargill renovation**





Recognising these challenges faced by the communities living in remote areas was possible because of Cargill's outreach to such rural communities through its network of employees, suppliers, dealers, and customers in addition to the local PC and government officials. Considering the actual needs of the community and identifying the gaps and challenges related to the school infrastructure, Cargill initiated construction of two classrooms in Giang Dien primary school in Dong Nai province in 1997. This laid the foundation of the SBP and marked the beginning of Cargill's "changing lives through education" campaign in Vietnam.

The strategic intent of the project was very clear from its inception. To invest in the young and the future of Vietnam, to contribute towards the Vietnamese Government's efforts to revive the social and economic pillars of the country and to inspire seamless participation of its employees, dealers, suppliers and community towards execution and continued sustenance of the initiative.

After successfully piloting the initiative in a couple of schools in South Vietnam, the project took off gradually, gaining in terms of geographical outreach, achievements and accolades, and gathered momentum towards the end of the 2000s.

Figure 5: Relevance of the SBP



Spanning three decades, the objectives of the project continue to be relevant in the current context, addressing the infrastructural gaps and challenges to support quality in education. Having achieved significant strides in making education accessible to all, the priorities of the Vietnamese Government has now shifted towards standardisation through wider adoption of the "National Standards" that define benchmarks in terms of school access, infrastructure, and quality. The shift in national priorities have been captured in the refined project design that considers convergence with government programs and a focus on meeting or moving towards the "National Standards" across one or more parameters.

Focused on quality education, the project lends credence to Cargill's contributions towards SDG 4 and more specifically to sub goals 4.1, 4.2, 4.5, 4.6, 4A, mandating universal primary education, early childhood development and pre-primary education, access to education for

children in vulnerable situations, child literacy and numeracy, and upgradation/ installation of school infrastructure, respectively.

The distinctive attribute of the project is the manner in which it was implemented over the three decades. The project delivery model was designed on the willingness and strengths of Cargill employees and its vast stakeholder network. The employee volunteers worked under the umbrella of the CCC, enabling the company to foster a better connect with its customer and distributor network that was scattered across provinces. The unique design of the SBP ensured that the CCC involved Cargill's local distributors, employees, customers, vendors and, suppliers at various stages in the school building process across its 92 school sites. In this way, Cargill and the CCC were able to attract and involve a diverse range of stakeholder groups into its "changing lives through education" campaign.

Figure 6: School built under the SBP



Over the years, the Cargill employee-led movement has emerged a successful model for other companies to replicate and has encouraged further investments from government and private companies towards school development activities.





# COVERAGE AND OUTREACH

The SBP focused on early education interventions including kindergarten and primary schools. This allowed parents to drop their children amid the safety and care of the schoolteachers, and enabled them to fully participate in economic activities, while giving their children a better foundation for their entire education journey.

Attributes such as high population density, school infrastructure gaps, proximity to agricultural and industrial hubs and representation of diverse socio-economic groups were considered while selecting the schools/locations, to ensure maximum geographic and community outreach.

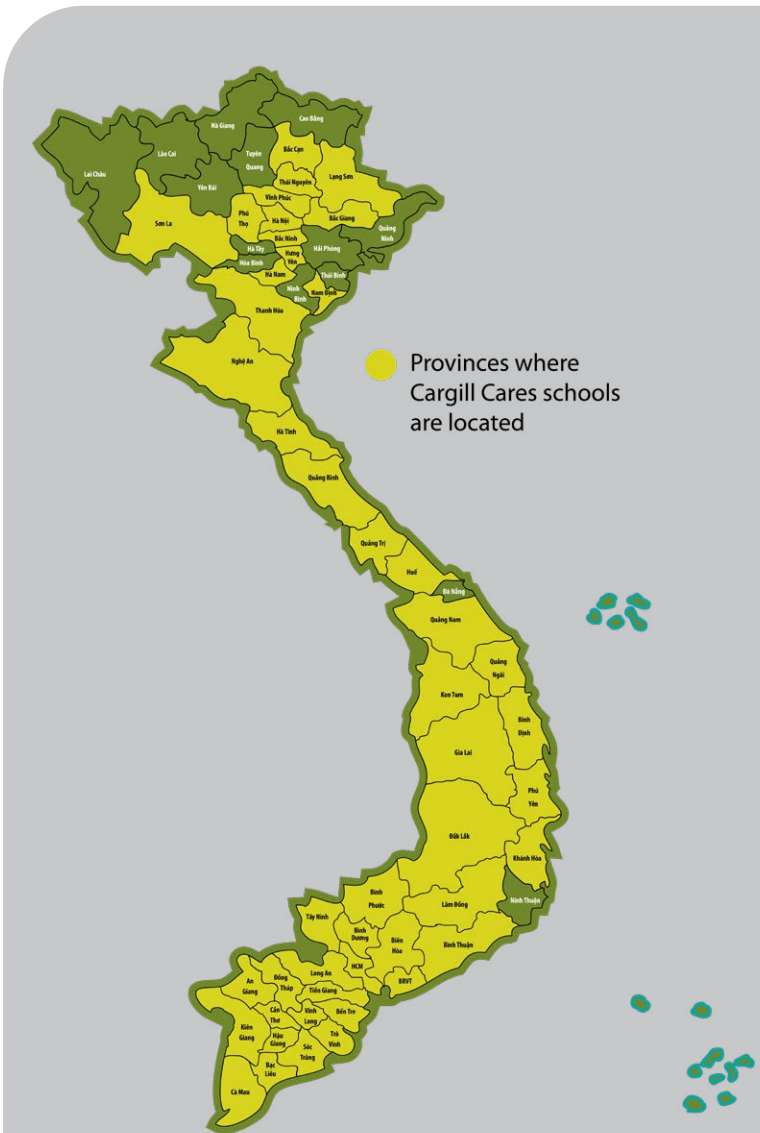
Table 1: Project coverage

Region	No. of Provinces	Project Coverage (till August 2019)			
		1997-2000	2001-2009	2010-2019	Total
North Vietnam	12	0	7	8	15
Central Vietnam	16	0	8	21	29
South Vietnam	20	3	16	29	48
Total	48	3	31	58	92

The primary activities undertaken included:

- Building of 3-5 classrooms
- Building of toilet blocks
- Establishing kitchen units
- Land levelling and/or expansion of the school yard
- School boundary walls and building of school gate
- Greening of the school premises

Figure 7: Cargill Cares school map



BY AUGUST 2019, THE PROJECT HAD COVERED 92 SCHOOLS WITH ITS OUTREACH EXTENDING TO 48 PROVINCES AND AROUND 14,500 STUDENTS ANNUALLY



BETWEEN 2009-2014, THE CCC BUILT 38 PRIMARY AND KINDERGARTEN SCHOOLS AND HANDED THEM OVER TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Figure 8: Classroom block built in Phuoc Thanh school under the SBP



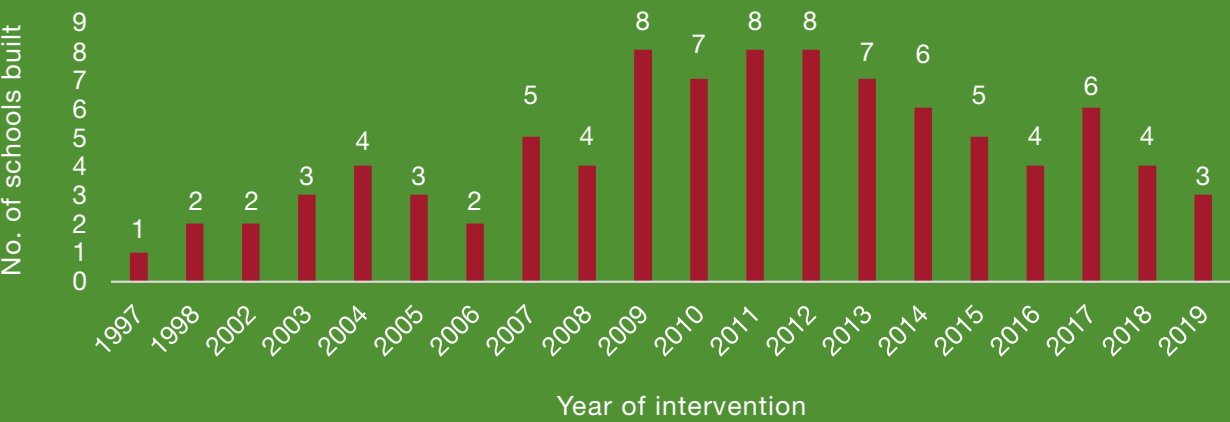
Figure 9: Ba Tang Kindergarten school in Quang Tri province built under the SBP



The high concentration of Cargill's business operations in South Vietnam and the Mekong Delta region led to the higher coverage of schools and beneficiaries in the Southern regions followed by the Central Highlands and Northern Vietnam. Out of 92 schools built until August 2019, 48 are located in South Vietnam covering 20 provinces, 29 in central Vietnam and 15 in northern Vietnam, covering 16 and 12 provinces respectively.

The year on year progress has been more or less uniform, with an average 4 schools per year since 1997. The project reached its peak in 2009, 2011 and 2012, building 8 schools in each of these years. Between 2009-2014, the CCC built 38 primary and kindergarten schools and handed them over to the local communities. In these 5 years itself, 41.3 percent of the 92 school sites were developed and completed.

Figure 10: Number of schools built each year (1997-2019)



Case Study 1: From paddy fields, to primary school

The commune of Vi Trung in South Vietnam was surrounded by paddy fields. The marshy land made access to schools difficult, and the remoteness of the area and lack of concrete roadways posed additional challenges to the locals.

The paddy farmers were duly compensated by the local government and the land use rights were changed. The marshy land then had to be filled and levelled in accordance with the building and safety requirements of Cargill.

A supplier of Cargill conveyed to the CCC the requirement of a school for this commune. CCC volunteers planned an inspection visit to the site and assessed the needs of the local community. School building efforts were encouraged as part of the government's mandate to improve rural living standards and transform rural villages under its "Nong Thon Moi" mission. The PC set up a Board (including a farmer association member, a teacher, a policeman and few parents) to supervise the construction of the school and support with the administrative requirements.

The primary school built by Cargill in 2011, helped address the lack of access to primary education. The CCC built 5 large classrooms and an administrative office, boundary fencing, toilets and a schoolyard. It also undertook a tree plantation drive in the school premises, enhancing the landscape of the school. Since the intervention, this school has become the benchmark for all other schools in the area.



Cargill built classroom block



Paddy fields pre-intervention





# IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The project processes, approach and methodology have evolved over the years and have been standardised based on experiential learnings of the Cares Council and its recognition of the changing context of operations. The project implementation process covers the entire range of activities right from selection of site until the school handover, with clear descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholder groups at each stage.



Figure 11: Process flow of the school building activities

## BEFORE

1

Proposals are submitted by Cargill Sales Team (predominantly), School administration, Suppliers & distributors etc.

2

CCC reviews the proposal; whether it involves expansion of existing schools on the same land, establishing new schools on new land or retrofitting/upgradation of existing schools.

3

On-site evaluations are conducted for 2-3 proposals deemed feasible.

6

Due quality checks are undertaken by CCC, local dealers, suppliers/vendors, proposers & government officials etc.

5

The infrastructure is constructed through Cargill's existing contractors. Then the school is transferred to the PC in a handover ceremony within the year.

4

The construction licenses are procured from the relevant department. An MoU is signed with local authorities and the budget and design plan is finalised.

7

The contractor is accountable for inspection and checking of new infrastructure for upto 2 years post construction.

8

Post that Cargill is responsible for the infrastructure and inspects it every 4 years.

9

After 20 years, the school is assured of further upgradation. Post this, the community/school authority is responsible for operations & maintenance.

## AFTER







# PROJECT STAFFING AND MANAGEMENT

The Cares Council works through employee volunteers as there are no dedicated staff members exclusively managing and overseeing the functions of the SBP. Apart from the CCC Management team and several long-serving CCC members having immense institutional knowledge, there are 65 employee-volunteers that work tirelessly towards managing and implementing the project by contributing their time, talent and resources, while remaining fully accountable to their regular role as Cargill employees.

Figure 12: Organogram of the CCC Leadership Team



Table 2: Roles & responsibilities of the CCC Leadership Team

Name	Role	Responsibility
Hong Nguyen	CCC Country Lead & Communications Lead	Leads internal/ external CCC communication, as well as CCC strategy and execution of CSR initiatives
Duy Tu Nguyen	School Project Lead	Leads school related activities from selection to construction, handover and maintenance
Minh Ha	North Lead	Leads CCC activities in the North region, ensuring alignment with larger Cargill strategy
Cuc Phuong & Quynh Anh	Event Leads	Organize events relating to school opening, fundraising campaigns, seeking sponsorships, etc.
The Anh	Administrative Lead	Leads admin and logistic related activities for the CCC, foreign visits etc.
Lan Huong	Finance Lead	Monitors fund utilization and project payments
Bich Nguyen & Quynh Anh	Fund Raising Leads	Deploy fund raising campaigns and manage sponsor relationships

Though the SBP responsibilities are distributed on a rotational basis and are secondary to their roles in Cargill's business operations, the personal commitment of each CCC employee volunteer towards improving the lives of local communities is remarkable. Many CCC members believe that the CSR initiatives enhance their work experience and makes Cargill stand apart from other companies.

The CCC has received several awards over the years, for its tireless work towards the SBP and for its community enrichment efforts.

THE PERSONAL COMMITMENT OF EACH CCC EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEER TOWARDS IMPROVING THE LIVES OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES IS REMARKABLE



Figure 13: CCC members at a school opening ceremony



Table 3: Awards received by CCC for the SBP

S. No.	Award	Year	Presented By
1	Cargill Cares Volunteer Award	2006	Cargill, Incorporated
2	Striving for Education Cause	2007	Ministry of Education & Training
3	Cargill Cares Volunteer Award	2007	Cargill, Incorporated
4	Businesses for Community	2009	Ministry of Industry & Commerce
5	Third Grade Labor Medal	2009	The Government of Vietnam
6	Community Enrichment	Annually	Cargill, Incorporated
7	Cargill Cares Volunteer Award	2009	Cargill, Incorporated
8	Cargill Cares Volunteer Award	2010	Cargill, Incorporated
9	Spirit of Cargill Award	2012	Cargill, Incorporated
10	U.S. Department of State 2015 Award for Corporate Excellence (ACE)	March 2016	U.S. Secretary of State
11	3rd Prize - I CAN DO MORE Community Enrichment Content- Cargill Global	May 2017	Cargill, Incorporated
12	Cargill Breakthrough Award finalist	November 2018	Cargill, Incorporated
13	Impact Award for Best Project - Enriching Communities SBP of CCC Vietnam	December 2019	Cargill Asia Pacific
14	Impact Leaders Award: Duy Tu Nguyen	December 2019	Cargill Asia Pacific



# FUND MOBILISATION

To mobilize adequate funds and resources for the project activities, the Cares Council actively leveraged the SBP’s wide network of community members and supporters and appealed for financial contributions towards executing the school development activities.

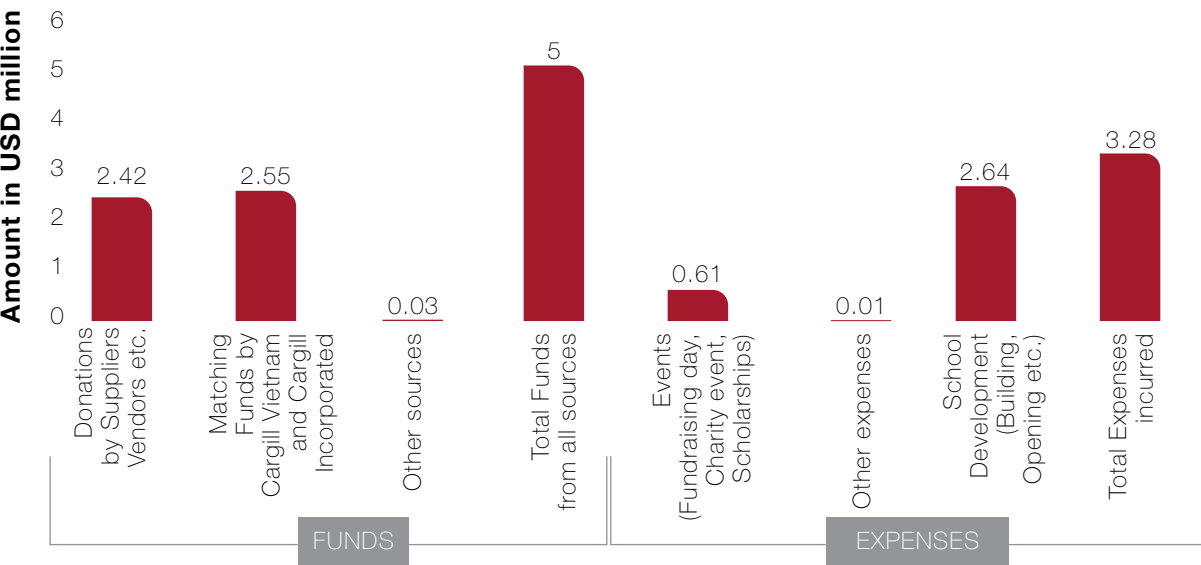


The approach towards fundraising was broad-based and convergent, aiming to reach out to donors and individual contributors within its diverse stakeholder network. Several channels were used including charity events, fundraising day and scholarships to garner financial contributions from Cargill employees, dealers, suppliers, vendors, partners, and their families. The funds raised locally within the country was enhanced through a one hundred percent matching grant from the Cargill headquarters. As per data shared by Cargill, the project mobilized around USD 5 million in the last 8 years (2012-Jan'2020), of which nearly USD 3.28 million has been spent on the SBP.

Figure 14: Opening ceremony arrangements at the 90<sup>th</sup> school under the SBP



Figure 15: Funds raised versus expenses incurred under the SBP (May 2012- Jan 2020)

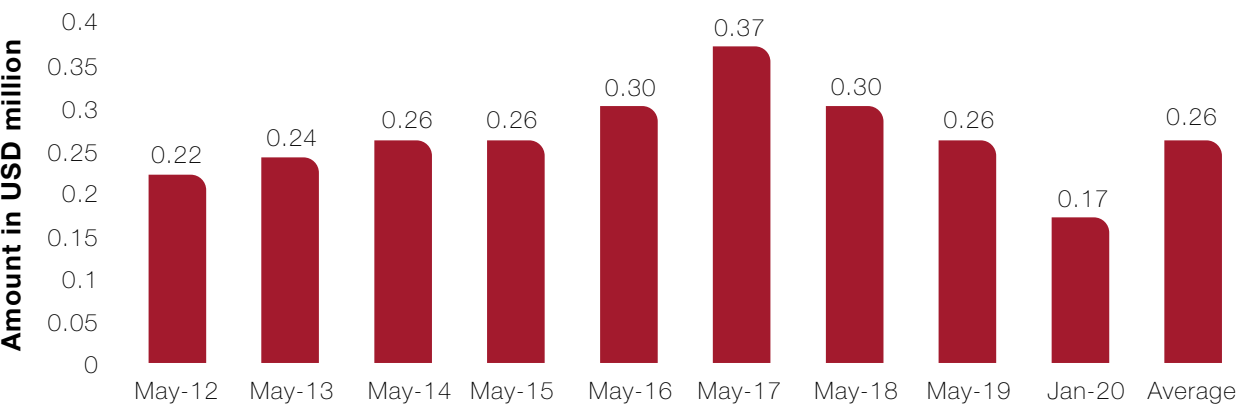


The number of schools for transformation/ improvement were selected based on the amount of funds raised each year. A high degree of resource and fund efficiency was ensured through the project management arrangements.

The operations of the SBP involved extensive community engagement. Cargill utilized its distributor/supplier network and leveraged

its collective influence throughout the project lifecycle from site selection and fundraising to resource mobilization and actual building and construction. Cargill's community support network collectively contributed USD 2.42 million to the total funds raised for the SBP, with its annual contribution ranging between USD 0.17- 0.37 million and average collection being USD 0.26 million annually.

Figure 16: Yearly funding from dealers, suppliers, community, etc. (May 2012- Jan 2020)



Case Study 2: From mere business to philanthropy

Since 2001, Mr. Diep Kinh Tan has not only been a loyal dealer of Cargill products in the Soc Trang province but also an ardent supporter of the CCC and donor to the SBP.

The Dai Tam commune has a large population of Khmer people, a Cambodian ethnic minority group. Mr. Tan notified the CCC of the need for building a school in the area, connected the CCC with the PC of the commune and even contributed VND 20 million of his personal finances to compensate the original landowner where the new school was to be built. The CCC carried out a site inspection and the kind of school to be built was jointly discussed along with the PC and the local community. The need for a kindergarten was greater given the commute time and long industrial work hours of the parents and the presence of 3 primary schools in the area.

Mr. Tan is an influential community member and his association with the SBP school in Dai Tam commune has ensured that he is known for more than just his large dealership. As part of his philanthropic endeavours, he regularly visited the school site to update the CCC of the project status and building progress.

In Mr. Tan's opinion, the Cargill built schools have helped parents (particularly mothers) belonging to ethnic minority communities go to work, since their children can now attend

school for the whole day, owing to the additional classroom infrastructure available.

"Most local people know about Cargill and almost the entire province knows about Cargill's schools. Only one other company, apart from Cargill, has undertaken CSR interventions. If more dealers and people from other areas are invited to the school opening ceremonies, they too will become aware of the positive societal impacts of Cargill's non- business efforts. I found greater meaning in Cargill's business and social responsibility after attending a school opening ceremony around 4-5 years ago," exclaims Mr. Tan.



Mr. Diep Kinh Tan





# PROJECT IMPACTS

To ensure rationality in the sample frame, schools representing different geography as well as spatial considerations were selected for the primary study. The study team visited approximately one-fourth of the 92 Cargill supported schools, covering fourteen provinces across South, Central and North Vietnam to interact with the project stakeholders including teachers, students, and parents. The interviews were carried out independently and the perspectives of each stakeholder was captured and analyzed to draw inferences.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> List of schools visited, and stakeholders consulted is provided in the annexure.

Figure 17: Results framework for the SBP

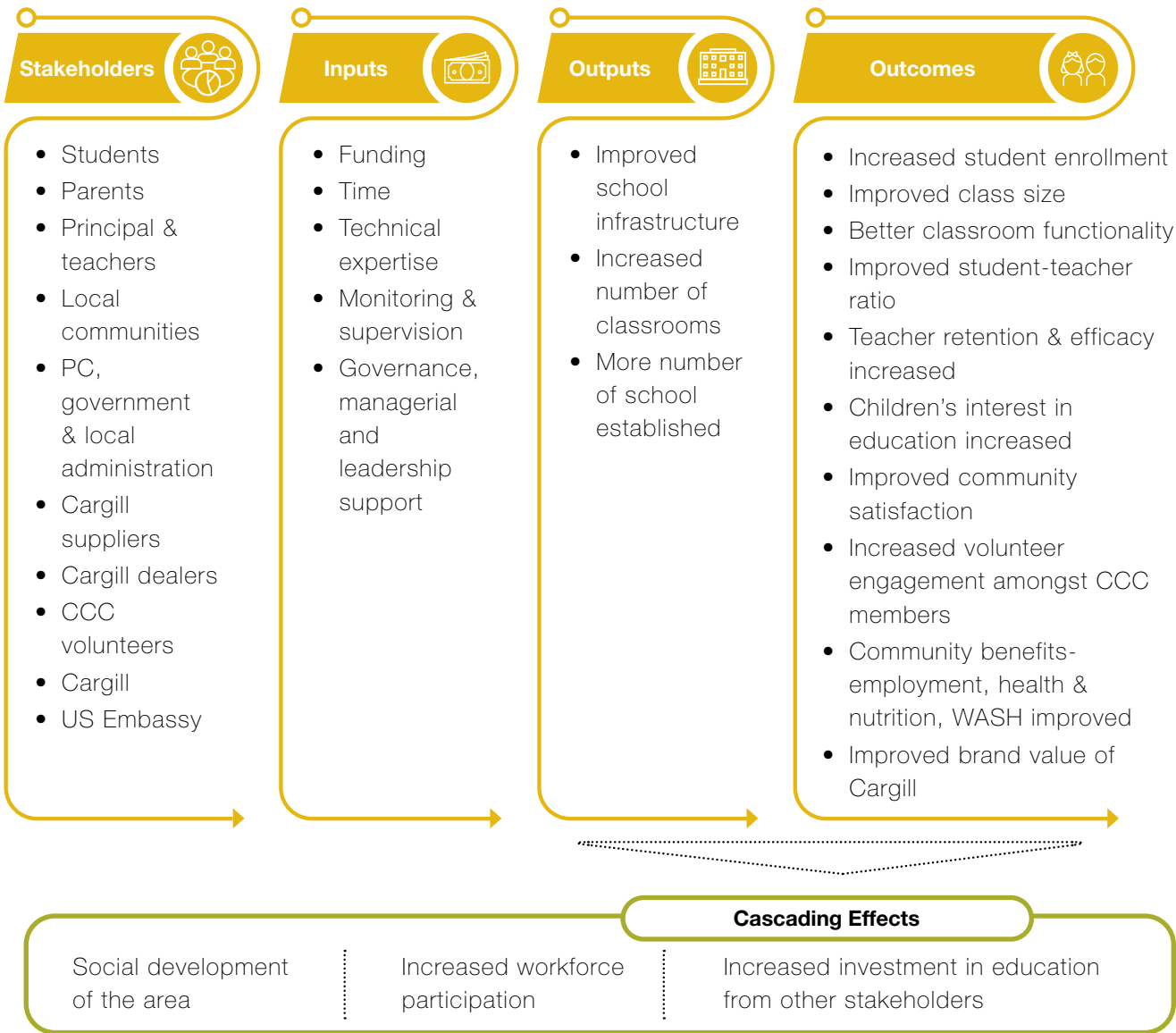


Figure 18: Library facility in a Cargill supported school



Figure 19: Entrance to an SBP school





”

VERY VALUABLE PROJECT, DESPERATELY NEEDED AT THE TIME AS THE AREA WAS VERY HARD TO ACCESS. POST THE CARGILL PROJECT, THE PC BUILT A KITCHEN BLOCK ON THE PREMISES. THIS KITCHEN BLOCK WAS FUNDED BY THE GOVERNMENT. PRIOR TO CARGILL, THE COMMUNITY HAD NEVER WITNESSED A DEVELOPMENT EFFORT OF THIS SCALE AND EVERYONE WAS VERY HAPPY WITH THE RESULTS. POST CARGILL, PARENTS CONTRIBUTED TO BUILD A SHADE COVER OVER THE SCHOOL YARD FOR THE KIDS TO PLAY. PARENTS NOW PAY MORE ATTENTION TO THEIR CHILDREN’S EDUCATION AND EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES. THIS IMPROVED THE STANDARD OF LIVING AND INCREASED THE ASPIRATIONS FOR THEIR CHILDREN. THIS IS CONSIDERED THE BEST SCHOOL IN THE AREA.

**Vu Thi Tam Thu,**  
Vice Principal (Duc Ly Kindergarten, Ha Nam province)

The project impact across geographies and stakeholders can be broadly assessed under 10 lenses as follows:

Table 4: Impacts of SBP across stakeholder groups

S.No.	Impact Indicator	Stakeholder Groups					
		Students	Teachers & Principals	Parents	Community	Cargill dealers Local Government	Cargill & CCC volunteers
1	Improved school infrastructure	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
2	Improved access to education	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
3	Increased student enrollment	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
4	Improved class size	✓	✓				✓
5	Better classroom functionality	✓	✓				✓
6	Improved teacher retention	✓	✓				✓
7	Improved student-teacher ratio	✓	✓				✓
8	Impacts on employment, WASH, health & nutrition	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
9	Increased investment on education by other stakeholders	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
10	Improved brand value & visibility					✓	✓

”

THIS SCHOOL IS CONVENIENTLY LOCATED FOR WORKING PARENTS AND NOW WE ARE ABLE TO HAVE FULL-DAY CLASSES, BECAUSE THERE ARE MORE CLASSROOMS FOR STUDENTS.

**– Nguyen Thi Diem Thuy,**  
Math & Vietnamese teacher (at a Cargill-supported school)

Increased access to education/schools:

Providing access to education for vulnerable communities like ethnic minorities is a challenge despite the significant strides made by the Vietnamese government towards universalization of education. For those living in rural areas of Vietnam, especially in far- flung communes and belonging to a predominantly ethnic community, there was a lack of access to schools. The distance from industrial hubs and city centres, led to the poor development of these areas

and resulted in the lack of facilities for these communities. In the case of existing schools, the difficult terrain and lack of transport facilities made access to these schools even harder. However, with the SBP primarily catering to schools across rural areas and those needing better infrastructure, a number of schools were built across Vietnam and ensured improved access to education, even for the girl child.

Improved learning amenities:

The project helped transform the classrooms from temporary/ semi-permanent structures into modern concrete structures, with adequate space and ventilation, ensuring an improved and safe learning environment. While there were variations across regions and individual Cargill schools, the standard infrastructure and facilities included:

- Kindergartens: On an average 3-5 classrooms, rooms for the Principal and staff members, toilets, kitchenette, playground, school gate and boundary fencing, chairs and desks, sleeping mats, fans and lights, information education communication (IEC) materials and teaching props, etc.
- Primary Schools: On an average 3-5 classrooms, Principal's room, staff and administration room, playground/school yard, school gate and boundary fencing, toilets, chairs and desks, etc.

The newly-built classrooms were reported to be larger in size and of better quality, having better ventilation, more natural light and requiring less

maintenance and repair due to reduced wear and tear. Apart from the classrooms, the project also focused on building school gates and boundary fencing which enhanced the safety of young children, especially for schools located closer to the main roads. Playgrounds and school yards were another area of focus under the SBP. Levelling of the school grounds ensured that students had more area to play and for physical activities. Greening and tree plantation drives were also initiated by the CCC across some school sites. Through these infrastructural improvements, some of the schools were able to elevate themselves from branch schools to the main schools of the commune.

Figure 20: New classroom built under the SBP





**Increase in student enrollment:**

Cargill's outreach to remote and sparsely inhabited communes ensured that the agricultural and ethnic communities greatly benefitted from the full-day kindergartens that were set up, as it gave them a safe place to leave their children while they went to work, thus increasing the possibility for them to earn and sustain higher wages. The intervention schools, being more conveniently located for parents and students, increased the number of admissions, more so in the remote and hilly areas. As reported by the stakeholders interviewed during the study, an increase in student enrollments has been recorded across kindergarten and primary schools. From a total enrollment (across kindergartens and primary schools) of 1,054 students pre intervention, to 5,278 post intervention, the student enrollments have increased by around 401 percent.

**Enhanced classroom effectiveness**

As a result of the additional classrooms supported by Cargill, several schools reported an improved learning environment due to fewer students per class/less crowding of the classes. This enabled higher effectiveness in teaching, student participation and retention of information. The principals admitted that student management was easier, and the discipline levels had improved due to the smaller class sizes.

Post the infrastructure provided and set up by Cargill, the investments from other sources

**Figure 21: Students in their new classroom**



**Figure 22: Improved classroom environment at a Cargill-supported school**



were mostly focused on soft components and classroom equipment. The modern classroom facilities supported the use of a wide range of IEC (posters, charts etc.) and innovative TLM (audio-visual and technology based), making them more vibrant and attractive and enhancing the learning environment for young children. The smart boards, computers and TV screens installed in Cargill-supported classrooms in a few schools, contributed to an improved and enjoyable learning experience and were used to hold school-wide assemblies and events.

**Increased teacher effectiveness and retention:**

Universally, teachers prefer schools with permanent classrooms, adequate toilet blocks and a staff room. They admitted that the upgraded facilities at the Cargill-supported schools ensured that their teaching time was productive and more worthwhile. Post

Cargill's intervention, the PCs in most areas became more active and attentive to the school development needs and recruited more qualified teachers to teach in these schools that had better infrastructure facilities.

”

BEFORE CARGILL, THERE WERE 4 MAKESHIFT ROOMS TO TEACH CHILDREN. CARGILL BUILT NICE CLASSROOMS- SAFER, MORE SPACIOUS AND MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN BEFORE. THIS BUILDING WAS BUILT SO FAST THAT WE DIDN'T EVEN REALISE IT HAD BEEN ONLY 40 DAYS. THERE WAS A LOT OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROVIDED WITH THE TEMPORARY/ INTERMEDIATE ARRANGEMENTS ETC. IT'S BEEN OVER 6 YEARS NOW AND THE BUILDING IS STILL IN VERY GOOD SHAPE, WITH NO MAINTENANCE/ REPAIR REQUIREMENT YET.

– Ms. Hien  
Teacher (Duc Ly Kindergarten, Ha Nam province)

**Improved student-teacher ratio:**

The student to teacher ratio has reportedly improved post Cargill's intervention due to the higher teacher retention and increased number of classrooms available for teaching. The lower the number of students taught by a teacher, the more focused and effective is the classroom teaching.

**Impacts on employment, WASH, health & nutrition:**

With Cargill providing affordable schooling facilities for children as early as 15-18 months of age, many more women from nearby rural village households were able to join the formal workforce and support their family income. The schools also functioned as day care facilities, providing clean drinking water and nutritious meals to students, improving their health and nutrition. The upgraded facilities brought improvements in the hygiene and sanitation habits of the children, while the newer classroom and school facilities enabled comfortable

afternoon siestas and outdoor activities that improved their sleep cycles and physical growth and development.

**Figure 23: Toilet block built under the SBP**





Increased investment on education by other stakeholders:

Cargill's SBP worked as a model to attract further investments from the government and private companies towards school development activities. In several cases, the local government and community too, have come forward to contribute money, time and other resources towards further improving the access to primary and kindergarten schools, as well as the quality of education being provided. The cascading effect resulting from Cargill's SBP has prompted many private companies to expand their CSR activities, sparking a series of further school development activities. Through such efforts, libraries, sports equipment, playground equipment, additional classroom blocks and smart boards have been garnered for SBP schools.

Figure 24: School opening ceremony attended by local government and PC representatives



”

OUR SCHOOL GOT INCREASED SUPPORT, CARE AND INVESTMENT FROM THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND THE PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE NATIONAL STANDARDS. IF CARGILL HADN'T PIONEERED THE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES BACK IN 2009 BY BUILDING 5 NEW CLASSROOMS, THEN THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT HAVE HAD THE BUDGET OR THE INSPIRATION TO DO WHAT CARGILL DID. IT WAS INDEED CARGILL'S INITIAL INVESTMENT THAT PROPELLED THE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES AND SPEARHEADED THE SERIES OF INFRASTRUCTURAL IMPROVEMENTS FOR THIS SCHOOL TO LOOK LIKE WHAT IT DOES TODAY.

– Ms. Quy, Principal  
(Dien Tho Kindergarten, Quang Nam province)

Boosted the morale of CCC employee volunteers:

The CCC employee volunteers expressed a sense of satisfaction and fulfilment at being able to reach out to rural communities and contribute towards improving their lives and livelihood opportunities. The volunteers admitted that working with vulnerable and marginalized communities boosted their morale, gave them joy and enhanced their job satisfaction, despite the additional duties and responsibilities that came with it. For many volunteers, their community service served as an eye-opener, helping them understand Cargill's customers better and increased their awareness of the challenges faced by the rural communities across different provinces.

THE SBP HELPED CCC VOLUNTEERS UNDERSTAND RURAL COMMUNITIES AND THEIR CHALLENGES BETTER

”

SOME RURAL COMMUNITY MEMBERS KNOW ONLY ABOUT THE CARGILL SCHOOLS AND DON'T EVEN KNOW ABOUT OUR MAIN BUSINESS. THE SBP ACTIVITIES KEEP US ATTACHED TO THE COMMUNITY AND GROUND REALITIES.

CCC member

Figure 25: CCC volunteers with Cargill Cares school students



Improved Cargill's brand value & visibility

The SBP has left an imprint on local communities, school staff, local dealers and local administrative units for its efforts in improving the local educational landscape. Students, teachers, parents, local community members and Cargill dealers have all expressed pride at being associated with Cargill schools. At job fairs held in colleges, the long queue of students at the Cargill booth reflects their high interest in joining the company and the respect they have for the Cargill brand.

While Cargill employees and CCC members credit the SBP with enhancing their work experience, government departments and representatives consider Cargill as a contributor to the social development of Vietnam.



”

CARGILL’S INTERVENTION IS AN EXAMPLE OF A GOOD CORPORATE CITIZEN AND OTHER ENTERPRISES SHOULD BE INSPIRED TO FOLLOW THIS.

**Vice Chairman, PC**  
(Lai Vung commune)

Figure 26: Students receiving gifts at a school opening event

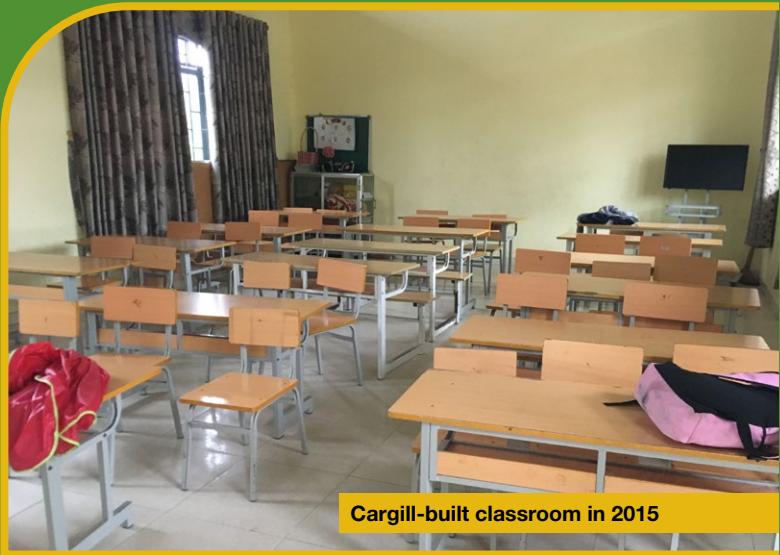


Case Study 3: Development sparks development

Today, the Yen Phu 2 primary school in Hung Yen province in North Vietnam boasts of 18 classrooms and 2 administrative offices, making it better than the main school of which it serves as a branch!

On this very same premises, the Vice Principal, Ms. Hoang Thi Thao recalls that until 2015 there were only 8 temporary tin and brick structures in which 400 children were taught, compromising the safety of both students and teachers.

In 2015, given the limited funding, Cargill undertook to build 3 classrooms, a toilet



Cargill-built classroom in 2015

block and a school gate. These multipurpose classrooms were used for teaching, school gatherings and group activities because of their large size, strong structure, proper ventilation and adequate natural light.

Soon after this upgradation, in 2016, the government built a two-floor school block with 15 classrooms. Together with the classrooms built by Cargill, all the 502 students enrolled at this school location, were now comfortably accommodated. The government also donated a “smart board” for English functional classes and insisted on it being installed in one of the classrooms that were built by Cargill, because it was more spacious and of good quality.

“Cargill’s school project brought us good luck and turned our fortunes. We are so grateful and thrilled. Cargill’s investments laid the foundation for the government’s school improvement efforts. The building quality of Cargill is far superior and even after a few years shows only minimal damage,” says the Vice Principal.

More recently, Nestle funded sporting equipment to promote sports like football and basketball among the students. This has increased the student engagement, and the parents display greater faith and pride in the school and the quality of education provided. The parents have also supported the purchase of additional teaching and learning equipment for classrooms.

In this way, Cargill has been a frontrunner in the context of school improvement activities, which has led to a series of changes in school education in several communes, benefitting the students and local community immensely.



Newly-built classroom facilities



Sporting equipment courtesy Nestle





# THE WAY FORWARD

Over its twenty-five-year long journey in Vietnam, Cargill has become a common household name, not just for the quality of its animal feed and agricultural products, but also for its role in improving primary and kindergarten school infrastructure in several rural and remote communes in Vietnam.

With the positive impacts of the SBP creating ripples of change beyond the classrooms and immediate school environments, the SBP has

been referred to as a “Phuoc” (meaning blessing in Vietnamese) by many community members and project stakeholders.

**Figure 27: Cargill animal feed plant in Bien Hoa**



**Figure 28: Cargill employees painting an old classroom**



Today, with the project nearing its 100-school target, Cargill has showcased its success in ensuring business excellence, as well as community enrichment, simultaneously. Given its alignment with the national education priorities, and the diverse network of individuals and communities it has tied together, the SBP may be seen as a community building effort as much as it is a school-building effort.

The commitment and “care” of the Cargill Cares volunteers is reflected in their role towards empowering, transforming and enriching the local communities of rural Vietnam. With the goodwill of Cargill garnering much appreciation from the community at large, and the SBP in particular earning it several supporters and

brand ambassadors outside of its immediate customer base, the future of Cargill in Vietnam is surely looking positive.

It will not be an overstatement to say that no other private sector company in Vietnam currently could match the scale and rigor of the intervention that Cargill has been able to implement through the SBP led by the Cargill Cares Council. The project design was ahead of its time in the late 90s, and it still remains relevant within the local, national, and global context. As the project inches closer to its 100-school mission, the bigger question that still remains is how the impact created through the project can be sustained with added incremental value in the future.



”

NO OTHER FEED COMPANY HAS A SOCIAL FOCUS LIKE THAT OF CARGILL. THERE IS A CERTAIN DEGREE OF PRIDE IN BEING A CARGILL DEALER.

**Diep Kinh Tan**  
(Cargill Dealer, Soc Trang Province)

For the primary beneficiaries, especially those students inhabiting remote villages and belonging to vulnerable communities, the safety, quality, and affordability of the Cargill schools ensures adequate socio-emotional development and a strong foundation towards a better and brighter future of literacy and productivity. These small village/community-level ecosystems for change, created through the SBP over the past three decades, shall ensure the continuity of the project’s impacts for future generations.

Anecdotal evidence indicates a charged and motivated cadre of PCs who are willing to drive and sustain the education related interventions towards attaining the targets prescribed by the National Standards mandate on quality education. The PCs became more responsive to the developmental needs of the local communities and collaborated with the local people in several communes to further the infrastructural development, collect resources and take ownership of the maintenance and repair requirements of community assets such as schools. In fact, across many of the SBP schools, the current infrastructure of the schools exceeds that which was built under the intervention itself. For example, the number of permanent classrooms built under the SBP has reportedly increased by more than 100 percent due to increased investment from entities other than Cargill.

Cargill will achieve its mission of developing its 100<sup>th</sup> school this year. The CCC should now look towards developing a strategy beyond 2020, with an eye to either expand the SBP

horizontally covering more communes, or deepen its intervention to include additional components such as teacher trainings, libraries, computers and digital literacy, in addition to becoming more inclusive towards the needs of differently-abled students in terms of provision of ramp facilities, functional rooms, differently-abled friendly toilet blocks etc. The CCC may also consider diversifying its interventions to go beyond school building to exploring options such as livelihood enhancement, sustainable agriculture, health, nutrition, sanitation etc.

Figure 29: Student having fun at a school opening ceremony



# ANNEXURE

Table 5: List of schools for primary research

Schools	Province	Region	SBP No.	Established
Giang Dien Primary School	Dong Nai	South	School number 1	1997
Trung Luong Primary School	Ha Nam	North	School number 8	2003
Tan Dan A Primary School	Hung Yen	North	School number 13	2005
Phu Lac Kindergarten	Phu Tho	North	School number 54	2012
Yen Phu 2 Primary School	Hung Yen	North	School number 79	2016
Hoai Duc Kindergarten	Lam Dong	Central	School number 22	2007
Dien Tho Kindergarten	Quang Nam	Central	School number 31	2009
Phuoc Thai Primary School	Lam Dong	Central	School number 72	2015
Binh Quy Kindergarten	Quang Nam	Central	School number 77	2016
Ho Le Kindergarten	Quang Tri	Central	School number 87	2018
Huc Primary School	Quang Tri	Central	School number 88	2018
My Phuoc Tay A Primary School	Tien Giang	South	School number 4	2002
My Hanh Bac Primary School	Long An	South	School number 14	2005
Giao Hoa Kindergarten	Ben Tre	South	School number 17	2006
Nhut Ninh 2 Primary School	Long An	South	School number 24	2008
Tan Thanh 2 Primary School	Dong Thap	South	School number 35	2010
Dai Tam Kindergarten	Soc Trang	South	School number 37	2010
Vi Trung 2 Primary School	Hau Giang	South	School number 44	2011
Vinh Thanh Kindergarten	Bac Lieu	South	School number 48	2011
Phu Cuong Kindergarten	Tien Giang	South	School number 61	2013
Phuoc Thanh Primary School	Tien Giang	South	School number 85	2017

Table 6: Stakeholder groups met during the study<sup>3</sup>

S.No.	Stakeholder Groups	Location
1	Chairman of People’s Committee of the commune	Representative sample across 14 provinces
2	School principals & teachers	Representative sample across 21 schools
3	Students	Representative sample across 21 schools
4	Parents	Representative sample across 21 schools
5	Cargill dealers, suppliers	At locations decided by CCC team
6	CCC members	HCMC
7	Cargill Management	HCMC
8	US Embassy and Agriculture Department officials	Hanoi

<sup>3</sup> Depending on the presence/availability in the selected school/province



# ABOUT THINKTHROUGH CONSULTING

Thinkthrough Consulting is a purpose-led multi-disciplinary professional services firm that specializes in providing advisory support to sustainable development initiatives, including social development and ESG.

Aligning with the global needs, TTC's solutions strive to facilitate achievement of the Global Goals (the SDGs) to a significant extent. Our transformative solutions help our clients to mitigate challenges and simultaneously leverage on opportunities in today's time of uncertainty.

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In recognition of our capability and experience, TTC is a license holder from AccountAbility for assurance of non-financial report as per AA1000AS standard.

On most occasions, we emphasize on the 'tri-sector approach', facilitating the synergy between government, corporate and civil society for holistic sustainable development.

Our solutions are custom made for specific needs of clients from diverse business sectors. The clients we serve range from corporates and corporate foundations, to governments, civil societies, bilateral/multilateral agencies and impact funds.

# THE STUDY TEAM

## TEAM LEADER

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CARGILL'S EMPLOYEE-LED SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT IN VIETNAM HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THE SAFETY AND VIBRANCY OF SEVERAL SCHOOLS, ENRICHING THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN OF LOCAL AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITIES.

**Ajay Pandey**  
Co-founder & Partner, TTC



Ajay has over two decades of experience in driving sustainable development and corporate responsibility strategies and streamlining operations, across the Middle East and South & South East Asia regions. Having a unique blend of expertise in working with grassroot organizations, donor organizations and development sector consulting firms, Ajay has supported a wide range of multilateral, government, corporate and not-for-profit entities, and has led teams to deliver action-oriented, enduring and replicable results in the fields of education, livelihood, agriculture and natural resource management.

## TEAM MEMBERS



Aalika Peres



Asim Juneja



Phan Ngoc Diep



Trinh Kieu Trang



