



**PACIFIC LINKS
FOUNDATION**

2016-17 School Year Progress Report Academic Scholarship Program

Prepared for John Lewis Foundation

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Program Background: Academic Scholarships

The Academic Scholarship Program increases access to education for young women, thereby safeguarding them against human trafficking by enabling safer and better economic opportunities. Since 2005, Pacific Links Foundation (PALS) has provided over 7,200 rounds of scholarships for over 2,000 students from populations most vulnerable to human trafficking at Vietnam's border with Cambodia.

Program Activities

1. Recipients Selection

The Academic Scholarship Program specifically gives students who are at high risk of dropping out of school a chance to obtain an education. Dropping out of school significantly increases a girls' risk of becoming a trafficking victim. Since PALS specifically seeks to support students who are most at-risk for dropping out of school due to economic circumstances, not every student at a particular school will be in the Academic Scholarship Program. In the 2016-2017 academic year, 840 girls from 38 schools throughout An Giang, Dong Thap, Kien Giang, and Tien Giang Provinces in Southern Vietnam received scholarships. Out of the 840 recipients, 470 students from the previous year were re-granted scholarships.

John Lewis Foundation is currently sponsoring 200 scholarship recipients.

2. Scholarship Delivery Ceremony

This year, PALS held the 2016-17 Scholarship Delivery Ceremony at the end of Summer Camp in July 2016 in order to cut down on excess travel time for scholarship recipients. Scholarships, uniforms, books, and school supplies were distributed at the Ceremony to the 470 students who were re-granted scholarships, and transferred directly to the schools for new scholarship recipients. Tuition, health insurance, tutoring, and exam preparation fees are transferred directly to the schools. The scholarship ceremony recognizes the involvement of students, their parents, government officials, and donors with the scholarship program for human trafficking prevention.

3. Home Visits

Home visits are carried out once a year in order to update information about the students' family life, economic circumstance and potential obstacles to finishing schoolwork. In February 2017, PALS staff members and volunteers started embarking on home visits, which will conclude in May 2017. As of March 15, over 400 students' families and homes across three provinces have been visited. It is important to note that many scholarship students live far from school, especially high school students because 1) there are fewer high schools than middle schools and 2) incoming 10th grade students must test into high school, which may be further than one that is closer to home. The students' paths from home to school can also vary – some require taking a small boat down rivers and streams or crossing by ferry, others may require walking over small footbridges ("monkey bridge") built using thin tree/bamboo woods or driving deep into the jungles on narrow dirt paths – all of which contributes to the challenges students face in physically getting to school (and makes getting to some homes challenging for PALS staff members and volunteers as well).

To conclude the visits, we provide information about the risks of human trafficking and how education is one of the most effective ways to counter trafficking. An average visit lasts 60 minutes with some lasting as long as an hour and a half. Staff members also addressed any questions that the students or parents have regarding the scholarship program during these visits. When possible, PALS staff members also visit the homes of students who dropped out of school, though most students who dropped out either 1) move to a different location to find work, or 2) have already started working. Concerns regarding the student's capacity to study or dire circumstances are then relayed to the student's teachers in order to resolve any issues that may lead to students dropping out or preventing them from improving their academic performance.

4. Family Day

Family Day, which will be conducted in April 2017, gathers both scholarship recipients and their parents to discuss human trafficking prevention.

5. Bicycle Delivery

Bicycles will be given to scholarship recipients in May 2017. In remote places, public transportation is non-existent and bicycles provide a convenient and inexpensive alternative to walking at least five kilometers to get to school. A bicycle reduces the time it takes to get to school to 15-20 minutes, increasing her chances of attending regularly.

John Lewis Foundation is currently sponsoring 50 bicycles.

6. Summer Camp

Summer camp, which will be conducted in July 2017, brings scholarship recipients together to increase self-awareness, life skills, career exploration, friendships, and personal growth to safeguard themselves from the dangers of human trafficking.

John Lewis Foundation is currently sponsoring 200 summer camp seats for scholarship recipients.

Outcomes

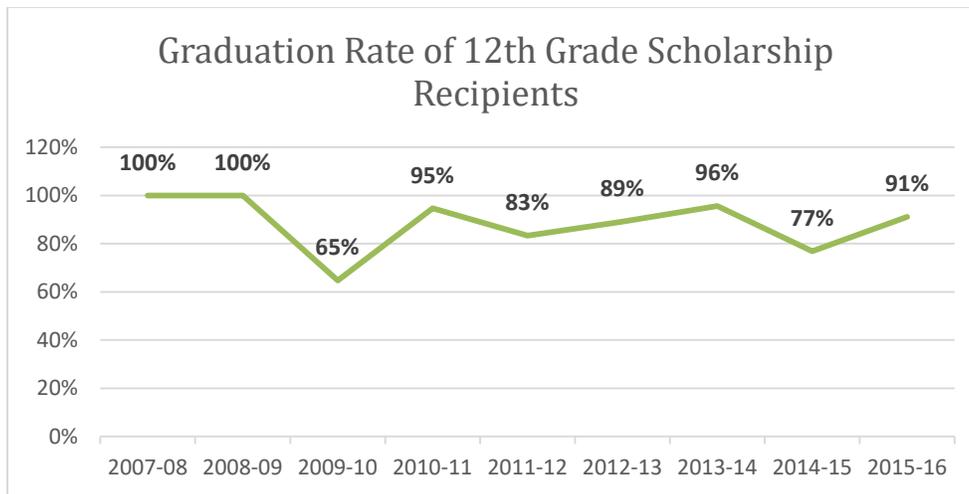
Proposed Outcomes	Metrics	Proposed Results	Results To Date
Number of scholarship students who graduate high school	Number of scholarships delivered to target recipients	Provide scholarships to at-risk young women to prevent school drop-out	840 scholarships delivered to target recipients (200 scholarships sponsored by John Lewis)
Number of scholarship students who complete vocational training and or attend college/ university			
Number of scholarship students who are gainfully employed			
Number of people who increase their financial literacy	Number of life skills workshops/training provided	Provide life skills development	To be completed in July 2017
Number of people who increase their self-confidence			
Number of people who increase their self-awareness			
Number of people who further develops their leadership skills			
Number of people who have increased access to resources			

Number of people who make better economic choices	Number of career-orientation workshops	Provide career-orientation	To be completed in July 2017
Number of people who build a strong network	Number of people who improved knowledge on trafficking & who report change in behavioral intent regarding suspicious activity or missing persons	Raise awareness about human trafficking among the most vulnerable	To be completed in May 2017
Number of people who stay safe from traffickers			

Impact

The Academic Scholarship Program gives students who are at high risk of dropping out of school a chance to obtain an education. The recipients and their family are deeply appreciative and grateful for the scholarship and what it means for their future. See appendix for quotes from scholarship recipients and their families.

SCHOLARSHIP STUDENT GRADUATION RATES OVER 9 YEARS



Over 290 scholarship recipients have graduated high school in the last nine years, with 90% (94 out of 104 12th graders receiving our scholarship) passing the 12th grade exam this year. Most have found jobs as factory workers, while some are studying at college or university in An Giang, Dong Thap, Kien Giang, Can Tho, or Ho Chi Minh City. Among the graduates from the 2015-16 cohort, at least 20 students confirmed they are studying at one of the aforementioned universities.

We continue to strengthen our ties with the families and the students, bolstering their life skills to keep them in school. Many scholarship recipients are determined to stay in school and deserve the opportunity to chart a different life path that is safe and free from trafficking.

1. PHOTOS

Home Visits



Scholarship Delivery Ceremony



Visit from John Lewis - Nadia Youds, Sustainable Supply Chain Manager



Meeting ADAPT Club students (who also includes some scholarship recipients). ADAPT Club is youth development after-school program for youth in the poorest areas of the Mekong Delta to build life skills such as leadership, public speaking, team-building, and engage in trafficking prevention.



Meeting scholarship recipients and their families at their homes

2. QUOTES

- a. "The Academic Scholarship Program reduces the financial burden of my schooling on my parents. It helps me grow and study better, and learn more about preventing human trafficking" – Student from Dong Thap Province
- b. "The program helps my children go to school. It reduces the burden on my family and helps me understand the dangers for children who drop out of school." – Scholarship Recipient's Parent from Dong Thap Province
- c. "I wish to continue my studies after I graduate high school so that I can have a better and stable job in my hometown in order to take care of my parents." – Student from Dong Thap Province
- d. "I was very happy to receive the scholarship from Pacific Links Foundation because it has given me an opportunity to continue my education and now I have graduated. In addition, the program even helped me learn about human trafficking prevention! Because of the program, I was able to both learn and play. I will try my best to continue my studies in hopes of getting a good job in the future. I thank the Academic Scholarship Program for helping me get through my studies, and I will continue to further my studies to make everyone proud." – 12th Grade Graduate from Kien Giang Province

- e. "The Academic Scholarship Program is truly meaningful, it has given more motivation to female students living in poverty to continue their studies and has helped these students reach their goal of finishing school." – 12th Grade Graduate from An Giang Province
- f. "I truly thank the donors of the Scholarship Program and Pacific Links Foundation staff for giving me the opportunity to continue going to school until now. Today, I was able to fulfill my promise to finish high school. I hope that Pacific Links will be able to assist other students facing financial hardships like me so they can go to school." – 12th Grade Graduate from Dong Thap Province
- g. "I learned a lot of life skills and solutions I could apply to my life, especially if I encounter deceptive tactics used by human traffickers." – Student from Tien Giang Province

Conclusion

Thanks to John Lewis Foundation's support, Pacific Links Foundation is able to strengthen our ties with the students and their families by bolstering their life skills and lifting the financial barrier to education to keep them in school. The activities that we organize for the Academic Scholarship Program reflect our commitment to serving at-risk and underprivileged girls in trafficking hotspots. Many scholarship recipients are determined to stay in school and deserve the opportunity to chart a different life path that is safe and free from trafficking.

Thank You for Your Support!