

Future Skills Case Study – REACH

REACH – Vietnam

Primary programs:

Vocational training and job placement for disadvantaged young people

Beneficiaries:

Disadvantaged young people aged 16–30 years old who do not have access to formal vocational education programs because of barriers such as poverty, lack of education and difficult family circumstances. Students include street-living and migrant youth, youth living with disability, school dropouts, unemployed secondary school graduates, disadvantaged youth from ethnic minorities and youth who have just left the army.

Story of Trang, REACH student in graphic design (2019 cohort)



Picture of Trang

Pepper trees grew, day by day, alongside the growing dream of Trang’s parents of escaping from the extreme poverty that had accompanied them for decades. Trang’s parents were poor farmers from the countryside of Nam Dinh province. Even though they worked very hard, it was very difficult for them to raise their 3 daughters, especially after Trang’s sister entered university. Being told that the Central Highlands region, with its fertile red soil would promise opportunities, Trang’s parents took Trang and her little sister and migrated there to start a new life. The place they chose to settle down was Dak Nong province. They arrived with empty hands. In their new home, Trang’s parents earned a living doing casual and unstable jobs. After 6 years of working hard, they had saved some money and, with a bank loan, they bought a piece of land to grow pepper. The whole family was delighted. For the first time in their life they were land owners. The pepper farm began to bear fruit promising a bumper crop. If they were successful, then Trang’s parents would be able to get their daughters a good education and they would have a better future.

Quote: A quote from Tam Pham, the Executive Director of REACH.

“The partnership with Credit Suisse has benefited REACH in many ways. It has not only helped us to attain great achievements in terms of our program, but also built our organization’s capacity. We have learned a lot from Credit Suisse and changed the way we work to be more effective and efficient.”

But it was not to be. First one pepper tree became diseased. Then so did a second and then a third. Trang’s parents were horrified but were helpless to stop its spread. They could only watch as slowly the whole pepper field withered and died shortly thereafter. “The pepper field had gone along with all of the money my parents saved for almost 6 years since we moved here. We were also left with a huge unpayable debt”, Trang says. “We were back on the poverty line and all hope seemed lost”. When the pepper field crisis happened, Trang just graduated from high school. The failure of the crops meant that Trang could not continue to university. Instead it prompted her to choose another career pathway to escape from the poverty cycle. After months of looking for a training course, Trang finally found REACH.

“Finding REACH was very fortunate for me,” Trang says. “It opened for me a gateway of opportunity to be trained and to have a job so that I can at least take care of myself”. Leaving the world of pepper trees far behind, Trang moved to Hanoi to Graphic Design at REACH through the Fit For Future program. She was a star student and an exceptional young woman and we’re excited to say that after 3 months of training, she has been sent to Esoft, a well-known IT company. “I am very excited to work in an international professional working environment,” Trang says. “My new life has just started with a lot of great learning and development opportunities ahead.”