

# UNIQUELY



UNIS  
HANOI

SUMMER 2017

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# Uniquely UNIS!

The first international school in Vietnam. The original IB World School in Asia. One of only two United Nations international schools in the world.

Currently, the school of choice for a record 1121 students representing 66 different nationalities and 300 faculty and staff from 27 countries.

## Without a doubt UNIS Hanoi is unique. But what makes us Uniquely UNIS?

Is it the UN Principles that underscore all that we do, or our core Values? Is it our overarching commitment to **Learning**? Or is it that we expect **Responsibility** from every member of a **Community** that we treasure above all else?

Yes! UNIS Hanoi is guided by all of the above - every single day - and in partnership with every single member of our community.

Our Vision to be a learning community that is an inspirational role model for a better world is the driving force behind all that we do.

This is our identity. And within the pages of our new bi-annual magazine, you'll soon see that this is what makes us Uniquely UNIS.



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# From Values to Vision

UNIS Hanoi is an exceptional place to learn - It is the ideals and principles of the United Nations in action every day!

We are proud to be a learning community that celebrates cultural diversity, unleashing the creativity and innovation that comes from bringing the world together on one campus. Our students are curious, compassionate and confident. They understand, and are committed to building a better world. And they are undaunted by the boldness of a vision that is both inspiring and intimidating.

We are a learning community committed to every child's happiness and believe that it is the quality of relationships within our community that empower exceptional learning.

We are determined that our students are challenged and nurtured by exceptional faculty in order to realise their full potential and test their most aspirational goals, both in and outside the classrooms. Our teachers' passion for innovative learning, both for our students and for themselves, inspires excellence.

And it is that ambition for excellence for all, driven by a shared vision and underscored by shared values, that shaped our strategic plan for the School and our students' futures.

The plan, Strategy 2020, uses our core Values as the driving force to shape the future: Learning, Community and Responsibility are the Values that both underpin and impel all that we do at UNIS Hanoi.

Those Values have shaped goals which were crafted during three years of careful consultation with, and by listening to, our community's many voices and it is our commitment that we will continue to strive for our community's hopes and dreams. Together.

The depth and breadth of Strategy 2020 can be discovered in detail on the UNIS Hanoi website but in brief, it is three goals which put our Values into action, each with detailed objectives to turn vision into reality.



## Excellent Learning

Excellent learning is the focus and the result of the efforts of all members of the school community. UNIS Hanoi is committed to moving all learning to new levels, so that every hour of every day spent at UNIS Hanoi provides excellent learning opportunities. If we want our young people to thrive in the future we need to be clear about what this means.

# Strategy 2020 Goals

## Connected Community

In an increasingly turbulent and uncertain world, it has never been more important to connect on a human level. Relationships matter and they start with our local community. The networks we create in the wider world will lead to collaboration and a building of collective knowledge that would be unachievable if we were to act alone. Our connected learning community will generate our sense of who we are now and what we will become.

## Community with No Bystanders

Because we belong to the UNIS Hanoi community, we have unique opportunities to make a positive impact on others. Our impact can be global or local, influencing what goes on in Vietnam and what happens in the school playground. This means not standing on the sidelines when action is needed, building bridges and extending our responsibility beyond our own immediate concerns and by seeing ourselves as responsible and principled individuals who are truly able to make a difference to the community as a whole.



# Excellent Learning

At UNIS Hanoi we define learning as the “process of creating meaning through acquiring, applying and synthesising new skills, understandings and knowledge”.

We believe that Excellent Learning is taking place at UNIS Hanoi when learners are:

- Extending their thinking and making thinking visible
- Modifying their thinking, behaviours and attitudes
- Developing new understandings and perspectives
- Reflecting on their learning experiences, their strengths and areas for development
- Transferring their learning to other settings and contexts
- Making connections to what they already know and can do
- Cooperating, collaborating and communicating in a variety of social contexts as well as being confident to learn independently.
- Appropriately challenged and actively engaged
- Active, have frequent opportunities to move, transition and to process information
- Aware of the significance and relevance of their learning
- Encouraged and nurtured in learning environments characterised by supportive and mutually respectful relationships.



# Simply Outclassed!



The 69 students who make up the Class of 2017 have a lot to celebrate. Between them they have received an impressive 201 acceptance offers from colleges and universities in 18 different countries across the globe.

Their collective accomplishments are a true reflection of the mixed abilities and diverse interests that exist across the cohort. Commenting on the outcome of these school careers, Guidance Counsellor, Brenda Manfredi said,

**“The Class of 2017 is a group of achievers who have supported each other both in and out of the classroom. Our philosophy is to create a ‘best fit’ match for students and their futures.**

As a result, we choose to measure our success as a Counselling Department on the happiness each student expresses regarding their choices. Since 70 percent of our students were accepted in their first choice or second choice school and we were able to recommend alternative plans to the few who wanted them, we believe we’re matching our students successfully.”

Finding the right match was an exercise in sheer determination for one recent graduate. Briani Griffin, 17, refused to leave a single stone unturned when considering colleges, applying to an incredible 15 places in the United States of America. She said, “I needed to get a full scholarship so I applied to bigger public schools, liberal arts schools and private schools in order to give myself as much chance as possible.”



## FAST FACTS

- 403 applications have been submitted
- 201 acceptance offers of admission
- 52% accepted rate overall (excluding withdrawn applications)
- Average of 6.71 applications submitted per student who has applied
- 7 students were accepted into every university to which they applied
- 70% of students who have received offers accepted to their #1 or #2 university choice
- \$1,728,500 USD in self reported scholarships offered for those who have applied
- 67 students out of 69 are registered as full IB diploma candidates

Her unique strategy paid off. After graduation, Briani will be heading to her country of origin to study Finance at Ohio State University on a full four year scholarship. A fixture on the Principal's List for many years, Briani credits her success to UNIS Hanoi. She said, "UNIS Hanoi gives students ambition. Our School provides us with every single opportunity to be successful and I felt the teachers and my friends were just there for me." Studying at UNIS Hanoi was Briani's first international school experience, and one that's changed her mindset for life. She divulged, "If I had remained in New Jersey where I'm from, I don't think I would have even left the state. But now I feel I have the world at my feet and anything is possible." Anything is truly possible for these enthusiastic fresh graduates, including an Oscar win in the not too distant future. That's certainly the goal for aspiring Hollywood starlet, Morgan-Belle Bradshaw from Australia. The 18 year-old is heading home to

pursue a glittering career and it's all thanks to the School's performing arts programme. She said, "When I first joined the School in 2012, I was into Basketball, but because of the great facilities here and the talented students around me, I quickly became interested in the performing arts."

While Morgan-Belle dreams of stardom, her friend Anh Phuong Nguyen (known to many as AP), will be flexing her creative muscle in London at the Camberwell College of Arts. AP, who has studied at UNIS Hanoi since she was three years old, says there's a sense of 'nurturing' at UNIS Hanoi that she's benefited from. "This School stands for growth" AP declared. "We're always pressing forward, we're never static and I'll miss that."

Alan Wichink Kruit who has studied at UNIS Hanoi for more than thirteen years, says the School has been a "home away from home". Now the

time has come for the Vietnamese-Dutch national to leave one home for another as he ventures to The Netherlands to study Applied Physics. Aspiring to be an engineer, the eighteen year-old believes the IB curriculum has prepared him for the world. He explained, "Throughout my time here, the IB Learner profile has acted as a constant reminder of what I hope to become as a person. I've been inspired by it."

# SCHOLAR'S SUCCESS



**Linh Vu, UNIS Hanoi's third scholar to graduate has also become the School's first student to win a prestigious full scholarship to study at NYU Abu Dhabi.**

The remarkable achievement came after Linh underwent a series of rigorous assessments that included a weekend visit to the college campus to meet fellow international students and faculty members. Following

the extremely competitive process, Linh endured a painstaking two-week wait before an early morning email containing the incredible offer dropped into her inbox.

The NYU scholarship once more affirms the success of UNIS Hanoi's Scholarship programme and the impressive scholars the School selects.

Overjoyed to be studying at NYU Abu Dhabi, Linh says the diversity she saw

there reminded her of UNIS Hanoi, something she's come to appreciate. She continued, "When I visited the NYU Abu Dhabi campus, it seemed similar to UNIS Hanoi and I felt I would feel comfortable there. I also like the fact that I'll get to spend my first year trying different courses before choosing a major. After years of being in a shell, I'm ready to take risks."

Quiet and unassuming, Linh joined UNIS Hanoi in August 2014 as a Grade 10 student who'd only ever studied in Vietnamese school systems. Not one to step out of her comfort zone, Linh found the UNIS Hanoi experience exasperating at first, albeit life transforming. She revealed, "Before I came to the School, I didn't have a dream. Although I'm still unsure of what I'll do in the future, I am no longer afraid to dream. I used to prefer structures and safe plans but UNIS Hanoi has taught me to break out a bit and take risks."

Linh's Guidance Counsellor Ms Brenda Manfredi says the scholar has really stepped out of her shell and will become an ambassador for Vietnam in NYU Abu Dhabi's global university setting. She said, "NYU Abu Dhabi is a special university with a special mission - to attract global scholars. Not only are they keen to attract the right student, they are looking for students on their mission path. In her college essay, Linh wrote about being a changemaker and the administrators liked the content. They want the kids who believe that they can change the world. And they saw that in Linh."

Elementary School teachers carved out a special time for independent student inquiry to take place this year in an effort to encourage 'a need-to-know' attitude in their young learners.

Launched in August, Grade 4 and Grade 5 teachers have been giving their students one hour's freedom to be creative using technology and crafts as part of a new initiative called iTime.

iTime (inquiry time) was introduced by Grade 4 teachers following research they conducted last year as part of their professional development. Commenting on behalf

sessions that currently take place every Friday afternoon. Mindy continued,

**“iTime creates a situation where students have a need to know. They are motivated by their own projects so they then want to learn the necessary skills and knowledge it requires to complete these projects.”**

Ten months on and the Elementary School teachers report an improvement in attitudes desired in an IB Learner. These are appreciation,



aid of technology. Ten year-old Hedvig Moller from Denmark likes the sessions because she gets to 'create stuff' including bunnies on TinkerCAD, simply because they're cute. Her classmate, Oliver Pollack from the United States of America claimed iTime is "most fun because you get to try out your idea". The idea he's currently trying out? "Slime. All the girls are bringing in slime. It's the next big thing!" he predicts. For nine year-old Hungarian native, Bobo Karolyi, iTime has given him a chance to learn robotics, coding and electronics. But, he revealed, it's also given him a chance to test himself. He shared, "iTime has taught me a lot about problem solving. There are a lot of times when I get stuck yet I know I can't ask the teachers for help straight away; I can only do that when I get really stuck. So I needed to learn where to go [in order] to solve the problem I'm having. Sometimes that's the internet or books or just trying different things out on my own."

Bobo added that he's learned to step out of his comfort zone and take new risks as a result of iTime. He explained, "Sometimes I want to stay on the course that I know, but sometimes I want to try new things, which also means I'm more likely to get stuck."

And so the individual learning journey continues...

## Me, Myself and i



of the teachers, Ms Mindy Slaughter said, "As part of our professional development inquiry we looked into ways we could give students agency over their learning and iTime was one of those ideas."

iTime emulates a concept started by internet giant, Google, which encourages employees to spend 20 per cent of their working week exploring projects of their own choosing. The idea was promptly adapted by the teachers to suit School life and to meet student goals, resulting in the fresh and inquisitive

cooperation, commitment, creativity and enthusiasm.

In addition, Mindy said, "We also wanted to find ways we could encourage our kids to push through difficult moments and once they've learned to do this, they can apply it to their other classes. Through iTime, the children have quickly developed other skills too and so it's an exercise that's really great for children across the spectrum."

For students, iTime is a free pass to use their imagination with the



# CHANGING THE WORLD TOGETHER

A resounding call to join the United Nations in making our world a better place was issued by Grade 5 students at their much anticipated annual Primary Years Programme (PYP) Exhibition this year.

The highlight event, which allows our eldest Elementary students to demonstrate the culmination of their learning, was entirely driven by the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the role we all play in realising them.

It was a stunning showcase of 23 distinct PYP Exhibition projects, the

results of the students collaborating in groups of two to five over a period of two months. A milestone in the learning journey of Grade 5 students, the in-depth inquiries they were tasked to undertake offered them a unique opportunity to fully explore topics they were personally interested in. And the SDG theme was both chosen and embraced by the entire grade.

The move to integrate SDGs into the International Baccalaureate's culminating PYP event, is yet another example of the School's continued efforts to embed the work of the UN and its principles into the curriculum.

And it was warmly embraced by the children themselves, confirmed PYP Coordinator Angela Meikle. She said,

**“Using the UN Sustainable Development Goals as our platform, students were immediately drawn and inspired to take action from the outset of the event.**

“The Grade 5 teaching team intentionally wanted to provide students with the opportunity to think about a topic and take action right away. We used the ‘hook’ passion + issue = action and had the students consider what they were passionate about in combination with an SDG issue.”

Demonstrating the attributes of the IB learner profile, students explored topics on poverty eradication, gender inequality, quality education, life below water, sustainable cities and communities, climate action and peace and justice. Presenting their learning to fellow students, teachers, parents and visitors from the International School of Vietnam and



the Hanoi International School, the Grade 5 students stood united in their message: 'Together We Can Change the World'.

True to their words, their multiple calls to take action on big issues were clearly evident. From appeals for sports items to a nifty student-to-student tutorial website that aims to improve the learning of underprivileged children, the Grade 5 cohort excelled themselves.

But speak with the young minds behind the projects and you'll soon discover that it's not just world issues and the actions needed that they learned about; they picked up a few life lessons of their own along the way too!

"I enjoyed the independency" revealed Luna Manso de Zuniga, an eleven year old from Spain whose project explored gender inequality around the globe. Further revealing why she loved the assignment so much she said, "I'm in EAL and English is not my first language so it's difficult for me to understand everything that happens in class. But I like design and I was able to use my design skills on this project and get to work with my group members, all of whom I like."

Fellow group member, Kael Hendry from Australia disclosed how his

perspective of the world changed because of all that he learned through the process. He shared, "I've come to realise that not everything is cupcakes and rainbows and that things can be really horrible. I want to stop some of those things now that I'm aware of it."

Segdae Lucardie from Ireland partnered with his friends to investigate the topic: People in Poverty Deserve the Benefits of Sports. As part of their study, they decided to encourage the UNIS Hanoi community to donate sports equipment with the intention of giving the items to the Blue Dragon Children's Foundation. With about 30 items collected, Segdae was pleased with his group's efforts, but confessed that working with his best friends wasn't as easy as he expected. He said, "I learned that even if you're with your best friends, you can get frustrated."

Yet like Kael wisely concludes, "I hope my grade found out that the Exhibition is fun and difficult at times and that members of a group will disagree with each other on things, but in the end, things end up fine."

Judging by the quality of work on display, things ended up better than fine.

## A United Effort!

A t-shirt competition was launched as part of this year's PYP exhibition. Students were asked to formulate a design that captured the SDG theme and the essence of the event. After intense judging, teachers and students voted for eleven year-old Socorro Escalante's design, aptly entitled, 'We Are United'.

She said, "Since our PYP exhibition is about the SDGs and we are a UN School, I thought saying 'We Are United' worked. On my design you can see an icon for every SDG and the UN logo is in the centre of the globe. I'm pleased that my design was chosen."



# Transformative Self Study

Eighty-one students in Grade 10 faced the ultimate challenge in their journey as independent learners so far when they undertook their Personal Projects this year.

A mind stretching experience for any 15 and 16 year old, the Personal Project is an eight-month long practical exploration into a topic of the student's choosing. It is a mandatory assessment that underscores the learning that took place throughout the IB Middle Years Programme - a five year curriculum that ends in Grade 10.

And as a result of this year's successful crop of projects, budding inventors, artisans and poets have been unearthed.

Among them was Amani Parvathaneni, 15, from India whose LED light bulb project is set to have a long-lasting impact at the School. Passionate about the environment, Amani researched the possibility of swapping the School's fluorescent light bulbs for eco-friendly LED versions. Taking it one step further, she put theory into practice and approached the School's Operations Department to persuade them to adopt her proposal. And to her delight, they are considering it. Explaining why she chose to focus her attention on improving the energy consumption at the School, she said, "UNIS Hanoi is a big institution and I believed they could take the initiative on this and , inspire other organisations to follow their example.



Through my research I discovered that Vietnam doesn't have a lot of LED light bulbs so it would be nice to introduce their use in this country."

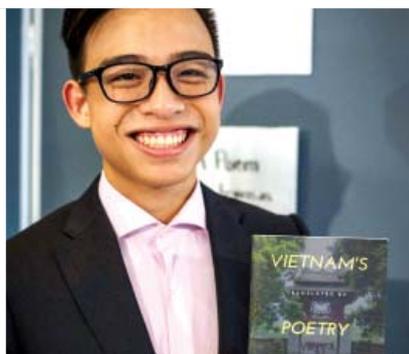
Amani spent her evenings and weekends selling granola bars and other snacks to raise the US\$2,500 needed to purchase 400 bulbs from India in the hopes of donating it to the School. In support of her efforts, the Operations Department have agreed to trial 55 lightbulbs in two Elementary School classrooms.

Benefitting others was a running theme for many UNIS Hanoi students who have taken the United Nation's charge to change the world around them to heart. Years of learning about unsafe water spurred Vietnamese student, Gia Han, into action. The 16 year-old who has studied at UNIS Hanoi since she was three years old, invented a version of a Lifestraw for her Personal Project which filters out toxins in water.

Her product has proved so effective that now a local laboratory, FabLabs Hanoi, hopes to work with Gia Han to turn her prototype into a customer friendly product for sale throughout Vietnam. She said,

**"I've always been interested in ways to improve people's health. Water is something everyone uses and I think if we can improve the water quality with one small action, we can affect a whole community. That's how I came up with the water filter idea."**

The simple concept however, proved challenging to realise. She divulged, "In the beginning, I didn't think my idea would work and I had to test it out five times and I kept failing miserably and I wanted to give up. But then I kept trying and making improvements to my product before it began to



work.” Now, Gia Han is pleased she persevered. She continued, “My biggest sense of accomplishment was creating a product and realising that one small change [such as my filter] could benefit everyone in the long run.”

Giving to others held a slightly different meaning for 16 year-old Phuong Le when he launched a cookbook with a twist for the benefit of the UNIS Hanoi community. Entitled ‘My Slice of Hanoi’ the book is a tribute to his passion for different cultures and appreciation of food. He said, “Since I was little, I have loved to cook and experiment with ingredients. I love to create fusion dishes. The Personal Project gave me the chance to undergo the creative process and be risk-taking too.”

Comprising ten unique recipes that included noodles in a French onion soup, taco flavoured Banh Mi and tempura pineapples, Phuong says he learned more than just food combinations. He shared, “I discovered a lot about my own cuisine, but I also learned about food photography and how to write interesting food stories too.”

Stories in poetry form was the topic sixteen year-old Minh Quan wanted to explore. The Vietnamese national who has been a student at UNIS Hanoi for eleven years, opted to find out more about Vietnamese poetry from every era for his Personal Project. It was an exercise he’s wanted to undertake for some time he confessed; “Back in eighth grade, there was a task given to us which involved translating a poem from one language to another. I thought it was fun and I also feel that students like myself [who come from Vietnam], lack knowledge of our own culture and so this was an opportunity to address this.”

As part of his study, Minh chose to translate each poem into English, a process he enjoyed. He said, “I got to see just how vast my culture is and I now have an appreciation of my own language which I’ve discovered is still relatively new and so to this day, new words are still being added. It was also very interesting to learn how sentences are crafted differently in Vietnamese compared to English.”

Personal Project Coordinators, Ms Susan Cizek and Mr Carlo Palusci say the outcome of the Personal Projects were as diverse as its student creators. Carlo further remarked, “In all, the projects submitted touched on social and cultural issues, service learning, human rights and tolerance, environmental issues, sports and technology. From high-tech creations to visual presentations, this year’s Grade 10 class has truly inspired and promoted the spirit of creativity and innovation in our global community.”

Equivalents

$\frac{1}{3} = \frac{3}{9} = \frac{1}{3} = \frac{2}{6} = \frac{2}{10} = 0.5$   
 $\frac{2}{3} = 0.666\ldots = 67$   
 $\frac{1}{4} = 0.25 = \frac{1}{4}$   
 $\frac{3}{4} = 0.75 = \frac{3}{4}$   
 $\frac{1}{5} = 0.2 = \frac{2}{10} = 20\%$   
 $\frac{2}{5} = 0.4 = \frac{2}{5} = 40\%$   
 $\frac{3}{5} = 0.6 = \frac{3}{5} = 60\%$   
 $\frac{4}{5} = 0.8 = 80\%$   
 $\frac{1}{6} = 0.1666\ldots = 0.17\%$   
 $\frac{5}{6} = 0.8333\ldots = 0.83\%$   
 $\frac{1}{8} = 0.125 = 13\%$   
 $\frac{3}{8} = 0.375 = 38\%$   
 $\frac{5}{8} = 0.625 = 63\%$   
 $\frac{1}{10} = 0.1 = 10\%$

# Exponential Learning

For more than five years, students in Grades 3 to 8 have consistently scored well in the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) math tests. The Spring 2017 data suggests that the math ability of children who attend UNIS Hanoi is equal to or higher than children who attend international peer schools. These results, released by an independent body, underpin the rigorous learning that takes place at UNIS Hanoi.

Yet not a School to rest on its laurels, concerted efforts continue to be made to further enrich the math curriculum from Discovery to Grade 12. In addition, high achieving individuals are being offered extra opportunities that appropriately challenge them.

In the Elementary School (ES), teachers have been benefiting from an innovative approach that gives them a deeper understanding of child



development. Spearheaded by ES Teacher, Beth Murray, the method ensures every child develops a very rich number sense in a constructivist inquiry based setting. Beth, a math specialist who has been at UNIS Hanoi for eight years said, "We have a lot of transient kids at this school, who come from diverse backgrounds and as a teacher, you often see how some kids are really successful in the classroom and some kids struggle

and sometimes you really can't identify why."

To address the notable differences, Beth introduced the Math Add+Vantage teaching toolkit to her colleagues. Made up of two intensive four day courses, the method helps teachers use assessments to pinpoint a child's understanding of number concepts and target their learning to move them forward.

Beth explained, "I thought the Math Add+Vantage approach would be so fantastic in an international school because teachers will have the skills to be able to see what students know, and what their understandings are in order to nurture growth along a child's learning continuum."

For six years Beth underwent training to become a trainer of the method in order to instruct her colleagues in it too. To date, 75 per cent of teachers in the Elementary School have completed at least one of the two courses and early indications suggest it's having the desired impact already.

**"What I love about this method is that we can look at a student and interview them and ask them about their strategies. For the first time, we're looking individually into their thinking and we can say, 'Okay we know where this student is and we know where to take them now'. It's so individualized."**

Beth hopes to roll out the training to the remaining 25 percent of ES faculty by the end of the 2017-2018 academic year.

As the Elementary School implemented new ways to enhance the delivery of the math curriculum, so did the Middle and High School. New this year, the division has started to roll out a programme that further ensures every child is appropriately challenged and has opportunities for success. Pete Kennedy, Principal of Middle and High School (MSHS) said, "In our division there's definitely a prescribed end game for us. We take a look at IB Higher Level Math and walk backwards then ask ourselves; what does a student have to learn by the end of each grade to progress to

the next? After that, we start to look at how to differentiate the topics so that students of different learning abilities and styles can access the next level of material."

With as many as 90 students in each grade level, tailoring a programme to meet the needs of every child is a monumental task. But undeterred, the School has taken steps towards establishing a programme that provides individual pathways for success whether a child is at the lower cognitive level, or the highest, or anywhere in between.

However, as Pete affirms, 95 per cent of the student body is already adequately catered for thanks to the subject area specialists on staff and a well established learning support unit. He revealed, "It's the top five per cent of our most able mathematics students that are well above the spectrum that we want to further challenge."

Charged to address this anomaly this year is MSHS Math Teacher, Ms Medeha Zahid. Her work, which is still in its infancy, aims to create opportunities for highly able students to be extended albeit within the parameters of the IB course.

She explained, "I've spent a lot of time building a range of interesting resources on Haiku for high achieving students who are self motivated and want a challenge."

As a math enrichment specialist, Medeha also explores possibilities for students outside of the classroom too; possibilities such as the Math Olympiad. What began as a small initiative five years ago by UNIS Hanoi and a neighbouring international school, has now become Hanoi's foremost problem-busting contest. The annual Math Olympiad currently attracts nine schools which battle it



out against each other in arithmetic aptitude! Medeha says, "Each school enters four teams - two from Middle School and two from High School. The competitions are themed and interactive, requiring participants to work together to solve complex problems, apply mathematics in creative ways, and derive solutions to higher order questions. It's a lot of fun!" And alongside the fun comes success too, with UNIS Hanoi's Middle School and High School teams reigning triumphant for two consecutive years. The hatrick, Medeha hopes, will come next year on an international stage when she takes her talented mathletes further afield.

With such great momentum achieved in math this year, an aspirational goal like this will certainly become UNIS Hanoi's new standard.

# DIRECTING DREAMS

Studying under the tutelage of a world-renowned theatre director proved to be a defining 'moment' in a lifetime for APAC Theatre Festival participants this year. Hosted for the first time by UNIS Hanoi and under the theme, *"To thine own self be true"*, 60 high school thespians from across the Southeast Asia region were put through their paces by the School's special guest, Barbara McAdams from the highly reputed Tectonic Theater Company.

It was a rare opportunity for students to learn from the company that authored and produced the critically-acclaimed play, *The Laramie Project*. And for Barbara, it was out of the ordinary to accept an invitation to work with a school outside of the United States of America. But when she was contacted by UNIS Hanoi's Theatre Arts Teacher, Ms Kristen Twynam-Perkins, she simply couldn't refuse.

So last February, Barbara made her first trip to the Asian continent to spend three days deconstructing the pieces the students had already created and reconstructing them to include what she and her co-directors, Phil Ridley and Kimberley Shaw, taught them - the philosophy of 'moments'.

"You need to walk in character, you need to walk in character!" ordered Phil as he instructed a teen on the stage.

Standing in the arena, keenly surveying the activity taking place in front of her, Barbara explained, "People who take part in a performance build moments. We're teaching the students to use the

elements of the stage. We want them to think; how can we tell our story through sound, special elements, colour? What we really try to explore is how a prop, movement, or song can carry the story. We are looking at non text elements and engaging with theatrical moments."

The walker continued onto the stage, shoulders expertly drooped as he wore his old man persona with aplomb. Emerging from all corners, fellow actors lithely invaded the space as if hypnotized, completely under the director's spell. Learning to convey their story through the theatrical technique known as moments of virtuosity, was a far cry from what the budding actors were used to. Yet they rose to the challenge. Students such as 16 year-old Sarah Yang who attends Shanghai American School and has been a part of her school's theatre team for two years. She expressed the value of the event. She said, "This year we have had more direction than usual and we've been able to learn different styles of theatre which we can take back and use in our own work." Seventeen year-old Kumal Gupta, a student at the Western Academy of Beijing agreed. He said, "The plays we're doing about the Self allows us to further explore what is an intricate idea and further elaborate on what we had produced as a team. The pretty interesting techniques about moments helped us come up with ideas out of nothing, which is the hardest thing to do in theatre."

Morgan-Belle Bradshaw, a UNIS Hanoi student who aspires to attend theatre school in Australia after she

graduates this Summer said the experience will benefit her future career. She added, "I've been part of the School's APAC Theatre team for four years and to see the development each actor makes over a three day period amazes me. I feel better prepared for an acting career."

For UNIS Hanoi's Theatre Arts Teacher, Ms Kristen Twynam-Perkins, the event achieved what it set out to do - to bring talented young people together to benefit from the Tectonic Theatre approach. Kristen said, "The Tectonic Theatre Company is known globally for their interview-based theatre work, such as *The Laramie Project*. I have directed the stage version of the play before and it's a very popular performance piece in schools across the world. It was exciting that Barbara came and worked with our children."

Visiting drama director, Edie Moon from The Seoul Foreign School praised UNIS Hanoi for the excellent Festival this year. She added, "The Tectonic Theatre Company brought an approach to creating theatre which was wonderful and as my own students know about the Company, it was an honour for them to learn from Barbara."

**They've loved working with the guest directors and enjoyed the experience. Every year, the Festival offers our students a way for them to breathe and if they can breathe artistically, then in my opinion, there's no better way."**



The three day festival was expertly organised by the School's Activities Team, headed by Tarique AL-lesa. Alongside UNIS Hanoi, participating schools included Brent International School Manila, Seoul Foreign School, Shanghai American School, Western Academy of Beijing and the American International School of Guangzhou.

# Measures of Success



effective or not. She said, “In our quest as educators to honour the ‘whole child’, many schools have dishonoured the place of empirical evidence in the decision making process. In our desire to value the ‘art’ of teaching, we have devalued the ‘science’ of teaching. Rather than an either/or approach, we can take a both/and approach to allow us to use learning data to make effective decisions about instructional, programme and school improvement. We [as a Leadership Team] don’t believe that data detracts from looking at the ‘whole’ child, but in fact, we believe it is an essential part of the picture.”

Ground-breaking research into data-driven learning that was spearheaded by UNIS Hanoi’s Elementary School Principal has been hitting the headlines across the globe lately.

Featured in prestigious professional publications such as *The International Educator* and *International Schools magazine*, Megan Brazil’s year-long study delved into the value of data informed dialogue.

In her paper, she put forth the argument that more emphasis needed to be placed on finding out in quantitative ways if instruction conducted in the classroom was

Implementing the theory into practice, Megan together with her Leadership Team have cultivated a school culture where teachers are encouraged to come together and engage in meaningful conversations around successful practice. Megan explained,

**“Just as teams of doctors examine patients together on medical rounds, we are working hard to equip our teachers with the right data and tools to be able to collaboratively analyse, diagnose and create plans for our students that will add value to their learning.”**

Over the course of the year, the Elementary School (ES) Leadership Team has established quarterly “Learning Retreats” to help teachers come together as ‘strong, healthy teams’ that are ‘assessment literate’ and ‘confident consumers of data’. Megan added, “In our efforts to achieve these goals, we used the data visualisations built by the Learning Analytics Collaborative (LAC)\* to provide us with data already visualized. Having assessment data turned into useful and easy-to-read interactive graphs ensures that teachers can immediately get to the work that they are best at, [which is] talking about student performance.”

In her research, Megan is careful to point out that concerted efforts regarding data, should not come at the expense of all else. She advised peer schools to strike a delicate balance for the good of students.

Her work has been met with interest from other educators who are keen to follow UNIS Hanoi’s lead. As other schools play catch-up, UNIS Hanoi pushes ahead, keen to involve students in their new process. Megan



revealed, “A next step for us might be to consider how we move towards transparent use of learning data with students, rather than simply for students, in a way that is meaningful and relevant.”

Commenting on his Principal’s dynamic approach, UNIS Hanoi’s Head of School, Dr Chip Barder said, “The ES Leadership Team under Megan’s guidance is striking a chord in getting at the answer to the question we are all increasingly asking; ‘Are students learning?’ Their workshop at the EARCOS\*\* Leadership Conference last year was filled to overflowing, and requests for consultation from other schools continue to come in. Our mission is to create a culture of accountability through the effective use of all kinds of data, and Megan’s leadership in this work is highly commendable.”

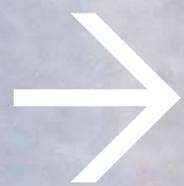
*\* The Learning Analytics Collaborative is a partnership between educational researchers, data scientists and visionary leaders from schools around the world. Members urgently seek to harness the power of Learning Analytics to analyse and share information about teaching in ways that lead to better questions, deeper understandings, and more informed provisions and decisions for successful teaching, learning and living.*

*\*\* EARCOS: The East Asia Regional Council of Schools*

A man in a dark blue suit, white shirt, and glasses is standing in a classroom, smiling and gesturing with his hands. He is wearing a yellow lanyard and a blue ID badge. Behind him is a whiteboard with handwritten mathematical equations and diagrams. To his right is a desk with a laptop and other items. In the foreground, the back of a student's head and shoulders is visible, looking towards the presenter.

# Connected Learning Community

In an increasingly turbulent and uncertain world, it has never been more important to connect on a human level. Relationships matter and they start with our local community. The networks we create in the wider world will lead to collaboration and a building of collective knowledge that would be unachievable if we were to act alone. Our connected learning community will generate our sense of who we are now and what we will become.



# What Does It Mean To Be a UN School?



As UNIS Hanoi gets set to commemorate an incredible “30 Years of Learning to Inspire”, members of the School community have been asking themselves; what does it mean to be a UN School?

Spearheaded by the Board of Directors, the three-year quest to define what distinguishes UNIS Hanoi from other international IB schools, was deemed critical and timely for an institution that has withstood decades of change.

Board Chairman, Mr Hieu Nguyen explained, “A few years ago, if you’d asked a child or a parent, staff or faculty member what is it that makes us a UN school, you’d get a multitude of answers. It was also crucial for us to clarify the UN’s relationship with our School. So with our 30 year milestone in sight, it became really important to

us as a Board to be in a position to articulate clearly what it means to be a UN school so that UN agencies could understand it, our students, faculty and parents could understand it and the world could understand it.”

The ambition to formally explore the School’s identity soon became possible when the Board set about creating UNIS Hanoi’s five year strategic plan, now dubbed Strategy 2020. During a weekend Board Retreat in 2014, the Directors kick-started a comprehensive investigation that considered how the UN in Vietnam sees the role of UNIS Hanoi, how the UN identity shapes teaching and learning at the School, who UNIS Hanoi should serve and what the ‘value benefit’ is of being a UN school.

Working alongside the School’s Leadership Team, Director of

Learning and the School’s Curriculum Coordinators, the researchers sought to underpin the true values and purpose of UNIS Hanoi as one of only two UN international schools in the world. The study undertaken also gave the School the unique opportunity to outline the role that UNIS Hanoi plays in Vietnam - a nation that continues to experience rapid development.

Summarizing their findings in a White Paper, the Board of Directors confirmed that UNIS Hanoi has a multi-faceted identity, but at its centre remains the relationship with the United Nations. And although not an agency of the United Nations, the School as one of only two UN international schools in the world, believes in its unique role to educate agents for change.

Importantly, the study also formalized what it means to be a UN school through a new identity statement which asserts that:

**‘The United Nations International School of Hanoi is committed to inspiring and equipping young people to build a better world. We bring the world together on one campus and guided by the Principles of the United Nations mentor peace makers and problem solvers. Our young global citizens are curious, compassionate and confident to take action against issues confronting humanity; bold in the face of complexity and resilient in an uncertain world. We are a learning community that cares enough to create a better tomorrow. Starting today. Together.’**

The Board of Directors published the White Paper in full on the School’s website earlier this year, yet their work has not ended. Now the team has plans to ensure every member of the UNIS Hanoi community fully understands the results.

Hieu said, “This piece of work was more than just a document to us; we wanted the findings to bleed into the fabric of our community so that we could all have a shared interpretation of what it means to be a UN school. It is our hope that in a few years time, we could ask anyone in our community what it means for us to be a UN school, and they would know the answer.”

**To read the Board’s White Paper, please visit our website: [www.unishanoi.org/UNschool](http://www.unishanoi.org/UNschool)**

# Former Student Leads Efforts to Strengthen UN Ties

It wasn’t just adult members of the School community who were keen to explore what it means to be a UN School, students were too! One alumnae in particular who went above and beyond to forge closer links between the School and the UN agencies in Viet Nam was nineteen year-old Nina McLean. A student who graduated in 2016 after nine years at the School, Nina chose to spend her last summer in between High School and university volunteering at the organisation she’d grown up being inspired by. Shadowing experts at UNAIDS, Nina gained invaluable insight into the workings of the agency before an unexpected turn of events propelled Nina into the pivotal role of facilitator between two organisations she’s long been connected to. The daughter of a UN employee, Nina discovered she was well placed to investigate the relationship between the UN agencies in Viet Nam and the School. Divulging the reason for her research, Nina said, “From a student’s perspective, I felt it was important that students at UNIS Hanoi recognise their role, not only in their community, but also in Vietnam. This role is to understand and act upon the UN values so that we can become leaders of the world and ensure human rights for all, no matter how small or how large that task may be. And because UNIS Hanoi is located in a developing country, I believe that there should be more opportunities made



available to students for advocacy, learning and doing.”

At a special meeting held at the UN’s flagship building, the One UN Green House, Nina unveiled her findings to a group of UN Country Team Leaders and UNIS Hanoi’s Senior Leadership Team. She presented 14 recommendations that included an essay competition, a UN directory and a work shadow programme. And in efforts to fully immerse the School in UN principles, Nina proposed all faculty members undergo UN internal training courses such as the UN Cares workshops which are made up of four modules that specifically focus on inclusivity, equality and diversity in the workplace. “These workshops could even be adapted and shared with the students as well” Nina further enthused.

UNIS Hanoi Head of School, Dr Chip Barder commended Nina’s efforts adding that it was ‘poetic that one of our own students would lead the initiative to strengthening ties between us and the UN’.

# AN ERA OF CLOSER COOPERATION



The brand new United Nations Resident Coordinator in Viet Nam, Mr Kamal Malhotra has revealed plans to increase interactions between his organisation and UNIS Hanoi. Mr Malhotra hinted at the enormous potential the School has, to play a part in what the UN in Viet Nam is striving to achieve.

Mr Malhotra, who began his assignment back in January, paid a courtesy call to the School shortly after his arrival to see and hear about the learning that takes place inside and outside the classrooms. His visit, along with conversations he's had with the School prompted his resolve to foster closer coordination between the two organisations in a joint bid to achieve more together.

A father of two, whose adult children once attended UNIS New York, Mr Malhotra joins the School community with invaluable insight into the purpose and potential of UN international schools. That potential, he believes, is far-reaching. He said,

**“It would be an enormous contribution to our world if UNIS Hanoi can instil an awareness and understanding of world issues that lead to action from an early age and throughout the lives of each young learner.**

For this reason, I was heartened to discover that UNIS Hanoi has

centrally featured the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the curriculum and service learning initiatives. This is important because as one of only two UNIS' in the world, it is both a privilege and a responsibility for the School to uphold the UN Values and Charter. As a consequence, I encourage the School community to deepen its understanding of what the SDGs mean and what UNIS Hanoi as a collective can do to help achieve them.”

Mr Malhotra continued, “Just think; if we all work together to achieve these aspirational Goals, today's young learners could realistically become the first generation to live in an absolutely poverty free world. Past generations could not even envision this in their lifetime.” As Mr Malhotra pointedly concluded, these aspirations ‘will require the cooperation of everyone in new ways if they are to be achieved’. And that, he stressed, includes every member of the UNIS Hanoi community.

# Triple Celebrations Ahead!



The 2017-2018 academic year is shaping up to be a year to remember in the UNIS Hanoi journey as the School gets set to celebrate three significant milestones!

**From August, the School will roll out a series of events that will mark UNIS Hanoi's highly anticipated 30 year anniversary, together with the 40th year of the United Nations in Viet Nam and the 10th anniversary of UNIS Hanoi's longest serving Head of School.**

The incidental trio of momentous anniversaries is reason enough to truly celebrate a School that broke the mould to make history as Vietnam's very first international school. Starting as it meant to go on, UNIS Hanoi has been trailblazing ever since, not only in Vietnam but across the globe

also. The first IB World School in Asia and one of only two UN international schools on earth, UNIS Hanoi has won a reputation for academic excellence as well as its unique mission to serve. And as a School that enjoys an enduring relationship with the United Nations in Viet Nam, UNIS Hanoi will play a role in the UNs official 40th birthday events.

The year-long calendar of activities include the launch of UNIS Hanoi's very first official school anthem which will be composed by Middle and High School students and performed at a special occasion by young musicians of all ages. What's more, alumni from 73 countries plan to converge on the campus for a mega Hanoi Homecoming event, culminating in a wonderful community cocktail celebration. And perhaps most importantly we will be facilitating a day of service for our entire community to mobilise! With service at the heart of what UNIS Hanoi stands for, a

Sunday of Service is in the pipeline, giving students, parents, faculty, staff and alumni the opportunity to work together and make a meaningful impact - our birthday gift back to our host community!

To mark the year, every member of the School community will also be invited to participate in an historic 'tifo' - the choreographed display of large banners that form an impressive image!

With so much jubilation in the pipeline, the 2017-2018 academic year is one that won't be forgotten for the next 30 years!

**To get involved with the Birthday Committee, please contact Nathalie Grun, the School's Community Liaison Officer via email: [clo@unishanoi.org](mailto:clo@unishanoi.org)**

# HEAD OF SCHOOL RECEIVES TOP HONOUR



Educators from across the globe have honoured UNIS Hanoi's very own Head of School, Dr Chip Barder with one of the highest accolades possible - the International Superintendent of the Year award.

Presented to Dr Barder in March by the Association for the Advancement of International Education, the award is in recognition of his outstanding, frontline leadership. It's a testament to the stellar achievements Dr Barder has etched in his 47 year career as an educator, and a nod to the top tier reputation UNIS Hanoi as a school holds around the world. Yet, true to character, Dr Barder chose not to focus on his professional highlights when receiving the award, rather his most humiliating failures.

"It is assumed that I've been on some 'LeBron James' trajectory to success" says Dr Barder. "You know what?

It doesn't work that way, and so I wanted to acknowledge this in the presence of my peers."

In front of an audience of 500, clutching his newly acquired plaque, Dr Barder boldly retold the story of his dismissal as Director of the Damascus Community School in Syria, which occurred more than 20 years ago. He revealed, "On a warm day in the Spring of 1995 in Damascus, the Board Chair entered my office, asked me for my keys and my laptop, said I was done, and escorted me off campus, never to return."

The incident, he admitted left him with 'waves of helplessness for days, weeks and months'. On reflection however, Dr Barder believes the lessons he learned through this dark episode were pivotal to notching up future successes.

“What we know about failure” he continued, “is not the fact that we fail, but what we choose to do about it.” And for Dr Barder admitting his weaknesses, seeking out mentors and getting perspective placed him back on track towards a prosperous career path. After Syria, Dr Barder completed a stint in the United States of America, before diving back into the international education arena. Periods in Russia and Poland ensued and almost ten years ago, Dr Barder arrived in Hanoi, to take up the role of Head of School.

On behalf of the Board, Mr Hieu Nguyen, Board Chair said,

**“I think Dr Barder always wants to challenge himself. He’s 70 now and he’s still reading self improvement books every time I see him! We’ve found him to be very open minded and an accessible leader who shows compassion for others and upholds the values of our School.”**

As part of the International Superintendent of the Year award, Dr Barder was presented with a US\$1000 gift, which he has promptly donated to the School’s Scholarship Fund - a flagship programme he established to benefit those less fortunate. For those who know Dr Barder, this gesture was simply true to form.



During his tenure at UNIS Hanoi, Dr Barder has overseen the development of the School’s 23 acre (9.2 hectare) purpose-built campus, supported the improvement of school governance practices, strengthened links with the United Nations, overseen an increase in successful IB diploma students, and invested in an innovative and broad service learning programme, to name but a few achievements. In addition, he was honoured by Vietnam’s Ministry of Education and Training in 2015 for his significant contribution to education in Vietnam. None of his accomplishments could be achieved, stressed Dr Barder, without the wonderful support of the Board. Dr Barder said, “This is the longest I’ve been anywhere and that’s because I’ve felt a continuous desire to grow and to grow together with the Board in order to get things right. When a Board has the mentality that our Board members have, they can do anything.”



# VISITORS T

UNIS Hanoi values community. The relationships we forge inside and outside our School matter to us and enhances the learning that takes place. This year, we've had the privilege of welcoming a diverse number of visitors to our School, each of them keen to inspire. Here are just three of them...

## 2017's Monster Message



The Director of this year's seventh biggest Hollywood Blockbuster paid a visit to UNIS Hanoi to impress upon students that 'hard work is dope'.

Jordan Vogt-Roberts, the visionary behind *Kong: Skull Island* made the pronouncement at a special assembly in Spring. Addressing the Middle and High School students, he said, "Working hard and having something that you've worked on over and over again before finally having something to show for it gives you the best feeling."

He continued, "We live in a world of instant gratification, which is crazy because the hard work you put into something you love, is the most meaningful time in your life. I miss those days when I was just chasing something that I wanted, and there was no Plan B."

As part of his talk, Jordan also encouraged the students to go out into the world and fail, believing that art in particular helps a person fail boldly and fail bravely.

# TO INSPIRE



**“Fail until you fall flat on your face” Jordan advised. “The way you pick yourself up will change everything. People need to realize it’s okay to fail. So go and [metaphorically] jump off the cliff and try; that for me is the big trick of life.”**

The exclusive motivational speech is a consequence of the fledgling relationship UNIS Hanoi has developed with the talented film director and producer.

The result of a chance connection, Jordan came to learn of UNIS Hanoi through a friend of the School’s IB Diploma Film Teacher, Jackson Garland. Knowing Jordan was in Vietnam last year to shoot much of the breathtaking scenes that appear in *Kong: Skull Island*, Jackson seized upon the opportunity to request a visit to the set.

At first the idea of a gaggle of star-struck teens on location did not appeal to the Detroit native. But after some time, Jordan had a change of heart and sought the necessary approvals from Warner Bros to make it happen. Jackson said his willingness to be accessible was ‘refreshing’ and inspires young students. He added, “A conversation that lasts five minutes between our students and Jordan or the actor Tom Hiddleston, may set them on a path towards creating art and film that hadn’t seemed possible before.”

Now the successful UNIS Hanoi visit has spurred Jordan on to devote more of his time to encouraging the next generation of creatives. He revealed, “I really want to understand how the education system works in Vietnam. I want to go on a tour and visit as many different types of schools here so I can really see the landscape and really see where arts education can be the most effective and inspiring to kids. I can see that UNIS Hanoi, with its own film course, is several steps ahead of the curve.”

Jackson is hopeful that UNIS Hanoi will be one of the schools that Jordan continues to partner with. He shared, “Jordan has expressed interest in staying in contact with our film programme as well as developing more connections to film and arts education programmes across the country. I don’t think this will be the last we see of him. It’s an exciting time for young filmmakers in Vietnam, and Jordan’s continued dedication to the country and its artists will help propel the pursuit of filmmaking as an important art form.”





An aerospace engineer’s two worlds collided this year when an invitation to talk to UNIS Hanoi students and faculty about his astronomical career reunited him with his former Head of School and his one-time chemistry teacher.

Philippe Kassouf, one of the original eight employees of SpaceX, once attended a school in Syria headed up by UNIS Hanoi’s very own Dr Chip Barder and where Science Teacher, Ms Rebecca Bechard (Ms B) taught too. Those nine years at Damascus Community School, he said, afforded him the stellar foundation needed to launch his incredible career. Speaking to UNIS Hanoi students over the course of two days, Philippe revealed that being in an international school environment and benefitting from motivational teachers sets students up to succeed. He remarked, “Ms B taught me in Grade 10 and I was able to go to her and ask if it was okay to take equipment home and trial things. And I’d come back the next day and show her what I’d discovered.”

After graduating from Damascus Community School, Lebanese-born Philippe won a place to study Aerospace Engineering at the University of Southern California, a long-held dream come true for him. On completion of his degree, Philippe met Paypal Founder Elon Musk who was keen to start a company that would launch a rocket to the moon. Recognising Philippe’s ability to ‘passionately solve a problem’, Elon hired him. Through trial and error, leading to eventual success,

## An out of this World guest

Dr Chip Barder and Ms Rebecca Bechard’s former student visits UNIS Hanoi and inspires...

Philippe and his team launched multiple rockets into space. Yet, at the height of his success, he left his position at SpaceX to return to school - this time, graduate school. A self-ascribed lifelong learner, Philippe says that going back to school after gaining valuable experience in the workplace gave him a better grasp of the concepts he came across in his Electrical Engineering Masters programme he took.

Now, as the founder of a research and development firm that invents high-tech equipment for large companies, Philippe revels in the fact that he’s become a ‘paid thinker’. Yet for Dr Barder and Ms B, his vocations come as no surprise.

Ms B said, “I’ve been teaching for 30 years and I’ve probably taught around 80 students per year, but Philippe stands out;

**“ He’s one of the brightest students I’ve ever taught. He was curious, yet helpful and always ready to share his talent.”**

Dr Barder agrees. He added, “With Philippe, you just never had the feeling that he was excluding of anyone at all.”

For Dr Barder, Philippe continues to embody the ethos of international schools - the lifelong learning global citizen who’s on a mission to make the world a better place. And as Middle and High School Principal, Mr Pete Kennedy aptly spelled out to an audience of Middle Schoolers, “[Philippe] was you, in a school just like this. You too can dream big for these things.”

## Students of all ages got to hear first hand what it takes to work for America's largest space organisation when one of its engineers paid a visit to the School.

Dr Ashley Stroupe, a robotics engineer who works for NASA building sequences and operating the robotic arm of the Mars Exploration Rovers revealed to students the winding path she took in order to clinch her dream job.

Speaking to students in Elementary, Middle and High School, Dr Stroupe confessed that her childhood ambition was to be an astronaut, until she discovered she suffers from motion sickness! Resolute to still work in space, Dr Stroupe explored alternative occupations instead. She said, "I followed different paths

including physics, astronomy, other engineering fields, and even anthropology! Ultimately I found robotics and fell in love with it."

However, her search for the right career, didn't end there. She continued, "I picked my field and topics in graduate school with an eye on what would be beneficial to NASA. I contacted NASA people at conferences as well as people from my school who went on to work at NASA."

To High School students on the precipice of adulthood, she recommended networking as an essential way to secure a position. She said, "Becoming a face and a person rather than just a resume makes a big difference in getting these highly competitive jobs."

Dr Stroupe's visit to the School occurred by chance; a consequence

of spending her holidays with her teacher brother, Clark Stroupe. Knowing his sister enjoys giving talks to students, Clark, UNIS Hanoi's DP Coordinator, proposed she interact with the UNIS Hanoi community for a day or two. Thankfully, taking time out to inspire young learners is a duty Dr Stroupe believes is important. She said, "These events are very important for several reasons. First, it can broaden a student's personal perspective beyond just the people they personally know. Second, they get the 'real' story, not just how the career is portrayed in the media. This real story is important so that people get a better feel for both the good and the bad."

Commenting on Dr Stroupe's visit, UNIS Hanoi's Head of School, Dr Chip Barder said, "It's outstanding that students can have access to such high calibre professionals who give real insight into what it's really like in the workplace and what it takes to get there. We're grateful to Dr Stroupe for taking the time out of her vacation to speak to a number of grades about her career and encouraging them to dream big."

# Down to Earth Interactions





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# HEADING TO HANOI

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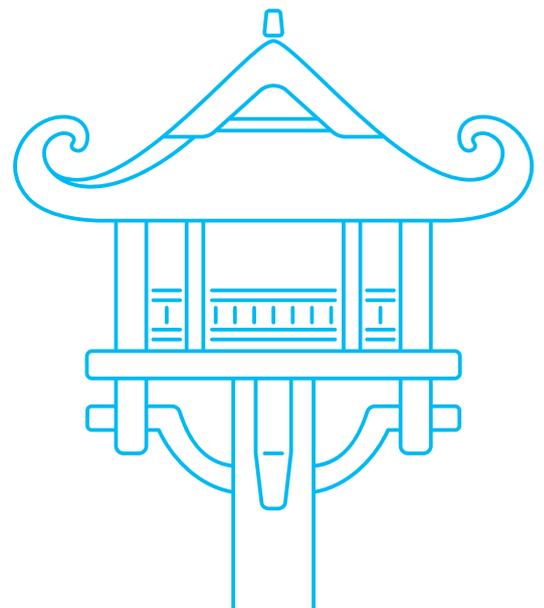
In the palatial courtyard of Hanoi's eminent Temple of Literature at 4.25 on a Saturday afternoon, crowds begin to gather. Whispers exchange. Attempts to sneak out a camera to steal a shot are made. Spectators visually wrestle with their thoughts: "Who is this person? Which movie does she appear in?" The click-click-clacking of the photographers shutter release chimes in rhythm to the patter of countless feet converging in the shadows. There's a celebrity in town, the bystanders decide. Presumed Celebrity throws her head back in laughter, bemused by the peculiarity of the moment, not sure whether to perform for her audience or remain composed, as if in character. What character that would be is of anyone's guess. And they do. They guess. And guess some more before they slink off confused and with reluctance, wooed away by the many demands of their day.

"If I knew you better, I'd do something really crazy right now" teases Presumed Celebrity, better known to

the UNIS Hanoi community as Jane McGee, the School's incoming Head of School.

It's April, and only a month after the announcement of her appointment and Jane happens to be in the city for a regional leadership conference. Disarmingly friendly, she talks animatedly about the thought-provoking session she's just emerged from and reveals how her family are looking forward to their impending move to Vietnam.

"This is the first time I've been able to come back to the Temple of Literature since 1998," she shares. "I've been back and forth to Hanoi but always for a conference and so there's never been the time to explore this city again." Now fate has intervened, and in little more than a year's time, Vietnam's capital will become her home. For the Canada native who grew up near the Ontario countryside, Hanoi holds endless possibilities, not least because of the passionate team at UNIS Hanoi she's looking



forward to working with. “There were many reasons the Head of School role appealed to me,” Jane says,

**“But what I was most looking to find out was whether there was a team that was going to dive in and be passionate about the same things I’m passionate about and I felt that.”**

Spend just a short time in Jane’s company, and it soon becomes evident that passion pumps through her veins. Passion for education, passion for travel and passion for her

family - teacher husband Brian and two teen daughters. It’s that passion that has stood her in good stead throughout her 20 year career as an international educator.

A daughter of a Health Inspector and a stay-at-home Mom, Jane confesses her globetrotting career was accidental. “At Queen’s University, they had a combined concurrent education programme [and through it] I could consider what I wanted to pursue in mathematics and actually check to see whether education was something I also wanted to do. The course soon reignited my childhood passion to teach. And right from the

beginning I wanted to go overseas; not forever though. I wanted to go for a year, but then go back to Canada to establish my career. Because you know,” she muses, “I was 18...”

But like Jane admits, ‘circumstances just happened’ and a one year teaching post abroad turned into a lifelong adventure that’s seen her and her family work and live in Italy, Egypt, Thailand, Poland, India, Laos and soon, Vietnam. A risk-taker by nature, Jane remains excited about what lies ahead.

Offering some insight into how and why she decided to embark on this next step in her personal journey, Jane shares, “I do an exercise with kids on Careers Day where I give them about three or four pivotal points and I just give them the information and ask them what would they do and they tend to - for lots of really good reasons - choose the less risky path than the one that I’ve actually chosen. When I tell them I did things differently, they think they’ve got the answer wrong, but there is no right or wrong here. It’s just about where you are in time and place, and whether you are comfortable to take that risk.”

For Jane, August 2018 in Hanoi happens to be the right time and place to take a risk. And that’s welcome news for the UNIS Hanoi community.





# Community with No Bystanders

Because we belong to the UNIS Hanoi community, we have unique opportunities to make a positive impact on others. Our impact can be global or local, influencing what goes on in Vietnam and what happens in the school playground. This means not standing on the sidelines when action is needed, building bridges and extending our responsibility beyond our own immediate concerns and by seeing ourselves as responsible and principled individuals who are truly able to make a difference to the community as a whole.





# UNlimbited Possibilities

A group of nine Elementary School students sacrificed their lunch times over the stretch of a semester to quietly work away on an extraordinary project - designing and printing 3D prosthetic limbs!

The remarkable feat, spearheaded by teachers, Claire Grady and Michelle Matias has since benefited five disabled adults from Hanoi, giving them a new lease of life. The initiative was sparked by the teachers' natural interest in technology, coupled with their commitment to show students how state-of-the-art equipment offers endless possibilities, both to them as creators and to others.

Explaining the genesis of the idea, Claire said,

**“We started the eNable Service Learning group because we believe in the power 3D printing has to change the world.”**

“Through this group we have been able to prove that 3D printing is a cost effective solution for many things we need in life. Just take for example the cost of the prosthetic limbs we created. They are 1,800,000 VND each compared to the hundred thousand dollar price tag for an

artificial limb from the United States of America.”

Cost effective and convenient, the 3D printed prosthetic limbs were designed with sustainability in mind too. Michelle said, “Claire and I spent our weekends in downtown Hanoi searching for fishing lines, metres of velcro and finger gel thimbles because it was important to us to source the materials locally.”

Although the teachers gathered the materials needed, it was the children who built the limbs, using two types of prosthetic models - Unlimbited and Raptor Reloaded. For ten year-old Rei Shiwa from Japan, getting involved was a long held dream come true. He revealed, “I remember when I lived in Bahrain and there was a kid in my Kindergarten class who didn’t have arms. He had his own table which was really low and he always had one shoe off because he’d use his foot to do things we do with our hands. I remember he was better than me at most things, including handwriting. I also realised he could use his toes in ways I can’t use my toes. But I remember I wanted to help him and so when Ms Claire and Ms Michelle asked who would like to get involved in this project, my friend popped into my mind and I said ‘yes!’”

Nine year-old Benjamin Price-Thomas also said ‘yes’ to being a part of eNable. He said, “It has been a fun way to help others and I’ve learned



about people who have these types of disabilities and how making these sorts of things can affect them.”

The affect, the children soon discovered, was indescribable. One recipient, Song Quoc Nong, who comes from the Nghe An province, expressed his gratitude to the young inventors. Receiving his made-to-order limb, the 33 year old IT technician said, “I am moved. I really appreciate my arm more because it has come from these young students.” As he tried it on for size, Song, a married father of two who was born without a full left arm, revealed that he plans to buy his very first motorbike now that he has two arms.

A second recipient, Binh Nguyen from Hanoi was equally touched by the student’s willingness to help him out; particularly because his first experience with an artificial limb was awful. The 27 year old home worker shared, “I lost my arm through a work accident in 2005 and a cousin of mine purchased an artificial limb for me a while later. But it had a metal frame and it hurt to wear it so I gave up wearing it altogether.”

However Binh was quick to note that the students had made a much more superior prosthetic limb to the ones

he’s seen before. He said, “I can see myself wearing this arm all day because it’s light and flexible. I can even curl the fingers! My first artificial limb couldn’t do that.”

Now the inspirational eNablers have produced prosthetic limbs to the delight of their beneficiaries, the team hopes to help many more in the future.



**Find out more about the eNable Service Learning Group by visiting their website: <https://sites.google.com/unishanoi.org/enable>**

# Growing Instructions

From composting in Kindergarten to harvested vegetables from the solar powered aquaponics garden, UNIS Hanoi's whole-school gardening programme is bearing fruit.

An initiative that began as a vegetable patch for Middle Schoolers to potter about in more than a decade ago, has since evolved to include composting bins and flower beds in the Elementary School and student run vegetable plots in Middle and High School - the products of which regularly find themselves in the School's Cafeteria Salad Bar. Part core learning, part co-curricular, the gardening activities have a common thread - the importance of service.

Every Spring, the K2 class avidly learn the importance of composting as part of their Recycling Unit. After a thorough introduction on degradable waste, students are actively encouraged to compost their uneaten snacks and lunches. "We want our children to learn that our choices impact our environment" says K2 Coordinator, Ms Corlia Muller. "We ask the children to look at how much we actually waste and we carry out a 'rot, not rot' experiment to get them thinking. Our Community Garden Coordinator, David Buckner comes in and talks to the children about composting, showing them the process. We want them to understand that instead of throwing food away, it's better to compost and be able to use rather than waste."

The damp, earthy results of the compost delights David who uses it to enrich the Elementary School's flower bed that's lovingly cared for by the students themselves. On

occasion, David has enough compost to go around, spreading some on the vegetable plots nurtured by the Middle and High Schoolers. The self-sufficient approach adopted by the community gardeners is one of the unique strengths the programme has, says David. "As much as possible, we try to use what we have around us, including the compost bins which we have made out of discarded plastics and tubes."

Not much is off limits for reuse either, and that includes pond water. Newly installed this year is an aquaponics garden. Situated in the confines of Building 5, the handcrafted aquaponics garden is a little oasis of tranquility. Designed by gardening enthusiast, Geert Vansintjan, the aquaponics system is ingeniously constructed using PVC, mini solar panels, a water pump and a battery. Science Teacher, David Coultas, who acts as the patron of the Middle School Community Garden group, says the students wanted the new garden. He explained, "We were looking at other technologies and both David Buckner and I suggested the aquaponics garden to the students."

The children liked the idea and agreed to fund the project with the money they raised from selling their vegetables. It won approval because the aquaponic system is a self sustaining solution to gardening that relies upon fishpond minerals to nourish the vegetables potted in the makeshift PVC planters that elevate above the water. Solar panels provide the energy to power the pump, propelling water into the tube to water the plants, and so the cycle continues. So far the group has successfully

grown lettuce, mint, sweet potato, basil, corn, cucumber and tomatoes.

The diverse activities that have sprouted over the years exemplify the School's commitment to the world around us and in more ways than one. David said, "Gardening at UNIS Hanoi is considered a service, and we've found meaningful ways it can service our community. In the Middle School, the students sell their produce to others and donate the takings to a service learning group. Our High School students give their best veg to the cafeteria on a regular basis, providing a valuable service to their fellow students."

## Now watch it for yourself!

Growing Instructions is the latest in our Values Film Series and highlights the gardening service programme as we explore what service means at UNIS Hanoi and ask again - What do you value?

Watch Growing Instructions on the UNIS Hanoi You Tube Channel:

**[www.youtube.com/c/UnishanoiOrgVideos](http://www.youtube.com/c/UnishanoiOrgVideos)**

Or experience the film in augmented reality! Simply download the app called, Aurasma, follow UNIS Hanoi, point your phone camera over our UNiquely UNIS cover and watch it come alive!





PART 2

# TEACHERS TEACHING TEACHERS

**In our Winter 2016 edition of UNiquely UNIS, we focused on the professional development our teachers offer local Vietnamese teachers on campus. In part 2 of Teachers Teaching Teachers, we turn the spotlight onto some of our faculty members who provide expert workshops and more to their global peers...**

Every year, hundreds of teachers from 600 schools across 29 countries in Asia benefit from seminars and conferences that aim to share best practice in international education. These events, organised by the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO), ensure approaches to learning remain current and consistent. But as the IBO is a largely grassroots organisation with only a handful of full time teachers on staff, it relies upon passionate teachers in their networks to deliver essential training.

As a school that values lifelong learning, it's no surprise to discover that a high number of the Asia

Pacific region's workshop leaders, presenters and assessors teach at UNIS Hanoi. What's more, one of the IBO's 12 Professional Development Lead Educators for the Asia Pacific region, also works at the School. Mr Clark Stroupe, UNIS Hanoi's Diploma Programme Coordinator and Grade 11 English teacher also helps the IBO design training modules and select workshop leaders.

It's a role he's been carrying out for more than a decade now and one he relishes. Offering insight into his duties as a Professional Development Lead Educator, Clark said, "We facilitate workshops and help workshop leaders deliver effective peer-to-



peer training in as little as three days. We're also teaching teachers how to use pre-workshop technologies to make sure their session is efficiently designed for their cohort and we show them how to do follow up that is meaningful to course participants."

One of the hundreds of teachers put through their paces by Clark is Ms Cathie Matthews. Cathie, who teaches K2, trained to become a Primary Years Programme (PYP) workshop leader more than two years ago as her way of giving back to a vocation she's been passionate about for more than 30 years. So far, she's conducted four different sessions in Early Years Education, instructing her participants in the latest approaches to literacy, math and symbolic learning. The enthusiasm she witnesses from course delegates, she says, spurs her on to continue teaching the next generation of educators. She continued, "I've had experience of mentoring young teachers ever since I started teaching the IB in 2000; that's where my interest in teaching peers stemmed from. As a workshop leader, I've delivered training in Adelaide, Jakarta



and twice in Hong Kong. Teaching colleagues is something that I enjoy.

**"It's rewarding to know that I can inspire the next generation of teachers and give them new ideas that enhance their skills as educators."**

The IBO offers workshops and conferences that touch upon a wealth of subjects. From literacy and numeracy to music and Theory of Knowledge, the organisation attempts to cover every topic. This includes sports which UNIS Hanoi's Elementary School PE teacher, Cameron McHale is striving to innovate. Leading EARCOS\* sessions in Hong Kong and The Philippines, Cameron has been sharing his experience devising 'Adventure Challenges', a story-led chain of trials that take children in Grades 1 to 5 out of their comfort zone. An initiative that resulted from his thesis in experiential education, Adventure Challenge expertly exploits the natural love for exploration that children possess and channels it into a series of activities that not only appropriately challenges young learners but encompasses the attributes listed in the IB learner profile too.

Delivered over the course of six weeks per year, Adventure Challenges has proved popular, both with students and Cameron's peers. He said, "People love teaching it! In my presentations I give an introduction to some of the theory behind adventure-based learning and the facilitation techniques required to allow for a true

transfer of understanding. I will carry out further training in it next year."

Training others, delivering presentations and conducting examinations over the years has led to global recognition for one UNIS Hanoi teacher. Ms Hoa Phan, a Vietnamese teacher who has been at UNIS Hanoi for 21 years, has become one of only 17 educators from across the world who will decide the IB's new Language A curriculum. Recommended for the role after a member of the IBO saw her lead a seminar, Hoa says she's honoured to be involved in a process that will affect every IB student across the globe.

She said, "As part of the Curriculum Committee, I will be making suggestions about the structure of the syllabus, assessment criteria and teacher support materials that will be rolled out in 2019 and will be in use for seven years. I'm proud to have been chosen to be a part of something that will affect children all over the world."

UNIS Hanoi is committed to becoming a learning community that provides an inspirational role model for a better world, and its teachers are clearly at the forefront of that Vision.

\* EARCOS: *The East Asia Regional Council of Schools*

# Sharing is Caring



Hundreds of children from across Hanoi are welcomed onto the School's campus week in, week out in a bid to help address real and authentic needs in Vietnam. Giving broader access to UNIS Hanoi's state-of-the-art facilities is considered a further act of service that falls in line with the School's ethos to be a "Community with No Bystanders".

Throughout the year, children with visual impairments occupy a classroom where they learn English braille classes, while children who find themselves in sheltered care shed their worries for an hour or

two through art, play and sports therapy. In addition, street children learn to swim every Wednesday through the School's Swim for Life programme. The open door approach gives opportunities for UNIS Hanoi students to be of direct service to the communities and the organisations they support. In turn, the beneficiaries experience a new world of possibility and ambition.

Beneficiaries such as the orphans with disabilities who live in the Huong La Centre, an hour and a half's drive from the capital city. The children, who range from the ages of five to 17, visit

UNIS Hanoi once a year for a day of fun and frivolity. Part of the School's Service Learning programme, children from Huong La are paired with Middle and High School students who opt to serve the group for a period of at least two years. As part of their commitment, they play host, offering an experience that was previously beyond the imagination of children whose circumstances are bleak. Art Teacher, Ms Nora Graham is one of the group's supervisors. She said, "Coming to our School is like Disney World for the children from the Huong La Centre. Last year they used the pool - a first for them, and this year they explored the new playground. It's been endless fun!"

Many visitors come to the School as part of the Service Learning initiative. But not all. Some visits are the result of long-standing relationships the School has with other schools, as Grade 5 students discovered when they flung open their classroom doors to welcome in their friends from the Vinh Tien School in rural Hoa Binh province for a day of lively learning.

Divided into five groups and paired with buddies from UNIS Hanoi, the ten and eleven year old visitors sowed seedlings, painted, danced and enjoyed the sporting field and playground.

"I'm happy to be here!" enthused one of the 75 visiting students, Trang Nguyen. "I couldn't wait to see my friends at UNIS Hanoi." Eleven year-old Tiep Do added, "It's fun and I like the playground the most."

The 'fun' experienced throughout the day was a sentiment shared by their teachers, Mr Tam Dinh and Ms Huong Nguyen. Mr Tam who teaches English, commented, "This day has been a chance for us to understand each other. It's my first time at UNIS Hanoi and I think it's a very beautiful school and everybody is very friendly." Ms Huong, who teaches math and

Vietnamese, also remarked on the hospitality shown to them. She added, "My hope for our children is that they will watch and learn the social skills your students have and replicate it. For example, I watched one of your students pick up a frog that crossed her path and move it to a place of safety. I want my children to learn to be considerate like that."

UNIS Hanoi students were visibly delighted to play host, buzzing about in the classrooms, guiding their visitors around the campus, completing activities together and exchanging stories over lunch. UNIS Hanoi student Hien Nguyen who has been at the School for seven years said,

**"I think it is great to have visitors and I like how we've collaborated. What I'll remember the most about this day is how respectful, brave and open-minded our visitors were."**

Hien was one of five UNIS Hanoi students who acted as translators, helping both parties communicate with each other. His classmate Rooney Nguyen was also one of them. A student at UNIS Hanoi for two years, Rooney said visiting the Vinh Tien School back in September made him realise how lucky he is to have the

chance to attend such a great school. And, he says, it was simply 'amazing' to see his visitors happy because it makes him happy. He added, "Our School is the best school in the city and I feel grateful to be educated here and I feel lucky to have a full belly because I realise that life is unfair sometimes. I'm happy they got to see our School and I'm happy we got to give them this experience."

Ms Tina Carew, the Grade 5 Team Leader remarked, "For the past six years, we've been visiting the Vinh Tien School, teaching the students games, creating artwork and donating sports equipment too. Throughout the school year, we keep in touch, exchanging drawings and participating in gift exchanges. But this is the very first time they have visited us and it's something we want to continue doing in the future."



# In the next edition of UNiquely UNIS

In your next edition of UNiquely UNIS we will bring you another collection of outstanding stories featuring some of the exceptional people who have made UNIS Hanoi what it is today.

30 stories from 30 people to celebrate 30 years! Don't miss the special 30th Birthday edition for Winter 17/18...

If you would like to nominate someone to feature in this special commemorative edition, please contact UNiquely UNIS' Storyteller, Akofa Wallace: [stories@unishanoi.org](mailto:stories@unishanoi.org)



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For any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact the UNiquely UNIS Editor, Emma Silva: [advancement@unishanoi.org](mailto:advancement@unishanoi.org)

Or if you have a story you would like to share or read more about: [stories@unishanoi.org](mailto:stories@unishanoi.org)





United Nations International School of Hanoi

G9 Ciputra, Tay Ho, Hanoi, Vietnam

Telephone: +84 24 3758 1551 Fax: +84 24 3758 1542 Email: [info@unishanoi.org](mailto:info@unishanoi.org)

[www.unishanoi.org](http://www.unishanoi.org)