



## Success Story: Children Come Together to Protect the Environment

Nhan is a ninth grader at Phu Tan Secondary School in Thua Thien Hue Province, Vietnam. Until recently, he was unaware of the harmful impacts of plastic waste on the environment, or how he could alleviate plastic pollution.

Nhan is not alone. Vietnam is the 17<sup>th</sup> biggest plastic waste producer in the world. Every day, Vietnam generates nearly 18,000 metric tons of plastic waste – adding up to 1.8 billion metric tons of waste each year. Most of this waste is dumped directly into canals and rivers, which then flow to the seas and oceans. By 2050, there could be more trash than fish in the oceans surrounding Vietnam. This could have debilitating impacts not only on the country's fish, but also on its people. Millions of Vietnamese people derive their incomes from fishing and aquaculture, and plastic pollution threatens their livelihoods and food security.



Photo credit: USAID Green Annamites Project

In Thua Thien Hue Province, where Nhan lives, the impacts of this pollution are already wreaking havoc on coastal communities. If the people of this province are to survive and thrive, it will be necessary for them to make changes including reducing plastic pollution.

Nhan and his classmates learned all about this, and more, at an Earth Day 2018 event held by the USAID Green Annamites Project at his school in the lagoon district of Phu Vang in Thua Thien Hue. This environmental project, implemented by ECODIT is located in central Vietnam. More than 300 students and 40 teachers attended the Earth Day event. The theme of the event was, "Let's work together to end plastic pollution."

### Vietnam Green Annamites Activity Overview

**Period of Performance:** September 2016 – December 2020

**Value:** \$24 million

**Client:** The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

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The students learned about plastic waste's negative impacts on biodiversity, humanity, and the environment through videos, presentations, and group discussions. The event attendees put these lessons to action by picking up trash in the area, making art projects using recycled materials, formulating green action plans, making posters to promote environmental awareness, and planting 200 *hopea odorata* trees on campus. "We are delighted to have the opportunity to bring our children a very informative and meaningful extracurricular activity. We believe the messages they received on Earth Day will help them to be more aware and responsible for the environment around them," said the school's principal, Ho Van Dung.

Indeed, Nhan says he and his friends are now devoted to working together to keep their school and home clean and pollution-free. They have also committed to educating their families and neighbors about how to safeguard their environment for the long-term. "I learned a lot of things that I had not heard before about garbage and plastic," he said. "I will try to use less things like plastic bags. I will also throw the garbage out in the proper places and stop littering."



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