

Promoting kindness among children in schools is essential for fostering a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment that nurtures emotional wellbeing and positive social development.

Everyday kindness

A Global Education Movement From Vietnam



Nam Ngo Thanh

B.School in Binh Duong, Vietnam

The Everyday Kindness Project is transforming classrooms into spaces of empathy, joy, and lasting peace through daily acts of kindness. The Project began with a simple yet profound question: How do we restore joy, safety, and mutual respect in our schools?





Initiated in 2017 in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, and now recognized as part of HundrED’s Global Collection 2025, the project has positively impacted over 35,500 students across 23 countries. It arose in response to increasing school violence and is grounded in the belief that kindness cannot be taught through words alone—it must be practiced daily.

The inspiration for the project stemmed from a deeply emotional moment. After attending the 2018 Global Education and Skills Forum in Dubai, Nam Ngo Thanh—the project’s founder—heard three students from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida speak about the trauma they experienced after a school shooting. Their heartbreaking stories moved him deeply. He realized that while Vietnam had not seen such tragedies, school violence in other forms was still a serious issue. He concluded that lasting peace in society will only be possible when people treat one another with kindness, empathy, and compassion.

Elements of the Program

The project is designed as a five-week experiential program based on the CASEL Framework for Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). SEL is more than a theoretical model; it is a research-based approach that cultivates empathy, emotional regulation, responsible decision-making, and interpersonal skills. The Everyday Kindness Project embodies these principles through simple daily practices that require no special infrastructure—just dedicated teachers, engaged students, and a culture that values humanity. The program’s structure includes classroom discussions, family involvement, and global student exchange.

In the first week, students explore the meaning of kindness through storytelling and multimedia, and create personal action plans. These reflections often lead to deep insights into students’ lived experiences, promoting self-awareness and connection.

One unique classroom activity developed by Nam is the “Love Words” game. Students write positive notes to one another and stick them on each other’s backs. These simple messages bring smiles and boost confidence, making kindness tangible. Students also begin each day with 15 minutes of kindness stories or videos, followed by thoughtful class discussions.

In the following three weeks, students carry out kind acts at home, at school, and in the community—helping their parents, assisting friends, and improving shared



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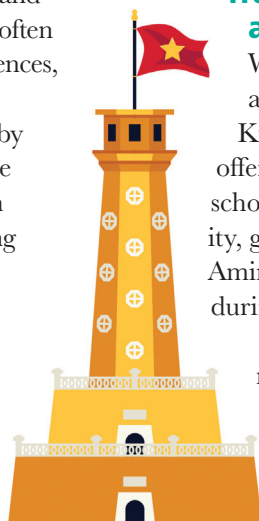
spaces. These acts are recorded by families, shared at school, and celebrated to reinforce intrinsic motivation.

The final week concludes with a global Skype-athon, allowing students to share stories and cultural practices of kindness with international peers. In one memorable session, Vietnamese students introduced Tet traditions, such as giving lucky money, while Italian students spoke about wintertime community support. Some schools also host a Kindness Day, where the entire community participates in charity events, such as clothing drives and fundraising efforts.

Transforming Schools, Homes, and Hearts

What sets the Everyday Kindness Project apart is its adaptability. For example, Jay Kumar, a student in India, witnessed a girl offering to shine shoes to buy her brother’s school uniform. A vendor, touched by her sincerity, gave her the uniform as a gift. In Indonesia, Amira Syafana recounted caring for her mother during an illness-filled night.

These personal stories show how ordinary moments of kindness can become powerful acts of transformation. Educators have noticed a significant shift in school environments: tensions decrease, peer support increases, and exclusionary



behaviors diminish. When kindness is visible and celebrated, it becomes contagious.

In Vietnam, many schools have incorporated weekly kindness reflections into homeroom sessions. In India, kindness is emphasized in daily assemblies, and student-led clubs host anonymous appreciation events. In Uganda, the curriculum was translated into local languages and paired with traditional stories of unity and care. These cultural adaptations help localize the program without compromising its core values.

Key to the project's success is equipping teachers with the mindset and tools to model kindness consistently. Professional development workshops focus on emotional regulation and the neuroscience of empathy. Initially hesitant educators report improved job satisfaction and stronger classroom bonds. Kindness is also used as a restorative disciplinary approach—students reflect on their actions and repair harm through

kind deeds. Pilot schools saw a 40% reduction in behavior-related incidents.

Parents play a vital role in reinforcing the values. When kindness is emphasized at home and at school, children receive a consistent message that care, empathy, and respect are priorities. Parents have observed changes not only in their children's behavior, but also in overall family dynamics—more cooperation, better emotional expression, and less punitive language. Some families adopt a “kindness jar,” documenting kind acts as part of their daily routine.

Advancing Global Education and Social Impact

The project aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). By embedding kindness into



school life, the project fosters inclusive, equitable, and socially sustainable learning environments. Kindness is not just a personal virtue—it is a civic skill that shapes responsible global citizens.

Looking forward, the project's flexible framework offers applications at all education levels. For preschoolers, kindness can be explored through storytelling and role-play. At the secondary level, the model evolves into student-led campaigns and leadership opportunities. Special education settings benefit from its inclusive, gentle approach. Notably, the project does not detract from academic performance—on the contrary, students who feel emotionally safe perform better, collaborate more, and show greater resilience.

The long-term vision includes building a research-backed impact dashboard to monitor transformation indicators, such as lower absenteeism, stronger student-teacher trust, and improved emotional intelligence. Plans for an annual Global Kindness Summit are also in development, bringing together educators, students, and policymakers to share insights and amplify the project's reach. Policymakers are increasingly recognizing SEL outcomes as predictors of social stability and civic engagement.

The Everyday Kindness Project is being positioned as a low-cost, high-impact strategy for education reform, especially in regions affected by conflict, inequality, or social stress. A white paper is in development to propose scalable public-sector adoption, supported by case studies from over 15 countries. Ongoing discussions with ministries aim to include kindness-oriented assessments in national evaluation frameworks.

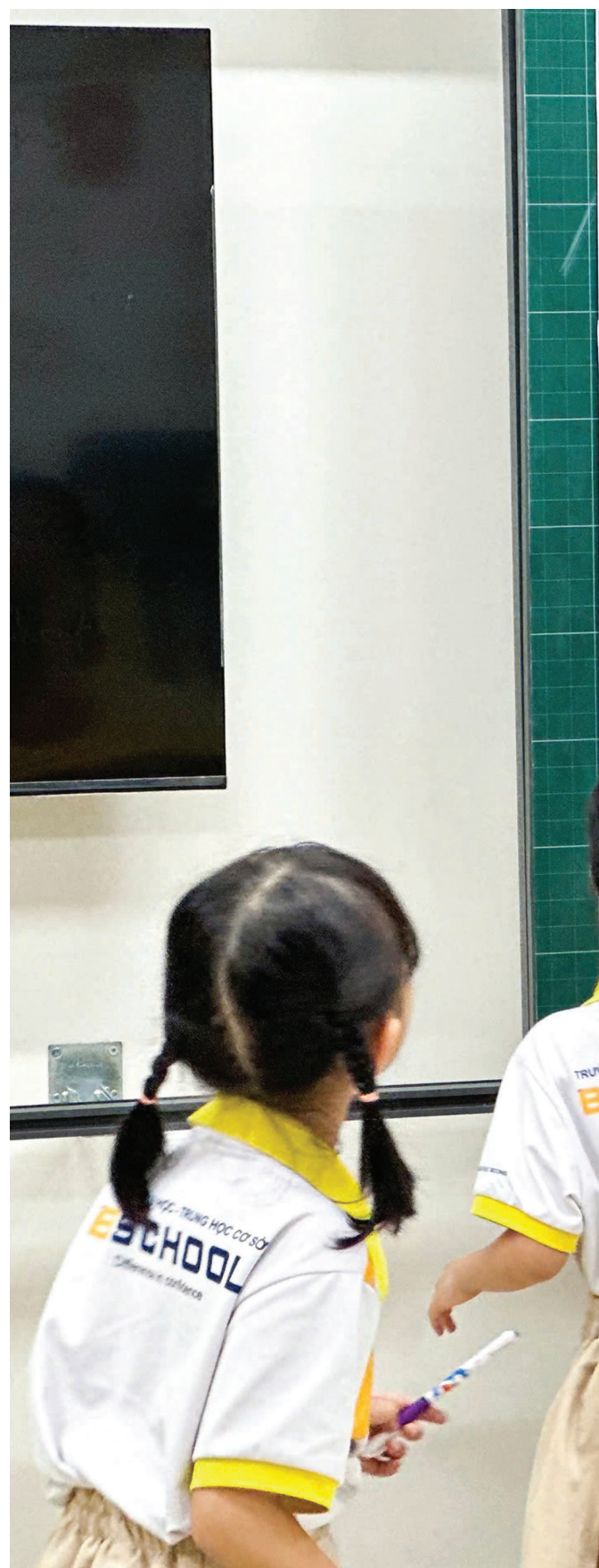
An Invitation to Kindness

In 2024, the Everyday Kindness Project received the Southeast Asian Educational Innovation Award, honoring its transformative impact on social-emotional learning and its replicable model for peaceful school reform. Ultimately, the Everyday Kindness Project is not a universal remedy for all educational challenges, but it offers a practical, replicable, and deeply human way to reconnect education with its moral purpose: nurturing individuals who not only know—but care. For teachers, families, and education leaders, the message is clear: kindness is not a luxury—it is a necessity.

When we plant this value in schools, we grow better students and a better society.

To connect with like-minded educators and bring kindness into your students' everyday learning environment, we warmly invite you to join us at <https://mrnamvn.wixsite.com/everydaykindness>.

Together, we can ensure that kindness becomes more than a







cherished value by making it a daily practice embedded in the heart of education—universally, inclusively, and with purpose.

About the author:

Nam Ngo Thanh is a dedicated educator, innovator, and community leader who is passionate about transforming education and solving the social challenges facing Vietnamese youth. He currently serves as Vice Principal of B.School in Binh Duong, Vietnam, where he integrates health education and sustainable development into the curriculum, focusing on students' physical and mental wellbeing. Driven by a mission to reform education, Nam has launched several initiatives,

including the Five Safe Fingers Project—a global child protection program—and the Everyday Kindness Project, which fosters a culture of empathy and kindness in schools. He is also the founder of the Vietnamese Innovative Educators Foundation, a thriving community of over 150,000 teachers. Nam continues to expand his leadership capacity in integrating education and health while championing systemic reform. He envisions a future in which education is a tool for healing, empowerment, and enduring social change.

Disclosure Statement:

The author is the founder of the Everyday Kindness Project.