

UN
UNIVERSITY
VOLUNTEER



UNV SHARING:

Are you passionate about giving back to the community or working with people around the globe? This program may be what you are looking for!

The unit I worked for:

**YOUTH CO:LAB
VIETNAM**

Co-created in 2017 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Citi Foundation



My job position:

- UN University Volunteer in Coordination Support for Youth Entrepreneurship



KEY JOB TASKS:



FOR TEMASEK FOUNDATION	
Title	Empowering Vietnamese Youth for a Green and Resilient Workforce
Future-ready Green Workforce (FGW)	
Proposed Timeline	October 2023 to September 2027
	Phase 1: Nov 2024 – Oct 2025
	Phase 2: Nov 2025 – Nov 2027
Estimated Budget	Phase 1: USD 300,000 (SGD 390,000*)
	Phase 2: USD 1,500,000 (SGD 1,950,000*)
	*NOTE: 13.5%

Context/ Background

Vietnam is currently in a unique period of "golden demographic structure," with a significant portion of its population consisting of young people. According to the 2019 Census, 20.4 million individuals aged 10-24 represent 21% of the population, offering a remarkable opportunity for a demographic dividend. This favorable demographic window, expected to continue until 2039, underscores the critical importance of equipping young people with the necessary skills and knowledge to contribute meaningfully to the nation's socio-economic development. However, despite this potential, Vietnam's youth face significant challenges in transitioning from school to the workforce, resulting in high unemployment rates. Reports indicate that one in ten young people is unemployed, and youth workers three times more likely to lose their jobs than older individuals. Additionally, fresh university graduates typically take an average of 7.3 months to secure their first stable or satisfactory job. These statistics highlight the difficulties young people encounter in finding stable, decent employment, largely due to issues such as skills mismatches, underutilization, and the prevalence of low-quality jobs among the aged 15-29. Addressing these challenges is essential to unlocking the full potential of Vietnam's young workforce.

Vietnam's commitment to achieving net zero emissions by 2050 is a complex and ambitious goal that requires a fundamental transformation across all sectors of the economy. This transition involves shifting from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources, adopting energy-efficient technologies, implementing sustainable agricultural practices, and developing low-carbon infrastructure. Each of these changes necessitates the creation and expansion of green jobs—roles that are directly tied to environmental sustainability and the reduction of carbon emissions.

Green jobs, as defined by the National Green Growth Strategy for the 2021-2030 period, encompass various sectors that contribute to the conservation and restoration of environmental quality. These jobs are essential for Vietnamese youth as the country transitions towards a sustainable, low-carbon economy, presenting significant economic opportunities and addressing environmental

are increasingly sought after in the labor market. Engaging youth as change agents in sustainability empowers them to lead initiatives that combat climate change while promoting inclusion and equitable access to education. By preparing the workforce for a net-zero future, not only enhances youth employability but also ensures long-term economic stability and resilience, positioning itself competitively in a rapidly evolving global market.

As the country advances its green transition, there will be a growing need for a workforce equipped with the knowledge and skills required to meet the demands of these emerging green jobs. This necessitates the integration of green skills into the education and training of young people, ensuring that they are prepared to contribute to both the economic and environmental sustainability of the nation.

Furthermore, as Vietnam navigates its path towards becoming an upper-middle-income country by the development of a skilled, green workforce is critical. The Vietnamese government recognizes the importance of reforming educational and vocational training systems to align with market needs and support the country's economic ambitions. This project, therefore, aims to enhance job readiness and green skills among Vietnamese youth, positioning them to succeed in a rapidly changing job market and contribute to the nation's sustainable development goals.

The timing of this initiative also coincides with the 60th anniversary of Singapore's independence in 2025, presenting an opportunity to showcase the significant impact of Singapore's support in building a stronger generation across Southeast Asia. Through the partnerships and collaborative efforts facilitated by Temasek Foundation, this project will highlight Singapore's leadership in fostering regional development and unity. By empowering Vietnam's youth with the skills needed to thrive in a green economy, the project not only contributes to Vietnam's growth but also reinforces the shared vision of a prosperous, sustainable future for the entire region. As we celebrate Singapore's six decades of independence, this proposal stands as a testament to the enduring bond between Singapore and Vietnam, and to the transformative power of regional cooperation in addressing global challenges and building a resilient, empowered generation of leaders for Southeast Asia.

II. Development challenge

Vietnam is experiencing rapid economic growth and industrialization, but this progress has also led to significant environmental challenges and disparities in job opportunities for its youth. Vietnamese youth play a pivotal role in the country's economic and social development, yet they face numerous challenges that hinder their successful integration into the labor market and entrepreneurial ventures. Despite the demographic advantage of a youthful population, fresh graduates and young professionals, especially those from vulnerable groups, disadvantaged backgrounds, and rural areas, face substantial barriers to securing meaningful employment. These barriers include a lack of soft skills, digital literacy, and practical job experience, coupled with a significant gap between academic learning and actual job market requirements.

Reports and documentation

- Prepared funding proposals, activity reports
- Visualised data and research

Youth Programs

- Conducted mover program
- Facilitated the BASIC Summit 2024
- Facilitated Future Founders Fest 2024



Collaboration with different parties

- Met with **Temasek Foundation** from Singapore
- **Collaborated** with Climate Change & Environmental teams

LESSON LEARNED



LED

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“Lead a change”

L - Leadership

“Love the problems, not the solutions,” is a quote shared by one Singapore start-up founder.

Being a leader does not mean you need to be the greatest man in a specific area; you can be a “professional” in any realm to make improvements. Working in youth entrepreneurship in the past six months, I summarized the most valuable attribute of young entrepreneurs: They are keen on finding problems. They identify the pain points in daily living, encouraging them to be the leaders to solve those problems. This echoes what the Singapore entrepreneur shared. A problem we found, an opportunity we created. After learning about the entrepreneur mindset, we have to talk about other vital elements that help us to be a leader: empowerment.





D - Diversity

Working in the United Nations is a great chance to build friendships with people around the globe.

One of my unforgettable memories is the time I spent with my colleagues. Traveling with a motorbike is a new experience for me. While trying Vietnamese cuisine, cycling in West Lake, and chilling in coffee shops, I can truly feel the beauty of this country. If I had never been here, I would not be able to grasp how cultural diversity enriches collaboration, like learning to navigate Hanoi's chaotic traffic with my local teammate. These moments taught me that embracing differences—whether in work styles, traditions, or perspectives—fuels innovation and trust.

Diversity is not just about backgrounds; it is about actively listening, adapting, and finding shared purpose amidst contrasts. This journey brings me a new mindset into every project, ensuring inclusivity is a checkbox, but the foundation of progress.

E - Empowerment

Empowerment means people having power and control over their own lives. My UNV experience taught me how to break the power blocks.

For cross-team collaboration, empowerment can be difficult due to conflicting priorities, communication breakdowns, and limited resources. Key lessons highlight the importance of acquiring interdisciplinary knowledge—such as behavioral insights, data literacy, or conflict resolution—to break down silos and build shared understanding. Proactively engaging colleagues and supervisors through transparent dialogue aligns objectives, identifies systemic barriers, and secures support for structural reforms.

From the service users' perspective, empowering users requires accessible education initiatives, blending practical training such as leadership workshops with peer mentoring to strengthen self-efficacy and decision-making autonomy. Crucially, convening stakeholders—including beneficiaries, NGOs, government agencies, and sector specialists—enables holistic, co-created strategies that tackle underlying inequities while fostering scalable, context-sensitive solutions.

This integrated approach balances immediate skill-building with long-term systemic shifts, transforming passive recipients into active partners in change.

