



CELEBRATING **60** YEARS



Annual Report
2021-2022

From the Executive Director



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Oh, what a difference 60 years make! The world surrounding us has certainly changed since VIA founder Dwight Clark and a group of Stanford students ventured out to Hong Kong to volunteer in the summer of 1963. Back then, not many people were traveling overseas and access to information was limited. There were also no economic superpowers in Asia. Over the past six decades, there have been many events, including political conflicts in Asia and global health threats such as the SARS epidemic in 2003 and the recent COVID pandemic, that have forced VIA to suspend our activities. However, being agile and resourceful, VIA has been able to navigate these challenges and continue to bring people from different cultures together.

As VIA adapted to the changing environment over the years, our programs have also continued to evolve. What started out as a summer volunteer project for American students became yearlong fellowships where VIA Global Community Fellows work with partner organizations in Asia to support capacity-building and their efforts to better their communities. When we started inviting students from Asia to the US in the 1970s, the focus was primarily on language learning and cultural exposure. Our Silicon Valley-based programs have since diversified across a range of academic and professional fields, to focus on developing mindsets and skills to take innovative approaches to addressing social issues. In just the last few years, we have also taken our programming online, making our curricula and unique approach to community-based learning globally accessible.

While our current programs appear different from before, our core values and approach have remained unchanged. We continue to value compassion and approach situations and people with openness and empathy. We also value collaboration and adapt our programs and services to ensure that they are meaningful to our partners and the communities in which they work. With regards to our key activities, we continue to connect people across the Pacific to build cross-cultural empathy and provide opportunities for self-reflection so that they can explore ways to connect to society and take action to bring positive change.

As we clarify our purpose in today's world and look ahead to the next few decades, we are in the process of updating our vision and mission statements. We greatly appreciate those who have shared their feedback on our initial drafts. I feel truly honored and privileged to have the opportunity to work with dedicated staff, board members, and alumni at a critical transformational time for VIA. As I reflect on my journey with VIA, starting as a participant from Japan joining a summer program on the Stanford campus over three decades ago and joining the VIA team as a staff member almost 20 years ago, I remain committed to providing experiences of personal growth and cross-cultural connections, and ensuring our programs are meaningful to the communities we serve. I must also sincerely thank all our staff, board, donors, funders, alumni, and friends who support VIA and look forward to shaping VIA's future together.

May 2023

Kazutoh Ishida, PhD
Executive Director

VIA In-Person Programs Return!

While our activities were limited to the virtual space during 2021, we were able to gradually resume our programs in person starting in the summer of 2022.



In June, October, and November 2022, in partnership with Meridian International, VIA hosted three cohorts from the Next30 Central Asia program sponsored by the US State Department. Young leaders including activists, artists, engineers, and entrepreneurs got hands-on experience on social impact and innovation during their visit to Silicon Valley. Program sessions included a workshop on design-thinking by VIA Executive Director Kazutoh Ishida, a talk by VIA alumnus and venture capital investor Andy Cohen, and site visits which included the Stanford and UC Berkeley campuses as well as social enterprises such as Delancey Street Foundation, Edible Schoolyard Project, and BRIDGEGOOD.

Next30 Participant Voice: The workshop on design-thinking was truly inspirational and we all enjoyed the process of gaining hands-on experience. I now look forward to implementing projects with long-term impacts towards shaping the future of Central Asia.

Led by Program Director Yuki Ueda, the Rikuzen Takata Project returned to an in-person format in August 2022, despite continuing challenges with COVID entry restrictions to Japan. In partnership with Rikkyo University, students from the US, Japan, and Hong Kong participated in a seven-day joint program dedicated to understanding disaster recovery and working with the community in Rikuzen Takata, a city that was devastated by the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami.

During the program, participants learned about approaches to sustainability especially in rural communities, while developing cross-cultural collaboration skills and reflecting on their own roles as community leaders.



Rikuzen Takata Project Participant Voice: I got the experience of seeing how communities and individuals recover and grow from natural disasters. I met friends I plan to stay in touch with, learn from, and see again throughout the rest of my life. I developed a love for Japan and its amazing communities.



In February 2023, VIA successfully hosted our first in-person Exploring Social Innovation (ESI) Program in Silicon Valley since 2020. Led by VIA Program Director Kristy Ishii, the cohort was made up of 15 amazing students and young professionals from Japan and Myanmar. Participants shared their career passions, inspirational personal stories, and community-driven initiatives while bonding over collaboration on their design-thinking projects.

During the program, the participants focused on learning about themselves and anchoring their strengths as individuals and as a part of a team. Being together in person offered the group an opportunity to learn about mindful meditation, engage professionally with local business and community leaders, and connect with changemakers. The final days of the program were spent in deep reflection and planning for goals post-program.



ESI Participant Voice: Through ESI, I gained not only design-thinking techniques for social innovation but also connections with other socially-minded people. I got a chance to reflect on myself and VIA taught me to be “an authentic me for others.”

HOW TO SUPPORT

We look forward to resuming our in-person programs this year in Silicon Valley and in Asia. If you would like to support, please visit viaprograms.org/donate. Your support will provide opportunities for aspiring social impact leaders to experience a transformative journey of cultural exploration and self-discovery through VIA.

Exploring Health Care

Connecting Around the World

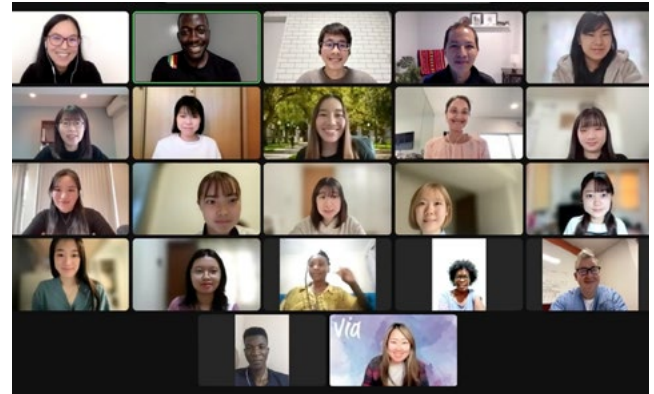
In the past 25 years, over 800 university students from Asia studying in various health care fields from mainland China, Japan, Taiwan, Myanmar, and other regions have joined VIA's health care programs to discover new perspectives and explore new insights on medicine and its practice in the United States and Asia.

The value of VIA's health care programs is not only in the exchange of ideas and knowledge but also in the impact it has on personal lives. Through reflections, participants learn more about themselves and their place in the world and what kind of health care provider they want to be.

2021 was the first year that VIA offered the Exploring Health Care (EHC) program virtually. While originally a necessity due to the pandemic travel restrictions, this opportunity made it possible for those who may not have otherwise been able to join an in-person program to gain knowledge and skills alongside like-minded young medical professionals from across Asia.

In 2022, 19 participants from Japan, Myanmar and Zambia joined the EHC program virtually. Virtual programs have made the VIA health care programs more accessible allowing participants from across the globe to connect and share their experiences and perspectives with each other.

VIA Program Director Lina Yamashita said, "The EHC programs this past year were a great success! The participants virtually explored a variety of health care topics from medical education, work-life balance, and mental health to response to COVID-19, cross-cultural communication in health care settings, and hospice care. I worked with an amazing team of fellows from Japan, the US, and Zambia who created a warm, supportive environment that enabled participants to actively engage with one another. Although we were all spread across different time zones, we were able to connect in a way that I never thought would be possible!"



HOW TO SUPPORT

The VIA Exploring Health Care (EHC) Program will provide both virtual and in-person options this year. If you would like to support, please visit viaprograms.org/donate. Your support of this program will provide opportunities for future health care providers to experience a transformative journey of cultural exploration and self-discovery through VIA.

VIA Social Impact Partnership Conference 2023

VIA began 2023 welcoming our Global Community Fellows and supporting partners to Chiang Mai, Thailand for the first VIA Social Impact Partnership Conference!

VIA Fellows, partners, supporters and alumni from the US, Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, and Myanmar gathered together in January 2023 for a week-long conference of collaboration and

innovation. Conference activities included meditation, a workshop on self-compassion, visit to a local social enterprise, culture exchange with students from BEAM Education Foundation, and a World Cafe session to share challenges and solutions. Through these activities, attendees discussed best practices, engaged in peer-to-peer learning, and strengthened VIA's network and relationships.

VIA would like to thank the Enlight Foundation for their sponsorship of the VIA Social Impact Partnership Conference.



HOW TO SUPPORT

The VIA Global Community Fellowship (GCF) is a multi-year program working directly with communities in Asia. Fellows get hands-on experience learning how organizations in Asia are using creative and innovative

methods to address critical social challenges. The GCF program is currently operating in Thailand and Japan, with active plans to expand in other areas in Asia. VIA is open to potential partners to support the growth of the GCF program. For opportunities, please contact our Strategic Relationships Director

at wallace@viaprograms.org for more details. If you would like to support, please visit viaprograms.org/donate. Your support will provide opportunities for aspiring social impact leaders to experience a transformative journey of cultural exploration and self-discovery through VIA.

GCF Partner Spotlight

In April 2022, VIA resumed our Global Community Fellowship (GCF) program, working with our partners in Asia to host a new group of Fellows in Thailand and Japan. As we look forward to resuming many more posts in other areas across Asia, we would like to thank our wonderful partners and highlight our GCF posts this year.

BEAM Education Foundation

beamedu.org

Bridging Educational Access to Migrants (BEAM) is a non-profit educational foundation that emerged in Chiang Mai, Thailand as a response to the needs of migrant and refugee youth living in Thailand, most of whom come from Myanmar. They are dedicated to supporting local, people-oriented communities in Myanmar and Thailand through access to comprehensive educational opportunities.

VIA has partnered with BEAM for nearly a decade through our Fellowship program. This past summer, **Jenny Chen** joined as our first Fellow to be posted at BEAM since the pandemic. In her role as a Fellow, Jenny manages the Youth Community Engagement Program (YCEP), a cultural learning and youth empowerment program which facilitates the integration and re-integration of migrant people in Thai and Burmese communities. Jenny engages with students through workshops, youth programs, and community events.



Jenny at the local community fair in Chiang Mai, Thailand

Shonan Shijuku

risshi50.jp

Shonan Shijuku is a community organization that was launched in 2010 and incorporated by the current mayor of the City of Izumi Otsu in Osaka Prefecture in 2016. As an organization, Shonan Shijuku strives to nurture future social impact leaders who can contribute to their community and beyond. As an organization, they provide educational programs, support youth in entrepreneurship, hold sessions that encourage self-expression for students and children, and connect foreigners studying at a Japanese school in their city to people in their

志で、人も社会も変えていく
松南志塾



Betty and Iroha at Irobeet Cafe

local community. We would like to thank the Freeman Foundation for supporting this post.

VIA sent our first Fellow, **Betty Nguyen** to Shonan Shijuku in April 2022. Betty supports educational programming for student groups and community members in Izumi Otsu. Recently, she collaborated with a local food company to organize a mural painting event for their new containers, with a focus on making mural-painting activities accessible to children, seniors, and disabled participants in the local community. Betty interacts regularly with the local community, focusing on expression and promoting positivity through art and healthy living.



Parami University

parami.edu.mm



Lynn and Fannie with the Parami University team

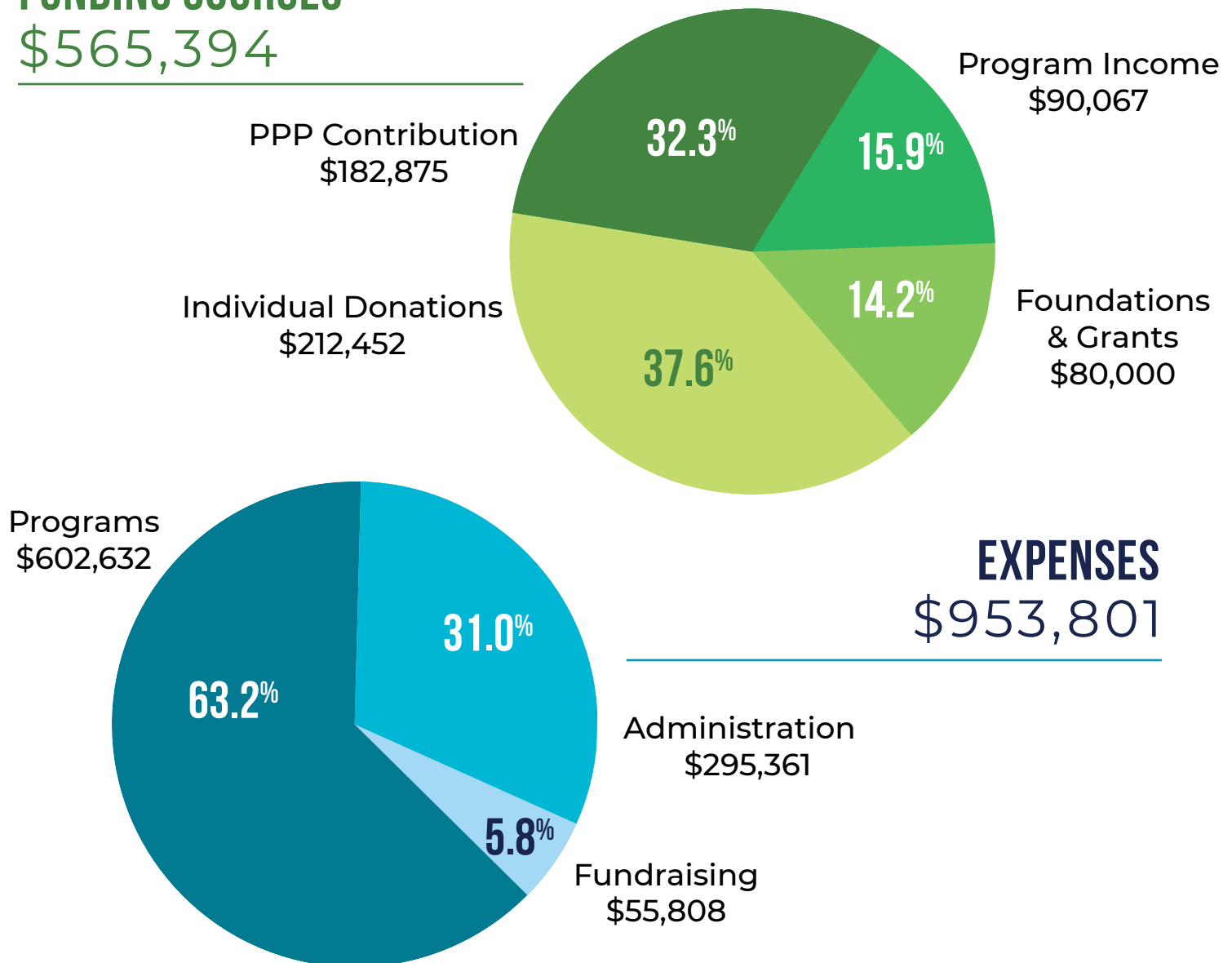
Parami University is a high-quality liberal arts university in Myanmar that seeks to cultivate future leaders and global citizens by nurturing critical thinking, inspiring leadership, and compassionate service. The university started as a pilot institute known as Parami Institute of Liberal Arts and Sciences in early 2017 and received its licensure in 2022 by the District of Columbia Higher Education Licensure Commission and is currently in the process of seeking accreditation.

In this partnership with Parami, VIA Fellows work as Academic Advisors to have provided advising support and tutoring to undergraduate students. Since August 2022, **Lynn Travnikova** and **Fannie Osran** have supported Parami University in their roles as GCF Fellows by helping launch the first class of undergraduate degree programs online. By focusing on providing access to education for students in protracted crises, Lynn and Fannie help students from challenging backgrounds through their coursework as they work to obtain their university degrees.

2021–2022 By The Numbers

FUNDING SOURCES

\$565,394



Leaving a Legacy for VIA

We would like to thank and honor all of those who have made a legacy gift promise to VIA. Their commitment will ensure the continuation of rich, immersive cross-cultural learning experiences that transform lives and strengthen our global community.

John Affeldt & Karen Hoy

Jeanne Blamey & Robert Fram

Dwight Clark

Tim & Mia Clark

Brooke Isham

Joan Karlin & Paul Resnick

Stephen McNeil

Michael Moradzadeh

Corbin Smith

Joel Stratte-McClure

Robert Textor

If you have included VIA in your will or trust, please inform us so that we can thank you for your special commitment. For additional information about our program, please contact Kazutoh Ishida at: kazutoh@viaprograms.org or (415) 904-8033.

Contributors

July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022

Foundations, Corporations & Organizations

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Yuta Tonegawa

Your contributions add miles to each participant's journey.
For that, we sincerely thank you.

Cherry Blossom (\$1,000–\$2,499)

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Shengnan (Cicy) Zhang
Myint Mo Thant Thant Zeya Tun

HOW TO SUPPORT

We are deeply grateful for our alumni and friends who have supported VIA in so many ways, including assisting our programs as fellows/mentors, providing insight and expertise, collaborating on programs, building community connections, and donating to support VIA's mission.

If you would like to make a gift and add your support, please visit viaprograms.org/donate or contact Wallace Wong, VIA Strategic Relationships Director, at wallace@viaprograms.org.



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VIA Year in Review: 2021 - 2022



Resuming in-person programs in Silicon Valley and Asia



Improving access to learning opportunities, international perspectives, and cross-cultural connections through virtual programming



Supporting grassroots community projects and initiatives



Working with new partners and collaborators



Welcoming three new team members



Hosting our first in-person reunion since 2019

2023 Social Impact Leadership Conference

June 9-10 (US Time) | June 10-11 (Asia Time)

Each year, the Social Impact Leadership Conference brings together community leaders from around the world to share stories and good practices in the social impact community. The theme for this year's virtual conference is "Guiding Stars: Navigating Sustainable Impact" which focuses on the orientation, pathway and journey one takes to driving sustainable impact through leadership and social innovation in their communities.

Attendees will gain access to inspiring keynotes, engaging breakout sessions, and valuable networking opportunities from the global VIA community. We invite all members of VIA's community, including alumni, partners, collaborators, and friends to join!

viaprograms.org/event/2023-conference



HOW TO SUPPORT

The Social Impact Leadership Conference is supported through sponsorship. If you would like to support, please contact Wallace Wong, VIA Strategic Relationships Director, at wallace@viaprograms.org.

In Memoriam



Paul

Paul Goldman

Paul Goldman, professor of educational leadership, passed away in January 2023. Paul was a VIA volunteer in Vietnam in 1966 and remained an active member of VIA's alumni community. He enjoyed sharing his perspective and advice while interviewing future participants, connected with friends and new VIA members at alumni gatherings in-person and online, and joined the Japan alumni tour in 2017.



Lafcadio

Lafcadio Cortesi

Lafcadio Cortesi passed away in March 2022 at his home in Berkeley. Lafcadio was a dedicated international campaigner for a better environment. He worked in Indonesia on community development as a VIA volunteer from 1985 till 1987. He then joined Greenpeace, where he led efforts to support local communities in their struggles to keep their traditional lands and end deforestation in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

From VIA Founder, Dwight Clark, "The enduring and deep effects of sustained exposure to a compelling culture can be seen so clearly in the lives of Paul Goldman and Lafcadio Cortesi. They absorbed the best of the Vietnamese and Indonesian cultures and left Asia as larger and more complex versions of themselves."

How YOU can Support VIA

Our work is made possible through generous contributions from our alumni and friends in our community. Below are some ways that you can support VIA. A gift of any amount will support our work and elevate hope for the people and communities we serve. If you have any questions about making a gift to VIA, please contact info@viaprograms.org.

- Make a **one-time or a recurring monthly donation** online from www.viaprograms.org/donate.
- **Mail a check** made out to Volunteers in Asia to P.O. Box 1314, Palo Alto, CA 94302.
- Make a **stock donation** or a gift through a **donor-advised fund**.
- Have your company **match your charitable contribution**. You can check to see if your company offers matching from viaprograms.org/donation-match.
- Include VIA in your will and **leave a legacy gift** so that VIA can continue to provide rich cross-cultural experiential experiences in Asia and the US for future generations!