

The AASuccess Huyen's Road Project - A Catalyst for Change

By: Ngoc Huynh, 19 (Level 2 Student)



When AASuccess embarked on this road-building venture in the small town of Hau Giang, the challenges were evident. The project required a significant commitment to building and maintaining trust across cultural divides. Aligning Vietnamese expectations with American standards of transparency and accountability involved numerous stakeholders, each playing a crucial role despite historical mistrust and opacity.

Yet, AASuccess's enduring commitment, rooted in nearly two decades of community service and development, provided a credible foundation that gradually won over our partners. This project vividly illustrates how perseverance and genuine intent can overcome skepticism.

For the students of AASuccess, this project is an unparalleled educational experience. Studying engineering or project management in a classroom is one thing; applying these skills on the ground, confronting real-world challenges, and making tangible contributions to a community's welfare is entirely another. Every meter of road laid not only enhances their technical skills but also deepens their understanding of the socio-economic landscape of rural Vietnam. This insight into the complexities of business development projects is invaluable, instilling a sense of responsibility and a spirit of innovation that textbooks alone cannot provide.

Meticulously overseen by our Vietnamese partners, the construction site meets all durability standards and contract specifications for at least ten years. The local community's celebration of the final road sections marks the unveiling of a new route and symbolizes the strengthened relationships and trust that have emerged. This initiative has created both a literal and metaphorical pathway in Hau Giang, laying the groundwork for future collaborative endeavors that enhance quality of life through cultural and economic exchanges.



The journey to where I stand today in the Hau Giang road project is not marked by mere academic achievements or a seamless series of successes. Instead, it is a profound lesson in growth, born from confronting fears and overcoming personal barriers. Engaging actively in a project where all exchanges were in Vietnamese, a language I struggled with due to my international schooling, was daunting. Yet, this became a pivotal experience for me, underscoring the essence of true learning and adaptation.

My early reluctance to ask questions, stemming from a fear of judgment, was a barrier I had to confront head-on. This project taught me that the real world values effort and intent over perfection. The local experts and community members didn't expect flawless Vietnamese or an

expert-level understanding from me. They valued my willingness to learn and engage, which was far more significant. This realization helped me transition from a passive observer to an active participant, using my role to bridge gaps not just in communication, but in cultural understanding. By stepping out of my comfort zone and engaging directly with the local committee, I not only managed to overcome my linguistic insecurities but also successfully introduced one of our AASuccess student's "Go Green" initiatives, gaining approval to enhance the project with environmental benefits. This wasn't just a victory for the project; it was a personal triumph over the insecurities that had held me back.

As we near the completion of the Hau Giang road, I reflect not only on the road we've built but on the journey I've undertaken personally. This experience has reshaped my understanding of success, teaching me that our greatest achievements often lie in the struggles we overcome and the growth we experience. AASuccess embodies this philosophy, nurturing individuals not merely to succeed but to grow through their challenges and to contribute meaningfully to their communities. In this journey, every step, every misstep, and every recovery is celebrated as part of the invaluable process of building not just roads but people.



A special thank you to the following who are involved with this project: our project sponsor, Jonathan Padgett; our AAS Operations Director, Dr. Huy Luu; and our US-IBDC Vietnam Partner, Viet Lotus JSC.

The Go-Green Team's Adventure

Through the Eyes of Leo Lue & Aashee Balani, 16 (Level 2 Students)

The Go-Green Team embarked on their journey approximately three years ago, a fact that still astonishes them as it feels like just yesterday they were buying a cartload of plants from Home Depot to distribute within their community. However, from the first event, it became apparent that this project held boundless potential. Both members were in unanimous agreement that they would spare no effort in pushing Go-Green to its utmost potential.

Following their first event, they had a significant meeting with Dave Nguyen, during which they deliberated Go-Green's trajectory over the next five years. They held ambitious aspirations, envisioning media coverage and bigger events, while Dave articulated hopes of extending assistance to communities in Vietnam. Remarkably, these aspirations materialized, just two years earlier than anticipated.



Naturally, their journey to the present moment was not without its challenges. Following the resounding success of their large-scale Go-Green Earth Day event in 2022, they felt like they were on fire. Yet, in subsequent meetings, they found themselves stumped.

Uncertainty took over the team as to how to expand Go-Green while balancing their high school commitments. They were overwhelmed with questions about the project and the viability of introducing new events that remained aligned with their gardening mission.



Faced with a list of ideas, they searched their homes and communities for inspiration, ultimately deciding to sustain Go-Green through a series of smaller summer events like "Plate Your Plant" and "Trash Rehash" to prevent burnout. This year, reinvigorated, they resolved to make a significant impact at Fairfax Earth Day. Through unwavering determination and community support, they witnessed many of their dreams materialize, affirming their belief that with continued effort and broader engagement, the Go-Green project can continue towards success.

Thank you to all the people who support the Go-Green team in AASuccess. Their passion is to spread environmental awareness, and with each student motivating one another, they have persevered and now have their sights set on greater heights.

A warm thank you to all parents, volunteers, and members who helped support the recent Go-Green Earth Day event.

Connecting with Operations

April's Momentum

Despite encountering multiple challenges and difficulties during the quarter, the Operations Team successfully conducted a Quarter 2 progress report meeting with the AAS Review Committee, discussing proposal objectives and their positive impact on our younger students. As we navigate our journey as the Operations Team, we genuinely appreciate the guidance and support received throughout this period. Although there are indeed areas for improvement, we have grown immensely as a team and highly anticipate the significant influence we can have on our students.

We extend heartfelt congratulations to our students Nathan Le, Leo Lue, and McKenzie Tran for their nomination for the Ebenstein Scholarship. A special thank you goes to the Eden Center for offering this scholarship to support our hardworking students. Over the coming months, these bright and determined students will work closely with the Operations Team to develop their practical skills while deepening their understanding of the AASuccess Core Values and servant leadership principles. If they successfully fulfill their scholarship responsibilities and requirements, their achievements will be recognized during our annual AASuccess Gala in August, and they will be rewarded accordingly for their hard work. As we continue to work and collaborate with our students, we aim to keep everyone informed of our progress over the next few months. Thank you to everyone once again for your support, and we look forward to sharing more of our updates in May!

Warmest Regards,
The Operations Team
Erica Shin, Angela Le, and Liem Nguyen