

Teacher Activity Groups (TAGs) in Viet Nam – from innovation to impact

What are TAGs?

The British Council's approach to continuing professional development (CPD) is called **Teaching for Success**. It aims to provide frameworks, resources and support for contextualised teacher development.

It also aims to raise awareness among educational authorities that conventional top-down, short-term, large-scale cascade models of in-service teacher education, whilst valuable, are not necessarily delivering visible and sustained changes in teaching and learning.

As a result, we promote additional forms of CPD which provide teachers with opportunities to learn collaboratively, over time, and in a manner which is more teacher-driven and linked to what happens in classrooms. In this context, **Teacher Activity Groups (TAGs)** have emerged as one form of Community of Practice (CoP).

Click the link to watch a short video and learn more about [What are TAGs?](#)

What does the research say?

Indeed, TAGs have already been implemented in at least six British Council projects around the globe and in 2020, a review examined British Council's use of TAGs as a model of CPD for teachers. The report also includes sections on the benefits and challenges of CoPs as well as recommendations of what makes TAGs work. More information about the research into TAGs can be found [here](#)

Why adopt TAGs in Viet Nam?

In Vietnam, language teachers are encouraged to take part in CoPs for professional development, which are formalised as professional groups. MOET circular 32.2020 (TT-BGDĐT), Article 14. Academic Specialized Groups states *'The professional group organizes professional activities at least once in two weeks and may hold an unscheduled meeting according to work requirements or at the request of the principal. The professional group operates on the principle of democracy, respect, sharing, learning and mutual help among members to develop professional capacity.'*

Building on this foundation of Academic Specialised Groups, the National Foreign Languages Project (NFLP) is now actively promoting Communities of Practice as an effective mode of CPD for in-service teachers across Viet Nam. In this context, British Council believe that TAGs can play an exemplary role.

First TAG initiative in 2019-2021

Between 2019 and 2021, as part of British Council work in Viet Nam with some provincial Departments of Education and Training (DOETs) to deliver a range of teacher training activities, we piloted a limited series of Teacher Activity Groups (TAGs) (three F2F and one online) to six groups of teachers in Can Tho province. Teacher feedback was overwhelmingly positive with many saying how they had enjoyed learning from each other, sharing experiences and resources, revising, and upgrading their teaching methodology.

Phase 1 of the TAG Programme: Pilot TAGs in 11 provinces in 2022-23

In 2022-2023 a total of five UK-VN projects received a British Council grant to establish and pilot approximately 64-68 TAGs over a 12-month period from February 2022 to January 2023 directly benefitting more than 1,600 teachers across 11 of Viet Nam's 63 provinces, including some remote and more disadvantaged areas, spanning the north, centre and south of the country.

[Read more about the launch of the TAGs pilot \(May 2022\)](#) and [June 2022 update here](#)

We also commissioned an external evaluation work of the TAG pilot projects from May to September 2023. The evaluation report provided valuable insights into the effectiveness, relevance, impact, and sustainability of the TAG programme and its five pilot projects, as well as its capacity to enrich teacher professional development and its broader influence on the educational landscape in Viet Nam.

- North - **IH Bristol and Hanoi University of Education (HNUE)** implemented TAG project in collaboration with Hoa Binh and Son La DOETs. The project created 12 Teacher Activity Groups with participation of approximately 600 teachers.
[Read more here from September 2022](#)
- North and south central - **University of Glasgow and Viet Nam's National Institute for Educational Sciences (VNIES)** implemented the project *VietABLL – Arts-based Language Learning in Vietnam* in collaboration with Bac Ninh, Quang Ninh and Ninh Thuan's DOETs to establish with 18 TAGs, 36 facilitators; 8 researchers and 14 creative artists supporting 329 teachers from 5 ethnic groups (Kinh, Cham, Dao, Tay and San Diu)
[Read more here from August 2022](#)
- North and north central – **IH London and Hanoi Pedagogical University 2** worked with Yen Bai and Nghe An DOETs to support 227 teachers; 12 TAGs established and 12 Hanoi Pedagogical University 2 teachers upskilled as facilitators
[Read more here](#)
- Centre - **Manchester Metropolitan University and Hue University** adopted an 'identity-focused approach' to CPD with 6 TAGs supporting 134 teachers in Hue and 11 facilitators from both MMU and HUFLIS.
[Read more here from July 2022](#)
- South – **Celtic English Academy and Can Tho University** worked with 250 teachers in which 183 English teachers from primary to upper secondary; and 67 Maths; Physics; Chemistry and Biology teachers across three Mekong Delta provinces (Ben Tre, Can Tho and Dong Thap); 11 TAGs groups created and facilitated.

To contact the UK or VN partners from the above TAG pilot partnership projects, please access or download the document “TAGs Pilot Phase - UK and VN partners - contact details” at: <https://bit.ly/425iCU7>

Phase 2 of the TAG Programme: Creating an enabling environment (2024-2025)

In Phase 2, we will focus on 'creating an enabling environment' for TAGs to be implemented and scaled up, aiming to achieve systemic, long-term change. Key proposed activities include:
Policy advocacy and strategic stakeholder engagement at MoET/NFLP and provincial/DoET levels
Knowledge dissemination and capacity building for teachers and teacher educators
Collaboration and partnership strengthening with a range of key stakeholders to make sure expertise and resources are leveraged for TAG scaling up.

These activities are underpinned by both top-down and bottom-up approaches. For example, we aim to build capacity at the grassroots level, i.e. by providing support to DoETs in key provinces so that they can first adopt and implement TAGs, then monitor and evaluate their effectiveness and finally scale them up as an effective and sustainable CPD model for in-service teachers in their province.

Looking to the future, beyond the project period of this current phase, we aim to develop these key provinces as **exemplars of TAG implementation**, who will then act as important knowledge disseminators and mentors for other provinces to implement TAGs in future.