



FIRST PERSON

Hearing-Impaired Girl Given New Hope

A hearing-impaired girl is given a hearing aid that allows her to go back to school



Photo: Pearl S. Buck International

“I had dropped classes because of the difficulties understanding the teacher and communicating with classmates,” says Diem. “Thanks to using the hearing aid instrument, I can now go to school again and catch up with my friends.”

Diem is a 10-year-old hearing-impaired girl who lives in Kon Tum, a province in Vietnam’s central highlands. She started school when she was 9 — later than most children, who start school at age 6 — but dropped out only a few months later because it was difficult for her. Diem is an active girl who did not like to sit for a long time and often left the classroom without permission. In addition, her teacher had little experience teaching and communicating with hearing impaired students.

Diem’s life changed when she was reached by a USAID-funded program started in March 2004 to improve the lives of children with disabilities. Audiologists visited Diem’s district in June 2004 to test primary school children suspected to have hearing loss. After being tested with an audiometer, Diem was diagnosed with profound hearing loss and given a hearing aid.

Now that her hearing is better, Diem has returned to school. “I had dropped classes because of the difficulties understanding the teacher and communicating with classmates,” she says. “Thanks to using the hearing aid instrument, I can now go to school again and catch up with my friends.”

Diem’s mother attended a USAID-funded training course on hearing impairment and was shown how to use and maintain Diem’s hearing aids. She says she is grateful to the project for helping her daughter and is committed to encourage Diem’s schooling and her hearing aid use.