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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**VIETNAM**

## FIRST PERSON

# Small Deeds Make a Big Difference

**After rehabilitation, a woman goes on to help thousands of other disabled people**



Photo: VNAH

***“I understand a small deed of help can make a big difference,” says Huong Duong. “A life will be changed, and as result, thousands of other lives will be then improved.”***

Nguyen Huong Duong was 25 years old when the tragic accident happened. As she was racing across some railroad tracks, a train crushed both of her legs just below the knees. A year after returning from the hospital, she still could not walk, even for a short distance. Huong Duong became depressed and rarely left the house.

Until she got involved in a USAID-funded project to help Vietnam’s handicapped. Huong Duong was examined and diagnosed at Can Tho Prosthetics and Rehabilitation Center and provided with a pair of well-fabricated prosthetic limbs. Within two months, she was learning to walk again.

Huong Duong says that being given the artificial limbs was like a rebirth, and she began thinking about how she could help other disabled people. On a visit to a school for blind children, she realized how effective reading books aloud was for improving their development and links to the seeing world. With USAID’s support, she went on to establish Vietnam’s first library of “talking books” — tape-recorded stories. By 2004 Huong Duong and her team had produced more than 450 titles and distributed 40,000 tapes to thousands of blind people throughout Vietnam.