



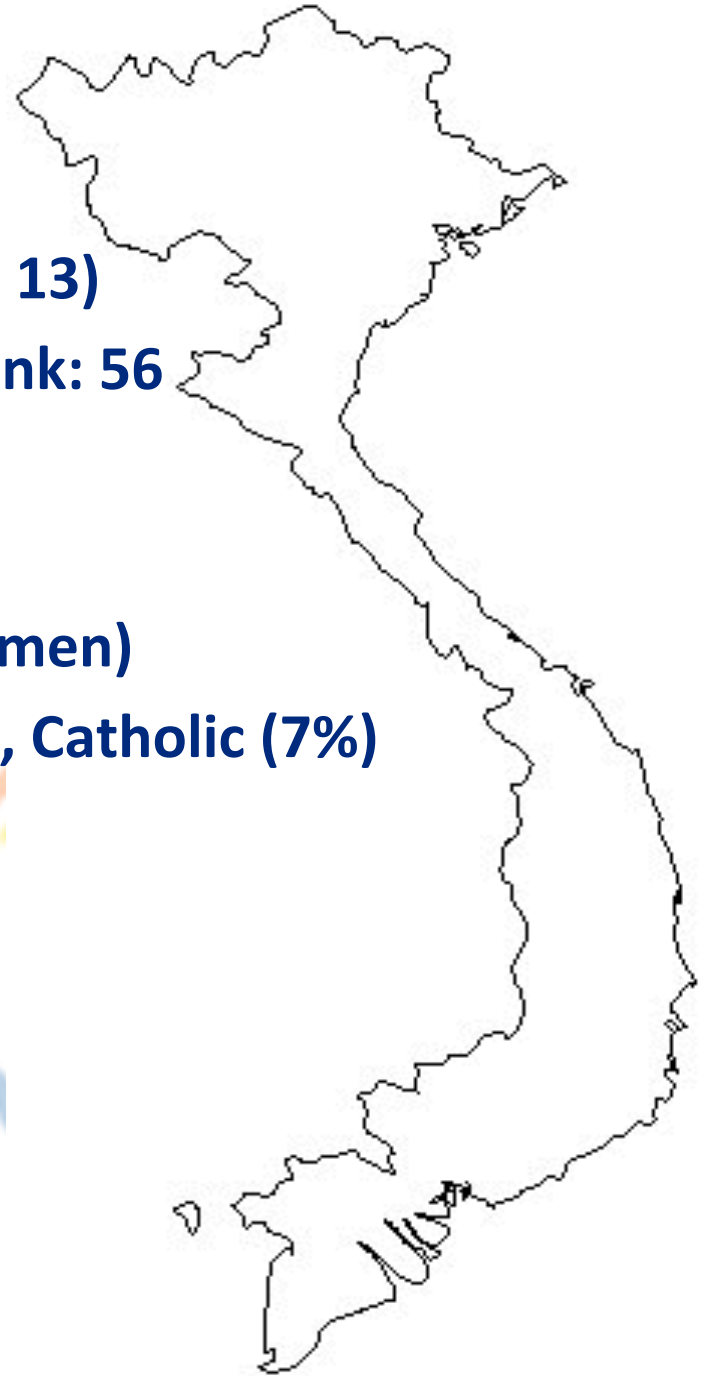
**Global  
Foundation  
For Children  
With Hearing Loss**



# **Building Capacity to Support Children With Hearing Loss in Vietnam**

**Paige Stringer, M.A.  
Founder and Executive Director  
Global Foundation For Children With Hearing Loss  
May 3, 2013**

# Vietnam At A Glance:



- **Population: 87.8 million (World Rank: 13)**
- **GDP: \$123.6 billion (+5.8% annual) Rank: 56**
- **Average age: 27.8**
- **Life expectancy: 72.4 years**
- **Literacy rate: 94% (96% men, 92% women)**
- **Religion: none (80.9%), Buddhist (9%), Catholic (7%)**
- **Fertility rate: 1.9 children/female**
- **Birth rate: 16.8 births/1000**
- **Children under 5 underweight: 20%**
- **Physician rate: 1.2/1000 (Rank: 82)**
- **Average Annual Salary: \$2,220 USD**

# Pediatric Hearing Loss in Vietnam

- Estimated 1.4 million children under 18 with some degree of hearing loss (WHO, 2009)
- Leading factors: Rubella/meningitis, Low weight, Premature birth
- No universal newborn hearing screening. Only “at risk” population is tested
- No government or insurance funding for hearing aids/cochlear implants



# Pediatric Hearing Loss in Vietnam

- Most children identified with hearing loss at 2 years. Age of identification is dropping as awareness grows.
- Pediatric hearing tests conducted at hospitals in HCMC and Hanoi.
- Phonak, Starkey, Widex, Siemens –most common pediatric HA brands. Med-El, Cochlear – CI brands.

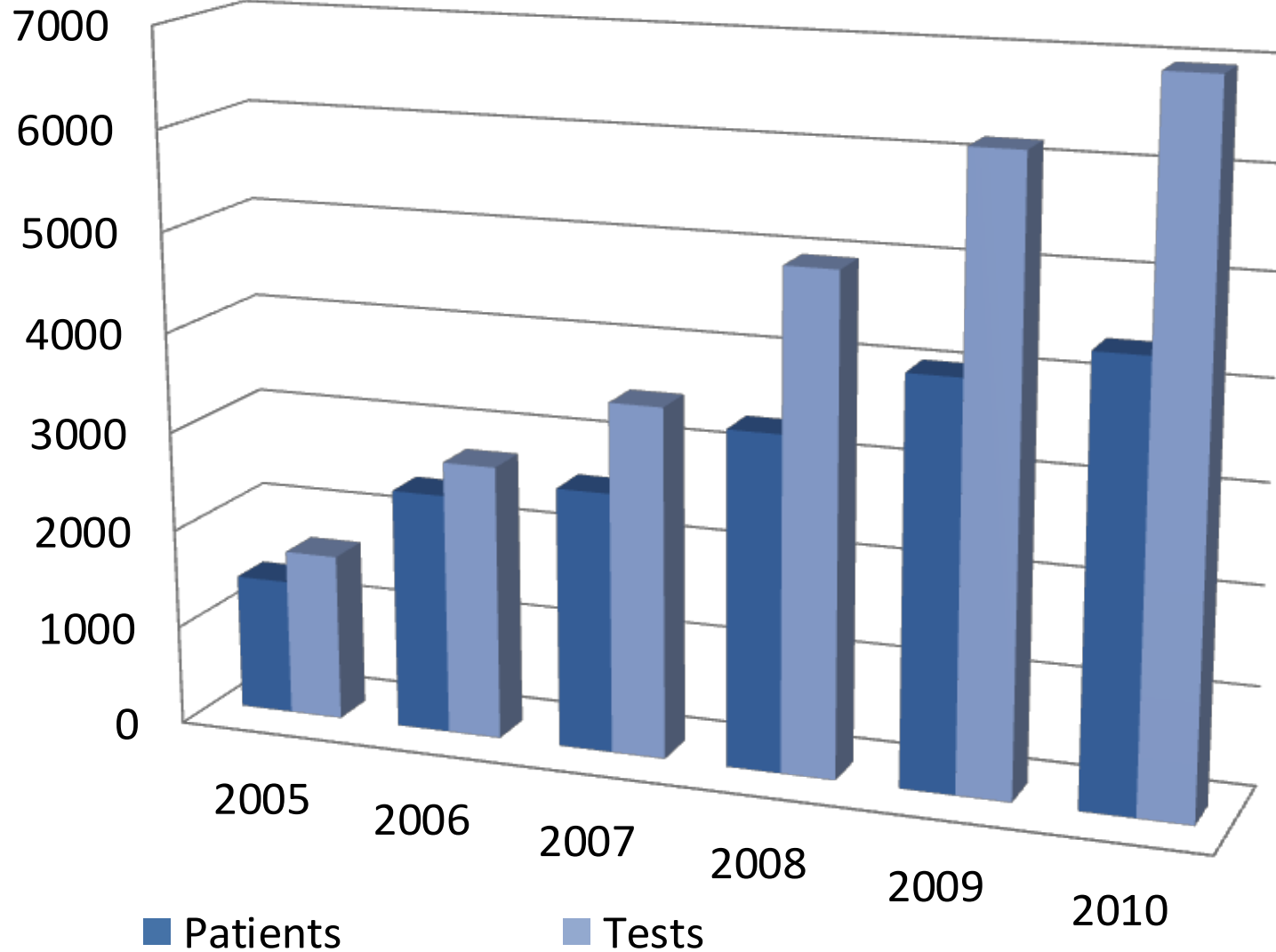


# Audiology Opportunity Areas

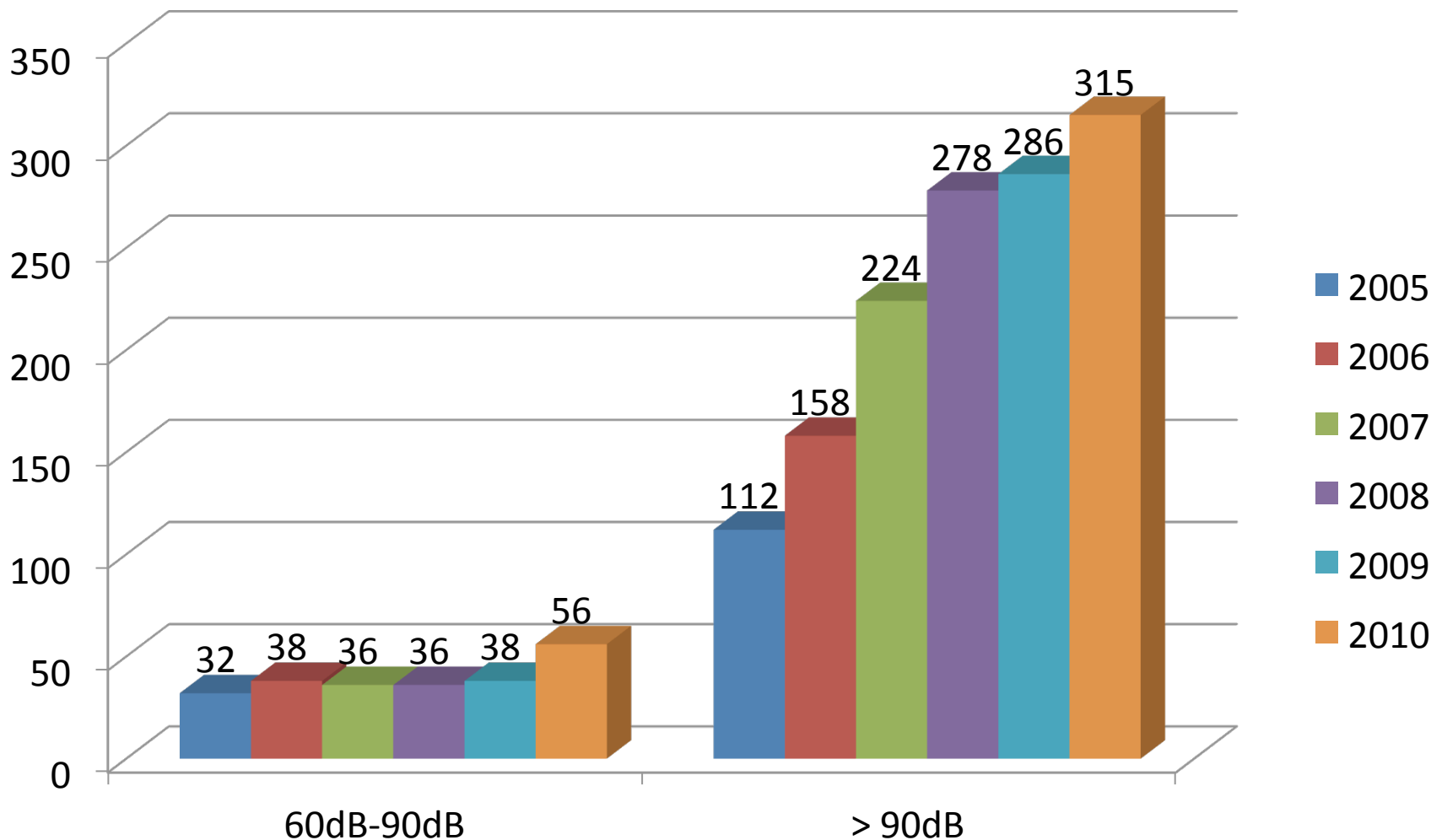
- Not enough trained ENT doctors and audio-technicians to meet rising demand for audiology and ear care support.
- Audiology services are concentrated in the cities, making it difficult for families in outlying areas to get timely service.
- Appropriate hearing aids and cochlear implants still a financial difficulty for many families.
- Audiology equipment sourcing, calibration, ongoing care continue to be issues.



# Growing Count of Pediatric Patients and Tests at Children's Hospital 1 in Ho Chi Minh City



# CH1 NHS High Risk Cases– Count / Degree of HI

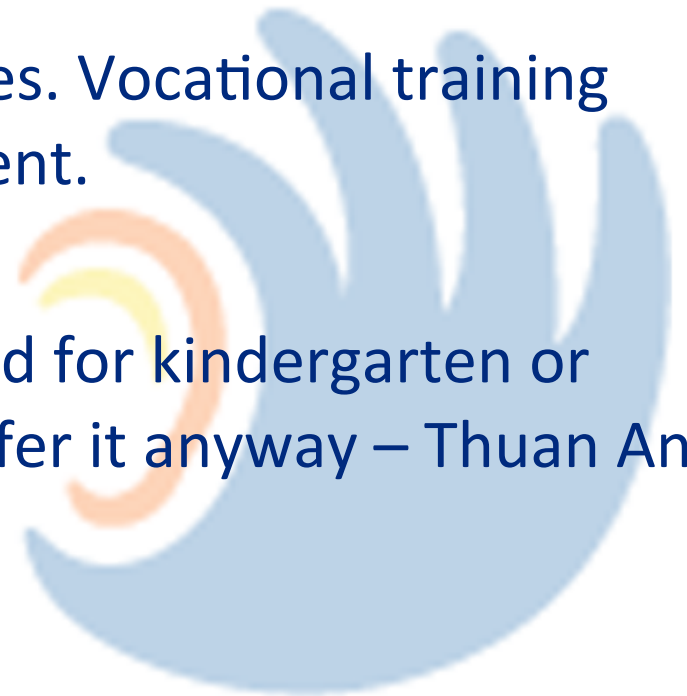


**4,000 children and babies tested annually at CH1**

**Approximately 12% test positive for hearing loss**

# Education Support For Children With Hearing Loss

- Deaf schools provide education from Grade 1 – Grade 9 (some areas, end at Grade 5).
- No opportunity for advanced degrees. Vocational training has led to little success in employment.
- Government deaf schools not funded for kindergarten or early intervention. Some schools offer it anyway – Thuan An Center, Long An for example.
- Private deaf schools and clinics more likely to offer kindergarten and/or early intervention programs.





# Education Opportunity Areas

- Vietnam's Inclusive Education Policy. Mixed results for hearing impaired children due to lack of widespread early identification, early intervention, and access to appropriate hearing technology.
- Teachers and therapists have general education or special education undergrad degrees but little expertise in teaching children with hearing loss specifically.



# The Good News

- Government priorities lie in maternal and natal health, inclusive education, and early learning and school readiness.
- New government Inclusive Education Centers provide early intervention to children and support to mainstream teachers.
- University Special Education undergraduate degree programs maturing in both scope and enrollment. Speech Pathology Masters curriculum in place in HCMC and Special Education Masters program starts next year in Hanoi.
- Vietnam's growing economy and standard of living. Cultural emphasis on family and education.



# Global Foundation For Children With Hearing Loss

## *Mission Statement:*

Provide deaf and hard of hearing children globally with access to the hearing technology, support services, and education they need to achieve their full potential in hearing society.



# Deaf Education Program: Cornerstone of our Work in Vietnam

## **Purpose:**

- Provide Vietnamese with expertise to help children with hearing loss make use of hearing technology and learn to listen and talk.
- Address gaps in hearing health care and early education support.

## **Scale :**

- 38 schools for the deaf across 20 Vietnam provinces, 3 hospitals.
- Doctors, technicians, teachers, therapists, families

## **Collaboration:**

- Global Foundation, Thuan An Center for Disabled Children, Ho Chi Minh City University of Education.
- Launched July 2010.



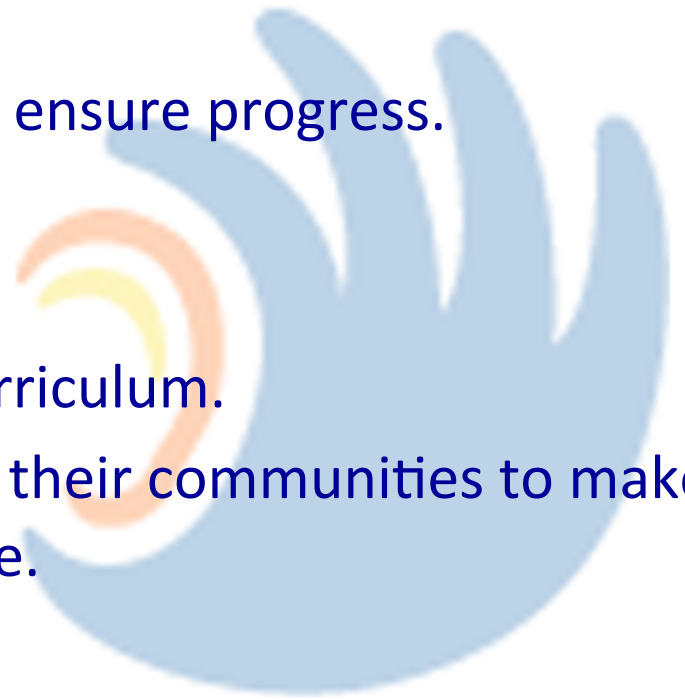
# Deaf Education Program: Cornerstone of Our Work in Vietnam

## Multi-disciplinary approach:

- Curriculum covers audiology, speech therapy, early intervention, auditory-verbal deaf education.
- Same participants enrolled over time to ensure progress.

## Sustainable:

- Participants advance thru multi-year curriculum.
- They train others in our program and in their communities to make the benefits exponential and sustainable.



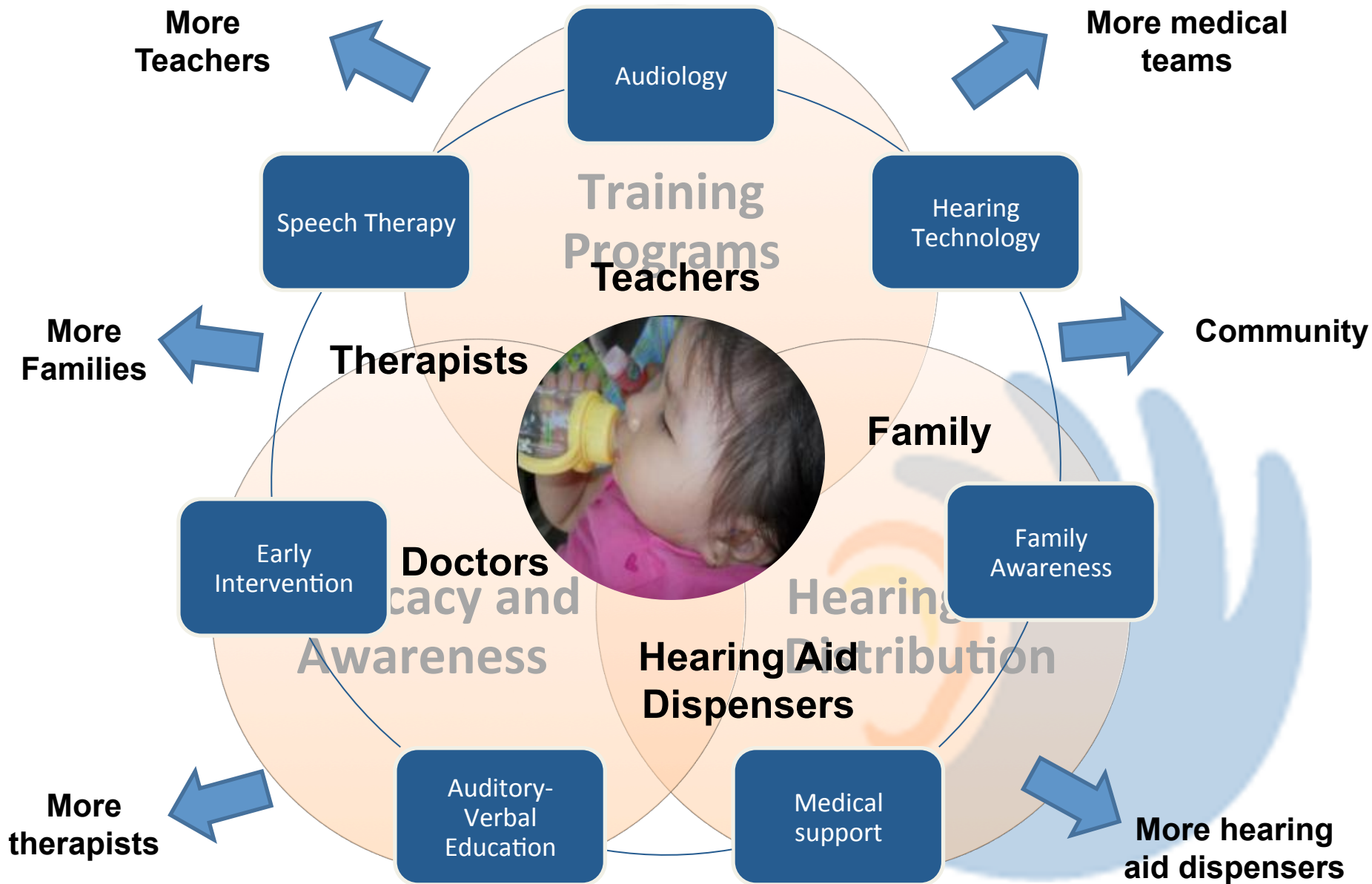
# Global Foundation for Children with Hearing Loss – Professionals

- Team comprises of 27 volunteer professionals from USA, Hong Kong, Singapore, Canada.
- Represent expertise in audiology, speech pathology, early intervention, and deaf education.
- Global Foundation team works together and with Vietnamese throughout the year. Travel to Vietnam to teach the curriculum.



# Vietnam Deaf Education Program: Multi-Faceted Approach

- **Summer Training:** Participants travel from 38 schools, 3 hospitals to Thuan An Center for annual Summer Training. Global Foundation professionals develop curriculum, travel to Vietnam to teach material.
  - **Mobile Missions:** Global Foundation professionals visit schools and hospitals during year to re-enforce summer training in audiology, speech pathology, early intervention, AV deaf education.
  - **Video Analysis:** Provides support for Vietnamese teachers and therapists throughout the year.
  - **Hearing Aids:** Hearing testing and hearing aid fitting incorporated into Audiology training. Children are monitored over time.
  - **Parent training and consultations** provided in all programs.
- 



**More Children With Hearing Loss Learn to Listen and Speak**



## Program Impact in 2.5 Years:

- 3 summer programs
  - 3 Mobile Missions
  - 220 teachers
  - 270 families
  - 125 other professionals trained
  - 38 schools from Hue to Mekong
  - 3 hospitals
  - 259 hearing aids fit on young children
- 
- Program has affected 1,000 children.
  - Vietnamese participants share learning with each other, making benefits exponential -- and sustainable.



# What's Next....



# What's Next: Hospital Program

- Provides training in ENT hearing health care and clinical audiology services.
- Newborn hearing screening pilot proposed.
- Builds on existing relationships with Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City area hospitals.
- Audiology equipment also being sought.



# What's Next: Audiology Regional Centers

- Addresses need for pediatric audiology care in communities outside of Ho Chi Minh City in South Vietnam.
- Three sites out of the 38 schools enrolled in its Deaf Education Program to serve as regional audiology centers. Eventually could expand to include up to 15 locations.
- Program provides training and equipment to support educational audiology for schools in a given region. Complements existing services in HCMC.



# What's Next: 2013 Summer Program

- July 1 – July 26, 2013
- Over 100 Vietnamese professionals and families to participate in audiology and education tracks.
- New committee to focus on Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training awareness for benefits and needs in country to support early intervention.
- Seeking research that points to long-term benefits of investment in early intervention and audiology support for children in developing countries.



# What's Next: Expansion to Guatemala

- Partnership with Healing the Children
- Multi-year curriculum for teachers, therapists, and audio-technicians in Quetzaltenango department and Guatemala City.
- Proposed initiative to launch in November, 2013



# Thank You

[www.childrenwithhearingloss.org](http://www.childrenwithhearingloss.org)



**Contact: Paige Stringer**  
**[paige@childrenwithhearingloss.org](mailto:paige@childrenwithhearingloss.org)**

