

# Nhan Dan

## Lighting up smiles for children in the highlands

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*From the love of a Vietnamese mother in a foreign land, the Loan Stiftung Foundation, founded by writer Isabelle Müller, has created thousands of learning opportunities for poor children in the highlands. For nearly 10 years, that journey has continued to extend from the hearts of children living far away from home to the smiles and hopes for the future of Vietnamese children.*



**Writer Isabelle Müller talks with aspiring young Vietnamese people**

On October 5, in Hanoi, in the warm atmosphere of an intimate meeting, the radiant young faces, some still carrying university degrees, some still students far from home gathered together in emotion. The young people came to express their gratitude, recount their journey of growth and to continue a flow of love that began nearly a decade ago with the Loan Stiftung Foundation (Federal Republic of Germany) founded by writer Isabelle Müller, named after her Vietnamese mother.

At the meeting, Ms. Isabelle Müller and representatives of the foundation awarded 18 Loan Stiftung Education Scholarships for the 2025-2026 school year worth 20 million VND each to disadvantaged students and orphans in Tuyen Quang province. Each scholarship is a word of encouragement, adding to the belief from people far away sent to the young generation of Vietnam. Among them, many are struggling, quietly overcoming difficult circumstances to reach their dreams.



**Ms. Isabelle hopes to light up hope for students in difficult circumstances to continue their studies.**

In the stories shared during the meeting, everyone was silent when listening to Dam Thi Huong Giang, a petite girl from Bac Quang (Tuyen Quang), recount her childhood journey full of loss. Orphaned since grade 9, Huong Giang thought she would have to put her university dream on hold. But thanks to the fund's scholarship, she continued to study, cover her living expenses and, more importantly, nurture her desire for knowledge.

Now, Huong Giang is an excellent bachelor of the National Economics University, has a stable job and 3 years of work experience. From an orphan, she has become an inspiration for the next generation and continues to spread kindness and knowledge to the community.

Another story of Tho Thi Pa, a Mong girl from a poor village in Lung Tam commune (Tuyen Quang), a second-year student majoring in literature at Hanoi Pedagogical University. Her mother died at a young age, her father was a freelance worker, and her family life was full of hardship, yet the little girl's eyes still shone with faith.



**Loan Stiftung Foundation's meeting and scholarship awarding program with students in Tuyen Quang province.**

Thanks to the scholarship, I have reduced my financial burden, have the conditions to learn more English, buy textbooks and pursue my major. After graduating, I plan to return to my hometown to teach, helping children in the village have more faith that even in remote areas with many difficulties, everyone can reach their dreams. T

he stories of Giang, Pa, and many other students who have received Loan Stiftung scholarships all have something in common, which is the journey of rising up with determination and faith, supported by the kindness of people who have never met but share the same limitless love.

Behind those beautiful stories is the figure of writer Isabelle Müller. She was born in 1964 in Tours (France), the youngest of five children of a Vietnamese woman, Dau Thi Cuc (Loan's mother) and a father of French descent.





**The joy of sharing dreams and working together to light them up.**

Isabelle's childhood was spent in poverty and harsh racism. She suffered violence and abuse, but as she herself said: "My mother taught me that no matter how cruel life is, as long as you keep a kind heart, you can still rise like a phoenix."

That saying became the source for Isabelle to build the Loan Stiftung Foundation as a way to bring her mother "back home" after she passed away in France in 2003.

On May 9, 2016, the Loan Stiftung Foundation was officially established in Germany. Since then, 48 humanitarian projects have been implemented in 8 mountainous provinces in the North and North Central regions with a total value of 1.77 million USD. The persistent journey has also contributed to the construction of 28 boarding houses, libraries, spacious schools with beds, cabinets, bookshelves, clean water, kitchens and libraries.

According to statistics from the fund, 5,000 children have directly benefited, 401 pupils and students have been awarded long-term scholarships; 44 orphans have found sponsors in Germany... with the simple goal of giving opportunities to children in disadvantaged areas to stand on their own feet in life.



**The Vietnamese-French writer spreads her kindness to young Vietnamese people.**

In schools in the highlands, where the roads are covered in fog all year round and the roads are winding and zigzag, boarding houses named Loan Stiftung have now become a common home for students. There are warm beds, clean kitchens, pure water sources and especially a library of books to befriend children. In addition to material support, the fund also rebuilds trust for the whole community, implementing educational scholarships and financial scholarships to provide timely support to students affected by natural disasters, epidemics or the loss of loved ones.

These scholarships are maintained long-term, helping students study until they graduate from university, and even continue to accompany them when they start their first jobs. As the founder of the fund, Isabelle Müller is also a writer with a positive influence. Her first book, "Loan: From the Life of a Phoenix", published in 2015, tells the story of Loan's mother, a Vietnamese woman who suffered many disadvantages but never gave up. The book quickly entered the Top 5 of the 2015 Kindle Storyteller Awards and became one of the best-selling books on Amazon (Germany).

She then published "The Phoenix's Daughter - Hope is My Path" in 2009, telling her own life story, with painful hidden corners but also full of determination. Isabelle encourages victims of sexual violence to speak up, break the silence to find freedom. She has given more than 150 talks in 8 states of Germany, has been a guest on television and radio, and has been invited to the German Presidential Palace for her humanitarian contributions.

Both of these works have been published in Vietnam and have been warmly received by readers, especially the work "Loan - from the life of a phoenix" which has been reprinted four times. In addition, Isabelle also wrote children's books, such as: "Hip Hop in the land of Ellsaby", "Hip Hop and the golden forest", "Hip Hop and the master singer" - stories carrying messages about courage, tolerance, and the desire to live well. All royalties from the books were donated to the Loan Stiftung Foundation to raise funds to help poor children in Vietnam.