

The homeless people in Saigon City are vulnerable and suffering because they live in poverty and cannot rent a room to live in. Sleeping on the streets of Saigon at night is not ideal, people struggling with mental illness; addiction and theft are just some of the things the homeless experience. When working a night shift for a construction company, I witnessed first-hand the poor conditions homeless people have to live in, so I looked forward to the day I would be able to visit and give gifts to each person. I thank EOCRO for making this possible, thank you.

During the Christmas season Saigon is very cold. At the beginning of the night, Saigon is still warm, but from midnight to dawn it is very cold, I see many people curled up lying on the streets.

Some of the stories involve people from the North or the Central parts of Vietnam came here to work but got robbed, and ended up having no money to go back home, all kinds of unfortunate circumstances.

My schedule is to go from 12 midnight to 5 am, because during these times the homeless people are most visible sleeping on the streets. There are two of us, Cao Thi Dung and I.

I would like to share with you about the situation of Dung. She was born and raised in Nghe An province. Her father left her when she was 7 years old. She misses her father very much and when she heard I had this trip planned to help the homeless, she asked to go with me. She said that when her father was away for a few months, he called home and said he was a beggar in Saigon city. So when she was growing up, she applied to work in a factory in Saigon with the wish to find her father one day. She still remembers her father's face and that his arm was injured in an accident, these features could help her identify him.

The way I identify homeless people is by looking for those who are sleeping on the ground at night. The homeless sleep one by one or two together, those are **the real homeless**.

As for those who are awake, I do not give them donations because there are now people forming groups sitting at crosswalks waiting to beg, they are not real homeless people. They formed gangs and chased the real Homeless people into the alley to sleep. So we kept sneaking into the alleys to find the real homeless people, it's been a slow process.

Gang groups are also very dangerous. With gift givers like me, they know that we have money on us so they might try to ambush me and try to steal the money I carry. So I have to be very smart to avoid them.

Doing this can be very dangerous and you must be extremely vigilant because in the big city of Saigon, anything can happen, violence or looting. For example, one day, when I went to distribute gifts in Phu Nhuan district I was hit by a drunken person ... I know that Buddha and Bodhisattva are always there protecting me.