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# Vietnam Disability Situation Assessment and Program Review

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# Vietnam Disability Situation Assessment and Program Review

## **Abstract**

[Excerpt] Since 1992, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has supported disability activities in Vietnam including activities focusing on education, health, employment, rehabilitation, accessibility, policy development, and advocacy. Through technical assistance and funding of nongovernmental organization (NGO) activities, USAID/Vietnam has contributed to raising awareness at the national, provincial, community and family levels regarding the needs and abilities of children and adults with disabilities in Vietnam. While progress is being made, significant gaps still exist and funding for programs is decreasing. A comprehensive strategy for disability programming will allow USAID/Vietnam to maximize available resources in order to continue the momentum of the disability programming in Vietnam. To inform USAID/Vietnam on strategic planning, this assessment team was charged with analyzing gaps in current programs and providing recommendations for a broader disability strategy.

The overarching purpose of the assessment was “to assist USAID/Vietnam in identifying focus areas where its disability portfolio can have the greatest impact in advancing the livelihoods of Vietnamese with disabilities (VWD).” The following priority guiding questions were developed to aid the assessment: 1) What are the most pressing needs of people with disabilities (PWD) in Vietnam and which of these are not being met? 2) What has been the reach/impact of USAID/Vietnam’s disability programming? and 3) Considering USAID/Vietnam’s existing position and the needs of VWD, where should USAID/Vietnam concentrate its efforts?

From information gathered in multiple interviews, meetings and other contacts with representatives of many segments of the disability community in Vietnam, the Assessment Team identified four areas of priority concern and three areas of recommendations.

## **Keywords**

United States Agency for International Development, USAID, Vietnam, disability, development, public policy, accessibility, advocacy

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# VIETNAM DISABILITY SITUATION ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM REVIEW

**MAY 2005**

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VIETNAM DISABILITY SITUATION ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM REVIEW



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## ACRONYMS

AED	Academy for Educational Development
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CWD	Children with Disabilities
DCOF	Displaced Children and Orphans Fund
DPO	Displaced Persons Organization
GSRV	Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam
HVO	Health Volunteers Overseas
IE	Inclusive Education
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LWVF	Leahy War Victims Fund
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MOLISA	Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs
MSI	Management Systems International
NAP	National Action Plan
NCCD	National Coordinating Committee on Disability
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NIESAC	National Institute for Education Strategy and Curriculum
ODA	Official Development Assistance
POF	Prosthetics Outreach Foundation
PSBI	Pearl S. Buck International
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
SCEDC	Steering Committee on Education for Children With Disabilities
SWD	Students with Disabilities
TPM	Team Planning Meeting
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCAP	United Nation Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund

USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VIETCOT	Vietnamese Training Center for Orthopedic Technologists
VNAH	Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped
VSO	Voluntary Services Overseas
VUFO	Vietnam Union of Friendship Organizations
VVAF	Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation
VWD	Vietnamese with Disabilities
WCI	World Concern International

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Specifically, we wish to thank the leadership, staff, members and volunteers from: Caitlin Wyndham (Independent Disability Consultant); Catholic Relief Services (CRS); Center for Special Education (NIESAC); Disability Forum; Early Detection and Early Intervention Faculty at Hanoi Teachers' College; Handicap International; Hanoi Blind Association; Health Volunteers Overseas (HVO); Information Technology Training Center; Medical Committee Netherlands Vietnam; Ministry of Education and Training (MOET); Ministry of Health (MOH); Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA); Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA); National Assembly Committee on Social Affairs; National Coordinating Council on Disability (NCCD); Pearl S. Buck Foundation; Save the Children Alliance; Special Education Faculty at Hanoi University of Education; Steering Committee for the Education of Children with Disabilities (MOET); Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped (VNAH); Vietnam Blind Association; Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAF); Vietnamese Training Center; Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO); World Concern International (WCI); the vocational training, job placement, employers, self-help groups, People's Committee, and Red Cross representatives of Hai Duong Province; teachers, students, parents, and school administrators in Thai Nguyen Province; individuals with disabilities and advocates from central and south Vietnam; and employers, self-help groups and advocates in Hanoi.

Thanks to the USAID/Vietnam staff for critical background information and support while the team conducted fieldwork. Brett Jones and Le Ha Van were invaluable and provided a fine balance between our need for advice and assistance with the need to distance themselves from the team so that we could undertake an objective assessment. Daniel Levitt provided a comprehensive overview of the various players and their activities that helped the team maneuver more knowledgeably and confidently. And the USAID/Vietnam Director Dennis Zzinakis was very helpful in sharing his extensive experience.

Special thanks are extended to:

Rob Horvath and Lynne Schaberg (USAID/DC) traveled with the team in Vietnam and provided incalculable counsel that helped the team remain focused and attentive to the task at hand.

Our interpreters, Nguyen Huong Tra and Nguyen Thuc An, not only helped with interpretation during interviews, but also took on the task of being our official Vietnam information specialists. We could not have been able to meet the challenge of this report without their assistance.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 1992, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has supported disability activities in Vietnam including activities focusing on education, health, employment, rehabilitation, accessibility, policy development, and advocacy. Through technical assistance and funding of non-governmental organization (NGO) activities, USAID/Vietnam has contributed to raising awareness at the national, provincial, community and family levels regarding the needs and abilities of children and adults with disabilities in Vietnam. While progress is being made, significant gaps still exist and funding for programs is decreasing. A comprehensive strategy for disability programming will allow USAID/Vietnam to maximize available resources in order to continue the momentum of the disability programming in Vietnam. To inform USAID/Vietnam on strategic planning, this assessment team was charged with analyzing gaps in current programs and providing recommendations for a broader disability strategy.

The overarching purpose of the assessment was “to assist USAID/Vietnam in identifying focus areas where its disability portfolio can have the greatest impact in advancing the livelihoods of Vietnamese with disabilities (VWD).” The following priority guiding questions were developed to aid the assessment: 1) What are the most pressing needs of people with disabilities (PWD) in Vietnam and which of these are not being met? 2) What has been the reach/impact of USAID/Vietnam’s disability programming? and 3) Considering USAID/Vietnam’s existing position and the needs of VWD, where should USAID/Vietnam concentrate its efforts?

From information gathered in multiple interviews, meetings and other contacts with representatives of many segments of the disability community in Vietnam, the Assessment Team identified four areas of priority concern and three areas of recommendations.

## FINDINGS

### Overarching Issues

Many issues cut across all four priority areas. The findings relating to these crosscutting issues are:

- Disability issues are often not integrated into the design or implementation of development donor programs in Vietnam.
- Disability programs in Vietnam, especially those funded under the mandates of the Leahy War Victims Fund (LWVF) and the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund (DCOF), tend to be limited to persons with mobility, vision and hearing impairments.
- Long-standing relationships with government officials at all levels appear to be a necessary prerequisite to effective advocacy. The decentralization of the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (GSRV) necessitates that these relationships occur at all levels of government.
- While awareness of disability issues has improved over the past ten years, there remain serious impediments to recognizing VWD as full members of society.
- The most effective partnerships and alliances appear to be those formed at the local level. However, without the support and direction of the national government, there seems to be little incentive to take action.

- Monitoring and evaluation systems are weak. Little data collection is being undertaken, objectives are not clearly defined, and measurement and reporting on progress against objectives is lacking.
- USAID is recognized as a leader amongst donor organizations, GSRV, as well as Vietnamese with disabilities, in putting forth policies and programs that support inclusive development practices.

## **Education**

Children with disabilities (CWD) face significant barriers in the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam's ability to provide a comprehensive education to its citizens, such as: poorly trained teachers; attitudinal barriers; and lack of resources, adapted curricula, assistive devices, and the built environment. Some schools for children with disabilities have been established in cooperation with international NGOs, which have served about 21,000 children countrywide. However, the rate of enrollment of children with disabilities in special schools is only around 2% of the total number of children who could benefit from such educational opportunities.

- The GSRV is committed to promoting inclusive education (IE) nationwide for students with disabilities (SWD).
- To ensure a national action plan that addresses the full range of needs of CWD and their families, individuals with disabilities, NGOs and others with expertise in inclusive education must be involved in the policy discussions at all levels.
- Implementation of IE for primary education will require intensive work on training, technical assistance and other infrastructure and capacity-building activities in every department and province.
- Regional resource centers provide one solution to IE infrastructure and capacity building needs in Vietnam.
- A plan for coordination of the varied approaches by NGOs and other donor groups to the development of IE resource centers and other capacity building activities is important to countrywide success.
- An impediment to educational efforts as well as networking and communication amongst self-help organizations is the lack of a universal Vietnamese sign language.
- The current system of standardized assessments to measure student progress is discriminatory against many SWD and provides a disincentive for teachers to willingly accept SWD into their classrooms.
- Most CWD do not have access to schools past the fifth grade.

## **Policy Development and Implementation**

Vietnam has made significant strides in developing policy to ensure the integration of people with disabilities into all aspects of Vietnamese society. These achievements include the following: (1) Drafting and adoption of the Disability Ordinance (CSA/NA, 1998); (2) Drafting and adoption of the Barrier-Free Access Code & Standards; (3) Establishment of the National Coordinating Council on Disability (NCCD); (4) Adoption of the Biwako Millennium Framework of Action with the important addition of a disability

awareness mandate; and (5) Inclusion of disability issues in poverty reduction programs at all levels of government. This latter effort is a key step toward the sustainability of all disability policy efforts.

Despite significant progress, key weaknesses were identified:

- Vietnam does not have a law that provides full legal status to NGOs. While there is a process for organizations to form associations, the process is somewhat confusing and government approval is applied inconsistently.
- The NCCD is not as effective as it could be. Disability issues cut across all governmental ministries. But NCCD is subordinate to one government ministry rather than being independent, and thus lacks the authority to obtain sufficient results within the government. This lack of authority limits its ability to provide the type of government-wide coordination on disability matters necessary to reach its goals.
- The GSRV undertakes a variety of programs and campaigns to serve the Vietnamese people, but most of these do not specifically address how to ensure the inclusion of people with disabilities.
- Disability policies, meant to further integrate and advance the needs of VWD, are neither adequately enforced once passed into law nor disseminated to local government offices and officials.

### **Development of the Movement of Disability Self-Help Groups**

In the past two years across the country, there has been a burgeoning of self-help groups of people with disabilities. These groups are a significant source of support and empowerment, and many interviewees reported the benefit to individual self-confidence and personal life satisfaction that such groups provide their members. However, challenges still exist. For example:

- The development of the self-help group movement is hampered by the lack of a law granting full legal status to Vietnamese NGOs.
- The successful development of the self-help group movement is hampered by the lack of a sufficient amount of skilled and energetic leadership.

### **Employment**

There is a very high unemployment rate among Vietnamese with disabilities. The Vietnamese Ordinance on Disabled Persons requires that 2-3% of the business workforce consist of individuals with disabilities though fines for violations are difficult to enforce and large or newly established businesses resist the disability hiring quota. Much of the employment opportunities for VWD that do exist tend to be centered on traditional and stereotypic employment (e.g. crafts; woodwork). VWD have little if any access to technology training or technology jobs, key components of full integration into society as Vietnam moves more fully into a market economy.

- While employment options are very bleak for VWD, they view work as their path to economic independence and social acceptance.
- Traditional vocational training programs in Vietnam are ineffective in general and do not serve VWD well.

- Self-help groups provide a tool for business and job development.
- Traditional social stigma in Vietnam views VWD as not being fully productive members of society is prevalent.
- The Vietnamese economy supports small independent business, which provides the potential for VWD to become entrepreneurs, but they need access to capital and other supports to cover start up activities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Overarching Issues:**

The following recommendations are overarching, and should, when possible, become guiding principles across all USAID/Vietnam funded disability related projects.

- Projects, prior to funding, should demonstrate solid relationships with key policymakers in relevant government offices at appropriate levels.
- Projects should include a component of disability awareness activities.
- Projects should demonstrate the ways in which they will result in sustainable changes both financially as well as programmatically. However, it is recognized that full post-funding sustainability is not always possible in this context and should not be an absolute requirement.
- To the extent feasible, projects should include a beginning step toward broader disability inclusiveness beyond hearing impairment, visual impairment, and mobility impairment to include intellectual disabilities, head injury, psychiatric disabilities and others that are typically excluded from disability programs in Vietnam.
- Projects should involve Vietnamese people with disabilities as staff in the planning and execution of projects.
- Where applicable, projects should attempt to link and integrate disability access into major donor infrastructure projects in Vietnam to ensure they are fully accessible to people with disabilities.
- Projects should include a monitoring and evaluation component in which data collected is used to determine successful outcomes and inform future activities of the project.

### **Inclusive Education:**

The recommendations include a high priority area followed by two secondary areas that should be considered based on sufficient funding and appropriate timing.

- Support should be provided for program(s) that further develop the inclusive education resource center model. This center could provide teacher and administrative training and demonstrating quality IE that could be both replicable in provinces ready to make the commitment and provide mentoring to other provinces that are interested in the exploratory stages.
- Subject to sufficient funding, support the development of a regionally respectful nationally useful sign language, and subsequent training programs.

- Future consideration should be given to providing support for a pilot project demonstrating quality secondary education practices for CWD, including strategies for raising the awareness of the capability of students with disabilities to participate in school beyond grade 5.

### **Policy Development and Implementation**

USAID should continue its emphasis on the development and enforcement of disability policy in Vietnam. Priority areas may include, in order of highest priority:

- Strengthening of NCCD and development of its policy and coordination role, including its elevation to a national committee. Consideration might also be given to providing the NCCD with some program resources to develop a pilot project.
- Establishment of a law that provides full legal rights to NGOs.
- Enforcement of existing disability policy and dissemination of information about policy advances.
- Integration of disability issues into national and local programs and campaigns for the Vietnamese general public, such as annual budget allocation, national target programs in poverty reduction and employment, surveys and census, youth programs, information technology expansion efforts, infrastructure and credit projects, etc.

### **Self-Help Groups**

USAID should continue to support the development of the movement of disability self-help groups, with emphasis on the following:

- Leadership recruitment, including a leadership development component to attract additional skilled and energetic leaders to the self-help movement; grantee(s) should ensure adequate training and development of their own staff.
- Organizing the development of new self-help groups and supporting the ongoing development of existing self-help groups.
- Training and technical assistance in leadership, organizational development, strategic planning, disability-related policies and their implementation, disability-related programs and opportunities (e.g. in employment, education, health, recreation, etc.).
- Enhanced communication among self-help groups via print (e.g. newsletter) and web-based media, and dissemination of information on the self-help movement to the broader disability community, NGOs, and Vietnam as a whole, including media campaigns.
- Encouragement of self-help groups to become multi-faceted as is appropriate in their natural development. Examples include obtaining jobs and services for members, computer/internet skills, and working on policy implementation.
- Further investments should be made in the Disability Forum, helping it to strengthen its mandate and professionalize its staff and organization.

- Support for microenterprise and skill training projects for PWD for self-help groups with the technical skills, abilities, and mandates. Employment in such projects should incorporate a business model and be geared towards 21<sup>st</sup> century jobs whenever appropriate.

## I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Vietnam has made significant strides in the last ten years integrating people with disabilities (PWD) into various aspects of public life. The country now lies at a crossroads as a modern perspective seeks to overtake the lingering vestiges of the backward notion of disability as something to be ashamed of. The poverty still present in Vietnam augments the difficulty of bringing a more positive disability perspective to full fruition. This point in history opens the door to exciting opportunities and many challenges for those working on disability issues in Vietnam.

This report is designed to be a snapshot of the realities in Vietnam for individuals with disabilities. This is not a program evaluation. The assessment team saw many very fine programs, staffed by many talented and committed persons, funded by USAID. The recommendations in this report are not based on judgments about any particular programs, but on the team's assessment (as best as could be determine in a whirlwind two week visit) of the most cost-effective impact that USAID can make in the next 3 to 5 years with limited dollars in an environment with many serious needs. This report also provides recommendations for USAID as it plans its next round for project funding for the Patrick Leahy War Victims Fund, and the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund. As we make our recommendations to USAID/Vietnam for these funding streams, we urge the Agency to consider other USAID budget programs whose mission could clearly embrace the needs of VWD.

### A. THE STATUS OF VIETNAMESE WITH DISABILITIES

While no official government survey on the status of Vietnamese with disabilities (VWD) has been undertaken, currently the Vietnamese Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) estimates that approximately 6% of the population, or 5 to 6 million Vietnamese, have disabilities. Illiteracy rates among VWD are estimated to be as high as 36% compared to national rates that are below 10%. Similar disproportional figures are found in education completion rates. In 1999, for example, three quarters of the student population completed their primary education compared to approximately 25% of children with disabilities. The statistics, spanning a range of areas from education to health to income, confirm the alarming and harsh realities of life for people with disabilities: issues of access, participation, and marginalization have set PWD on an uneven footing producing an inequality of both opportunity and results.

Following a growing trend by countries worldwide to establish policies that recognize disability as an important priority, the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (GSRV) has taken steps to improve opportunities for people with disabilities. For example, the 1994 Labor Code (No. 35-L-CTN) tackled issues related to wage laws; occupational safety and hazards; vocational training; and established production protections for PWD. In 1998, the Ordinance on Disabled Persons (No. 06/1998/PL-UBTVQH-10, hereafter Disability Ordinance) was adopted and addressed all aspects of legislation pertaining to people with disabilities. In 2001, the Office of the National Coordinating Council on Disability (NCCD) of Vietnam, comprised of 26 representatives from various government ministries, was established to advise the government on disability issues. In conjunction with these GSRV efforts, many disability advocacy organizations are working in cooperation to concentrate on central issues of poverty, lack of access to education, employment, and social support. Local and regional groups of people with disabilities, state, regional, and international NGOs, and various governments concerned with people with disabilities have joined the effort to improve their status. While many engage primarily in assistance and

public education, some are focusing on legal and structural changes not only in Vietnam but also in the region.

## B. USAID/VIETNAM DISABILITY PORTFOLIO

In line with Vietnam’s own efforts, USAID/Vietnam has taken the lead among donor programs in responding to disability issues in Vietnam, primarily through the Leahy War Victims Fund (LWVF) and the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund (DCOF), which for years carried congressional set-asides specific to Vietnam. By USAID’s own accounting, “The rights and needs of PWD have been increasingly recognized and respected in Vietnam as a result of USAID funded programs.”

From 1992-1998, USAID supported programs focused almost exclusively on the mobility related needs of VWD. However, in 1998, USAID funding streams became more diversified and have since supported disability activities focusing on education, health, employment, medical rehabilitation, policy development and advocacy. Through technical assistance and funding of NGO activities, USAID has contributed to raising awareness at the national, provincial, community and family levels regarding the needs and abilities of children and adults with disabilities in Vietnam. Programs have demonstrated job training and retention for adolescents with disabilities; accessible education for children in primary school (kindergarten through grade 5); provision of mobility aids and other assistive devices; technician training for prosthetics and orthotics; policy development and implementation; and expansion of self-help groups. Pilot projects have demonstrated the efficacy of inclusive education and led the way to a national commitment and strategy for inclusive education for all children with disabilities. Thousands of children have been screened and treated for hearing impairments, and teachers trained to work with children with hearing impairments.

USAID/Vietnam Disability Portfolio Grantee	Start of Funding	Funding Amount	Programmatic Area
Catholic Relief Services (CRS)	1998	\$1,654,537	Inclusive Education, Education Policy
Health Volunteers Overseas (HVO)	1998	\$3,336,923	Rehabilitation Services, Coordination
Hesperian Foundation	2002	\$334,546	Hearing Impaired Assistance
Pearl S. Buck International (PSBI)	1998	\$1,728,656	Inclusive Education, Education Policy
Prosthetics Outreach Foundation (POF)	2002	\$301,599	Orthotic Assistive Devices
Save the Children	2002	\$1,000,907	Inclusive Education
Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VAF)	1994	\$2,570,553	Rehabilitation Services
Vietnam Assistance to the Handicapped (VAH)	1998	\$4,556,382	Disability Policy
World Concern International (WCI)	1998	\$2,225,313	Vocational Training

## C. GAPS IN DISABILITY PROGRAMMING

While progress is being made, significant gaps still exist between the aim of the Government of the Social Republic of Vietnam’s disability policy, best practices and the actual assistance available to most VWD. Little policy guidance has been developed and disseminated and actual implementation and enforcement of the Ordinance on Disabled Persons is weak. Furthermore, there is a lack of consensus and coordination amongst Vietnamese ministries regarding methods to implement the new laws and regulations, including how to meet the inclusive education commitment. Widespread lack of understanding and awareness of disability legislation still persists as do negative attitudes about disability.

## **D. STATEMENT OF THE NEED FOR ASSESSMENT**

While USAID/Vietnam’s disability portfolio aims to increase the number of people with disabilities with access to education, employment and development, the field office has not yet developed a comprehensive framework or strategy on disabilities. This assessment team was charged with analyzing the impact of current programs, identifying the gaps in these programs and providing recommendations for a broader disability strategy in line with goals identified by the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, UNESCAP, NCCD, Vietnamese disability advocacy groups, and NGOs working in Vietnam.

## II. ASSESSMENT PLANNING AND METHODOLOGY

Preparation for the Vietnam Disability Situation Assessment and Program Review began with a team planning meeting (TPM) in early May of 2005. The TPM was attended by Celane McWhorter, assessment team leader and inclusive education specialist from the Academy for Educational Development (AED); Marilyn Golden, disability policy specialist from Management Systems International (MSI), Lainey Feingold, a disability rights lawyer and Ms. Golden's attendant; Dennis Marotta, monitoring and evaluation specialist from MSI; Larry Beyna, TPM facilitator from MSI; and Megan Callihan, a project manager at MSI. Intended USAID/DC staff, Rob Horvath and Lynne Schaberg, were not able to participate in this meeting, however telephone discussions did occur before the team arrived in Hanoi.

During the TPM the overall purpose of the assignment was defined, priority assessment questions were identified, and the report outline was generated. The TPM team agreed that the overarching purpose of the assessment was "to assist USAID/Vietnam in identifying focus areas where its disability portfolio can have the greatest impact in advancing the livelihoods of Vietnamese with Disabilities (VWD)." In order to meet this purpose, the following priority guiding questions were developed:

- What are the most pressing needs of people with disabilities (PWD) in Vietnam and which of these are not being met?
- What has been the reach/impact of USAID/Vietnam's disability programming?
- Considering USAID/Vietnam's existing position and the needs of VWD, where should USAID/Vietnam concentrate its efforts?

After reaching agreement on the priority assessment questions, the TPM team turned to the issue of data collection, i.e., what types of data and information would inform these questions and how could such data be collected. Multiple data sources and data collection methods were identified:

- 1) Key informant interviews;
- 2) Town-hall meetings;
- 3) Group interviews;
- 4) Site visits; and
- 5) Review of project documents

### ***Field Work***

The field team consisted of Celane McWhorter (AED), Marilyn Golden (MSI), Lainey Feingold (MSI), and Dennis Marotta (MSI). Rob Horvath (USAID/DC) and Lynne Schaberg (USAID/DC) participated in most meetings and field visits, but were not part of the formal MSI team.

### III. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

While the team learned of many needs for VWD, four areas were identified as priority areas for USAID focus. The four areas are education; policy development and implementation; self-help groups; and employment. The areas we recommend, by their very nature, result in work that has a lasting impact. For example, each self-help group that is spawned and nurtured ideally produces members who in turn can advocate for the full inclusion of Vietnamese with disabilities into various aspects of society. As pointed out elsewhere in this report, the literacy rate is very low among VWD. In a country with an overall literacy rate in the mid-ninety percentile, quality education is an extremely important tool for VWD in the push for full inclusion and acceptance. A strong, coordinated and well funded disability policy component at all levels of government can have an impact across society on such key issues as transportation, education, infrastructure, and government programming. And, as expressed by many Vietnamese with disabilities, the key to economic independence and social acceptance is employment. While the capacity for USAID/Vietnam to address all of these issues may be limited, the team felt it important to outline the full range of findings and recommendations.

#### A. OVERARCHING ISSUES

Issues of disability awareness, inclusion of disability issues in development projects, cross-disability considerations, sustainability, donor coordination, longstanding relationship with government officials, and leadership development for Vietnamese with disabilities are important issues across all the assessment team's recommendations.

**Overarching Issue Finding.** There have been many efforts toward disability awareness via events and campaigns, such as the National and International Disability Day events, as well as media articles on disability issues. Yet, a great deal more is needed to shift the overall attitude of society towards full integration of people with disabilities.

A very significant factor hampering the advance of people with disabilities in Vietnam is attitudinal, with the general public demonstrating negative and dismissive attitudes toward disability. As Robert Metts' pointed out, "The inclusionary approach to disability on which Vietnam's emerging national disability strategy is increasingly based, is not yet understood by most people in society. As is the case in most countries, most people in Vietnam, including those in public administration, tend to falsely perceive people with disabilities as inherently incapable of significant participation in the social and economic mainstream."<sup>1</sup> In large parts of the countryside, family members with disabilities are hidden in the home out of shame and are denied the same opportunities for participation and self-determination available to non-disabled family members. Metts also commented that "Even those who understand that societal benefits are to be gained through inclusion strategies often tend to be hampered by a lack of information and guidance concerning the most appropriate and cost-effective ways to do so." Implementation of national policy on the district and commune level may be hampered "based on tradition, preconceived notions, negative stereotypes, and limited expectations of people with disabilities . . . Fearing rejection, many disabled people, particularly in the rural areas, tend not to consider the possibility of mainstream social participation or employment." The negative effect of these attitudes on disabled individuals themselves is also significant. As Metts also commented, "the misperceptions and negative stereotypes underlying [disability] discrimination . . . contribute to a self-reinforcing climate of low expectations for disabled people that further limits their potential. Overcoming such entrenched discriminatory patterns

requires public education and explicit policies and affirmative strategies to foster the inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of public life.”<sup>2</sup>

For example, Commemorative Day is, quite literally, about the “care and protection” of people with disabilities rather than, for example, illustrating the self-sufficiency and equality that disability accommodations and programs can engender. Another vivid example of attitudes about people with disabilities in Vietnam came to light during an interview with a group of social workers and others. When asked about public attitudes toward people with disabilities, one of the social workers stated: “Of course, people with disabilities should be protected and cared for, but we think people with disabilities can produce products and made a contribution now. This means people with disabilities can make a small contribution to society.” This cultural context poses significant obstacles to fostering a sense of equality, independence, and inclusion of people with disabilities. People interviewed across all sectors – people with disabilities, government representatives, NGO staff and DPO and self-help group representatives – recognized the need to raise awareness in the whole society.

**Overarching Issue Finding. Disability Issues should be integrated into all Donor Programs in Vietnam.**

Major donors other than USAID, such as the World Bank and the ODA, fund significant projects in Vietnam. For example, the World Bank is involved in developing a Bus Rapid Transit system in Hanoi, and the French government, via the ODA, will build a new Hanoi Tram system. While efforts by NGOs and, to some extent, the government are underway to ensure these systems are fully accessible to people with disabilities, it is not yet clear that these efforts will be successful. As a leader, USAID should work to better inform and influence donors and their programs, in an effort to better ensure they will be barrier-free.

**Overarching Issue Finding. Disability programs in Vietnam tend to be limited to people with mobility, vision, and hearing impairments.**

Progress for people with disabilities in Vietnam has primarily been limited to people with mobility impairments, hearing impairments, and visual impairments. People with other disabilities, such as cognitive disabilities, psychiatric disabilities, and head injuries have been largely neglected, and often live in conditions of significant isolation, segregation, and exclusion. It is important for initiatives aimed at the disability community to at least take beginning steps toward inclusion of disability categories which have previously been ignored and which may present complex challenges.

**Overarching Issue Finding. Long standing relationships with government officials at all levels appear to be a necessary prerequisite to effective advocacy. The decentralization of the government of Vietnam necessitates that these relationships occur at all levels of government.**

Long-standing relationships with government officials appear to be a necessary prerequisite to effective advocacy, and in the context of diminishing dollars, groups with existing relationships will be more effective for less cost. The decentralization of the GSRV necessitates that these relationships occur at all levels of government. This finding does not necessarily require USAID to fund only existing programs, as key individuals with requisite relationships may be present in currently un-funded programs.

**Overarching Issue Finding. The national government of Vietnam is proud of the recognition it has received outside the country for its efforts to promote disability awareness and improve the lives of people with disabilities.**

The national government of Vietnam is proud of the deserved recognition it has received outside the country for its efforts to promote disability awareness and improve the lives of people with disabilities. Such recognition may serve as a motivator for the increased government participation and effort that is needed to fully realize the disability agenda.

## OVERARCHING ISSUE RECOMMENDATIONS

**Overarching Issue Recommendation. Projects should demonstrate pre-existing solid relationships with key policymakers in relevant government ministries.**

**Overarching Issue Recommendation. Projects should include a component of disability awareness activities.**

**Overarching Issue Recommendation. Projects should show they would result in sustainable changes.**

**Overarching Issue Recommendation. Projects should include a beginning step toward broader disability inclusiveness (beyond hearing impairment, visual impairment, and mobility impairment).**

**Overarching Issue Recommendation. Projects should involve Vietnamese people with disabilities as staff in the planning and execution of projects and in policy dialogue.**

**Overarching Issue Recommendation. Where applicable, projects should integrate disability access into major donor infrastructure projects developed in Vietnam to ensure they are fully accessible to people with disabilities.**

**Overarching Issue Recommendation. Where applicable, projects should attempt to bring regional and international recognition to Vietnam's efforts to improve the lives of persons with disabilities.**

**Overarching Issue Recommendation. Projects should include a monitoring and evaluation component in which data collected is used to determine successful outcomes and inform future activities of the project.**

## B. EDUCATION

Children with disabilities face significant barriers in the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam's ability to provide a high quality education. In many schools, teachers are not trained to teach children with disabilities, and despite the government priority placed on inclusive education many provinces have not yet begun to include CWD in the mainstream classroom. Moreover, the government provides limited resources and support to assist in the education of children with disabilities, and adapted education curricula is not widely available. Some schools for children with disabilities have been established in cooperation with international NGOs, which have served about 21,000 children countrywide. However, the rate of enrollment of children with disabilities in schools is only around 2% of the total number of children who could benefit from such educational opportunities.

**Education Finding.** The Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is committed to promoting inclusive education (IE) nationwide for students with disabilities.

In 1995 national jurisdiction for the education of CWD was transferred to the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). Institutions within MOET then began to consider educational strategies for CWD for the first time. In 2001, MOET announced a national policy and commitment for inclusive education for children with disabilities. Also in 2001 the Ministry established a Steering Committee on Education for CWD (SCEDC), made up of public administrators and technical staff of the Ministry who serve as an advisory body to the Ministry on issues relating to education for CWD in Vietnam. One of their major tasks is to make proposals for education policy addressing CWD. The government commitment has recently been expanded, with a goal now of providing inclusive education for all children with disabilities by the year 2015, with staggered targets of 50% of all CWD in Inclusive Education (IE) in 2005 and 70% by 2010.

In April of this year, government officials circulated the latest draft implementation plan for Inclusive Education (Draft #11), the National Action Plan (NAP) on Education for Children with Disabilities in Vietnam. When finalized the NAP will provide guidance to the Provincial officials on the implementation of IE. The NAP is based on three earlier government documents setting the pace for IE: (1) National Action Plan on Children with Disabilities in Vietnam 2001-2010; (2) Educational Development Strategy 2001-2010; and (3) National Plan on Education for All 2003-2015. In addition to the administrative documents from the Ministry level, it will be important for lawmakers in the National Assembly to include IE in the national Education law. It is currently on the agenda for the Committee of Social Affairs in the National Assembly, and it is likely that the bill will come before the full assembly for vote sometime in 2006.

Meanwhile, it is clear that if IE is to become fully and effectively implemented the Vietnamese Government must send strong guidance and directives to the provinces that inclusion is a national goal. The team learned from meetings with NGOs that only with such direction would the provinces and Departments below them feel the need to direct resources to support CWD.

By all accounts, efforts of the international community, especially the projects of Pearl S. Buck Foundation and Catholic Relief Services, both supported by USAID, led to GSRV decisions to mainstream children with disabilities in the regular schools and to the promulgation of the strategic and action planning documents. It will be important for these projects to continue to inform the GSRV on effective implementation strategies as they move toward full implementation in 2015.

**Education Finding.** To ensure a National Action Plan that addresses the full range of needs of CWD and their families, the involvement of individuals with disabilities, NGOs and others with expertise in inclusive education must be involved in the policy discussions at all levels.

Vietnam is just beginning to fully tackle educational strategies for CWD, and the task of addressing their needs in mainstream educational settings is monumental. The harsh reality is that many provinces have not begun to consider inclusive education for students with disabilities and some provinces do not even have special schools for CWD. The policy makers at the ministry level and the implementers at the provincial, departmental and community levels have much to learn. It will be very important for them to learn from the true stakeholders themselves – children with disabilities, their families, NGOs, and others who have already created successful pilot and other IE programs across the country.

USAID-funded projects have informed government officials on effective IE strategies demonstrated in pilot projects across the country, and have been available to work with ministry officials throughout the development of inclusive education policy. It is important for Vietnamese with disabilities, disability

professionals, and other community leaders who have been working at the local levels on IE to continue to establish themselves as an important government resource on IE implementation.

To its credit, the draft National Action Plan for Inclusive Education for Students with Disabilities gives consideration to information-gathering from families and CWD. However, a strong, collective, and consistent “voice” is needed to work with policymakers, at all levels. The policymakers will continue to need VWD and professionals whom they respect and trust available to serve as advisors as they move forward with the implementation plan.

**Education Finding.** Implementation of IE for primary education will require intensive work on training, technical assistance and other infrastructure and capacity building activities in every province.

Primary school is compulsory for all students in Vietnam. However, this law has not been enforced for most Vietnamese children with disabilities. In 2003 UNICEF reported more than one million children in Vietnam living with a disability, the vast majority of whom lack the opportunity to participate in education and vocational programs. The contrast between a 94% rate for Vietnamese in general with a UNICEF reported statistic that more than 1/3 of CWD in Vietnam never attend school paints a bleak picture for children and adults with disabilities in the country. In 1998, UNICEF reported that over 1/2 of all school aged CWD (ages 6-17) were illiterate.<sup>3</sup> As outlined above, through the adoption of a solid policy regarding IE for CWD, the GSRV has taken the first step in remedying these numbers. However, the policy alone does not solve the problem.

While Ministry officials spoke optimistically about the status of IE in the country, visits and interviews with VWD, parents, and NGOs revealed the great divide between a very solid commitment to IE and the capacity of the local educational systems to implement the policy. The implementation policy is in draft status, still under negotiation, and apparently far from completion. There is no guidance to provinces or communes regarding their responsibility to provide IE to CWD and the provinces do not appear equipped with capacity, infrastructure, equipment nor any other components needed to successfully deliver IE.

“There remains no strategy at the national level to achieve these targets. Inclusive Education is in the very early stages of being institutionalized; there is considerable momentum with full government support. Yet, without a clearly defined national strategy, provinces and districts remain without clearly defined targets to develop their strategies or action plans to expand Inclusive Education.”<sup>4</sup>

This quote from a Catholic Relief Services report was reinforced many times over, in the team’s meetings. While GSRV officials have remained very open to information received from pilot projects in their attempt to develop a model that can be replicated, there is much work to be done before successful implementation can be achieved across the country. This work includes:

**Data collection.** In order to create a system of IE that is responsive to the educational needs of CWD, it is important to know how many CWD there are, where they are located, what disabling conditions they experience. MOET’s National Institute of Education Strategy and Curriculum (NIESAC) the agency responsible for education research and curriculum development do not have access to the data needed to do this work.

**Accessibility.** The lack of accessible environments is a major issue for VWD nationwide. If children with mobility disabilities cannot enter the school building or access classrooms and facilities throughout the school, they will certainly not have access to inclusive education. There is also a major issue of accessible roads and pathways to school buildings, especially in the rural areas, but the same is true in urban areas as well.

***Cultural and social biases.*** Most Vietnamese have not had personal experience with disability and the resulting cultural and social biases from the lack of exposure extends to the mainstream classroom, both with teachers and students without disabilities. For example, if given the option many teachers will reject the placement of CWD out of fear that their class scores on the national standardized performance tests will be lowered. Students who have not learned about disability or differences can be unkind, exposing CWD to taunts and isolation in a mainstream setting.

***Lack of teachers trained to work with specific disability issues.*** Most teachers are not trained in special education, nor received any specialized training necessary to address the varying types of disabilities that will be included in an IE setting.

***Lack of technical support for classroom teachers who do accept children with disabilities into their class.*** Teachers in IE settings report that they do not have classroom aides, sufficient adapted materials nor other supports they need to effectively respond to the special educational needs of CWD in their classrooms.

***Shame, shyness and impoverishment of family members.*** Many families caught in cultural biases view their CWD as family members to be ashamed of and are either ashamed or shy about public exposure. This attitude makes it difficult for a family to support IE for their child. Many families do not have the financial resources necessary to attend to the costs of their children's needs.

***Lack of universal system of communication for students with hearing impairment.*** There is not a universal sign language established in Vietnam for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. The result is a series of regionalized sign communication, which limits the ability of a student with auditory disability to communicate with their teacher and classmates. It further challenges the development of effective teacher training programs in sign language.

***Older Students with Disabilities.*** Students with disabilities who did not have access to schooling during their younger years pose a special problem in developing effective age appropriate classrooms.

***Limited understanding or commitment to IE at the Provincial or District level.*** Much of the decision-making about education and other social programs are made at the Provincial or communal levels. Without specific guidance and instructions from the Ministry level officials, many provinces do not understand the requirement for IE nor will they be willing to take on the commitment of Departmental funds. Much of the decision-making powers rest within the provincial People's Committees and little effort has been directed to raising their awareness regarding IE.

While it is reported that the majority of provinces do have some form of inclusive education, it is the opinion of many that the only effective IE implementation occurring in Vietnam is supported by NGOs.

Visits to local school programs sponsored by NGOs further demonstrated that even projects striving for best practice within Vietnam still face serious challenges. The team learned from teachers about many unmet needs, such as:

- IE classrooms with 25 students, including 2 students with disabilities (SWD) have no assistance to meet their special needs;
- No free class time to address the special needs of the SWD;
- Limited preparation training for the special needs of a CWD;

- No on-going support during the school year from the “Resource Center”;
- No additional stipend or compensation for teachers with CWD in their classroom; and
- Insufficient training materials, especially adapted training materials for CWD.

Another equally important observation: while Vietnam moves toward IE for all students with disabilities, great care must be taken to prevent the creation of a system, which, while very well intended, ends up treating CWD as “tokens” in the IE game. Exposing SWD to regular classrooms without fully supporting and including them could damage their social skill development – just the opposite of the intended effect of IE.

**Education Finding. Regional Resource Centers provide one solution to IE infrastructure and capacity building needs in Vietnam.**

There are currently three approaches to education for SWD in Vietnam:

- 1) **Special Schools:** Separate schools accepting only CWD.
- 2) **Integrated Schools:** Special Schools that have transitioned CWD into IE settings and have become a “Resource Center” for IE. Most Integrated Schools still have some students with disabilities in a separate special education classroom and have added students without disabilities to the school as well.
- 3) **Inclusive Schools:** Regular schools implementing the IE model, with classrooms with no more than two CWD in any classroom.

No matter which components of the above structure occur in a community’s implementation of education for SWD, training and technical assistance to the IE teacher and administrator is integral to the support of the system. According to the Vietnamese plan, the development of provincial resource centers will provide the best answer to this need. There are some who believe that other forms of training and technical assistance (e.g. through the Teacher Colleges) would be a better strategy for capacity and infrastructure building due to staffing issues in the Resource Centers. Traditionally it appears that the Special Schools were assigned the less effective teachers, who, once a Special School transitions to a Resource Center will be becoming the training and support staff for the IE teachers. To avoid an untrained or poor quality residual staffing issue, some recommend looking to the teaching colleges to provide resource center services. Unfortunately, only 6-7 provinces have a teaching college and it is not likely that they will be able to reach beyond communities in their own province for special education training and other services. Whichever direction the officials choose to go it is important that there be Centers from which training and support are provided to IE teachers and administrators.

Unfortunately, this is no easy task. There are many roadblocks. For example, from site visits and discussions it is clear the following issues must to be addressed in the development of effective Resource Centers:

***Provincial political considerations.*** The Provincial People’s Committee makes all provincial government programming and funding decisions. It is important that the Resource Center leaders have the support of the People’s Committee in the Province. The lack of understanding and/or commitment to disability and IE at the local, Departmental or Provincial level will require additional

public awareness and outreach;. A good relationship with the People’s Committee could be very helpful with this effort.

***Insufficient funds.*** Without commitment of sufficient funding from the Province and/or Department to address the full range of training and capacity building needs, the Resource Center will be hampered. Creative leadership will be needed to maximize use of the funding available.

***Lack of well trained teaching and technical assistance center staff.*** The Resource Center may be faced with poorly trained and/or unmotivated carry-over staff from the special school to provide the training and technical assistance to the IE teachers. Likewise, it will be challenging to find staff who have the skill and knowledge base to address a full range of special needs. Resource leaders must be prepared to address these and other staffing problems to facilitate inclusion of all CWD in mainstream schools.

***Lack of special schools in many provinces.*** Provinces that do not have a Special School will not have the infrastructure from which to transition to IE. Additional decisions and funding may be necessary to establish a resource center in this circumstance.

All of these are issues that could be resolved through a system of strong resource centers available in the provinces.

**Education Finding.** A plan for coordination of the varied approaches by NGOs, donor groups, and governmental entities with IE responsibilities is important for the development of successful IE Resource Centers and other capacity building activities.

In the opinion of one well-respected disability professional in Hanoi: “There are resources to address many of these issues. – it is important how we all coordinate those resources collectively.”<sup>5</sup>

Existing projects in Vietnam addressing infrastructure and capacity building for on IE are scattered, with each making only a small dent in a country with such great need. Coordinated, similar projects could collectively have a much greater impact. Coordination should be a crucial component for the next round of USAID projects aimed at solving the IE implementation challenges and more easily spreading a knowledge base across provinces.

Successful implementation of Inclusive Education will also require coordination among government agencies. It was suggested at a team town hall meeting that as the NGOs and DPOs become better organized and coordinated, a very important side effect of such coordination could be the development of a role model for Ministry level coordination.

**Education Finding.** A major impediment for Vietnamese with hearing impairments is the lack of a universal Vietnamese sign language. A sign language system is needed that will allow individuals with hearing impairments to communicate across regions.

There is no universal sign language in Vietnam. This poses significant obstacles to teachers who require training in the communication modality of their students in order to successfully “speak” with them and teach them. Sign language built on regional dialect appears to seriously limit the development of signs available in any one language and the ability of a person with a hearing impairment to communicate outside of their own community.

The team heard this message from visits with university teacher trainers, NGOs, and in on-site visits. A visit with students with hearing impairments in a provincial classroom revealed the severity of the limitations in the language available to them. Likewise, deficits in the training available to their classroom teachers made it almost impossible to communicate with the students on even simple questions.

Work is on-going to address this problem, most specifically through an USAID supported project of education for students with hearing impairments as well as at Hanoi University. In the process of attempting to develop one language useful to all Vietnamese, great care is taken to respect and protect the regional dialects and to incorporate regional differences into the universal language. Consideration is also given to the combination of regional languages into two larger sign languages, preserving the differences of the North and the South of Vietnam. No matter what the solution, students with profound hearing disabilities need this communication tool, as quickly as solutions are possible.

**Education Finding.** The current system of standardized assessments to measure student progress is discriminatory against many SWD with disabilities and provides a disincentive for teachers to willingly accept SWD into their classrooms.

Teacher effectiveness is determined by how well their students perform on standardized tests. If a child with a disability does not have access to adapted assessments, based on the nature of their disability, the teacher who has a SWD could be penalized for lower student performance scores. This creates a challenge for the teacher of a SWD and opens the door to potential discrimination against the SWD. Adapted assessments are a necessary tool to avoid this significant barrier to successful IE.

**Education Finding.** Most CWD do not have access to schools past the fifth grade

It is clear from team interviews that many children with disabilities who attend school do not have access to education beyond primary school (5th grade). Anecdotally, the team learned that only children with mobility impairments and with blindness can expect to go beyond the fifth grade. The outcome of this situation is documented most dramatically in the UNICEF *Situational Analysis on Children with Disabilities in Vietnam*, “The CDS [MOLISA/UNICEF Child Disability Survey-1998] reports that in the communities almost half of the school-aged CWD (age 6-17) are illiterate (45.5%). Over one-third of CWD age 6-17 had never attended school and another one-sixth of school age CWD attended school but dropped out. ...vocational training and employment opportunities for older CWD are limited.”<sup>6</sup>

There are many NGOs working in the area of IE, and the team gave serious consideration to abandoning a service delivery model project due to this fact. However, it is clear that Vietnam is far from reaching the saturation point on IE projects. There appears to be a real need for more models of best practice in a multitude of areas.

## EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations to enhance the implementation of Inclusive Education are offered, in order of priority.

**Support an Inclusive Education Resource Center providing teacher and administrative training and demonstrating quality IE that could be both replicable in provinces ready to make the commitment and provide mentoring to other provinces at the exploratory stages.**

Targeted minimum criteria for USAID involvement might be:

- Project builds on knowledge gained in already established Resource Center or other Center for training, technical assistance, and support for IE in the designated area;
- With additional resources, Center project demonstrates promise of becoming replicable, best practices Center of Excellence;
- Center will have the capacity to provide teacher training, technical assistance and training to other provinces across Vietnam;
- Location in a Province that has made a political and financial commitment to IE and the Center.

There are many areas the project could consider supporting in a comprehensive manner or piecemeal, including the following:

- Information and skill development for work with children across the disability spectrum;
- Relationship building, especially with policymakers at District, Provincial and Ministry level to infuse lessons learned from Center into implementation policy.
- Community based system of outreach to identify students with disabilities who are not in school;
- Family training, empowerment and support;
- Development of cadre of volunteers in the community who could serve as classroom aides;
- Community awareness for disability issues
- Center of Excellence that effectively utilizes international expertise and makes same available to staff of like projects financed by other donor groups.
- Leadership in collaboration of all like projects across Vietnam to facilitate expansion of knowledge base best practice information.
- Disability awareness and IE skill development for school level managers;
- Collaboration with Teacher Training Colleges to build capacity for pre and in service training available to IE teachers;
- Adapted performance assessment for SWD.

**Subject to sufficient funding, support work on the development of a regionally respectful, nationally useful sign language, and subsequent training programs.**

If funded, this secondary recommendation should give consideration to the following:

- Utilize experienced sign language linguist, with understanding of Asian sign languages.
- Utilize skilled signers, including fluent Vietnamese adult deaf signers, with ability to understand and develop sign language that embodies dialects currently used in Vietnam.
- Involve Vietnamese individuals with deafness in the development of training programs.

- Develop training programs for teachers that ensure adequate training time and sufficient practice for teachers in signing complete sentences and focus the language in social context.
- Provide sign language training for parents.

Note: Emphasis must be placed on preserving and including the indigenous Vietnamese sign languages that currently exist. This may mean the creation of more than one sign language in Vietnam with the incorporation of enough universally applicable signs to make communication across the languages possible.

Future consideration should be given to support for a pilot project demonstrating quality secondary practices for CWD, including strategies for raising the awareness of the capability of students with disabilities to participate in school beyond grade 5.

### C. POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Vietnam has made significant strides in developing policy to ensure the integration of people with disabilities into all aspects of Vietnamese society. Most of these achievements have been spearheaded by USAID-funded Vietnam Assistance for the Handicap and include the following: (1) Drafting and adoption of the Disability Ordinance; (2) Drafting and adoption of the Barrier-Free Access Code & Standards; (3) Establishment of the National Coordinating Committee on Disability (NCCD); (4) Adoption of the Biwako Millennium Framework of Action with the important addition of a disability awareness mandate; and (5) Inclusion of disability issues in poverty reduction programs at all governmental levels. This latter effort is a key step toward the sustainability of all disability policy efforts.

Despite significant progress, a number of key weaknesses were identified, which lead to the following findings.

**Policy Development Finding.** Vietnam does not have a law that provides them full legal status to NGOs.

When asked during interviews to identify key factors stunting the development of the self-help groups, most NGOs, DPOs, and other parties identified the lack of a robust NGO Law as fundamental. Representatives from the Disability Forum, for example, identified NGO lack of legal status as the “biggest challenge to sustainability” of disability programmatic work in Vietnam. Currently, an NGO cannot put on a program, hold an event, or officially engage in fundraising activities unless it does so in partnership with a sanctioned governmental organization. Providing legal status to NGOs would represent a very fundamental and necessary organizational change. A national NGO law needs to be passed allowing such groups to establish themselves and function fully without significant obstacle.

**Policy Development Finding.** There is a need to strengthen the National Coordinating Council on Disability.

The establishment of the National Coordinating Council on Disability (NCCD)<sup>7</sup> in 2001 was an important step in raising the status of disability issues in Vietnam. The individual commitment of all participants is readily apparent. NGO staff reported that Director Tue understands disabilities issues quite well and has spoken persuasively on behalf of people with disabilities in Vietnam. NCCD has become a major instrument for NGOs, government, and Vietnamese with disabilities in the overall efforts toward greater inclusion. Examples include the first ever allocation of funds for vocational rehabilitation and the nationally televised advocacy and awareness campaign. NCCD’s efforts to raise awareness in the national media were recognized as important by many interviewees.

According to reports from Vietnam Assistance to the Handicapped as well as all other interviewed, NCCD is seen as the key Vietnamese coordinator on disability issues by major international organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank as well as other major bilateral donors such as JICA. NCCD was invited to participate in several regional gatherings, including those on poverty reduction for people with disabilities in China and UN disability rights organized by the UNESCAP in Thailand and Korea. NCCD collaborated with JICA and the Asia Pacific Centre on Disability, a Bangkok-based regional center, to organize a weeklong leadership training workshop for people with disabilities around the region. NCCD also helped facilitate funds from the New York Life Insurance and Canada Fund for disabled children projects in Vietnam.<sup>8</sup>

NCCD's effectiveness, however, is significantly hampered by its status as a Council within MOLISA. Many interviewees stated that the status of NCCD needs to be elevated to a National Committee, rather than continue as an entity linked to a particular ministry, so it can have a more powerful impact. NCCD's internal structure and organization should also be strengthened. NCCD could be supported to become a strong resource center on disability issues for the government of Vietnam and its people. A minority of stakeholders saw some drawbacks to this potential change in NCCD's status, or thought another government body should take on this type of elevated national role. For example, they stated that as a national committee, the NCCD may lose some of its flexibility to implement and program. Moreover, national committees in Vietnam are chaired by a Vice Prime Minister and committee members must be at a Vice Minister level or above. As such, national committees tend to be more political than practical. As such, some saw NCCD's elevation as merely one possible path to the goal of a stronger centralized government agency on disability policy, and questioned whether other changes could attain the same goal.

**Policy Development Finding.** There is a need for the integration of disability issues into Vietnamese governmental activities.

The government of Vietnam undertakes a variety of programs and campaigns to serve the Vietnamese people, including employment programs and infrastructure and credit projects. For people with disabilities to have equal opportunity in Vietnamese society, all such campaigns should include disability-related considerations. This is occurring in one area, poverty reduction, but should be made more government-wide. The government of Vietnam, NGOs, and the disability community should all undertake efforts to integrate disability issues into all government programs and campaigns.

**Policy Development Finding.** There is a lack of enforcement of the policies the government has developed to ensure the integration of people with disabilities into Vietnamese society.

Current disability laws in Vietnam, if implemented, would have a significant and positive impact on the lives of disabled Vietnamese people. However, virtually all interviewees, including government officials, acknowledged that a big deficit is the lack of enforcement of current laws. Enforcement of disability-related laws is an important priority.

It is noted that additional resources at all levels of government, strengthening of the grassroots disability movement, greater coordination among government ministries, and elevation of the NCCD to a national committee would help boost enforcement significantly. Progress is being made however. For example, under a VNAH initiative, training of construction practitioners on the barrier-free access code and standards – a critical component of standards enforcement – occurred during the last six months of 2004 in Hanoi, Hai Phong, Ho Chi Minh City, and Da Nang. Most participants were technicians representing the provincial level of the Department of Construction, agencies in charge of licensing and inspection, urban development and construction companies, architect design and housing investment companies, and

public building works. Representatives from local People’s Committees, relevant government agencies, and other stakeholder organizations were also present. Subsequently, the Da Nang Department of Construction committed to set up an enforcement unit to help enforce compliance on the barrier-free access code and standards.<sup>9</sup>

Even when there is enforcement, information about increased accessibility and inclusion is not necessarily shared within the community of NGOs and disability organizations. For example, some improvements in the accessibility of the built environment were listed by one organization as evidence of progress, while leaders with disabilities in another organization felt no buildings or street features had been made accessible. Information about such improvements is important to share in the disability and NGO communities. These changes are also ideal topics for public awareness stories in the media illustrating the importance of an accessible society for people with disabilities that can augment the disability awareness of the general public.

## **POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

There is still a great need for extensive work to be done on the development and enforcement of disability policy in Vietnam. Support policy development and implementation projects that works on the following issues, presented in the highest order of priority:

- Strengthening of NCCD and development of its policy and coordination role, including its elevation to a National Committee.
- Establishment of a law that provides full legal rights to NGOs.
- Enforcement of existing disability policy and dissemination of information about policy advances.
- Integration of disability issues into national and local programs and campaigns for the Vietnamese general public, such as annual budget allocation, national target programs in poverty reduction and employment, surveys and census, youth programs, information technology expansion efforts, infrastructure and credit projects, etc.

Potential methodologies for the recommendations above may include:

- Operating at both national and provincial levels.
- Conducting of disability awareness sessions for policymakers, including a component allowing policymakers to have the experience of a simulated disability (e.g. by spending a period of hours using wheelchairs, wearing an apparatus that limits vision, etc.) to give policymakers (1) An increased understanding of obstacles faced by people with disabilities in their daily lives, and (2) A deeper appreciation of the changes needed by people with disabilities in society.
- Providing technical assistance to policymakers.
- Providing training and technical assistance on policy issues to other USAID disability-related grantees.
- Inaugurating a transition to disability policy work being carried out by Vietnamese people with disabilities, through active mentoring of disabled Vietnamese advocates who will gain policy skills and form relationships with key governmental parties.

## D. DISABILITY SELF-HELP GROUPS

Effective policies and programs for people with disabilities necessitate the active involvement of disabled individuals and a vibrant and empowered disability community. As the disability movement in many countries has coined as a motto, “Nothing about us, without us.” And as Robert Metts wrote in his Final Report for Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped, “People with disabilities and their families are the most qualified, best informed and most motivated to speak on their own behalf concerning the proper design and implementation of strategies to facilitate the social and economic access they need to increase their social and economic contributions. Support for organizations of people with disabilities is, therefore, one of the most cost-effective investments available to increase the social and economic participation of people with disabilities.”<sup>10</sup>

This crucial flowering of a vibrant disability community is well on its way in Vietnam. In the past two years across the country, there has been a burgeoning of self-help groups of people with disabilities. Significant support for these groups have come from USAID-funded Health Volunteers Overseas (HVO), World Concern Development Organization (WCDO), VNAH, and Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAFA). Self-help groups are a significant source of support and empowerment, and many interviewees reported the benefit to individual self-confidence and personal life satisfaction that such groups provide their members. They link adolescents and adults with disabilities to others in the disability community, locally, nationally and internationally. Many of them also enable their members to access crucial services such as education, vocational training, and employment opportunities. By the estimate of one organization interviewed, the number of disability self-help groups has risen from 8 to 57 in just a two-year period. An intensive vocational training program for adolescents with disabilities has been an important factor in the development of self-help groups in several provinces.

The value of these groups is inestimable. As Robert Metts’ Final Report also pointed out, “Disabled persons organizations can become the source of essential information for newly disabled persons and parents of children with disabilities regarding rehabilitation, assistive devices and technology, and the availability of disability goods, services and programs.” As one example, an embroidery group in Nam Dinh Province wanted to start an embroidery workshop. They approached their province People’s Committee, received permission and funds, and are now up and running. Metts continued that self-help groups “can also advocate for full participation in education, government, and society, serve on disability related committees, panels and boards, and be involved in the design and implementation of disability policies, programs and strategies.”<sup>11</sup> Disabled persons organizations should be given opportunities to become providers of disability goods and services, such as finding jobs and locating adaptive technologies. Also, self-help groups are ideally positioned to take on advocacy activities and provide crucial disability participation in such activities. For example, a disability youth association in Ho Chi Minh City had a one-day event when their members surveyed public locations for wheelchair access, giving “5 stars” (for excellent access) down to “1 star” (for poor access). The event raised public awareness, and had the useful result of providing a list of accessible locations.

There is a great need to increase the organizing, support, and training of the movement of self-help groups of people with disabilities toward goals of empowerment, leadership, self-sufficiency, and integration. This movement has extraordinary potential to aid people with disabilities in Vietnam with a relatively small investment of resources.

**Self-Help Group Finding.** The successful development of the movement of disability self-help groups is hampered by the lack of an NGO Law.

Self-help groups cannot organize legally (though they can associate legally) until an NGO law is passed. Currently, groups need to show financial viability prior to legal recognition, yet is difficult to fundraise without official status. As described by one Vietnamese disabled person, it is a “vicious cycle” that hampers the establishment and growth of self-help groups.

For example, the grant proposal for Health Volunteers Overseas (the current NGO supporting the Disability Forum, which coordinates disability self-help groups in Vietnam) for 2004 – 2006 reported that since 2000, the Disability Forum has operated as a working group of the VUFO Resource Centre, providing the Forum with useful, although temporary, legal protection. However, it was foreseen that, during the next project period, it would be necessary to transform the Disability Forum into a Vietnamese Association, for several reasons including the fact that the working group structure had recently come under critical scrutiny by the VUFO Resource Centre, which called into question the possibility of maintaining that status for very much longer. VUFO distributed Working Group Guidelines in April, 2003 stating, in part, “As the Working Groups exist under the covering of the Resource Centre, they are not able to undertake activities as separate institutions.” Of particular concern, apparently, were the Disability Forum’s website, monthly newsletter, office space, and salaried coordinator. The NGO Co-Director of the Resource Centre agreed that a satisfactory resolution to the problem would be to begin to transform the Disability Forum into a local organization that is legally established, with a Vietnamese board of directors. The Disability Forum began that process in 2004 but it has not been completely finalized.<sup>12</sup>

Self-Help Group Finding. The successful development of the movement of disability self-help groups the lack of a sufficient amount of skilled and energetic leadership.

The self-help movement is hampered by the lack of sufficient solid, energetic leadership in all sections of the country – north, central, and south. Additional skilled, vibrant leadership would unleash significant development in growth, sophistication, and impact.

## SELF-HELP GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered in the order of priority.

**Self-Help Group Recommendation. There is still a significant need to continue support for development of the movement of disability self-help groups, with these objectives:**

- Further investments should be made in the Disability Forum, helping it to strengthen its mandate and professionalize its staff and organization;
- Leadership recruitment attracting additional skilled and energetic leaders;
- Organizing the development of new self-help groups and supporting the ongoing development of existing self-help groups;
- Training and technical assistance in leadership; organizational development and strategic planning; disability-related policies and their implementation, disability-related programs and opportunities (e.g. in employment, education, health, recreation, etc.)
- Facilitation of communication among self-help groups via print (e.g. newsletter) and web-based media and to disseminate information on the self-help movement to the broader disability community, NGOs, and Vietnam as a whole, including media campaigns

- Encouragement to self-help groups to become multi-faceted as is appropriate in their natural development. Examples include obtaining jobs and services for members, developing member computer / internet skills, and working on district / provincial / national policy implementation.

**Self-Help Group Recommendation.** To assist VWD meet their goal of employment and need for assistance, support a project within the self-help movement that provides some of the following employment related supports: micro-enterprise loans, training and technical assistance in business development, on the job training and marketing, and job development, placement and work place supports. Such a project should be limited to activities that lead to integrated, competitive work opportunities rather than more limiting segregated workshop related activities and/or jobs that pay less than traditional wages or are based on stereotypes of the capabilities of VWD.

## E. EMPLOYMENT

In 2003, unemployment rates generally in Vietnam were estimated at 6.1% as compared to a rate of more than 25% for Vietnamese with disabilities. VWD who had employment tended to be clustered in jobs traditionally deemed acceptable for disabled people: for example, a common job for blind people was making toothpicks or chopsticks, while embroidery and crafts was the work of people with other types of disabilities. There is virtually no employment of people with disabilities in the growing technology sector. The Ordinance on Disabled Persons requires that 2-3% of the workforce of businesses consist of individuals with disabilities though fines for violations are generally resisted by the business community and are not enforced. Some success has been achieved by groups such as WCDO through focused efforts of mentoring and microenterprise.

**Employment Finding.** While employment options are bleak for VWD, they view work as their path to economic independence and social acceptance.

When asked to discuss the needs of the Vietnamese disability community, VWD consistently saw jobs as a high priority. Appearance and perception are important in the Vietnamese society, and job hires are often based on cosmetic appearance, which works against individuals with disabilities who “look different”. People with disabilities reported, however, that when they were able to get a job, it changed the way people viewed them. When people see an individual with a disability successfully working in their community, the perception of disability changes. A generally agreed to principle among the VWD interviewed by the team was very simply, the quickest path to acceptance and individual empowerment for VWD is economic independence through employment. As one self-help group leader stated, “the non-disabled in Vietnam see us as objects of charity but not as equal persons Now we have to do our best to break down that way of thinking”. Employment is essential to that effort as jobs raise self-esteem and public acceptance.

**Employment Finding.** Traditional Vocational Training programs in Vietnam are ineffective in general and do not serve VWD well.

The team heard from many sources that the traditional vocational training programs in Vietnam are not well run, do not address the needs of any of its trainees, and are, in general, considered to be ineffective. This finding was reinforced by the World Concern Development Organization in their Final Report to USAID for an adolescent vocational training program, “In many cases, the weakness of this particular program reflect more widespread weaknesses in the vocational training and employment situation for all young Vietnamese. For example, the quality of vocational training in Vietnam is generally inadequate,

working conditions for most young Vietnamese are poor, income in small businesses is low for most employees, particularly the young, and occupational health and safety conditions are unsafe for many Vietnamese workers in Vietnam.”<sup>13</sup> Such a program would not be expected to have the capacity to effectively address the additional training needs of individuals with disabilities.

The Ministry of Labor has committed to addressing the problems of the vocational training programs and to support the inclusion of PWD in the programs and, in fact, \$750,000 was allocated from the government budget for vocational training of VWD, the first time this has ever occurred. However lasting change can take a long time to occur. Alternate job training and development opportunities must be supported in order to open the doors more rapidly to economic development and independence for VWD (e.g. supported entrepreneurship for individuals with disabilities, who need start-up training, financial support and follow-along support, as needed, to successfully own and operate a small business. Training for 21<sup>st</sup> century jobs is also key.). Successful outcomes in such independent projects will only enhance the ability of the Department of Labor to make the argument that PWD can work and should be an integral part of any generic training program.

#### Employment Finding. Self-Help Groups provide a tool for business & job development.

Self-help groups are forming across Vietnam for the purpose of business development, placement and/or support for its members. In observing the self-help group movement, it appears that employment is a major priority for those who are taking advantage of the ability to form such groups. In most cases, those individuals capable of articulating their own wishes choose to first use the self-help group to organize around employment. The priority appears to be jobs first, social activities second. Given that the voice of PWD themselves point to the potential for the self-help group for jobs, USAID should seriously consider using this model as a means of infusing employment support into the disability community.

#### Finding. Stigmas against PWD disabilities are high in the business community.

One of the major obstacles to employment is employer and workplace attitude. Employers are not willing to take a “risk” and employees express discomfort around disabilities. Furthermore, the Vietnamese society focus on appearance serves as a deterrent to hiring individuals with disabilities. Many job descriptions include criteria around age and appearance. Discrimination on the basis of appearance is very normal in Vietnam – even for factory sewing jobs. The gaps between awareness and practice need to be eliminated, beginning with government officials and employers. Individuals with disabilities have ambitions that can only be eliminated when they are supported by both of these entities.

#### Finding: The Vietnam economy support for small independent business provides a good opportunity for VWD to become entrepreneurs, but they need access to capital and other supports for business start up.

For all of the reasons already discussed, VWD desire employment and economic independence, and have all the ingredients for success given the proper array of training, accommodations and support. For many, the most effective and rapid way to move through the obstacles to work is self-employment. Within an economy that supports small enterprises, an entrepreneur with a disability should be able to hold their own, if provided start up costs, business training and supports that would be needed by any beginning entrepreneur, and accommodations that might be needed to support the disability. Based on interviews with Ministry officials, VWD, DPOs, NGOs and others, it is determined that Vietnam provides a good opportunity for VWD to try their hand at entrepreneurship and it would be important to create a program supporting such endeavors. A program for entrepreneurs with disabilities in Vietnam could focus both on

individuals and groups within self-help groups, so long as it does not foster segregated workshop placements and/or sub-traditional wages.

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<sup>1</sup> As stated in *Final Report and Recommendations* by Robert Metts, on May 6, 2005 in his closing report on the Inclusion of Disabled Persons and Disability Issues in the HEPR Program, and Creation of a National Action Plan on Disability, page 6.

<sup>2</sup> Metts, *op.cit.*, pages 12 – 13.

<sup>3</sup> UNICEF Situational Analysis on Children with Disabilities in Vietnam, March, 2004, page 101.

<sup>4</sup> Catholic Relief Services, Statement of Work, Implementation of A Comprehensive Survey On Education For Children with Disabilities, March 2005, page 1.

<sup>5</sup> Quote from participant in USAID Assessment Team Town Hall Meeting, May 12, Hanoi.

<sup>6</sup> UNICEF, *Situational Analysis on Children with Disabilities in Vietnam*, 2004, page 101.

<sup>7</sup> Metts, *op.cit.*, page 1: “The NCCD is comprised of 26 representatives from the following Ministries and organizations: MOLISA, MOH, MOC, MOET, MOHA, MCI, MOTC, MOJ, MOF, Office of the National Assembly, Association for the Support of Vietnamese Handicapped and Orphans, Bright Future Group, National Steering Committee on Information Technology, Vietnam’s Woman’s Union, Red Cross of Vietnam, National Committee of Sports and Physical Exercises, General Department of Taxation, Vietnam Television, Vietnam Blind Association, and Hanoi Club for the Deaf.”

<sup>8</sup> Progress Report, Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped (VNAH), January 2005, for reporting period July 1 to December 31, 2004, on projects on Assisting People with Disabilities in Vietnam and Promoting the Development of NGOs in Vietnam, p. 5

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.* p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> Metts, *op.cit.*, page 13.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.* p. 13.

<sup>12</sup> Health Volunteers Overseas (HVO), Grant, 2004 – 2006 grant period.

<sup>13</sup> World Concern Development Organization, Adaptive Vocational Training Program for Adolescents with Disabilities, Final Evaluation , Vietnam, 2005, page 4.

## APPENDIX A: SCOPE OF WORK

### BACKGROUND

The Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (GSRV) estimates that 6.3% or 5.1 million Vietnamese have disabilities. Unfortunately, services for people with disabilities (PWD) in Vietnam are severely under-funded and highly inefficient. PWD face significant challenges accessing and obtaining information on employment, health and educational services, gaining legal rights, and receiving emotional and financial support. As a result, disabled people have lower education and income levels than the rest of the population.

The Vietnamese government has made some efforts to improve the quality of life for PWD, including passing legislation to equalize rights, increase opportunities for health, education and employment, and improve accessibility. However, enforcement of these policies is limited. In addition, many government disability programs were designed without input and participation from PWD.

Since 1992, USAID/Vietnam, with funding from the Leahy War Victims Fund (LWVF) and the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund (DCOF), has supported disability programs in Vietnam. USAID/Vietnam's ten grants support disability activities including: inclusive education and vocational training, rehabilitation, policy development and advocacy (please see Annex for program descriptions). While USAID/Vietnam's program on disability aims to ensure that PWD have equal access to education, employment and development, the mission has not yet developed a comprehensive framework or strategy on disabilities. A program assessment is needed to analyze the impact of current programs, identify gaps in these programs and provide recommendations for a broader disability strategy in line with the strategic development of the GSRV.

### ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the program assessment are to:

- Review the situation of people with disability in Vietnam, particularly focusing on the areas of policy/legislative development and enforcement, education, employment and social accommodation to people with disabilities. USAID Vietnam considers advocacy as a cross-cutting theme, and it should be addressed in each of these areas.
- Construct a donor/NGO/government map of existing programs that address disability needs in Vietnam.
- Review USAID/Vietnam's disability programs in order to assess program impact, gaps, and capacity for achieving greater impact.
- Provide recommendations for the future direction of USAID's disability portfolio and for developing a disability strategy for USAID/Vietnam
- Develop a five-year program plan that addresses USAID priority areas to maximize impact based on the initial assessment.



The assessment team shall consider the following objectives when assessing the disability situation in Vietnam and develop recommendations for future program activities:

- Relevant to essential needs of PWD in Vietnam
- Addresses major gaps in the existing program framework
- Coordinates well with the government of Vietnam's priorities and program focus areas
- Reduces management burden on USAID
- Assures continued coordinating role of USAID in the sector
- Maximizes opportunity to institutionalize best practices and policies
- Results-based and unified in its approach
- Sustainable
- Cost-effective

## METHODS AND RESOURCES

1. The contractor shall meet with Lloyd Feinberg, Program Analyst DCHA/DG at USAID/Washington, prior to travel to Vietnam.
2. In Vietnam:
  - a. The Contractor is expected to facilitate a USAID-funded INGO Town Hall Meeting to gather public opinion on the areas in which USAID has already made a positive impact and should be focusing on in the future.
  - b. The contractor shall meet with the Vietnamese Ministries of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), Health, Education, Office of Government, Committee for Social Affairs, National Assembly, National Coordinating Council on Disability, and other government officials to discuss current disability efforts and identify opportunities for future disability interventions.
  - c. The contractor shall meet with other past and potential disability donors in Vietnam including World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF, ADB, JICA, GTZ and other organizations, i.e. MCNV, VSO, and Red Cross to assess their disability-related activities and lessons learned and identify opportunities for future cooperation and coordination.
  - d. The contractor shall meet with local stakeholders, PWD leaders and visit disability programs in the field.
3. Relevant documents and reports will be provided to the assessment team upon request by USAID/Vietnam Humanitarian Program staff:
  - a. Vietnamese Government Ordinance on People with Disabilities

- b. Disability in Vietnam in 1999: A Meta-Analysis of the Data – USAID, 1999 (Tom Kane)
- c. Situation Analysis on Children with Disability in Vietnam – MOLISA-UNICEF
- d. The Status of Training and Employment Policies and Practices for People with Disabilities in Vietnam – ILO, 2002
- e. PSBI Final Program Evaluation: “Inclusive Education for Hearing impaired children in Vietnam” – PSBI, 2003
- f. MoET National Plan of Action – Education for All, 2003
- g. Evaluation of the teacher training components for Inclusive Education in Vietnam – Save Children, 2003
- h. Disability program reports and evaluations from other Grantees
- i. National Coordinating Council on Disability (NCCD) Two Year Strategic Plans

## APPENDIX B: LIST OF INTERVIEWS

### May 10, 2005

Larry Wolfe, Director, Health Volunteers Overseas  
Vu Thi Binh Minh, Project Coordinator, Health Volunteers Overseas  
Nguyen Hong Ha, Program Coordinator, Disability Forum  
Nguyen Thi Lan Anh, Communication Officer, Disability Forum  
Nguyen Trung, Member, Disability Forum (Bright Futures Group)  
Caitlyn Wyndham, Member, Disability Forum (Independent Consultant)  
Le Hai Anh, Member, Disability Forum (Good for Business)  
Nghiem Xuan Tue, Director, National Coordinating Council of Vietnam

### May 11, 2005

Le Van Tac, Director, Center for Special Education (NIESAC)  
Nguyen Xuan Hai, Staff, Center for Special Education (NIESAC)  
Le Thai Thuy Hong, Staff, Center for Special Education (NIESAC)  
Nguyen Thi Hoang Yen, Dean, Faculty of Special Education, Hanoi University of Education  
Bui Van Toan, Country Director, Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped (VNAH)  
Robert Horvath, Assistant Project Director, Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped (VNAH)  
Pham Thi Cam Ly, Senior Program Officer, Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped (VNAH)  
Tero Siivonen, UN Volunteer, Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped (VNAH)

### *Town-Hall Meeting*

Wendell Evalley	VVAF
Steven Parker	Handicap International (HI)
Anat Prag	CRS
Greg Anberry	CRS
Hoang Cam Linh	VVAF
Than Thi Ha	World Vision

Do Van Do	ITTC
Hoang Moc Kien	IVN Institute
Nguyen Dinh Toan	IVN Institute
Venn Weitzed	UNDP
Maria Luigia Perenze	MCNV
Larry Wolfe	HVO
Khuc Hai Van	Light Center for Informatics
Le Dinh Hien	Hold on to the Future
Tran Duc Hai	Nam Dinh Disabled Youth's Club
Dang Huong Gian	Thai Binh Disabled Youth's Club
Dang Kim Oanh	You and Me Self-Help Group
Trang Cam Vieng	18-4 Club
Do Thai Hang	Hope Club
Dang Quang Anh	Ha Noi Deaf Association
Tran Van Trai	Disabled Students' Club
Ta Bich Huong	Ha Noi Disabled Students' Club
Robert Horvath	VNAH
Nguyen Lan Anh	Disability Forum
Nguyen Hong Ha	Disability Forum
Le Hai Anh	Good For Business
Vu Thi Binh Minh`	HVO
Tran Thi Thu Hien	World Concern
Robin Shell	World Concern
Pham Huy Hoang	POF
Pham Minh Hang	PSBI
Dang Quang Anh	Ha Noi Deaf Club
Tran Ngoc Tuan	Ha Noi Deaf Club

**May 12, 2005**

Dr. Tran Trong Hai, Director General, International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Health

Trinh Quang Dzung, Deputy Head of Rehabilitation Dept, National Institute for Pediatrics

Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Lam, Director, NGO Department, Ministry of Home Affairs

Mr. Hoang Ngoc Ho, Vice Director for NGOs, Ministry of Home Affairs

Ms. Thuy, Department of International Relations, Ministry of Home Affairs

Dang Xuan Khang, Deputy Dean of Orthopedic Facilities, Vietnamese Training Center for Orthopedic Technologists (VIETCOT)

Dr. Nguyen Tiep, Director, Vietnamese Training Center for Orthopedic Technologists (VIETCOT)

Wilfred Raab, GTZ Representative, Vietnamese Training Center for Orthopedic Technologists (VIETCOT)

Ms. Hong, Country Representative, Prosthetics Outreach Foundation (POF)

Mr. Thanh, Deputy Director and Vice Chair, Steering Committee for Education for Children with Disabilities, Ministry of Education

Mr. Tran Dinh Thuan, Program Manager, Steering Committee for Education for Children with Disabilities, Ministry of Education

*Group Interview*

Representatives of DPOs from North Vietnam with approximately 20 people in attendance.

**May 13, 2005**

Pham Minh Hang, Country Director, Pearl S. Buck International (PSBI)

Tran Phi Tuoc, Director, Department off International Cooperation, MOLISA

Le Thi Thuy Huong, Project Officer, World Concern

Tran Thi Thu Hien, Project Coordinator, World Concern

Robin Shell, Country Representative, World Concern

*NCCD Plenary*

Representatives from: Ministry of Construction (MOC), MOLISA, Vietnam Association of Persons with Visual Impairments, National Committee on Information Technology, Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Health, and Woman's Union of Vietnam.

**May 14, 2005**

*Site Visit (Hai Duong Province)*

Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Tuyen, Director, Truong Dat Co. Ltd. (Business Owner)

Mr. Nguyen Van Nghien, Red Cross, Ninh Giang District

Ms. Nguyen Thi Thuy, Red Cross, Thanh Mien District

Mr. Pham Xuan My, Red Cross, Tu Ky District

Ms. Nguyen Thi Huu, DOLISA, Gia Loc District

Ms. Nguyen Thi Nha, Red Cross, Gia Loc District

Mr. Nguyen Van Toan, Red Cross, Gia Loc District

Approximately 15 children with disabilities.

**May 16, 2005**

*Site Visit (Thai Nguyen Province)*

*Chi Linh District*

Nguyen Thi Vui, Adolescent with Disability

Mr. Nguyen Van Vinh, Business Owner, Motorbike and Bicycle Repair

Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Quy, Vice Chair, Chi Linh District People's Committee

Mr. Nguyen Thanh Long, Chair, DOLISA

Ms. Nguyen Thi Thuc, President, Red Cross Chi Linh District

Ms. Tran Thi Hong Van, Department of Education and Training

Ms. Nguyen Thi Thoan, Red Cross

Ms. Nguyen Thi Phan, Community-based Social Worker

Mr. Diep, Parent of Child with Disability

Ms. Tinh, Parent of Child with Disability

Mr. An, Parent of Child with Disability  
Ms. Sen, Parent of Child with Disability  
Mr. Thuan, Parent of Child with Disability  
Ms. Khanh, Parent of Child with Disability  
Mr. That, Parent of Child with Disability  
Ms. Hoi, Parent of Child with Disability  
Mr. Tong, Parent of Child with Disability  
Mr. Luc, Parent of Child with Disability  
Huong Nguyet Dam, Adolescent with Disability

*Hai Duong City*

Nguyen Duc Van, Group Leader  
Mr. Pham Van Thuan, Chair, Red Cross of Hai Duong City  
Mr. Nguyen Thanh Binh, Chair, Thanh Binh Ward, Hai Duong City  
Mr. Nguyen Van Mai, Red Cross of Thanh Binh Ward  
Ms. Nguyen Thi Kim Dzung, Red Cross  
Ms. Nguyen Thi Phan, Community-Based Social Worker

*Kim Thanh District*

Mr. Dinh Van Vinh, District President, Red Cross  
Mr. Nguyen Duc Thang, Staff, Red Cross  
Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Tuy, Staff, Red Cross  
Ms. Nguyen Thi Lien, Former Staff, Red Cross  
Mr. Vu Minh Hai, Business Owner, Carpentry  
Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Thu, Business Owner, Sewing  
Mr. Ngoc, Business Owner, Carpentry

**May 17, 2005**

Natalie McCauley, Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF

Do Thanh Lam, Program Officer, UNDP

Ms. Mai Ms. Huong, UNESCO

Carrie Turk, Program Officer, World Bank Group

Simon Ellis, Transport Sector Coordinator, World Bank Group

Dang Duc Cuong, Senior Operations Officer, World Bank Group

Tran Thi Van Anh, Program Officer, World Bank Group

Tim Boyes-Watson, Country Director, VSO

Steven Parker, Program Coordinator, Handicap International

Anneke Maars, Rehabilitation Advisor, Medical Committee Netherlands Vietnam

Representative, Save the Children, Sweden

Mr. Luong Phan CU, Vice-Chair of the Committee for Social Affairs

Do Van Du, Director, Information Technology Training Center

Vern Weitzel, UN Volunteer Specialist, Information Technology Training Center

**May 18, 2005**

Mr. Nguyen Hai Huu, Director General, Dept. of Social Protection, MOLISA

Caitlin Wyndham, Independent Disability Consultant

**May 19, 2005**

Cao Van Thanh, Standing Vice President, Vietnam Blind Association

Tran Van Nam, Deputy Director, International Relations Dept., Vietnam Blind Association

Alexander F. Rietveld, Country Representative, Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAFF)

Kerry Fisher, Program Manager, Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAFF)

Nguyen Hong Oanh, Self-Help Development Coordinator, Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAFF)

Anat Prag, Program Director, Catholic Relief Services

Nguyen Thi Minh Thuy, Inclusive Education Program Coordinator, Catholic Relief Services

Nguyen Dieu Anh, Education Program Coordinator, Catholic Relief Services

*Group Interview (DPOs from central and south Vietnam)*

Hu?nh Công Sơn	H?i thanh niên KT thành ph? HCM
Luu Th? Ánh Loan	H?i thanh niên KT thành ph? HCM
Lê Đ?c Hi?n	H?i KT tuong tr? vuon lên
Võ Đình Triêm	H?i KT tuong tr? vuon lên
Lê Nguyên Bình	Doanh nghi?p Hòa Nh?p
Võ Th? Ng?c Mai	Nhóm Đ?i Duong-Vung Tàu
Vu Th? Tám	Nhóm KT H?i Phòng
Đ?ng Hương Giang	CLB Thanh niên KT Thái Bình
Hu?nh Ng?c H?ng Nhung	CLB ngu?i khuy?t t?t C?n Tho
Ph?m Minh Th?y	Nhóm khuy?t t?t Tiên Phong Ba Vì Hà Tây

## APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

**Organization:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Individuals Present:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location of Interview:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. What do you see as the main goals of your project? Are they being achieved?
2. Where do you feel your project has had the greatest success and how has it impacted people with disabilities in Vietnam?
3. What have been the shortcomings? Do you feel that there were any explicit factors that contributed to these shortcomings?
4. Have there been any other particular constraints or challenges to the project's success?
5. Do you think that you were able to reach your primary audience?
6. Are there other groups that were not specifically targeted under your project that could benefit from your activities?
7. Do you have people with disabilities on staff? Are they in positions of leadership and management?
8. To what extent are your facilities accessible to people with disabilities? [If team is at the facility this question may not need to be asked and could be ascertained through observation.]
9. How do you allocate your resources and in what ways, if at all, were PWD and DPOs included in the project design, implementation, and review processes?
10. How do you measure the effectiveness of the project activities and what is the extent of your data collection efforts?

11. How are findings from ongoing monitoring efforts incorporated into adjusting your project activities? Please provide specific examples of how you have used these findings to alter your project activities.
12. To what degree do collaborative efforts take place with other organizations and what other types of partnerships would be beneficial in the future?
13. Do you believe the project and its impacts are sustainable? What factors support sustainability and what factors make sustainability a challenge?
14. Do you believe that your project could be replicated in other parts of the country?
15. What sorts of assistance technology could have the greatest impact for PWD?
16. Are there specific areas related to your project that you feel would greatly benefit your organization if they were more fully developed?
17. What are your thoughts regarding donor coordination for disability programs in Vietnam?
18. While considering the full range of disability programming in Vietnam with USAID, GSRV, and other international donors, what do you feel are the most significant gaps that are not being addressed to meet the needs of PWD?
19. Can you speak generally about how disability is perceived in Vietnam? Are PWD stigmatized? Is it more difficult for women or individuals with certain types of disability? How?
20. Can you provide specific examples of how societal barriers have affected PWD?
21. Do you have any other comments or observations related to your own activities, USAID's efforts, or disability in general that you would like to share?