

# FACT SHEET

## Young People and HIV and AIDS



- Viet Nam's impressive economic growth in recent years has brought about **profound social changes** including increased mobility of young people for studying and employment and thus increased exposure to risk behaviors and **vulnerability to abuse, exploitation and HIV infection**.
- The second Survey Assessment of Vietnamese Youth (SAVY II, 2010) shows that only **42.5% of Vietnamese youth aged 15-24 have comprehensive knowledge of HIV** transmission, far less than the national target of 95% by 2010.<sup>1</sup>
- The HIV epidemic in Viet Nam is largely concentrated among most at risk populations. This suggests that the **majority of HIV cases among young people have occurred among young people who inject drugs, who have sex between males and young sex workers or clients of sex workers** though standardized age-disaggregated data is not consistently available.
- There is a large number of children and adolescents affected by HIV, with stigma and discrimination blocking their access to education and basic services. A 2005 study estimated that **about 283,700 children and adolescents aged 0-15 were affected by HIV and AIDS**, requiring care and support, many of them are at risk of HIV infection.<sup>2</sup>
- Young people who inject drugs, young sex workers and young clients of sex workers and young men who have sex with men under 25 years are less likely to be reached by HIV prevention programs than those aged over 25 years.<sup>3</sup>
- **Young people in closed settings** including administration detention centres for sex workers and drug users are generally not separated from adults, increasing their vulnerability.

## Recommendations

- **Youth-friendly and gender-sensitive HIV awareness and behavior-change education**, voluntary counseling and testing, legal aid, sexual and reproductive health and HIV services need to be widely available.
- Education programmes, in and out of school, need to include **life-skills training** (decision making, negotiation, etc), provide guidance on fighting stigma and discrimination, promote individual behaviour change (i.e. use of condom) and positive behaviours associated with HIV prevention, treatment, care and support.
- **Laws and policies related to HIV**, drug use, sex work, sexual and reproductive health, and gender should enable a safe and supportive environment for most-at-risk young people that help reduce stigma blocking their access to HIV services.
- Existing **programmes targeting most-at-risk populations** need to improve to reach and meet the needs of most at risk young people.
- Young people need to be separated from adults when placed in closed settings.
- **More research** is required on most-at-risk young people and HIV to generate quality evidence that is needed to develop more effective interventions.

<sup>1</sup> Under the Declaration of Commitment on HIV and AIDS, Viet Nam targets to have by 2010 at least 95% of people aged 15-24 well-informed of HIV to develop the life skills needed to reduce their vulnerability to HIV infection.

<sup>2</sup> MOLISA and UNICEF Viet Nam (2005) *The situation of Families and Children affected by HIV/AIDS in Viet Nam*.

<sup>3</sup> Preliminary results IBBS 2009.