



UN

Volunteers VIET NAM

Annual Report 2007



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Pham Thi Hue - National UN volunteer Specialist with Queen Rania of Jordan at the 2007 Annual Summit Forum of Young Global Leaders. Hue is working with the Vietnamese Women's Union to support the "Promoting Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV/AIDS (GIPA)" project.

Executive Summary

UNV has been an active partner in the development of Viet Nam for more than 17 years. In 1990, the first international UN volunteer arrived in Viet Nam to take an assignment as a trainer for the Ministry of Education and Training. More than 420 UN volunteers have since served with a whole range of host organisations offering technical expertise in sectors as varied as environmental protection and database management. Through the UNV Programme, Vietnamese volunteers also share their knowledge, skills and experience in the country and in the region. During the past eight years, UNV has implemented development projects such as Information Technology and English Training for Employment for Former Drug Users, Enhancing Volunteer Contributions in Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Youth Volunteers in Cultural Heritage Preservation and 2 projects through the MDG Small Grant Facilities.

UNV is currently supporting the project *Promoting Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV/AIDS (GIPA)* which is implemented by the Vietnamese Women's Union with technical assistance from UNAIDS. This is done with funding from the Special Volunteer Fund, The United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the German Government, and AusAID.

The Viet Nam Volunteer Information Resource Centre (VVIRC) is a project currently developed by the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union (HCYU) in collaboration with UNV since 2006. UNV has assisted the HCYU to bring together relevant stakeholders and interested groups in support of this initiative. Stakeholders such as Government Ministries; UN organisations (particularly the UN Youth Theme Group); NGOs/CSOs; and other Volunteering Involving Organisations (VIOs) will have an important role in providing support, advise, and guidance to the HCYU in the implementation of this initiative. The VVIRC aims to promote volunteerism at national and regional levels. The project is expected to commence in mid-2008 with financial assistance from the UN and other VIOs.

UNV continues to participate in the One UN Initiative in Viet Nam. Six UN agencies and the Vietnamese Government signed a One Plan document in August 2007. The objectives of this initiative are to provide more effective assistance to the Vietnamese development agenda, increased cost effectiveness and less duplication of interventions.

It is important to highlight that due to the One UN Initiative in Viet Nam, the UNV Country Office has been able to mobilise good backing for the projects it supports, particularly the VVIRC, from UN agencies, the Vietnamese Government, civil society, NGOs, and national VIOs. Under the One Plan Fund, UNV has been allocated US\$488,000 to support National Implementing Partners in HIV and National Volunteer Infrastructure projects during 2008-2010.



International Volunteers Day - Diversity and unity in volunteerism



UNV Core Areas of Work

I. ADVOCATING Volunteerism for Development and Peace

International Volunteer Day

1. Hanoi

On December 2nd, 2007, UNV joined the National Coordinating Council on Disability of Vietnam, the Hanoi Disabled People Association and other organisations to organise the “Equality and Integration” event. This was aimed at challenging the stigma that people living with HIV/AIDS and people with disabilities face in Vietnam, and at highlighting the importance of volunteerism. More than a thousand volunteers and visitors participated in this annual event to mark World Aids Day, International Day of Disabled People, and International Volunteer Day (IVD).

Ms. Bui My Hanh, a national UN volunteer from the GIPA project representing people living with HIV, made a speech on the meaningful contribution of people living with HIV to HIV prevention and social development. *“We always want to affirm that we are people living with HIV/AIDS, yet we can contribute to social development”*, she said.

The event featured an exhibition of products made by self-help groups of people living with HIV which impressed many visitors. The UN resident coordinator, Mr. John Hendra, thanked the volunteers, many of whom were people with disabilities and HIV, for their contribution to achieving the MDGs.



2. Ho Chi Minh City:



On December 1st, the 2007 IVD event in Ho Chi Minh City gathered over 550 people, including 250 children from local shelters, warm houses and schools, and 300 volunteers. 13 local and international organisations participated. The international NGO Education for Development, a long-standing partner of UNV's, took the lead in organising the event.

With the theme “Volunteering Change Starts With Me”, the event opened with a few short presentations stressing the importance of volunteering and emphasising the roles volunteers, particularly UN volunteers, played in raising awareness of HIV and AIDS.

An exhibition of photographs and posters was staged illustrating the work of local organisations and more specifically the work carried out by volunteers. Children were invited to enter a painting and drawing competition where they were encouraged to express their views and awareness of volunteerism and HIV and AIDS.

A range of food stalls offered snacks and refreshments aimed at raising awareness of the many health food options that can be of benefit to people living with HIV/AIDS. Performances, games for children and a HIV/AIDS quiz filled the event.

3. International:

With the assistance of the HCMC GIPA team, a film featuring the contribution of people living with HIV and a photographic exhibition were shown at the UNV Headquarter in Bonn, Germany. This was later described as a highlight of the IVD celebrations.

4. TV Programme on Volunteerism for Development:

Hanoi TV produced a 30-minute programme on “Volunteerism for Development” which focused on the contribution of UNV to Vietnam's socio-economic development. The programme was aired three times around the IVD. It provided audience with a general overview of UNV's operation in Viet Nam and illustrated how volunteerism for development could make a difference in achieving long-term sustainable development.

Volunteers' Monthly Gatherings

These are luncheon meetings organised on the last Friday of the month. The purpose of this UNV initiative is to create a chance for volunteers from different national and international organisations to get together to share and discuss topics concerning volunteerism. All volunteer-based organisations are encouraged to take turn hosting the gatherings. The initiative is an important contribution to building up a network of national and international volunteers.

UNV website

UNV is working on developing a more dynamic website where users can easily navigate and search for UNV's work on volunteerism in Viet Nam. This initiative has been carried out with the help of an International University Volunteer (IT specialist) and local on-line volunteers who work on the Vietnamese version of the website. The new UNV website will be launched in early 2008.



UNV annual workshop

The 2007 UNV Annual Workshop was held in Tam Dao, Vinh Phuc province, in November. 40 UN volunteers joined a three-day workshop of learning, sharing, and discussing volunteerism. They served in various areas such as policy advice, programme management, education, HIV/AIDS, gender, environment, communications, human rights, information technology, and food safety.

Facilitated in both English and Vietnamese by the volunteers themselves, the workshop showed the highly professional standards of serving UNVs. The UNV Cambodia Programme Officer gave a presentation on "Youth Star Cambodia", a local volunteer organisation supported by UNV.

II. INTEGRATING "Volunteerism for Development" into Development Planning and Programming

UNV participated in and signed the UNDAF 2006-2010 and is an active participant in the One UN Initiative. Six UN agencies (namely UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNV, UNAIDS and UNIFEM) and the Vietnamese Government signed a One Plan document in August 2007. The objectives of this initiative are to provide more effective assistance to the Vietnamese development agenda, increased cost effectiveness and less duplication of interventions. UNV contributed to the process of including another 8 UN agencies in the One UN Initiative which is due to be signed in 2008.

It is important to highlight that due to the One UN Initiative in Viet Nam, the UNV Country Office has been able to mobilise good backing for the projects it supports, particularly the VVIRC, from UN agencies, the Vietnamese Government, civil society, NGOs, and national VIOs. Under the One Plan Fund, UNV has been allocated US\$488,000 to support National Implementing Partners in HIV and National Volunteer Infrastructure projects during 2008-2010.

UNV's contributions to Viet Nam's development agenda are in the following areas:

Outcome 1.8: More coherent and conducive regulatory framework for private sector development and practices that promote investment, trade and employment, especially among youth and at local levels. **Expected Results:** corporate volunteering and public-private partnerships for youth employment (advocacy & national policy levels); and IT & English training and employment for former drug users at the Ba Vi Rehabilitation Center for women.

Outcome 2.9: Volunteerism provides a mechanism for participation and involvement of Vietnamese youth. **Expected Results:** the establishment of the Viet Nam Volunteer Information Resource Center (national level); supporting disability self-help groups; raising public awareness of volunteerism, disabilities and MDGs (national level through MDG small grants); volunteer component in ICT for Development as part of the VNG Education for All (EFA) programme with UNESCO.

Outcome 2.10: Appropriate and relevant vocational guidance training and job orientation is available to all Vietnamese youth, in particular disadvantaged groups. **Expected Results:** supporting education, vocational training and employment for disadvantaged youth in HCMC (through MDGs small grants).

Outcome 2.33: Volunteerism and social mobilisation provide support services for people infected and affected by HIV. **Expected Results:** increasing the participation of people living with HIV (PLHIV) UNV and UNAIDS, GIPA project with the Vietnamese Women's Union, national & local levels; mainstreaming HIV in volunteer promotion and advocacy activities; strengthening the roles of PLHIV and their peer support groups in the context of scaling up comprehensive care and treatment; development of documentation, case studies and evaluation of civil society/mass organisation work on HIV; technical support and advocacy for the development of GIPA and PLHIV groups; and support to the legalisation of PLHIV groups.

UNV, as part of the UN Youth Theme Group (UNYTG), contributed to the development of the UN joint programme *Working Out of Poverty: Creating Opportunities for Vulnerable Rural Youth* concept note. This concept note responds to the priorities for youth set by the Vietnamese Government in the Social Economic Development Programme which stresses the importance of addressing youth unemployment and underemployment and makes particular reference to vulnerable rural youth. It is directly linked to the National Youth Development Strategy 2001-10, the National Programme on Youth Employment (2006-2010) and the Youth Law 2005.

This programme will have the collaboration of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union (HCYU) and other relevant stakeholders to create an environment that will facilitate the access of Vietnamese youth, especially vulnerable rural youth, to career and life opportunities and meaningful employment through employability initiatives such as 'volunteerism for employability' in rural areas.



UNVs discussing important issues at UNV annual workshop



III. MOBILISING volunteers (including, but not limited to, UN volunteers)

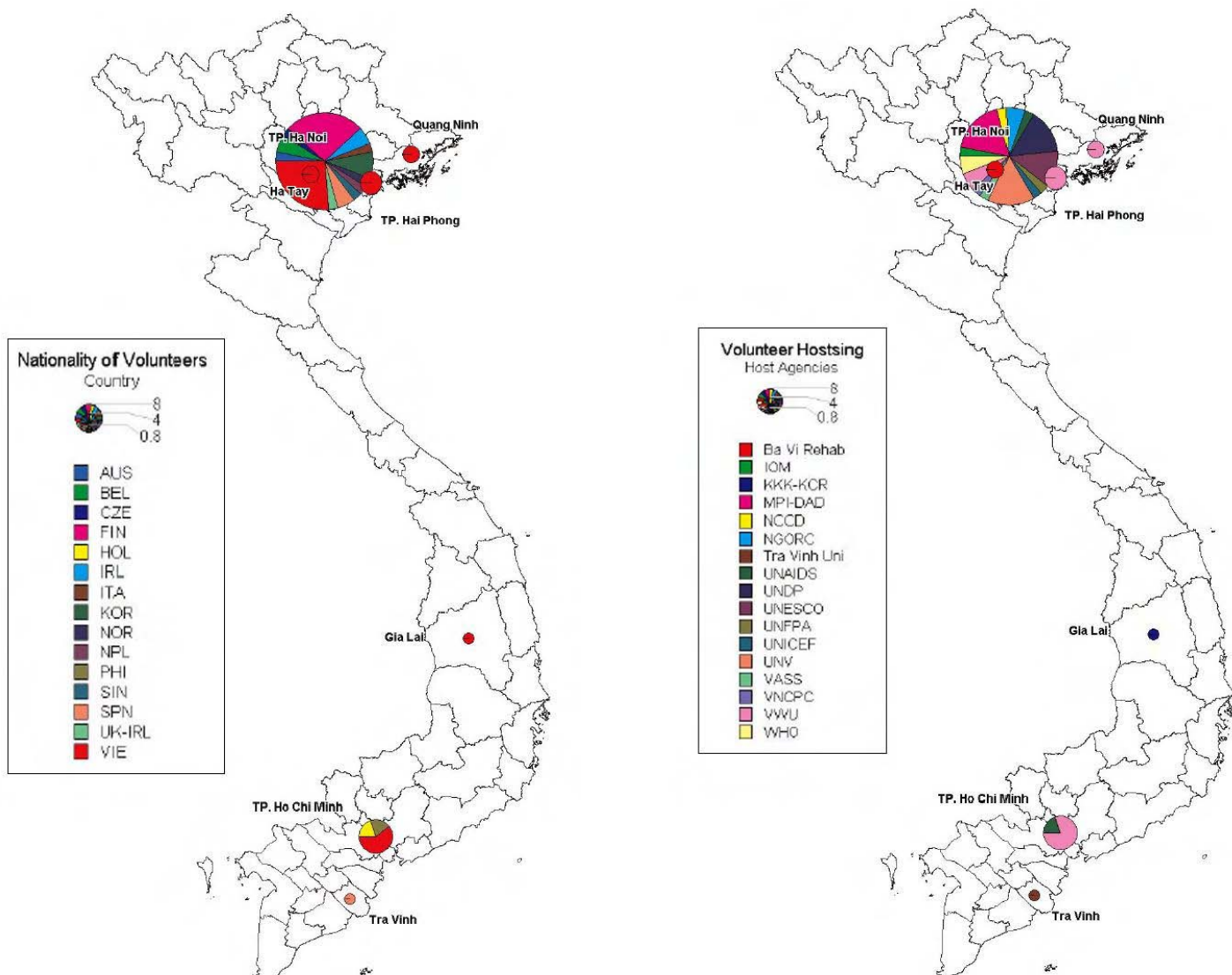
The project *Promoting Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV (GIPA)*, implemented by the Vietnamese Women's Union (VWU) in partnership with UNV and with technical assistance from UNAIDS, carries out activities in Ha Noi, Hai Phong, Quang Ninh and Ho Chi Minh City. Apart from 10 UN volunteers, the project mobilises a great number of other volunteers many of whom are HIV+.

The project's main objective is to increase the participation of PLHIV in the planning and implementation of HIV/AIDS activities and other efforts to improve their lives, families and communities. This will be achieved through capacity building, increased access to treatment and other services, stigma & discrimination reduction, increased understanding and support of GIPA principles, and increased opportunities for PLHIV's participation. Over the year, on a needs basis, training courses on the new HIV/AIDS Law, basic knowledge of HIV, home-based care, counseling skills, advocacy skills, etc., were provided to UN volunteers, VWU staff and PLHIV communities. This has increased the awareness of the GIPA concept in the PLHIV communities which has also boosted their meaningful participation in HIV/AIDS activities. Several of the trained PLHIV have contributed to topics such as the GIPA concept and other HIV-related issues in training, workshops, public events and the media. In 2007, UN volunteers also participated in HIV events in Sweden, Rwanda, China and Cambodia.

National UN volunteers, with support from local volunteer groups and provincial VWU staff, provided counseling and referred PLHIV to available care and support services. A support network was set up. Meetings with service providers were organised in the provinces to share information, raise awareness, increase the understanding of GIPA, and reduce stigma and discrimination toward PLHIV and their families, thus contributing directly to PLHIV's better access to services.

Empathy Clubs, Young Women Clubs and PLHIV groups in the four locations mentioned above were supported through regular training sessions on home-based care and support, ARV treatment and adherence, etc. Based on needs, training on group management skills, counseling and community advocacy skills, planning and reporting were also provided. Understanding of and support for the GIPA concept increased substantially in partner organisations in 2007.

Recruitment of volunteers





UNV Resources

GIPA: The project *Promoting Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV* has a total budget of USD 735,186 (UNV Special Volunteer Fund (SVF): USD 200,000; German Government Funding (GER): USD 240,936; and other funds from The United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and AusAID).

VVIRC: In the second half of 2007, UNV supported a preparatory phase in the development of the Viet Nam Volunteer Information Resource Centre (VVIRC) as requested by the HCYU. With USD

28,000 from UNV Project Preparatory Fund (PRODEFA) and USD 12,500 from the UNDP Country Office, UNV has supported the HCYU in conducting an extensive consultation process with the Vietnamese Government; UN organisations; national and international VIOs; & NGOs/CSOs; and carrying out a study trip to Hungary to gain a better understanding of how a national volunteer centre could be developed and sustained. The VVIRC three-year multi-stakeholder supported initiative is expected to start in mid-2008.

Challenges, Opportunities, Risks and Pipeline

One UN Initiative. The development and implications of the ongoing UN reform create both opportunities and challenges. One important outcome of the reform is that the concept of volunteerism is highlighted as a crosscutting issue across all the relevant UN outcome development assistance areas for the period 2007-10. This is especially noticeable in the UNV's programmatic areas of HIV and Youth. The thematic cooperation on HIV and Youth creates synergies and increases the capacity of the UNV Country Office Team in these areas. The One UN Initiative is, however, a great challenge to the UNV Country Office Team in terms of added workload.

GIPA. Viet Nam is still lagging behind in achieving the MDG 6 on combating HIV in spite of the progressive HIV law which was passed by the Vietnamese National Assembly in 2006 and the proactive approach by the Vietnamese Government on HIV. The GIPA project is creating new opportunities for the involvement of PLHIV at advocacy, policy and service delivery levels. According to PLHIV themselves, positive messages concerning PLHIV in the media have increased, and there is a decrease of stigma and discrimination against PLHIV. A major challenge, however, is the lack of legal framework for self-help and other PLHIV groups. A civil society/association law has been drafted but is still far from being ratified. Due to their currently non-existent legal status, these PLHIV groups have little access to funds and to other PLHIV networks to exchange experiences and skills at national and international levels.

VVIRC. The Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union (HCYU) is fully committed and ready to cooperate with government agencies, NGOs, the private sector, international organisations and the UN to improve the effectiveness of volunteerism and to promote volunteerism for development, particularly among youth. In order to do this, however, it needs support and guidance in an organised and systematic manner so that it can be a national resource to address national social priorities. An SVF proposal in this regard is currently under preparation. The HCYU has approached UNV for technical and financial assistance in developing this project. After prolonged consultation in 2007, further cooperation is expected in 2008.

Strategic Outlook

Due to positive changes in the country such as rapid socio-economic development and the One UN Initiative, there may be increased opportunities in the implementation UNV's key areas of work, which are 1 - Advocacy for volunteerism for peace and development; 2 - Integrating volunteerism in development programming; and 3 - Mobilization of volunteers for peace and development.

Apart from the opportunities and challenges stated above, there seems to be an increased need for skilled volunteers in the areas of environmental protection and disaster management. Because of its long coastline, Viet Nam is predicted to suffer from the onslaught of oncoming climatic changes. Flooding has already become a serious threat to equitable development.

Another strategic area UNV should give priority to is to increase the number of Vietnamese volunteers to contribute their skills internationally and especially in the region. There are many mid-career Vietnamese professionals, but very few see the international UNV modality as a real opportunity. This view may change with the establishment of the VVIRC.



Hanoi IVD celebration: UN university volunteer from Spain with Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union volunteers



This Annual Report has been put together by the collective effort of United Nations Volunteers in Vietnam.

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