

International NGO Partnerships for Development

December 2010

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Letter from the Managing Co-Director

Welcome to the 2010 edition of the International NGO Partnerships for Development Report. This report highlights the activities of the Working Groups facilitated by the VUFO-NGO Resource Centre during the past 12 months. Before you read the report, I would like to give you a brief overview of other activities carried out by the Resource Centre team.

This has been a transitional year for the NGO RC. We have implemented some changes in our work and introduced strategic innovations in response to challenges during 2009. The centre further upgraded its physical resources; it finalised the transition from the old website to a new more secure platform; the Steering Committee approved a new long-term membership fee structure; we streamlined the website pages of our Working Groups and we launched the new online INGO Directory, which is available at: <http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/ingodirectory>

We improved and expanded our core services, bringing the focus back to INGO members and diversifying our support for them. We still maintained close collaboration with non-member INGOs, local NGOs, the donor community, UN agencies, local institutions, the Vietnamese Government and other development partners. The centre organised two INGO Forums; continued supporting the work of 12 active Working Groups; endorsed establishment of the new Capacity Development Working Group; and continued with other regular activities.

The centre's team did not change during the year, which created an opportunity to engage the staff in strategic discussions, increase their involvement in important issues and further build their capacity. We continued a productive relationship with VUFO and PACCOM through regular dialogue and our participation in their annual meetings in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. I maintained a close contact with my counterpart, Ms. Thuy Thi Thu Tran, Deputy Director General at PACCOM, and consulted her on number of issues concerning INGOs.

The centre facilitated elections for a new INGO representative at the HIV Policy and Programme Coordination Group, two INGO representatives at the Consultative Group meeting and a new INGO representative at the centre's Steering Committee. We consolidated INGOs' comments and provided inputs to several important documents such as: the Five-Year Socio-Economic Development Plan 2011-2015, the Five-Year Health Sector Development Plan; the United Nations One Plan 2012-2016 and the Vietnam Integrated National Program on Avian Influenza, Pandemic Preparedness and 'One Health' 2011-2015. The centre also participated in preparations for the Sixth ASEAN People's Forum. Our regional links have been strengthened through my participation at international NGO conferences in Taipei, Taiwan (June 2010) and Seoul, South Korea (November 2010), where I delivered presentations on the VUFO-NGO Resource Centre and INGOs assistance in Vietnam.

The VUFO-NGO Resource Centre remains the main bridge between the INGO community, international donors and key government institutions. I would like to express my gratitude to our INGO members, other partners and individuals for their support. Our team looks forward to further developing and improving our services for the benefit of people in Vietnam.



Marko Lovrekovic, Managing Co-Director

The VUFO-NGO Resource Centre

The VUFO-NGO Resource Centre was established in 1993 through a partnership between international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) working in Vietnam, and the Vietnam Union of Friendship Organisations (VUFO). The centre serves primarily the community of international non-governmental organisations working in Vietnam. It has around 120 INGO members, but its services and support also benefit others, including Vietnamese NGOs, non-member INGOs, UN agencies, the donor community in Vietnam, local institutions, Vietnamese Government agencies and international and national researchers. Its objectives are to:

- promote, facilitate and contribute to the sharing of information, resources and experiences within and between INGOs, their partners and local organisations, in order to improve the quality and impact of their work in Vietnam; and
- strengthen relationships and enhance dialogue between INGOs and other development ‘actors’ in Vietnam, including government agencies, donors and local organisations.

History

The Resource Centre grew out of a loose network of INGOs working in Vietnam in the early 1990s. Their representatives began to meet on the last Friday of each month to discuss the details of their work in Vietnam. Since that time, INGOs have continued to share information and collaborate to improve the quality of their programs. In 1998, a strengthened partnership was developed between the Resource Centre and VUFO. This involved the establishment of a co-directorship with VUFO and expansion of the Steering Committee to include Vietnamese agencies.

Activities and Services

INGO Forum

The Resource Centre hosts the INGO Forum several times a year. Open to all representatives of INGOs affiliated with the Resource Centre, it offers them the opportunity to share, experiences and better co-ordinate common activities. The Forum is also the highest decision-making authority of the Resource Centre, electing the Steering Committee and representatives for external meetings and endorsing joint statements. The Resource Centre welcomes visiting experts wishing to attend or make presentations. For more information, contact the Managing Co-Director at <director@ngocentre.org.vn>

Working Groups

The Resource Centre encourages and facilitates its members to establish working groups on different issues. Apart from INGOs, Vietnamese NGOs and other interested parties also participate in their work. In 2010 there were 13 active working groups.

INGO Directory

The Resource Centre publishes a directory, in English and Vietnamese, of INGOs providing support to Vietnam. A summary of the Directory is also available online.

Website

The website - at <www.ngocentre.org.vn> - provides information to support the work of INGOs, Vietnamese NGOs and institutions and others focused on development in Vietnam.

Library

The Resource Centre maintains a library at its office or publications on development and Vietnam, and an online catalogue.

Newsletter

The Resource Centre emails a newsletter about its activities and general development news every two weeks to member organisations.

Dialogue and Advocacy

The Resource Centre works to support, and advocate on behalf of, international NGOs in the changing development context of Vietnam, and to improve coordination and dialogue, between INGOs and government institutions, Vietnamese NGOs and donors. This includes:

- participation in drafting of government strategies and policies, such as in the drafting of the Five-Year Socio-Economic Development Plan 2011-2015;
- facilitation and support for consultation on donor strategies and reports, such as facilitation for NGO contributions to the Vietnam Development Report
- representation, participation and preparation of a written joint INGO statement for the Consultative Group meetings between the Government and donors;
- support for preparation of INGO reports, such as the INGO Complementary Report on the Convention of the Rights of the Child;
- participation in different partnership groups and local NGO networks, such as the Ministry of Health's Health Partnership Group.

Structure

The centre's office in Hanoi is staffed by a small secretariat headed by the Managing Co-Director. The other Co-Director works within the People's Aid Coordinating Committee (PACCOM) under the Vietnam Union of Friendship Organisations (VUFO).

As noted, the INGO Forum is the highest decision-making authority and selects the five INGO representatives for the Steering Committee, as well as INGO representatives to the Consultative Group meetings and partnership groups. The Steering Committee has the responsibility to govern, oversee and decide on the strategic direction of the centre, as well as to provide guidance, support and oversight of the activities of the Managing Co-Director. It meets each quarter and comprises five INGO representatives and five Vietnamese agencies.

The activities of the Resource Centre are almost entirely funded by membership fees. It raises funds for the remaining amount as needed.

Acronyms

AADMER	ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response
ABC	Awareness and behaviour change
ADPC	Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre
ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency in Vietnam
AECID	Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development
AED	Academy for Educational Development
AEPD	Association for Empowerment for Persons with Disability
ART	Anti-Retroviral Therapy
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
BORDA	Bremen Overseas Research and Development Association
CBDRM	Community-based disaster reduction management
CBO	Community-based organisation
CBR	Community-based rehabilitation
CC	Climate change
CCA	Climate change adaptation
CCM	Convention on Cluster Munitions
CECI	Centre for International Studies and Cooperation
CECODES	Centre for Community Support Development Studies
CEFACOM	Research Centre for Family Health and Community Development
CEMA	Committee on Ethnic Minority Affairs
CENFORCHIL	Centre for Promotion and Research on Children
CMC	Cluster Munition Coalition
CPCC	Committee of Protection and Care for Children
CPFC	Committee for Population, Family and Children)
CPI	Clear Path International
CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSAGA	Centre for Studies and Applied Sciences in Gender - Family, Women and Adolescents
CSO	Civil society organisation
CWD	Children with disabilities
CWS	Church World Service
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DMC	Disaster Management Centre
DOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
DRD	Disability Research and Capacity Development Centre
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
EMW	East Meets West Foundation
FHI	Family Health International
FFI	Flora and Fauna International
FOSCO	Service Company to Foreign Missions

FPSC	Foundation for the Social Promotion of Culture
GIHCD	Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining
GRET	Research and Technological Exchange Group
HI	Handicap International
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
HUFO	Ho Chi Minh City Union of Friendship Organisations
IE	Inclusive education
ILO	International Labour Organisation
iSEE	Institute for Studies of Society, Economy and Development
JANI	Joint Advocacy Network Initiative
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
MAG	Mines Advisory Group
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MCD	Centre for Marinelife Conservation and Community Development
MCNV	Medical Committee Netherlands Vietnam
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
MSM	Men who have sex with men
NLRC	Netherlands Red Cross
NPA	National Plan of Action
NPA	Norwegian People's Aid
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NTP	National Target Programme
PAC	Provincial AIDS Committee
PACCOM	The People's Aid Coordinating Committee
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief
PLHIV	People living with HIV
PPWG	People's Participation Working Group
PTVN	Peace Trees Viet Nam
PWD	People with disabilities
RECOFTC	Centre for People and Forests
REDD	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation
RWSSP	Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Partnership
SBV	State Bank of Vietnam
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
SODI	Solidarity Service International
SRD	Centre for Sustainable Rural Development
STI	Sexually transmitted infection
TBS	Targetted Budget Support
TOR	Terms of reference
TOT	Training of trainers
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMAS	United Nations Mine Action Service
UN-PCG	UN Natural Disasters and Emergencies Programme Coordinating Group
UXO	Unexploded ordnance
VBMAC	Vietnam Bomb and Mine Action Centre
VNAH	Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped
VNGO&CC Network	Vietnamese Non-Governmental Organisations Climate Change Network
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas
VUFO	Vietnam Union of Friendship Organisations
VVAF	Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation
VVMF	Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund
WARECOD	Centre for Water Resources, Conservation and Development
WASH	Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organisation
WVO	Worldwide Orphans Foundation

Agent Orange Working Group

<http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/agentorange>

Background

The Agent Orange Working Group (AOWG) was formed in July 2004, under the auspices of the VUFO-NGO Resource Centre. The group was initiated by international NGO members of the Resource Centre. Participation is open to international NGOs, Vietnamese counterpart agencies, international organisations, and other interested local and foreign personnel.

Participants in the Agent Orange Working Group approach the issue of Agent Orange from a broad variety of perspectives, including scientific research, assistance to people with disabilities, resolution of war legacies, environmental toxics and remediation, the arts and humanities, and US-Vietnam relations.

They have in common an interest in sharing information and experiences in order to better to understand and respond to issues related to the wartime use of Agent Orange and other toxic substances in Vietnam.

Objectives

- To share information and views on international NGO projects and various Vietnamese and international initiatives relating to agent orange.
- To enhance participants' understanding of the range and complexity of issues relating to Agent Orange.
- To enhance communication and create space for relevant groups inside and outside Vietnam to meet and discuss current events and the changing environment around Agent Orange.

Chairs and Core Group

The Co-Chairs are the East Meets West Foundation (EMW) and the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAFA). The other members of the Core Group are Save the Children, Clear Path International (CPI), Institute of Chemical Technology in Ho Chi Minh City and Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped (VNAH).

Activities in 2010

The Agent Orange Working Group met for the first time in two years in July 2010. From this meeting two co-chairs were elected: East Meets West and Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation. After such a long break the group is focussed on re-establishing itself as an active and effective working group.

The group was privileged to have the following speakers present to the group this year:

- Ambassador Ngo Quang Xuan, Vietnamese Co-Chair of the United States-Vietnam Dialogue Group

- Professor Dang Thi Cam Ha, Institute of Biotechnology
- Mr Nguyen Manh Hung, East Meets West Foundation and Da Nang Disability Coordination Group
- Dr. Tran Thi Tuyet Hanh, Lecturer, Environmental Health Department of Hanoi School of Public Health

Plans for 2011

The Agent Orange Working Group is in the process of reviewing the group's Work Plan and Terms of Reference for 2011. Next year the group plans to have regular meetings with guest speakers at each meeting.

Capacity Development Working Group

<http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/capacitydevwg>

Overview

Capacity development is the focus of many development initiatives in Vietnam, which are largely focused on civil society. Some are led by NGOs, donors and volunteer organisations, others by civil society organisations and some by Government institutions.

Although capacity building is a common element of many different organisations and across many sectors, there are few initiatives for sharing lessons learnt, resources and coordinating resources.

The Capacity Development Working Group (CDWG) aims to reduce vulnerability by helping local organisations to improve through a forum for exchange between different stakeholders, creating a dialogue and mutual learning on organisational capacity development.

Key objectives

Coordinate and share initiatives and knowledge in organisational development in order to mutually learn, maximise impact and minimise overlap.

Create an interface between NGOs and their counterparts, including the Government, donors and the private sector, for dialogue and advocacy on civil society capacity development.

Ensure that NGOs, civil society organisations and self-help groups in Vietnam have access to information, training, events and funding opportunities relating to capacity development and support.

Chair

The Acting Chair of the Capacity Development Working Group is CARE International and the Co-Chair is Pact.

Activities in 2010

Meeting on March 9, 2010: The Capacity Development Working Group was established in March 2010 at a meeting where interested parties confirmed their perceived need for a group to focus on capacity development and agreed a tentative structure and preliminary action plan for the group.

Meeting on April 13, 2010: The members met for the first time formally as the Capacity Development Working Group. CARE International, Pact, CECODES/SNV (Centre for Community Support Development Studies/Netherlands Development Organisation) and VSO Vietnam (Voluntary Service Overseas in Vietnam) presented their capacity development approaches and shared their experiences.

Meeting on August 10, 2010: The full group of the CDWG met and received presentations

from Dr Phuong of Abt Associates about the Health Policy Intervention, from VNP+ on their experience of the association-registration process, and conducted a detailed discussion about the Working Group's work-plan priorities.

Coordination

From commencement in March, a core group of interested individuals and organisations has met regularly to develop the Capacity Development Working Group and implement activities and events. As a new working group, the period covered by this report has focused primarily on coordination and engaging partners and participants.

Plans for 2011

- Continue monthly coordination meetings.
- Build on the existing NGO Resource Centre communications tools to promote capacity development organisations, resources and activities.
- Host regular topic talks on issues relevant to capacity development.
- Continue to engage development partners and stakeholders in sharing and dialogue forums.
- Maximise VUFO-NGO Resource Centre communication resources to widen the scope for sharing information relating to capacity development and support.

Child Rights Working Group

childrights-wg@ngocentre.org.vn

Background

Vietnam was the first country in Asia to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The Vietnamese Government has also shown great concern by establishing the CPCC (Committee of Protection and Care for Children) and CPFC (Committee for Population, Family and Children) and promulgating the Law on Protection, Care and Education of Children. During the first 15 years of CRC ratification, support for the implementation of the convention developed rapidly and many achievements have been made. International assistance has made a significant contribution to the implementation of the rights of the child. Nevertheless, contributions and improvement have still been needed, both at international and national levels, while there was an increasing recognition of the need for improved communication and coordination between all actors involved.

It was therefore proposed to establish a regular forum to exchange information on this topic and to provide a space for discussion, decision and actions. The aim was to improve coordination between those working to support the society of Vietnam in fulfilling its commitment to upholding the rights of the child. The Child Rights Working Group was, therefore, established in June 2006 as an international NGO initiative. However, local NGOs have been more and more engaged and played a more active role, through time.

The Child Rights Working Group (CRWG) is now a technical working group, consisting of representatives from both international and local NGOs, mass organisations, research institutes, experts, individuals and other community groups in Vietnam. Other agencies and organisations, such as UN bodies and specialised agencies - United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), International Labour Organisation (ILO), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), etc. - and Government ministries are our partners and guest speakers in information and experience exchanging sessions.

The Child Right Working Group meets every two months.

Chair and Core Group

Facilitation or chairpersonship rotates annually.

Co-Chairs:

Save the Children

Research Centre for Family Health and Community Development (CEFACOM)

Core group members:

Plan International

World Vision

ChildFund

Vietnam Association for the Protection of Children's Rights

Centre for Promotion and Research on Children (CENFORCHIL)

Saigon Children's Charity

Terres des hommes

CSAGA (Centre for Studies and Applied Sciences in Gender - Family, Women and Adolescents)

Goals and objectives

The overall purpose of the CRWG is to promote the rights of the child and to strengthen their implementation, by increasing and enhancing the communication, collaboration and coordination between all actors working to support Vietnamese society.

The goal is achieved through sharing resources and experience, engaging members in planning and forming partnerships for programmes and advocacy work concerning child rights. The group seeks to strengthen the Government's efforts and maximise NGO efforts to ensure effective social mobilisation in advancing children's rights. Partnership with Government occurs mainly at the national and provincial levels through individual organisational collaboration with relevant government authorities. However, the CRWG aims in the future to develop and strengthen formal and long term partnerships with the Government of Vietnam at national and local levels through dialogues and collaboration for policy changes and best practice in making sure that children rights are promoted and implemented.

Activities in 2010

Main Themes for 2010

- Child Participation (policy dialogues, inputs to current projects, experience sharing)
- Child Protection (information and experience sharing, policy development in NGOs and partners)
- Ombudsperson (NGO initiatives and pilots, influences and inputs to current projects by the National Assembly and UNICEF)
- Data-collection strengthening (lessons learnt for future CRC complementary reports)
- Optional Protocol on Complaints Procedures and Mechanism in Vietnam (advocacy for, research and pilots)

Key milestones

- CRC Complementary Report – final draft shared with the Government for clarification of data, followed by finalisation and submission processes.
- Revision of the CRWG's terms of reference.
- Development and application of a child protection policy for child-focused organisations - discussion among the CRWG members in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi.
- Consider how to effectively promote the CRWG's role in its future responses to cases of child rights violations through media and advocate for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and duty bearers' accountability discussed among the CRWG members in Ho Chi Minh City.
- Optional Protocol on Complaints Procedures and Mechanism in Vietnam – justification and start-up the process.
- Recommendations for the Government's 10 year National Plan of Action (NPA) on children.

Plans for 2011

Sharing experiences, improving the development practice of members organizations

- Child Protection Policy – continuation of 2010 plan

Policy Dialogue and advocacy (discussions and workshopping)

- Revised law on protection and care for children
- Budget allocation for civil society organisations
- Ten-year National Plan of Action on children – monitoring
- Optional Protocol on Complaints Procedures and Mechanism in Vietnam (advocacy for, research and pilots) – continuation of 2010 plan
- The next Convention on the Rights of the Child Complementary Report (2007 – 2012)

NGO Climate Change Working Group

www.ngocentre.org.vn/ccwg

Background

The NGO Climate Change Working Group (CCWG) was established in February 2008 and provides a forum for Vietnamese and International NGOs to actively participate in the climate change debate and works. The Climate Change Working Group plays a significant role in facilitating information sharing and coordination among NGOs currently engaged in addressing climate change across a number of sectors and themes. The Working Group is open to the participation of interested international and Vietnamese NGOs, other agencies and individuals.

Three sub-groups operate within the Climate Change Working Group: the Awareness and Behaviour Change, Climate Change Adaptation, and Climate Change Mitigation sub-groups. These groups meet separately to exchange relevant information and ideas and report back to the Core Group (see below). The Working Group itself organises a monthly meeting on the first Thursday of the month. This meeting is open to anyone interested in attending. The Core Group members take turn in chairing this meeting.

Chair and Core Group

CARE International in Vietnam has chaired the Climate Change Working Group since its establishment, while the Core Group of members provides orientation and support for the Working Group's activities. The Core Group comprises 12 organisations: CARE International in Vietnam, Action for the City, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Challenge to Change, East Meets West, Oxfam, MCD (Centre for Marinelife Conservation and Community Development), SRD (Sustainable Rural Development), SNV (Netherlands Development Organisation), RECOFTC (Centre for People and Forests), WARECOD (Centre for Water Resources, Conservation and Development) and WWF.

Goal and objectives

The Climate Change Working Group seeks to contribute to reducing the vulnerability of poor people in Vietnam to the impacts of climate change through NGO coordination, advocacy and capacity building for environmentally and economically sustainable and socially just responses to climate change.

Its key objectives are:

- **Coordination:** coordinate and share NGO initiatives and knowledge on climate change in order to maximise impact and minimise overlap through providing forums where international NGOs and Vietnamese NGOs can interact.
- **Advocacy:** provide a structure within which NGOs develop common advocacy agendas on climate change and also build relationships between NGOs and decision-makers (government, donors, the private sector and others) for coordination, dialogue and advocacy in relation to climate change responses and participation in policy processes, nationally and sub-nationally.

- **Capacity Building:** ensure NGOs in Vietnam have access to information, training, current events and funding opportunities in climate change and provide support as feasible to individual NGO climate change activities.

Activities in 2010

1. Coordination

Working Group Meetings

The monthly Climate Change Working Group meeting has been organised regularly at the VUFO-NGO Resource Centre, at which members share lessons and information relating to their own organisation or local and national events on climate change

Workshops and Meetings

The Climate Change Working Group has coordinated its participation and presentation in different climate change workshops and events at different levels, such as the Mekong Environmental and Climate Change Symposium, the Innovation Day of the World Bank where wide range of initiatives was presented from NGOs, and meetings with the USAIDS Mission, Asia City Climate Change Resilience Network, etc.

The Working Group facilitates NGOs in Vietnam to access information about climate change issues, training activities, and funding opportunities through the group's mailing list and website.

Sub-Groups

- ***Climate Change Awareness and Behaviour Change (ABC sub-group):*** Chaired by Action for the City, the group operated actively in 2010, holding regular meetings and coordinating joint campaigns and activities such as a journalist database, a green office campaign and activities in relation to saving paper and energy, green transportation, reducing the use of plastic bags and air conditioning, and promoting eco-stationery. The sub-group's campaigns have attracted the broad participation of NGO staff and Hanoi residents. The sub-group also involved several NGOs in planting 1800 saplings in Ha Giang under the coordination of Caritas. Funds raised from individuals are used for poor people to take care of the trees. The sub-group also supported the Capacity Building project on database development.
- ***Climate Change Adaptation (CCA sub-group):*** Chaired by Oxfam it organised meetings to share information and experiences with tools and methodologies used in vulnerability and capacity assessment on disasters and climate change, and related training opportunities. Based on these meetings a DRR (disaster risk reduction) and CC (climate change) Mainstreaming Guideline has been developed. The guideline is planned to be available at the end of 2010. The CCA sub-group is preparing for a sharing workshop on community based adaptation among NGOs in December 2010.
- ***Climate Change Mitigation sub-group:*** The sub-group is chaired by RECOFTC. There have not been many activities involving the Mitigation sub-group, as the leader

has been too busy. Meanwhile members of the group have been involved in the REDD (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation) working groups co-ordinated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD).

2. Advocacy

A planning meeting on advocacy issues and potential mechanism and stakeholders was organised at the beginning of the year. The Core Group conducted quarterly meetings to discuss the follow up and implementation of the plan. Joint Working Group member advocacy messages have been developed and delivered through Vietnam Consultative Group meetings and other gatherings. The key messages were about the need to address the vulnerability of the most vulnerable groups in society, benefit sharing in REDD, the roles of NGOs and how we can supplement the Government in responding to climate change. The Climate Change Working Group also coordinated Working Group participation and sharing experiences and messages in climate change mainstreaming events such as the 'SEDP (Socio-Economic Development Plan) consultation seminar on climate change and environment' organised by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI).

3. Capacity Building

The Capacity Building Project

Supported by both the Climate Change Working Group and the Vietnamese Non-Governmental Organisations Climate Change Network (VNGO&CC Network) this project aims to raise both awareness and capacity building of civil society, focusing on NGOs and their partners, to effectively respond to and integrate climate change adaptation and mitigation into their development programmes. It is in its second year of implementation. Key activities and outputs achieved are:

- **Communications and coordination:** The Climate Change Working Group website (www.ngocentre.org.vn/ccwg) was improved and the VNGO&CC Network website was developed (www.vngo-cc.vn). An online forum was organised, which involved good participation by youth, NGO staff and others. Thirteen e-bulletins and four newsletters on climate change issues were produced and sent via emails and post respectively to NGOs and their partners, and project areas as well.
- **Training on adaptation and mitigation:** A manual on climate change covering adaptation and mitigation is in the last stage of finalisation and will be ready for printing in December 2010. Three TOT (training of trainers) courses on climate change adaptation, mitigation and communication were conducted for 20 trainees from different NGOs in various regions of Vietnam. Twelve extended training courses were conducted in the Hanoi, Yen Bai, Can Tho and Hue for around 300 staff from NGOs, institutions and others. Most of the trainees were very satisfied with the training and confident to share what they have learned on climate change.
- **Sharing and learning:** A study tour was organised to a GRET (Research and Technological Exchange Group) project in Thanh Hoa, which involved a variety of activities relating to climate change adaptation and mitigation, such as cooking on stoves, planting mushrooms, safe vegetables, biogas, raising chickens and planting bamboo.

For more information on the project, please see the VNGO&CC website: www.vngo-cc.vn.

4. Partnerships

Regarding possible funding for the Climate Change Working Group, the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) has some small funds available for strengthening southern voices covering the Working Group in Vietnam. The first phase of the proposal is for 18 months, starting in November 2010, with an amount available of about US\$50,000 for this period.

The Climate Change Working Group is working to enhance interaction with the Disaster Management Working Group, the Informal Technical Working Group of Donors and NGOs and the Policy and Coordination Group on advocacy issues.

Plans for 2011

The Climate Change Working Group will:

- Recruit a coordinator for the Climate Change Working Group and probably support Disaster Management Working Group coordination.
- Continue to support the Capacity Building Project with the main activities being the finalisation of the training manual, implementation of training courses, a study tour, a climate change manual for community use, sharing workshops and research on good adaptation models.
- Implement the project funded by DANIDA, focusing on advocacy and capacity building. The Working Group will review our advocacy priorities on REDD benefit sharing and the involvement of indigenous communities, support capacity building and mainstreaming of climate change at local levels and support the building of adaptive capacity in poor communities.
- Work further with the Disaster Management Working Group on the joint advocacy plan on common areas and interests of the two groups.
- Enhance awareness and behaviour change activities, including: the cooperation and capacity of Vietnamese media forms for awareness raising and conveying Climate Change Working Group messages; launching of public green campaigns in relation to mitigation involving a wide range of organisations such as local NGOs, international NGOs, companies, government offices and communities.
- Organise a national adaptation workshop on climate change adaptation and mitigation to share our models and experiences.

Community-Based and Responsible Tourism Network

<http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/cbrtnetwork>

Background

The Community-Based Tourism Network was established in July 2007 by a group of non-governmental organisations, tours operators and other interested parties. It sought to improve and expand the quality of community-based and tourism development by facilitating the exchange of information among stakeholders.

After being inactive for a period of time, it was reformed during 2010 and renamed the Community-Based and Responsible Tourism Network in order to be more inclusive of the range of tourism activities of NGOs in addition to Community Based Tourism.

Chair and Core Group

The Chair of the Working Group is SNV (Netherlands Development Organisation) and the other Core Group members are WWF, PanNature, Centre for Marinelife Conservation and Community Development (MCD), Flora and Fauna International (FFI) and Exotissimo Travel Vietnam.

Objectives

Of key importance to successful community-based and responsible tourism development is effective stakeholder cooperation. The Community-Based and Responsible Tourism Network helps to provide a platform to meet the following objectives:

- To raise awareness and promote community-based and responsible tourism as a strategic tool to improve livelihoods and diversify Vietnam's tourism products.
- To serve as a location for information specific and relevant to community-based and responsible tourism development and engage in further knowledge and information development.
- To create opportunities for interested parties or individuals to make contact and forge cooperation with partners.
- To support the marketing and promoting of community-based and responsible tourism product development.
- To advocate for policy and programming change to ensure greater local benefits from community-based and responsible tourism and the tourism sector in general.

Activities in 2010

The key activity in 2010 was the core group meeting on 25 May that helped re-establish the Network. There was a general agreement that the Network should focus on information sharing, better connecting NGOs with the private sector and addressing common issues and constraints. Key action items coming out of the meeting were:

- Develop a simple matrix in which organisations can add information on where they are

- working to better communicate activity between NGOs and tour operators.
- Review the current website and update contents.
 - Organise a networking event that will better connect NGOs with the private sector, including members of the Responsible Travel Club.

Regular meetings organised by the group in 2010

The Network Meeting on August 25 was an opportunity to hear about the range of tourism development projects that are underway or about to start in Vietnam.

This included a presentation by Jamie Armenteros on the AECID (Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development) and FPSC (Foundation for the Social Promotion of Culture) Ngoc Son Ngo Luong Project, a briefing by Hans Farnhammer, from the Delegation of the European Union to Vietnam, outlining the upcoming Environmentally and Socially Responsible Tourism Project (ESRTP), an update from Renate Bleeken, Lux Development, on 'Strengthening of Human Resources in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry in Vietnam' and Jenny Ilkelberg from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) outlining the project 'Strengthening of in-land tourism in Quang Nam', which will be based on a value chain approach.

There was also an opportunity for other development partners, NGOs and tour operators to provide an update to their group on their activities.

Other activities

Following the August 25 meeting, there was a successful networking event between tour operators, NGOs and development partners that was supported by SNV (Netherlands Development Organisation), Exotissimo Travel Vietnam and the Responsible Travel Club.

Plans for 2011

The direction for 2011 will focus on consolidating the Network since its relaunch, attracting additional organisations that have an interest in community based and responsible tourism and further enhancing the engagement with the private sector to ensure that tourism development occurs in line with market demand.

Disability Working Group

<http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/disabilitywg>

Background

After the Ordinance for People with Disabilities (PWD) was issued in Vietnam in 1998, support for people living with disabilities has developed rapidly and many achievements have been made. While international assistance has made a significant contribution to the development of support for people with disabilities, there is an increasing recognition of the need for improved communication and coordination between all the actors involved. Therefore, in 2007 the Disability Working Group was officially established and operated under umbrella of and in accordance with the VUFO-NGO Resource Centre working group guidelines.

The Disability Working Group (DWG) is not limited to international NGOs only but is also open to the participation of individuals and organisations that are interested in disability and development.

The main activities of the Disability Working Group are regular meetings every two months, with selected themes based on the information-sharing needs of group members and stakeholders that are identified early each year. The meetings are conducted in an open, transparent and participatory style.

Chair and Core Group

The management and coordination of the Working Group are carried out by a Core Group of five international NGOs. The role of chair is rotated among members of this group. The current chair is Dr. Pham Dung, Programme Coordinator, from Medical Committee Netherlands Vietnam (MCNV). Member organisations of the Core Group are MCNV, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Voluntary Service Overseas in Vietnam (VSO), Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped (VNAH), Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAFA) and Handicap International France (HI France).

The email contact for the Working Group is: dung.pham@mcnv.vn

Goals and objectives

The overall purpose of the Disability Working Group is to increase communication and coordination and to share learning between all actors working to support people living with disabilities.

The main aim of meetings is to share practical experience, successes and learning to the mutual benefit of all attending. A secondary aim is to act as a time-efficient and effective mechanism for actors to communicate and coordinate working plans.

Activities in 2010

In 2010, at the time of writing, four regular meetings and a core group meeting had been held.

January meeting: The theme of discussion was vocational training and job promotion for people with disabilities. The main point of discussion was that while training PWD on work skills it is extremely important to make changes of community awareness on capacity of PWD in order to establish the impact of programmes/projects on job for PWD. Participants also discussed the needs of stakeholders in term of information exchange and experience sharing and roles of the Disability Working Group.

February meeting: This was an internal meeting of the Core Group that focused on reviewing activities in 2009, electing the new chair and brainstorming on the agenda of the Working Group in 2010. Member organisations of the Core Group agreed to keep rotating the chair mechanism for organising regular meetings, but also agreed on the need to rotate the chairmanship of the Working Group. Dr. Pham Dung from MCNV was selected to take the role of chair of the Working Group in 2010. Five identified topics were identified for the regular meetings: social work, education, vocational training, community-based rehabilitation (CBR) and awareness rising on people with disabilities.

March meeting: This was an opportunity for individuals and concerned organisations to hear about the basic concepts of social work in general, the roles of social workers in supporting people with disabilities, and the need for the development of a social worker network. An update on the progress of promotion of a national action plan on social work development was presented. The proposal would be approved by the Prime Minister in April 2010.

May meeting: VVAF facilitated the meeting, which had the theme of job creation for people with disabilities. The experience sharing were more focused on community-based vocational training for PWD, rather than a centre-based model. Discussion covered the advantages of community-based job placement for PWD. In terms of accessibility it is easier and more convenient for PWDs to access job opportunities in their own community. As PWDs work and live in their own community they will not have to move around or to live away, so this community approach promises more stable jobs for them. However there are some considerable limitations. Case management is costly and complicated. Investment funds and the markets for handicraft products are limited, there are insufficient facilities and professionalism is lacking. The discussion concluded that each person with disabilities should have an own-need assessment as well as a job development plan based on their specific situation and including responses from family and community.

July meeting: In discussing the topic of community-based rehabilitation (CBR) MCNV presented some available tools for evaluating the participation of people with disabilities in the community. Salsa and P-scale were introduced and there was encouragement at the meeting for them to be piloted in some community-based rehabilitation programmes and projects in Vietnam. As a part of any CBR programme, disability data management is very important in planning, monitoring and evaluation. VNAH shared with participants some interesting web-based software for disability data management. This web based software has been used out in Da Nang.

September meeting: The meeting was considered as the most inspiring one as it covered two interesting issues in education for children with disabilities (CWD): inclusive education (IE) for children with disabilities at secondary schools and associations of parents of children with disabilities. People agreed on the urgent need to develop inclusive education at both the secondary and higher levels of education. The conclusion of the discussion was that parents of

children with disabilities and their associations play important roles in education for CWD. However discrimination still exists as a big barrier for parents sending children with disabilities to school.

November meeting: The theme of the meeting will be awareness raising on disability.

Plans for 2011

In 2011 the Disability Working Group will still focus on the objectives of updating knowledge, information exchange and experience sharing in support of people with disabilities. The Working Group will also focus on advocacy and lobbying for the implementation of the Law on Disability that will come into effect on January 1, 2011.

Disaster Management Working Group

<http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/dmwg>

Background

The Disaster Management Working Group acts as a forum for NGOs and other development agencies and professionals to exchange ideas and 'lessons learned' about how to improve development policies and practices on disaster reduction and meeting for emergency assessment and call for support to disaster victims.

The origins of the Working Group arise from the period immediately following the storms of 1999. It was felt that NGOs needed to coordinate their relief operations more closely. The group continued to meet on an ad hoc basis, as a forum for discussions and information sharing, particularly focusing on the Mekong Delta floods of 2000 and 2001. Currently, the Working Group holds its meetings monthly and rotates the position of chair every six months.

Chair and Core Group

The current co-chairs are Plan in Vietnam and ActionAid in Vietnam. The other core members are: PACCOM (People's Aid Coordinating Committee), Save the Children, Oxfam, CARE, World Vision, Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, CECI (Centre for International Studies and Cooperation), ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency in Vietnam), ADPC (Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre) and UN-PCG (the UN Natural Disasters and Emergencies Programme Coordinating Group - UNICEF, WHO, UNDP).

Goal and objectives

The goal of the Disaster Management Working Group is to enhance disaster management in Vietnam through improved information sharing, coordination of initiatives and joint action to promote the highest possible standards and practices.

The Working Group's objectives are:

- To improve coordination among all agencies working in disaster management through information sharing, experience exchange and joint initiatives.
- To build the capacity of relevant agencies and practitioners in disaster management.
- To initiate and contribute toward policy dialogues for improving disaster-related policies and practices of policy makers and implementers.
- To improve coordination and collaboration in emergency responses, especially when big disasters happen.

Activities in 2010

Joint Assessment

The Disaster Management Working Group decided to conduct a rapid joint assessment in Quang Binh and Ha Tinh after the heavy rains and flooding in central provinces in October.

Two teams were formed with the participation of PACCOM, CARE, Oxfam, Save the Children, UN-PCG (UNICEF and WHO), Plan, World Vision, ActionAid, Challenge to Change, ADRA, Red Cross and the provincial Department of Foreign Affairs. Oxfam and Plan were the lead agencies. The debrief meeting was held on October 12 at the VUFO-NGO Resource Centre in collaboration with PACCOM.

Consultations

The Disaster Management Working Group was invited by DMC to present to the coordination meeting their experience on community-based disaster reduction management (CBDRM), and lessons learned, from the perspective of NGOs.

The Working Group presented its best practice on CBDRM at the national workshop held by DMC. The theme of the workshop was 'Toward to a common agreement to support the implementation of the Government CBDRM Programme'.

Workshop

A joint workshop with key members of the Disaster Management Working Group was held in July 2010 to prepare for the typhoon season, and the Disaster Management Centre (DMC), PACCOM and Working Group members participated. The workshop also discussed the Contingency Plan, the Sphere Project's minimum standards in disaster response, data analysis and writing a good Joint Assessment Report, including a simulation exercise on how to conduct a joint assessment. Useful discussions were shared among members, DMC and PACCOM, especially on coordination, data management and the implementation of emergency projects in the field.

Monthly meetings

September meeting: The trigger for Joint Assessment and finalisation of the Contingency Plan was discussed, following comments during the Disaster Management Working Group workshop in July. There were presentations and sharing on the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Day event, led by Save the Children and JANI (Joint Advocacy Network Initiative). CARE proposed, as part of the JANI project, strengthened coordination and sharing between the Disaster Management Working Group and the Climate Change Working Group, and a joint advocacy and communication strategy for climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction.

August meeting: The Disaster Management Working Group's annual plan was reviewed by all members and the transition to new co-chairs was discussed. Participants also noted key points from the Working Group workshop held in July that needed following up. A consultant from UNICEF and Save the Children shared their plan to work for the education in emergency cluster promotion.

July meeting: There was discussion about the situation regarding Typhoon 1 (the Con Son typhoon) and the Working Group's presence in the at-risk provinces. Members discussed concerns about the impact of drought on vulnerable communities, especially on livelihoods. The meeting agreed that for the next six-month rotation Plan and ActionAid would be the co-chairs.

June meeting: The Working Group shared key initiatives related to community-based disaster reduction management, including the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) and the National Platform on Disaster Management. A number of trainings were shared with other members, such as on emergency market mapping and analysis (EMMA), food security and malnutrition in emergencies. The Disaster Pandemic Contingency Plan was discussed among core members of the Working Group for finalisation.

May meeting: Sharing on the JANI project, was led by CARE, working in partnership with relevant agencies such as DNMC, Oxfam, ActionAid, World Vision, Save the Children, ADPC, Netherlands Red Cross (NLRC) and Plan. Handicap International presented its experience of working with disabled people after the Ketsana typhoon. There was also discussion on a joint workshop on preparing for the typhoon season for all members of the Working Group.

April meeting: Revised Terms of Reference and the work-plan for the Disaster Management Working Group were presented and approved. The Joint Assessment Terms of Reference and a template for joint assessment was proposed for revision, based on the experiences of the Ketsana typhoon.

Ethnic Minorities Working Group

www.ngocentre.org.vn/emwg

Background

The Ethnic Minorities Working Group (EMWG) is a forum for NGOs and other development agencies and professionals to exchange ideas and lessons learned about how to improve development policies and practices for the benefit of ethnic minority peoples.

The Working Group has task-forces that work on different themes related to ethnic minority issues in Vietnam. It develops a yearly action plan in the first core-group meeting of each year. In 2010, the Working Group continued the activities of several task-forces from 2009 and focused on specific engagements with different Government agencies in charge at the central level of development programmes and projects for ethnic minorities.

The Working Group's daily activities are assigned to a coordinator. The coordinator undertakes such tasks as organising meetings and activities, compiling the database of agencies working with ethnic minorities, budgeting, facilitating group communication internally and externally, acting as moderator for the group's mailing list, updating its website and preparing the Working Group yearly report.

Chair and Core Group

The Working Group operates on a voluntary basis and is managed by a core group of international NGOs that are most active within the group. Since the beginning of 2007, Oxfam Great Britain has been the chair of the organisation. The members of the core group are: Oxfam Great Britain, Caritas Switzerland, Oxfam Hong Kong, Save the Children, Enfants&Développement, Care International, iSEE (Institute for Studies of Society, Economy and Development) and ActionAid Vietnam.

Goal and Objectives

The overall goal of the Ethnic Minorities Working Group is to improve the livelihoods of ethnic minorities by improving the development assistance provided by members of the Working Group and by building the capacity of ethnic minorities to fully participate in development processes.

The key objectives are:

- ***Sharing and disseminating information:*** The Working Group provides a forum for discussions regarding development issues related to ethnic minorities in Vietnam. It disseminates information as widely as possible regarding laws, policies, research and documentation of projects and programmes relating to ethnic minorities.
- ***Improving the practices of member organisations:*** Working Group participants share experiences and lessons learned in order to improve the impact, both in quality and quantity, of their development interventions.
- ***Policy dialogue:*** The sharing of experiences and information relating to ethnic minorities leads to improved development practices and policies among members and

their partner organisations. The group also acts as a venue for conducting dialogues with relevant government and donor institutions and organisations.

- ***Facilitating the voice of ethnic minority people:*** the Working Group facilitates different mechanisms for ethnic people to voice their opinions on the development projects and influence policies and decisions that affect their lives.

Activities in 2010

In early 2010, the core members of the Working Group identified task-forces and developed concept papers and timetables for each one. These work plans were followed in 2009, with various activities carried out for each theme:

- Stigma
- Develop an approach to work with ethnic minorities on a mechanism to enhance their voice in the decision-making processes of government bodies (EMWG engagement in Programme 135-II and the Annual Partnership Forum for Resolution No. 32a)
- Capacity building and networking (including mass media, local authorities and donors)
- Ethnic Minorities Working Group database and regular activities
- Social protection strategies

Work on these task forces activities in 2010 included:

- ***January 2010:*** Core Group members organised a meeting to design and agree on the programme for 2010. During this period, upon the request of the Committee on Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA), the Working Group provided comments on the four manuals for Programme 135 Phase II. They are: Gender Mainstreaming for Improvement and Implementation of Programme 135 Phase II, Capacity Building, Community Bidding Under Communication, and Participatory Planning. The Working Group received positive feedback from CEMA.
- ***February 2010:*** The Working Group and iSEE held a workshop, Image of Ethnic Minorities in Printed Newspapers, on February 2, 2010. The presenters were Nguyen Van Chinh from the Vietnam National University and Nguyen Thi Tuyet Minh from the Academy of Journalism and Communication. More than 40 people participated in the workshop and joined the discussion.
- ***April 2010:*** iSEE and the Working Group co-organised a meeting on Research on Land and Culture of Ethnic Minorities, with 34 people participating. iSEE and the Working Group also organised another workshop on Ethnic Stereotype, which attracted roughly 25 people.
- ***May 2010:*** The Working Group attended a Technical Workshop with CEMA on giving comments for the document of the Programme for Socio-Economic Development of Communes and Villages Facing Extreme Hardship in Ethnic Minorities and Mountainous Areas in 2011-2015.
- ***July 2010:*** The Working Group played a key role in a meeting with an independent expert on ethnic minorities' affairs from the UN, organised jointly with the People's Aid Coordinating Committee (PACCOM).
- ***September 2010:*** Together with iSEE and the People's Participation Working Group (PPWG), the Ethnic Minorities Working Group organised the thematic Workshop on

Diversified Culture, Ethnic Identity and Sustainable Development in Vietnam, in order to prepare for the sixth Asian People's Forum.

- ***May-December 2010:*** The Working Group co-operated with CEMA on consultative input for the design of the Typical Policies Supporting Gender Equality for Ethnic Minorities and Hardship Areas. The Working Group worked closely with CEMA from the beginning to develop the Master Plan and CEMA is expected to submit the document to the Prime Minister in December 2010.
- ***January-October 2010:*** The Working Group recently participated in the Joint Partnership Review of Programme 135 process and the ongoing consultation process.

Plans for 2011

The Ethnic Minorities Working Group will continue to focus on topics that will be crucial to and also interest its members in relation to ethnic minority issues in Vietnam. The Working Group will also continue to support strategic work led by individual member agencies and will organise meetings and disseminate information on issues related to overcoming ethnic-minority poverty.

The Working Group will continue to strengthen and enhance the dialogue between NGOs and Government agencies in order to make sure that NGOs' experiences and practices will be useful in the Government's programmes for ethnic minority areas. We will engage in the Programme 135-III start-up process, which will include the development of guidelines, and most likely we will continue to work on this jointly with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

HIV/AIDS Technical Working Group

<http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/hiv aids-twg>

Background

The HIV/AIDS Technical Working Group (HIV TWG) continues to play a broad and impressive role in facilitating information sharing and coordination among individuals and organisations working on issues affecting those at risk of, living with, and affected by HIV. It is registered with the VUFO-NGO Resource Centre under the People's Aid Coordinating Committee (PACCOM arrangements), and brings together participants from international and local NGOs, the Party, Government, mass organisations, bilateral and multilateral donors, foundations, the United Nations and PLHIV (people living with HIV) groups. Participation in the Technical Working Group is open to all sectors, and to both organisations and individuals. The Technical Working Group has held regular meetings since 2004.

Objectives

The Technical Working Group's key objectives remain:

- To advocate for a supportive and enabling environment for the implementation of HIV prevention and care projects in Vietnam in a multi-sectoral, non-discriminatory environment;
- To document, discuss and disseminate lessons learned;
- To collaborate on common areas for capacity building, particularly in the areas of training and development of resource materials;
- To analyse and exchange information based on field experience;
- To identify gaps in the overall national response to HIV and build partnerships between organisations to address these gaps; and
- To identify other stakeholders with which the working group can build partnerships and enhance communications, including the media, the private sector and other sector specific networks.

Chairs, Secretariat and Sub-Groups

The Chair for the first months of the year, Dr. Nguyen Thu Giang, from the Vietnamese NGO, LIGHT, committed to strengthening Vietnamese participation. Dr Nguyen Thu Giang ended her Chairmanship in May, at which time Simon Baldwin of Family Health International (FHI) took over, and is supported by the new Co-Chair, Dr Hoang Tu Anh, Director of the Centre for Creative Initiatives in Health and Population. In 2011, the Chairs will build on the year's achievements, particularly with regard to addressing members' needs as expressed in the 2010 evaluation of the Technical Working Group.

The UNAIDS Secretariat Vietnam serves as the secretariat for the Technical Working Group. Meetings are simultaneously translated, and all documentation is provided in Vietnamese and English.

The Technical Working Group oversees nine sub-groups that address HIV technical issues in

more depth and also develop their own goals and work plans. These groups meet regularly or on an ad hoc basis, to cover the following topics: Gender and Sexuality; Greater Involvement of People with AIDS; Harm Reduction; 05/06 Centres; Care and Treatment; HIV and Communications; Children and HIV; men who have sex with men; and the Ho Chi Minh City HIV TWG. A new group on sex work is being formed and the 05/06 Centres group is to be disbanded. More information on the work of these sub-groups is provided below.

The Technical Working Group continues to host and monitor an electronic 'listserv' forum, which has grown to include more than 700 members. Group members receive and disseminate new information on HIV topics through this mechanism in a rapid manner. The listserv is used around 100 times a month.

Activities in 2010

1. Main themes

Alongside normal TWG activities, the Technical Working Group secretariat designed and launched an online survey to establish how TWG participants saw these activities, and how they felt these might be improved. While participants recognised the value of the activities, three main challenges were identified by the evaluation:

1. Access to Information: While groups such as international NGOs, Vietnamese NGOs and Vietnamese Government groups do access the Technical Working Group electronic listserv forum and website, self-help and community group participants stated that they do not access TWG information channels, citing lack of knowledge of both the resources and computer skills. Participants also pointed to constraints within the listserv format.

2. Recommended sector participation: Survey respondents overwhelmingly wanted to see more participation by the Vietnamese Government in TWG meetings, as well as by the private sector.

3. Technical Working Group meetings: Survey respondents said that meetings could be improved by focusing more on coordination and action. Two key recommendations were to make meetings less formal, and more technical. Other recommendations included making the Technical Working Group focus more on how to move forward and/or address barriers, on sharing between members and in sub-groups and on teamwork.

2. Meetings in 2010

17 March 2010: The year's first meeting used a new format, with a panel of representatives – including from PEPFAR (President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief), UNAIDS, Pact, CIHP and the GIPA (Greater Involvement of People with AIDS) sub-group – sharing their views about resource mobilisation and sustainability (rather than presentations). The representatives emphasised long-term approaches, capacity building and coordination to increase sustainability. The Technical Working Group evaluation was also announced at this meeting.

26 May 2010: The second meeting of the year included presentations by UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) on adolescent sexual and reproductive health in Vietnam and by the

Medical Committee Netherlands-Vietnam on Thai Women and Vulnerability to HIV in Dien Bien Province. Discussions following the presentations raised the issues of sex work, very low condom use by women in rural areas and the need for more attention to gender and youth issues.

25 August 2010: The third meeting – and the first following the completion of the Technical Working Group Evaluation – opened with a participatory session to review the recommendations from the evaluation. This was followed by presentations from the VUFO-NGO Resource Centre and from UNAIDS regarding civil society web-based platforms, part of a planned response to concerns expressed in the evaluation about access to information. Following the discussion, and based on the outcomes of the evaluation, it was decided to hold future meetings quarterly rather than bi-monthly and at the new time of 3.00pm to 5.00pm. Participants also discussed ways to increase and broaden participation in the Technical Working Group and to link better between the sub-groups, lunchtime seminars and the main TWG meetings.

November 24 2010: The last meeting of the year will be held on the subject of ‘HIV and the workplace’ and will include presentations from VAAC, ILO (International Labour Organisation), the private sector and a representative of a PLHIV self-help group.

3. Other Activities

Lunchtime Seminars

The Technical Working Group Secretariat continues to host the lunchtime seminars and provides logistical and technical support to the series. In 2010, the Technical Working Group Secretariat hosted eight seminars. The topics included: a longitudinal assessment of care, treatment and support interventions at two clinics in Ho Chi Minh City; mobilising young people through 'Dance for Life'; Tools of Public Health: The Public Health Laboratory'; peer adherence support and ART (Anti-Retroviral Therapy) in Quang Ninh province; management training for HIV personnel; 'Where to now? Social Work in Vietnam'; 'Implementing comprehensive activities from harm reduction and detection to care and treatment, in the context of Hanoi'; and sharing lessons from the Vienna International AIDS Conference.

The seminars continue to be very successful, with between 40 and 150 participants at each session, and presenters often contacting the Technical Working Group to present their work at this forum. As recognised by the evaluation, the seminars are an excellent forum for in-depth discussion on a particular topic.

Partnership with Hanoi School of Public Health

The Hanoi School of Public Health has been providing logistical support to the Technical Working Group Secretariat since April 2008. This partnership is significant in ensuring the continuity and quality of the Technical Working Group meetings as well as contributing towards the expansion of Group activities.

Summary of activities of the Sub-Groups of the HIV Technical Working Group

The sub-groups continue to serve as a forum for information exchange, with in-depth

discussion and active collaboration on specific areas of interest. In 2010, a new Terms of Reference (TORs) document for the sub-groups was developed. Each group will work on developing individual TORs based on this generic document.

MSM Subgroup

The National MSM Working Group provides a platform for organisations to share information on policy, programmes, research, capacity building and resource mobilisation for MSM/HIV issues in Vietnam. The aim is to improve and expand MSM-focussed HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services for men who have sex with men (MSM) through strengthening multi-sectoral coordination and information-sharing.

In 2010, MSM sub-group meetings were held in January, April and August, and a fourth meeting is planned for November. Each meeting was attended by more than 40 participants from civil society, government, donors, international NGOs, research organisations and multi-lateral organisations.

Three new provincial MSM working groups were established - Thanh Hoa, Hai Duong and An Giang - in addition to six existing groups - Hanoi, Hai Phong, Khanh Hoa, Da Nang, Ho Chi Minh City and Can Tho. The purpose of these meetings was to improve coordination of the capacity building plan for MSM groups and interventions in Vietnam. The National MSM Working Group and the provincial working groups were engaged in the development and rollout of the toolkit 'Understanding and Reducing Stigma and Discrimination related to HIV and MSM', which is now being incorporated into advocacy and communications activities. During the development process, the toolkit received a lot of positive feedback. It has already been used as an effective advocacy tool in creating an enabling environment for HIV interventions for MSM.

Members of the National MSM Working Group have participated in the development by VAAC of 'Guidelines for HIV Prevention, Care, Support and Treatment for Men who have Sex with Men'. These aim to guide programme managers, staff and institutions in providing comprehensive package of services on HIV prevention, care, treatment and support for MSM. It is expected that the guidelines will be finalised and submitted to the Ministry of Health for approval by the end of 2010. The VAAC, provincial AIDS centres and the MSM community have already planned to roll out and implement the guidelines through a number of sensitisation and advocacy workshops.

Seven of the provincial MSM working groups received small grants from PEPFAR/UNAIDS to build the coordination capacity of the working groups and create an enabling environment for MSM-focused programmes. In addition, sensitisation and advocacy workshops have provided local leaders from government departments, mass organisations, MSM community and health service providers more information about HIV, STIs (sexually transmitted infections) and male-to-male sex. As a result, more support was generated at provincial level for HIV interventions for MSM.

Advocacy and project leadership capacities of MSM were strengthened through the working groups. Twenty-eight provincial MSM focal points and representatives from MSM self-help groups were trained on advocacy, including the development of provincial advocacy plans. Three MSM self-help groups were trained by HPI and UNAIDS on organisational

development, writing project proposals and managing programmes.

National MSM Working Group members also participated in the regional MSM and trans-gender network, Purple Sky. In March 2010, two representatives attended the annual planning meeting organised by the Purple Sky Network in Bangkok. In July, a representative from Vietnam attended the first Purple Sky Network Governing Board where members elected Chair and set priority to challenge stigma and discrimination among MSM and trans-gender people in Greater Mekong Sub region. A representative of the Purple Sky Network also attended one of the National MSM Working Group meetings to foster stronger knowledge and understanding of regional MSM efforts to expand HIV services.

The national and provincial MSM working groups are strengthening their governance mechanisms to more effectively coordinate the activities of their members and represent their constituents in national and regional meetings. The National Working Group is in the process of revising its terms of reference in order to more clearly state its vision, mission, objectives, governance structure, roles and responsibilities of key members, and the selection process for its leaders. In the last quarterly meeting of the calendar year, provincial MSM focal points are expected to approve the new Terms of Reference and begin adapting them for their provincial level work.

HIV and Communications Sub-Group

The HIV and Communications Sub-Group met in June and October. A special session was co-organised by the sub-group and UNICEF on creative communications in April and attended by sub-group members as well as others working in communications in Vietnam. The focus remained on HIV, behavior change communication and communication in a broad sense. Participants included representatives from international NGOS, local NGOS and donors. A new Chair, Ms. Le Thanh Huyen from Digisun, took over in December 2009, but following her departure from Digisun she was replaced in November 2010. The sub-group also has a new co-chair, Ms. Nguyen Nhu Mai Anh from Population Services International.

The meetings included presentations on: assessing condom promotion among clients of sex workers in Vietnam; TV spots on 'Discussions about sex and IDU' for the Ministry of Health's project on HIV prevention among youth; the 'Come Together' Communications Initiative, which aims to foster an ecosystem of change in Vietnam through young people's imagination, creativity and collaboration using media, art, citizen agency and social entrepreneurship; 'IEC (informative education and communication) tools produced for Van Kieu people in Quang Tri' to contribute to the HIV/AIDS risk transmission decrease among ethnic minority populations; and feedback on communications and media events attended by participants.

The April special session enabled group members to share experiences and discussion regarding the effectiveness of theatre, acting, role play and games to tackle issues from HIV/AIDS prevention, reproductive health and stigma reduction to other social and health issues.

The 05-06 Centre Collaboration Sub-Group

Following marked reductions in meetings in 2009, the 05-06 Centre Collaboration sub-group held no meetings in 2010.

Interest and participation in the group having declined, it was decided at the October meeting of sub-group Chairs, chaired by Simon Baldwin (HIV TWG Chair), that the 05-06 Centre Collaboration sub-group should be disbanded. It was further decided that the Harm Reduction sub-group drug use and HIV should take over discussions regarding 06 Centres, while a new group on sex work (see below) would be established, and be the forum for discussion of 05 Centres.

Harm Reduction Sub-Group

During the period since the last report, the Harm Reduction Sub-Group has organised two meetings.

The first, on December 15, 2009, was organised in collaboration with the 05-06 Centre Collaboration Sub-Group. Twenty-eight participants from over 20 organisations attended the meeting on 'Improving Vietnam's Legal and Policy Framework on HIV and Drug Use' and discussed:

- Opportunities and strategy regarding the legal framework.
- The active and meaningful involvement of drug users in HR policy development and the development of self-help groups among drug users.
- The LEHRN project investigating the relationship between law enforcement and harm reduction in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

The second meeting, on 'How can we scale up IDU's access to syringes and needles?', took place on April 20, 2010, with 20 participants. They listened to presentations on 'FHI experiences in IDU interventions', 'The use of pharmacy vouchers to expand injecting drug users' access to syringes and needles: Experience from a cross-border HIV prevention project in Vietnam and China', and 'IDU Harm reduction intervention models'.

The Harm Reduction Sub-Group is currently discussing nominations for its future Chair, as well as the future inclusion of 06 Centres and the renaming of the sub-group to increase the scope of discussion and membership (suggestion: Drug use and HIV).

Greater Involvement of People with AIDS (GIPA) Sub-Group

Bi-monthly meetings were organised to share and update activities carried out by self-help groups, support groups and other most-at-risk-populations (MARPs). The meetings provided opportunities for organisations and projects responding to HIV to share their activities in supporting groups and people living with HIV (PLHIV) and their sub-grants for groups of PLHIV. Several meetings including training provided by VSO (Voluntary Service Overseas) volunteers on specific issues, including resource mobilisation and vision and strategy development for groups.

At the same time, it became clear that the needs of PLHIV have changed and that the GIPA Sub-Group does not meet the practical needs of self-help groups. The majority of group members do not have stable jobs and face economic difficulties, while the GIPA Sub-Group meetings did not cover sufficiently diverse topics. The sub-group also lacked the financial resources to enable members from other provinces and provincial networks outside Hanoi to attend meetings, and had no full time staff committed to the sub-group activities. For these

reasons, the GIPA Sub-Group did not attract active participation from group members.

In order to address these challenges, a small number of sub-group members met and reached an agreement to undertake the following:

- Nominate and elect a new chair and co-chair, who are capable, well experienced and committed to leading the sub-group and who will be supported by a small group of core sub-group members.
- Conduct an assessment of the GIPA Sub-Group members and potential members to determine how best to arrange interesting and beneficial meetings.
- Develop new Terms of Reference for the GIPA Sub-Group, based on the results of the assessment.

These proposed actions will be tabled and discussed at the next meeting in November.

Care and Treatment Sub-Group

In part due to discussions on the nature of the subject and the focus of the group, and to the departure from Vietnam of its Chair, the Care and Treatment Sub-Group lost momentum in 2010, with no meetings held.

In November, Marcelo Fernandez from the Harvard Medical School AIDS Initiative in Vietnam took over as Chair of the sub-group, with plans for the next meeting to take place in January 2011 and a re-energising of members.

Gender and Sexuality Sub-Group

The Gender and Sexuality Sub-Group recognises that the HIV epidemic cannot be adequately addressed unless underlying cultural and social issues are tackled, such as gender inequality and the stigma and discrimination faced by sexual minorities. To understand these factors it is necessary to draw upon a range of approaches that include cultural studies, anthropology and economics. For this reason, the Gender and Sexuality Sub-Group encompasses a broad range of areas that cross-cut many of the other HIV TWG sub-group areas.

The Gender and Sexuality Sub-Group met four times over the past year, tackling subjects including the impact of migration upon sexual practices, the relationship between gender-based violence and HIV and the impact of the internet on addressing the needs of MSM. The group is regularly attended by over 30 regular members from a variety of groups, NGOs and international organisations.

In the next year the sub-group will continue to look at a wide variety of topics related to gender and sexuality, including alternative sexualities (e.g. trans-gender), conceptions of masculinity and HIV and sex work.

A mapping exercise is also planned, to identify the work being undertaken in this area and to look at ways the group can share its expertise with other sub-groups and organizations.

Children and HIV Sub-Group

The Children and HIV Sub-Group met quarterly in 2010. It continued to be chaired by Dr Nguyen Trong An, Deputy Director of the Children's Department of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), and co-chaired by an NGO representative. The sub-group meetings had fairly consistent participation from 10 to 20 NGOs working on issues related to children and HIV and AIDS. Meetings tended to include a topic of common interest as well as time to share updates among organisations. The meetings served as information and technical guidance sharing and coordination forums. In addition, the leadership of Dr An of MOLISA ensured coordination between NGOs and the National Plan of Action on Children and HIV and AIDS and contributions from organisations to emerging policy issues and directions.

Meeting topics included: monitoring and evaluation methods used in children's programming, including CRS's Child Well-Being Tool and a qualitative assessment of migrant and affected children's needs; directions and innovations in community-based alternative care, including foster care policy and programming by HealthRight International and day care programming for affected children; and nutrition and hunger assessment and programme tools for infected children by Family Health International.

The sub-group experienced challenges related to including colleagues from Ho Chi Minh City and ensuring that smaller organisations are able to participate. To address these challenges, the sub-group organised the spring meeting in Ho Chi Minh City for the first time, and ensured translation for both English and Vietnamese-speaking participants.

Topics for 2011 include contributions to national standards of quality of care for HIV-affected children, psychosocial support services for affected children and stigma reduction in the education sector. The sub-group will also participate in a national conference on children and HIV/AIDS being organised by MOLISA.

Ho Chi Minh City HIV Technical Working Group

The Ho Chi Minh City HIV Technical Working Group (HCMC HIV TWG) is the only geographically based sub-group in the Technical Working Group. It provides a platform where HIV programme implementers, advocates and other stakeholders in southern Vietnam can coordinate, share resources, identify gaps and build partnerships. It provides geographic representation and perspective to the HIV TWG in Hanoi. In January a new Chair, Ms Tran Thi Ngoc Tram, HIV Coordinator at ActionAid Vietnam, was elected, to be supported by two volunteer coordinators.

In 2010, meetings were held in January, April, June and September with 15-35 participants attending. Participants came from a variety of international and local NGOs, the UN, PLHIV self-help groups, community and faith-based groups and educational institutions.

The meetings included a session providing guidance and instruction on how to carry out research for a literature review to be incorporated into evidence-based HIV/AIDS programmes, sharing experience on referral systems between clinics and community-based care services in Ho Chi Minh City.

In the coming year, the HCMC HIV TWG will continue to serve as a forum for information sharing, capacity building and coordination among organisations working in southern

Vietnam. The 2010 meetings included discussion on how to improve the sub-group, for example through supplementary information-sharing meetings, more relevant topics and widening the group's participation and remit to include advocacy, research, capacity building and events.

Sex Work Sub-Group

As already noted, it was decided at the October meeting of sub-group Chairs that a new group on sex work would be established, since sex workers and their clients are among key populations at risk in Vietnam and there is currently no structure under the auspices of the Technical Working Group to discuss these issues in detail. The 05 Centres will be discussed within this group. The Technical Working Group Chairs and Secretariat are currently identifying a Chair and Co-Chair for the sub-group.

Plans for 2011

The Technical Working Group will continue to serve as a platform for exchange of information and networking among the full range of organisations working on HIV in Vietnam. It will focus on maintaining a balance between quality discussion and information sharing.

In addition, the Technical Working Group will work on addressing those issues identified by the evaluation, to ensure that it remains relevant and useful for participants. Further discussion will be required to establish how the Technical Working Group Chairs, secretariat and participants can increase access to information for all members, increase and broaden participation and make the Technical Working Group meetings more action-oriented.

Ho Chi Minh City INGO Discussion Group

<http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/hcmcwg>

Background

For the past seven years, the HCMC INGO Discussion Group (formerly the INGO Child Discussion Group) has been functioning as a forum for representatives and staff from foreign non-governmental organisations that have an office and are operating in Ho Chi Minh City or in the southern provinces. Meetings on specific topics and issues of interest to foreign NGOs are held on a quarterly basis at the premises of the HCMC Union of Friendship Organisations (HUFO). Occasionally, speakers and guests from Government agencies, donors and partner organisations are invited to join in the meetings.

Chair and Core Group

A core group of five to six INGO representatives is responsible for organising the meetings and other activities. They are joined by the chairs or co-chairs of the existing four thematic working groups: Administration and Finance, Child Rights, Disability and HIV/AIDS. Participation in the core team depends on willingness to stand for at least one year and to contribute actively to the planning of the activities of the HCMC INGO Discussion Group.

Currently, the core group is composed of the representatives of four foreign NGOs: Education for Development, Loreto Viet Nam – Australia Programme, Saigon Children’s Charity and Vietnam Plus. Education for Development serves as coordinating agency.

Purpose and objectives

The HCMC INGO Discussion Group provides a forum for the sharing of information, knowledge and experience. Its aim is to act as an entry point for more concrete forms of coordination or collaboration in areas such as research, training, as well as advocacy and policy dialogue.

Activities in 2010

Networking

Organisation of quarterly meetings

- At the first quarterly meeting, in January 2010, the HCMC INGO Discussion Group welcomed the Managing Co-Director of the VUFO-NGO Resource Centre, Marko Lovrekovic, who provided an update on the activities of the Resource Centre as well as on legal issues related to the operation of foreign NGOs in Vietnam.
- At the second quarterly meeting, in April 2010, the group discussed the future role of foreign NGOs and foreign NGO disengagement in Vietnam, based on presentations by Terre des hommes – Lausanne and Viet Nam Plus.
- At the third quarterly meeting, in July 2010, the group looked at issues related to fundraising in Vietnam, including presentations by Saigon Children’s Charity, Operation Smile, and Loreto Viet Nam – Australia Programme.

- At the fourth quarterly meeting, in October 2010, there was a large attendance as the group took up the topic of gender, looking at it from different angles, based on presentations by Room to Read, Pacific Links and Thien Chi (a local association supported by Viet Nam Plus).
- Last but not least, the HCMC INGO Discussion Group, assisted by HUFO, facilitated a meeting earlier in the year, on 25 March 2010, with the President of the Vietnam Union of Friendship Organisations and the Director General of the People's Aid Coordinating Committee. This was an excellent opportunity to look at issues such as the socio-economic situation in Vietnam, the socio-economic development plan of the Government, and the present and future role of foreign NGOs in the country.

Organisation of monthly lunch gatherings

These monthly lunch gatherings provide a social platform for foreign NGO representatives and any other persons interested in the NGO community and NGO work in Ho Chi Minh City.

Facilitation of thematic working groups

Four thematic working groups have been set up and are functioning: HCMC Admin and Finance Working Group, HCMC Child Rights Working Group, HCMC Disability Working Group, and HCMC HIV/AIDS Technical Working Group. For detailed information on the thematic working groups, refer to the respective sections below.

Plans for 2011

- Maintain the dynamic of the HCMC INGO Discussion Group for information sharing and collective learning as well as for joint advocacy and policy dialogue activities.
- Support the thematic working groups and ensure their smooth functioning.
- Continue the informal lunch gatherings for networking and information sharing purposes.

Practical and Contact Details

The quarterly meetings of the HCMC INGO Discussion Group are held every third Friday morning of the first month of the quarter at the premises of the HCMC Union of Friendship Organisations, 31 Le Duan, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City.

The monthly lunch gatherings are held every first Friday in the calendar month at the Catering and Hostelry School for disadvantaged children, 153 Xo Viet Nghe Tinh, District Binh Thanh, Ho Chi Minh City.

The Coordinating Agency for the HCMC INGO Discussion Group is:

Education for Development (EFD)
 Ms. Kirsten Theuns, Country Coordinator
 305/30 Le Van Sy Street, Ward 1, Tan Binh District
 Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
 Telephone: (+84-8) 3991 6033
 Email: kirstenefd@yahoo.com

Thematic Working Groups

1. HCMC Admin and Finance Working Group

<http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/content/hcmc-ingo-admin-working-group>

Background

A survey conducted by the HCMC INGO Discussion Group in 2008 identified the need to set up a thematic group on issues related to administrative and finance procedures. The HCMC Union of Friendship Organisations encouraged this initiative and underlined the importance of having a working group where finance and administration officers could meet on a regularly basis and where HUFO representatives could come and share information on regulatory and administrative issues that apply to foreign NGOs. The HCMC Admin and Finance Working Group was formally established at the first meeting held in 2009. On this occasion, the participants appointed co-chairs and decided to review the draft Terms of Reference.

Purpose and objectives

The overall purpose of the HCMC Admin and Finance WG is to share information about government policies, regulations and other administrative and financial issues related to the operation of foreign NGOs in Vietnam. The rationale is that this group would comprise foreign NGOs based in Ho Chi Minh City and the southern part of Vietnam, which do not have the resources and opportunities to contribute to or join the meetings of the Hanoi-based Admin Working Group, and give them a means to meet and share experiences and practice on issues concerning administration, finance and human resources.

The main objectives are to:

- Increase access to and sharing of information and resources to improve practice and operation;
- Communicate with the Hanoi-based Administrators Working Group and contribute on topics of common interest.

Activities in 2010

In 2010 the Admin and Finance WG was chaired by Handicap International and the Christina Noble Children's Foundation and co-chaired by HUFO. Due to some start up problems, just one meeting was held in 2010, on the topic of Personal Income Tax, in September. Experts from the Tax Department were invited to explain the new developments. More than 30 people from international NGOs and local NGOs participated in the meeting. Also, a new co-chair was appointed and a moderator was assigned to manage the web page of the group.

Plans for 2011

The members of the HCMC Admin and Finance WG plan to invite, according to the needs and interests of its members, external speakers from HCMC authorities such as FOSCO (Service Company to Foreign Missions), the Tax Department and DOLISA (Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs). One topic on the agenda for a next meeting will be the law on fundraising in Vietnam.

Practical and contact details

Chairs:

Ngô Thị Thùy
Handicap International
Email: deputy.director@vietnam.handicap.be
Nguyễn Hữu Nghĩa
Christina Noble Children's Foundation
Email: huunghia@cncfvn.com.vn

Moderator:

Nguyễn Thanh Liêm
Handicap International
Email address: nguyenthanhliem85@yahoo.com

Meeting dates: The date of each meeting is announced through the mailing list.

Minutes: The minutes of the Admin and Finance WG can be found on the VUFO-NGO Resource Centre website.

Working languages: Vietnamese and English are both working languages of the HCMC Admin and Finance WG. However, as the participants in this group are mainly local administration and finance officers, the meetings are mostly conducted in Vietnamese.

2. HCMC Child Rights Working Group

<http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/?q=content/hcmc-child-rights-working-group>

Background

The HCMC Child Rights Working Group (HCMC Child Rights WG) is an active and enthusiastic group of international NGOs, Vietnamese organisations and associations and other stakeholders, and was set up in 2008, first meeting on May 15 that year. It is a group of people who have chosen to get together to share ideas and opportunities as well as concerns and struggles in relation to anything affecting children. The group intends to be action-oriented.

The Terms of Reference for the HCMC Child Rights WG were inspired by the Child Rights WG in Hanoi, in order to provide for some level of consistency; and the HCMC Child Rights WG coordinates and works closely with the colleagues in the Child Rights WG in Hanoi.

The HCMC Child Rights WG aims to ensure a forum for the collective expression of views of organisations that operate additionally or exclusively in the southern part of Vietnam. In addition, the group takes position and comments – individually or collectively – on documents or issues of local and national importance.

Purpose and objectives

The overall purpose of the HCMC Child Rights WG is to enhance communication and coordination between child-focused organisations, to share learning between various actors

working to support Vietnamese society in promoting the rights of the child, and to effectively address and respond to issues related to child care and protection.

The key objectives are:

- To share practical experiences, successes and lessons learned for the mutual benefit of organisations and associations involved.
- To facilitate networking among child focused organisations and associations, and to serve as a focal point in Ho Chi Minh City for consultation, policy dialogue and common statements.
- To liaise with the Child Rights WG in Hanoi in contributing towards a national focal point.
- To organise joint activities related to the rights of the child.
- To collaborate in responding to opportunities for input on various documents, government policies and laws as well as to support the implementation of relevant government programmes.

For more details, refer to the Terms of Reference for the HCMC Child Rights WG on the website of the VUFO-NGO Resource Centre in Hanoi at: www.ngocentre.org.vn.

Activities in 2010

The core issue in 2010 remained the same as in 2009: Keeping children safe within our own organisations, with the aim of developing and elaborating child protection policies at the level of each member organisation. The HCMC Child Rights WG discussed and adopted common principles of child protection and looked at existing mechanisms for reporting concerns. It also learned about the development of practical responses to the need for child care and protection, which will lead to the establishment of child protection systems. These discussions are also being coordinated and exchanged with the Child Rights WG in Hanoi.

Members of the HCMC Child Rights WG contributed further to the NGO Complementary Report to the Vietnamese State Report on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Vietnam in the period 2002-2007. And they participated in a discussion with officials from different ministries and agencies at national level, which was organised in Hanoi by the Child Care and Protection Department of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs.

Plans for 2011

The HCMC Child Rights WG is task-focused and, as such, it will continue to focus on topics that are crucial to and attract a wide spectrum of members. 2011 will continue to see a focus on child protection policy, but other issues that might be taken up include: education, health care, and trafficking. This will be discussed and agreed before the end of 2010 and the results posted on the VUFO-NGO Resource Centre website.

In addition, the HCMC Child Rights WG will consider joint projects, training, research and activities of mutual interest on all issues related to ensuring the best possible future for children in Vietnam.

Practical and contact details

Chairs: As of November 2010, Saigon Children’s Charity remains the co-chair of the HCMC Child Rights WG. Terre des hommes Foundation – Lausanne, as out-going co-chair, intends to hand over to a local association, but this new co-chair has not yet been identified.

Participation: In accordance with the VUFO-NGO Resource Centre working group guidelines, the group welcomes attendance from anyone with an interest in the theme. Meetings are open to representatives and relevant staff of INGOs, Vietnamese organisations and associations, international and bilateral donor agencies and representatives of government institutions.

Frequency: The group aims to meet every two months. The date and venue of each meeting is posted on the VUFO-NGO Resource Centre website and announced through the mailing list (hcmc_crwg@googlegroups.com).

Venue: The HCMC Child Rights WG meets at the premises of the HCMC Child Welfare Foundation, 85/65 Pham Viet Chanh, Ward 19, District Binh Thanh, Ho Chi Minh City. However, meetings may occasionally be held elsewhere.

Working languages: Vietnamese and English are both working languages for the group. The HCMC Child Rights WG endeavours to make the meetings as accessible as possible for both English and Vietnamese speakers, with communication and translation from English to Vietnamese and Vietnamese to English.

3. HCMC Disability Working Group

<http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/content/hcmc-disability-working-group>

Background

The HCMC Disability Working Group is managed by a core group of six international NGOs who take responsibility for coordinating the annual work plan and day-to-day agenda of the group. The core group’s members are all volunteers and currently include members from Disabled Peoples Organisations and local and foreign NGOs.

Attendance is open to any person or organisation that has an interest in supporting people with disabilities (PWD).

Purpose and objectives

The HCMC Disability Working Group seeks to address disability issues through joint working, information and resource exchange, events, training and workshops, guest speakers and the development of positive partnerships.

Activities in 2010

Meetings have centred on understanding the work of each of the members, identifying areas for collaboration and support. Various members have taken the lead for topics at meetings, which have allowed the group to share in depth information about projects and key areas of

work. A range of resources have been shared and circulated.

Meetings have been held this year covering a range of topics, including protecting children from abuse, employment for people with disabilities and new and existing projects being developed, including the Congenital Difference project (Handicap International), the Club House for people with disabilities (DRD, or Disability Research and Capacity Development Centre), Village Chance (Lang May Man), Maison Chance and the new Vocational Training campus of 'Sunrise Special School' – Tan Phu (Loreto).

In August 2010 the HCMC Disability WG Core Group members agreed to carry out a Needs Assessment of Disability-focussed organisations based in Ho Chi Minh City and environs.

The purpose was to:

- Understand the needs of organisations and to look at how the HCMC Disability WG can support those needs.
- Develop a comprehensive database of organisations working in the field of disability
- Increase the engagement of local stakeholders
- Review the terms of reference for the HCMC Disability WG based on the information gained in the needs assessment.

A database was developed and approximately 200 questionnaires were sent out. One hundred and eleven were identified as having a known interest in disability. Responses were received from 33 organisations.

Summary of key emerging facts from survey:

- Highest group to respond: Government organisations
- Main area of activity: education
- Main type of disability: developmental delay
- Main beneficiaries: children
- Twenty three respondents are interested in knowing more or attending HCMC Disability WG meetings
- Nine are attending other disability groups and forums
- Top topics by level of interest: employment, inclusive education, behaviour management
- Comments added: need for accommodation, resources, networking and participation of people with disabilities.

A full report and analysis of the responses is currently being undertaken. The report will be used to formulate a detailed plan of work for 2011 and posted on the VUFO-NGO Resource Centre website.

Plans for 2011

- To increase the engagement of local stakeholders and people with disabilities in the activities of the HCMC Disability WG through needs-based training/workshops and dual-language meetings (Vietnamese and English)

- To increase membership of the HCMC Disability WG core group
- To focus on the provision of workshops and training to cover identified topics
- To try to address specific needs of stakeholders by supporting the development of partnerships

Practical and contact details

Chair: The Chair is DRD (Disability Research and Capacity Development Centre).

Participation: In accordance with the VUFO-NGO Resource Centre's working group guidelines, attendance at the meeting is open to representatives and relevant staff of all actors working to support people living with disabilities. This can include international and donor organisations, as well as representatives of Vietnamese government and non-government local organisations. Most importantly, attendance should include representatives of Vietnamese groups of people living with disabilities.

Meetings for 2011 and location: the HCMC Disability WG will hold meetings every two months, and these are open to all. The dates and location will be notified through the HCMC Disability WG mailing list (email: chinh@saigonchildren.com to have your name or organisation added) and the HCMC-INGO Discussion Group mailing list. The dates for events during 2011 will be circulated via the HCMC Disability WG mailing list and posted on the VUFO-NGO Resource Centre website.

Working languages: The minutes, reports and events will have English and Vietnamese translations. The meetings are primarily in English but the group is committed to providing Vietnamese language translation where possible.

4. HCMC HIV/AIDS Technical Working Group

<http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/content/hcmc-hiv-aids-working-group>

Background

The HCMC HIV/AIDS Technical Working Group was established in May 2008. It was formed in response to a survey conducted by the HCMC INGO Discussion Group, which recognised the need to strengthen, coordinate and share skills and resources between HIV programme implementers and advocates in the southern part of Vietnam. The underlying principle of the formation of the group was to join the HIV/AIDS Technical Working Group based in Hanoi, so that Southern stakeholders and beneficiaries who do not have the resources to join meetings in Hanoi will be able to coordinate with others working in the HIV/AIDS field.

Purpose and objectives

The purpose of the Ho Chi Minh City-based HIV/AIDS Technical Working Group (HCMC HIV/AIDS TWG) is to strengthen the implementation of HIV programmes in the southern part of Vietnam through greater coordination and sharing among local HIV programme implementers, policy makers, advocates, community-based organisations and faith-based groups.

Activities in 2010

In 2010, meetings were held in April, June and September and December with 15 to 25 participants attending each. Participants came from a variety of international and local NGOs, the UN, PLHIV (people living with HIV) self-help groups, community-based groups and educational institutions. The group has also participated in the HIV-AIDS TWG and two Chairs' meetings held in Hanoi.

In 2010 the meeting themes were:

- April - Develop plan for 2010 and literature review
- June - Referral system between clinics and community-based organisations (CBOs)
- September - Child HIV disclosure
- December (planning) - Baseline survey skills

Supplemental meetings held were:

- April - Advocacy basic knowledge: presentation by ActionAid Vietnam
- May - Promoting Community-Based Care for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (PCC-OVC): presentation by Health for Rights

Additional information:

- HUFO provided a meeting room for the HCMC HIV/AIDS TWG meetings
- Volunteer coordinators were willing and available to support the meetings
- PAC (Provincial AIDS Committee in Hoc Chi Minh City), WWO (Worldwide Orphans Foundation), UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), AED (Academy for Educational Development), CARE International and ActionAid Vietnam were key organisations supporting the HCMC HIV TWG meetings.

Plans for 2011

- The HCMC HIV/AIDS TWG will continue to serve as a forum for information sharing, capacity building and coordination among organisations working in Southern Vietnam
- It will decide on topics for the next meeting at each meeting
- It will hold quarterly meetings, in March, June, September and December
- It will select a core group and new chairs

Practical and contact details

Chair: ActionAid Vietnam is the current Chair and Tinh Than Network (AIDS Programme) is the current local Vice-Chair.

Frequency and Venue: The HCMC HIV/AIDS TWG meets every three months at the HCMC Union of Friendship Organisations (HUFO). Meeting dates are notified via the mailing list.

Working languages: Meetings are conducted partly in English and partly in Vietnamese. We strive to provide translation throughout the meetings to accommodate all members.

Landmines Working Group

<http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/landmineswg>

Background

The Landmines Working Group (LWG) was established in 1996 by NGO representatives Suzanne Lecht of Oxfam Hong Kong, and Chuck Searcy of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVAf). A few other NGOs who participated at the beginning included Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and Peace Trees Viet Nam (PTVN). The aim was to share information about the problem of landmines and UXO (unexploded ordnance) in Vietnam, focusing on the issue primarily in the context of humanitarian needs, socio-economic development, and poverty issues. At the time no international organisations were involved in actual clearance activities, which began in 1996 with a tree-planting project launched by PTVN, followed by some mine-risk education efforts and the 1997 launch of a demining team funded by the German organisation SODI (Solidarity Service International). Later CPI (Clear Path International), MAG (Mines Advisory Group), and other NGOs expanded risk education, survivor assistance, and other initiatives including some clearance activities approved by the provincial government in Quang Tri Province, as authorised by the Prime Minister. Today the Landmines Working Group is made up of about 20 active participants who attend meetings which are held two or three times a year. Another 90 or so organisations and individuals are on the LWG mailing list.

Chair and Core Group

The positions of Chair and Co-Chair are reviewed every year and members select representatives for these positions. The current Co-Chairs are Mr. Chuck Searcy of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) and Ms. Nguyen Thi Thanh Hong of the Association for Empowerment for Persons with Disability (AEPD), formerly the Landmine Survivor Network/Survivor Corps.

Goals and objectives

The Landmines Working Group is dedicated to promoting collaboration among international NGOs and other stakeholders working in the various fields of mine action by:

- Facilitating communication among mine action organisations to encourage information sharing, cooperation, and effective mutual efforts among Working Group members in support of programme activities;
- Disseminating and exchanging information within the international NGO sector, donors and embassies, local partners, and relevant Vietnamese authorities;
- Providing a forum to discuss programme issues, and to raise the profile of mine action in Vietnam;
- Serving as a point of reference for interested parties seeking information and advice on mine action programmes and activities in Vietnam;
- Collaborating and sharing technical expertise and experiences among Working Group members;

- Promoting events such as dedication ceremonies, meetings, seminars, and training workshops amongst Working Group members and others where appropriate.
- Engaging in some public advocacy initiatives where appropriate, such as international treaties which might result in new resources and opportunities for Vietnam to help resolve the problem of landmines and UXO (unexploded ordnance).

Key Activities in 2010

Landmines Working Group meeting on April 16, 2010: The meeting was attended by 15 Working Group members. AEPD announced that the Irish Embassy would fund a documentary film on cluster munitions issues to encourage the Vietnamese Government to sign and ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM, sometimes referred to as the Oslo Treaty). Quang Tri's Project RENEW and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) discussed a database project being developed with VBMAC (Vietnam Bomb and Mine Action Centre), and SODI announced that they are also working with RENEW to integrate the database into SODI's work. It was noted that the database, including updates on Mine Risk Education, Victim Assistance, and Clearance, is open to any organisation to use. The National Mine Action Plan was discussed since it was awaiting Government approval. A concern was expressed that the NGO community had received no official information about the plan. To help remedy this communications problem, the group agreed to invite representatives of the Vietnamese Government to attend Working Group meetings to try to strengthen collaboration between the Government and the NGO community. Chuck Searcy from Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund was nominated and elected to be the new Landmine Working Group Chairperson, and it was decided that Survivor Corps would continue as Co-Chair of the group. A schedule of two meetings a year for the Working Group was agreed upon, in April and September, and that any member could request a meeting at any time if an issue needed to be discussed. The VUFO-NGO Resource Centre informed members that it now has the capacity to upload large documents and materials onto the website, which is a major new tool and significant asset for Working Group members and interested observers. Updates on three international conventions – the Mine Ban Treaty, the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – were presented by LSN.

May 2010 visit by UNDP and CMC representatives: The visit brought Working Group members and government officials together to focus on the Cluster Munitions Treaty. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) representatives Sara M. Sekkenes from Geneva and Maya Lindberg Brink from New York were joined by Thomas Nash, Coordinator of the Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC), and Satnam Singh, Diplomatic Advisor to the CMC and a former Indian Ambassador as well as former military officer and a landmine survivor. The delegation met with government officials and leading representatives of Vietnamese agencies. They discussed the advantages for Vietnam if the Government would sign the treaty prior to the November 12 implementation meeting in Lao People's Democratic Republic.

June 2010: The Landmines Working Group submitted suggested wording about Mine Action to be included in the Vietnamese Government's 10-year Social Economic Development Strategy (SEDS) and five-year Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP 2011-2015).

July 2010: A statement was issued to Vietnamese and foreign media announcing Working Group members' support for the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which entered into force on August 1, 2010.

Working Group meeting September 17, 2010: The meeting was hosted by Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF), with 19 participants attending. Representing VBMAC and MOLISA (Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs), Sr. Col. Duong Van Nhan updated the group on the establishment and development of the Vietnam Bomb and Mine Action Center (VBMAC), launched in February 2009. Nhan reviewed the National Mine Action Plan approved by the Prime Minister on April 21, 2010, and said the next step would be to establish a National Steering Committee but no decision had been made about the timing. VBMAC has received US\$1.56 million from the Japanese Government to implement clearance activities in Quang Tri Province. VBMAC is cooperating with NPA to create a national database at a cost of \$491,000, to build management capacity within VBMAC. They are also in discussions with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) and United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS).

Mr. Nguyen Kim Phuong of MOLISA's Department of International Relations reported that the National Mine Action Plan from 2010 to 2025 sets out six major efforts to be implemented:

- Surveying and mapping contaminated areas
- Developing national mine action standards
- Building capacity for national database and centre management
- Clearance
- Mine Risk Education
- Supporting victim assistance and community reintegration, and post-clearance development

Preparation for First Meeting of States Parties (IMSP) in Laos: This involved a number of Landmines Working Group members who would be attending in November, 2010, including VVAF, MAG, VVMF / RENEW, NPA, SODI, and AEPD.

Microfinance Working Group

<http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/microfinance>

Background

The Vietnam Microfinance Working Group (the Microfinance Working Group) was founded to create a forum for microfinance practitioners to share experiences with each other, come together to debate relevant issues, and speak to policy makers with a unified voice. Founded in 2004 as an informal organisation under the auspices of the VUFO-NGO Resource Centre, according to the Working Group Guidelines approved by the Resource Centre Steering Committee in April 2003, the the Microfinance Working Group is open to all individuals and organisations interested in microfinance in Vietnam.

Goals and Objectives

The overall goal of the Microfinance Working Group is to enhance the impact of microfinance on poverty alleviation by promoting quality and sustainability of microfinance in Vietnam, both in the practice of institutions and in an improved enabling environment.

Its objectives are:

- To encourage policy dialogue across relevant stakeholder organisations in order to facilitate the development of a favorable enabling environment and;
- To promote sustainable microfinance among practitioners by disseminating information, sharing lessons learned and achieving consensus on best practices for microfinance in Vietnam.
- To identify and develop training and technical resources to be used in improving quality of MFIs, particularly in accounting systems.

Working mechanism

The Microfinance Working Group is led by a voluntary Steering Committee of nine representatives of MFIs, local NGOs, international NGOs, and international organisations who were elected at the Annual Meeting of the Working Group. The Steering Committee meets frequently to discuss all issues of common concern and is responsible for implementing Working Group strategies, activities and administration. At the annual conference of the Microfinance Working Group , members elect the Steering Committee. The role of Chair is currently being filled by TYM Fund. The two Vice-Presidents are M&D and Binh Minh CDC.

It has more than 160 members from almost 80 organisations. Among them 40 organisations regularly participate in the Microfinance Working Group 's meeting and activities.

Activities in 2010

The Microfinance Working Group 's action plan in 2010 focussed on:

- Continuing to organise activities that attract the participation of organisations and

individuals to help build the Working Group into a strong organisation representing the Vietnamese microfinance sector.

- Implementing follow-up activities to achieve the objectives of the five-year strategy plan of the Working Group (2008–2013).
- Consolidating the organisation's structure, intensifying administration and management to make the Working Group's activities more effective and maintaining its activities effectively and efficiently to gradually meet the demands and aspirations of members.
- Improving capacity building for members through organising training courses; conferences, workshops and other activities and increasing the exchange of information and experiences between organisations.

Major achievements in the first three quarters of 2010 included:

- Activities for exploiting resource and mobilising funding sources
 - The Working Group is organising the annual Citi Micro-Entrepreneurs Award for December 2010, in cooperation with the State Bank of Vietnam (SBV) after organising the awards for the previous three years. The Citi Foundation will continue to provide funds for the Award.
 - The Working Group will assist with activities that aim to build a cooperation plan between organisations from 2010 to 2012.
- Providing services:
 - The capacity and knowledge of 82 participants from 60 member organisations were built capacity through trainings and workshops conducted by the Microfinance Working Group during the first quarter of 2010.
 - The Working Group cooperated with ADA-Luxembourg (Appui au Developpement Autonome - Luxembourg) to organise a workshop on financial analysis and activities indicators in Hanoi in March 2010, attended by 14 participants from eight microfinance organisations.
 - The Working Group cooperated with PlaNet Finance on a workshop in March that introduced PlaNet Finance's projects for the next three years in Vietnam (the Microfinance Working Group), Laos and the Philippines. Twenty-six participants from 21 microfinance organisations in Vietnam participated in the training course.
 - To support Microfinance Working Group members in developing a business plan to meet the requirement of Decrees 28 and 165 for licensed MFIs, in September the Working Group cooperated with the Banking Academy to conduct a training course, Business Planning for MFIs. Thirty-one participants from 19 microfinance organisations from southern, central and northern Vietnam studied together for three days.
 - The Working Group cooperated with SBV on a workshop in support of a project sponsored by ADB for Vietnam that assists organisations aiming to become microfinance institutions according to Decrees 28 and 165. The workshop was an opportunity for participants and representatives of Ministries, industries and officers of the banking system to better understand the activities of the Working Group and the microfinance sector in Vietnam.
 - The Working Group also helped members learn about Decrees 28 and 165 by organising a training course titled Introducing Legal framework for MFIs in

Vietnam in May. Twenty-five participants from 20 organisations participated in the course and heard two lecturers, Ms. Quach Tuong Vi and Ms. Ha Bich Thuy from the State Bank of Viet Nam.

- Maintaining and developing relationships with sponsors and partners
 - The Working Group often exchanges information with the Ford Foundation, ADA, CORDAID, PlaNet Finance, SEEP, FDC/Banking with the Poor and ADB.
 - The Working Group supported the advisory board of ADA to update information about microfinance organisations relating to ADA's research report and contributed to the draft report.
 - The Working Group worked with AFD about supporting activities.

Other Activities

To assist in more comprehensive understanding of the important role of microfinance in eliminating hunger and poverty and developing social economy:

- Vietnam Microfinance Bulletin 15, with the topic of 'Developing a sustainable microfinance in Vietnam' was published and distributed.
- The Working Group's website was renovated.
- The Group is preparing for the second National Workshop on Vietnam Microfinance which will be held on December 14, 2010.

Plans for 2011

- Help create a favourable policy environment to develop the industry
 - Take part in contributing ideas with SBV and other ministries concerned in drafting process and policy development related to Microfinance industry, particularly for drafting government project 'Develop Microfinance Industry to 2010'.
 - Organize public events to improve awareness about microfinance, such as workshops, seminars, the Citi Micro-Entrepreneurs Award and training courses.
- Improve the approach of members to business development services:
 - Understand the needs of members about the improving capacity training courses to establish a framework; which contribute to Training Strategy.
 - Take part in seminars and international workshops such as the Asian Microfinance Forum and the SEEP Asian Network Summit.
- Strive to become the focal point and information provider for Microfinance industry in Vietnam.
 - Continue to maintain updated information about member organisations.
 - Organise training courses about report formats and organisation operations.
 - Publish the 16th Vietnam Microfinance Bulletin

Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene Working Group

<http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/node/138>

Background

The VUFO-NGO Resource Centre Water Supply and Sanitation Working Group (WSSWG) was established in 2003 and provides a forum for the many NGOs and other stakeholders in the water and sanitation sector in Vietnam.

Its main purpose is to meet, discuss, and learn about technical, policy, and other issues relevant to water and sanitation work. In 2010, the working group embraced hygiene as one of the main undertakings, and changed its name to the Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene Working Group (WASH-WG).

Formal and informal dialogues between the Working Group, government and donors have been initiated over the past year through the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Partnership (RWSSP). This process will be intensified and strengthened through the revitalised Working Group engaging directly with relevant government branches at all levels, the wider donor community and the private sector, with shared voices forming an advocacy alliance in the spirit of harmonisation and alignment.

Building on these ongoing interactions with government and donors, and recognising the important contribution of NGOs and civil society organisations to achieving the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals and national targets for WASH, especially for sanitation, the Working Group intends to enter into a more intensified and focused dialogue with all stakeholders. This two-way dialogue will centre on the following key themes:

- improve service delivery
- help citizens hold government and donor agencies to account
- increase advocacy targeted at decision makers in the sector
- ensure that the broad spectrum of civil society organisations - NGOs, CBOs (community-based organisations), academia and the private sector - have a say in the sector's policy dialogue

The Working Group is open to all NGOs, embassies, donors, Vietnamese authorities, local organisations and others with a special interest in the WASH sector in Vietnam. The Working Group uses English and Vietnamese as working languages. It meets every two months, or as often as required.

Chair and Core Group

The Working Group selects one organisation from the Core Group as chair for two years; at present SNV (Netherlands Development Organisation). The other members are Church World Service (CWS), BORDA (Bremen Overseas Research and Development Association), Plan International, East Meets West Foundation, ChildFund and RWSSP as a government liaison representative.

Goals and objectives

- To facilitate communication and knowledge exchange in the NGO WASH sector with a view to:
 - Supporting and/or facilitating the capacity building of member organisations and staff,
 - Enhancing the quality and impact of WASH programmes,
 - Identifying and share best practices for learning, and
 - Developing a common NGO WASH sector voice.
- To facilitate communication, knowledge exchange and where possible coordination between the NGO WASH community in Vietnam and the National Rural Water Supply and Sanitation programmes (e.g. the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation National Target Programme Phase II (RWSS NTP II) and future programmes).
- To facilitate communication and knowledge exchange between the NGO WASH community in Vietnam and other key WASH-sector stakeholders, including donors, local partners and Vietnamese authorities, with a view to mutual learning and influencing.

Activities in 2010

Main Themes for 2010 (details below)

- NGO approaches to RWSS 'Lessons learnt and opportunities for scaling up'
- NGO approaches to RWSS 'Moving towards a programme-based approach'

Working Group Meetings

1. Convene meetings and presentations

Core Group members revised the Working Group Terms of Reference.

The Working Group meetings contribute to policy dialogue to influence policy through sharing the lessons learned in implementing innovative pilots, etc.

The Working Group is engaging the Government of Vietnam and donors proactively, promoting best practice.

The Working Group is networking and communicating with the national RWSS programme, including the Standing Office for the National Target Programme for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation.

2. Facilitate a national stakeholders forum to actively engage Government, NGOs, civil society organisations, the private sector and donors: two major national workshops facilitated by RWSSP and sponsored by Targetted Budget Support (TBS) Donors NTP II in collaboration with the Working Group

On 14-15 January, 2010, in Dalat city, the first in a series of workshops was held to discuss the NGO contribution to rural water supply and sanitation in Vietnam. The workshop, titled

The NGO Approaches to the RWSS in Vietnam: Lessons Learnt and Opportunities for Scaling Up, aimed to present key approaches and experiences implemented by WASH NGOs in Vietnam, and discuss the lessons that could be relevant to and replicable under the National Target Programme (NTP). A key recommendation from that workshop stated that NGOs should work to align their approaches with the NTP. It was also recommended that another workshop should be organised.

The second workshop, NGO Approaches to RWSS: Moving Towards a Programme-Based Approach, was held in Nha Trang on 13-14 May, 2010, and discussed how NGOs that are supporting the RWSS sector in Vietnam could use a programme-based approach, and engage with and align with NTP II and the NTP 2011-2015. The workshop covered three topics: the programme based approach, reaching the poor in a sustainable way, and scaling up rural sanitation.

Workshop recommendations were developed under three main headings. The first heading was: NTP III (National Target Programme Phase III) design with NGOs' involvement. A recommendation under this heading requested NGOs to prepare and agree on key issues for NGO involvement in NTP, for submission to the NTP III design team by the end of May 2010. The second heading was: Institutionalisation of NGOs' involvement in NTP. The third heading was: Scaling up of NGOs' sanitation approaches.

On 19 May, 2010, the NGO WASH Working Group met to discuss the above recommendation and provide input to a document outlining NGOs' thoughts and ideas on areas of alignment and NGO contributions to the NTP. It was noted that there is considerable value to the Government and all stakeholders in the rural water supply and sanitation sector if there is a greater role for NGOs in the entire process of formulating NTP III, from initial conceptualisation, programme resourcing, management and budgeting to evaluation.

Another idea involves a Service Agreement Approach, between the National Standing Office and a registry of NGOs pre-qualified to deliver capacity development in areas of demand among local authorities (mostly at the province and district-government levels) and small and medium enterprises of the private sector at the sub-national level.

It was also noted that coordination among NGOs on applying consistent sector approaches, and adopting and harmonising cost norms, is required to engage collectively with the Government to agree on terms and conditions to allow NGOs to be direct service providers under a national programme.

At the end, the WASH NGOs shared these recommendations with the NTP III design team:

- There should be NGO representation on NTP steering committees at national, provincial, district levels.
- NTP III design and the national RWSS Strategy should be aligned – particularly as the Strategy is currently being updated.
- Data on NGO activities should be collected and mapped.
- Review Ministry of Health recommendations for the diversification of latrine options and providing input to the technical design.
- Promote technical workshop to discuss low cost technology options, both for rural water supply and sanitation.

- NGOs to be aligned with the the national sector programme and harmonise their approaches for scaling up.

On the basis of the two workshops, the Working Group successfully negotiated and facilitated a process by which the WASH NGOs access funds from the WASH Targetted Budgeted Support donors to provide technical assistance in sanitation and hygiene interventions for the NTP III. The overall objective of this initiative is to scale up and mainstream successful practices that have led to increasing access to sanitation and improved hygiene in rural areas in Vietnam so that national targets on sanitation access and hygiene are achieved.

This initiative recognises that there have been many small-scale successes in accelerating sanitation access and improving hygiene, but they have not yet been adopted at scale. It also appreciates the fact that the challenges go beyond replicating earlier approaches. Therefore it calls for the identification of those approaches that can operate at scale and ensuring that they are mainstreamed into normal sector practice and convention.

Whilst the scope of the initiative is household sanitation and hygiene, including hand washing, in rural areas, the interventions could be of a social, marketing, technological or regulatory nature - and most likely would involve a combination of these. Although the emphasis is on the safe disposal of human excreta and safe hygiene behaviour, concepts that integrate animal waste management, including waste water treatment and solid waste management, are also eligible for the initiative.

The total budget for individual proposals will not exceed USD250,000. Mass organisations, non-government organisations and private and state-owned enterprises based in Vietnam are all eligible.

3. Input towards the design of the Vietnam National Target Programme (NTP III) for the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWSS) Programme for 2011-2015

A Special Session of the Working Group was convened so that the national consulting team could meet with, discuss, get perspectives from and stimulate dialogue with the NGO community, towards the wards the goal of greater harmonisation and sector coordination. This consultation was the first of its kind and the first step for a united coalition of NGOs to contribute directly to the Government's Participatory Consultation and Design Process towards NTP II of the national RWSS programme.

This historic and strategic meeting produced outcomes that include:

- An agreement that there is considerable value to the Government and all stakeholders in the rural water supply and sanitation sector if there is a greater role for NGOs in the entire process of formulating NTP III, from initial conceptualisation, programme resourcing, management and budgeting, to evaluation.
- The realisation and recognition from Government that NGOs could bridge the Private-Public- Partnerships (PPPs) building, which could influence the shape and direction of Vietnam's rural water supply and sanitation sector.
- NGO participation might be better coordinated and regulated under common legislation concerning PPPs for the WASH Sector in Vietnam.
- An application of the Service Agreement Approach, between the National Standing

Office and a registry of NGOs pre-qualified to deliver capacity development in areas of demand among local authorities (mostly at the provincial and district-government level).

4. Disseminate and share key documents of relevance to the WASH sector

Plans for 2011

- Continue engagement with the national programme
- Scale up sanitation and hygiene
- Link WASH efforts with other sectors
- Conduct national-level sector dialogue
- Learning and sharing