

International NGO Partnerships for Development

December 2011

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Letter from the Managing Co-Director


The International NGO Partnerships for Development Report describes the activities of 13 Working Groups facilitated by the VUFO-NGO Resource Centre in 2011. On the following pages you can read about the most important achievements of the Working Groups, as told by their chairpersons, coordinators and our team. In this letter I would like to share a summary of all other activities carried out by the Resource Centre team during the past twelve months.

This year has brought greater stability and financial security to the Resource Centre, which enabled us to improve our services; to expand relationships with development agencies; and to strengthen partnerships with governmental counterparts. We organised two INGO Forums, facilitated over one hundred Working Group meetings and revived two working groups that have been dormant for the past few years: *Sustainable Agriculture & Natural Resources Management* and *Community-Based & Responsible Tourism Network*. PACCOM appointed a new person as the Co-Director of the Resource Centre: Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Hung, Deputy Director General, which secured a continued and productive relationship with our partners.

In 2011 two INGOs closed their missions in Vietnam: *Enfants & Développement* (France) and *Terre des Hommes Foundation* (Switzerland). At the same time six organizations decided to join the membership: *Challenge to Change* (UK), *Room to Read* (US), *Partage* (France), *Malteser International* (Germany), *Danish Demining Group* and *American Bar Association*.

The Resource Centre facilitated elections of a new INGO representative at the Consultative Group Meeting, as well as two new members of the Steering Committee. The *Climate Change* and the *Ethnic Minorities* Working Groups identified cross-cutting issues; increased their regular information sharing; and organized a joint conference at the national level. Our teams assisted the *International Support Group* at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development with organizing the annual plenary session *Vietnam Towards the New Vision in Agriculture* and a series of related regional workshops. We participated in several consultative meetings organized by the World Bank, United Nations agencies, European Union, Asian Development Bank, International Fund for Agricultural Development and Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences. Our global and regional involvement increased through participation in the *Social Watch Assembly* in Manila (Philippines) and the international NGO conference in Seoul (South Korea), while our image in Vietnam has been promoted through an interview and participation in a talk-show on the VTC10 channel.

I would like to use this opportunity to express my appreciation to our INGO members, partners at PACCOM and all other counterparts for their continued support. The Resource Centre remains the main bridge between the INGO community, development partners and the Government of Vietnam. We look 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 2011 there were 14 active working groups.

INGO Directory

The Resource Centre maintains an online directory of INGOs providing support to Vietnam, available at the following link: <<http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/ingodirectory>>

Website

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

Library

The Resource Centre maintains a library at its office of 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;
- facilitation and support for consultation on donor strategies and reports;
- 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
AFAP	The Australian Foundation for the Peoples of Asia and the Pacific
AO	Agent Orange
AOWG	Agent Orange Working Group
ART	Anti-Retroviral Therapy
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BORDA	Bremen Overseas Research and Development Association
CBA	Community-Based Adaptation
CBDRM	Community-Based Disaster Reduction Management
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CBR	Community-Based Rehabilitation
CC	Climate Change
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CCIHP	Center for Creative Initiatives in Health and Population
CCM	Convention on Cluster Munitions
CCWG	Climate Change Working Group
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
CDWG	Capacity Development Working Group
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 Munitions 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
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CWD	Children with Disabilities
CWS	Church World Service
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DMC	Disaster Management Centre
DMWG	Disaster Management Working Group
DOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
DRD	Disability Research and Capacity Development Centre
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction

ELAN	Ecosystems and Livelihoods Adaptation Network
EM	Ethnic Minorities
EMWG	Ethnic Minorities Working Group
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 Immune-Deficiency virus
HUFO	Ho Chi Minh City Union of Friendship Organisations
IE	Inclusive Education
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IPCC	Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change
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
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
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 Vietnam
PWD	People with Disabilities
RECOFTC	Regional Community Forestry Training Centre
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
SP-RCC	Support Program to Respond to Climate Change
SRD	Centre for Sustainable Rural Development

STI	Sexually-transmitted infection
TBS	Targeted 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 & Emergencies Programme Coordinating Group
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
VACVINA	Vietnam Gardening Association
VAVA	Vietnam Association for Victims of Agent Orange
VBMAC	Vietnam Bomb and Mine Action Centre
VNAH	Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped
VNGO-CC	Vietnamese NGOs 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
WWF	World Wide Fund
WWO	Worldwide Orphans Foundation

Agent Orange Working Group

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

Background

The Agent Orange Working Group (AOWG) was formed in July 2004, under the VUFO-NGO Resource Center. The group was initiated by international NGO members of the Resource Center. Participation is open to INGOs, Vietnamese counterpart agencies, international organizations, and other interested local and foreign personnel. Participants in the 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 the US-Vietnam relations. They have in common an interest in sharing information and experience in order to better 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.

Activities

The AOWG met on the 2nd of July 2011. Another meeting is scheduled for December 2011. In the July meeting, the group had five presentations:

- Presentation by USAID Country Director Mr Frank Donovan on the USAID's Agent Orange program in Vietnam focusing on health and environmental remediation
- Presentation by Eric Frater, Environment, Science, Technology & Health Officer, U.S. Embassy: an update on the 5th annual meeting of the Joint Advisory Committee on Agent Orange and Dioxin which took place in Hanoi in September 2011
- Presentation by Koos Neefjes, Policy Advisor on Climate Change, UNDP Vietnam: an update on UNDP's Agent Orange/Dioxin program for environmental remediation.
- Presentation by Dr Charles Bailey – Aspen Institute on the 10-year strategic declaration and plan of the US-Vietnam Dialogue Group on Agent Orange/Dioxin
- Presentation by Prof. Tran Xuan Thu, Vice President and Secretary General of VAVA: Summary of planned activities for commemoration of the 50th anniversary of first use of AO in Vietnam in August 2011.

Key Messages for the 2011 Consultative Group Meeting

The AOWG recognizes the remarkable economic growth in Vietnam over the past 20 years, and the early success of the U.S.-Vietnam close collaboration in addressing the war legacies

such as unexploded bombs and Agent Orange in the recent years. In addition, American foundations, foreign countries and UN agencies have invested a substantial amount of funding. Many U.S. and Vietnamese non-governmental organizations, as well as individual donors, are providing support to families as well as adding to existing facilities so that families with children with disabilities can get help.

The problem of unexploded bombs and Agent Orange still constrain Vietnam's economic development and distort the social realms of contaminated communities. The World Bank's 2011 World Development Report, entitled 'Conflict, Security and Development', correctly identifies conflict as a real inhibitor of development which, as Vietnam's case demonstrates, can take many decades to address.

The AOWG recommend to the government of Vietnam and its international development partners that assistance on war legacy issues be included within Vietnam's overall socio-economic development plan so that these issues are addressed in the mainstream development discussions.

Capacity Development Working Group

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

Background

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 organizations, others by civil society organizations and some by Government institutions. Although capacity building is a common element of many different organizations and across many sectors, there are few opportunities for sharing lessons learnt, resources and coordinating resources.

The CDWG aims to provide a forum for exchange between different stakeholders, creating a dialogue and mutual learning around the theme of organizational capacity development.

Objectives

The key objectives of the CDWG are:

- To coordinate and share initiatives and knowledge in organisational development in order to mutually learn, maximise impact and minimise overlap.
- To create an interface between NGOs and their counterparts, including the Vietnamese Government, donors and private sector, for dialogue and advocacy on civil society capacity development.
- To 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.

Activities

Information sharing workshops

The main activity of the CDWG is to hold information sharing workshops on topics of interest for capacity development practitioners. The CDWG holds its meetings on a quarterly basis. Since the last annual report the following topics have been discussed:

Corporate Social Responsibility

Topics covered included, union support to improve the social and ethical conduct of Vietnamese companies exporting to Finland (APHEDA), strengthening the life-skills of female garment workers at GAP textile companies (CARE International) and the Global Compact in Vietnam (GNCV).

Empowerment and effective leadership

The theme of empowerment was covered by a range of speakers from international and Vietnamese organisations and was followed by a vibrant panel discussion and Q and A session. The panel included representatives from UNDP, Vietnamese private sector organisations and Vietnamese Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

Roles of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Vietnam

A round table discussion regarding the changing roles of the civil society in Vietnam, provided an interesting opportunity for debate about the type of functions that CSOs perform ranging from provision of public services to the more challenging positions such as advocacy and watchdog roles. Recent research on this topic was presented by CCIHP.

NGOs in transition. The challenges facing NGOs in the context of declining overseas aid

The final meeting of the year 2011, shall draw these themes together to look at the challenges and opportunities faced by NGOs in a period of great change, (and some uncertainty), as Vietnam consolidates its position as a middle-income country whilst traditional donors reevaluate their development priorities in the face of economic crises at home.

Membership and Structure

The meetings have been well attended by up to 60 participants and the CDWG mailing list currently contains 228 subscribers. A core group of interested individuals from both local and international NGOs meet on a monthly basis to plan the meetings and discuss the administrative aspects of the group.

In 2011 Ian Bromage from the Medical Committee Netherlands-Vietnam (MCNV) was elected as a new chair of the group. Special thanks goes to the outgoing chair Neil Poetschka from CARE International in Vietnam, who continues to be an active member of the core group, which also includes organisations such as PACT, Plan International, CCIHP and SRD.

Future Directions for 2012

The CDWG will continue to organize and run innovative and interesting workshops and meetings that addressing a broad cross-cutting theme of capacity development. It will continue to look at the latest developments in this field and seek to attract a wide variety of speakers. It will organize at least 4 workshops per year. Potential topics will include the learning organization, strategic change management, capability modeling and new ideas for the development of human resources. The CDWG will look to use different formats for meetings, including the possibility of field trips in 2012.

The CDWG will continue to look at broadening its audience to attract both international and Vietnamese practitioners and stakeholders. It will also look at developing linkages with other sectors, most notably private sector organisations. It will also seek ICT technology to broaden its meetings to outside of Hanoi, and include members from HCMC and other regions.

Several requests have been made for developing a registry of all capacity development practitioners. The CDWG has not yet undertaken this task due to constraints of members' availability, but this will be kept under review.

Child Rights Working Group

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

Background

The Child Rights Working Group (CRWG), established in 2006, is a technical working group, consisting of representatives from both international and local NGOs, mass organizations, research institutes, experts, individuals and other community groups in Vietnam. Other agencies and organizations joined the CRWG as guest speakers to share information and their experiences. This group included government ministries and specialized UN agencies, such as UNICEF, ILO, UNODC and others.

Objectives

The overall purpose of the CRWG is to promote the rights of the child and to strengthen their implementation, by increasing/enhancing the communication, collaboration and coordination between all actors who work in the Child Rights sector.

The CRWG has the following objectives:

- Sharing experiences and improving development practices of member organizations;
- Sharing best practices and lessons learned, theories and approaches - both outside and within Vietnam for the mutual benefit of all organizations involved;
- Providing a forum for new ideas and a platform for topics oriented group work, presentations and discussions with concrete outcomes;
- Developing coordination mechanisms and tools;
- Documenting, discussing and disseminating lessons learned to improve best practices and to facilitate our ability to adapt projects appropriately;
- Collaborating on common areas for capacity building, raising awareness, lobbying and advocacy - particularly in the areas of child participation and child protection;
- Increasing opportunities for collaboration between international organizations, Vietnamese NGOs and their partners;
- Conducting policy dialogues and advocacy;
- Facilitating networking among child-focused organizations and associations, and serving as a focal point for consultations, policy dialogue and joint statements;
- Advocating and making program/policy recommendations to create a supportive and enabling environment in order to strengthen the implementation of Vietnam's Commitment to the CRC;
- Collaborating in view of the development of relevant governmental policies and legal frameworks, as well as in support of the implementation of the government programs, with the aim to support the implementation of the CRC;
- Raising a common voice and playing an active role with regard to the CR promotion and advocacy with stakeholders;
- Encouraging and providing support to the Government of Vietnam to play a leading role at international level for the defense and promotion of the CR.

The CRWG meets every two months. Its chairmanship rotates annually and the current Co-Chairs are representatives of Plan in Vietnam and the Research Center for Family Health and Community Development (CEFACOM).

Activities

In addition to regular meetings, in 2011 the CRWG's joint efforts were made primarily for the following:

Finalization, submission and presentation of the CRC Complementary Report

During the first half of 2011, the 1st CRC Complementary Report for the period of 2002-2007 has been finalized by CRWG members. The final report was officially submitted to the CRC Committee in Geneva at the end of June 2011. Afterwards, the CRWG was in active preparation for presenting the report to the CRC Committee at the Pre-session in Geneva.

On October 13, 2011 the CRWG's delegation attended the CRC Committee Pre-session in Geneva. The delegation's presentation on the CRC Complementary Report and its performance during the following Q&A were highly appreciated by the CRC Committee.

Strengthening the CRWG

After five working years since its establishment, the CRWG was in need of being strengthened to increase its performance effectiveness. As discussed and agreed at the CRWG meetings, some key activities were carried out for this purpose, starting by the revision of the CRWG's Terms of Reference in June 2011.

The first outcome of the revised Terms of Reference was the establishment of the CRWG Core Group, which consisted of the key members of the working group as the dynamic team to lead the CRWG activities. The Core Group started its activities in August 2011, including direct meetings and several technical discussions through electronic exchange.

Development of the CRWG work plan (2011 – 2012)

The two-year work plan of the CRWG was developed in April, then taken into several discussions before its finalization in July 2011. It outlines the key joint activities of the CRWG, together with relevant responsibility assignment and time schedule, in 2 prioritized areas: children's participation and policy dialogues with the Government. The CRWG Core Group was given primary responsibility for implementing, reporting and evaluating this work plan.

Other Activities

The CRWG members have actively participated in, and contributed to several child rights related actions and events organized by the Government of Vietnam, such as the development of National Action Plan for Children, National Children's Forum and National Workshop on Children's Participation.

Meetings

April 1, 2011: The main focus of the discussion was the finalization of CRC Complementary Report and CRWG's Action plan 2011. Additionally, the meeting engaged Dang Nam, the Vice Director of Children's Bureau from MOLISA, who shared updates on the policies,

implementation of the government's child protection procedures and other projects and interventions which the CRWG could support. At the meeting, the CRWG's detailed work plan for 2011 -2012 was firstly presented and discussed. Finally, the results of the meeting with the Parliament on Children and Youth Affairs were shared with all members in preparation of the National Children's Forum.

June 7, 2011: The meeting discussed the printing and submission process of the CRC Complementary Report, joint project on Child Rights Monitoring, CRWG new chairmanship and nomination of core members as well as the group action plan for 2011-2012. The meeting embraced the ownership of different members towards the working group. Save the Children and Plan in Vietnam introduced their new programs with commitment on strengthening the CRWG in general and local CSOs' participation in particular. At this meeting, Plan in Vietnam and CEFACOM were selected to become the Co-Chairs of the CRWG. In addition, the members of Core Group initiated the championship in the CRWG Work Plan 2011-2012 and made themselves committed to the contribution of technical and financial resources.

August 9, 2011: The meeting was organized in order to select members of the CRWG delegation to present the CRC Complementary Report at the pre-session of the CRC Committee in Geneva. The CRWG detailed work-plan for 2011-2012, especially the time-line of the work plan for August-December 2011, was discussed at the meeting. Together with a representative of CRWG in Ho Chi Minh City, the CRWG discussed and agreed that the two networks should be combined into one national network – in order to increase their voice and influence. Members of the CRWG were informed about the Annual Workshop on Child Care of CSOs organized by VUSTA.

The final meeting of the CWR in 2011 will be held in 16th November.

Future Directions for 2012

- ***Promoting meaningful participation of children***, focusing on the capacity building on child participation for the CRWG members, especially the local CSOs
- ***Continuing Policy Dialogues and Advocacy*** related to child protection policies and child rights monitoring. Lesson learns from the 1st CRC Alternative Report and preparation for the next report of this kind will also be the key activities.

Key Messages for the 2011 Consultative Group Meeting

The CRWG has a vast experience and the group's contribution is well received at the policy dialogues and during technical discussions with the Government of Vietnam. It has built a strong relationship with the Children Bureau at MOLISA and other relevant agencies. The CRWG would like enhance its achievements in 2012 in close collaboration with the Children Bureau; and to create an effective mechanism for regular policy dialogue and technical discussions with governmental partners. We believe that this mechanism would significantly increase our support to the implementation of the child rights by the Government of Vietnam.

Climate Change Working Group

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

Background

Vietnam, according to the IPCC, is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world, threatened by rising sea levels, greater-intensity storms, floods, droughts and other effects of global warming. Contributing to ongoing efforts by the Government of Vietnam in response to climate change, the NGO community has a role to play in helping to develop, advocate for, and implement plans to assist Vietnam in this regard.

The Climate Change Working Group (CCWG) was established as a forum for international NGOs, Vietnamese NGOs, UN agencies, governmental counterparts, other related institutions and interested individuals - to actively participate in debates related to the Climate Change. The CCWG functions as a voluntary group and conducts activities related to Climate Change adaptation, mitigation, raising the awareness and behavioral changes.

The CCWG operates through diverse modalities utilizing electronic exchange, direct monthly and quarterly meetings, and information sharing through the NGO Resource Centre's website. One of the INGO members of the CCWG Core Group recently recruited a full-time Climate Change Coordinator who is supporting regular activities of the CCWG and strengthening the learning and sharing among the CCWG's members.

Membership and Structure

The CCWG consists of the **Core Group** and the **three thematic sub-groups**: Mitigation; Adaptation; and Awareness Raising & Behavior Change (ABC). Each sub-group has its own working dynamics in terms of issues, frequency of meetings, discussions and sharing. All sub-groups provide updates to the wider CCWG through regular monthly meetings.

The CCWG **Core Group** brings together all sub-group leaders and pro-active members of the CCWG, who volunteered to join the Core Group. The Core Group members are committed to devoting a substantial time and resources; and to taking the lead on policy and advocacy actions. The members of the Core Group are: Care International in Vietnam, Challenge to Change, Live & Learn, Oxfam, Regional Community Forestry Training Centre, Netherlands Development Organization, Center for Sustainable Rural Development, Center for Water Resources Conservation & Development, Centre for Marine Life Conservation & Community Development, the Australian Foundation for the Peoples of Asia & the Pacific, Center for International Studies & Cooperation and the World Wide Fund.

Objectives

The CCWG seeks to contribute to reducing the vulnerability of poor people in Vietnam caused by the impact of Climate Change. This is achieved through its members' coordination, advocacy and capacity building towards socially just responses to Climate Change, which are also environmentally and economically sustainable.

The objectives of the CCWG are:

- **Coordination** – to coordinate and to share NGO initiatives and knowledge on Climate Change in order to maximize impact and to minimize the overlap through providing forums for INGOs and Vietnamese NGOs to interact.
- **Advocacy** – to create an environment for NGOs and other concerned external actors (e.g. Vietnamese Government, donors, private sector) in which they can coordinate, have dialogues and advocate for the Climate Change response and policy dialogue at the national and sub-national level.
- **Capacity Building** – to ensure that NGOs in Vietnam have access to information about training opportunities, current events and funding for Climate Change; and to provide support to individual NGO Climate Change activities.

Activities

Most activities were proposed and agreed upon at the beginning of 2011, while some emerged during monthly meetings or within working scope of sub-groups, as follows:

- Composing and developing the guidelines on how to mainstream disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into communal socio-economic development plan. This activity is implemented by adaptation sub-group and led by Oxfam. The guidelines are available only in Vietnamese since the main target group is Vietnamese community. The CCWG members are encouraged to pilot the guidelines in their project sites; and they are expected to provide feedback for further revisions. The CCWG will organize a trainings before application of the guidelines. The guidelines were developed in close consultations with MONRE and MARD.
- Organizing ELAN workshop in order to raise the awareness of NGOs and CCWG members about integration of ecosystem management and human livelihoods (April). Following the workshop, the Adaptation sub-group developed a study to assess the government system on management of integration of ecosystem management and human adaptation in Vietnam;
- Co-organizing Community-based adaptation workshop within the scope of the *Climate Change Capacity Building Project* for Vietnamese NGOs, in coordination with the Center for Sustainable Rural Development. The workshop was attended by NGOs and representatives from relevant governmental bodies.
- Developing a list of journalists and other media contacts interested in the Climate Change issues. This activity is within the scope of the ABC sub-group. This list will enable members of the sub-group and the wider CCWG to analyze how to better communicate on climate change related issues to the world; and how to get more involved in the CCWG activities.
- Organizing a workshop on climate change education with the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). This workshop focused on the idea of bringing climate change related facts and issues into schools. As a result of the workshop, the CCWG members developed educational materials on climate change and disaster risk reduction for teachers and students at the primary school level. Members worked closely with MOET officials to finalize the materials.
- Documenting case studies in climate change adaptation models and develop a list of FAQs about the Climate Change.

- The CCWG, the Ethnic Minorities Working Group and the JANI's group co-organized a workshop about ethnic minorities in response to climate change. The workshop focused on vulnerability of the ethnic minority communities in mountainous areas; and how the current policy framework helps strengthening local people's resilience to negative impacts of climate change. The workshop drew significant attention from interested stakeholders. Representatives of Thai Nguyen, Yen Bai, Lao Cai, Ha Giang, Thanh Hoa, Nghe An, Kon Tum, Dien Bien, Cao Bang and Son La, together with representatives of donor agencies, attended the workshop and participated in productive discussions during the workshop.
- Jointly developing advocacy strategy with the Disaster Management Working Group in order to avoid overlapping and duplication of efforts between the two groups.
- In collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, UNDP and the Disaster Management Working Group started preparations for the international conference on community-based adaptation (No 6) in Vietnam scheduled for April 2012. The CCWG and the DWMG actively participate in preparations by designing flyers, developing criteria for field visits selection and encouraging NGOs to join the conference.

Future Directions for 2012

- Continuing preparations and organizing of the CBA6 conference in Vietnam in 2012. Each sub-group will develop their own initiatives to support this conference (e.g. the Adaptation sub-group will collect information and present relevant research reports on adaptation topics; the ABC sub-group will run side-events);
- Piloting DRR / CCA mainstreaming guidelines in the CCWG members' project sites;
- Co-implementing DRR / CCA advocacy action plan from the joint advocacy strategy, designed in collaboration with the Disaster Management Working Group;
- Co-developing capacity development and network strengthening plan with ELAN;
- Developing draft of the 2012 technical focus for the Adaptation sub-group (e.g. Climate Risk Reduction in Agriculture, Forest and Adaptive Livelihoods, etc.)
- Promoting Climate Change and Disaster Management Education among NGOs and with the Ministry of Education and Training;
- Promoting youth participation in national and international Climate Change activities and campaigns;
- Updating the CCWG activities matrix;
- Identifying issues in terms of mitigation in agriculture, energy efficiency and renewable energy, REDD and low carbon economy including CDM;
- Organizing workshop on TOT experiences in context of the Climate Change;
- Piloting mitigation models, which are based on experiences / strengths of the CCWG members (e.g. VACVINA Hybrid Biogas models, improved cook stoves, bamboo);
- Advocacy: Documenting mitigation models; including 'environment protection' content into village regulations under the Environmental Law; designing samples based on the lessons learned to be integrated into policies;
- Further developing the cooperation plan between MONRE and CCWGs. The focus will be on involvement of NGOs in the SP-RCC program, climate change action planning for 63 provinces etc.

Key Messages for the 2011 Consultative Group Meeting

- To include into the governmental guidelines and regulations vulnerable population's engagement in climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.
- The ecosystem management integrated into community based adaptation must start now and must involve / benefit the most vulnerable population including the poorest of the poor, ethnic minorities, women and children.
- Forest areas under community management have great potential to reduce emissions and enhance adaptive capacity of local people. It is essential to include mechanisms for equitable sharing of benefits arising from REDD, particularly for the forest dependent communities.
- To include social safeguards for REDD, which will enable ethnic minorities and local communities to receive timely information, to participate effectively in decision making and monitoring, and to receive an equitable share of benefits from REDD.
- The Government of Vietnam and civil society should work with regional and global counterparts in order to ensure that an appropriate mix of financing is received. Vietnam should consider demanding that all funding for adaptation be in the form of grants.
- To ensure that funding for local level adaptation is sufficient.
- To build the capacity for action at the sub-national and grassroots level.
- To strengthen linkages which support knowledge sharing, coordination and cooperation between relevant ministries, donors, civil society and private sector.

Community-Based and Responsible Tourism Network

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

Background

The Community-Based and Tourism Network was established in July 2007 by a group of non-governmental organizations, 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 dormant for a period of time, it was revived in 2010-2011 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. Of key importance to a successful community-based and responsible tourism development is effective stakeholder cooperation.

Membership and Structure

The Community Based and Responsible Tourism Network is chaired by Phil Harman, Sector Leader Tourism at SNV. Other core group members include FFI, WWF, MCD, Asia Foundation, Counterpart and Caritas.

Objectives

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
- Advocate for policy and programming change to ensure greater local benefits from community-based and responsible tourism and the tourism sector in general

Activities

There has been two main activities for the Network in 2011 with one more planned for the end of the year. The first activity was a meeting in May that included sharing of current projects. This included a presentation by SNV on the EC funded tourism training for the informal economy HITT project that will train informal workers in sectors including restaurants, small hotels, home stays and local hosts/guides. Guilhem Cavaille presented the Handspan Moc Chau Home Stay that is being developed in conjunction with the local community. Other projects were presented by Bloom Micro Ventures, Responsible Travel Club, WHL Group, Tam Dao Bear Rescue Centre, Bak Kan 3PAD Project and the FPSC Ngoc

Son Ngo Luong Project. A networking function followed the meeting that enabled NGOs and tour companies to get to know each other in an informal setting.

The second activity was two and a half day visit (Escape Hanoi 2011) to two community based tourism sites, the FPSC Ngoc Son Ngo Luong Project in Hao Binh and the SNV/RTC supported Chieng Yen site in Moc Chau, Son La. The visit included over 30 participants including NGOs, tour companies and media. It provided an opportunity for on-the-ground learning, networking between participants as well as helping to raise the profile of these two emerging destinations.

In addition to formal meetings, the Network has been useful in providing links between NGOs, other development partners and tour companies throughout the year.

Future Directions for 2012

The plan for 2012 is to continue the network in its current format with more regular meetings if members are available. A visit to other project sites is also planned. In addition, a closer alignment with the Responsible Travel Club is envisaged which will enhance the engagement of NGOs and private sector tour companies.

Key Issues impacting the Sector

The following key issues, which made an impact on the tourism industry, were raised at the last Community Based and Responsible Tourism Network meeting

Environmental Management

For the tourism industry to continue to flourish, Vietnam's key natural attractions have to be managed effectively. While the tourism industry has a role to play in ensuring that the sector is developed in a sustainable manner, government at all levels need to help ensure that there is an appropriate balance between economic development, the needs and aspirations of local communities and the environment. Other industry such as mining, manufacturing as well as growing urbanization are rapidly degrading some of Vietnam's key natural tourism assets.

Focus on Quality and a Balanced Approach to Investment Attraction

In order to ensure the authenticity of the tourism experience and to ensure that communities benefit from tourism and can access natural attractions, a balanced approach to tourism investment attraction is needed. There have been cases where far too much power is in the hands of developers which has led to inappropriate development and restricted access to locals to natural assets such as beaches. This is in part due to the lack of capacity to undertake tourism master planning and so this responsibility is 'handed over' to developers.

There is also often a mentality that 'bigger is better' when it comes to accommodation. However, western visitors often want smaller, better quality and more authentic experiences which also have the advantage of greater economic benefits flowing through to the local people. The focus should be on quality and capacity building for tourism planning, which redresses this imbalance and ensures an outcome which protects the interests of the environment, local communities and encourages tourism development that meets the needs of current and future visitors.

Human Resources Development

There is a need for continued improvement of skills and for an increased number of trained people within the tourism industry with practical, market orientated tourism training.

Branding

A well-researched tourism brand can help reinforce the positive images of Vietnam that builds upon the authentic experiences. If the branding process is participatory and there is a shared understanding of priority target markets, it can also help to harness the collective strength of government and the private sector.

There is an opportunity to develop a country brand that goes beyond tourism to cover other sectors such as investment attraction. Countries such as Korea and New Zealand have adopted this approach which helps to provide consistency and can increase resources for marketing efforts.

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 NGO Resource Centre WG guidelines.

The Disability Working Group (DWG) is not limited to international NGOs only but is also open to representatives of Vietnamese government and non-government local organizations and other types of organization that work for/with PWD.

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. In 2011, core group members of the DWG met in January and designed a survey form to collect information from relevant organizations in the concerned themes. Regular meetings were organized following themes discussed and collected through this survey. The meetings are conducted in an open, transparent and participatory style.

Membership and Structure

The management and coordination of the Working Group are carried out by a Core Group of five international NGOs (CRS, MCNV, HI Federation, VVAF, SRC), and two local NGOs (IDEA and AEPD). These core group members will share the workload with co-chairs such as contributing idea/initiative for group activities; active participating at the meeting by support in taking meeting minutes, translating if required.

The role of chair is rotated among members of this group. In 2011, the core group members met in January and all agree to select CRS to play role of chairmanship and IDEA as a Co-chair of the group. The current co-chairs of this DWG are Ms. Dinh Thi Nguyet, Inclusive education program manager from CRS, and Ms. Nguyen Hong Oanh, Director of IDEA.

The email contact for the Working Group is: <nguyet.dinh@crs.org>

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.

Activities

In 2011, at the time of writing, three regular meetings had been held.

January meeting

During January, core group members met to discuss the revision of DWG TOR to include more local organizations or any individuals who are interested in sharing and learning from DWG relating to support to PWDs. The core group members also discussed how to coordinate support activities in the same field better through the update of disability matrix of who doing what. The core group members agreed on working mechanism to make the DWG more effective and useful to participating organizations, which includes the following issues:

- Topic of each meeting should be widely sent throughout the DWG
- members for their voluntarily registration of the participation
- In each meeting should have core presentation- 1 or 2 sharing.
- Core group members should be committed, dynamic to DWG 's activities
- Try to promote the participant from organization of PWD, PWD, increase the involvement of relevant government offices.
- The preparation for group meeting should be more careful, core group should contribute comments during process of developing meeting agenda.

Besides these issues, The Association for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (AEPD) shared with the group about their new structure and function after becoming a local NGO (established based on the work of Survivor Corps/Landmine Survivors Network (SC/LSN)

March meeting

The meeting was facilitated by MCVN with presentations from CRS and Vietnam Red cross, focusing on employment of PWDs. 19 participants from 11 organizations (including a representative from NCCD) turned up. Participants had an opportunity to learn from an employment model collaborated between Red Cross Vietnam with Spanish Red Cross, supporting vulnerable people including PWDs, women and ethnic minority people. Targeted beneficiaries received training from the Red Cross based on market analysis of jobs. Besides training, Red Cross also worked with relevant local agencies to link with businesses or job providers. One of suggestion from participants is how to promote awareness of business or employers further so they can recruit more PWDs.

CRS shares with participants about a model of IT training with job linkage for youth with disabilities. The program focuses not only on technical training, but also on building linkage with DPOs and business in soft skill training, job counseling and internship/employment. When PWDs are provided with opportunities, they will be able to demonstrate their capacity and living independently with their stable income.

June Meeting

The meeting was facilitated by IDEA with contribution from HI France, AEPD and CMB. AEPD shared its experience in how to help PWDs have better understanding of the government policies and how they can advocate better to get support from the Quang Binh

authority. CBM introduced to participants about their strategy in supporting for eyes care to prevent potential visual impairment and eyes related problems. While HI shared with participants about a model of inclusive education in Cambodia.

All participants had a chance to learn from different experience either in Vietnam or from other countries to support their work better.

Future Directions for 2012

- Core group members will continue updating the disability matrix to ensure programs and activities are more coordinated and shared.
- Core group members will meet in December 2011 to discuss priorities for the year 2012, especially how to collaborate or work with VFD to promote rights and opportunities for PWDs in Vietnam further.

Disaster Management Working Group

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

Background

The DMWG began in the period immediately following the floods of 1999, when it was felt that NGOs in Vietnam needed to coordinate their relief operations more closely. Since 2001, the group has continued to meet regularly and also held emergency meetings when there is need for joint actions in relation to disasters in Vietnam.

The Working Group has a core group of member organizations, which share the management and administration duties of the DMWG. A yearly work plan is developed and implemented during the monthly meetings. Members of the DMWG are also active in the CBDRM technical working group, JANI, and CBA6 task-force.

Membership and Structure

The Working Group operates on a voluntary basis and is managed by a core group. Membership to the core group will be based on an organization's voluntary commitment, recognition by the Government, capacity and taking an active role in disaster management in Vietnam.

The members of the core group are: Action Aid Vietnam, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, CARE International in Vietnam, CECI, Habitat for Humanity Vietnam, IFRC, Oxfam in Vietnam, PCG 10, Plan International in Vietnam, Pacific Disaster Center, Save the Children in Vietnam, and World Vision International in Vietnam.

The Chair of the DMWG is rotated every 6 months and selected by the core group members. Habitat for Humanity Vietnam and IFRC have chaired the DMWG for the year 2011.

Objectives

The main goal of the DMWG is to enhance disaster management¹ in Vietnam through improved information sharing, coordination of initiatives and joint action to promote the highest possible standards and practices.

The key 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.

¹ For the purposes of this TOR 'disaster management' includes disaster risk reduction, mitigation/preparedness, relief and recovery

Activities

In 2011, the core members of the Working Group developed and agreed upon a work plan that was aligned to the DMWG's key objectives. The main activities and monthly meeting discussions are detailed below.

Joint Assessment

During October, a joint assessment team conducted a flood rapid assessment in Dong Thap and An Giang provinces to seek out humanitarian data that is sufficient - at that stage - to help decision makers in their (and other organizations) determine whether further sectoral assessments are necessary and/or the kinds of relief/recovery assistance required.

Advocacy

Members participated and organized the national Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) week during 24-28th May. Activities were held in Hue, Da Nang and Quang Tri and hosted by DWF, Save the Children and Plan International. The DRR week was well represented by Government agencies, the media and NGOs, and was important to raise awareness of the importance of DRR.

Workshops

Members participated in two day DMWG and CCWG Joint Advocacy Strategy workshop. Workshop included key themes such as capacity of local government, voice of civil society and integration of DRR/CCA. It was highlighted that DMWG and CCWG should work together where possible to eliminate duplication.

A two day disaster preparedness training workshop was held in Hanoi for members of the Joint Assessment Team. Training included refresher presentations and simulation exercises.

A half day workshop on cash grant organized by Plan Vietnam and Center for Rural Development in Central Vietnam. This is for NGOs to share about their experiences of in cash grant program such as Irish Aid, Plan Vietnam, CRD, Oxfam, Save the children, Netherlands Red Cross, UNDP, etc...

Meetings

March 2011: The DMWG Terms of Reference (TOR) and work plan for 2011 was reviewed and agreed upon by members. There were presentations and sharing of CARE and UNICEF emergency kits.

April 2011: Members discussed their response to the disaster in Japan. Information about DMWG member's emergency kits are collected so that DMWG can be prepared ahead of the 2011 disaster season. An update on the development of the joint advocacy strategy, DRM law and 6th international CBA conference was provided. There were presentations on the advocacy workshop on safe hospital from disasters, and proposal for the establishment of a national platform for DRR and CCA. It was discussed that the platform would not replace the existing mechanisms for disaster response, and does not intent to duplicate existing networks.

May 2011: There were presentations on the nutrition global harmonized training package for infants and young child nutrition in emergencies, and technical assistance on quality assurance standards and certification of locally produced fortified complementary foods, therapeutic foods, iron folic acid supplements and micronutrient sprinkles. An update of the Disaster Risk Reduction week was provided and members were invited to attend the activities in Central Vietnam.

June 2011: The release of the new Sphere Project document 'Humanitarian charter and minimum standards in humanitarian response' was discussed. Members discussed the importance of translating the handbook to Vietnamese. Details of the Asian Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) were shared in a presentation. A brief refresher session on the DMWG contingency plans and joint rapid assessment was provided. Members discussed the need for a more detailed refresher session for members of the Joint Assessment Team.

July 2011: Members discussed the agenda and organization of the JAT team disaster preparedness training workshop and details for the JAT team members are updated. Presentations on the rapid health assessment, and exercise on mass casualty management are provided. Updates on the emergency kit survey and joint advocacy strategy are also provided. It was discussed that the emergency kit survey was useful to improve distribution efficiency and the procurement process.

August 2011: Final details for the disaster preparedness training were agreed upon. Updates on typhoon Nockten and member organisations disaster response operations are shared.

September 2011: Members vote for the new chair of the second half of the year to be the International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC), Mr. Dang Van Tao. Updates on the Joint Advocacy Strategy, international DRR day and exercise on health disaster response plan were provided.

October 2011: Emergency coordination meetings on response preparedness for typhoons and Mekong flood on 30 Sept and 3rd, 7th Oct for updating on situation and response activities done by members. A monthly meeting on 21 Oct has been held with half time for flood response and the translation of Sphere standards into Vietnamese and finalization.

November 2011: DRR day in Hanoi on 12 November. DMWG is also preparing a monthly meeting and the first detailed assessment of Mekong floods. One workshop to finalize the sphere handbook in Vietnamese and printing with UNDP assistance.

December 2011: Monthly meeting on 2012 annual planning on 16 Dec 2012

Future Directions for 2012

- Jan to March: Monthly meeting and follow up of Mekong flood response
- April to June: Hand over of DMWG chair role and Joint training workshops, DRR day
- Develop close cooperation with CCWG in advocacy activities

Ethnic Minorities Working Group

<http://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 EMWG activities are coordinated by the core group. For specific activities, a task force is created to lead on the preparations. The core group meets on a monthly basis on the basis of an action plan. The Working Group's daily activities are assigned to a coordinator. The coordinator undertakes such tasks as organizing 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.

Membership and Structure

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 September 2011, Oxfam has been the chair of the group. The members of the core group are: Oxfam, Caritas Switzerland, Save the Children, Care International, Plan International, iSEE (Institute for Studies of Society, Economy and Development) and ActionAid Vietnam.

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 early 2011 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 2010, 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
- 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 2011 included:

16 May 2011: EMWG core group meeting: the members decided to follow the plan set for 2011. At the meeting members said goodbye to Mark (Oxfam Hong Kong).

24 June 2011: EMWG held a meeting on sharing the principal findings of a study on *Indigenous knowledge in agriculture and forestry of several ethnic minorities groups of Vietnam's Northern Mountain Region*. This meeting is led by Care International. After the meeting, EMWG Core members sat together to discuss.

22 July 2011: EMWG and iSEE organized an open sharing on 'Cultural Diversity and Stereotype'. The meeting attracted more than 20 people participated and discussed on the findings. The EMWG Core group members had a brief meeting after that to agree on the next plan including the possibility of collaboration between EMWG and CCWG.

7 September 2011: EMWG and Caritas Switzerland held a meeting on '*sharing experiences on working with mountainous ethnic communities*'. 15 people attended and hot discussion was started. The EMWG Core group members also sat together and discussed about the collaboration between EMWG and CCWG.

August 2011 - October 2011: EMWG and CCWG focused on the collaboration on '*The effect of climate change on the ethnic minorities*'

21 October 2011: Open sharing of Dr. Son on rights of ethnic minorities. The sharing attracted 22 development practitioners of INGOs working in Hanoi. The sharing focused on rights ethnic minorities under different perspectives, introduction of some models of rights of ethnic minorities across the world and an analysis of concepts and practices in Vietnam in addressing issues in relation to rights of ethnic minorities. Such contents were highly appreciated by the participants.

24 October 2011: EMWG and CCWG organized a workshop on '*Climate Change and Disasters: Impacts and Initiatives for Ethnic Minority Populations in Mountain Areas of Vietnam*' with more than 100 participants from governmental agencies from central to grassroots levels, donors, NGOs, INGOs, mass media, civil society organizations (CSOs), community-based organizations, universities and institutions and ethnic minorities. They are

actively working on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in ethnic minority areas.

Other Activities

A representative of EMWG took part in the event on 26th of October 2011: ISG Annual Plenary Meeting 'Vietnam towards the New Vision in Agriculture'. There were 3 sessions in the Panel Discussion covered:

Session 1: Sustainable Agricultural Growth, Co chair by Mr. Trang Hieu Dung Director General of Planning Department and Mr. Steven Jaffee, Agricultural Sector Coordinator, WB;

Session 2: Poverty reduction and farmer income increasing; Co lead: Dr. Dang Kim Son, Director of IPSARD and Mr. Graham Dattels, Senior Development Officer, CIDA;

Session 3: Emission reduction from agriculture; Co chair: Mr. Trieu Van Hung, Director general of Science Technology and Environment Department and Mr. Koos Neefjes, Policy Advisor UNDP. In the session 2, in response to the NTP/NRD, EMWG had a discussion amongst the delegates. Key points raised up for bettering the future governmental programs in agriculture such as issues prioritized to ethnic minority groups in particular livelihoods options, capacity building and empowerment programs.

10 - 11 November 2011: The ISG Regional Workshop on National Target Programs – New Rural Development. EMWG delivered a presentation on the NTP/NRD

November 2011: Civil Society Organizations images in Mass Media Workshop

December 2011: Meeting with World Bank; CEMA Ethnic Minority poverty forum.

Future Directions for 2012

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 organize 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.

The Working Group will continue to take opportunities to strengthen the voice of ethnic minorities through real experiences along with themselves

HIV/AIDS Technical Working Group

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

Background

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

Objectives

- 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 analyze and exchange information based on field experience;
- To identify gaps in the overall national response to HIV and build partnerships between organizations to address these gaps; and
- To identify other stakeholders with whom the working group can build partnerships and enhance communications, including the media, the private sector, and other sector specific networks.

Membership and Structure

Mr. Simon Baldwin of FHI Chaired the HIV TWG for the first quarter of 2011, and encouraged a movement towards a focus on human rights and advocacy. Dr Hoang Tu Anh, Director of the Center for Creative Initiatives in Health and Population took over Chairmanship following Simon's departure in April, and continued to ensure strong Vietnamese engagement.

The UNAIDS Secretariat Vietnam serves as the secretariat for the TWG. The meetings are simultaneously translated, and all documentation is provided in both Vietnamese and English.

The TWG 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; Drug Use and HIV; Care and Treatment; HIV and Communications; Children and HIV; men who have sex with men; Sex Work; and the Ho Chi Minh City HIV TWG.

The TWG continues to host and monitor an electronic forum (mailing list), which has grown to include over 730 subscribers. Group members receive and disseminate new information on

HIV topics through this mechanism in a rapid manner. The mailing list is utilized everyday for sharing information.

Activities

Main themes during 2011

Following the evaluation carried out with TWG members in 2010, the Chair and Co-Chair aimed to ensure feedback was incorporated into the TWG and its activities in 2011.

Meetings

23 February 2011: The meeting focused on the issue of sex work and HIV, and consisted of a presentation by a representative from Department of Social Evils Prevention, ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs, followed by a panel discussion with speakers from CCIHP, SCDI, UNFPA, and a member of a sex work group. The discussion centered on the future response to sex work in Vietnam. The meeting also announced the establishment of a new sub-group on sex work and HIV.

1 June 2011: The second meeting of the year was organized under the theme 'HIV and Information, Education and Communication' (IEC), and included three presentations by Pact, Handicap International France, and Center for Community Health Research and Development (CCRD). Discussion following the presentations raised the issues around lack of IEC materials for children, how behavior change is measured, needs assessments, and gender. Enthusiastic about the work of their colleagues, the group also discussed sharing of materials and how this can be improved.

7 September 2011: The theme of the third meeting of the year was 'Monitoring and Evaluation', and Pact, Center for Community health Promotion (CHP), and Population Services International (PSI) presented their experiences with data auditing, data use for improvement of project quality and ways to improve quality monitoring of HIV program outreach. Monitoring and evaluation is an important component of all projects and programmes, thus participants benefited greatly from the information and experience sharing.

1 November 2011: The final meeting of the year was arranged to showcase Vietnamese presentations from the recently held International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (ICAAP). With a number of excellent presentations at the regional meeting, a process for selecting presentations was initiated, and the TWG was asked to vote for the 5 presentations they would most like to see. The 5 'winning' presentations were given by Save the Children, CDC, Institute of Social and Medical Studies, and FHI. Topics covered included mental health, most at risk youth, OVC, and referral to HIV testing and counseling by peer outreach workers.

Other Activities

Lunchtime Seminars

The TWG Secretariat continues to host the lunchtime seminars and provides logistical and technical support to these meetings. In 2011, the TWG Secretariat hosted nine seminars, with the topics: mental health and HIV, MSM and drug use, WHO ART recommendations,

feedback from the Mali youth Summit, MSM in Vietnam: social stigma and consequences, adherence to ART, The impact of Free Trade Agreement to PLHIV's access to life saving medicines, drug addiction treatment by methadone in Hai Phong, and exploring the sexual networks of men in Hanoi.

The seminars continue to be excellent opportunities to share research, projects and other valuable information with colleagues, and are attended by between 30 and 60 participants on average. The Secretariat is frequently contacted by persons wishing to present their work, and the forum continues to be an important space for in depth discussion about particular topics.

Partnership with Hanoi School of Public Health

The Hanoi School of Public Health continues to provide logistical support to the TWG Secretariat, and has ensured continuity and quality of the TWG meetings.

Summary of activities of the Subgroups of the HIV Technical working Group

MSM Subgroup

The National MSM Technical Working Group held 3 meetings in 2011, and have had impressive attendance and participation. The group has continued to grow in 2011, and now has 9 provincial MSM working groups.

The MSM Technical Working Group meets quarterly. Community ownership of the National MSM Working Group was considerably strengthened, resulting in a more sustainable forum for coordination and capacity building for the response to HIV among MSM. The working group went through a participatory re-structure process which led to improved governance of MSM working groups at both national and provincial levels.

In March 2011, the group selected new co-chairs and members of an Executive Committee. Both co-chairs (Phan Huy Hien and Nguyen Van Tung) and three out of five members of Executive Committee are representatives from MSM community. At provincial level, nine working groups also went through transparent selection processes for provincial MSM community representatives. Also, at the meeting in March 2011, a discussion also took place around the MSM related issues which were to be advocated for to in the national HIV strategy 2011-2020.

The meeting held in August was a special meeting on 'Strengthening the HIV response for MSM: Vietnam and Global Perspectives'. Ms. Caroline Frances (FHI) presented 'A snapshot of MSM programming in Vietnam and recommendations for moving forward', which provided an analysis of FHI's interventions for MSM in 6 provinces and recommendations for key questions. Mr. Tat Buu then presented the community's perspectives on HIV response for MSM on behalf of the MSM community. He highlighted the diverse needs of MSM and needs for comprehensive services. Dr. Kenneth Mayer, a professor of medicine at the Harvard Medical School was a special guest at the meeting, and gave the presentation 'HIV prevention for MSM: what works and what do we need to know?'. He presented latest studies and findings related to biological for MSM, including vaccination and PEP and PrEP.

The meeting in October 2011 was held for members of MSM working groups at national and provincial levels to provide inputs to the proposal to be submitted by regional Purple Sky Network (PSN) to GFATM. The meeting participants heard about the GFATM application process, an overview of interventions for MSM in Vietnam. They also discussed needs and gaps for MSM interventions in Vietnam and put forward recommendations for interventions to be included in the PSN proposal.

The group also directly gave feedback to the National HIV Strategy on HIV/AIDS in national civil society consultations, and advocated for a number of issues important for the HIV response for MSM in Vietnam.

HIV and Communications

The HIV and Communications Subgroup coordinates international support for HIV-related media activities and discusses and shares information on behavior change campaigns and initiatives in Vietnam. The group is chaired by Nathan Wilkinson (Pact), and recently elected Pham Hoai Thanh (SCDI) as the groups' co-chair in October 2011.

The HIV and Communications subgroup met in June and October. The meetings involved sharing of experiences and lessons learnt in communication activities, such as press releases, communication strategies, websites, press conferences, corporate identity, and evaluation of the impact of communication activities. Discussions also focused on communications needs and good practices, opportunities for collaboration amongst the NGOs represented in the group, and ways to strengthen their work.

Gender and Sexuality

The Gender and Sexuality sub-group recognizes 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, and thus the group encompasses a broad range of areas that cross-cut many of the other HIV TWG subgroup areas.

The Gender and Sexuality Group is Chaired by Ian Bromage (MCNV). The Group met in April, and plans to meet again in November where a new co-chair will be elected.

The meeting in April was well attended by around 25 participants, and looked at the experiences and needs of young male sex workers. The meeting produced some key conclusions and recommendations, and emphasized the importance of interventions that are tailored for MSW, as this group often does not identify as gay and thus will not be reached by interventions that target this group.

Children and HIV

The Children and HIV subgroup has remained active in 2011 with consistent participation. The group is chaired by Dr Nguyen Trong An, Deputy Director of the Children's Department of MOLISA, and co-chaired by Rebecca Elias, Programme Director at HealthRight International.

In 2011, the Children and HIV subgroup has been actively involved in providing feedback and contributions to the National Plan of Action for Children affected HIV/AIDS (NPA). A special meeting was held in July to gather comments on the NPA, and the group was also invited to a national workshop which allowed the group to give direct feedback.

The Group meets quarterly. The first meeting of the year included a presentation and discussion around OVC-related document review, which investigated target group's needs of IEC material and recommendations for IEC materials specific to OVC children. Dr Son (Abt/HPI) also shared an introduction of the draft monitoring and evaluation system for OVC programs that is to support the National Plan of Action for Children Affected by HIV (NPA).

The main topic of the second meeting of the year was 'Portraying children in communication material', and was presented by Nathan Wilkinson from Pact and Pham Hoai Thanh from SCDI. This is an important topic given the sensitive status of the beneficiaries and the stigma commonly attached to HIV. Discussions focused on how and when we need to obtain consent from the subjects of photos, consent forms, ethics of providing incentives for taking pictures, importance of portraying people affected by HIV in a positive way, and challenges of gaining consent. The group also decided to collaboratively develop a set of 'code of conduct' guidelines on child friendly communication that can be incorporated into work policies. These guidelines were developed and disseminated in July. The final meeting is planned for November, where members will share experiences of programming and research work with OVC.

Drug use and HIV

The Drug use and HIV group has not met in 2011.

Greater Involvement of People with AIDS (GIPA)

The GIPA subgroup met in February and May. For the first meeting, the group invited Dr Thuy from Bach Mai hospital to present on the second line regimen treatment for PLHIV, and was followed by an extended call for participation in the needs assessment of the group which was facilitated by David Graham, VSO volunteer.

Dr Fabio Mesquita from WHO was invited to present at the second meeting on co-infection of HIV and TB. The meeting also presented GIPA's need assessment results, of which suggestions to improve the GIPA meeting include: themed meetings, inviting guest speakers, training integrated into the meeting.

The group plans to meet again in early December.

Ho Chi Minh City

The Ho Chi Minh City HIV TWG is the only geographically based sub-group in the TWG. The HCMC HIV TWG provides a platform whereby 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 2011, meetings were organized in January, April and August and have had good participation with between 25 and 65 attendees. A fourth meeting is organized for December where new co-chairs will be elected for the group. Meetings involved discussions HIV prevention for MARPS, challenges and roles of CSOs in the HIV response in Vietnam and roles of CSOs and cooperation among CSOs and Governmental agencies.

Sex Work

In 2011, the Sex Work Working Group was officially formed, and is chaired by Ms Luong Thi Tinh (COHED) and Ms Nguyen Ngoc Khanh (Noi Binh Yen self-help group).

The first meeting was a success, with around 40 participants from Office of Government, VAAC, USAID, representatives of Provincial AIDS centers (PAC), NGOs, UN agencies, and peer educators from several regions. The Groups' ToR was presented, and speakers from the PAC and UNFPA presented overviews of the HIV response for sex workers in Vietnam. A group of peer educators also performed a role play on challenges faced by sex workers in accessing harm reduction services, highlighting stigma and discrimination as a key challenge. The second meeting is scheduled in December 2011.

In 2012, the group aims to be involved in advocating around sex work policy issues, and promote involvement of the community in the group. The group also plans to conduct a study on social network of FSWs in Vietnam in order to better understand how these networks contributing to the spread of HIV and HIV prevention.

Care and Treatment

The Care and Treatment Group met in March, and discussed WHO guidelines for intensified tuberculosis case-finding and isoniazid preventive therapy for people living with HIV in resource- constrained settings, and diagnosis and management of TB/HIV. Questions on ART regimens for TB/HIV patients and drug interaction were discussed.

A meeting on nutrition and HIV is planned before the end of 2011.

Future Directions for 2012

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

The TWG will also aim to ensure feedback is regularly sought into the functioning of the group and how to make the meetings and platform most beneficial for its members. There is also a need to ensure meetings are action oriented, and perhaps include a stronger advocacy focus.

Ho Chi Minh City INGO Discussion Group

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

Background

For the past eight 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 Organizations (HUFO). Speakers and guests from Government agencies, donors and partner organizations are invited to join in the meetings.

Membership and Structure

A core group of five to six INGO representatives is responsible for organizing the meetings and other activities. They are often 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. Through 2011 the core group was composed of the representatives of four foreign NGOs: Education for Development, Loreto Vietnam – Australia Programme, Saigon Children's Charity and Vietnam Plus. Since September they have been joined by representatives of East Meets West, Norwegian Mission Alliance and Vina Capital Foundation. Education for Development serves as the coordinating agency with support from Saigon Children's Charity.

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

Networking

Organisation of quarterly meetings

- At the first quarterly meeting, in January 2011, the group discussed disability in Vietnam, following presentations from Le Chu Giang from DoLISA who gave an Introduction and Overview of Disability in Vietnam, Vo T. Hoang Yen (Director of DRD) who spoke about issues facing disability in Vietnam, and Caroline Mayger, who gave an update from the Disability Working Group and the outcomes of their needs assessment.
- At the second quarterly meeting, in April 2011, 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 Mr. Phong from PACCOM who updated the group on INGO activities in Vietnam.

- At the third quarterly meeting, in July 2011, there was a large attendance as the group welcomed a range of speakers who addressed environmental issues in Vietnam at a local and national level, including presentations from the Forestry University, Thien Chi (a local association supported by Vietnam Plus), and from 350.org.
- In preparation for the fourth quarterly meeting in October 2011, the core group circulated a questionnaire to all members of the group as a basis for discussion about Discussion Group activities in 2012 and beyond.
- At the fourth quarterly meeting, in October 2011, there was time for group discussion about the environmental issues raised at the previous meeting. This was followed by discussion based on the questionnaire circulated to the group members prior to the meeting. The focus was on what members of the group value about the meetings and which topics they would like to revisit or cover over the coming years.

Organisation of monthly lunch gatherings

These monthly lunch gatherings provide an informal social platform for foreign NGO representatives and any other persons interested in the NGO community and NGO work in Ho Chi Minh City. These now take place at different venues every month based on nominations from those who subscribe to the HCMC INGO mailing list hosted by VUFO. Nominations can include any venue that offers vocational training or opportunities to disadvantaged groups.

Facilitation of thematic working groups

There are four thematic working groups in HCMC: 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.

Future Directions for 2012

- 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 to ensure their smooth functioning including good communication with the broader NGO community.
- Continue the informal lunch gatherings for networking and information sharing purposes.

Practical Details and Contact Information

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 Organizations, 31 Le Duan, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City.

The monthly lunch gatherings one Friday per month and invitations or calls for venue nominations are sent out through the mailing list: ingo-hcmc@ngocentre.org.vn

The Coordinating Agency for the HCMC INGO Discussion Group is:

Education for Development (EFD)
Ms. Hanna Smokcum, Country Coordinator
305/30 Le Van Sy Street, Ward 1, Tan Binh District
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
Telephone: (+84-8) 3991 6033
Email: hanna@educationfordevelopment.org

HCMC Child Rights Working Group

http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/?q=content/hcmc-child-rights-working_group

Background

The HCMC CRWG is an active and enthusiastic group of INGOs, Vietnamese NGOs and other stakeholders, set up in 2008. 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 CRWG were inspired by the CRWG in Hanoi, in order to provide for some level of consistency; and the HCMC CRWG coordinates and works closely with their colleagues in the CRWG in Hanoi. These Terms of Reference were updated during 2011 as the Hanoi CRWG adapted their Terms too. Copies of these can be found on the NGO Centre website.

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

Objectives

The overall purpose of the HCMC CRWG is to enhance communication and coordination between child-focused organisations, to share learning between actors working to support Vietnamese society, and to effectively manage and respond to issues related to the rights of the child. The main 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 HCMC for consultation, policy dialogue and common statements.
- To liaise with the CRWG 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.

- To raise a common voice and play an active role in regards to child rights promotion and advocacy with all stakeholders – particularly with local, regional and national government and the media.

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

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, as well as representatives of government institutions. The meetings are most often held at the offices of the Ho Chi Minh City Child Welfare Foundation and are held every second month on a Thursday. We particularly appreciate the growing direct involvement in the group from our government partners and wish to especially thank both DoET and DoLISA for their engagement.

Themes

The core issue in 2011 have been quite wide ranging after having focussed on Child Protection Policy for the previous 2 or 3 years. Child Protection continues to be a core theme for the group as well as the development of practical and shared responses to this issue, which seeks to ensure the protection of children wherever they may be in Vietnam. This work is also coordinated with the CRWG in Hanoi. The key themes in 2011 were:

- Violence and children – in the home, in the community and at school. This was a shared exercise with support and involvement from both DoET and DoLISA.
- National Plan of Action for Children – group discussions on key government plans for working with vulnerable children from 2011 onwards
- Children with special needs
- The group has also focussed on ensuring that the group acts in a coordinated fashion and some time was spent looking inwardly at the group (such as the Terms of Reference) as well as externally.

The HCMC CRWG also discusses and examines various other child related issues when they are relevant, depending on the needs or interests of the participants.

Practical Details

Frequency: The inaugural meeting of the HCMC CRWG took place on 15th May 2008, and the group meets every 2 months. The date and venue of each meeting is posted on the website and announced through the mailing list <ingo-hcmc@ngocentre.org.vn>.

Venue: Members decide on the next venue during each meeting, but the plan is to circulate amongst participating organisations. Currently the group meets mainly courtesy of the Ho Chi Minh City Child Welfare Foundation.

Working language: Vietnamese and English are both working languages. The HCMC CRWG endeavours to make the meetings as accessible as possible for both English and Vietnamese speakers with a translator from English to Vietnamese and Vietnamese to English.

Chair: Paul Finnis from Saigon Children's Charity and Ai My are the current co-chairs of the group and the ambition is that the group always has one INGO and local NGO as co-chairs. This role is reviewed every 12 months.

Meetings: During 2011, six meetings were held. (Copies of the minutes for each meeting are available on the website.)

Future direction for 2012

The HCMC CRWG 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 matters such as violence but also it is expected to focus more on issues such as education and disability too. Other issues may well be taken up including health care and trafficking.

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

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 5 organizations who take responsibility for coordinating the annual work plan and day-to-day agenda of the group. The core group is based on voluntary representation and currently includes members from Disabled Peoples Organisations, local and foreign NGOs.

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

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

According to Needs of Assessment carried on in October 2010, the DWG organized four workshops about the most popular topics:

- March 2011: Behaviour and Communication
- June 2011: Disability Awareness
- September 2011: Inclusive Education
- December 2011: Employment

Future direction for 2012

The DWG will continue to exploit the results of the Needs of Assessment and will organize workshops on the following topics:

- March 2012: Vocational Training
- June 2012: Practical Sharing Workshop about Tools used to Teach
- September 2012: School / Home Partnership
- December 2012: Early Intervention

In addition, the DWG will continue to follow its objectives:

- To increase the engagement of local stakeholders and PWD's in the activities of the DWG by needs based training / workshops and dual language meetings (Vietnamese and English)
- To increase membership of the DWG core group
- To focus on the provision of workshops and training to cover identified topics
- To try and address specific needs of stakeholders by supporting the development of partnerships

Practical Details and Contact Information

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 people working to support people living with disabilities. This can be international and donor organisations, as well as representatives of Vietnamese government and non-government local organisations. Most importantly, it should include representatives of Vietnamese groups of people living with disabilities. The Chair was handed over from DRD to MAISON CHANCE in March 2010. The minutes, reports and Events will have English/Vietnamese translation. The meetings are primarily in English but the group is committed to providing Vietnamese language translation where possible.

Future Directions for 2012

DWG core group will hold meetings about every month and these are open to all. The dates and location will be notified through the DWG mailing list (contact <hcmcdwg@yahoo.com> to have your name or organisation added) and the INGO-HCMC mailing list.

The dates for events during 2012 will be circulated via the DWG mailing list and posted on the VUFO-NGO Resource Centre website.

Landmines Working Group

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

Background

The Landmines Working Group (LWG) was established in 1996 by NGO representatives of Oxfam Hong Kong, and Chuck Searcy of the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAFA). A few other NGOs who participated at the beginning included Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and Peace Trees Vietnam (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 organization 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 authorized 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.

Membership and Structure

The co-chair positions are reviewed every year and members choose representatives to fill these positions. The co-chairs were rotated at the 14 October 2011 meeting of the LWG. Hannah Bryce of MAG and Jonathan Guthrie of NPA were elected to replace outgoing co-chairs Chuck Searcy of Project RENEW and HDI and Nguyen Thi Thanh Hong of the Association for Empowerment for Persons with Disability (AEPD).

There has been no recognized 'core group' during 2011 but it is likely that a few key members will be asked to participate in such an arrangement in the future.

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).

Activities

Highlights from Landmines Working Group meeting on April 15, 2011:

The meeting was attended by 11 Working Group members. The main topics were discussed at the meeting as below:

Changes at Project RENEW: Chuck Searcy and Dinh Ngoc Vu of Project RENEW provided an update on VVMF's withdrawal from Vietnam and involvement with Project RENEW to be effective on June 1, 2011. Commitments for continued funding and technical assistance from Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), Humpty Dumpty Institute (HDI), and other partners would assure that Project RENEW's work could continue without interruption.

New Land Reduction Trials: NPA and RENEW had undertaken field tests in Quang Tri of a new land reduction model using U.S. bombing data, intended to reduce the size of the area requiring clearance by using cluster munitions 'footprints' found in old bomb strike data. The result is hoped to save time and man-hours, and lower costs. Outcomes will be shared with other NGOs and the government.

Database expansion: Rickard Hartman reported good cooperation among SODI, RENEW, and NPA in sharing data input and information management built on the Techbase platform introduced by NPA. SODI is hoping to backtrack and input 12 years of past activity to build a strong historical foundation for the database, but not much specific information has been available over the years. SODI also announced that 20 commune staff were being trained as focal points for local liaison, MRE, reporting, communications, and other activities. SODI also was training another mobile team in Hue to be operable in May.

Landmine Monitor Report: Nguyen Thi Thanh Hong of AEPD reported that gathering data for the new edition of the Landmine Monitor Report, which AEPD volunteered to do, was hampered because each organization had its own data system and managed it differently. There is no standard format for record-keeping or reporting within each province or nationwide.

LWG Advocacy: There was discussion of a possible meeting with the newly installed General Secretary of the Communist Party, Mr. Nguyen Phu Trong, for members of the LWG to discuss issues related to mine action in Vietnam. There were doubts about whether Mr. Trong would agree to such a meeting, but it was agreed to explore the possibilities.

U.S. Funding: Tim Liston of the U.S. Embassy warned of serious funding difficulties for mine action in the future. He predicted U.S. funding at a level of about \$5 million annually in the short-term, but predicted that funding would not continue for very long at that level.

Roadmap to CCM accession: Questions were raised about Vietnam's CCM accession since a 2010 meeting when Vietnamese ministry officials stated that a 'road map' toward Vietnam's implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) had been circulated and was now being followed as government policy. It was suggested that Thao Griffiths of VVAF, who organized the meeting where that was discussed, follow up with government officials.

MAG funding: MAG has received 30 months of funding support from DFID, according to Greg Secomb, to field three larger clearance teams that will also handle EOD tasks in Quang Tri Province.

AO cleanup, UXO clearance: Susan Hammond of the War Legacies Project had attended the a conference on Agent Orange sponsored by the Ford Foundation's 'Dialogue Group' in Bien Hoa. Susan noted that UXO cleanup will be required at the 27-hectare site at Da Nang and the site at Bien Hoa, although how that will be handled was unclear at the time.

NGO 'localization': AEPD updated the group after eight months of 'localization' as a Vietnamese NGO, promoting small scale businesses for persons with disability in Quang Binh funded by Irish Aid, and implementing emergency relief and rehabilitation projects after heavy flooding in October 2010

New U.S. Ambassador: There was agreement that the incoming U.S. Ambassador, David Shear, should be invited to attend the next LWG meeting in September. Tim Liston said it might be possible depending on his schedule at that time.

Highlights from Landmines Working Group meeting on Friday, October 14, 2011:

Land Release in a Cluster Munition Context: Presented by Jonathan (Gus) Guthrie, NPA Country Manager made a presentation highlighting how Vietnam could use 'Land Release in a Cluster Munition Context' to greatly reduce the need for expensive and time consuming clearance. The approach focuses on Confirmed Hazardous Areas (CHA) as the priority for public safety. Cluster munitions and certain other ordnance are an immediate danger, but bombs buried deep underground, for example, do not pose an immediate threat. If Hazardous Areas are properly identified the target response can be greatly reduced. Sr. Col. Tuan of MOD's Engineering Command said the information was quite interesting. He suggested that Gus and NPA work with BOMICEN to develop such a response plan, based on reducing the area and types of contamination that must be covered. A technical workshop on land release is scheduled in Da Nang for November and LWG members are invited to attend.

First meeting of VBMAC: The new National Mine Action Authority which held its first meeting and finalized a working plan for 2012. A survey covering 24 of 63 cities and provinces nationwide has been completed, and results will be updated in the database system. In 2012 the Government will invest more funds to speed up the survey progress. The new Mine Action Authority is working on International Mine Action Standards with support from GICHD, with a list of 14 different standards which is being translated into English along with the IMAS text.

National Data Base: Officially begun in September with support from NPA, and Sr. Col. Tuan said data entry from six provinces is being speeded up to be included in the new data base.

Another four provinces in the central highlands and seven in southeastern Vietnam will bring the total to 17 provinces completed.

Information exchange: Sr. Col. Tuan encouraged LWG members to request information freely from VBMAC. He also offered VBMAC to help NGOs with meeting arrangements and venues, including the BOMICEN museum as a meeting place. The goal is to make all mine action players, authorities from VBMAC, members of the LWG, work together effectively in the same arena – all working on the same target, to mitigate the impact of UXO.

Mobile Bomb Cutting System: Col. Nguyen Hong Son of BOMICEN presented a briefing for LWG members on the new Mobile Bomb Cutting System recently turned over by Golden West Humanitarian Foundation, which has expanded technological capacity to deal with very large ordnance.

Convention on Cluster Munitions : LWG members have generally been active in supporting the international Convention on Cluster Munitions, and encouraging Vietnam's accession to the treaty. There seemed to be progress in that direction at the recent 2MSP Meeting in Beirut, which was attended by a ranking Vietnamese delegation and NGOs. Ngo Xuan Hien of Project RENEW reported that Vietnam's positions were: (1) Vietnam supports the goals of the treaty, but is not ready to accede, one reason being that the affected countries should not be more responsible than the countries that used cluster munitions; and (2) there should be more international assistance for victims. There was a special session for southeast Asian regional representatives, who recommended that the CCM be included in an agenda item at all SE Asian nation meetings in the future.

Mr. Do Hung Viet of MOFA said that overall there was a very good mood at the 2MSP. He said Vietnam's major concern is whether Vietnam can fulfill its obligations of clearance. He pointed out that the figures about contamination which have been used by Vietnam have not been very useful, so it's good that NPA and others are identifying specific CM affected areas and problem more exactly. That may help Vietnam to sign the treaty. The political issue is more difficult, he said – the 'responsibility' to clear munitions. Why does Vietnam, a victim country, have to take responsibility? He also mentioned the problem of funding, and the experience of Laos, where funding from donor countries is not really up to expectations.

NGO Resource Center website: LWG members have been briefed by Phan Thu Ha of the NGO Resource Center about the website and how to upload and share surveys, studies, reports and other documents produced by LWG members. LWG members agreed that we should make much better use of this important information resource, to link reports and other documents for full public access.

Disability advice from Ireland: AEPD undertook a study tour in Ireland to review quality services available to PWDs, an issue of importance to many LWG members who provide support services for ERW victims. The Irish visit focused on accessibility, taxis, buses and other public transport, airport access, hospitals, schools – examples that offered a good model for Vietnam. Nguyen Thi Thanh Hong of AEPD said there were two key factors to Ireland's success: 1. strong the government funding and a good public welfare system; and 2. good human resources, volunteers, Networking is and strengthening provincial disability associations.

DDG plans in Vietnam: Jimmy Roodt from Danish Demining Group summarized DDG's plans and priorities, to work in four provinces: Quang Tri, Quang Binh, Quang Ngai, and Da Nang. DDG is part of the Danish Refugee Council, an organization in 42 countries, DDG specifically is in 9 countries including Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

Elections: Hannah Bryce and Gus Guthrie were elected co-chairs of the LWG, taking over for outgoing co-chairs Chuck Searcy and Nguyen Thi Thanh Hong.

May 2011 request from VBMAC for NGO input for new National Mine Action Database Management Centre in Vietnam

In a 20 May 2011 memo to all demining organizations in Vietnam, Col. Nguyen Trong Canh requested that NGOs provide information that could be used by a new Database Unit at the Vietnam Bomb and Mine Clearance Action Centre (VBMAC). With the help of NPA, the unit was creating a national information system is to compile all relevant and available information on mine action from different sources into one system. Col. Canh noted that once the VBMAC Database Unit is functional and operational, the unit will be the resource centre for all relevant information/maps on the aftermath of war and mine action in Vietnam. He requested NGOs to cooperate by submitting all relevant survey, clearance, victim assistance and other information in as much detail as possible. He said data-sets from NGOs will be integrated into the national database system for baseline information.

Information Sharing

The LWG continued to be a primary source of general information about mine action in Vietnam as well as other countries and technical information about technologies and methodologies that are being deployed or which might be applied in Vietnam. Regular exchanges of news clips, reports, and announcements of NGO activities were disseminated through the LWG membership list via e-mails

Microfinance Working Group

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

Background

Vietnam Microfinance Working Group (MFWG) 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 under the VUFO-NGO Resource Center, in accordance with the Working Groups Guidelines and approved by the Steering Committee in April 2003, the MFWG is open to all individuals and organizations interested in microfinance in Vietnam. In September 2011 MFWG was recognized as a professional industry network of microfinance institutions in Vietnam according to the Decision No. 238/QĐ-CTHH (September 5, 2011) and became the Vietnam Association of Small and Medium Enterprises (VNASME)

Objectives

- To encourage policy dialogue across relevant stakeholder organizations in order to facilitate the development of a favorable enabling environment;
- To promote sustainable microfinance among practitioners by disseminating information, sharing lessons learned and achieving consensus on best practices for microfinance in Vietnam.

Membership and Structure

The network has more than 67 members including governmental agencies, microfinance institutions, microfinance organizations, NGOs, INGOs, international organizations, donors and individuals.

Activities

From January to September 2011 the MFWG worked towards formalization, which was approved by a relevant governmental body. Sixty seven participating members from 31 organizations have registered as official MFWG members, while more than 600 other related stakeholders actively shared information through the MFWG and contributed to its capacity building through Microfinance Bulletin, microfinance monthly newsletters, MFWG's website, 5 workshops, 5 training courses and 3 regional / international conferences.

Two quarterly meetings and one semi-annual review meeting were organized by MFWG and attended by 57 representatives from 29 organizations. The MFWG semi-annual review meeting on August 13, 2011 in Ho Chi Minh City brought together 23 participants, members of the MFWG Steering Committee and Advisory Committee – to share information and to discuss the MFWG's operations. Two quarterly meetings were organized on February 14, 2011 (Hanoi) and August 13, 2011 (Ho Chi Minh City).

The MFWG is advocating for policies that will regulate microfinance environment in Vietnam. The MFWG is developing good practices in microfinance sector and lobbying with

the State Bank of Vietnam, Ministry of Finance and other relevant governmental agencies. This is achieved through two conferences on microfinance at the national level, three microfinance workshops and other meetings; as well as by working closely with policy makers on microfinance operational regulations and guidelines.

The MFWG actively participated in a national conference on Microfinance Strategy 2020 in Vietnam, which took place on February 15, 2011 in Hanoi. The conference brought together 72 participants from 47 organizations, including MFWG members, representatives of the State Bank of Vietnam, the Ministry of Finance, VINASME, donors and other stakeholders. They discussed the draft document and shared ideas about the microfinance sector in Vietnam. More than 90% of participants were satisfied with preparations of the conference and appreciated the content. Discussion on the draft Microfinance Strategy was summarized by the MFWG and submitted to the State Bank of Vietnam on February 23, 2011.

Capacity Building through Training Courses for the MFWG Members

In total 102 participants received training in capacity building on business development services (BDS), credit risk management, social performance management (SPM) and microfinance management. TOT training courses were organized by the MFWG and its partners from January to September 2011, based on needs assessment in 2010.

Another 24 participants from 17 organizations (MFWG members) built their capacity through the ‘*Making Microfinance Works: Management for Improved Performance*’ training course conducted by the MFWG in cooperation with ILO from May 23 to June 3, 2011 in Hanoi. Most participants (99%) were satisfied with the training content and preparations. Seven trainees who met the ILO standards for potential trainers attended an advanced training, organized by the MFWG with ILO’s technical support, on September 12 - 16, 2011.

MFWG as a Coordination and Information Hub for the Industry in Vietnam

The MFWG is a ‘one stop shop’ for stakeholders looking for a reliable up-to-date information and documents relevant to their work. These include the MFWG members, SBV, donors, investors and other global microfinance resources.

The MFWG organized the workshop ‘*Data Collection for Development and Standardization*’ on March 4, 2011 in Hanoi with 20 participants from microfinance institutions, donors, ADB, INGOs, and other relevant partners. Following the workshop, the MFWG developed a form for annual data collection, which meets international and national standards.

In order to expand its international links and networking, the MFWG actively participate in various regional and international networks, including *Banking With The Poor* (BWTP) and the *Social Performance Task Force - Asia Working Group* (SPTF-AWG). The MFWG representatives also attended an international conference in Thailand (February); the SPTF Annual Meeting in June (Netherlands) and Asia Network Summit in July (Philippines).

Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (SANRM) Working Group

<http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/node/134>

Background

The last meeting of the SANRM working Group took place on 21 September 2007. The SANRM remained dormant until mid-2011. Prompted by a number of inquiries from different stakeholders, the NGO Resource Center took the initiative to revive the group, particularly considering its relevance to the current situation in Vietnam. Following the initial contact from the Resource Centre a few new members and several old members expressed interest to join the group. The first SANRM meeting (since 2007) took place on 5 August 2011.

Membership and Structure

During the ‘revival’ meeting on 5 August 2011 a new group of the SANRM Core Members were elected as follows:

- WG Chairperson: Eduardo A. Sabio, Regional Representative of VECO Vietnam;
- Core Group Members: VECO Vietnam, Action Aid Vietnam, GRET, ECOECO, East Meets West and Care International.

Objectives

The overall goal of SANRM is to improve livelihoods of people dependent on natural resource in Vietnam.

Objectives:

- To share SANRM information and experiences among its members;
- To implement joint activities and to identify strategic and practical action points that will create forums for policy dialogues with relevant governmental bodies and donor institutions/organizations.

Activities

Since its reactivation in August 2011, the activities of the SANRM included:

September 2011

- First WG meeting on September 27 with 14 participants from 10 organizations;
- Reviewed and finalized the draft TOR of the SANRM Working Group.
- Agreed on priority activities for September 2011 – December 2012:
 - (a) Mapping of who is doing what and where among the SANRM members;
 - (b) Sharing of experiences sessions;
 - (c) Dialogues with government and SANRM stakeholders on certain policies.

- Created a sub-group to prepare a position paper for the National Target Program - New Rural Development (NTP-NRD) Workshop in October/November 2011.

October 2011

- Held the second SANRM meeting on October 28, which became an informal discussion due to small attendance (5 people); next meeting scheduled for Nov 18;
- Consolidated inputs of some WG members into a SANRM Statement Document;
- The Chair was invited to serve as one of the panel discussants at the International Support Group Annual Plenary Meeting 2011: *Vietnam Towards the New Vision in Agriculture* held in Hanoi on 26 October. During this plenary meeting, the Chair articulated the issues agreed by its members in the SANRM Statement Document.

November 2011

- Coordinated preparations for the participation of the WG in the forthcoming Workshop on ‘*National Target Program on New Rural Development: Learning from Experiences*’ scheduled for November 9-10, 2011 in Hanoi.

Future Directions for 2012

Three priority tasks are planned for the period September 2011 - December 2012:

- Mapping of who is doing what and where among the SANRM members;
- Sharing of experiences sessions;
- Dialogues with government and stakeholders of SANRM on certain policies.

Preparation of the detailed plan of these tasks is scheduled for the next SANRM meeting on 18 November 2011.