

# VietHealth Update

December 2012

*The Sustainable Health Development Centre (VietHealth) is a Vietnamese non-governmental organisation working to improve the health of the people of Vietnam, with a particular emphasis on disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and communities. Focusing on childhood disability, water and sanitation, reproductive health, primary health care and HIV/AIDS, VietHealth uses a community-based approach to deliver services, build capacity and raise awareness.*

## Vinh Long Project Benefitting 20,000 Children, Irish Delegation Told

On 13 October 2012, VietHealth staff welcomed a delegation led by the Ambassador of the Republic of Ireland to Vietnam, Damien Cole, and the Minister for Trade and Development, Joe Costello. The group, which included Irish Aid staff based both in Vietnam and in Ireland, heard about VietHealth's work on behalf of disadvantaged and vulnerable populations across Viet Nam, in particular the disability projects in Vinh Long province and Da Nang city funded by Irish Aid since 2009.

These projects have increased disability prevention, screening and intervention, with over 20,000 children under the age of six screened for disabilities since 2010. This

has given 240 children with disabilities (CwDs) access to the services they need, including surgery, medical treatment at the regional hospital, intensive rehabilitation at health centres, community-based rehabilitation and special education within a school setting.

The delegation also visited the VietHealth Childhood Rehabilitation Clinic, located on-site at VietHealth's head office in Hanoi. The clinic, which is funded by Latter-Day Saint Charities (LDSC), is unique in Vietnam because it uses a holistic approach incorporating health, education and social work to achieve the best outcomes for CwDs. VietHealth staff explained how the or-



*Minister Joe Costello visits the VietHealth Childhood Rehabilitation Clinic*

ganisation's approach links projects in different locations, including the clinic and Vinh Long project.

## Finnish Delegation Visits 'Pioneering' Bac Giang and Phu Tho Disability Projects

VietHealth recently welcomed a delegation from the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM) which included Pauli Rantanen, Regional Office Director, Koskinen Arja Hannele, Program Manager and Noora Pauliina Simola, Regional Program Manager. On 27-28 November 2012, the delegation visited FELM-funded disability prevention, detection and intervention

projects in Bac Giang and Phu Tho provinces. "FELM has been very happy to cooperate with VietHealth on this project" said Ms. Simola. "The methodology used in this project is a pioneering methodology in this field in Vietnam."

In Phu Tho province, the group visited the Cam Khe and Thanh Thuy district health centres and met with the project

management units. Later, the delegation observed project activities in the Dong Luong and Xuan Loc communes, including club activities on the prevention of birth defects at the commune health centre, monthly meetings and counselling for pregnant women, as well as visiting households with children with disabilities.

In Bac Giang province, the group met with

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- Irish Minister Visits
- VietHealth New Executive Director

the project management team and observed project activities, including: rehabilitation and special education training sessions for parents of CwDs at the Bac Giang Rehabilitation Hospital; early intervention for CwDs at the Que Nham and Ngoc Chau kindergartens; and a club for the prevention of birth defects at the Ngoc Chau commune health centre.

The project has already achieved some impressive results in its first year. Twenty-seven health, education and social services workers participated in train-the-trainer workshops. Subsequently, 239 health workers were trained and then

delivered screening for over 4500 children – almost all the children in the targeted communes. Of the 295 children identified as possibly experiencing a disability, over 90 per cent received subsequent classification examinations, 38 were referred for advanced examinations and intervention, and 20 received rehabilitation support in the community. Remarking on the good results, Ms. Simola said: "Thank you to VietHealth, you are making a difference in Vietnam."

The Phu Tho and Bac Giang projects are the culmination of several years work. VietHealth and FELM's partnership in

Phu Tho stretches back to 2010 when the organisations conducted a needs assessment in Thanh Thuy commune. This was followed by a project piloting the model, a further needs assessment in Bac Giang and an exhaustive baseline survey of disability issues in Cam Khe and Tan Yen communes. VietHealth has continuously refined its model of enhancing the capacity of the existing network of health, education and social service workers to detect and treat childhood disability since its first project in Vinh Long province was funded by Irish Aid.

## Irish Minister for Training and Skills to Visit VietHealth

Following the successful visit by Ireland's Minister for Trade and Development, Joe Costello, VietHealth is preparing to welcome the country's Minister of Training and Skills, Ciaran Cannon. On 11 December 2012, Minister Cannon and Ambassador Cole will visit VietHealth's Hanoi office and the on-site Childhood Rehabilitation Clinic.

## 11,000 Da Nang Children will Benefit from Latest Initiative

On 20 August 2012, VietHealth launched its latest project, a childhood disability prevention and detection initiative in Cam Le district, Da Nang city, that will screen 11,000 children under the age of six. Of an estimated 400 children who will be identified as having disabilities, all will receive benefits from health insurance, with 250 children receiving referrals and financial assistance from the project. In addition, 200 parents will receive training on rehabilitation and special education.

The two-year project, which is generously supported by Irish Aid, will enhance the

capacity of the local health care network to undertake disability prevention, detection and intervention -- including both basic and intensive techniques. Other objectives include strengthening the existing referral network, and adopting social work and case management work in the service delivery system. The project will develop important tools such as a standardised package and guidelines for screening for disability, a provincial database to track the incidence of disability in children younger than six and a reusable project curriculum on early child-

hood disability detection and intervention. In all, 25 master trainers, 160 local health and social workers, up to 40 pre-school teachers and 20 rehabilitation therapists will receive training. The project builds on earlier work in Vinh Long province supported by Irish Aid and the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM). Other project partners include Vietnam National Assistance for the Handicapped, the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs and the Da Nang government.

## VietHealth Welcomes New Executive Director

VietHealth would like to thank Mrs. Phan Vu Thi Kieu Anh -- former Executive Director of VietHealth -- who led the organisation since 2008 and achieved notable advances for the organisation, its partners and people who experience disadvantage across Viet Nam. Mrs. Phan Vu Thi Kieu Anh has decided to step aside from her role as Executive Director of VietHealth.

With the resignation of Mrs. Phan Vu Thi Kieu Anh, VietHealth's Board of Directors has appointed Dr. Le Quang Duong as the organisation's new Executive Direc-

tor, effective 1 November 2012. Dr. Duong worked previously at the Supporting Community Development Initiative, a Vietnamese NGO that works to improve the lives and health of marginalised populations, primarily people living with HIV/AIDS. He received his M.D. from the Hanoi Medical University and his Master's in Public Health from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Dr. Duong can be reached at [duongle@viethealth.org.vn](mailto:duongle@viethealth.org.vn) or by calling (84-4) 3718 6677.

"I am very pleased to be chosen to lead VietHealth", said Dr. Duong. "The organisation already has a number of great projects helping vulnerable and marginalised communities and I look forward to working closely with our donors and partners to build on this foundation."

*VietHealth greatly appreciates the contributions of its donors and partners. Questions regarding current projects and ideas for new projects should be directed to Nguyen Hong Quan, VietHealth Office Manager, at [programme@viethealth.org.vn](mailto:programme@viethealth.org.vn) or by calling (84-4) 3717 3118.*

*The views and opinions set out herein are those of VietHealth and do not necessarily represent the position of its donors and partners, including Irish Aid and FELM.*

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