



Project description

The SSC Health Project in Vietnam addresses non-communicable diseases (NCDs) at the primary health care level. Vietnam is experiencing a rise in NCDs, including diabetes, hypertension and cancers. The focus of the SSC project is two-fold: 1) strengthening the awareness regarding prevention and management of NCDs and 2) strengthening the primary health care sector.

The focus on primary health care is aligned with the Vietnamese National NCD Strategy from March 2015 and subsequent circulars, laws and plans (the latest from May 2018). The mutual focus in Denmark and Vietnam on strengthening primary health has given a unique opportunity for the exchange of experiences and knowledge between the Danish and Vietnamese health systems during time of reforms. Hence, the policy environment is conducive for the project objectives, albeit implementation strategies and modalities are challenging. The project involves experts from the Danish Ministry of Health, University of Copenhagen, Local Government Denmark, The Danish National Institute of Public Health, University of Southern Denmark and University College South.

Key activities in 2018

The year of 2018 was marked by high-level visits of the Danish Minister of Health to Vietnam (April) and by the Vietnamese Minister of Health to Denmark (October). The reciprocal political support had a significant, positive impact on project implementation, and important milestones were reached in approval of DK-developed training materials and guidelines.

From October 2018 the use of the new materials began in the 30 pilot commune health stations in Thai Binh Province, with the active involvement of the Core Training Team established in 2017 and with the additional involvement of the regional medical university in the pilot province.

The DFC health-targeted capacity development courses organized in Copenhagen continued to have a substantial and positive impact on project implementation and by the end of 2018, 46 Vietnamese professionals had received training in Denmark.

On November 1st the 3-year Danida funded "Living Together with Diabetes" (Windows 2) research project in Thai Binh Province was launched, providing from the outset valuable in-depth insight into the health and social conditions for the rural population living with diabetes.

Main achievements and lessons learned in 2018

The approval of training manuals and guidelines in August 2018 was a significant break-through, but also a precondition for launching the scheduled on-the-job training activity. These training activities are a key component of the project, aiming to develop the operation of the primary health care sector in the target communes.

The visit from the Danish Minister of Health clearly had a positive impact on the overall progress and support for the project activities. A second significant initiative was the visit by the Vietnamese Minister of Health to Denmark in early October, facilitating the formulation of joint, overall objectives for the proposed second phase of the project.

In Q4, the cooperation with Danish pharma companies and World Diabetes Foundation was reinitiated, with prospects for a close engagement in phase 2. The DFC scholarship program opened up for recruitment of participants from private enterprises and this provided new opportunities for the Embassy Trade Section to reach out and expand activities.

The global celebration of the 40 years since the Alma Ata Declaration provided a strong platform for continued focus on primary health care (PHC).

Status: SSC Project under implementation.

Partners: Vietnamese Ministry of Health (VMOH) and Thai Binh Province Health Authority. WHO as key stakeholder.

Contact information:

Sector Counsellor Morten Pristed morpri@um.dk, The Danish Embassy in Hanoi.

Hanne Charlotte Findsen hcf@sum.dk, The Danish Ministry of Health, Copenhagen.