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IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

BACKGROUND

Over last 30 years, the U.S. Government has contributed more than \$125 million in assistance to persons with disabilities in Vietnam. Since 1989, with the establishment of the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Leahy War Victims Fund (LWVF), USAID has worked to increase access to a wide variety of programs benefiting people with disabilities in conflict-affected countries. In Vietnam, U.S. assistance has helped to improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities by addressing medical and social needs, improving disability policies, and reducing physical and social barriers.

USAID/Vietnam is currently focused on providing services for persons with significant disabilities, regardless of cause, in areas heavily sprayed with Agent Orange. This project is part of the U.S. Government's efforts to address legacies from U.S.-Vietnam War. This work contributes to both countries' efforts to overcome the past, build trust, and strengthen bilateral relations. It enables continued security cooperation between the U.S. and Vietnam and a strong relationship for the achievement of USAID's other development objectives.

IMPACT

USAID disability projects have evolved over time, from providing direct humanitarian assistance such as prosthetic and orthopedic devices, to building a system that provides essential services to persons with disabilities, supporting disability policies and regulations, and strengthening advocacy for the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities. These projects have contributed to the improvement of the quality of life of persons with disabilities in Vietnam, with impact such as: 1) Direct support to over 30,000 persons with disabilities in Vietnam; 2) Improved rehabilitation and social services for persons with disabilities; 3) Improved disability policy and advocacy; and 4) Improved partners' capacity in management, implementation, and activity support to persons with disabilities.

PROJECTS

USAID has a robust portfolio of activities working across eight provinces heavily sprayed with Agent Orange (Quang Tri, Thua Thien Hue, Quang Nam, Binh Dinh, Dong Nai, Binh Phuoc, Tay Ninh, and Kon Tum), implemented by 10 local and international partners, covering a variety of services for persons with significant disabilities, regardless of cause, such as early childhood intervention, direct hospital-based and home-based interventions, and establishment of national guidelines and education programs. The newest \$65 million project (2020-2024) falls under a Memorandum of Intent signed in April 2019 between USAID and the Office of the Steering Board for the National Steering Committee on Overcoming the Post-war unexploded ordnances and toxic chemicals consequences in Vietnam (Office 701), and witnessed by nine U.S. Senators, as well as a Limited Scope Grant Agreement signed with the National Action Center for Toxic Chemicals and Environment Treatments (NACCET) in December 2019. This opens a new chapter of cooperative partnership between USAID/Vietnam and the Vietnam Ministry of National Defense.

Advancing Medical Care and Rehabilitation and Education: aims to improve the quality of care and service delivery for persons with brain function impairments, build capacity for rehabilitation professionals, and strengthen rehabilitation training. 2015 – 2023; \$10.3 million.

Disability Rights Enforcement, Coordination and Therapies: enhance disability rights and policies enforcement; Improve occupational therapy services and training. 2015 – 2023, \$10.7 million.

Disabilities Integration of Services and Therapies Network for Capacity and Treatment Project: aims to provide early detection and early intervention services for children with disabilities under the age of six in Tay Ninh, Binh Phuoc, and Dong Nai provinces. 2015 – 2022, \$5.6 million.

Moving Without Limits: provide quality, appropriate assistive devices for persons with disabilities; Improve capacity for health practitioners; Promote assistive device services information and policy advocacy. 2015 – 2021, \$7.9 million.

Accessibility For All: aims to improve persons with disabilities' physical access to buildings in Tay Ninh and Binh Dinh provinces. Raise awareness on disability rights; Establish and build persons with disabilities self-help organizations' capacity and advocacy efforts for improving accessibility needs. 2017 – 2020, \$1 million.

Hold My Hand: develop a sustainable and expandable model to improve rehabilitation services and home-based care for persons with significant disabilities in Binh Dinh and Quang Nam. 2018 – 2021, \$1.9 million.

I-Thrive: aims to provide rehabilitation services to children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs) in Thua Thien – Hue and Quang Nam provinces. 2018 – 2021, \$1.9 million.

Raising Voices, Creating Opportunities: improve public attitude towards disability rights, increase persons with disabilities' access to transportation and health facilities, promote independent living and full integration for persons with disabilities in Quang Tri, Thua Thien Hue, and Quang Nam provinces. 2018 – 2021, \$1.9 million.

Inclusion: aims to improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities, regardless of cause, in provinces heavily sprayed with Agent Orange by expanding and improving rehabilitation and social services, enhance policy implementation, and building capacity for the counterparts. Phase I: 2020 – 2022; \$19 million.