



# COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND RECOVERY SUPPORT FOR WOMEN AT RISK OF VIOLENCE

**Lessons Learned from Viet Nam**







# BACKGROUND – CONTEXT



## COVID-19 IN VIET NAM

In 2020 and 2021, Viet Nam faced significant challenges beyond public health due to COVID-19. Gender equality setbacks were evident as women's employment rates dropped from 70.9% in 2019 to 62.3% in 2021. The pandemic widened the gender gap in unemployment rates, with women leaving the workforce at higher rates than men. This was partly due to the increased unpaid domestic care work during school closures and lockdowns.

During the severe fourth COVID-19 wave in April 2021, Ho Chi Minh City bore the brunt, accounting for over 66% of the country's deaths. This led to city-wide lockdowns affecting at least 36% of the country's population. The Southeast and Mekong River Delta regions were most impacted economically, with 59.1% and 44.7% of workers respectively reporting negative job impacts, the highest proportions in the country.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN VIET NAM

A national 2019 survey found that 2 in 3 ever-married women (62.9%) had experienced violence from their husband or intimate partner. The COVID-19 pandemic increased the risk of gender-based violence (GBV), as household tensions rose under confinement conditions and economic strains. The risk of violence also escalated as perpetrators sought to maintain a sense of power and control during such crises.

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

With financial support from the Australian Government, particularly the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the project "COVID-19 Emergency Response and Recovery Support for Women at Risk of Violence" was launched in April 2022. This project leverages UN Women's expertise in eliminating violence against women (EVAW) and promoting women's economic empowerment (WEE) within the emergency context of Viet Nam, particularly during the response and recovery from the fourth wave of COVID-19 in 2020 and early 2021.

The project aims to provide sustainable, holistic recovery support by exploring the intersections of EVAW and WEE. It focuses on society's most vulnerable women, selected in accordance with the compulsory and prioritized criteria in agreements with partners.







## TARGETED DIRECT BENEFICIARIES

**Poor or near poor households**

OR

**Household with loss of livelihood or significantly reduced income**

(70% due to the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, or other disaster.)

## PRIORITIZED CRITERIA

- Ethnic minority women
- Women migrant workers
- Women heads of households
- Pregnant women
- Women with children under 2
- Women above 60
- Women living with a disability or supporting people with a disability in their household
- Women living with HIV or other chronic diseases
- Women who are survivors of violence

## KEY STAKEHOLDERS & PARTNERS

- The Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
- Tien Giang & Ho Chi Minh Women's Union
- Center for Women's Development (CWD)
- Vietnam Red Cross Society (VNRC)
- Vietnam Post (VN Post)

### Scope of implementation

Tien Giang Province  
Ho Chi Minh City

### Period of implementation

June 2022 - May 2024

**Using Kobo Toolbox, a powerful software to collect and analyze data for beneficiary selection**



## INTERVENTION MEASURES

After finalizing the beneficiary list, UN Women collaborated with key partners to implement the project's interventions measures, including:

1. Cash transfers for livelihood recovery
2. Technical livelihood assistance, capacity building to partners and post-distribution guidance
3. Development and dissemination of communications materials on EVAW
4. Building capacity for service providers in the essential services package (ESP) toolkit



# PROJECT'S IMPACTS

## Livelihoods and Economic Empowerment

*Direct Support to Vulnerable Women:*

**3,591** vulnerable women

in Ho Chi Minh City and Tien Giang received cash grants and technical assistance to rebuild their livelihoods, positively impacting over **14,300** individuals in their households.



## Capacity Building and Service Provision

*Stakeholder Engagement:*

Nearly **250** stakeholders from government agencies and CSO networks in Ho Chi Minh City and Tien Giang participated in capacity-building activities. These stakeholders were trained on Essential Service Packages for survivors of violence, enhancing their ability to design comprehensive GBV (Gender-Based Violence) prevention interventions and monitoring frameworks.

*Training for Male Advocates:* CWD-trained male advocates gained valuable field experience in Ho Chi Minh City, actively participating in community engagement efforts.

## Awareness and Education

*Gender Norms and Livelihood Skills:*

At least **30%**

of Tien Giang province's population gained valuable insights on gender norms and livelihood skills through the Tien Giang public broadcast system, which included radio, newspaper, and community articles.

*National Awareness on Violence Against Women and Children:* Approximately two million people were reached through national television, radio programs, and social media campaigns aimed at raising awareness about violence against women and children.

## Support for Service Providers

*Capacity Building:*

**2,000** service providers

benefited from capacity building and 500 service providers received information card support to ensure they could deliver 24/7 services supporting survivors of violence against women and children.

*GBV Case Management Training:* Nearly **230** service providers were equipped with skills to manage GBV cases effectively and promote prevention within their communities.

