

***Case Study 1:  
Support to ethnic minorities  
By UN in Vietnam***



***\*All findings in this document are extracted from the Independent Review of One Plan 2012-2016, conducted by SIPU in April 2016***

## Case Study 1: Support to ethnic minorities

This case study looked at the UN's support to ethnic minorities, including through integrated policy advice, as an example of work with vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. This Case Study looked at four initiatives:

### *1.1: Joint initiative on Ethnic Minorities*

**Aim:** Increase government awareness on the fact that ethnic minority areas are lagging behind in achieving all the Millennium Development Goals. This initiative, funded by the Delivering Results Together Fund, includes two components: first, supporting formulation of an Action Plan to Accelerate MDG Achievement in Ethnic Minority Areas; and second, generating disaggregated evidence on selected areas for ethnic minority groups to serve as inputs to overarching national development policy.

**Agencies:** UNDP, FAO, UNESCO, UN Women, UNICEF

#### Highlights of evaluation findings:

- UN successfully supported development of the MDG Action Plan for Ethnic Minorities (MAP-EM) through several desk studies, assessments, organization of participatory consultations and inputs to concrete policy recommendations that have influenced the Socio-Economic Development Plan 2016-2020 (SEDP), including a Statement on Mainstreaming Ethnic Minority Development in the SEDP.
- Development targets proposed in MAP-EM, and evidence generated by the UN have fed into discussions on multi-dimensional approach to poverty reduction and policy options to reduce multi-dimensional poverty amongst ethnic minorities.
- The UN effectively made use of its convening power to bring together over 200 delegates from ministries, central and provincial agencies, the National Assembly, academia, development partners, NGOs and representatives from ethnic minority communities at a national forum on mainstreaming ethnic minority development in the 2016-2020 SEDP. This laid the foundation for relevant agencies to integrate concrete actions in support of ethnic minorities into their sectoral plans.

- UN support resulted in improvements to indicators in the 2016-2020 SEDP M&E Framework to better target and monitor achievement of MAP-EM expected results

## ***1.2: Health equity and UN's role in the Health Partnership Forum***

**Aim:** Advocate for health equity and accelerate work on health-related MDGs, with a focus on reducing inequities in access to maternal health services for ethnic minorities. The Health Partnership Forum promotes cooperation between Viet Nam's health sector and international partners. WHO and UNFPA are the lead conveners for this group together with MOH, and the UN plays an active role within its Secretariat to support capacity building of technical working groups, improvement in monitoring health sector progress, and conducting joint fieldtrips and missions to strengthen linkages between central, local level, and international cooperation activities.

**Agencies:** WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS, FAO, IOM, ILO and UNODC

### **Highlights of evaluation findings:**

- An equity analysis conducted by MOH and the UN in 2013 has been used to feed into development of a resolution to accelerate achievement of health MDG targets, including better targeting for ethnic minorities. This ultimately led to government adopting universal health coverage as its main agenda for health following extensive UN advocacy. It further contributed to a Prime Minister Decision mandated a 100 per cent subsidy for the near poor living in the poorest districts, ultimately expanding health insurance coverage to the majority of the population.
- The UN has played an active and effective role in convening high-level action within the Health Partnership Group, mobilizing participation of a wide range of stakeholders and development partners. Key policy initiatives advanced through UN support in this group include policy dialogues around UHC, acceleration of MDGs, grassroots health reform and the One Health Initiative (a strategy and multi-stakeholder action to strengthen coordination in fighting against emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases). However, civil society participation is still limited and some stakeholders interviewed felt the UN has not been pushing for this engagement strongly.

- Government counterparts interviewed expressed that most government guidelines in the health sector refer to or have been adapted in line with UN guidelines. Stakeholders interviewed also indicated that the Government is very open to adopting global standard guidelines for the sector.
- UN support for various technical working groups under the Health Partnership Group (e.g. groups on human resources, pharmaceuticals and nutrition) helped to better understand their current status, roles and factors affecting their work to identify recommendations on improving their functions and linkages.

### ***1.3: Joint Programme on Green Production and Trade***

**Aim:** This initiative aimed to increase income and employment opportunities for the rural poor in four provinces (Thanh Hoa, Nghe An, Hoa Binh and Phu Tho), focusing on raw material growers/collectors and grassroots producers of handicrafts.

**Agencies:** ITC, UNIDO, ILO, FAO and UNCTAD

#### **Highlights of evaluation findings:**

- This is a good example of UN agencies working together in the spirit of DaO, undertaking joint programme design, implementation, monitoring and management, making use of each agency's core competencies.
- Two years after finalization of the programme, all five value chains remain active and have been expanded to engage around 2,000 more people, adding to the total of 4,000 people reached at programme completion. The silk value chain has been furthest developed, with more people involved in higher income generation. The weakest value chain is textiles, which was supported to leverage resources from Viet Craft, one of the biggest handicraft manufacturers in the country.
- The impact of the programme has gone beyond reaching rural poor (responsible for inputs/materials, primary processing and production), and has also been felt by enterprises and cooperatives, which remain a driver for sustaining jobs and incomes for the poor.
- Establishment of local economic development dialogue forums under the programme has fostered local dialogues and ownership on value chain

improvement, as well as helped to tackle constraints in the business environment.

- Evidence from the programme has informed MARD's preparation of a circular to operationalize a Prime Minister Decision on incentive policies for rattan and bamboo industry development.

### ***1.4: Sustainable and Responsible Tourism Development in Central Viet Nam***

**Aim:** Improve the livelihoods of local communities, create decent work opportunities and ensure that the cultural resources and environment are sustainably exploited. The joint project builds on previous UN work in Thua Thien-Hue and Quang Nam provinces, two of the country's provinces with the highest density of ethnic minorities. The overall approach involved supporting diversification and quality improvement of the tourism product value chains, enhancing the tourism business environment and strengthening community capacity to engage in and manage local tourism development.

**Agencies:** ILO and UNESCO

#### **Highlights of evaluation findings:**

- The joint project successfully led to development of new green tourism products associated with community-based tourism models, as well as raised public and private awareness on responsible tourism, such as improved visitors' attitudes and public-private partnership for poverty reduction through tourism activities. Market access of local tourism products has been improved.
- The project improved linkages between markets, tourism, facilities and infrastructure, through support to various partners from the public and private sector, as well as mass organizations (Women's Union, Cooperative Alliance) and provincial and district governments to bring stakeholders in the tourism industry and cultural areas together.
- Findings indicate increased participation of women and increased support from their husbands. This resulted from using the project as a means to verify and collect evidence on effectiveness of Government policies that support

women (e.g. Policy on New Rural Development; Policy on Poverty Reduction) to assess if the burden on women has been addressed properly.

### ***Highlights of evaluation findings corresponding to additional initiatives under Case Study 1:***

- The UNICEF Mid-Term Review notes that, under the UN-backed Mother Tongue-Based Bilingual Education Programme, the first cohort of 248 children (132 girls) has completed the MTBBE programme successfully. Results of the end of primary year assessments show better learning outcomes compared with other children not involved in the programme. Action research has been successful in establishing a strong evidence base to inform various government stakeholders in further development of policies to promote bilingual teaching methodologies. UNICEF, UNESCO and MOET are working to expose more ethnic minority communities to the programme.
- The Out-of-School Children Study, which generated significant impetus for equity in education in the country - and evidence of disparities in access to education for disadvantaged groups such as ethnic minority children, children with disabilities and migrant children – has contributed greatly to a stronger equity focus in education sector planning. MOET has institutionalized indicators on out-of-school children in its routine data collection and management practices.
- The UN made use of its convening power in its support, in collaboration with the Embassy of Ireland, to the Ethnic Minorities Council of the National Assembly and the Committee for Ethnic Minorities by co-chairing the Forum on Mainstreaming Ethnic Minority Development (2016-2020 National Framework), which took place in January 2015. The UN played a key role in setting up technical working groups, with participation of various development partners, line ministries and provinces, to further integrate MAP-EM targets into the SEDP and its M&E indicators.
- UNICEF's collaboration with the General Statistics Office to analyze and update the results of the multi-dimensional child poverty analysis in Viet Nam using the available Viet Nam Household Living Standards Survey (VHLSS) 2012 dataset enabled providing evidence on the barriers in access to services for children and primary caregivers from ethnic minority groups.

## *Case Study 2: Opening space for citizen participation*

*By UN in Vietnam*



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## Case Study 2: Opening space for citizen participation

The second case study looked at the UN's role helping to create a space for civil society and citizens to participate in policy dialogue, including aligning national legislation and policy to Viet Nam's international commitments. The following were some of the initiatives examined:

### ***2.1: Law on Administrative Sanctions***

**Aim:** Support Viet Nam to strengthen the rule of law in line with Viet Nam's obligations under core UN human rights instruments through supporting development of a new law to replace the Ordinance on Administrative Sanctions.

**Agencies:** UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNODC and WHO

#### **Highlights from evaluation findings:**

- UN counterparts interviewed highly valued the international expertise and experience the UN brings to their work. For example, normative human rights standards played a key role in shaping the stipulations of the Law on Administrative Sanctions on Human Rights and Citizens' Rights (as well as Chapter 2 of the 2013 Constitution).

### ***2.2: Supporting the role of Disabled Peoples Organizations to advance disability rights***

**Aim:** This project focuses on strengthening the capacities and role of Disabled Peoples Organizations in advocacy, development, implementation and monitoring of legal frameworks and policies, and to help ensure that the current momentum around ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities results in the empowerment of people with disabilities and enables them to claim their rights.

**Agencies:** ILO, UNDP and UNICEF

#### **Highlights from evaluation findings:**



- The project supported the National Coordinating Council on Disability (under the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs) to review implementation of the Law on Disability, with the aim to revise it in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and develop a framework for its implementation in Viet Nam.
- The UN supported consultations and policy dialogues, and a TV talk show, to bring policy-makers and Disabled People's Organizations together in the run-up to the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Through training, the project enhanced awareness of disability rights, as well as capacity for policy advocacy and networking among DPOs so they can better serve as an effective bridge to bring voices of people with disabilities to policy-makers.

### ***2.3: Marriage and Family Law***

**Aim:** Provide key recommendations on the draft amended Law on Marriage and Family to ensure no group in society (women, LGBTI) is discriminated against in the law, targeting the drafting team and National Assembly deputies.

**Agencies:** UN Women, UNDP and UNAIDS

#### **Highlights from evaluation findings:**

- UN advocacy contributed to the removal of the gay marriage prohibition clause of the previous law (thus still not recognizing marriages between people of the same sex, but no longer outright banning them).
- The UN used its convening power to facilitate civil society organizations representing LGBTI communities to bring their concerns and interests into policy dialogues with the Government.

### ***2.4: Addressing violence against women and girls***

**Aim:** Employ a multi-sectoral and coordinated approach to addressing the complex and multi-faceted problem of violence against women and girls.

**Agencies:** UNFPA led with UN Women, UNODC, UNESCO, ILO, WHO and IOM

### Highlights from evaluation findings:

- The UN has contributed to expanding the evidence base to help policy-makers address the issue through a series of researches, policy briefs, studies and surveys on gender-based violence, domestic violence, sex ratio at birth imbalance, human trafficking and women in justice.
- The UN helped the Government to pilot a minimum intervention package for gender-based violence survivors in two provinces, encompassing health, legal and referral services that can be scaled up to nationwide availability in 2016.

### ***2.5: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women***

**Aim:** Support Vietnamese civil society organizations to advocate to Government on women's rights and to collaborate in production of the CEDAW Shadow Report

**Agencies:** UN Women

### Highlights from evaluation findings:

- UN Women facilitated engagement of a well-known and capable women's rights organization in the region (International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific) to work with Vietnamese civil society organizations, providing technical support in developing the Shadow Report and presenting it to the CEDAW Committee.
- UN Women connected Vietnamese civil society organizations to Government officials, facilitated training and provided comments on technical reports.

### ***2.6: Human rights advocacy***

**Aim:** Advocate for international human rights standards in the revised constitution.

**Agencies:** UN Human Rights Technical Working Group, led by UNDP

### Highlights from evaluation findings:

- According to the Institute of Legislative Studies Director, UN contributions to Chapter 2 of the Constitution on Human Rights were significant. The UN contributed this support through a common commentary on human rights provisions and draft amendments to the 1992 Constitution, through workshops on constitutional issues such as freedom to do business, assumption of innocence and adversarial trials, amongst others.
- The UN supported the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the process of Viet Nam's second Universal Period Review on Human Rights, including through provision of comments on the draft National Action Plan for Implementation of the Accepted Recommendations.

## *Case Study 3: Evidence-based advocacy*

*By UN in Vietnam*



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## Case Study 3: Evidence-based advocacy

The third case study looked at the different mechanisms the UN uses to provide evidence-based advocacy in support of the Government's initiative to address the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. This case study looked at four initiatives:

### 3.1: Participatory monitoring

**Aim:** Improve decision-making and policy by incorporating inputs from citizens on their experiences of governance. Two types of tools are used, firstly the Public Performance Monitoring Index (PAPI), implemented in all 63 provinces annually since 2011 that captures citizen feedback and experiences on public administration performance; and secondly four Social Audit tools (child rights-based social audit, public expenditure survey, citizen report cards and gender audit) piloted in three provinces that aim to assess, understand and report on social services' delivery.

**Agencies:** UNDP, UNICEF

#### Highlights from evaluation findings:

- PAPI has been credited with promoting a shift from a focus on “what is good for business” towards an approach where citizens are end users and rights-holders, able to inform action. Stakeholders interviewed felt that by making results publicly available, a culture of transparency has been strengthened, as well as promoting a more results-oriented governance approach.
- The social audits have supported the health sector to remove bottlenecks for delivery of better health outcomes to disadvantaged women and children. Local governments in three provinces have committed to follow up on recommendations from these audits to further improve services. The Government has also expressed interest in rolling out the Citizen Report Card for Birth Registration.
- A key risk identified for PAPI is the temptation for authorities to “*govern to the test*” – that is, addressing areas included in the test as indicators as opposed to the underlying issues it intends to measure” (emphasis original). A limitation was the need for it to be independent to guarantee both neutrality and the perception of neutrality for participants.

- There is a question whether use of online citizen feedback by commune-level administrations will be replicable to rural Viet Nam where citizen familiarity with such tools is limited.

### **3.2: HIV Investment Case**

**Aim:** The 'HIV Investment Approach' promotes targeted investment and better priority setting based on a nuanced understanding of HIV epidemics. UNAIDS has been working with a wide range of partners at the global level since 2011 to develop this new investment approach to serve as guidance for countries to develop national HIV Investment Cases.

**Agencies:** UNAIDS in coordination with HIV Joint Programming Group

#### **Highlights from evaluation findings:**

- With UN support, the MOH developed a national HIV Investment Case based on UNAIDS global methodology in 2014.
- The UN supported the HIV Investment Case in support of the health sector HIV programme review. Findings of the investment case were part of Viet Nam's successful submission to the Global Fund with a total of US\$ 107 million for the 2014-2017 response to HIV and tuberculosis. MOH has been supported to integrate HIV into other health services as well.

### **3.3: Socialization of public services**

**Aim:** Support the Government to define its role as a primary provider of equitable public services. Advocate and raise awareness for budget allocation for vulnerable populations that may fall between traditional measurement gaps, for example the 'missing middle' or 'life cycle' vulnerabilities.

**Agencies:** Led by UNICEF in coordination with Social Protection JPG

#### **Highlights from evaluation findings:**

- This initiative has helped the UN to develop a clear and common understanding of what socialization means, as well as the risks and benefits

that stem from it. A common policy position strengthens the UN's ability to advocate for more inclusive policies as well as for additional resources.

- While it is too early to talk about achievements or results, this initiative is very much in line with the role envisaged for Joint Programming Groups as a forum to strengthen internal coherence.

### ***3.4: Data for development***

**Aim:** Through the Data for Development Working Group (under the Joint Programming Group on Economic Growth and Decent Work), ensure alignment, coherence and a more comprehensive approach to data generation support of the various UN agencies.

**Agencies:** Led by UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP, ILO and UN Women,

#### **Highlights from evaluation findings:**

- Stakeholders felt this way of working responded to extending internal and external demand, helping the Government access all UN expertise through one clear channel, while simultaneously improving the quality of data available to inform policymaking.
- Amongst this group's many achievements, highlights include joint support to the first ever ethnic minority survey; advice and support to multi-dimensional poverty measurement, the first ever Multiple-Indicator Cluster Survey co-funded by the General Statistics Office; the first ever inter-censal population and housing survey; the first ever national school-to-work transition survey; and provision of support for capacity-building and advocacy to increase awareness of the value of data.
- This group has shown the ability of Delivering as One to help highlight emerging issues, for example around the integration of migration into the population survey.

## *Case Study 4: Capacity building to promote resilience and reduce risks*

*By UN in Vietnam*



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## **Case Study 4: Capacity building to promote resilience and reduce risks**

Case study 4 sought to understand the ability of the UN to successfully promote resilience to reduce risks and vulnerabilities linked to climate change through capacity building. Six initiatives informed this case study:

### ***4.1: Women's leadership in disaster risk management***

**Aim:** Viet Nam, a country especially prone to various hazards, has made good progress in disaster risk management but women's potential role has as yet remained untapped. This initiative, in partnership with Oxfam, seeks to promote women leaders' participation in and contribution to the country's formal disaster risk management system and ensure women's voices are heard.

**Agencies:** UNDP and UN Women

#### **Highlights from evaluation findings:**

- Two important changes in the legal framework were achieved with advocacy and support from the UN: firstly, the new Disaster Risk Management Law (approved 2014) recognizes gender equality as a key principle in disaster risk management; and secondly, the Central Disaster Risk Management Committee now officially includes the Women's Union as a member, with this representation formalized in local disaster risk management committees.

### ***4.2: Education for sustainable development***

**Aim:** Contribute to development of strategic relationship between schools, parents and communities to build resilience through joint efforts.

**Agencies:** UNESCO

#### **Highlights from evaluation findings:**

- UNESCO brought in the internationally accepted Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response and Recovery, which provide inputs into the development of e-learning courses for teachers on climate change, biodiversity conservation and disaster risk reduction, as well as the Assessment and Preparedness Toolkit. This has strengthened the capacity of the education sector in Viet Nam to integrate these issues into education curricula.
- The project has introduced the use of satellite imagery as a tool for awareness raising and decision-making.

### ***4.3: Law on Environmental Protection***

**Aim:** Support amendment of the law to meet the realities of a rapidly developing Viet Nam, addressing emerging challenges to improve protection of natural resources and environment, and a strong legal framework on sustainable development and green growth.

**Agencies:** UNEP, UNDP and UNICEF

#### **Highlights from evaluation findings:**

- The UN provided manifold support to the drafting team and the National Assembly, including through generating evidence, bringing international expertise and promoting inclusion of voices from diverse members of society in the amended law.
- Vietnamese counterparts assessed UN support as highly relevant, with one Government counterpart stating: “We develop the TOR for researches and international experts. They contribute exactly what we need.”
- The review team was able to document that the UN effectively facilitated voices of children resulting in a principle of the law that states: “Environmental protection must harmonize... assurance about the children’s right.”

### ***4.4: Response to emerging communicable disease threats (One Health)***

**Aim:** The One Health integrated approach calls for increased multi-disciplinary and inter-sectoral cooperation and communication to address diseases that emerge at

the human-animal ecosystem interface and pose a threat to human and animal health.

**Agencies:** FAO and WHO

#### **Highlights from evaluation findings:**

- Circular 16 has formalized collaboration under this initiative, providing guidelines for coordinated prevention and control of zoonotic diseases.
- The UN facilitated the adoption of an aide memoire on multi-sectoral action to combat antimicrobial resistance in Viet Nam (among MOH, MARD, MOIT, MONRE and development partners).
- UN efforts have already led to better preparedness and response capacity for zoonotic diseases such as Avian Influenza H5N1 and H7N9.

#### **4.5: Green growth**

**Aim:** To contribute to national strategy on green growth and climate change-responsive city development, support evidence generation and local level pilots to inform policy-making

**Agencies:** UNDP, UN-Habitat, UNEP and UNIDO

#### **Highlights from evaluation findings:**

- The UN assisted the Government to develop a Green Growth Strategy and a National Green Growth Action Plan, providing clear responsibilities for ministries and provinces to achieve national greenhouse gas emission targets.
- Key studies were carried out by the UN, serving as the basis for policy-makers to develop the orientation, objectives and actions for the above.
- Green growth principles and approaches have been mainstreamed into Da Nang's City Development Strategy, with innovative solutions developed to effectively implement said strategy through design of an appropriate green growth-led development investment framework.

#### **4.6: Treatment of hazardous chemicals**

**Aim:** This initiative helps to eliminate all known stockpiles of persistent organic pollutant pesticides in Viet Nam through removing capacity barriers.

**Agencies:** UNDP

**Highlights from evaluation findings:**

- By end of 2014, 650 tons of persistent organic pollutant pesticides from eight sites in Nghe An and Ha Tinh provinces had been destroyed, with technical guidelines and standards for safe destruction developed and issued by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.