



VVAF Update

April –December 2010

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Mental health program welcomes new staff member, Ms. Nguyen Thu Huyen
- VVAF Office welcomes Ms. Bui Kim Oanh as Administrative Assistant
- VVAF Receives Landmine Grant, from the U.S. Department of State. The terms of the grant are from September to February 2011
- VVAF has received a Grant from the Ford Foundation to continue its work with Agent Orange
- Program Manager Nguyen Thanh Tam received scholarship to attend International Mental Health Leadership at the International Mental Health Center, University of Melbourne in June 2010.
- VVAF co-chaired the October 26th Agent Orange Working Group.

Primary School Opening Celebration and Dedication in Muong Phang and Hai Hung

This May, in coordination with the Boeing Company, VVAF celebrated the opening and renovation of 2 schools, in Hai Hung District, Nam Dinh province and Muong Phang Commune, Dien Bien Province

Muong Phang Primary School was dedicated on May 5th: the 56th anniversary of the Battle of Dien Bien Phu and, most meaningfully, General Vo Nguyen Giap's 100th birthday.

The school's redevelopment was made possible by VVAF, in collaboration with the family of General Vo Nguyen Giap and the Dien Bien District People's Committee. The US\$150,000 primary school complex was funded by Boeing Company together with contributions from the local authorities. The complex contains a new two-story classroom building, seven renovated classrooms, a computer lab, and a new fenced-in playground. Wheelchairs ramps were built as an integral part of the school buildings in order to ensure students and parents with disabilities have access



School Opening in Dien Bien

to the school. The school will serve the community's approximately 300 students and teachers.

In addition to the new facilities, well-known singer Tung Dzuong and Miss Vietnam World Ngo Phuong Lan presented 40 scholarships to the students of Muong Phang. Furthermore, 200 brand-new books were donated by leading childrens publishing house, Kim Dong.

The Hai Hung School in Nam Dinh Province celebrated the dedication of its renovated school on May 13th. The facility, which will be used by approximately 800 children and teachers, has ten new

classrooms. The \$233,000 project was jointly funded by local authorities and Boeing.

The dedication ceremony was attended by the Hai-Hung authorities and United States Ambassador Michael Michalak, representatives of the Boeing Company, and VVAF as well as member of the community.

Hai Hung primary school was established before 1954. However, the school was in poor conditions due to harsh typhoon weather in recent years. The renovation as well as the addition of ten classrooms will help improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Opening Ceremonies for Job Training Courses

On August 25, VVAF, in conjunction with the Duy Xuyen District Red Cross, celebrated the opening of job training courses for 20 local PWDs.

The ceremony was attended by local authorities, the family members of the participating PWDs and famous local artist Ngoc Suon from Ho Chi Minh City.

The courses will expose the PWDs to various job training programs such a rattan knitting and painting workshops.



Students attending Rattan Knitting Class

The US- Vietnam Dialogue Group Unveils 10-year Plan of Action

On June 16th, the US-Vietnam Dialogue Group unveiled its 10-year plan of action. The 10-year plan is a result of the US study mission that took place in April 2010.

With funding of \$300 million over ten years, the plan outlines how the three main goals can be met. Goals include: stop the further spread of dioxin from hot spots; restore damaged ecosystems; and reduce the burden of disabilities on families in Vietnam.

The 10-year plan was the result of a recent study mission in April by members of the Dialogue Group including Ambassador Ngo Quang Xuan. In addition to completing the 10-year plan, the study mission

aimed to highlight the issue of Agent Orange amongst the Washington political and policy community.

The trip was made possible with the help of the Ford Foundation and the Aspen Institute. The mission included visits with Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Kurt Campbell as well as meetings with Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung. The Dialogue Group also travelled to California during the study mission to meet with members of the East Meets West Foundation and the Vietnamese American Entrepreneurs Association.

VVAF Holds First Congress to establish Hue Association of PWDs

As part of the second phase of the Dioxin Resolution Initiatives in Vietnam (DRIVE), VVAF supported the foundation and operation of the Hue Association of Persons with Disabilities.

The first meeting was held June 9th to establish the Hue Association of PWDs at the Hoan Kiem Hotel, Hue City.

Meeting Participants include Vice Chairmain of Hue People's Committee, Mr. Ngo Hao, Country Representative of VVAF Ms. Nguyen Thu Thao, Vice Director of Vietnam National Coordinating Council for Disabilities, Mr. Ho Xuan Lai as well as nearly 100 local PWDs.

Representatives from Associations of PWDs in Hanoi, Nam Dinh, Ninh Binh, Thai Binh and Quang Nam were also in attendance. They came to share their own experiences in the establishment and operation of their own association.



Country Representative Nguyen Thao awarded wheelchairs

Continued Progress for VVAF's Mental Health Program

VVAF's Mental Health Program continued to progress throughout 2010. The Mental Health program was able to expand its current efforts as well as provide continued support to its current programs.

The interim meeting of the VVAF Mental Health Program occurred on 29 April 2010 in Da Nang. Participants included the Department of Health in Da Nang and Khanh Hoa, VVAF, and The Atlantic Philanthropies.

The progress of activities, disbursement and technical issues of the Vietnam Collaborative Stepped Care Model for

Depression were presented at the meeting.

Additionally, a Training of Trainers (TOT) course on Information, Education and Communication was held for providers at Da Nang and Khanh Hoa Psychiatric hospitals and the staff of Health Education and Communication Centers from November 14 through 18. This training aimed to provide the participants with skills on direct communication and teaching for Health Collaborators at the village level.

Furthermore, the mental health program continued to grow. Nguyen Mai Hien, MD, PhD joined

the VVAF Mental Health Program as a Technical Advisor in September 2010. The program has also expanded and added two new community health stations in Da Nang and Khanh Hoa.



Participants attending TOT on IEC class

VVAF attends Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining Working Trip

Members of the VVAF team attended the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) working trip. The trip took place from November 14th through 18th in Hue City.

During the trip, members attended several meetings intending to strengthen the relationship between GICHD and the Vietnamese ministries responsible for landmine and unexploded ordnance clearance as well as update all parties on the current situation in Vietnam. In addition, VVAF's objective was to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with other ministries including the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) and the

Technology Center for Bomb and Mine Disposal (BOMICEN), on matters relating to landmines and unexploded ordnance

Activities included a signing event with representatives of the Engineering Command, BOMICEN and GICHD as well as VVAF.

VVAF also had the opportunity to speak with Lt. Gen Pham Thanh Lan, Director of External Relation for the Ministry of Defense (MoD).

In addition, members of VVAF spoke with Vice Minister Nguyen Thanh Hoa, MOLISA and attended a roundtable discussion with representatives from UNDP, UNICEF, the United States Embassy, the Swiss Embassy, the

Canadian Embassy and co-chairs of the Working Group of International NGOs working in Vietnam as well as representatives from BOMICEN, the Vietnam Bomb and Mine Action Center, MOD, the Ministry of Planning and Investment, MOLISA and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

