

Monthly updates - July 2019

ActionAid Vietnam



Children at Thoi An Hoi 2 Primary School (Soc Trang province) participating in an activity facilitated by the staff of KT&G Social Welfare Foundation (Korea) during the volunteer camp from 11 to 17 July 2019.

Key highlights

July 9 - 16, New York city, Country Director of ActionAid Vietnam (AAV) - Ms. Hoang Phuong Thao participated in a series of side events organised at the 7th session of the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF 2019) and shared about Vietnam's "Leave No One Behind" Alliance's work on Vietnam's progresses.

Speaking at different sessions, particularly at the forum "Making People's Voices Heard and Count in SDG Processes" about key highlights from the Report: ***SDG and social integration in Vietnam***, Ms. Thao presented about how the vulnerable groups are (not) included in Vietnam's development, highlighting recommendations for policy change. She stressed the substantial contribution of people-generated data as evidence for monitoring and evaluating the SDG progresses.

Additionally, specific insights on engaging marginalized communities as well as other stakeholders for national SDG monitoring and implementation were presented and debated upon.



Ms. Hoang Phuong Thao and Mr. Peter Koblowsky representing the Leave No One Behind Alliance at the forum "Making People's Voices Heard and Count in SDG Processes".

Key highlights

July 17-18, AAV Country Director had multiple meetings with representatives of ActionAid USA, Global Impact, Global Givings, and US-ASEAN Business Council to discuss AAV-AFV's work related to SDG processes, decent work for women under the free trade agreements, and improvement of public services for the marginalised groups in Vietnam.

The meetings opened up potential partnership between AAV-AFV and these organisations in the areas of building capacity for government agencies, communities, and civil society in Southeast Asian countries to ensure the economic and social development processes in Vietnam is inclusive of the vulnerable groups in both rural and urban areas.



Ms. Hoang Phuong Thao meeting with the representatives of ActionAid USA, Global Impact, and US-ASEAN Business Council.

Key highlights



Ms. Nguyen Phuong Thuy and representatives of ActionAid Australia and AFTINET at the RCEP.

The 26th round of Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (#RCEP) negotiation took place in Melbourne, Australia from 28th June to 3rd July 2019.

At this event, ActionAid Australia and ActionAid Vietnam, in cooperation with the Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network (AFTINET), demanded that CSOs' voice on the social, environmental, and gender impact of trade relations will be heard. In particular, discussions were initiated to campaign for tax justice and public services in low and middle-income countries.

“Vietnam lacks budget for gender-responsive public services, this makes many women stay at home to take care of their children due to lack of kindergartens. Fair tax will help the Vietnamese government to deliver public services and create more chances for women to do paid work and decrease the gender violence and inequality,” explained Ms. Nguyen Phuong Thuy, ActionAid Vietnam Programme Director (PP2), who participated in the entire process.

Key highlights

Report: *Unpaid Care Work - Redistribution for sustainable development* by ActionAid Vietnam.



SPOTLIGHT ON:
LEAVE NO ONE
BEHIND

Migrant workers in cities often experience exclusion and discrimination! Following the discussion on how people-generated data can be useful and credible for SDG monitoring at national level, being held at the SDG Global Festival of Action in Bonn in May 2019, an article discussing how the SDGs and their indicators can contribute to sustainable urban planning that is inclusive of vulnerable groups such as women migrant workers themselves was presented at the Urbanet. On July 25, the Urbanet, a media agency focused on municipal and local governance for sustainable development supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) published the article at: https://www.urbanet.info/how-can-sdgs-contribute-to-sustainable-cities-for-all/?fbclid=IwAR1t56-1xCePmLF7gwSs2HMb_JhTHB_vrT83pCUvx-Yz2tuNtk-siQq72Qg).

This publication strengthens the voice of ActionAid as National Coordinator of the Leave No One Behind Alliance in Vietnam to advocate for the official recognition of people-generated data and evidence in monitoring the goal to **Leave No One Behind**.

Governance

July was the time for AAV and AFV to review our work during the first 6 months of 2019. Taking this occasion, Board Chair - Journalist Mr. Ta Viet Anh highlighted the organisational transformation and achievements despite challenges:

1. Project implementation achieved the progress as planned at the beginning of the year;
2. AAV and AFV ensured active and efficient participation in the activities and campaigns of the AAI Federation; and
3. The implementation of CSPVI yielded initial results as of mid-2019 - the second year of the 5-year period.



Journalist Mr. Ta Viet Anh - AFV Board Chair

Regarding the plans forward, Board Chair shared: ***"In addition to the ongoing programmes and projects, we will put effort to become an Affiliate of the Federation. Furthermore, Vietnam will sign up to host the AAI General Assembly in 2020. I believe we will make notable contributions to the ActionAid Federation, while continue to further our programme quality."*** (Link to the interview video: <https://youtu.be/8sbAnzTv6E8>).

Partnership

A senior representative of the Union of Friendship Organizations of Ho Chi Minh city (HUFO) - AAV's partner since 2002 acknowledges the effectiveness of AAV's long-term support programmes to communities in the poor districts of the city. AAV's work to address urban poverty and HIV/AIDS, promote women's rights, and improve people' livelihoods have shown substantial results which are replicated in the city area.

"AAV works closely with local partners and stakeholders to implement practical and effective programmes, and ensures compliance to the reporting and information requirements of HUFO and other managing agencies.", shared HUFO representative. She also stressed that it is most important that AAV takes the proactive role in collaboration with local partners to develop and conduct programmes and projects that are relevant to the needs of the communities.



Women in Binh Tan district at the music event *"Rhythm of Joy"* campaigning for prevention of sexual harassment.

Program activities and impacts

Persons with disabilities practiced emergency first aid

In enhancing their preparedness to disasters, communities, particularly persons with disabilities in Nho Quan district, Ninh Binh province (LRP25) took part in a series of training courses on emergency first aid and rescue.

Each training course lasted for 2 days. Over 200 participants, of which 47 are disabled persons, acquired basic understanding on emergency first aid and practiced first aid skills, which are suitable for different types of disabilities. They also practiced team cooperation and resource allocation to perform the rescue and evacuation during disasters effectively. Around 30 persons in the target communes volunteered to three commune support groups and assigned among themselves to provide assistance to persons with disabilities in their neighborhood. Their actions will day by day change the communities' awareness and behaviours to enhance the inclusive disaster preparedness and resilience.



Local people in LRP25 practicing emergency first aid skills.

Mock drills to enhance responsiveness to natural disasters and climate change supported by AAV, AFV and CBM

Program activities and impacts

July 26, 167 participants including 27 people with disabilities conducted mock drills in 2 villages of Thach Binh commune, Nho Quan district, Ninh Binh province (LRP25) to prepare themselves with skills to respond in case of natural disasters. It is worth noticing that the techniques introduced and practiced were tailored to the particular needs of persons with disabilities. Thus, community members took this chance to know better disabled persons, their types of disabilities, and how to best support them in case of emergency.

In the hypothetical situations, community members and village leaders performed the skills that they had acquired in the earlier training courses, organised themselves into different teams that are responsible for emergency first aid, asset protection, and evacuation. All teams cooperated in a simple but effective mechanism to ensure safety of the community and mitigate human and reduce material losses. Afterwards, they reviewed and drew lessons learnt on what to improve, and developed an inclusive disaster risk reduction (iDRR) plan, which facilitates the whole community to join hands to improve their readiness to natural disasters.



Local people in LRP25 applying emergency first aid and evacuation skills at the mock drills.



Women-led CDGs practicing social audit tools in LRP102

Program activities and impacts



A woman presenting the findings of social audits in LRP18

Quality of public services to be enhanced as a result of community-led social audits

In Tra Vinh city (LRP102), women in urban risk areas are leading the activities to build resilient communities and improve public water supply and drainage services. At the same time, ethnic minority women in Krong Bong district (LRP18) actively enhance quality of healthcare services at commune level. Part of the actions to achieve these goals is assess the current public services and recommend improvements to local authorities.

July 1-6, 29 members of the women-led community development groups (CDGs) in LRP102 learned the social audit process, tools, methods and skills. Then, 15 of them conducted a social audit using community score cards to collect feedbacks of 86 service users in 9 villages and 3 representatives of Tra Vinh province water supplier. In LRP18, 5 other social audits were carried out by about 45 CDG members in 5 communes to assess the quality of healthcare services using Economic Literacy and Budget Accountability for Governance (ELBAG) tool.

The findings of these audits showed drawbacks in public service supply. The CDGs' suggestions to improve the services were well received and appreciated by the service providers and local authorities, who then gave commitment to address the issues in the coming time.

Impacts of these activities go beyond that. CDGs enhanced their attention and proactiveness to claim for improvement of public services and demand transparency in public services supply in their areas.

Program activities and impacts

Community monitoring budget transparency of local public water supply and drainage systems

Besides evaluating service quality, the comprehensive improvement of public services also requires enhanced budget transparency and accountability.

July 15-20, 20 core members of the CDGs in Tra Vinh city continued equipping themselves with the tool ELBAG to monitor and evaluate the financial transparency of governance activities and public service provision in their areas. After the training course, 12 of them joint 56 local people and 2 representatives of the water supplier (Tra Vinh Urban Management Department and Provincial Water Drainage Company) to conduct a survey on public drainage systems in 6 villages of Ward 8 and Ward 9.

The findings revealed that 8/10 service quality criteria scored under 7 on the scale from 1 to 10. Noticeably, the central drainage system had not reached the households; a number of manhole covers were missing, threatening people's safety. The duty bearers agreed with these feedbacks and presented their action plans to address the identified issues.



CDG members at the ELBAG training in LRP102



A CDG representative presenting findings of the survey on local drainage systems

Program activities and impacts

Media engaged in advocacy for improved sexual & reproductive healthcare

AAV-AFV well comprehend the power of media in mobilising mass community's attention and support for policy advocacy. Under the framework of project "*Civil society-led promotion of quality sexual and reproductive healthcare services (EC4)*", AAV-AFV established and built capacity for a media group to accompany the communities in their journey.

This groups consists of 20 journalists from national and local media agencies in Krong Bong district, Dak Lak province (LRP18) and Lam Ha district, Lam Dong province (LRP19). July 25-31, these journalists paid a field trip to share information and experiences in promoting the rights to sexual and reproductive healthcare (SRH) for vulnerable groups, especially ethnic minorities. They also participated in the workshop "*Strengthening the quality of SRH for women, youth, and ethnics minorities*" and learned about issues including gynaecologic health, prenatal and postnatal care, child marriage/marriage within blood relations, and adolescent reproductive health.

Equiped with practical knowledge and grassroots-level evidence, these journalists became inspired activists that will join hands with the local communities in voicing their needs to duty bearers and advocate for changes in policy and practices. Specifically, they will participate in the project's activities and broadcast news on the improvements in public SRH services for the women and youth of ethnic monirities in LRP18 and LRP19.



Journalists recording the discussion on SHR among ethnic minority women in LRP18.

LAGASH members identifying the forms of sexual harassment at their work places in LRP21.



Local Activist Groups Against Sexual Harassment armed with SABI to act for the community

Program activities and impacts

July 14 & 19-20, 36 members of Local Activist Groups Against Sexual Harassment (LAGASH) of Dinsen factory and Molax Vina factory in Binh Tan district (LRP21) joined a training course on prevention of sexual harassment and rights for sexual autonomy and bodily integrity (SABI). They learned about what sexual harassment is, its forms, causes and effects to the victims, and what actions to take when being attacked.

After the training, 80% of the participants became more confident to share the knowledge and skills on this topic with other workers. They will take part in a refresh training in December 2019 to become core trainers and provide counselling and emergency support for survivors of sexual harassment. These successive activities will initiate and expand the movement of women workers advocating for safe working environment that is free of sexual harassment.

Program activities and impacts

· Campaign on prevention of sexual harassment in Hai Phong



Campaigning to prevent sexual harassment at the workplace, over 300 workers and managers of four companies in Hai Phong city (LRP11) attended a music event titled "Rhythm of Joy" in July. The event was also attended by representatives of Hai Phong Municipal Labor Union, Tien Lang district Labor Union, and Center for Worker's Rights. The creative art-based performances powerfully conveyed the messages: "Say no to sexual harassment at the workplace", "No means No", and "Sexual harassment is a crime" to show the commitment and determination of businesses and workers in preventing sexual harassment.

After the event, workers raised their awareness on what sexual harassment is, which forms it takes and how to prevent it and help its victims. They stepped forward to speak up and act when being harassed or to support the victims when witnessing harassment. Businesses representatives became aware of their obligation to develop prevent mechanism. The commitments of workers and company leaders mark a step closer to building a safe world of work in Vietnam.

Primary school students and teachers welcomed Korean volunteers, initiating cooperation to support primary education



As part of collaboration with corporates, AAV-AFV organised volunteer camps for their staff to engage in community support.

One of such activities took place during July 11-17 in Ke Sach District, Soc Trang Province (LRP24). 30 volunteers from KT&G Social Welfare Foundation (Korea) joined students and teachers of Thoi An Hoi 2 Primary School in upgrading the school facilities. Specifically, the children and Korean volunteers worked together to build sanitation facilities, paint and re-decorate school walls. Besides, the volunteers conducted several educational sessions to guide the students to maintain personal hygiene and make toys from recycled materials. Joyful outdoor activities were also a part of the camp where students and the Korean friends exchanged cultural and traditional practices.

This volunteer camp gave a great opportunity for the local children and teachers to interact with foreign friends and learn advanced knowledge and techniques to improve education practices. It boosts their confidence and communication skills to proactively engage in similar activities in the future.



Program activities and impacts

Impact story of the month



Ms. Bui Thi Thanh is 59 years old. She lives in Thach Binh commune, Nho Quan district, Ninh Binh province. Both of her children have disabilities. Her 34-year-old son suffers from a mental illness; her 19-year-old daughter bears mobility impairment. Both of them face difficulties in working and daily activities. Ms. Thanh takes care of them while her husband struggles to work to provide for the whole family.

In June 2017, when informed about the community development group (CDG) that would support people with disabilities and their families in her village, Ms. Thanh joined the group instantly and has been an active member since. She participated in various training courses to improve her skills in production and taking care of persons with different types of disabilities.

Over the last 3 months, Ms. Thanh learned and practiced knitting, which has become her main alternative livelihood. With her diligence and skillfulness, she is now capable of producing high quality products and earns stable incomes. She flexibly allocates time for working and taking care of the children, thus manages to fulfil both missions. Now, she contributes to her family incomes and shares the financial burden with her husband, hence sharing voice and decision making as well. Confidently mentoring other women in her knitting group, Ms. Thanh is becoming one of the core agents of change in her community.


Resource Mobilization

AAV-AFV's desk study and consultation meetings with local partners revealed that 100% children in local schools in Quan Ba district, Ha Giang province (LRP7A) lack safely managed drinking water supplies. They drink unpurified water taken from stream or river. Approximately 90% of them are from ethnic minority groups (H'mong, Dao, Giay, Tay, Nung, etc.) and about 40% of them are from extremely poor families. In Soc Son district, Ha Noi (LRP26), a number of primary schools do not have water purification systems to ensure clean water, while local agriculture practices apply much chemical fertilizers and pesticides which seriously affects underground water resources and people's health, especially children's health.

Efforting to address this situation, AAV-AFV proposed to ActionAid International Asia Hub a project to increase access to safe drinking water in schools for around 2,500 children in these areas. Their family which are about 10,000 people will indirectly benefit from saved cost and reduced care work for children having water-borne diseases.

Also in the area of improving quality of education in the Northern mountainous districts, AAV-AFV sought sponsorship from TX Foundation for school construction in Thong Nong district, Cao Bang province (LRP8) and Quan Ba district, Ha Giang province (LRP7A). The proposed budget is USD 320,000.





Child links updates:
As of July , the total links established & maintained is 8,817, in which:

- CS (total): 7,480
 - Amico: 80
- Next Steps: 1,257