

# **GLEN 2011 Final report**

**Supporting HIV/AIDS Community Development Initiatives with projects and  
developing a platform**

**Vietnam, Hanoi  
August 2011 – November 2011**

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## **Introduction**

The Glen tandem was composed of two participants – one from the Czech Republic, one from Germany.

The Glen internship, which was realized within the Multipliers Training Cycle as a follow up after the training seminars was performed between August 2011 and November 2011 (exactly 15. August – 11. November 2011) and was based in Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam, at SCDI – Center for Supporting Community Development Initiatives. The topic was: “Supporting HIV/AIDS Community Development Initiatives with projects and developing a platform”.

From the beginning of this internship I was very interested in system of Public Health and implementation in to the civil society in Vietnam. It enables me to combine the academic background of development studies and my interest in the health education, health risk factors and health issues in developing countries.

Vietnam is still a developing country, but nowadays is opening to the outside world and it is more and more integrated to the global economy and it is becoming one of the leader in the SA Asia.. In the past twenty years we could observe a rapid economic development followed by significant social changes and massive urbanization. As a consequence, the year 2015 will be a mile stone for Vietnam - it will become a middle income country according to the World Bank classification. These conditions will be hard for the NGOs being actually dependent on grants and funding intended for the low income countries. The NGOs will have a hard time finding other financial source. They will also have to fight for the new position of the civil society and establish a new partnership between the government and the civil society.

## **Host Organization - SCDI**

The Center for Supporting Community Development Initiatives (SCDI) was established in January 2010, as a non-governmental and non-profit organization. SCDI aims to enhance the quality of life and the ability of vulnerable and disadvantaged populations (especially the affected by HIV/AIDS) to integrate them into society through researching, designing, experimenting, implementing, and promoting community development models and trainings.

SCDI directly supports the management and operation of Vietnam Civil Society Partnership Platform on AIDS (VCSPA), which gathers nearly 200 groups and organizations

from HIV-affected communities and social organizations who work in the field, in order to contribute to national efforts to stop HIV transmission and its effects. The organization runs a free clinic and a food program delivering rice to over 190 families. It also provides an outreach service delivering welfare to the outlying families as well as a social worker/counselor who addresses issues such as domestic violence, child trafficking and family planning.

- SCDI provides support for the self-help groups of sex workers in Hanoi, in an attempt to reduce HIV risks, drug use, and violence.
- SCDI has successfully initiated and implemented a model for prevention of HIV transmission amongst male drug users. SCDI has also succeeded in promoting and advocating for this model to be replicated in other provinces.
- SCDI staff, together with the Bright Future Network of people living with HIV (PLHIV), have created a magazine named “Living with HIV” and a website for PLHIV ([www.nch.vn](http://www.nch.vn)), providing space for PLHIV to share information and voice their concerns.
- SCDI has carried out the “HIV in the workplace” project. Through the individual development approach and has strengthened essential skills for PLHIV, former drug users and sex workers, motivating them to new job opportunities and to live positively.
- The partnership between SCDI’s professional counseling team and the GIPEsther project from the French Government has brought about constant social and psychological services for PLHIV at Dong Da Hospital, Hanoi. With this experience at hand, we are hoping to scale up this model in the future.

### **Results, learning effect and experiences**

The internship in Hanoi was the alternative internship to the original one in Cambodia - Needs assessment for health education. It was arranged by the former Glen participant and the communication with the new host organization SCDI and the director Oanh Thi Hau Kuat was very smooth. After our arrival in August 2011 we slowly discovered all the topics and projects, in which is SCDI involved and we were introduced to the all departments within SCDI - counseling department, communication department and their specific projects and activities. We

got enough time to become familiar with all the projects. After meetings with each department we suggested some ideas and possible ways of cooperation and involvement.

### **Communication team**

CSDI's communication team publishes every three months a magazine focused on prevention of HIV/AIDS. As a tandem team we cooperated with the Communication team - the goal of our activity was to create a manual and pilot training on journalism basic skills for future magazine writers. We developed the manual, which includes the theoretical part as well as the practical one and some examples of exercises. This training manual is intended to be used with self-help groups, or small Community Based Organizations who want to increase their capacity to work with some magazines or publish their own articles. The self-help groups are having different areas of interest and they might also have different needs in terms of capacity building. Not all groups will want or need to undertake all of the training sessions in this manual. It is recommended that a needs assessment is carried out with groups before undertaking any training, to ascertain what the needs actually are. It is also advised that all training sessions within this manual are adapted and amended to match the needs better, capability, knowledge and capacity of the groups. The session plans are not intended as set programs which have to be adhered to exactly; rather they should be viewed as a guide to enhancing knowledge in these areas. This training manual has been designed to be as simple to use as possible.

The manual was piloted with participants from SCDI and local NGOs. The results and final evaluation was very satisfactory.

### **VSCPA - Vietnam civil society partnership platform on AIDS**

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My contribution to the VCSPA was led by Miss Nguyễn Thị Minh Hiền. Two main documents were developed after VCSPA Annual meeting in August 2011 (August, 2011) and meeting with stakeholders in Ho Ci Minh City. The final reports present some main problematic issues, requirements and suggestion for further development of VCSPA. It was very important to

get more deeply in to the topics and situation about HIV/AIDS in Vietnam, the role of Vietnamese civil society in tackling the barrier and the relationship with the government. After a deep study of all documents about VCSPA (annual meetings reports, charter), visiting some stakeholders (community centers, self-help groups) and undergoing a training organized by the Global Fund focused on VCSPA development, I started preparing a presentation for the Platform Coordinating Committee. The presentation was created according to the horizontal and vertical strategy of development and tried to reflect all the needs of vulnerable groups. The main part is focused on the rising effectiveness and strengthening position of VCSPA as a coordinator of all the stakeholders and a mediator between the civil society and the government. The presentation points out the needs of strategic plan, revision of strategic objectives, evaluation and monitoring system,...etc. This presentation was translated to Vietnamese and presented to the Platform Coordinating Committee as an inspiration for further development of VSCPA.

Thanks to different projects of SCDI we had the chance to participate also in some conferences and trainings on reproductive and women health or trainings offered to the communities or self help group as SCDI participants.

The atmosphere in the SCDI was very kind and all the staff were very helpful and supporting our internship. They really created a great environment for our work and helped us especially with the translations of exercises for the journalism training and presentations. They integrated us into their team and helped us to overcome to language barrier, which was sometimes the main challenge in communication with the communities and participants of the training.

I definitely learned a lot about myself and my assumed open-mindedness, which in the confrontation with such a different culture really got tested to its limits. I learned to overcome personal conflicts within our tandem. One of the biggest challenges during the internship was to find an efficient solution to these conflicts. But of course I gained a unique experience - working in an international team with people from a completely different cultural background, with very different working habits. The most valuable thing I have learned during the internship is the

importance of thorough communication for mutual understanding and to be honest this experience is absolutely invaluable for me.