

MEASURE Evaluation in Vietnam

Even though HIV has been detected in all of Vietnam's 63 provinces, the country's epidemic has been confined mostly to a few at-risk populations. With only 0.4 percent of the general adult population infected with the virus, the epidemic is still considered concentrated. Injecting drug users have the highest prevalence rate at 18.4 percent nationally.

However, prevalence rates among these groups vary considerably from one region to another. For example, one percent of injecting drug users is estimated to carry HIV in Danang province, according to the 2009 HIV/ Sexually Transmitted Infection Integrated Behavioral and Biological Surveillance (IBBS) survey. Further north, in Dien Bien and Quang Ninh provinces, this rate climbs to 55 percent. In Hai Phong and Ho Chi Min City, approximately 17 percent of men who have sex with men (MSM) have HIV, whereas 6.8 percent of MSM carry the virus in Hanoi.

The Vietnamese government has made a vigorous effort to combat the country's growing HIV epidemic. In 2000, it established the Vietnam Administration HIV/ AIDS Control (VAAC), which coordinates the country's national HIV/AIDS prevention and control strategy. Jonathan Pearson, who served as a health systems advisor for MEASURE Evaluation's activities in Vietnam, described the government's effort as advantageous to the country's HIV monitoring and evaluation (M&E) infrastructure.

"When the government decides to do something in Vietnam," said Pearson, "it gets done. It's exciting to see what can be done when a government has the power and will to do something."

In addition to HIV, Vietnam has dealt with avian influenza (AI) H5N1. During the 2003 outbreak, Vietnam reported the first human case of AI. Since then, there



COUNTRY FLAG



DEMOGRAPHY

Population: 90,549,390

Population Growth Rate: 1.077%

Age Structure:

0–14 years: 25.2%

15–64 years: 69.3%

65 years and over: 5.5%

Death Rate: 5.96 deaths/1,000 population

HIV-RELATED DATA

Adult HIV Prevalence: 0.4%

People Living with HIV: 220,000 (2009 est.)

OTHER RELEVANT DATA

Infant Mortality Rate: 20 infant deaths/1,000 live births

Total Fertility Rate: 1.91 children born/woman

Maternal Mortality Ratio: 75 maternal deaths/100,000 live births



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have been more than 3,000 animal and 100 human cases reported.

MEASURE EVALUATION IN VIETNAM

MEASURE Evaluation has provided technical assistance to Vietnam in both HIV and AI related activities. The Project's HIV work has focused on strengthening the country's national M&E system as well as facilitating high quality data collection and reporting for the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). MEASURE Evaluation has continued its assistance to Vietnam's Partnership for Avian and Human Influenza (PAHI) in developing a national AI M&E strategy.

Strengthening Vietnam's National HIV M&E System
In September 2006, Vietnam's government issued Decision 26, which required medical clinics throughout the country to collect and report data on HIV/AIDS patients and prevention programs. In other words, it created a national M&E framework and system for HIV surveillance. The latest version of the system is referred to as Decision 28, or simply "D-28."

"These are systems for collecting routine monitoring data," Pearson explained. "They collect data on everything—it's pretty amazing."

MEASURE Evaluation assisted VAAC, the Vietnamese government's HIV/AIDS strategy program, in implementing the D-28 reporting indicators and national M&E framework, including an online reporting system. The purpose of this assistance has been to improve the quality of data flowing through the national M&E system, and to increase the use of data for program decision making, policy development and advocacy in targeted provinces.

To these ends, the MEASURE Evaluation team helped VAAC and the Ministry of Health conduct numerous training workshops on data management in selected provinces. Trainings spanned four topics—basic M&E, Decision 28 implementation, data management, and data use. The workshops drew participants from provinces throughout the country.

An important outcome of MEASURE Evaluation's support to national M&E system functions was the

establishment of an Excel database to compile and make accessible all national HIV data by program and province. The database has been essential to geographic information system (GIS) activities in Vietnam. GIS is a tool that links data to geography and can help in the production of maps, as well as other tools, which improve the decision-making process. MEASURE Evaluation also worked with VAAC and the national Technical Working Group to collect the data needed to estimate and project key HIV epidemiological information.

Strengthening PEPFAR Reporting

In 2009, PEPFAR, the U.S. President's Emergency Program for AIDS Relief, launched a newly revised set of required program indicators to be reported by recipients of its funding. The amount of effort required to implement the new required indicators, also known as "Next Generation Indicators" (NGI), was great. MEASURE Evaluation played a major role in helping Vietnam transition from the old to the new.

"We provided training and guidance and developed reporting tools for the PEPFAR implementing partners to report back to the U.S. government," Pearson explained. "We also provided site-level support, and held a series of capacity building workshops with all of the PEPFAR partners in Vietnam."

One vital element to this transition was the development of an indicator guide tailored specifically for Vietnam. MEASURE Evaluation helped adapt the generic PEPFAR guidelines to a Vietnamese context. All of the new PEPFAR indicators were explained in the context of Vietnam's specific circumstances, and the entire indicator guide was translated from English to Vietnamese. The results of MEASURE Evaluation's assistance have been clear.

"By the end of the first year of the second phase, the data quality coming out of Vietnam was better than at the beginning of Phase One," Pearson said. "They moved seamlessly from Phase One to Two."

MEASURE Evaluation also helped develop a PEPFAR data warehouse for Vietnam, which now serves as the primary source of HIV data consumption in the country. This PEPFAR indicator database houses all targets and reported results for all primary partners and programs

since PEPFAR activities began in the country in 2004. By making the PEPFAR data more readily accessible, it is also more likely to be used to support the decision-making process for HIV programs in Vietnam and enhance policy development.

National Avian Influenza M&E Strategy

During Phase III, MEASURE Evaluation has continued to provide technical assistance to the Vietnamese government's Partnership for Avian and Human Influenza in developing an M&E framework and strategy for the national avian influenza program. MEASURE Evaluation has also assisted in developing an assessment framework and standardized assessment tools for a package of interventions implemented by USAID/Vietnam in five different provinces. The assessment framework covers four key components

of AI prevention and control—planning and policy, animal health, human health, and behavior change communication. The national AI M&E framework aims to simultaneously strengthen Vietnam's systems and improve reporting by U.S. government agencies in the countries. This activity was informed by MEASURE Evaluation's earlier work in developing the Guide for Monitoring and Evaluating Avian Influenza Programs in Southeast Asia.

MEASURE Evaluation also assisted in drafting USAID Vietnam's performance management plan (PMP), which builds on the national AI M&E framework. Local stakeholders contributed heavily to the PMP. To facilitate the data collection and access, MEASURE Evaluation has prepared data collection forms and a storage mechanism for PMP data collected.