United Nations
International Drug Control Programme in Viet Nam
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Since its inception in 1992, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) Country Office Viet Nam has provided technical assistance in a wide range of activities dealing with the demand and supply side of illicit drugs in a balanced approach.

This brochure presents an overview of the projects and programmes which contain, implicitly, the approach to drug control as practiced and implemented by UNDCP and as mandated by the UN Conventions on drug control of 1961, 1971 and 1988 to which the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is a signatory.

The wide range of activities, linked to sectors such as capacity building, rural development, legal assistance, health, education, culture and information, point to the cross-cutting nature of the work while providing the specific focus on drug control.

I hope that the brochure contributes to the understanding of the work UNDCP is committed to.

Doris Buddenberg
Representative
The extent and pattern of opiate drug use in Viet Nam is shifting from the rural older people to younger age groups in urban areas, a shift marked also by the transition from opium to heroin. The emergence of amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) is also likely to have an impact on the young generation. Increasing drug injection and continued practice of needle sharing is fueling the HIV/AIDS epidemic. It is estimated that up to 65.3% of HIV/AIDS cases are linked to injecting drug users.

At the same time, crime rates are on the rise in Viet Nam. These two phenomena are linked since, according to available statistics, as many as 90% of the people involved in murder, robbery and theft have been identified as drug addicts.
Viet Nam is considered a minor drug producing country since remarkable success has been achieved in the eradication of poppy plants. The area of opium cultivation in 2001 was estimated to be as low as 324 ha. The potential opium output for 2001 was 2 metric tons (compared to for example Laos 134 tons and Myanmar 1,097 tons). There was also minor production of cannabis in Southern Viet Nam.

In Viet Nam, both drug seizures made and the number of people involved in drug trafficking have increased and shows an escalation of the drug problem in the country. Drug smuggling is unfolding in an ever more complicated manner. This development may be a consequence of Viet Nam’s proximity to the “Golden Triangle”, the recently introduced open-door policy as well as high profits involved in the drug business. Moreover, Vietnamese law enforcement authorities are facing difficulties in tackling the escalating situation partly because the long borders and coastal lines have proven to be difficult and expensive to patrol.
Country Strategy

The strategy of UNDCP Viet Nam is based on the balanced approach incorporating all elements of drug control in supply and demand reduction.

After the completion of the masterplan 1996–2000, the programme is developing taking into account the changed situation in the country and windows of opportunity for project planning, implementation and funding, providing the foundation for further expansion in close cooperation and collaboration with the Government in the context of the masterplan 2001–2010.
The programme objectives of UNDCP assistance in Viet Nam include:

➤ to promote effective implementation of a national drug control strategy, policy and action plan as envisaged by the national drug control masterplan;

➤ to promote development of a proper drug control legislative framework, maintaining the adherence to the UN conventions on drugs that Viet Nam has ratified;

➤ to strengthen a national capacity for drug control administration and management;

➤ to reduce and ultimately eliminate opium poppy cultivation and to support sustainable measures to prevent future cultivation;

➤ to prevent and eliminate illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals;

➤ to prevent and reduce drug abuse including its harmful consequences such as HIV infection and to improve drug treatment and rehabilitation; and

➤ to promote effective international and sub-regional co-operation in drug control.
Activities Overview

Young girls from Ky Son District in Nghe An Province stand in their families poppy crop – 1996
Projects 1992 - 1996

1992 – 1996

Three years later the same girls in the same field with an alternative crop – 1999
The Drug Abuse Control Masterplan Exercises

Duration: Four years (1992-1996)

The project supported the preparation of a comprehensive, integrated masterplan for the control of drug abuse in Viet Nam through preparatory activities, development of a long-term plan, and formulation of a number of projects and project profiles for international financing.
Major project activities included fact-finding missions and initial support to the Committee for Ethnic Minorities and Mountainous Areas (CEMMA) then in charge of coordinating drug control activities in the country. UNDCP provided expertise and financial support to carry out several surveys on the institutional organization, opium poppy cultivation, drug abuse, and law enforcement. The survey results were used as background for the development of UNDCP-supported projects, which were executed from 1996-2000. The first national drug control masterplan for the period 1996-2000 was prepared and approved by the Government in 1996.
Distribution of Assistance

Off-farm income generation in Ky Son District
1997 – 2000

UNDCP has assisted the Government in developing the national drug control masterplan for the period 1996-2000, and in funding and execution of six technical co-operation projects with a total contribution of US$ 7,379,735 million.

The projects include:

➤ An alternative development project for replacement of opium in Ky Son District (VIE/95/B09);
➤ Strengthening capability of the national drug control co-ordination institutions (VIE/96/B54);
➤ Strengthening drug seizure and interdiction capacity in Viet Nam (VIE/97/B08);
➤ HIV/AIDS prevention among the target group of IDUs (VIE/97/B07);
➤ Drug abuse prevention in schools (VIE/98/B52); and
➤ Drug abuse data assessment and treatment and rehabilitation training (VIE/98/B93).

Distribution of assistance

- Drug law enforcement: 12%
- Drug control administration: 6%
- Drug demand reduction: 22%
- Anti-illicit drug production activities: 60%

Building of a school in Muong Long, Ky Son District, Nghe An Province
Strengthening of National Drug Control Co-ordination Institutions

Duration: Six years (1996-2001)

The project aimed at strengthening the national capacities in inter-agency co-ordination and administration of drug control programmes, implementation of the national drug control masterplan, and design and management of technical assistance projects.
The project’s major achievements included the establishment of Viet Nam National Drug Control Committee (VNDCC), Viet Nam’s ratification of the UN drug control conventions and adoption of the narcotic law. A unified mechanism for planning and coordinating drug control initiatives has been well placed at the national and sub-regional level. Perception about drug issues and the managerial skill of drug control officers in related agencies have been upgraded through numerous project activities.
Duration: 4.5 years (1996-2000)

The aim of the project was to strengthen Viet Nam’s capacity to bring about socio-economic changes that will enable farmers to eliminate illicit drug cultivation and abuse. Three years after the start of the project the opium cultivation in the area was totally eliminated from the region.
This was achieved through improvement of the agricultural systems through development of livestock, agricultural crops, marketing and off-farm income generation. The infrastructure has also been improved in the region and the leaders of the communities and villages are more aware of the possibilities and opportunities to improve the living conditions for the people. The implementation of this pilot scheme in Ky Son district in Nghe An province has provided techniques for replication in other areas in the country faced with problems of opium poppy cultivation.
Sharing needles is a common practice among IDUs in Viet Nam

The project aimed at strengthening Viet Nam’s capacity to run community-level programmes. It was implemented in 11 wards and raised knowledge and awareness about community intervention approaches suitable in Viet Nam.
The project has been successful in significantly contributing to a change in high-risk behaviour among the project participants (from needle sharing to use of clean needles and safe sexual practices). During the project, an increased number of drug abusers also applied for and were admitted into treatment. The project has established a working model with collaboration between different levels and sectors in drug use and HIV/AIDS prevention activities, particularly taking into account awareness raising among local law enforcement personnel who became supportive facilitators of the prevention and community activities at the local level. The peer educators approach implemented in this project has lead to sustainable capacity building: more than 50% of the peer educators trained in the project are active and working with national and international NGOs two years after the completion of the project.
Duration: Three years (1997-2000)

The project objective was to increase capacities of the law enforcement agencies including police, customs and border army to reduce trafficking in illicit narcotics drugs & precursor chemicals in major cities and selected border areas.
The project was designed to establish an effective policy and procedure, and a framework for co-operation of the Police, the Customs and the Border Army in reducing production and controlling the trafficking of illicit narcotic drugs in Viet Nam, to enhance the capacity of interdiction and seizure of the Police, the Customs and the Border Army, to provide the skills to apply special investigative techniques, and to provide technical equipment to improve transportation and communications. The Police, Customs and Border Army signed an interagency drug control cooperation protocol. Two interdiction task-forces were set up to intensify the control of drug trafficking along the most infamous drug routes Highway No. 6 and 7.

Seized opium and heroin as the result of improved interdiction capacity

Seminar of Law Enforcement Cooperation held in Hanoi
July 17-18, 2000
Drug Abuse Situation Analysis and Training for Community-based Treatment and Rehabilitation

Duration: Three years (1998–2000)

The project aimed at increasing the capacity of drug treatment professionals in assessing the drug abuse situation and providing effective community-based treatment and rehabilitation.
The knowledge about patterns and reasons of drug use as well as the strengths and weaknesses of current approaches to treatment and rehabilitation in Viet Nam were analysed through surveys in selected areas. The introduction of new methods of treatment contributed to improving remarkably the quality of treatment services at centers with encouraging results. Through intensive training, a positive change in attitudes was achieved among treatment professionals and staff dealing with drug abuse problems in the application of the therapeutic community method. Treatment and rehabilitation professionals at centers and in the communities improved their knowledge base and skills. The project was useful also for a re-consideration and re-discussion of national policies towards treatment and rehabilitation work.
Drug Abuse Prevention in Schools

Duration: Three years (1999–2001)

The project has achieved its objective to demonstrate effective drug preventive education in pilot teacher training institutions and established the basis for introducing drug abuse prevention curriculum in the school system in Viet Nam.
A drug abuse prevention education curriculum was developed and pilot teaching of the curriculum was carried out in the teacher training universities, colleges and secondary vocational schools. The curriculum, as an important project output, comprises 15 standard lessons that were prepared to incorporate drug prevention education into intra-curriculum core subjects, and provide guidelines to integrate drug prevention education into different school subjects and extra-curriculum activities. The teaching materials focused on the application of participatory and life-skill approaches in drug prevention education. The project beneficiaries included the administrators, education specialists, teacher trainers, pre-service teachers and students in the Ministry of Education & Training and the teacher training colleges.
MOU / SOC meeting in Hanoi, May 1998
MOU and sub-regional projects

UNDCP has also assisted the Government in implementing 13 sub-regional projects developed under the Memorandum of Understanding for Co-operation on Drug Control in Southeast Asia comprising Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam.

New Phase of Co-operation

2001 – 2010

UNDCP Viet Nam Country Programme has entered a new phase of co-operation starting 2001 with the successful implementation of the first masterplan for national drug control 1996-2000. While a new masterplan for the period from 2001-2010 is currently formulated, projects are implemented while new initiatives are being developed.
National Drug Control Masterplan
2001–2010

Duration: 14 months (2001-2002)

The project objective is to strengthen the capacity of the Government to control drugs by assistance in developing a national drug control masterplan for 2001-2010.
The project activities comprise review of the national drug control policy, institutional organization, legislation, law enforcement and jurisdiction system, treatment and rehabilitation, advocacy and prevention; assessment of the implementation of the masterplan 1996-2000; preparation of the masterplan 2001-2010. Priorities in drug control are being identified in consultation with relevant line ministries to develop project ideas and project documents for implementation in 2001-2005. The masterplan will provide a framework for the Government to mobilize external assistance in the implementation of the national drug control action plan.
Alternative Socio-economic Development Programme to Replace Opium Poppy Cultivation - Ky Son Pilot Scheme (Phase II)

Duration: Two years (2001-2003)

The first phase of the Ky Son alternative development project, implemented in 1996-2000, was a success. However, to ensure sustainability and replicability, the second phase started implementation in 2002. The immediate objective of the project is to develop a replicable methodology for the
establishment of opium income substitution and drug demand reduction activities among opium producing ethnic minority people in Viet Nam, through the strengthening of the capacity of the national institutions responsible for delivering the required services in co-operation with community based development planning. Consultations between the UNDCP and the relevant government authorities lead to a modification in the implementation modality. The project will be executed partly by the Government to increase ownership and improve the prospects of sustainability and replicability of the alternative development approach in Viet Nam. Provincial and district authorities will take a greater role and responsibility in the second phase. Transfer of experience in alternative development technology and its application will facilitate the application of the experience in other rural development initiatives.
Drug Abuse Prevention among Ethnic Minorities in Viet Nam

Duration: Two years (2002-2004)

The project is aimed at preventing the spread of illicit drug use among ethnic minorities in Viet Nam. The project’s immediate objective is to develop a demand reduction programme for the ethnic minority peoples in selected highland provinces in the North,
focusing on formulation of community-based programmes including surveys and assessment of drug abuse situation among ethnic groups, and development of practical approaches to achieve gradual reduction of the problems. At the project closure, the capacity of the local authorities and communities in demand reduction will be considerably strengthened, enabling other investments and services to be brought into full use.
UNAIDS PAF Project to Improve Risk Reduction Programmes through research into IDUs’ behaviours and support to people living with HIV/AIDS

Duration: One Year (2001-2002)

Drug injection is still the leading cause of HIV transmission in Viet Nam. Of the drug users in Viet Nam it is estimated that 1/3 are injecting drug users. By June 2002 the number of HIV infected people was 48,000.
Statistics and well founded in-depth research and understanding of the target-group, the drug users themselves, is lacking. The only way interventions can improve in a dynamically developing environment is to build on information about the target group that facilitates understanding and functions as a tool for designing more effective intervention approaches. The project immediate objective is to assess HIV and other health risks associated with injecting drug users and develop effective intervention for HIV prevention among injecting drug users in the selected provinces. The project will provide a basis for intervention and prevention of HIV/AIDS transmission through an improved understanding of the context and re-utilization of drug use, high-risk behavior, drug use history and case studies as well as providing a better understanding of the concept.
Song Ma Alternative Development Project planned for start-up in 2002

Duration: Three years (2002-2004)

Due to recidivism of opium poppy cultivation in remote areas, an alternative development project in Song Ma district, Son La province has been developed in close co-operation and co-ordination with the local authorities.
The project is designed to address the problem of opium re-cultivation, drug abuse and sustainable alternative means of livelihood in Song Ma through a participatory approach to reduce household drug dependency and poverty. The project will approach the issues of both household income generation through opium cultivation and drug demand through addressing their underlying determinants such as poverty, health, income opportunities, socio-economic development and a community capacity for dealing with them. Best practices from recently concluded UNDCP project VIE/95/B09, RAS/96/490 and RAS/96/B53 in Viet Nam will be applied in the project.
AD/VIE/DR14 (Planned)

Prevention of HIV/AIDS among IDUs in Viet Nam

Duration: Three years (2002-2005)

As part of the masterplan consultations, the priority of the Government of Viet Nam and UNDCP for HIV/AIDS prevention work has been identified. The drug abuse situation is reaching a critical point in Viet Nam. 65% of the transmission of the virus is through injecting drug users.
Prevention is urgently required to halt the growing drug use specifically among young people. Such activities need to be accompanied by supporting measures for other target groups, in particular parents, who are faced with challenges previously unknown to them. The project will draw on lessons learned and best practice developed by a previous UNDCP project and will develop the capacities at local and provincial level expanding the peer educators approach developed in project B07, completed in 2000.
Planned project

Comprehensive Drug Prevention Activities in Viet Nam

Duration: Three years (2003-2005)

Current drug abuse problems include heroin use, either smoking or injecting the drug, as well as the increased use of amphetamine-type stimulants. The national effort in drug prevention was limited in the past years due to lack of experience and financial constraints. To prevent an increasing number of young people to slide into drug use without even rudimentary knowledge about drugs and refusal skills is becoming one of the most urgent tasks in Viet Nam. The project's immediate objective is to carry out drug primary prevention through awareness promotion and community-based activities. The project strategy consists of two main elements: to disseminate information and to promote community-based participatory activities. The link between these two elements is essential in providing information as a necessary but not sufficient base that will be complemented by simultaneous interventions to bring about behavioral changes. A further strategic goal of the project is to re-orient government policy towards more up-to-date prevention methods and approaches by providing successful models.
Integration & Partnership

Following its mandate among the UN organizations, the UNDCP country office acts as the focal agency for drug issues in the United Nations country team in Vietnam, taking the lead to raise awareness and integrate drug control into the wider context of development.
Initiatives of UNDCP to mainstream the drug issue in the work of other UN agencies have been ongoing since the start-up of the UNDCP Country Office in 1995.

Since 1998, UNDCP has further pursued inter-agency co-operation through participation in the other UN thematic groups in the country, including UNAIDS, Poverty Alleviation & Hunger Eradication, Rural Development, Gender Issues.
International Day Against Drugs

Every year, the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking is celebrated on 26 June to commemorate the signature of the Declaration adopted at the International Conference against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking on this day in 1987.
Every year a theme for the day is established and thousands of people around the world are mobilized to celebrate the day. The UNDCP Field Office in Viet Nam joins in the celebration of the International Day with special events and activities in collaboration with the Government.
UNDCP Viet Nam Country Office


Head of UNDCP Viet Nam office
1994 – Present

Jorn Kristensen
Senior Programme Coordinator 1994-1997

Jens Hannibal
Representative 1997-2000

Doris Buddenberg
Representative 2000-Present
Drug Abuse in Hanoi
Some insights & their implications for intervention
40 pages, 2002
Available in English and Vietnamese
2002

Vietnam Country Profile
50 pages,
Available in English and Vietnamese
2002

Vietnamese Anti-Drug Posters
70 pages,
100 colour-plates
2001

World Drug Report 2000
Vietnamese language
200 pages
With graphic charts, tables, maps, and illustration photos
2001