

HIV/AIDS PREVENTION AMONG YOUTH

The lifestyle of today's Vietnamese youth is very different...

The lifestyle of today's Vietnamese youth is very different from the not too distant past. Youth face a society that is rapidly changing—as a result values and attitudes towards gender, drug use and sexual relationships are very different from previous generations.

A changing social environment offers youth academic and work opportunities never before imagined. At the same time it exposes them to greater risk of HIV infection. The proportion of HIV infections among youth has grown steadily. In 1994, 10% of new cases

Today's youth face a society that is rapidly changing...

were among young people; today it has reached 65%.

The *National HIV/AIDS Strategy* recognizes the change in lifestyle and the resulting situation of youth who are recognized as being at risk and needing targeted support. The Strategy also recognizes the importance of involving youth in HIV prevention and empha-

sizes the need to use effective behavior change communication (BCC) approaches involving a *synergistic mix of mass and interpersonal media*.

The Asian Development Bank sponsored *HIV/AIDS Prevention Among Youth Project* responds to this need of targeted support and the use of modern interpersonal and mass media approaches. The

Project offers a comprehensive BCC approach to reduce HIV-infection risk among youth aged 15–24.

The combined use of mass media, community-based interpersonal communication interventions and the provision of youth-friendly health services provide youth up-to-date information and services on how HIV and AIDS affects them and how they can protect themselves.



Dự Án Phòng Chống HIV/AIDS Cho Thanh Niên
Project logo and slogan: 'Same heartbeat, same action'

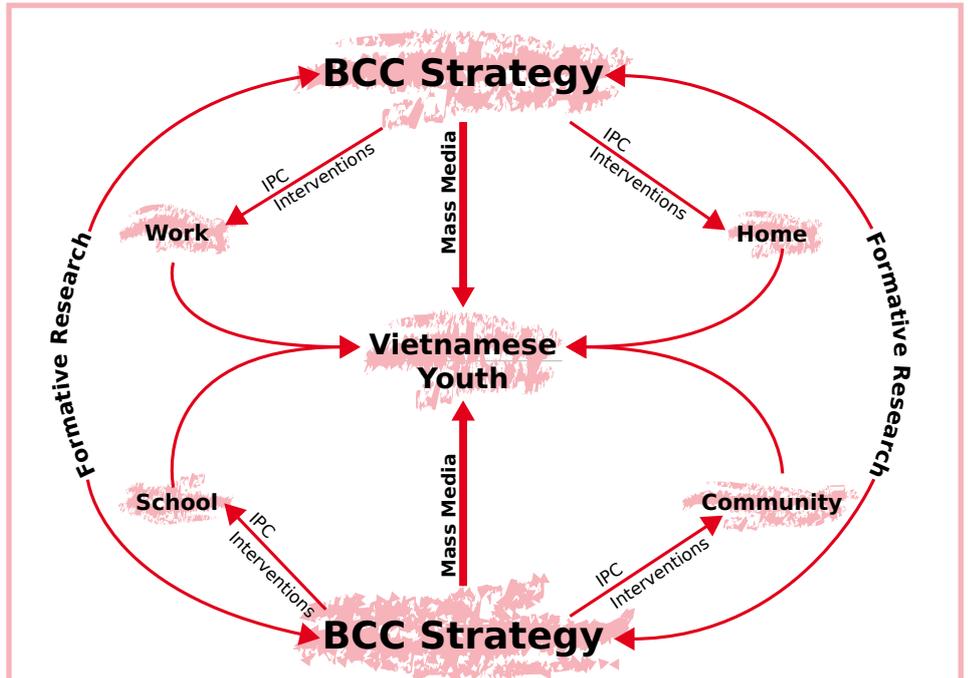


An Enter-Educate approach and Synergistic relationship

The Project applies an ‘enter-educate’ approach to effectively reach young people. With a long-running TV drama—the *House with Many Windows*, radio phone-in programs, TV and radio spots and a website, the Project delivers educational messages in an entertainment format. These messages are reinforced by community-based IPC activities including peer education. Mass media partnered with IPC interventions is a powerful synergistic force for behavior change.



Above and below: Actors from TV spot promoting VCT.



A synergistic relationship...

The Project’s synergistic approach—shown in the diagram above—adds to the sustainability and impact of the *HIV/AIDS Prevention Among Youth Project*. It allows for different approaches to serve different needs which are mutually reinforcing. Young people following the TV drama, listening to the radio phone-in programs, viewing TV spots or engaging with the Project website are also approached by Project-supported peer educators using IPC materials to generate dialogue on the topics presented in the mass media outputs. The messages delivered through mass media and IPC channels are consistent and reinforce each other.

Reaching a wide range of Vietnamese youth

The Project reaches a wide range of youth including:

- youth involved in high-risk behaviors including using injecting drugs, sex workers, and clients of sex workers;
- vulnerable youth because of their migrant, education, or employment status; and,
- mainstream youth such as youth living with parents who may currently be at low risk, but whose status can be protected and strengthened.

The Components

Advocacy — the Project works at national and provincial levels to move issues of youth and HIV-risk to the forefront of discussion and motivate leaders to support program delivery. Leaders who are sensitive to the needs of young people and are willing to support HIV/AIDS prevention policies and programs that focus on youth have helped to establish a foundation for other Project activities. A vibrant Youth Advisory Group of young people including

Youth work as designers of interventions, facilitators of learning and energetic mobilisers of youth and leaders.

PLHA works with the Project to ensure a youth friendly approach. Youth-driven advocacy activities include dissemination of materials targeted at leaders, public forums, youth-led conferences, festivals and the participation of 'young ambassadors' in national and international conferences.

The World Health Organisation provides technical support for the Advocacy Component of the Project.

Mass Media — a national mass media program is designed to influence personal behaviors and attitudes of young people. An 'enter-educate' approach uses a variety of outputs including:

- **A multi-episode TV Drama** exploring the lives of today's Vietnamese youth in different settings. The drama discusses a variety of issues affecting youth including love, relationships, drug use, sexuality, stigma and discrimination, gender and HIV/AIDS.
- **One-hour, weekly radio phone-in programs in 15 provinces** give youth a chance to discuss what they have seen on the TV Drama and openly and anonymously discuss issues that matter to them such as HIV/AIDS, love, sex, marriage and drug abuse. The programs are lead by trained youth moderators.
- **TV and radio spots** provide a constant flow of targeted information while **video documentaries** allow for the detailed examination of social issues surrounding HIV/AIDS for use in group viewing settings. Issues covered include stigma and discrimination, injecting drug use, condom use, talking about sex with peers and parents, and voluntary counselling and testing.
- **A Project website** provides youth with a confidential source of information on HIV/AIDS. This entertaining and interactive site includes a moderated forum, blogs, quiz sections and competitions. Youth can view and download Project outputs.



▲ Dr Ngo Khang Cuong, Project Director, MoH, PMU.



▲ Members of the Project's Youth Advisory Group.

▼ Youth moderators at the radio phone-in program launch in Hai Duong.



The Project offers a two pronged approach; mass media helps to quickly and effectively deliver information and create an understanding of HIV/AIDS related issues. Interpersonal interventions are then more effective in changing attitudes and behavior of youth.

- A wide range of **inter-personal communication print materials** are developed for distribution through peer educators. Materials reinforce the TV drama messages at a personal level.



On-set shooting the multi-episode TV Drama House with Many Windows (above) and TV spots (below).



To ensure mass media outputs are appealing to young Vietnamese, youth advisors are involved in all steps of product design.

Technical support for the Mass Media Component is provided by the BBC World Service Trust.

Community Based Interventions — the Project supports 15 provinces to implement a program of youth-focused activities, including peer education, condom and needle distribution, Voluntary Counseling and Testing and parent education.

Services are provided in locations, and at times, that are youth-friendly, especially to those engaging in high-risk behaviors. Peer educators conduct discussion groups using the IPC materials developed under the mass media component to generate dialogue on the topics raised in the TV drama series.

Technical support for the Community Based Interventions Component is provided by Youth House, Marie Stopes International and CARE International.

Project Management — as the Executing Agency the MoH supports the implementation of the Project ensuring that management, financial, and monitoring and evaluation systems are in place at national and provincial levels.

At the provincial level a number of partners, including Department of Health, Provincial AIDS Committees, Youth Union, Public Security and mass media, are working together to implement activities. A central Project Management Unit based at the General Department of Population directs and coordinates the Project.

For further information on the *HIV/AIDS Prevention Among Youth Project* contact...

Project Management Unit
 12 Ngo Tat To Street, Dong Da, Hanoi, Vietnam
 Phone: + 84 (0) 4747 1102
 Fax: + 84 (0) 4 8438514
 Email: pmuncpfphn@hn.vnn.vn

