



Improving Quality of Life of Persons with Disabilities in Provinces Heavily Sprayed with Agent Orange

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

November 2022

Introduction

USAID/Vietnam has been assisting persons with disabilities in Vietnam since 1989. In 2015, USAID started the Improving Quality of Life (QOL) of Persons with Disabilities in Provinces Heavily Sprayed with Agent Orange Project (abbreviated as Inclusion Project), focused on improving rehabilitation services, social services and policy support to expand opportunities for persons with disabilities in eight provinces: Binh Dinh, Quang Nam, Dong Nai, Tay Ninh, Binh Phuoc, Quang Tri, Thua Thien Hue, and Kon Tum.

To gauge progress against the project's goals, USAID requested USAID Learns to conduct a performance evaluation (hereafter referred to as the disabilities project evaluation) to answer the following questions:

- **EQ1:** To what extent has the QOL for persons with disabilities receiving USAID-supported assistance changed over time?
- **EQ2:** What are the factors affecting the success of the three intervention areas targeted for USAID support (rehabilitation, social services, and disability policies)?
- **EQ3:** To what extent have the availability, accessibility, and quality of rehabilitation and social services in USAID-targeted provinces changed over time?

In addition, the evaluation aims to identify and pilot suitable QOL measurement and rehabilitation data tools, processes, and provides lessons learned from the data collection process. In mid-2022, USAID Learns conducted a baseline survey to assess the current status of the project for each evaluation question. A follow-up survey to learn about changes in QOL (EQ1) is planned for January 2023.

Methods

This baseline survey applies a mixed-methods approach, collecting qualitative and quantitative data in the Quang Tri and Binh Dinh provinces. Quantitative data was collected by two standardized and validated measurement tools: the WHOQOL-BREF+DIS for adults (n=635) and ScoPeO-Kids for children (n=146) with disabilities who participated in the Inclusion Project. These tools were validated with persons with disabilities before their use in the baseline survey.



*The current USAID project is a **breakthrough** – previously there were small projects but now the project focuses not only on services but on supporting our system.*

(Respondent from a Provincial Health Department)

Findings

QOL of persons with disabilities receiving USAID-supported assistance:

The survey results showed that the QOL of persons with disabilities, who were newly admitted as USAID's beneficiaries, varied significantly, not only by level and type of disabilities, but also by sex, age, education level, working status, participation in Organization of Persons with Disabilities, ownership of health insurance, and standards of living. The QOL tools (WHOQOL-BREF+DIS & SCoPeO-Kids) have been validated and show validity and reliability (a brief guidance on how to use the tool can be found here).

The factors affecting the success of the three intervention areas targeted for USAID support:

USAID interventions were perceived to be successful overall. The expertise provided by and through implementing partners, project alignment with needs identified by the Government of Vietnam (GVN), and the amount of time and resources invested by USAID were key to the success of rehabilitation intervention.

With policy intervention, an existing enabling policy environment and USAID's historical support were facilitators of the intervention's success. Meanwhile, social services intervention was ranked less positively due to its newly-implemented status and the unclear terms and definitions of social services - leading to inconsistent intervention approach.

The availability, accessibility, and quality of rehabilitation and social services in USAID-targeted provinces:

USAID's support has contributed to the improvement of the availability and quality of services for persons with disabilities, especially rehabilitation professionals and services.

Remaining gaps include:

- trainings to increase the number of licensed professionals,
- support for the most vulnerable populations including persons with mental and intellectual disabilities and persons with multiple disabilities,
- limited services at the commune level where persons with disabilities could afford to access services on a regular basis,
- systematic quality control and measurement in the healthcare system.



USAID increased the touch-points for interventions, and this helps, but still QOL is influenced by so much more than these project activities.

(Respondent from IP)

Recommendations



Continues long-term support: The evaluation team recommends that USAID continues long-term support in both direct assistance and system strengthening for rehabilitation and social services.



Expanding program opportunities: USAID should consider expanding program opportunities to include support for not only health, but also education, employment, social services, and livelihood to cover multiple components of rehabilitation, multiple dimensions of both QOL and disability, and the complex interactions among them, for a more comprehensive improvement in the QOL of persons with disabilities. The selection of expansion should be collectively decided by USAID, its IPs, and their government partners in consideration of available resources, USAID's priorities, and/or GVN's priorities.



Apply and promote the validated tools: USAID should apply and promote the use of the tools that were used and validated in this study to strengthen rehabilitation and social service data for monitoring and evaluation and evidence-based policy development.

To read the full report, please visit [here](#).

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