



THANH TUNG MEDICAL STATION
Annual Report 2014

Health-check at the medical station

Programme Description

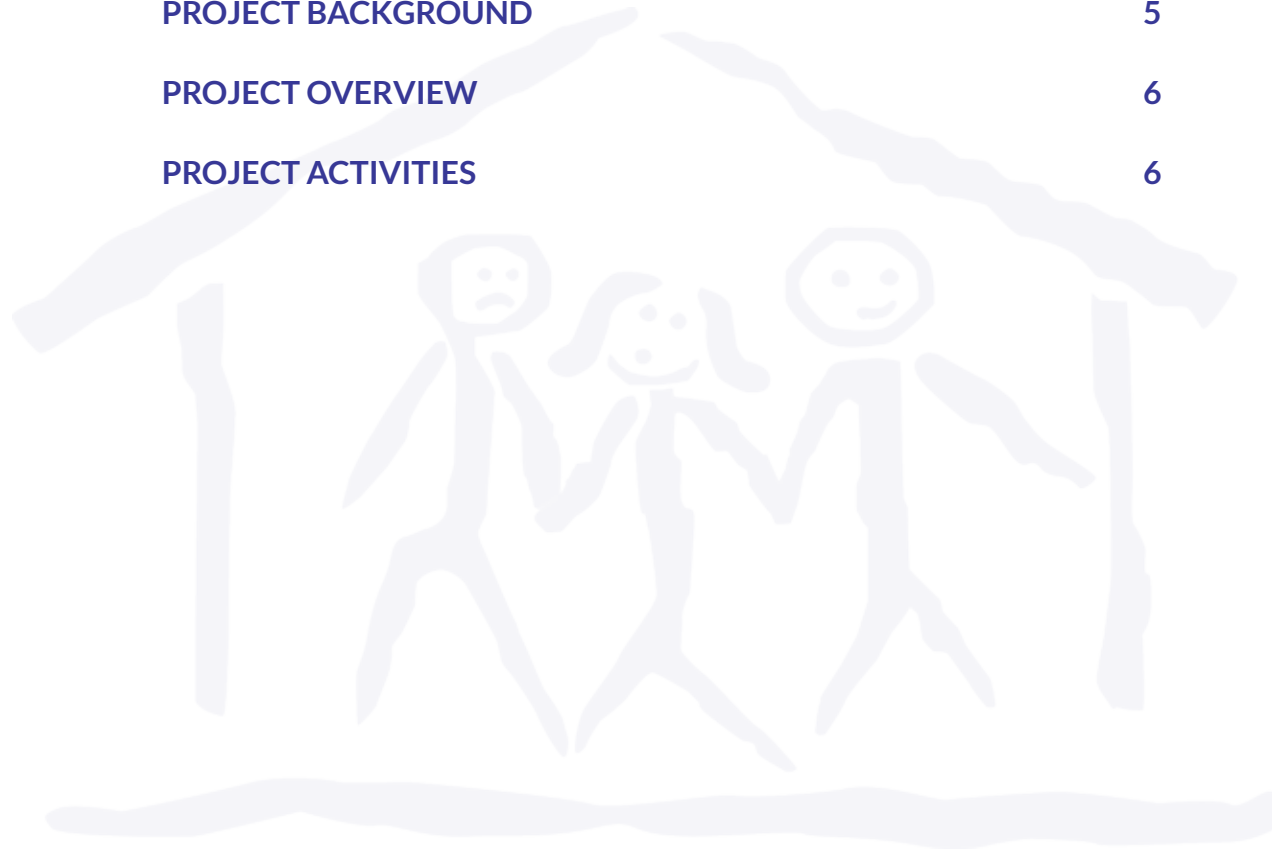


Established:	1999
Location:	Gia Canh Hamlet, Dinh Quan District, Dong Nai Province
Target Group:	Poor and disadvantaged families in the area
Local Partner:	The People's Committee of Dinh Quan
CNCF Staff:	Mr. Nicolas Pistolas, Ms. Son Thu Trinh, Ms. Tran Thi Ngoc Thuy
Monitoring visit:	Bi-annual
CNCF Involvement:	Fully funding, supervising
Budget 2014:	\$US 8,059
Future Plans:	Winding-down financial support in 2015 and handing over all responsibility, including financial, to the local partner
Compiled By:	Ms. Tran Thi Ngoc Thuy

On behalf of our Foundation and the Sunshine Children of Vietnam, we thank all sponsors for supporting this programme in 2014.

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Local living environment

Project Background

We established the Thanh Tung Medical Station in 1999 to serve the medical needs of a small poverty-stricken community in rural Vietnam, approximately 130km northeast of Ho Chi Minh City. Around 2,200 people live here; a fifth are from minority ethnic groups. The Chau Ma people make up the largest ethnic minority group and are the main beneficiaries of this project.

Most Chau Ma people live very hard lives without even the most basic sanitation and nutritional requirements. Before we built the Thanh Tung Medical Station, local people had to travel to another medical station 15 km away. As there are no roads the only way to get there is on foot and due to the difficult terrain and restricted access, the Chau Ma people seldom made the trip and were unable to access healthcare.

Rates of malnourished children, incidences of malaria and numbers of women suffering from gynaecological problems were very high and when we first opened the medical station these were typically the types of cases we dealt with.

Gradually, as the community's health has improved, our medical station has also evolved; it provides child nourishment facilities, pre- and post-natal care, and preventative medical services such as health awareness seminars and workshops that focus on providing information to families like the need for good personal hygiene and sanitation.

The road system in the area has also been much improved, which makes it easier for the people to access health care units.

This year we conducted a comprehensive study to evaluate if there was a continued need for CNCF support in this area. We found that due to the success of the project and the resulting improvement in health awareness and an overall improvement in sanitation facilities in this area, the medical station was no longer necessary. The medical station has fulfilled its primary targets of providing first-aid, basic medical services and malnutrition treatment to the local people and to help raise their awareness about personal healthcare. Thanh Tung Medical Station has reached self-sufficiency.

Our support of the medical station ended from 1 January 2015

Project Overview

In 2014, the medical station provided medical and preventative services to the local community including: free medical appointments and care for disadvantaged people (predominantly ethnic minorities), free contraceptives, and preventive medical care such as vaccines, medical screening and healthcare workshops.

We also provided personal consultations on health-care issues and family planning as part of routine medical consultations with patients. We held educational talks and seminars in the local primary and secondary school on the importance of good personal hygiene and sanitation for children and families.

We have recognised that attendance at the Medical Station had steadily declined over the past couple of years, thus a comprehensive evaluation was conducted to identify the reasons for the decline and in order to make a recommendation for future usage.

The evaluation showed the following measures were responsible for the decline:

- Our health awareness campaigns were successful in encouraging local people to seek out early medical attention and to have the confidence to travel to the larger well-equipped facilities in the province.
- Our education initiatives and preventative measures have resulted in a complete eradication of malaria in this community. Based on our evaluation, and in agreement with the local partner, we decided there was no longer a need to fund the clinic and CNCF support would end from 1 January 2015 with the project considered a success.

Project Activities

Medical Services

Two full-time nurses are employed at Thanh Tung Medical Station to provide medical services including medical examinations, hospital referrals for serious illnesses, and provision of free medicine.

In 2014, the medical station saw 1,131 different patients with 4,813 appointments made in total. 64,5% of mainly ethnic minority patients - 168 of whom are under the age of 15 - received free medicine.

People were treated for a wide variety of conditions such as (but not limited to): respiratory problems, digestive illness, and tuberculosis. Along with common illnesses such as colds and seasonal influenza, gynecological issues were the most common complaints mainly due to poor standards of sanitation.

Preventative Health Services

The following preventative health services have been provided.

VACCINATIONS

In this mountainous, forest region there are a number of infectious diseases that are still prevalent. It has been important for us to vaccinate children against these types of diseases in an attempt to reduce high-rates of infant disability and mortality.



One of our main priorities in establishing the medical station was to ensure that all children in the area were vaccinated in accordance with the national vaccination programme. The medical station staff maintain thorough records for each child and reminders are sent to families, sometimes in person, for those parents who miss follow-up booster vaccines.

In 2013, the Ministry of Health moved all vaccine services to the main provincial hospital due to incidents of severe complications in smaller clinics in Vietnam. As a result no more vaccinations have been administered at Thanh Tung medical station. The staff keep track of target vaccine groups, including children under 1 year old and pregnant women as there was historically a very low vaccination rate among these groups. In 2014, the Ministry of Health used the Medical Station as a base to provide emergency vaccines in the face of a serious measles outbreak. A series of vaccinations were given to the target group of children and pregnant women in the village:

- 34 children under 1-year-old were vaccinated against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, polio, tuberculosis, measles, hepatitis B, meningitis and Sabin;
- 103 children aged 1 to 3-years-old received Japanese encephalitis vaccinations;
- 33 pregnant women received tetanus vaccinations as well as 18 women aged 15 to 35;
- measles vaccinations were given to all village children under the age of 14

FAMILY PLANNING

In the year 2000 the birth rate for this community was 7 children per family.

The staff at the medical station focused on increasing family planning awareness in the village and provided couples with free birth control. Couples with 2 or more children were encouraged to use contraceptives. In 2014 the birth rate has declined to 2.3 children per family.

In 2014, 381 couples in the community received family planning advice.

AWARENESS RAISING ACTIVITIES

Awareness raising activities began in 2006. In 2008, they became the main focus of the medical station.

In 2010, we agreed to provide educational talks to two village schools on a wide range of healthcare and social/psychological issues. The local partners were impressed with the workshop facilitation and educational methods used and were keen to adopt similar techniques themselves for future activities.

In 2014, due to several national outbreaks of measles, dengue fever, and hand-foot-mouth, the staff at Thanh Tung medical station focused on these diseases in their counselling sessions along with Japanese encephalitis, food safety, productive health, and child nutrition.





Construction work at the medical station..



Thanh Tung Medical Station.



Waiting at the medical station



Medicine Distribution



Health-care professional at the medical station




Some of the people we supported



During a health-awareness talk



Project visit



**“The future of our world is the future of our children,
our beautiful children.
For many of them, it is a matter of giving them back their future,
giving them a life, giving them hope and giving them
a childhood they deserve.”**

- Christina Noble -



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