

A Project for Strengthening participation of persons affected by leprosy and their family members in community development programmes in Kon Tum Province, Vietnam. (2016-2018)

a. Background

There are more than 8,000 victims of Agent Orange/Dioxin, and 9,751 people with disability including 220 persons affected by leprosy in Kon Tum province [\[1\]](#) . Most of the families with a disabled family member in the province are among the poorest households, and 91,6% of the poor households are from ethnic minorities

[\[2\]](#)

. According to WHO, there are strong links between poverty, childhood malnutrition and acquiring impairments. Childhood malnutrition is estimated to cause about 20% of the impairments that can lead to disability.

In recent years, the government of Vietnam has tried to help poor families with disabled family members to escape the cycle of poverty. Several medical, socio-economic and educational services for people with disabilities exist and are available under various government sectors and local service providers. However there are persistent problems of locating the services, access to the services and quality of these services, especially for people affected by leprosy.

Kon Tum province has been classified as one of the last leprosy endemic provinces in Vietnam. The proportion of people who are permanently affected by leprosy and in need of rehabilitation care is relatively high. However, years of top down planning have left the local people expecting officials to decide and do everything for them. A survey report (2014) pointed out that many persons with leprosy related disability in the province were unaware of the rights of persons with disability and the services that are available in the province. Only 35% of people affected by leprosy participated in local social or cultural activities and even fewer (13%) took part in recreation activities. The percentage of persons with disability that have found access to socio-economic and rehabilitation services is very low due to the stigma and discrimination they still face in their community. Therefore, many of people with leprosy related disability lack self-confidence, resilience and self-reliance. They do not participate actively in social and cultural events and socio-economic activities in their community.

b. Location(s):

Kon Tum is one of the poorest provinces in Vietnam, located in the Central Highlands, near the borders with Laos and Cambodia. It has an area of 9,934 square km and a population of 495,807 of which 54% are ethnic minority groups and 28% are poor households [3]. The social, cultural and political situation in Kon Tum is very complex and the government has limited the number of INGOs working in the province. NLR is one of a few longstanding organizations that are allowed to work with ethnic minority groups in the provinces.

Dak To is a rural, mountainous district, about 40Km west of the provincial town Kon Tum, with total population of 38,642. The majority population comprises tribal people. The area was a terrible battlefield, heavily sprayed with dioxin, during the US – Vietnam War.

The proposed project activities will be carried out mainly in two communes, with high rate of persons affected by leprosy, including Dak Tram Commune in Dak To district and Doan Ket Commune in Kon Tum. Dak Tram is a mountainous and poor commune in the west of Dak To district. At present, there are 68 persons with disability including 25 persons affected by leprosy in the commune. **Doan Ket Commune** is located in a suburb about 17 KM from Kon Tum town. There are 139 people with disability living in the commune, including 67 people affected by leprosy.

c. Aim (to which the project is expected to contribute)

The project aims over the long term to improve quality of life of persons with leprosy-related disability and persons with disability due to other causes through mutual integration, and more specifically through empowering and strengthening confidence, self-reliance and active participation in inclusive community development in Kon Tum province.

d. Who is (are) the anticipated end user(s)?

- Direct anticipated end users/beneficiaries will be 208 persons with disability (including 92 persons with leprosy related disability) and their families; 63 staffs of community-based organizations and organizations of persons with disability, and 34 local government officials in two target communes.
- Indirect beneficiaries will be 9,751 people with disability including 220 persons affected by leprosy and their family in Kon Tum province; and staffs of 7 service providers for persons with disability in Kon Tum.

e. Strategies to be used:

NLR Mekong will apply Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) and Asset- Based and Community-driven Development (ABCD) to mobilize community assets and widened participation in piloting initiatives for community based inclusive development (CBID), community based rehabilitation and advocacy. Also, the following specific strategies will used as a guideline for the project implementation:

- Promote the implementation of the Principles and Guidelines for the Elimination of Discrimination against Persons Affected by Leprosy and their Family Members.
- Use mobile phone (SMS message) and social media apps (Face-book, WhatSapp, YouTube, Google+, etc...) to enable the persons with disabilities to obtain the current and updated information about social policies and rehabilitation services.
- Provide technical supports and policy advocacy for the local governmental officials and service providers to exercise properly the rights of persons with disability.
- Pilot the project model in one community and then upscale and replicate it to other communities in Vietnam; and eventually to communities in other Mekong countries, e.g. Cambodia and Myanmar.

f. Results (that the project is expected to achieve itself)

1. By the end of March 2018, all rights of persons with disabilities including persons with leprosy related disability are recognized and exercised properly by all the government officials and staff of the service providers in the two communes.

2. 90% of people with disability and their family members in the two communes are able to locate, access and actively participate in health, education and socio-economic services that are available in Kon Tum.

3. The people with disability in the two communes are resilient and enjoy their self-reliance in friendly and inclusive development communities.

4. Lessons learnt and experiences gained from a successful project model for the persons with disability in Kon Tum province are recognized promisingly and replicated in other districts and communes in Vietnam, and will be shared with NLR Mekong's partner organizations in Cambodia and Myanmar.

g. Main activities for each result

Result 1: All rights of persons with disabilities are recognized and exercised inclusively by the government officials and service providers in Kon Tum.

1. Train the local government officials, community leaders, CBR facilitators, social workers and members of the SHGs on the rights of persons with disability (training courses on the Guidelines for strengthening participation of persons affected by leprosy; training in the implementation of the Principles and Guidelines for the Elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members; training courses on facilitation skills, and training in social policies for persons with disabilities).

2. Map currently existing and available social policies for persons with disability in Kon Tum province.

3. Organize bi-annual workshops on participatory planning and implementation of initiatives to mobilize local assets and participation in inclusive community development.

4. Conduct a baseline survey on availability of health, education and socio-economic

services, and the clients' satisfaction with the rehabilitation services provided by the local government agencies and service providers.

5. Organize consultation meetings with local government officials and services providers to discuss and identify how to improve services for people with disabilities.

Result 2: The local people with disability and their family members in two target communes are able to locate, access and actively participate in health, education and socio-economic services that are available in Kon Tum.

1. Map currently existing and available rehabilitation services for persons with disability in Kon Tum province.

2. Support for local organizations and self-help groups to organize cultural, educational and social events to mobilize resources, indigenous assets and widen participation in fighting against discrimination or stigma, attitudes and behaviour.

3. Facilitate the persons with disability to access available educational, socio-economic services in the province to carry out their own initiatives for income-generation and livelihood sustainability.

4. Facilitate the persons with disability and their family members to take part in provincial, national and regional workshops on disability as well as social activities organized by the local organizations (Women's Union, Youth's Union, farmers' Association, Association of elders, and Association for promotion of education).

5. Organize advocacy workshops to shift the Leprosy Clinic in Dak Kia leprosarium to provincial dermatology hospital.

Result 3: The people with disability in two target communes are resilient and enjoy their self-reliance in friendly and inclusive and harmonious communities.

1. Organize community outreach activities to raise awareness among policy makers and service providers about the importance of including those individuals for whom their services are designed and recognize the significant contributions that people who have experienced leprosy or other disabilities have made to their communities.

1. Establish and strengthen the SHGs and community groups (such as savings-credit groups, parents clubs of children with disability) to ensure active participation of people with disability in community-based groups and in community development programs.

2. Organize training courses and provide support for members of SHGs to access basic Internet and social media network for better connection with society.

3. Send weekly SMS messages about updated information of social policies, rehabilitation services and reminders of upcoming social, cultural events to persons affected

by leprosy, persons with disability and their family members.

4. Support the local partners and the people with disability and their family members to use Face-book, Google+ and other social apps to update information about social policies and rehabilitation services and share their comments on services they have received.

5. Facilitate collective and mutual-help activities of SHGs (“the persons affected by leprosy help poorer persons affected by leprosy, the PWDs help poorer PWDs and vice-versa; each SHG sponsored a child with disability) to encourage the strengths, confidence and participation of persons with disability in community development.

Result 4: Lessons learnt and experiences gained from the successful project model of the persons with disability in Kon Tum are recognized and replicated to other communes in Vietnam and will be shared with counterparts in Cambodia and Myanmar.

1. Compile the project information, successful stories and lessons learnt into a pdf file and made it available for sharing.

2. Organize exchange-visit and technical forum to share the lessons learnt from the project with staffs of 15 partner organizations in Vietnam and Cambodia and Myanmar.

3. Support for technical staff of NLR Mekong and its local partner organizations to take part in national and regional disability networks, forum and Disability Working Groups in order to give our voice to the rights of persons with disability due to leprosy.

4. Facilitate INGOs, DPOs and Civil Society Organizations who want to support persons with disability to visit and meet with members of the SHGs in Doan Ket and Dak Tram communes to exchange knowledge and experiences in strengthening the participation and self-reliance of people with disability.

5. Organize a final workshop on dissemination of the project’s final evaluation and results, with participants from NLR Mekong’s partner organizations in Vietnam, Cambodia and Myanmar.

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[1] Kon Tum CSDC’s Report on disability project activities in Kon Tum, 2014

Strengthening participation of persons with disability in Kon Tum, Vietnam

Việt bả i Võ Xuân Hòa

Thờ bả y, 27 Tháng 2 2016 16:37 - Lờ n cồ p nhồ t cuồ i Thờ ba, 11 Tháng 4 2017 21:15

[2] UNDP in Vietnam, Mid-Term Review Report on Strengthening Capacity in Socio-Economic Development Planning, Implementation and Provision of Basic Social Services in Kon Tum province, 2010.

[3] DOLISA, Report on socio-economic situation in Kon Tum, 2014