

Project VIE051

Enhancing the capacity of non-state actors to improve the wellbeing of disadvantaged groups in Thanh Hoa Province

Intergenerational self-help clubs in Thuong Xuan and Ba Thuoc district



Funded by



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Project background

Older people, women, people with disabilities and ethnic minorities are central to improving the well-being of their households and communities.



Many are active contributors to the household and village economy, though their critical roles are

often not recognized or supported. Others are vulnerable, and their burdens become the burdens of the entire household.

Older people in rural communities face many difficulties in accessing livelihoods assistance such as credit, poverty alleviation inputs, or training on effective farming/fishing or business techniques. Having lived during a period of prolonged war and economic mismanagement, most older people have had few opportunities for basic education or technical training.

Project location

The project involves two districts; Thuong Xuan and Ba Thuoc in Thanh Hoa Province. These two districts have one of highest poverty rates (27.3%) and ethnic minority percentages (72.3%), and are in the list of 62 poorest districts of the country.



Project objectives

To **reduce poverty** and **improve health** of disadvantaged people by promoting more inclusive and empowered civil societies and by promoting “grassroots-oriented” local development in Vietnam.



Project size

80 Intergenerational self-help clubs (ISHC) have been established in 80 communities in these two districts. The multifunctional ISHC model support and empower communities in many aspects, such as poverty reduction, improving health, diversifying livelihood and income sources, promoting homecare and self-care and raising awareness of their rights and entitlements as citizens.

Project duration

The project began in **March 2015** and will end in **February 2018**.

Local partners

Partnered with the **Thanh Hoa Association of the Elderly**, the ISHCs are encouraged to develop **long lasting collaborations** with local communities, service providers, authorities and private sectors to gain **long term support and recognition**.

Club purposes

- To **increase awareness** of health, self-care and homecare
- To **reduce the proportion of people living under the poverty line** in the target communities
- To **generate income** through implementing age-friendly and pro-poor livelihood models
- To advocate the **rights and entitlements** of poor and disadvantaged people



Why Intergenerational Self-help Club?

- The ISHC offers an **inclusive, community led approach**, ensuring that **no one is left behind** and that **everyone's potential is tapped in** to support community development.
- **The clubs' leadership structure** is designed to include those who are marginalised, such as **women, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities** and **older people**, to make sure the ISHC represents all elements of society.
- The model works together with poor, near poor and disadvantaged people, with an emphasis older people to **promote their roles and contributions** in local development.
- It **improves their interaction** with local authorities, service providers and private sectors.



"The club is very good. The best part about the club is the monthly meeting when we get together and do physical exercise, health check-ups, health promotion sessions and socialize with people my own age and different ages. It is a relaxing time away from daily work and is an enjoyable moment for an older person like me."

ISHC framework

Club Management Board

The ISHC members elect their own Club Management Board (CMB) to oversee the management of their ISHC. The board comprises **five members** with election held **every two years**. The board acts as **a coordination unit** between the ISHC, government agencies, local service providers and community.



Membership

Each ISHC has **50-70 members**. ISHC members pay monthly membership fees. Membership varies by age, gender and economic status.



Financial Management

The ISHC has **its own bookkeeping and filing system** with budget and fundraising initiatives.

Monthly meeting

Each ISHC meets **at least once a month**. No money is paid for members to attend the ISHC meeting or events.

Volunteers

Ten members volunteer, with roles such as homecare and economic development.

Self-managed

ISHC is a **member-led** organisation which includes planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Report

Each ISHC has a **monthly** activity and financial plan and report.



Funds

The ISHC generates income from four main sources, which are:

- Interest from income generating activities (IGA) revolving inputs
- Membership fees
- Local fund raising
- ISHC businesses/social enterprises

Club activities

Intergenerational self-help clubs are **multi-functional** as they provide support for many interrelated issues based on the needs of the individual community. Each of the 80 ISHCs will form small groups with 5-10 members, engaging in the following activities:

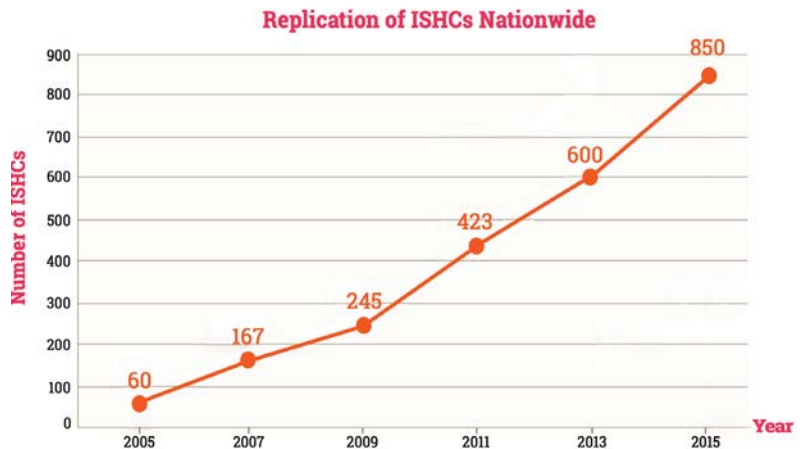


Why Multifunctional?

- Meet the real needs of people
- Adapt to local context
- Inclusive
- Create synergies between activities

Replication of ISHC nationwide

The number of ISHC models in Vietnam has rapidly grown from 60 in 2005 to 850 ISHCs in June 2015.



Why join ISHCs?

Healthier



Through regular physical exercises, homecare and self-care activities, healthy living awareness, health check-ups and mobile health clinics conducted twice annually, the wellbeing of ISHC members is greatly improved. In addition, social and cultural activities such as dances and games improve members' peace of mind.

Wealthier



ISHCs are given better access to IGA revolving input and knowledge. Additionally, the clubs are taught 120 age friendly and pro-poor livelihood topics, and with mutual support between ISHC members the success of income generating activities has been strong.

Improved solidarity



Home care, self-help/living support and cultural activities promote mutual understanding and support among local people of all age, gender and economic status.

Empowered



Thanks to increased awareness and access to information on rights and entitlements, ISHC members are empowered to give collective voice to influence the local development agenda and actions. ISHC become a close link between older people and local service providers and authority.

Enhanced confidence



ISHCs not only provide a support structure, but also create opportunities for members to further contribute to their families and communities. ISHC members become more confident in participating or leading activities to help themselves and their communities.

Happier



Being happy is a clear result of the ISHCs as members find support and friendship, and enjoy social, cultural and physical activities. Being cared for and providing care for others make life more positive and meaningful.

Life story

Joining hands for a better community

Truong Phuc Vien is a resident from Chu Village, Ba Thuoc District, Thanh Hoa, one of the country's most underprivileged areas. Despite having worked for the government during his youth, the 95-year-old man is now staying in a flimsy-looking house with his wife. Most of Vien's hearings has gone along with loss of vision. In spite of all these, the elderly couple does not want to become a burden on their nine children neither; insisting on living by themselves on Vien's pension.



"Me and Truong Thi Lien have been assisting his family for the past few months" said Ha Thi Dang, a homecare volunteer working for Chu Commune's Intergenerational Self-help Club (ISHC). Dang and Lien are 2 volunteers who have been assigned by the club to provide supports in the family's daily activities. "We take turns to look out for them.

Usually, we try to come and help at least twice a week. Sometimes, it is even 2-3 times a day. Most of our tasks include house cleaning, cooking, accompanying the couple when they feel lonely." Ha Thi Dang explaining her routine assignments. "He still gives me money to pay for all the expenses regarding his own house works." Dang admirably describes the man she volunteers for, who is still pushing for financial independence in his late 90s'. Thanks to the support from ISHC's volunteer-based homecare service, Truong Phuc Vien and his wife have somewhat managed to enjoy the independent live the they've strived for, building a strong foundation for their 9 children to focus on the lives of their own.

Life story

Fighting poverty with her little goat herd

Luong Thi Thoat, a 63-year-old woman of Thai ethnicity, and her husband are the heads of a poor family residing in Xuan Thanh village, Ngoc Phung Commune, Thuong Xuan District, Thanh Hoa. In addition, the couple are left with 4 orphaned grandchildren to take care of. At the beginning, the family's farm consisted of 2 goats. However, due to the lack of adequate investments, Thoat's family didn't manage to achieve the needed economic stability with their livestock. Being a member of a local ISHC, Thoat asked for 2 more goats as IGA revolving input with the worth of 4 million dong (\$177).



"Raising these goats does not cost much since they mostly feed on grass and leaves. Having dealt with previous problems concerning high medical cost for the herd, I decided to apply traditional

herbal medicine techniques in order to shield them from diseases" said Thoat. As a result, the family had more money to spend on improving the food and shelters for the herd.



The results have been positive so far as the goats have begun to breed. It is estimated that Thoat would be able to sell her goats for three million dong each after 6 months, which equals to nearly 1 million dong in profit. The herd is capable of producing around eight offspring in a year. This means that the family would be able to gain approximately nine million dong of profit in the next 12 months. "The input has been so helpful to us, without it, we would have never thought of getting out of the situation we were in. Since I am over 60, I can only request for regular bank loans under the name of another person. Even if I did, the success would still be uncertain."

Sustainable clubs

How it works

CLUB EARNS

per month

\$50 - \$60
interest
from
IGA inputs

+

\$5 - \$10
membership
fees

+

Up to \$20
donations

+

**Social
enterprise**

CLUB SPENDS

Increased
IGA
inputs

Activities
for
members

Fund
raising

Running
costs

Bottom line - Club is sustainable after TWO YEARS

The model is sustainable because it:

- Promotes local management and ownership of the ISHC from the start.
- Ensures the ISHCs have regular self-generated income (from IGA revolving input interest, membership fees, local fund raising and ISHC's business), even after the project ends.
- Enables the ISHCs to have active and regular engagement in the broader community, local authorities, service providers and the private sector to garner additional and ongoing resources for their activities.
- CMBs will become important players at the local level by advocating on behalf of the most disadvantaged, providing citizen feedback and highlighting barriers that prevent access to rights and entitlements.



HelpAge International helps older people claim their rights, challenge discrimination and overcome poverty, so that they can lead dignified, secure, active and healthy lives

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