Opening the Door to Programs: Vietnam’s HIV Law

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Illustrations from treatment literacy materials created by and for PLHIV in Vietnam.
Back in 2003 … A Challenging Environment

- Concentrated epidemic
- “Social evil” campaigns
- Limited treatment options
- Limited civil society engagement
  - Government-affiliated mass organizations
  - Only ~20 PLHIV self-help groups
  - No word in the Vietnamese language for “advocacy”
Drafting the Law on Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS

• Updated the 1995 Ordinance to provide legal framework for provisions in new HIV/AIDS strategy

• Standing Bureau of National Assembly elevates ordinance to status of a law

• Law implemented through Decree

• Involved people living with HIV—first time ever involved in policymaking in Vietnam
Vietnam’s HIV Law and Implementation Decree - 2007

HIV Law and Implementation Decree

Resources

Services

Rights
Law Requires HIV Budget Allocations in National and Provincial Plans

• Ho Chi Minh City provincial action planning

• Reallocation of resources for most-at-risk populations:
  • 20x increase in spending from 2005-2007

• Expansion of resource planning approach to PEPFAR priority provinces

Source: HCMC Provincial AIDS Committee et al., 2006.
HIV Law Provides Framework for Expanded Services

- Distribution of antiretrovirals (ARVs) in public and private sectors
- Free care for orphaned children and PLHIV unable to support themselves
- Needle and syringe exchange programs for HIV prevention made legal
- Management mechanism for medication-assisted therapy (MAT) program
  - *Guidelines on Methadone Substitution Therapy for Opiate Addiction* (December 2007)
  - Pilot MAT program in 6 sites in Hai Phong and Ho Chi Minh City
HIV Law Puts Rights into Practice: HIV Legal Clinics

- National hotline in Hanoi (January 2007)
- Legal clinics in Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi, Quang Ninh, An Giang, Hai Phong
- Multisectoral advisory boards (government, lawyers, PLHIV)
- PLHIV as peer educators
Putting Rights into Practice: People Served

Number of Client Visits to Legal Clinics by Quarter (Jan. 07–Sept. 08)

- Client consultations
- Dispute mediation and referrals
- Legal outreach and mobile clinics

- 1,100 face-to-face consultations
- More than 2,700 callers
- Legal outreach to ~3,700 people
The Policy Environment Has Changed …

- Law backs policy implementation
- Improved planning and understanding of resources and budgets
- Increased access to services
- Greater involvement of PLHIV and civil society in policymaking and implementation

Photo courtesy of Bright Futures.
Making Policy Work for People

- Policy implementation not automatic
- Human rights approach fosters access and scale-up
- Capacity building in evidence-based planning pays off
- Engagement of PLHIV improves implementation and monitoring