

Mission report

Mission	Support to the HIV Research Network Vietnam and the REACH project
Place	Hanoi, Vietnam
Time	September 04 - 11, 2010
Team members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vibeke Rasch, University of Southern Denmark, project director, REACH, • Tine Gammeltoft, Department of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen, • Helle Samuelsen, Department of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen, • Pia Pannula Toft, Platform on Human Health, • Michael Devlin, COHRED & • Lise Rosendal Østergaard, ENRECA Health
Written by	Lise Rosendal Østergaard
Distributed to	Steering Committee, ENRECA Health, Project coordinator, Vietnam available at the website (www.enrecahealth.dk & www.isim.ku.dk/ih/reach)
Annexes	Programme research network meeting, Programme Policy brief workshop, list of participants in policy brief workshop

Background: Strengthening Population & Reproductive Health Research in Vietnam (REACH) Project is a joint project between the General Office of Population and Family Planning (GOPFP), Vietnam and the Department for International Health, Microbiology and Immunology (ISIM) and Department of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen. As the second phase of the project (2006 – 2010) has come to an end, a policy brief workshop was organised with the aim of equipping the participants with the skills to write research summaries of their projects with a specific target group in mind and a coherent communication plan to support it. In addition to this activity, a number of meetings were conducting aiming at preparing an application for a Phase III (including a meeting with the Danish Ambassador in Vietnam, John Nielsen) and finally a conference of the HIV Research Network in Vietnam was organised as well as a formal closure of Phase II.

Phase II of the REACH project has focused on HIV and AIDS in northern Vietnam and has more specifically aimed at strengthening the capacity of Vietnamese researchers and of research institutions to conduct critical and interdisciplinary research in the intersection between HIV/AIDS and reproductive health. The specific objectives of this phase have been to :

1. Strengthen capacity to critically analyse the contextual factors that shape individual vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, particularly in a gender perspective; as well as obstacles and barriers in relation to testing/treatment;
2. Foster analyses of HIV/AIDS prevention, testing and treatment strategies in Northern Vietnam; and
3. Establish and empower a Vietnamese Network for communication of experiences and research results regarding HIV/AIDS ('Vietnamese Research Network on HIV').

The PhD studies that have been initiated as a part of the REACH project Phase II focus on international health and HIV and are entitled:

- Access to treatment and care among HIV positive women in Haiphong province, Vietnam
- Counseling, testing and prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV in Quang Ninh Province, Vietnam.
- Reproductive choices among HIV infected women in Quang Ninh Province, Vietnam.

The Master studies focus on sexual and reproductive health and rights and HIV and are entitled:

- Uptake of prenatal HIV testing in Haiphong province, Vietnam
- Immigrant women in Hanoi and their sexual vulnerability
- Stigma and discriminations at workplaces in Ha Tay province, Vietnam
- Risk behaviour of men who have sex with men in Haiphong, Vietnam
- Factors relating to HIV drug adherence in Haiphong Vietnam

All this research has resulted in a number of peer reviewed articles aiming at influencing the academic knowledge base but as most of the researchers hold key positions in government institutions it is an opportunity for them to translate their research results into communication that can be used by policy makers.

The Research Network was initiated in 2008 and has conducted three workshops (one in Copenhagen and two in Hanoi). The Vietnamese counterparts has created a data base which provides an overview of on going research activities; a website providing access to academic abstracts and a description of ongoing HIV research activities as well as other relevant information. This research network has actively been supported by ENRECA Health.

This mission was jointly funded by the REACH project, ENRECA Health and Universities Denmark's Platform on Human Health.

Objectives of mission:

- To conduct a two days workshop on Policy Briefs and Research summaries with a broad number of stakeholders;
- To be familiarized with this concept of policy brief workshops in order to be able to conduct them with the Platform on Human Health activities;
- To conduct one national workshop with Vietnamese and international researchers as well as with national stakeholders and to strengthen the capacities of the 'Vietnamese Research Network on HIV';
- To explore the possibilities of submitting an application for a REACH phase III.

Results:

- Eight posters with research summaries from the REACH projects;
- One policy brief workshop with 29 participants from various research projects and NGOs successfully conducted;
- A concept for policy brief workshop – developed by COHRED– has been tested and can now be conducted by ENRECA / The Platform ;
- The Danish Ambassador has been brief about the REACH project and a discussion about Universities Denmark's Platforms was undertaken in which it was emphasised by the Ambassador that the Platforms do not need to be limited to sub Saharan countries;
- One HIV Research Network in Northern Vietnam annual conference successfully conducted;
- One formal closure workshop of REACH Phase III successfully conducted.

Follow up:

- To finalize the submitted draft research summaries from the REACH participants;
- To work with the other participants from the policy brief workshop on their summaries;
- To explore the possibilities of additional funding for the HIV Research network as requested by a WHO representative who expressed interest in hosting the network in the future.