

# Evaluation of Project NAM: HIV Prevention for Street Youth in Hai Phong and Ho Chi Minh City

2010



## Background

Faced with marginalization, poverty, family breakdown and inadequate access to services, young people who live and work on the streets are among the populations most vulnerable to HIV infection in Vietnam. Many young women and some young men sell sex for survival or as a result of sexual exploitation, and the number of those injecting heroin is rapidly increasing (Terre des hommes Foundation, 2004).

With support from USAID/PEPFAR through Pact/Vietnam, Save the Children in Vietnam (SCiV) and local partners are implementing Project NAM, an HIV prevention project targeting street youth in Vietnam. The project aims to improve the adoption of risk-avoidance and risk-reduction practices among young men and women aged 15 to 24 years in street-based settings in Hai Phong, Ho Chi Minh (HCM), Hanoi, and Quang Ninh provinces. Project activities began in July 2007 and are continuing through 2011.

At the request of SCiV, ISMS conducted an evaluation at the end of 2010 in order to identify the risk status of street youth, assess the needs of street youth, and evaluate the impact of the project activities on street youth. This evaluation builds upon the foundation of knowledge on street children by: 1) providing an updated overview of the living situation and risky behaviors of street youth 10 years later; and 2) conducting research in an older population (aged 15 to 24 years old) that has not received much attention yet in the literature.



Peer Educators  
Source: SCiV Project NAM Brief 6/2010

One of the major strengths of this survey was the use of peer research in which trained street educators (SEs) and peer educators (PEs) served as peer interviewers (PIs) that participated in the study design and implementation processes. To our knowledge, it is the first time this method has been used in conducting a combination of quantitative and qualitative research on street youth in Vietnam. Their expertise allowed the research team to achieve greater access into a population that is mobile, difficult to reach, and often untrusting of outsiders. Speaking to other

young people with similar backgrounds allowed the respondents to relax more, feel less judged and therefore share more information than they might with professional researchers. Their knowledge of practices and language used within this community also established their credibility with the survey participants. In this way, we were able to collect high quality of data from this marginal population.

## **Objectives**

The objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Assess perceived changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices related to HIV prevention among street youth in HCM and Hai Phong, according to level of participation in the project.
- Document MARP groups among the street youth in HCM and Hai Phong interviewed during the evaluation process;
- Gather input from street youth about preferences and recommendations for the next phase;
- Identify challenges that have been encountered by peer educators and local partners; and
- Develop recommendations to improve the quality and impact of outreach efforts, service referral networks and case management in the next phase.

## **Study Participants and Sites**

The evaluation took place in two of the provinces where Project NAM has been implemented: Hai Phong and HCM. The study targeted young people aged 15-24 years with at least one of the following characteristics:

- Live part or full time on the street;
- Live outside of family care and supervision;
- Have little-to-no connection with family or have no family support; or
- Make a living on the street (i.e., shoe shining, selling newspapers, selling lottery tickets, doing illegal work, using/selling drugs, doing manual labor and selling sex).

Using the population proportionate to size (PPS) method, 40 street youth time-locations in HCM and 18 in Hai Phong were selected. At each time-location, 10 street youth were selected using a simple random sampling method.

Other study participants included PEs, SEs and representatives from organizations involved with street youth.

## Study Design and Methodology

The study employed a cross-sectional design in which both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect comprehensive data. PEs and SEs from Project NAM were recruited and trained to participate in the study as PIs. They helped the researchers refine and pilot the questionnaires and were responsible for conducting the mapping exercises that were used to design the sampling frame.

A total of 582 street youth - 176 in Hai Phong and 406 in HCM - were interviewed using a structured questionnaire. The qualitative component involved in-depth interviews following semi-structured guidelines with PEs and SEs and 7 representatives from organizations involved with street youth. To supplement the in-depth interviews, 4 focus group discussions with peer educators were moderated by trained researchers, with a focus on youth's needs and recommendations for the project.

## Output from ISMS

After data analysis, the results were summarized in a report completed in December of 2010 and submitted to SCiV for review. The results are divided into 2 sections. The first section summarizes demographic information about street youth in Hai Phong and HCM as well as their knowledge and attitudes about HIV/AIDS, sexual behaviors and patterns of drug use. The second section assesses the impact of Project NAM on the HIV-related knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of street youth in these two provinces. It also provides recommendations for improvement based on the qualitative findings and the ISMS researchers' own assessments of the data. The report provides extensive information that SCiV can use in moving forward to the next phase of Project NAM.

## Donors and Partners

This evaluation was conducted by the Institute of Social and Medical Studies for Save the Children Vietnam and funded by USAID/PEPFAR through Pact Vietnam.

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