



# COMMUNITY HIV LINK – NORTHERN MOUNTAINS

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In Dien Bien, a mountainous province in Vietnam where difficult terrain and language barriers exist, many people at risk for HIV do not receive HIV prevention information, testing or other support services. Many people living with HIV (PLHIV) do not seek timely treatment or become lost-to-follow-up by health staff. The USAID Community HIV Link - Northern Mountains project addresses these problems by building a sustainable local response to reduce HIV/AIDS transmission. Program activities employ community service provider networks to improve the quality and reach of HIV services in the mountainous communities; create an enabling environment for the HIV/AIDS response among local leaders and residents; and generate continuous services and support from community to health facilities. Through these activities, the project is able to reach the most at-risk, and refer them for testing, treatment, and support.

## IMPROVES COMMUNITY- BASED HIV SERVICES

The program works closely with the provincial HIV/AIDS prevention centers, district health centers, community-based organizations and community service providers to form community service networks and develop comprehensive service packages for HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support. Services providers and organizations are trained and supported to deliver services to key populations (KPs) – people who inject drugs (PWID), female sex workers, sex partners of PWID and PLHIV, men who have sex with men - and PLHIV in their area. The program also advocates in each community to foster an enabling environment for community-based work and to encourage greater participation from KPs and PLHIV.

## STRENGTHENS COMMUNITY- BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Through tailored training and coaching, the program builds the knowledge and skills of community-based groups and supporters to run accountable and technically competent organizations and implement effective community-based HIV/AIDS interventions. This support facilitates collaboration and networking between community-based organizations, community services, public services and government authorities to ensure quality HIV services are delivered.

## RESULTS

In the first year, activities took place in Lao Cai, Dien Bien and Hanoi. The project's community service networks reached 13,269 individuals with quality prevention services, detected 653 new HIV cases and referred 950 PLHIV to care and treatment services. The program also trained 69 community service providers, about 60 percent of which are ethnic minorities. The project helped nine community-based organizations to deliver quality HIV/AIDS services.

*In the photo: Training on interpersonal communication skills and community-based HIV service delivery in Dien Bien province*