Long-term campaign to tackle disability in Vietnam bears fruit at CGI

One of the pledges made at September’s Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) meeting brings together a number of public, private and philanthropic organizations to address the challenges facing the large numbers of people with physical and mental disabilities in Vietnam. Those involved, who include USAID, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Aspen Institute, IBM and Hyatt Hotels, have between them pledged $3.5 million to coordinate efforts.

The commitment builds on the work of the US-Vietnam Dialogue Group on Agent Orange/Dioxin, which in turn grew out of initial work by the Ford Foundation and the Aspen Institute to bring this issue to attention (see Alliance, June 2010). The Dialogue Group has created a ten-year strategic plan of action that includes practical steps to expand humanitarian services to people with disabilities and their families. Many disabilities are due to the continuing legacy of the Vietnam War, but the pledging parties have specified that cause of disability will not be taken into account. Walter Isaacson, Aspen Institute’s president, who co-chairs the group, said the money will help the recommendations contained in the plan of action ‘gain real momentum’.

The Aspen Institute’s Agent Orange in Vietnam Program (AOVP), which helps Americans and Vietnamese address the continuing health and environmental impact of herbicides sprayed in Vietnam during the war, led the creation of the public private partnership focused on Da Nang. The programme will manage the Rockefeller Foundation’s contribution to an initial pilot project which introduces a new approach to services for children with disabilities, the ‘Hope System of Care’. The programme is remarkable in that it brings together organizations from different countries as well as different sectors. Headed by Dr Charles Bailey, who spearheaded the initial work at the Ford Foundation, AOVP supports projects that pilot and expand models for comprehensive services benefiting people with disabilities and their families, in collaboration with local governments and agencies in Vietnam.

For more information
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Did you know...

The widespread belief that volunteer activity is more extensive in higher-income countries than in lower-income ones results from focusing exclusively on volunteering through organizations.

When the lens is widened to include direct volunteering for neighbours or communities, as it is called for in the new International Labour Organization Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work, it becomes clear that the average time spent volunteering by people in higher- and lower-income countries is virtually identical. But those in lower-income countries do more of their volunteering directly, whereas those in higher-income countries do more of it through non-profits and other organizations.

Source

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