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Strengthening the state machinery on gender equality in Viet Nam 2010 - 2014

A Cooperation project between The Royal Norwegian Ministry of Children Equality and Social Inclusion (BLD) and the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (MOLISA)



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On the frontpage: Minister of children and gender equality Audun Lysbakken and deputy minister of MOLISA, Dam Huu Dac, Photo Karin Hovde.

Summary

From 2010 to 2014 the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion (BLD) cooperated with Viet Nam's Ministry of Labour Invalids and Social affairs (MOLISA) on gender equality. KUN centre for gender equality (KUN) and the gender equality division (GED) in MOLISA have been in charge of practicalities and project management on the Norwegian and Vietnamese side, respectively.

The purpose was strengthening the Vietnamese state machinery's capacity on gender equality, utilising Norwegian expertise and experiences. We have contributed to integrating a gender perspective in legislation, strategy and action plans, and submitted suggestions for policy development in the gender equality field. We have also increased the competency of personnel in charge of gender equality on the central and local levels, and developed methodology and tools for further equality work. The challenge of implementing the knowledge and following up with solid measures in order to create lasting changes.

The project is an example of how Norwegian expertise on gender equality, in cooperation with the ministerial level, can be of use in communicating knowledge and establishing long-term cooperation where this is desired and has added value. This is in accordance with the Norwegian MFA's action plan for women's human rights and gender equality in foreign and development politics.

The cooperation resulted from the human rights dialogues between Norway and Viet Nam and reform work in the Vietnamese state machinery. MOLISA had been tasked with implementing gender equality policy through their newly established gender equality department (GED.MOLISA), and asked for Norwegian capacity input to strengthen the work of this division. The project's target group has been persons and organisations working for gender equality on a national, regional and local level, institutes and the mass organisations Women's Union and Youth Union. In Norway, experts from Norad, LDO, the Norwegian embassy in Hanoi, the Viet Nam programme at the Centre for Human Rights at the University of Oslo, LO, NHO, the Labour Party's women's network, UN women and a selection of researches have added their professional input and contributed to seminars.

We know an effective strategy for promoting gender equality is to develop a national structure, with ties to the top level and with resources at both regional and local levels. A precondition for development is that this structure be used to further a gender equality policy that has developed in cooperation between the national, regional and local levels, and including both government and NGOs. This strategy demands continuous development of systems, tools and methodology, and where it is necessary to re-think and innovate continuously. In the long-term international cooperation, where we have been given the opportunity to delve deeply into the topics, we have seen that parties in both countries have reaped valuable experiences and developed their capacity, independent of the level of gender equality structures they started out with.

The project had as its starting point Viet Nam's duties through Human Rights conventions and the CEDAW convention on women's rights in particular. The cooperation is part of the

above mentioned project under the Viet Nam national programme for gender equality 2011-2015, and is based on needs defined in “The National strategy on Gender Equality for the period of 2011-2020”.

A cooperation agreement was established, defining the main targets and framework for the project. Individual measures have been discussed and planned on a year-to-year basis, and have resulted from dialogue between the cooperation partners. A main condition for the success of the programme has been the parallel development of trust and knowledge of the systems in Viet Nam and Norway, ensuring competence on both sides regarding what to include and how to deliver it. The year-to-year financing has been a main challenge, in that getting an application through the system on both sides in time to start proceedings as planned has been problematic.

Early on in the project we arranged study tours in order to get important knowledge of the structures in the participating countries, and a main hub of the project has been the yearly seminars. We delved deeply into different subjects; women in politics, gender in the media, gender equality in the workplace and gender-based violence. The ministries have provided management and expertise for the seminars, and shared experience and best practices on the implementation of state policy on gender equality, from policy and legal development and on the role of the authorities.

The seminars have been followed by conferences and workshops on the same subjects. We have emphasised knowledge-based development work, through capacity-building and applied statistics and research. We clearly defined roles and responsibility, and facilitated sharing of best practices and participants’ contributions. Many of the workshops have provided input to national policy development through action plans and legal framework. For instance, the seminar on gender in the workplace was part of the implementation of the women in working life and decent work act. The gender in the media workshop in 2012 gave input to the Action plan for gender equality in the media 2013-2015. The study tour on structures in social work gave input to the Viet Nam national programme for gender equality 2016-2020, and the national proposal for preventing and responding to gender-based violence in Viet Nam.

The project has included two capacity-building programmes, one in gender mainstreaming and one on women in politics. We have based this on a model of training of trainers. This means that we held courses, and the participants have in their turn held courses afterwards. The courses were evaluated by the participants and by Norwegian experts, and manuals in Vietnamese have been developed for further use. Both these programmes were participant-led, with room for reflection and discussion, which we have seen is of prime importance when importing a model from one country to another. We also see that there should be a long-term perspective on implementing such tools, and that further guidance and resources are needed for implementing them once the first round of training has taken place.

Through establishing arenas for discussing topics on gender equality we have developed networks in Viet Nam, in Norway, and between the countries. This furthers the gender equality work in both countries, and is an important starting point for further work. These networks need to be encouraged and given the resources for further growth, and there is more

work to be done on all the subjects included in the programme. The Viet Nam strategy and action plan for 2015-2020 emphasises both gender-based violence and women in politics.

Developing the state machinery for gender equality is also a major undertaking, and there are plans for establishing a Centre for social work in Viet Nam that could be developed to be responsible for implementing actions on a local and regional level. There are also plans detailing a national gender equality centre, this seems to be a natural arena for Norway to contribute.

Our project demonstrates many positive results, and we have laid the foundation for further work for gender equality. The effects hinge on Viet Nam's willingness to supply the resources to work systematically and implement concrete measures. The project has established networks and increased capacity, but we see the need for further international cooperation to maintain and further knowledge and praxis. Whether this will become a reality depends on further financing.

1.0 Strengthening the state machinery on gender equality in Viet Nam 2010-2014.

Since 2003, Norway has had Human Rights dialogues with Viet Nam, aiming to strengthen their implementation of the international framework for human rights. These dialogues are followed up by cooperation projects between Norwegian and Vietnamese organisations and departments about a series of relevant subjects such as developing a transparency act, advice on press ethics and strengthening the state machinery capacity on gender equality.



Minister of children and gender equality Audun Lysbakken and deputy minister of MOLISA, Dam Huu Dac.

Viet Nam is a one-party state, ruled by the communist party which has been through a reform on economic, legal and social development since 1986, Doi Moi. Since 1990, Viet Nam has been among the fastest-growing economies in the world, with an average of 6 to 10 % annual growth rate. Viet Nam was ranked as a middle-income country in 2010, but there is still substantial poverty among ethnic minorities in the rural areas.

Viet Nam has ratified a series of international agreements on human rights, including the UN convention on civil and political rights and CEDAW in 1982. This has been followed up by amongst others the Gender Equality Law (2006) and the Law on preventing and combating

Domestic Violence (2007). The 1995 Labour Code of Viet Nam, revised 2012, also has a Chapter to regulate special measures to protect women in working life.

Despite a legal system to safeguard women's rights, formal rights and positions are still removed from the real situation. Sons are preferred to daughters, society is clearly marked by traditional gender roles, and gender-based violence remains frequent. Women remain in the informal sector and are not included in labour rights, retirement age remains lower for women.

In the Human Rights dialogues (HR dialogues) between Norway and Viet Nam in April 2008, the working group for gender equality and trafficking had meetings with a number of international gender equality institutions in Viet Nam. The working group included members from the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion (BLD), Norad and FaFo. During meetings, it was made clear that the international partners considered the time ripe to work for gender equality in Viet Nam. The implementation of the new Gender Equality Act, following-up on the commitments in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), gender budgeting, gender-based violence and family policy were mentioned as areas where Norway could contribute in a cooperative project. An expressed desire from Viet Nam for assistance from Norway on gender equality, strengthened this further.

On the background of this, BLD and the Norwegian MFA wanted to establish cooperation between Norway and Viet Nam on some of these issues, regarding this as a pilot project for integrating a gender and equality perspective in the HR dialogues.

The Gender Equality Law was of recent date, and the Ministry of Labor Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) had recently been tasked with administrating gender equality policy in Viet Nam. The Gender Equality Department (GED) had been established, with staff that were new to gender equality work and in need of training, developing networks and methodology. In the past, responsibility had been with the National Committee for the Advancement of Women in Vietnam (NCFAW), an inter-ministerial organization established by the Vietnamese Prime Minister that was administratively subordinate to Women's Union. Now, the MOLISA is assigned to be permanent office of the NCFAW and MOLISA GED staff are responsible for a secretariat of the Office.

In order to find measures that were relevant and useful for Viet Nam in developing a competent and strong state machinery for gender equality, it was important that the central partners participated and expressed their needs. BLD therefore agreed to a pre-project, and a Norwegian project group was established to contribute gender equality expertise to the different partners in Viet Nam. The Norwegian group had participants from Norad, BLD, the Gender Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud (LDO) and the KUN centre for gender equality.

The fact-finding study tour resulted in a cooperation project proposal that was presented from MOLISA/NCFAW. The group found that working with MOLISA as the lead partner on the Viet Nam side, their Norwegian partner should be BLD's gender equality department. The

project was established to strengthen MOLISA/GED, in order to establish them as a competent and responsible coordinator of gender equality policy. Main focus areas were defined, and discussion and planning meetings of the group and MOLISA ensued. A workshop in Viet Nam gathered some 80 participants from the ministry, affiliated departments and organisations. Its aim was to assess, coordinate and adjust the project proposal, but it also served the purpose of clearly outlining responsibility for gender equality policy and introducing the new MOLISA Gender Equality Department. We shared Norwegian experiences and received suggestions for measures in the project. The participants suggested that in addition to training programmes, Norway could contribute expertise particularly on how to find and develop drivers to work for/with them, develop networks and demarcate responsibility.

The Ministries signed a five-year cooperation agreement for 2010-2014. This specified the project aim, and outlined roles and possible contributions. KUN centre for gender equality, having so far coordinated the work and been responsible for developing agreements and projects, was established as project leader.

The cooperation agreement and the involvement of the BLD has given the project governmental support and a foundation both in Norway and in Viet Nam, and has been of the utmost importance to the project progress. This has ensured access to researchers and experts, and confirmed the importance of gender equality and equal rights for women and men. The clear ministerial mandate has given KUN (a private foundation) the position and authority to work with MOLISA/GED.

2.0 Targets



Kids at a street food restaurant. Photo: Ulrika Eklund

Viet Nam includes seven objectives in their National Strategy for Gender Equality 2011-2020;

Objective 1: Strengthened women's representation in leadership and management positions in order to reduce gender gap in politics.

- Objektive2:** Narrowed gender gap in the economic, labour sectors and in employment; increased access of poor women in rural areas and ethnic minority women to economic resources and labour market.
- Objective 3:** Improved quality of female human resource, gradually ensure equal participation of men and women in education and training.
- Objective 4:** Ensure gender equality in accessing and receiving health care services.
- Objective 5:** Ensuring gender equality in culture and information.
- Objective 6:** Ensuring gender equality in family life; step by step eliminating gender-based violence.
- Objective 7:** Enhanced capacity of state management on gender equality.

The activities in the project have been aimed at these targets and were coordinated with other programmes, activities and projects for gender equality in Viet Nam. The cooperation was part of the project No 2 on capacity and efficiency building in State management of gender equality of the Vietnam National Programme on Gender Equality 2011-2015, The objective of the project was to enhance the capacity of the staff working in the areas of gender equality and women advancement, staff working as policy advisors and in legal divisions of ministries, sectors, central level agencies and provincial authorities.

We wanted to contribute to integrating a gender perspective in legislation, strategies and programmes, developing measures and policies to enhance gender equality in different parts of society, developing competence for the personnel responsible for gender equality. Expected outcomes for the project were defined in a framework outlined in the cooperation agreement for 2010-2014. The project had two main targets, with their specific components. These were:

Increased competence in MOLISA/GED and enhanced capacity of the state management on gender equality and increasing women's participation and involvement through:

- Exchange of experiences with implementing state policy on gender equality
- Research, guidance and measures to ensure the development of policy, legislation on gender equality and implementation of the gender equality legislation.
- Guidance and training in analysis and assessment of legislation and directives in a gender perspective.
- Master degree in Gender and Development, in Norway.
- Organising technical workshops on gender equality and other activities.

Increased competence in personnel responsible for gender equality on central and local levels through:

- Gender equality training, gender and equality analysis.
- Developing training materials and guidelines for gender equality in important sectors.
- Maintaining and strengthening the national network of gender experts established by MOLISA.
- Develop guidance for women interested in entering politics.
- Integrating a gender perspective in a series of existing courses.
- Establishing courses in selected universities/institutions.

Ratifying the women's convention, developing national legislation and developing action plans are a good basis for working with gender equality. Even so, this is only a baseline. Based on Norwegian experience, we have targeted elements essential to ensuring formal and real gender equality. We have addressed a number of topics, presented under measures below, and shown how the same principles apply in all work.

- Establishing knowledge about the importance of gender and equality
- Gender-disaggregated statistics and baseline knowledge
- A cooperation between the government and civil society
- A system for reporting and monitoring conventions
- Consciousness-raising among women and men on the importance of equality
- Information about rights

3.0 Project measures

Through the project measures we have contributed to several of the stated aims in the National Strategy for Gender Equality, on increasing women's participation in politics (the Labour party's women's network "Women can do it" training), strengthening women's position in the labour market (seminar), gender equality in the media (seminar and workshops) and working with violence in close relationships (seminar and study tour).

The target group for the workshop has been persons and organisations responsible for gender equality on a national, regional and local level, institutions, universities and the mass organisations "Women's Union" and "Youth Union". Measures have been discussed and planned on a year to year basis, and have primarily developed organically through the project cooperation based on suggestions from MOLISA, KUN and BLD. The cooperation agreement has defined roles, frameworks and main objectives. Experts from Norad, LDO, the Norwegian embassy in Hanoi, the Viet Nam programme at the centre for Human Rights at the University of Oslo and UN women have participated with advice. Financing being limited to a yearly basis provided a great challenge, navigating administrative procedures on both sides in time to start project activities as scheduled. This was particularly challenging in the beginning, but eased somewhat as we learned how the systems functioned.

The yearly seminars have been an important basis for the project, these started out as expert meetings during the Human Rights dialogues between Norway and Viet Nam. We struggled with the form for these from the beginning, as we wanted to facilitate two-way communication and everything had to be translated to and from Vietnamese. What worked best was when the Viet Nam delegation visited Norway, we shared physical space, had clear meeting leadership and the tone was engaged and humorous. BLD were essential in developing these seminars, which have treated women in politics, gender in the media, equality in working life, gender-based violence and the implementation of Beijing +20. (All seminars will be described in detail under each topic.) Ministries in both countries have chaired meetings, provided experts and ensured an exchange of knowledge on the implementation of state gender equality policy. They have also exchanged best practices and insights into the role to be played by the government. The language barrier has been a hindrance in getting full value from this, but the enthusiastic participation of two ministry department heads in the project activities has been central in ensuring project compliance and priority.

In the yearly seminars we established a routine on the Norwegian side where experts in the chosen field were invited to a planning meeting to give their input. BLD sent out the invitations, this made the necessary expertise available and made it easy to find experts willing to participate. KUN was in charge of the practicalities, such as deciding content and making arrangements with speakers, in close cooperation with MOLISA/GED. These expert seminars needed comprehensive planning, we produced discussion papers in advance where

we introduced the theme and outlined relevant questions. We found that these were useful as starting point for the discussions. These are to be found as appendices.

3.1 Women in politics 2010-2011

The first seminar of the project period was held in conjunction with the Human Rights Dialogues in 2010. Because of the upcoming local election and the parliamentary elections 2011 women's participation in politics was the topic. This was the beginning of a comprehensive effort with several seminars and workshops. The initial seminar highlighted and developed upon the importance of a bottom-up approach, involving men in equality work and including more women in society development. The need for a change of attitudes was also discussed, and the media were singled out as an important factor in this. With this in mind, "women and the media" was selected as the next topic for the next year's dialogues.

Meeting notes from the seminar in appendices.

After the HR dialogues the project group teamed up with Siri Hov Eggen and Anne Cathrine Berger from the Norwegian Labour Party's women's network to conduct a "training of trainers" course, based on their "women can do it!" model. This teaches female candidates about political work, and furthers networking and alliances among women. In total, 37 participants attended the whole course and several attended parts of it. This course has been successful all over the world, and also seemed well suited to strengthening women's participation in society development in Viet Nam. We found that the contents and model, based on actively engaging the participants, was well received and seen as innovative by the participants. A manual was produced after this course, the Vietnamese partners developed this to fit their own context and needs.



Participants in TOT on "Women can do it" in Hanoi.

As a continuation of the «training of trainers»-course, we held three courses in South, Central and North Viet Nam for a total of 112 women candidates in the 2011 local elections. The purpose was ensuring training for the women candidates, and ensuring that trainers and organizers are available to further develop and use the course in the future. The courses were held by four different trainers who had participated in our course, and were well received by the participants and UN observers.

In the third of these courses, the project leader and one of the Norwegian labour party's trainers participated. They were informed of plans to use the course in the future, and how it works in a Vietnamese context. We gave feedback and discussed possible perspectives with the course trainers. We had also invited the Norwegian Church Aid Alliance and a representative from Women's Union in Danang, who we had been in contact with earlier. They can offer similar courses locally.

The election result was not as good as we had hoped, and female representation in Parliament dropped to 24.4%, but MOLISA reports that several of the women who participated were elected, based on the plans of action they had developed in the course.

MOLISA evaluated each course and developed a manual based on the knowledge gained. We had meetings with Women's Union central, who are also in a cooperation project with Spain to further women's participation and leadership. They have added the "Women can do it" manual as an integrated tool, as have the Ho Chi Minh Academy.

3.2 Study tour in the Norwegian gender equality machinery



The delegation visiting in Stod, Nord-Trøndelag.

In October 2010 we facilitated a study tour for 10 Vietnamese delegates from different sections of MOLISA/GED and regional DOLISAs. The delegation head was Mr Dam Huu Dac, First Deputy Minister of MOLISA. The purpose of the study tour was to learn about the Norwegian system for gender equality and Norwegian gender equality work. 80% of the participants of the delegation were from the directorial level of MOLISA departments, Dolisa

provinces and the Government Office. We designed the programme to include all levels from the national to the regional levels, visiting the ministry, the ombud, the county governor, the county council, and municipalities. Then Minister of children, equality and social affairs, Audun Lysbakken, met with the delegation and an official dinner was held at the government's official residence.

The delegation gave good feedback and in particular emphasized the insight into how central gender equality policy affects regional and local activity. They displayed great interest in the Ombud system, the use of action plans for gender equality in different sectors, and the effect of the activity and reporting clause of the gender equality act. KUN was present as facilitator throughout the trip, something we see as essential in ensuring quality results from study tours such as these. Opinions vary as to the outcome of such study tours, but in this project they have been useful and regarded as a positive element, because they gave the Vietnamese partners unique insight in the Norwegian system and have been in a position to relate our suggestions to this. They gained sufficient knowledge that they could be very specific in their suggestions for Norwegian knowledge contributions. Lessons learnt from this tour such as the Norwegian coordination between ministerial and provincial level, Gender Equality Legislation and reporting system on gender equality work were applied in developing the draft of the National Strategy on Gender Equality from 2010-2020. This strategy was approved by the Vietnamese Government on December 2010.

3.3 Gender and equality in the media 2011-2013

In the Human Rights dialogues 2010, where we discussed women's participation in politics, we touched upon media's role in upholding stereotypical representations that contribute to discrimination and exclusion of women. This was also pointed out in the CEDAW committee's recommendations both to Viet Nam and Norway. On that basis we decided to hold a seminar on the topic in the cooperation project, and also asked that this be addressed in the human rights dialogues.

Media and freedom of speech are sensitive issues, but possible to discuss in a gender equality perspective. In the 2011 dialogues we address both women's opportunities to express themselves through the media, a right to representation and men's and women's right to be portrayed in a diverse manner. We also discussed women journalists, their working terms and women's positions of power in the media. This resulted in a common statement that also identified possible measures. One of these was consciousness-raising efforts to journalists and the media in general on the importance of gender equality and diversity in the media, their influentiality in fighting gender stereotypes and furthering women's democratic rights.



Expert group, "gender equality in the media" in Oslo.

In a seminar after the dialogues we were presented with practical examples on how to work with information to further gender equality in the state machinery and in the media. The

effect of meeting and interacting with people who work directly with the topic is strong, and it gave us new ideas of how we can use Norwegian experience and knowledge to strengthen the work already being done in Viet Nam.

Our statement from the human rights dialogues was also followed by a seminar on gender and the media for journalists and editors in 2012 to 40 participants, mainly journalists. Speakers were Professor of journalism at the Oslo and Akershus University College, Elisabet Eide, and masculinities researcher Jørgen Lorentzen. Jørgen Lorenzen. They addressed such topics as gender stereotypes, women's position in media industry and women's right to representation. The course has a theoretical and practical approach. Participants made their own evaluations of selected newspapers, and planned out articles with a gendered perspective.

Molisa had ideas of their own on how to follow up the media, including presenting a journalism award for good articles that furthered a gender perspective and avoided stereotypes. They also decided to work further with the topic, and hold a 2013 seminar targeted at editors.

The gender equality in the media workshop 2013 had a double agenda, both consciousness-raising of leaders and journalists in media houses on the importance of gender and equality, and to give input to the gender equality in the media action plan. The workshop had many participants (about 100). In the first part of the program, where professor Elisabeth Eide and editor Arve Løberg chaired, many journalists and media leaders participated. In the further part of the program, these left and we were left with a majority of participants from local authorities who worked in groups on the action plan. We gave input on ways to work with the topic, also in cooperation with Norwegian partners.

We also invited the group behind the Viet Nam section of the world-wide enquiry "Who makes the news?", the Research centre for Gender, Family and Environment in Development, www.CGFED.org.vn.

3.4 Gender mainstreaming 2012-2014

Integrating a gender and equality perspective in all policy areas, Gender mainstreaming, was established as a global strategy for furthering equality between women and men at the UN women's conference in Beijing in 1995. Since then, manuals have been made for this work, also in Viet Nam, but they have in common that they are theoretical and difficult to apply. MOLISA requested Norwegian capacity on this, and we suggested looking to Sweden where there has been systematic work on leadership training in the state management, manual development and guidance. Since MOLISA requested training we decided that the best course of action would be to compose a course based on our experience in KUN and "Trappan", the Swedish model for integrating gender equality in state management, with some elements of the "Program for Hållbar Jämställdhet" (programme for sustainable equality) from SKL, the Swedish Authorities of Local Authorities and Regions.



Group session, "gender mainstreaming" in Ninh Binh, Vietnam.

In 2012, we set out with an introductory 4-day session, an obligatory home assignment, and a follow-up 3-day course. The courses were led by Ulrika Eklund, co-developer of the Swedish manual, and Gunhild Thunem from KUN. The home assignments gave us a good basis insight into the participants' grasp of the concepts, and we could design the follow-up session accordingly. Gender mainstreaming is a challenging methodology, but we tried to make it simple, and worked with the participants to translate it into a Vietnamese context. We have worked further with the same group in 2013 and 2014, working to develop a practical Vietnamese gender mainstreaming manual with local examples.

In 2013, in addition to the further sessions we held with the group, 6 of our alumni held their own gender mainstreaming courses, one in the north and one in the south, for a total of 120 participants. The trainers got feedback on their teaching and methodology, and received feedback on the manual we were developing. In 2014, the final manual was presented in a seminar with feedback from the participants, Norwegian and Swedish experts.

Through the program we have fostered a group of experts who say that they have been through a very challenging, but interesting and rewarding learning process. They have positions where they can benefit from the content, methodology and pedagogics in their everyday work, since many of them work in universities, other educational institutions, and local administration. They are now utilized as national experts, training others through MOLISA courses. In addition, they have bonded in a national network of colleagues that they can further use in their work. The guidance manual on Gender Mainstreaming and the Training material on Gender Mainstreaming were published based on the original book introduced by KUN. These were disseminated widely to staff working on gender equality and advancement of women at ministerial level and provincial level. These books were highly appreciated by users and readers. They consider these to be a useful guide to how to perform gender mainstreaming work in practice.



Participants of TOT training course on Gender mainstreaming in Tam Dao, Vinh Phuc..

3.5 Gender and working life, 2013-2014

The 2013 seminar topic was gender and working life. Following the outline from previous years we co-developed a discussion paper and established expert groups on both sides in preparation for the seminar. On the Norwegian side, this group held representatives from the ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion (BLD), the Labour Organisation (LO) and the Employers' Organisation (NHO).



We invited a Vietnamese delegation to Oslo and conducted a study tour in addition to the topical discussions. The delegation consisted of 8 representatives from MOLISA, the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL) and the Research Centre for Female Labourers and Gender, Academy for Science, Labour and Social Affairs. They found the Norwegian tripartite cooperation and the integrating of a gender and equality perspective in the cooperation to be of special interest. Norwegian experiences were deemed relevant, and the topic was developed further in the preparations for a new Vietnamese law on decent work, where gender equality was to be included.

The new working life conditions from 2013 include many positive changes that could affect the gendered situation in the labour market. Viet Nam has outlawed sexual harassment, manifested equal pay and extended parental leave. We know that implementing new laws and policies can be as challenging as developing them, so on this background we held a 2-day national working life workshop, focusing on equality in working life. The seminar was held in Central Viet Nam in 2014, and BLD, LO and NHO all participated. The aim was to delineate responsibility for mainstreaming gender equality in working life with the ministries and the

social partners. By sharing examples of best practices and challenges, the participants could give input to the national program for gender equality in Viet Nam 2016-2020.

Among the Vietnamese participants were representatives of MOLISA, the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL), Vietnam Women's Union, the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), National Committee for Advancement of Women, Dolisas, CFAWs from selected provinces and cities, some local voluntary organisations working with gender equality and women's rights, and a gender equality expert facilitating the workshop.

3.6 Gendered violence 2012- 2014

In the project period, the format of the Human Rights Dialogues changed. From having a technical seminar with experts from both sides during the dialogues, with an ongoing project cooperation between the countries running parallel, these were now separated. The technical seminars and projects were no longer part of the dialogue format from the 2012 dialogues.

The Norwegian MFA asked us to do a seminar concurrent with the dialogues in 2012, on the subject of gender based violence. This topic had been touched upon in previous seminars, but was now discussed in more detail. Violence in close relationships is a major problem in Viet Nam, and is subject to several cooperation projects with other countries. Norway has come far in establishing a systematic approach to the issue, through using action plans that coordinate efforts, but also through establishing and furthering expertise on prevention,

supporting the victim and the perpetrator, and of sentencing. The main challenge was to overcome the differences in structures and systems in the two countries, in particular the difference in how the police authorities in the two countries approach violence against

Expert group from the technical seminar on gendered violence in Hanoi.

women. As a consequence, a suggestion was made that this should be included in police training, supported by

Norway, but that is outside the limitations of this project. We brought the topic of intimate violence again as an example in the study tour on social work.

3.7 Study tour on social work, 2014

MOLISA is tasked with implementing the Viet Nam national strategy for social work, and a central part of this is furthering gender equality and hindering violence in close relationships. There are Social Work Centres and projects led by selected aid agencies. These offer such services as support to women who are victims of violence and trafficking, but these are scarce and there is no overall structure supporting them.

Women's Union, the Catholic Church and the Buddhist Organisation can be important partners in the preventative and supporting system in Viet Nam. Kirkens Nødhjelp, the Norwegian Church Aid Act Alliance, who we have worked with, works with these, and we agreed that it could be feasible for MOLISA and their partners, with the Norwegian Church Aid's partners, travelled together to discuss the different examples of Norwegian practices.

After the study tour, the group gathered for an evaluation where they summed up the main findings from the trip. Much of this was related to coordination and cooperation between different levels and between the government, religious bodies and NGOs. The importance of improving NGOs and the Buddhist organisation's opportunities to work with social work and against gendered violence in Viet Nam.



Participants of the study tour in social work in Oslo, Norway.

3.7 Student scholarship for Gender and development at the University of Bergen.

An important part of strengthening the work of MOLISA/GED has been increasing the formal capacity of ministry officials. From the project outset we aimed at offering a master's scholarship to one employee. In 2013, the 2-year master program Gender and Development was offered at the University of Bergen, Norway, and a scholarship was awarded to Ms Truong Ngoc Anh, who graduates spring 2015. Her thesis discusses intimate partner violence and the use of women's shelters, and will be of great use in her further work at MOLISA/GED.

Other measures:

The experts we have brought to Viet Nam have contributed also outside the set courses and seminars. They have been active parts of social settings, taking part in lively discussions. Professor Elisabet Eide and masculinities researcher Jørgen Lorentzen held a guest speaker lecture on freedom of speech for the students at the Master study of Human Rights at the School of Law of Viet Nam National University Hanoi, which is supported by the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights at the university of Oslo. Ulrika Eklund and Karin Hovde facilitated a workshop on gender equality for the students at Youth Academy, employing Open Space methodology. The youths decided on different topics, discussing male preference, gendered division of housework, differing expectations of boyfriends and girlfriends and gender stereotypes.

4.0 Results

Measuring direct effects of the project and individual measures in shorter and longer terms is challenging. In order to implement a gender equality policy, it is necessary to have top-down commitment, with sufficient resources allocated on a national, regional and local level. It is also important that policy be developed in a close dialogue between the national, regional and local levels and between the authorities and NGOs. How we have contributed to this seems the most relevant evaluation of the project.

The project has been a development project, initiating change from above, and it would have been ideal to also have a grass root level cooperation on the topic. UN women have criticized the tendency to hold seminars and conferences, resulting in little practical action. We attempted cooperation with regional government in Danang, but found that this would have to be organized and financed through a separate project. There was no room for this in the cooperation agreement established between the ministries.

4.1 Target 1. Strengthening state machinery capacity to work with gender equality and increasing women's participation and influence.

Strengthening the capacity of the state machinery was seen as increasing the abilities and competence of the MOLISA/GED gender equality officials. In general, we will claim that the total capacity of the department has increased, their position as responsible for implementing gender equality policy has been emphasized, and their status as a competent and responsible authority has increased. Furthermore, the department has increased their network, in particular through contact with the experts that have received gender mainstreaming training, and they have developed manuals and methodology for their work. It remains to be seen whether the department will be given the resources and time needed to work further, in particular on a regional and local level.

The Gender Equality Department has been represented by the chair, vice chair and officials at the different seminars, courses and workshops we have held. Informal discussions throughout the planning and development work, as well as in more social settings, have furthered knowledge and methodology development on both sides. In addition, one member of staff has received a Master's degree from the University of Bergen in Gender and Development.

Within the agreement framework, MOLISA/GED have decided what measures to initiate in any given year, and the main guests for the technical seminars and workshops. The actual planning and methodology development has been done in close cooperation between the project leaders. Through this, MOLISA/GED have developed their methodology and increased their professional capacity in developing and executing such initiatives. On both sides, we have gained hands-on experience with interactive meeting strategies as part of development work for action plans, policy documents and legal frameworks. We have also developed

knowledge on how international bodies may contribute in such processes.

We believe that the arrangement of big seminars on gender equality is in itself a strong statement about



the importance of the topic and its policy relevance. This signal effect, with the highly competent and committed staff, has been part of building the national and international reputation of the Gender Equality Department of MOLISA. We sincerely hope the staff that have been part of the effort are retained and given the opportunity to employ their skills, since we have seen a tendency that highly trained staff are moved to other positions.

Access to experts is important for the government's capacity to work with gender equality. This project has further developed a network of Vietnamese national experts available to offer training to women who want to step up to influence society development and stand for election, and an expert network trained in gender mainstreaming and able to perform gender and equality analyses.

Through the cooperation, MOLISA/GED have also gained access to both Norwegian and Vietnamese experts. Vietnamese protocol outlines who can be invited and how this is to happen. In addition, KUN/BLD have requested the presence of some persons or institutions or invited them directly. One example is the gender in the media seminar, where we invited the Research Centre for Gender, Family and Environment in Development (www.CGFED.org.vn), who have done the "Who makes the news?" analysis for Vietnam. In order to support the work done by the Norwegian Church Aid Act Alliance in Hue, they and their partners were invited to "Women can do it!". Furthermore, we have invited the Buddhist organisation, Fatherlands Front and the Norwegian Church Aid Alliance.

Several of these measures have been instrumental in the development of national policy, action plans and legal measures. In order to get to-the-point input from the participants, we designed a program that contained capacity-building, sharing of best practices and delineating of responsibility. For instance, the gender and working life seminar was part of the development and implementation of the new Act on women in working life and decent work. The gender in the media workshop in 2012 gave input to the Action plan for media equality 2013-2015. The Study tour on social work aimed to contribute to Viet Nam's development in the field, to the National program for gender equality 2016-2020 and to the national proposal on the prevention of gender-based violence.

Due to the language barrier it can be a challenge to gain knowledge of what happens beyond what direct information we get from our project partner. The contact with UN Women and the Norwegian embassy in Ha Noi has been invaluable in this regard. We also keep in touch informally through social media, keeping up to date with activities that way.

4.2 Increasing capacity of personnel working with gender equality on a central and local level.

In order to delineate responsibilities and roles between the national, regional and local levels, we have made a point of presenting practical examples of how national policy can be translated to the local level. The district and local level authorities in Viet Nam are being developed and are under-resourced in terms of economy, competence and capacity. These

challenges are the same in Norway, and the exchange of experiences has been very interesting.



Youth Academy members discussing gender equality.

In order to strengthen the local level, we based our approach on a training of trainers' model, both in the "Women can do it!" and the mainstreaming courses. We held courses, and the participants went on to hold their own courses. The courses have been evaluated by the participants as well as by Norwegian experts, and in both

courses we developed Vietnamese manuals for further use. The participants have reported that in addition to the course content, they see the experience with alternative and participant-led methodology as an inspiring supplement to their previous experience.

The manual developed through "Women can do it" can also be used as a guide for women who want to run for election and/or become part of decision-making. MOLISA evaluated every course and adapted the Norwegian manual in line with the feedback. We introduced the concept in a meeting with Women's Union central, who also work with Spain on furthering women's participation and leadership. The manual will be included in their tool kit, and will also be used by the Ho Chi Minh Academy, in their party member training.

The mainstreaming course and the gender and equality course have resulted in a professional network of some 50 persons from MOLISA's employees in the district DOLISAs, lecturers from the University of Labour and Social affairs, the Ho Chi Minh Academy on Politics and Administrations, Social Work Faculty and the Viet Nam Youth Academy. These will work as national consultants and do grass root level training. They will also work with implementing the gender and equality perspective in their own organizations and their teaching schedules.

Through the course work, participants have performed equality analyses in their own organization or in a local community. Through practical exercises they have demonstrated the changes in their perceptions on gender and equality, this is also confirmed in their own feedback. Translating legalities, policy and national targets to your own organization and your own practice is a challenge. In Viet Nam, too, special measures for women and girls may be met with resistance, and having a clear government mandate is a necessity. This emphasizes the need for clear legal measures and a state structure. The network participants have also been part of developing the Gender mainstreaming manual, adapting it to the Vietnamese context.

Our impression is that the gender mainstreaming courses, with a high level of interaction and reflection, has worked well for the participants and their organizations and institutions. The courses have been well received in MOLISA/GED, the director has participated in several of the sessions. It is important that the resource the participants now represent is valued and followed up to ensure future benefits and lasting effects. The participants confirm that they want to keep meeting, exchange experiences, take part in each other training sessions and seminars, get updated knowledge and develop further. Developing this network, preferably

with the addition of the instructors from the “Women can do it!” course, will be important in further strengthening the Vietnamese state machinery for gender equality.

5.0 Beyond the project

Understanding another country’s regulations and protocol is no small feat. This has taken time and effort, but we see results both in Norway and in Vietnam, in the shape of networks and increased knowledge of implementing gender equality policy in a Norwegian and Vietnamese context. We acknowledge the limitations of the project scope, and see a further need for developing the capacity and methodology produced.

KUN has emphasized some overall principles for gender equality in all settings:

- The connection between human rights and women’s rights
- The need to visualize gender equality’s importance for society development
- The need for knowledge and statistics
- The need for building integrated, vertical structures from the national to the local levels
- Cooperation with civil society

Viet Nam has a gender equality law, a strategic plan and a national programme for gender equality, and we see it as a great advantage to the project that we could use these actively in planning and carrying through the project measures. We have, as a general rule, found relevant statistics for the project focus areas, such as women in politics, women in the media, gendered violence and women’s participation in work life. Furthering the statistics field, with gender-disaggregated data and knowledge of how to utilize this, is necessary even so. In the gender mainstreaming and women in media courses we introduced methodology for collecting gender-disaggregated statistics, analyzing and setting targets with plans for action. These are well-established methodologies, but the main challenge is practical application. There is a need to work further with this, both with understanding and with the structures that give the opportunities for local action.

We have had two distinct, but broad, targets for the project. Strengthening the state machinery capacity for working with gender equality and improving women’s participation and influence, and improving the formal qualifications for personnel in charge of gender equality at central and local levels. We had also suggested some possible topics in the cooperation agreement, but not in detail, thus we were able to focus on current needs throughout. The good relations between the project partners and the formalized meeting points have been central in making the cooperation successful.

Most of the Viet Nam events have turned out different than we had anticipated. This may be due to cultural differences, but also difficulties with making advance arrangements. Having available experts with a broad range of experiences and the ability to improvise and adapt has been invaluable.

The Vietnamese ministry has developed a high level of familiarity with the Norwegian system and a relationship with Norwegian experts on gender equality. This means that they know

what to ask for when they request assistance for new legal works, action plans or capacity development. A major part of the project has been developing trust and knowledge of each other's systems. The social works study tour has been central in this. The continuity of the project staff in Viet Nam has been another success factor, as has the good relationship that developed between the project leaders on both sides. There have been some changes of who in BLD has been in charge of the project, but the KUN project leader has been the same throughout, as has a department head in BLD who has followed the project the whole way. This was also the case in Viet Nam.

The language barrier has been a significant hindrance to effective cooperation. Big seminars with interpreters and limited opportunities for interaction means less rewarding efforts. In this way, the smaller groups participating in the expert seminars and the study tour delegations have been more successful. "Training of trainers" is a good model to work with, but we see that working with groups with better English would make the benefits to their work greater.

UN Women, the Norwegian embassy in Ha Noi and the Vietnam project at the Centre for human rights at the University of Oslo have all been kept informed of our plans in order to coordinate our work with theirs. Ideally, we would like to work closer with the Norwegian MFA in order to improve the international knowledge, this would also be in line with their official priorities.

In order to illustrate the construction of vertical structures from the national to the local level, state – NGO cooperation has been an important part of the best practices exchange. How grass root initiatives can develop over time and come to be part of the official structure (like the women's shelters) is a good illustration of such a process. Historically, Viet Nam has had a different relation between the State and the NGOs than Norway, and this is a topic MOLISA/GED is working further with. They are planning to develop a centre for international capacity-building. This centre will be a knowledge resource for local and national work, and run gender equality projects. We believe this may be a good way to go, especially since this has been initiated from the ministry and there is a good network to build on. Centres for social work have also been established regionally, and MOLISA/GED want these to work more for gender equality.

5.3 Areas for cooperation

In addition to Norway, several other countries have been involved with gender equality work in Viet Nam in the project period, but due to Viet Nam's economic status there has been a significant reduction in this form of support. A middle-income country should be able to adopt such measures and developing systems on their own. We see the need for more gender equality work and a need to strengthen women's position in the country at all levels, and in many sectors. Though MOLISA/GED have seen some capacity-building, the structure is still fragile and dependent on more expertise and resources. Norway has an international reputation as a flagship of gender equality, and has worked hard to build this image. This gives us a status and some positioning power, meaning our expertise is sought after – this also means we have some commitments to fulfill.

The MFA action plan for women's rights and gender equality in foreign and development affairs 2013-2015 confirms that Norwegian gender equality expertise is in great demand internationally. They want to communicate Norwegian experience abroad, and establish long-term cooperation on gender equality when requested and there is additional value. They underline that this demands a cooperation with BLD. The cooperation with Viet Nam is a good example of how this can be done. The crown prince couple's visit to Viet Nam was part of furthering Norwegian industry's economic interests, and working with equality and women's rights parallel to this is very relevant.

Our conclusion is that there is a need to further strengthen the gender equality work in Viet Nam, but much work remains before a possible new cooperation agreement is ready. The Human Rights dialogues have been restructured and there is no longer room for expert groups and projects. Thus, other funding sources must be found. Internal conditions in Viet Nam regarding democracy and human rights must be evaluated against the ability to influence and make a difference. MFA priorities in aid politics must also be considered.

Viet Nam sees violence in close relationships and increasing women's participation in politics as their priorities ahead. As regards violence, the authorities want to establish a structure that both prevents violence and that supports the victims of violence. This includes developing social services and shelters.

In the technical seminar and through working with "Women can do it!" we discussed measures to increase women's participation in politics. Both attitudes to women in society in general, traditional gender roles and attitudes in the media were mentioned as important hindrances to women's participation.

In both these areas, Norway can provide expertise. In our dialogue with MOLISA, we have agreed that an initial point would be professionalising and mainstreaming the regional Centres for social work. The centres can work as a regional resource for gender equality work, as a shelter and operate a hotline. They could also offer services to selective groups, and further equality.

5.1 Integrating gender equality in the human rights dialogues – methodology.

The technical seminars in the HR dialogues have been chaired by BLD with KUN as the facilitator. Our approach has worked well, and the expert group became an important development arena for insight in subjects related to gender equality. One success factor in this was the close ties to the practical measures in the project. In the project work, we have identified problems that we raised to expert group levels and debated for further insight. The result has been measures that were taken further in the project. Gender in the media is a good example of how this worked. In the 2010 dialogues women's participation in politics was discussed, and the role of the media came up. This was then suggested as a topic for 2011, and a one-day technical seminar was arranged. We focused on practical examples on how to work with information and the media to further equality. This was followed up with training for journalists, editors and media liaisons in Viet Nam.

Another success factor for the dialogues has been BLD's role as chair of the expert group, highlighting the ministry's role and possibilities. In advance of the technical seminars we have made discussion papers with central terms, definition and problems for discussion. The target was to create a common statement based on this. The expert statement in 2011 resulted in the journalist and editors seminars in 2012 and 2013. This emphasises how this arena has been used to influence and inspire practical measures in the project.

This model has been most successful in Norway, where a core group was defined in advance and have worked intensively together. The dialogue has been open and clear here, we see this in connection to the dialogues' status in Viet Nam.

5.2 Recommendations for the Human Rights dialogues

KUN believes that the model developed in the HR dialogues with Viet Nam can work in other dialogue settings, too, and in project cooperation in general. The key point is gaining insight into each other's challenges, experiences and points of views in order to use this in further work.

The HR dialogue technical seminars and the study tours have given us the opportunity to form interpersonal relationships with our Vietnamese counterparts, ensure quality and evaluating the relevance to Viet Nam. In this, MOLISA have been granted expertise in requesting Norwegian experts in their own context, trusting that they can invite their cooperation partners and get a good result. This is why we chose to keep the format also after the HR dialogues format changed.

We believe that the best way to integrate gender equality in the HR dialogues would be to use a double strategy for mainstreaming the gender equality perspective in all the groups, but also having a specialized group where equality and women's right is the topic. We have suggested this to the MFA who facilitate with the embassy and the Vietnamese MFA. Changing the dialogue format has made this angle less interesting to develop.

APPENDIX

Some project participants

Human Rights dialogues, Hanoi 2010. Women in politics

Norwegian Experts: Inge Ovesen, BLD, Sissel Salomon, BLD, Gisle Kvanvig, Kirkens nødhjelp, Siri Hov Eggen, Arbeiderpartiets kvinnenettverk, Ågot Valle, politiker, Gisle Hagen, Norad og Karin Hovde, KUN centre for gender equality.

Study tour in the Norwegian machinery for gender equality

Vietnamese delegation:

Mr. Dam Huu Dac, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Labor Invalids and Social Affairs

Head of the delegation

Mr. Pham Ngoc Tien, General Director, Department of Gender Equality, MOLISA

Mr. Nguyen Quang Thang, General Director Labor, Culture and Social Affairs Department, Ministry of Planning and Investment

Ms. Nguyen Thi Hoang Lan, Deputy General Director Department of Science, Education, Culture and Social Affairs, Office of the Government

Mr. Luu Hong Son, Deputy Chief of the Ministry Office, MOLISA

Ms. Le Thi Khanh Deputy General Director Department of Planning – Finance, MOLISA

Mr. Bui Hanh Chung, Department of Finance - Administration, Ministry of Finance

Ms. Hoang Thi Thu Huyen, Official, Department of Gender Equality, MOLISA

Ms. Nguyen Le Hang, Official, Department of International Cooperation, MOLISA, interpreter

Mr. Truong Ngoc Ly, Director Labor Invalids and Social Affairs Department of Lam Dong province

Mr. Le Vu Bang Labor Invalids and Social Affairs Department of Quang Tri province

Human rights dialogues, Oslo 2011. Gender in the media

Norwegian experts: Jorunn Hjertø, BLD, Unni Mathisen, BLD, Jørgen Lorentzen, UiO, Marie Simonsen, Dagbladet, Bjørg Skotnes, Norad, Danny Pellicer, Nordlys, Karin Hovde, KUN centre for gender equality.

Vietnamese delegation:

Mr. Pham Ngoc Tien, Director General of Gender Equality Department, MOLISA

Ms. Hoang Thi Thu Huyen, Vice Director General of National Committee for the Advancement of Women in Vietnam (NCFAW), Gender Equality Department, MOLISA, Project Coordinator

Ms Dang Thi Van Anh, Vice Director General, Press Department, Ministry of Information and Communication,

Ms Le Thi Bich Hong, Vice Director General of Cultural Department, Central Information and Education Committee of Central Party,

Ms Nguyen Thi Thuc Hanh, Member of Presiding Committee of Vietnam Women's Union, Editor of Vietnamese Women's News Paper,

Ms Tran Thu Hang, Journalist of Newspaper on Labour and Social Affairs, Mr Trinh Duy Chan, Official of Planning and Finance Department, MOLISA,

Mr Nguyen Dung Tien, MOLISA, Interpreter

Human rights dialogues, Hanoi 2012. Gendered violence.

Norwegian experts: Hilde Marit Knotten, JD, Elin Rønningen, BLD, Dag Simen Grøtterud, politiet, Wenche Hovland, Krisesenteret i Sogn og Fjordane, Karin Hovde, KUN centre for gender equality.

Seminar, Oslo 2013. Decent work

Inge Ovesen BLD, Ragnhild Nersten AD, Synnøve Konglevoll LO, Kristina Jullum Hagen NHO, Binh Nguyen, IMDI, Torhild Løfwander Quo Vadis.

Mr. Tào Bằng Huy, Deputy Director General, Department of Employment – Ministry of Labour, Invalid and Social Affairs (MOLISA), Head of delegation,

Ms. Mai Thuý Nga, Deputy Director General, Department of Organization and Personnel, MOLISA,

Ms. Trịnh Thanh Hằng, Director General of Department of Women Affairs, Vietnam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL),

Mr. Đặng Sĩ Dũng, Head of Division of Secretariat, MOLISA Office,

Ms. Hoàng Thị Thu Huyền, Deputy Director of NCFAW Office/ Gender Equality Department, the coordinator on BLD and MOLISA project, MOLISA,

Ms. Nguyễn Thị Bích Thuý, Director of the Research Centre for Female Labourers and Gender, Academy for Science, Labour and Social Affairs,

Ms. Nguyễn Việt Hải, Official of Gender Equality Department, MOLISA,

Ms. Trịnh Thị Hoàng Anh, Official of Gender Equality Department, MOLISA

[Study tour Social work, 2014](#)

Mr Pham Ngoc Tien, DG of Gender Equality Department of MOLISA

Ms Hoang Thi Thu Huyen, Project Coordinator on Norway and Vietnam cooperation, Deputy Director General of Gender Equality Department of MOLISA

Mr To Đức, Head of Social Work Division, Department of Social Protection Administration of MOLISA

Mr Dam Khac Hoan, senior official in charge of GBV of Gender Equality Department,

Thich Hai An, Buddhist Monk, National Head of Culture department / Vice Head of national Charity committee of Vietnam Buddhist Association, Vietnam Buddhist Association

Thich Phuoc Dien, Buddhist Monk, Former Coordinator of NCA's FBO programmes in Vietnam. Member of Board of management of Bus engaging in social work in Vietnam, Vietnam Buddhist Association

Le Ba Trinh, Vice Chairman of the Central Committee of Vietnam Fatherland Front (CFF) Central Committee of Vietnam Fatherland Front, policy department

Nguyen Van Thanh, Head of Ethnicity and religion Affair, CFF Central Committee of Vietnam Fatherland Front, Program section

Nuyen Thi Hong Cam Deputy of Country Representative NCA VNNCA, Mr Binh, Conselor of Vietnamese Embassy in Oslo

[Seminar 2014 Beijing + 20](#)

Inge Ovesen BLD, Juliet Namuli Birabwa Haveland BLD, Karin Hovde KUN

Discussion paper –Gender Equality 2009

Human Rights dialogue Norway – Vietnam 2009, Oslo 15 Mai

In connection with the April 2008 Human rights dialogue between Norway and Vietnam, the working group on gender equality and trafficking had meetings on gender equality issues with various international agencies. Because of these discussions and special interest on the part of Vietnam, a working group on gender equality partnership between Norway and Vietnam was established. This group had several meetings in Vietnam in late March this year and the planning of a project is underway. The main aim of the project will be improving gender equality in the state management system. We will therefore like to highlight the state management on gender equality in this discussion.

Vietnam is committed to women's advancement and gender equality, and regards this as an important tool to achieve equity and sustainable development. There is already a lot of work done; the law on prevention and combat of domestic violence and a law on gender equality where put into action in 2006 and 2007, gender issues are integrated into the Sosio-Economic Development plan for the period 2006 – 2010, and a plan of action for the advancement of woman for the period 2006-2010 has been developed.

In 2008, the Government assigned the Ministry of Labor Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) to perform the function of state management of gender equality. At the same time, the National Committee for the Advancement of Women (NCFAW) was also strengthened, and the NCFAW office was moved from Vietnam Women's Union to the MOLISA. This means that this way of organizing the work is new and in its first phase.

For the session, we want to present the work of the Norwegian Ministry of children and equality, and we would correspondingly like to hear how the parallel institution in Vietnam works, how it is constructed, its way of functioning versus other institutions. We hope to get a fruitful discussion of our separate and common challenges and future development work.

Possible key area for discussion:

Challenges in promoting gender equality – tools and partners.

Areas selected to illustrate working methods:

- Representation of women
- Family policy
- Violence against women
 - How to use tools as national machinery, legal framework, statistics and research, capacity building, gender budgeting to promote gender equality?
 - Which kinds of partners are useful in gender equality work? How?

Examples: Non-governmental organizations; the feminist movement, politicians, researchers, employers' organizations and trade unions, public authorities/public servants etc.

Presentations:

Ms Arni Hole, Director General for the Department of Family Affairs and Equality at the Ministry of Children and Equality, will give an introductory presentation on how the Ministry works with gender equality issues.

Ms Lindis Sloan, adviser from the KUN centre for gender equality foundation, will give a presentation on the cooperation project on gender equality between Norway and Vietnam.

Discussion paper –Gender Equality and women in politics 2010

Human Rights dialogue Norway – Vietnam, Hanoi 27 April

Background

Since March 2009 there has been a work going on to establish a gender equality partnership between Norway and Vietnam. There have been several meetings, the latest in Viet Nam where the Vietnamese Ministry of Labour Invalids and Social Affairs and the Norwegian Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion arranged a work-shop in Halong City.

We have now reached the point in the planning of a project where we are ready to commit to a final agreement. The main aim of the 2010 - 2014 project will be enhancing the capacity of the State management machinery for gender equality in Vietnam. The topics we want to address in this project will vary from year to year, dependent on the challenges that are met, and current needs of the project partners.

The background for our choice of topic this year is the upcoming elections in Viet Nam (Local level in 2011 and for the parliament 2012). And the newly developed National Strategy on Gender Equality (NS) and National Targeted Programme on Gender Equality (NTP) for the period 2011-2015 in the period of 2011 to 2020. Therefore, the technical seminar on Gender Equality is divided in two sections with two different issues:

- How to promote Women's participation in politics?
- How to implement the National Strategy and National Targeted Programmes on Gender Equality?

Each of the discussions should lead to:

- Suggestions and recommendations on actions needed from the different participating bodies.
- Suggestions and recommendations for assistance on these issues from Norway

Women's participation in politics

Taking the Human rights framework into the question about women in politics involves a double strategy, thinking about both women's human rights and about political agendas for sustainable development. Women have the same rights as men to participate, to have a voice and to have access to resources. To empower women involves contributing to social change that brings about better development. To make changes sustainable you need to involve the ones who are going to be involved in the decision-making processes. This includes both women and men. Working on women in politics is therefore not only about working with women, but with all partners in society; both those who are fighting for women's rights, and those who are barriers, whether they are women or men (B. Aasen 2009:116)

According to the Global Gender Gap report 2009 Viet Nam has

26% women in the parliament

4% in ministerial positions,

and Norway has

36% women in the parliament

56% in ministerial positions.

Challenges in promoting gender equality – tools and partners. Possible key area for

discussion: What are the challenges, the main tools and who are the crucial partners in this work?

- Representation of women on decision making committees, boards etc.

Working methods; tools and partners:

- How to use different tools: national machinery, legal framework, information, statistics and research, capacity building etc.
- Who are the crucial partners? For example: Non-governmental organizations; the feminist movement, men's groups, politicians, researchers, employers' organisations and trade unions, public authorities/public servants etc.

For the session, we want to present the work of the Norwegian Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion and a Norwegian political party. We also want to present the work research cooperation on Norway and Viet Nam and we would correspondingly like to hear how the parallel institutions in Viet Nam work to increase the proportion of women in politics. We hope to get a fruitful discussion of our separate and common challenges and future development work.

Implementing a National Strategy and National Targeted Programmes on Gender Equality

MOLISA was requested to be a leading agency in developing the National Strategy on Gender Equality (NS) and National Targeted Programme on Gender Equality (NTP) for the period 2011-2015 in the period of 2011 to 2020 to submit the Government in 2010.

Priorities for implementation should be based on the critical role they could play in social development, and on the possibilities for achieving the objective and making an impact with available resources.

Important issues in implementing a Strategy and National Targeted programmes may include:

- Participation and ownership of the plan
- A gender equality machinery with the skills, expertise and capacity required
- Coordinating Mechanisms at the national, district and local level
- Dissemination of information
- Funding
- Accountability mechanisms: monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

In the seminar we want to address different roles the partners represented in the seminar have in implementing a national strategy and targeted program.

Presentations:

- The National Strategy on Gender Equality (NS) and National Targeted Programme on Gender Equality (NTP) in Viet Nam
- Challenges and important tools in implementing action plans on gender equality
 - From a Ministries' point of view
 - From a politicians' point of view
 - The practical work on the local level
 - From Norway and Viet Nam

Minutes from the Technical seminar on gender equality 2010

- on the Occasion of the Human Rights dialogue between Viet Nam and Norway, Hanoi 23rd-24th of November

The subject for the technical seminar was women in politics in Viet Nam and Norway.

- What are the challenges, the main tools and who are the crucial partners in this work?**

The aim of the seminar was to:

- Define what the main challenges are in the work to enhance the proportion of women in politics.**
- Share experiences and present best practices that could be used in both countries.**

The subjects were presented in the plenary session of the Human rights dialogue by Mrs Hoàng Thi Thu Huyền on behalf of MOLISA/GED and by Mr Inge Ovesen, Deputy Director General of the department of Family Affairs and Equality in the Ministry of Children, equality and social inclusion, head of the Norwegian delegation. The expert groups had technical seminars in side sessions, the results of which were then presented to the plenary in a closing session.

Introduction on Women's participation in Politics in Viet Nam by

Mrs Tran Thi Bich Loan, National Committee for the Advancement of Women in Vietnam

Viet Nam consider women in politics an important issue in developing the country. There are not enough women in politics, the ministries and agencies nor on the local level, but some important achievements have been made.

Legal policy has been developed to secure gender equality and women's participation. This is also founded in the constitution. The latest achievement is the Gender Equality law in 2006. Article 11 states that men and women are equal in participating in the state management and social activities.

The law sets an obligation to ensure an appropriate proportion of the National Assembly female deputies and Peoples Council female deputies in accordance with national gender equality targets.

The national strategy on gender equality 2011- 2020 sets 5 objectives and 20 targets. This also includes the promotion of women on different levels and areas.

Difficulties and shortcomings

- The awareness of the importance of gender equality is limited both in the public and in the state management.
- There is a gender gap in retirement age which leads to disadvantages for women's carriers.
- Existing gender inequality in practices, where men have more power in the family and women bear the responsibility for children and housework limits women's participation.
- The state management on gender equality is weak. The grass root level has not got enough resources to collect the necessary data for monitoring the implementation of the Gender equality program.
- Women are frequently assigned as vice managers in traditional female fields like culture and social areas despite their education. Women's promotion depends on male managers, not a national system.

Introduction by Dr Vo Thi Mai, Vice Director of Director of Mass Organisations of the Central Party Commission on People Mobilization

"Women in politics" is a big issue both in the state agencies and in the party organization. There is a need to focus on the barriers to find the reason and to focus on the actions that are needed to make a change. A study shows that there are three major reasons that prevent women from participation.

- The husband
- The men in the leading positions
- The communities' customs and traditions

The role of the party committee is also crucial – if they do not want to assist women or promote them it is very difficult. It is also a problem that the women consider themselves as not good enough and that they get less votes from both men and women.

The solution is awareness rising about the importance of gender equality and what it means, to give the women the same right to retirement as men and to use the media actively to integrate gender equality in the socio-political questions.

Questions from the Norwegian experts

The state influence on family life is limited but one thing a state can do is to promote parental leave in such a way that the father can stay at home and, secondly, to provide day care for children. Is this a policy in Viet Nam? Is this a topic of public discussion?

Is there any debate about gender equality and family burden in Viet Nam?

Are there socio-economic policies that support women's participation in politics, like more allowances to women that participate in workshops and meetings, to compensate for child care, or tax reductions to those employers that employ more women?

Is there any gender budgeting?

Answers :

There has been a survey to illuminate how the role of the woman is in the family. After the survey there has been arranged an open forum within the agency to discuss the findings.

A portion of the state budget is allocated to the local level relating to the promotion of women, women's participation and projects on gender equality. There is no functional ministry to measure how much is spent on the local level.

Introduction by Ågot Valle, chair of FOKUS Forum for women and development

Norway has made many important achievements but we also have some challenges.

We believe that an important explanation for Norway's high score as being one of the best countries in the world to live in, and the country's social and economic development, is the relatively high proportion of women in politics.

The key component of the policies behind the increased participation of women in politics in Norway is a political willingness to make social justice, human rights and equal opportunities for all members of society a prime political objective.

The gender equality promotion in Norway has also been about awareness-rising from below. Today the challenges are:

- The per hour wage gap between women and men for work of equal value.
- A high number of women in part-time jobs who would prefer to work full time.
- The issue of how schools and pre-schools socialize boys and girls.
- The challenge of engaging boys and men in the gender equality project.
- Domestic violence.

Introduction by Siri Hov Eggen, politician

General comments:

It has not been possible to reach the proportion of women in politics without the support of men. When the women came into politics they changed the political agenda in Norway.

We have experienced that women's wish to participate is closely connected to their self-confidence and self-esteem. In this it is important to recognize the importance of role models. There need to be women that take part, lead and have central political positions.

In Norway, it has been important for women to form networks and support each other to reach achievements. These networks advocate on women's issues inside the party and educate women to be skilful politicians.

There have also been projects or programs to increase the number of women in politics. One of the last programs was issued to increase the proportion of female mayors. This increased the proportion from 15% to 28%.

In Norway, there are few laws that can be used to increase the proportion of women in politics, this means that it is up to the political parties to work for more gender equality. Almost all the parties have affirmative action to promote women. Every second on the ballot lists has to be a woman, or 50% of each gender in every position. On the local level there is still a struggle to get women on the list and to get the voters to vote for them. There is a need to adjust the election law to secure gender-balanced participation on the local level, campaigns to encourage votes for women is not enough.

Question from the Vietnamese delegation:

What is the most important model of promoting Gender Equality in Norway?

Answers from the Norwegian group:

- The cooperation between women's movement and women in politics.
- The people on the grass root level know where the problems are and it is important that these opinions reach to the national level. For example, is it possible to adjust the law and make it more efficient if you get comments from those who live with it.
- Quotas and other initiatives like Women's network inside the parties, projects, programs and campaigns.
- Broadly speaking, female participation in politics takes place in two steps: The first step is work outside the home, the second step is into politics. Initiatives like available childcare and a targeted family policy are therefore important.
- It has been important to find the drivers for change in a market-oriented economy. The lack of labour in the 1970ies in Norway made it easier for women to get into paid work and get the chance to gain economic freedom.

Introduction by Mrs Dao Thi Quynh Mai, Official of Department of Laws and Policies of Vietnam Women's Union

The Women's Union is important in the work for gender equality in Viet Nam. The organization is both an adviser and critical agency for the implementation of the Gender equality law.

Women's Union works to increase the proportion of women in politics. The Gender equality law, article 29 and 30, state that their responsibility is to coordinate with related agencies and organizations to foster and recommend qualified women as candidates to the National Assembly and Peoples Council; and to the positions of leadership and management in the political systems at all levels.

They select their best members and suggest them as members of the party. The president of the Women's Union is also a member of parliament.

The nomination system involves the politicians, the ministries and the voters at different levels. In this system it is important to address the agreed national strategy on gender equality, to campaign for the female candidates and to improve their skills.

Conclusions from the discussion:

Vietnam and Norway also acknowledged that CEDAW is (the fundamental basis) (a core instrument regarding the countries legal commitments) to promote gender equality. In addition, both two sides agree to achieve certain results on promoting women's participation in politics in terms of policies and practice. However, there should be many efforts (or: different measures should be implemented) to encourage women's participation in this field.

Awareness rising has been a theme throughout the discussion and we agree that media plays an important role in awareness rising and has influence on the shaping of gender roles. MOLISA has established a network which includes different newspapers. Women and the presentation of gender roles in media could be a subject in a seminar within the cooperation project between Norway and Viet Nam.

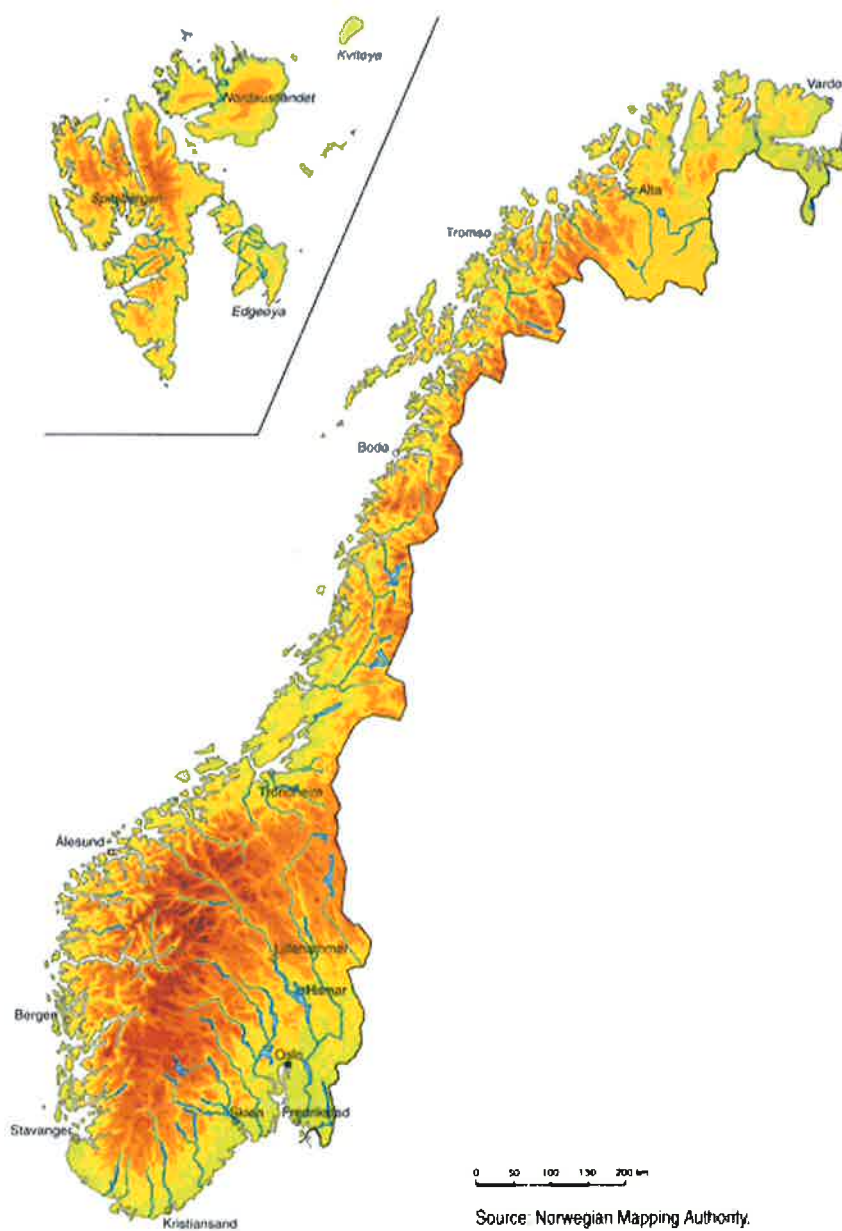
The coming training of trainers for women to elective bodies is an important measure to get more women in political positions. It is important to follow up this training in 2011 to ensure that as many women as possible get a chance to join a training course.

Finally, MOLISA and BLD agreed that the cooperation framework on capacity building of state management between two sides in the period of 2010-2014 will be very useful and suitable to further exchange experiences of gender equality between the two countries. The above conclusions, which was presented in the final plenary session of the technical seminar was highly appreciated by the participants. This activity will contribute to strengthen the bilateral cooperation between Vietnam and Norway

Cooperation between the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Children Equality and Social Inclusion (BLD) and The Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs of Socialist Republic of Vietnam (MOLISA) on Gender Equality

Programme for Study tour to Norway 10th -17th of October 2010

Norway, with Svalbard



Date/Time	Activities	locality
Monday, 11 Oct	The state management on Gender Equality at national level	
07.25	The delegation arrives at Oslo Airport Gardemoen and will be picked up by car. In Oslo the delegation will stay at Rica Oslo Hotel	Rica Oslo Hotel Europarådets Plass 1 Tlf: +47 23 10 42 00
10.40	Representative from KUN meets the delegation in the hotel reception. Walk to the Ministries.	
11.00-14.30	Meeting with the Ministry of children, equality and social inclusion.	Akersgt.59 (R5)
11.00 - 11.15	Welcome by Director general Ms Arni Hole.	VIP room- D2216
11.15 - 12.00	Opening remarks of the meeting from BLD and MOLISA and introduction of the invitees.	
12.00-12.25	Introduction of BLD's responsibility and brief status of gender equality in Norway. Questions and answers.	
12.30 - 12.50	Sharing of MOLISA 's responsibility related to State management on gender equality and brief status of gender equality in Vietnam; sharing the final draft of National Strategy on Gender Equality of Vietnam from 2011-2020 (GED/MOLISA)	Mr Lysbakkens meeting room, 5 th Floor
12.50-13.30	Meeting with Minister Mr Audun Lysbakken	VIP room –D2216
	Sharing of MOLISA's responsibility... (continued)	
	Questions and answers	
13.30-14.30	Lunch	Lion Lodge
14.30	Walk from the Ministries to the residence of the Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud	

15.00-17.00	Meeting with the Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud (LDO) LDO 's experience: To deal with complaints of discrimination. By Ms Monica Hox Controlling reports on gender equality from companies, organizations and public authorities. By Senior advisor Mr Claus Jervell Development and application of gender based statistics in Norway some examples by Senior Advisor Ms Ylva Lohne The work of supervising and monitoring gender equality and the work of statistics on gender equality in Vietnam (MOLISA or Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI)	Mariboesgt. 13, 4th floor
17.45	Departure from the hotel Dinner at the Government Guest House Hosted by Deputy Minister Ms Henriette Westhrin	Parkveien 45, Entrance from Riddervoldsgate

Tuesday, 12 Oct	The work against Domestic Violence	
11.00-13.00	Meeting with the Ministry of Justice and the Police, and The Ministry of Children, equality and social Inclusion The success of the work against domestic violence in Norway By Senior adviser in the Department of Police Ms Line Nersnæs and Senior Adviser, Department of Family Affairs and Equality, Ms Hilde Marit Knotten.	Akersgt.59 (R5) Vip lunch (Rom D2216)
13.00-14.00	Lunch	Vip lunch
	Walk to Oslo Women's shelter	
15.00-17.00	Information about the Shelter Movement by leader of the Secretariat of the Shelter Movement Ms Tove Smådal	Storgt 11
18.00	Dinner	Xich Lo Restaurant Karl Johansgate 23B

Wednesday, 13 Oct	Meeting with The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) and travel to Steinkjer (the North of Norway)	
10.00- 11.30	Sharing experiences on Family politics in Norway and Viet Nam by Special Advisor KS' International Projects Ms Liss Schanke	Håkon 7s gate 9
12.00-13.00	Lunch	Rica Oslo Hotel
13.00	Carservice to Oslo Airport Gardemoen Travel by plane to Trondheim airport. SK 354 13OCT 3 OSLTRD 1455 1550 Carservice to Steinkjer	
18.00	Dinner at the hotel on arrival	Quality Hotel Grand Steinkjer

Background

Women in politics was the subject of the gender equality and women's rights working group in the 2010 Human Rights Dialogue between Norway and Viet Nam. In these discussions, women's representations in the media and the use of female and male stereotypes were pinpointed as a problem, hindering women in seeking political office. With this in mind, we have chosen women and the media as the topic of the working group discussion in 2011. By "media" we include newspapers, television and social media such as social networks.

Rights and duties

Women in media is a matter of the right to be heard, to participate and to be represented, and of state obligations to ensure no groups of people are hindered in their freedom of expression, rendered invisible or subjected to marginalisation and negative publicity.

The Universal declaration of human rights (1948) article 19 states that all humans have the right to freedom of expression, in the media and otherwise. Viet Nam and Norway are, in accordance with the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) article 19, obliged to ensure freedom of expression for all, both women and men. The UN Commission on human rights resolution 2003/42 on the right to freedom of opinion and expression states that ensuring women's freedom of expression is of particular importance. The resolution emphasises that states must counter factors that hinder women's right to communicate freely and effectively. These factors are in particular the continued illiteracy in some parts of the world, and fear of violence. To efficiently increase women's participation in the media, it is important to protect them from abuse and to make them able to take leading positions in media and in public life in general.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979) aims at removing socioeconomic barriers that hinder women's participation in the country's political, social, economic and cultural life. States shall make all efforts to fight discrimination against women in the country's political and public life (article 7). The Beijing platform for action (1995) on women and the media has two stated aims:

Increasing women's participation in and access to defining and expressing themselves in and through the media and new information technology.

Promoting a balanced, non-stereotyped representation of women in the media.

Situation

The Concluding comments of The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to both Viet Nam and Norway in 2007 shows that the two countries face similar challenges:

The Committee recommends that both the Vietnamese and the Norwegian State parties take additional measures to eliminate traditional stereotypical attitudes and that special attention

should be given to the role of the media in perpetuating stereotypes, as well as their role in contributing to a social and cultural change towards gender equality.

The Committee recommends that the Vietnamese State party implement training programmes and awareness-raising campaigns, with a special focus on mass organizations, on the right of women to full and equal participation at all levels of decision-making. It encourages the Norwegian State party to ensure that the representation of women in political and public bodies reflects the full diversity of the population and includes migrant and minority women.

Suggested topics for discussion:

In general

- International and national laws and regulations about gender and media.
- The government, the media and the civil society: different roles, responsibilities and regulations
- How the government/authorities making use of the media in their work?
- Individual freedom, self-regulation and the government.

Aim 1: Women's participation in media

Michel Bachelet from UN Women has stated that "Media journalists, as people who gives life and voice to the realities of womenare the heart of successful advocacy and awareness campaigns at all levels from local to global".

Some aspects:

- Who is the journalist?
- Why are media houses making the choice to employ more women?
- How are journalists trained, educated and recruited?
- Is the journalist responsible for promoting gender equality and not to discriminate?
- Are female journalists making a difference?
- Does female managers and editors change the agenda?

Aim 2: Women's access to defining and expressing themselves in and through the media and new information technology

Some aspects:

- How do we ensure groups and individuals have access to the media, to having their voice heard?
- Women's voices – are they heard in newspapers, radio/TV, films etc?
- What makes a story "news", who sets the agenda?
- Stakeholder responsibilities, how do we exercise our rights? How do women come to know their rights and how do they use them?

- The social media as women's arena, what do we know? Do social media enhance women's possibilities to participate in decision-making processes and to be heard?
- What women have access to social media?

Aim 3: Promoting a balanced, non-stereotyped representation of women in the media

Some aspects:

- The state's responsibility to ensure no groups are subjected to marginalization, negative stereotyping or being rendered invisible.
- What are the stereotypes and how do they influence individuals, groups and the society?
- Gender stereotypes - has media influenced a change in attitudes and in the society?

NORWAY AND VIET NAM

Final statement of working group on gender equality 2011

(Theme: Gender and Media in 2011, Oslo)

Norway and Vietnam are, in accordance with the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966, article 19), obliged to ensure freedom of expression for all, both women and men. In addition, CEDAW states the necessity of making all efforts to fight discrimination against women in political and public life (Article 7). The discussions in the working group were related to the aims of The Beijing platform for action (1995) on women and the media.

These were the main topics of concern of the group:

- How to promote a balanced, non-stereotyped representation of women in the media?
- How to break the “culture of silence” that inhibits women from speaking out and making their voices heard?
- How can media empower women, and how can women use media and information technology?
- How can media contribute to efficient dissemination of information on gender equality and women’s rights?

We acknowledge that the underrepresentation of women in the media and the use of female and male stereotypes is a hindrance for equal opportunities in both Viet Nam and Norway. We have addressed the rights and duties of the different stakeholders (the government, the media and the civil society) to contribute to changes on these issues:

Our States have the legal frameworks to ensure that no groups of people are hindered in their freedom of expression, rendered invisible or subjected to marginalisation and negative publicity. The laws have to be implemented sufficiently. Control is needed and breaches of the laws are to be followed by sanctions. Laws and regulations are necessary, but not enough.

The Governments should:

- Ensure that both sexes have the same access to education of high quality.
- Increase the capacity to implement laws and policies related to women in the media.
- Provide sufficient and gender sensitive education for journalists.
- Support dialogues, forums and trainings on gender and media.
- Ensure availability of ICT skills and media access including internet, to both women and men.

The media:

- Media should have an independent role, but are bound to the general ethical rules and responsibilities in society. They should contribute to social and cultural change towards gender equality by:
- Ensuring that there is a diversity of media channels available.
- Recruiting journalists from different groups in society.
- Giving women and men equal opportunities to advancement in the media organization.
- Being aware of gender bias and take actions against it.
- Avoiding use of gender stereotypes and present women and men in their diverse roles.
- Offering education and training on gender issues to staff.

Civil society:

Organizations especially women's organizations should take the role as watch dogs, mobilizing and empowering women through information, training and awareness rising, media monitoring and critique. The civil society should be encouraged to contribute with human and financial resources and advocate a legal framework that supports their role.

- Build capacity for underrepresented groups.
- Prevent discrimination and enhance equality.

Partnerships arrangements aim at the following:

Norwegian experts will provide technical assistance to develop gender sensitive training for journalists/editors of some key media agencies at central level and some selected provinces and universities

Twinning between a Norwegian and a Viet Nam newspaper on the exchange of experience and good practice.

Training of women and women's organisations on how to make use of the media for women's empowerment through 'Women Can Do It'

Exchange experiences on campaigning on a gender equality issue

Background:

In 1993, the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women offered the first official definition of gender-based violence: “Article 1: Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”

Gender-based violence encompasses a range of acts of violence committed against females because they are females and against males because they are males, based on how a particular society assigns and views gender roles and expectations. It includes sexual violence, intimate partner or spouse abuse (domestic violence), emotional and psychological abuse, sex trafficking, forced prostitution, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, harmful traditional practices (e.g. female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, infanticide of girl children) and discriminatory practices based on gender.

Gender-based violence is a problem with wide-reaching consequences both for the individual, for the family and for society. There is a need to safeguard the rights of both women and men to a life free of violence and threats of violence, and to ensure that children can grow up without suffering abuse or fear. In Vietnam, 32% of ever-married women aged 15-49 had experienced physical violence by a partner, and 10% had experienced sexual violence. The lifetime prevalence of physical and/or sexual partner violence was 34%, and 54% of women had experienced emotional abuse in their lives (WHO 2011).

In Norway approximately 9% of women over fifteen years of age have been victims of serious violence from their current or former partner in the course of their lives. Since 1992, women and their children have spent more than one and a half million nights at Norwegian shelters. Between 2000 and April 2011, 93 women were killed by their partners/former partners or boyfriend. In January 2008, a government-appointed committee on rape estimated that every year between 8,000 and 16,000 women in Norway are victims of rape or attempted rape (Norwegian NGO shadow report to CEDAW 2011). 3,4 % of Norwegian employees are exposed to sexual harassment once a month or more, and this figure is likely to be much higher among students.

We want to address three important discussions in the work against gender-based violence:

1. Vietnamese and Norwegian laws and strategies to address gender-based violence.
2. action plans as tools to coordinate the work against gender-based violence
3. the attitudes to gender-based violence and the impact on the ways the problem is handled, with specific focus on the role of the police.

1. Strategies to address gender based violence.

Both The Governments of Viet Nam and Norway have demonstrated commitment to act against gender inequality and gender-based violence through laws built on a human rights framework. In Norway there is juridical, medical and monitoring machinery on preventing and handling gender-based violence, but there is still a need for development. In Viet Nam there is a need to build adequate machinery.

To discuss:

- Strategies and approaches to prevent and address gender based violence.
- Examples of systems to prevent and address gender based violence in Viet Nam and Norway.
- How does gender based violence impact on a societies economic, democratic and political development?

2. Action plans

Both Viet Nam and Norway have National actions plans for gender equality, and against domestic violence and human trafficking. In addition, Norway has action plans against forced marriage and female genital mutilation, rape and discrimination of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons and against rape in general. There is also a recommendation from the Norwegian Government to develop local action plans against domestic violence.

To discuss

- Are action plans effective?
- What is the prerequisite to make them work in practice?

3. Working in practice

There is a need to integrate gender-based violence prevention and care into existing systems and services, as well as designing new responses. We want to discuss how this can work in practice and use examples from the police. The Vietnam law on domestic violence prevention and control states that the police are obliged to prevent, discover, stop and deal with any violations of the law on domestic violence. It is also the police's responsibility to coordinate and facilitate the State management agencies' statistical work on domestic violence cases.

To discuss

- How do the police work to fulfill the requirements in the law?
- How to develop and improve practices?

NORWAY AND VIETNAM

Final conclusion of the technical seminar on gender equality 2012

(Theme: preventing and combating gender based violence)

(Hanoi, from 27-28 November 2012)

The technical seminar showed that Vietnam and Norway have similarities and differences at the same time and that Gender based violence is a challenging issue in both countries. Our two countries are obliged by the UN Convention on discrimination against women, and other international human rights instruments to ensure protection against violence for all human beings. Our states are responsible to make efforts to prevent the violence and to help victims. Gender based violence includes violence against men and boys, but since the violence against women is most extensive the technical seminar was focusing on this violence.

Legislation and accountability on responding to gender based violence

We had discussions about legislation and the approach on GBV that also may influence coordination responsibility for the work against GBV. Norway does not have one act on Gender based violence, but the legal protection is included in different acts and provisions (penal code, foreigners act, crisis center act etc), in addition the CEDAW has been implemented in the human rights act and has impact on constitutional provisions. Other countries, like for example Spain have chosen to have another form of legislation with one law called "violence against women" including all forms of violence.

It is important to have effective and appropriate sanctions for the perpetrator in order to prevent the violence. Sanctions like fines effects the victims and the family's economy and are regarded as not suitable in cases of domestic violence. In Norway all serious offences are prosecuted if they are possible to prove, and they are not dependent on the victim's report.

It was agreed upon that a cost survey on the economic cost caused by gender based violence is an important tool to mobilize and highlight the necessity of work on prevention of GBV. Both Norway and Viet Nam has conducted such a survey. In Vietnam this is a research conducted by the National University of Ireland, Galway and the Institute for Family and Gender Studies, with support from the UN Women in Viet Nam. Key findings in these studies are that the economic repercussions of domestic violence can be felt at both the household and macro-economic level. This is especially connected to loss of labor, and long term cost related to the traumas for the children in the families. Norway has also conducted a one-week assessment where police, shelters, social workers and hospitals reported on cases of gender based violence.

Action plans

One of the main issues addressed in the seminar was plans of action. Both Viet Nam and Norway have experiences in the use of actions plans and we defined critical success factors to be:

- an open process developing the plan
- coordination by high level board
- regularly reports and evaluations
- allocating budget

Norway has different action plans for different forms of gender based violence – one against domestic violence, one against forced marriage, one against rape etc. Norway also has good experiences with publishing the plans and status reports on the internet page of the ministry responsible for the action plan.

Vietnam has started developing services for women in domestic violence, and the local authorities have been asked to decide upon their opportunities for contribution.

The interventions and discussions on work against GBV at the regional and local level were shared, with presentation of a pilot project for women returning from abroad after divorce. The project aim is to give assistance to women coming back to Vietnam, to reduce risks for women going abroad to marry and to reduce the risks of human trafficking. The project is supported by UNHCR, and includes support for women and children, counseling, communication, awareness raising and training for the local authorities and for volunteers. The project also provided small credits to women who want to start their own business.

Work in practice

It is essential to give support to the victims, and a corner stone in this work in Norway is the shelters. The Crisis Center movement represents an essential contribution in developing the shelter services at the local/regional level. The movement and the participation of the civil society have also been very important in order to put pressure on, and make the authorities responsible for these services today. In Norway many women choose not to go back to their ex-husbands after the violence, but to start an independent life. A family with violence is not considered as a happy family, but a dysfunctional family. To be protected against violence is a basic human right. Violence against women influences the children in the family strongly, and the children have their own right to protection. In Norway, the municipalities are advised to develop a local plan against violence in close relationships.

Sharing the best practices and model on responding GBV:

The work on preventing and combating GBV was shared and a successful model of the police work in Oslo was presented. We heard introduction about the work of developing domestic violence teams, that are today integrated in all Norwegian police stations. There is need of standardized definitions of Domestic Violence, consistent interventions, grounding in leadership, training of staff, performance monitoring, use of resources, risk and threat assessment, and risk management. The Spousal risk assessment instrument (SARA) is a knowledge based method, and experiences from police in Oslo shows that it is effective.

A manual has been developed to secure systematic work by the police, provide safety for the women (emergency alarms, restraining orders etc). It is important to secure evidence immediately after the police have entered the scene. Awareness is important and to show respect to the victims. As an example of the police routines, they are obliged to call the victim for a follow up conversation following an incident. The police also cooperate with the child care authorities, and there are established "children houses" in order to take care of the need of children connected to domestic violence and sexual abuse. The shelters are also essential cooperation partners in the work of the police.

The peace house project was introduced by Vietnam experts. The aim of this project is to support women who are suffering from domestic violence and human trafficking.

Conclusion:

Both sides agree that initiatives on gender equality will be conducted until 2014 as mentioned in the cooperation frame work. Some issues coming up in this seminar might be possible to include in future plans, but more planning and cooperation will be necessary before we can conclude. We agree on the following:

Gender mainstreaming course on ‘the Ladder’: TOT and pilot training course for local trainer. Based on the assessment forms from participants from the 2nd TOT course of the Ladder in September 2012, the mainstreaming course was very useful for Vietnam. It provided necessary skills on gender analysis, gender mainstreaming, sustainable steps for promoting gender equality for the staff working on gender equality and other sectors who are in charge of integrating gender perspectives into their work. The training is a part of our plan to build a group of national trainers in gender equality issues who can teach and support ministries and also provincial and local level. This group could also develop a general training course based on the ladder in a Vietnamese context.

The proposed activities for this course:

- 1 4-day training course for TOT to help the trainers finalize the Ladder curriculum in the Vietnam context.
- 3 2-day training courses to train provincial trainer in 3 regions of Vietnam, the North, the South and the Central. These courses will help MOLISA to train provincial trainers for the local level. After that, this curriculum will be finalized by MOLISA and disseminated widely to ministries, agencies and localities in 2014.
- Event on Gender in Media: the technical seminar on gender equality in Oslo confirmed that media is very important for gender equality work. The conference on promoting gender in media should be organized in Vietnam. Norwegian experts are invited to share best experiences on gender and media in Norway at the aim of strengthening awareness as well as capacity of promoting women’s representation in media for editors or managers of media agencies of Vietnam. Furthermore, methods of responding to gender based violence should be presented in media.
- Provide one Scholarship for the Master Degree on Gender and Development in Norway. MOLISA will introduce one staff member from the Gender Equality Department of MOLISA who can meet English requirement for this course to apply to the Master course on gender and development in Norway.

Further proposed activities in 2014: There should be an activity to share experience on the coordination of work on responding GBV between Norway and Vietnam to help police, functional ministries and agencies in Vietnam to further understand how to respond GBV in practice.

Discussion paper: Technical seminar on Gender mainstreaming in labour and work life
2013

Oslo June 25.-26.

“While women worldwide contribute to the economy and its productivity, they continue to face many barriers that prevent them from realising their full economic potential. This is not only holding back women; it is holding back economic performance and growth. Guaranteeing equal opportunities for women and men is not just the right thing to do. It’s smart economics.”

(Michelle Bachele)

Both the 1995 Beijing platform and the 2006 UN Economic and Social Council Ministerial Declaration on decent work give importance to promoting decent work and full employment of both women and men.

Gender mainstreaming as a strategy to achieve gender equality was also identified by governments in the conference in Beijing, defined as:

Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men, of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes

There are five key gender differences that disadvantage women in the labour markets around the world:

- in unemployment
- in employment
- In labour force participation
- in vulnerability
- in sectorial and occupational segregation

Norway and the other Nordic countries have developed an economic and social model referred to as the Nordic model.

Basic characteristics of this model is

- the Government emphasis on contributing to high participation in the labour force
- A well-regulated work life and a three party cooperation between strong employers’ - and labour organizations
- A developed and universal welfare system financed with high tax levels
- A family policy to provide gender equality and women’s participation in the labour market

The Vietnamese model is different, but the statistics show that Norway and Vietnam both have high labour force participation in general and a very high female participation in comparison with other countries in the world. In the technical seminar we want to address our experiences and some of our challenges. Our discussion will address both

- Women’s access to work – key factors necessary for women’s participation
- Women in working life – their possibilities, challenges and vulnerability.

Key statistics:

Indicator Name	Norway	Viet Nam
Labor force participation rate, female (% of female population ages 15-64)	75,7	78,2
Employment to population ratio, 15+, female (%)	59,9	71,3
Employment to population ratio, 15+, male (%)	67,5	79,5

Indicator Name	Norway	Viet Nam
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	3,1	2,4
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	3,4	1,7
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	3,3	2

Indicator Name	Norway	Viet Nam
Part time employment, female (% of total female employment)	30	
Part time employment, female (% of total part time employment)	71,0	
Part time employment, male (% of total male employment)	11	
Part time employment, total (% of total employment)	20	
Wage and salaried workers, female (% of females employed)	96	
Wage and salaried workers, total (% of total employed)	93	34,6
Wage and salary workers, male (% of males employed)	90,3	
Children in employment, female (% of female children ages 7-14)		13,5
Children in employment, male (% of male children ages 7-14)		12,5
Children in employment, total (% of children ages 7-14)		13

Sector employment 2009 Vietnam

	all	men	women
Agricultural employment	47,6	45,4	50,0
Informal sector employment	24,4	25,1	23,7
Formal sector employment	27,9	29,5	26,3

Sector employment 2011 Norway:

Share of women among employees (20-66 years) in public sector (per cent)	70.6
Share of women among employees (20-66 years) private sector (per cent)	36.8
Share of women among leaders (20-66 years) (per cent)	33.9

Study tour on social work and domestic violence 2014

Oslo 23th to 28th of June

Background: social work and domestic violence

This study tour is initiated within the framework of the cooperation project between MOLISA and BLD. The objective of this cooperation is to enhance the state machinery on gender equality and to enhance expertise of GE staff working on GE and advancement of women at central and local levels.

MOLISA is assigned to develop social work in Vietnam and this is also a matter of gender equality.

The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilizing of human behavior and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work (Federation of Social Work (IFSW) 2000) There are four vital concepts within social work: social change, problem solving, person-in-the environment and empowerment (Hick, 2006).

We want to address the work against domestic violence which is a matter of gender equality and a social problem in both Norway and Vietnam. Both Governments have demonstrated commitment to act against gender inequality and gender-based violence through laws built on the framework of the human rights. In Norway there are juridical, medical and monitoring machinery on preventing and handling gender-based violence, but there is still a need for development. In Viet Nam there is a need to build adequate machinery.

This study tour will focus on work against domestic violence. However, social work within this field will also serve as an example of how to develop social work in other areas. We will divide this into different topics:

On the macro level: policy, law, coordination, cooperation and mobilization

On the micro level: Awareness raising, building knowledge, protection and community based interventions.

Objectives of the study tour:

- To strengthen policy formulations and delivery at central level relating to Gender equality, children's rights and social work
- Enhance the capacity to advise and develop policies, programmes and projects on social work and gender equality in difficult and remote areas
- To identify the role of both Government, institutions, education and research, mass organization/civil society including religious groups, and how the cooperation between these institutions could be strengthened
- To provide a playground for international learning and sharing experiences/ best practices and find initiatives for civil society development

- promote gender mainstreaming in projects
- Share the lessons learnt from the study trip with other leaders at national and local level as a first step of the advocacy process of the cooperative project on “scaling up the FBO responses to social development work in Vietnam towards 2020”

Important point we would address:

- The building of structures to prevent, protect and response to domestic violence.
- The work against domestic violence as a process, show the historical perspective.
- The individual’s basic human rights, value and dignity.
- The quality assurance of social work and voluntary work.
- The work against domestic violence is about change on both micro and macro level.
- Grassroots initiatives as responses to needs at the local level, and steps for further development.
- Cooperation between Government, institutions and NGO/ mass organizations, civil society organisations including faith based organisations.
- Social problems have, and need, a gender perspective.
- National commitment for implementing the social work from gender perspectives: human and budget allocation, technical guidance

Vietnamese delegates

MOLISA:

1. Mr Pham Ngoc Tien, DG of Gender Equality Department of MOLISA
2. Ms Hoang Thi Thu Huyen, Project Coordinator on Norway and Vietnam cooperation, Gender Equality Department of MOLISA
3. Mr To Đức, Head of Social Work Division, Department of Social Protection Administration of MOLISA
4. Mr Dam Khac Hoan, senior official in charge of GBV of Gender Equality Department,

NCA:

5. Thich Hai An, Buddhist Monk, National Head of Culture department / Vice Head of national Charity committee of Vietnam Buddhist Association, Vietnam Buddhist Association
6. Thich Phuoc Dien, Buddhist Monk, Former Coordinator of NCA’s FBO programmes in Vietnam. Member of Board of management of Bus engaging in social work in Vietnam, Vietnam Buddhist Association
7. Le Ba Trinh, Vice Chairman of the Central Committee of Vietnam Fatherland Front (CFF) Central Committee of Vietnam Fatherland Front, policy department
8. Nguyen Van Thanh, Head of Ethnicity and religion Affair, CFF Central Committee of Vietnam Fatherland Front, Program section
9. Nuyen Thi Hong Cam Deputy of Country Representative NCA VNNCA V
10. Mr Binh, Conselor of Vietnamese Embassy in Oslo

Approach

We will visit different partners who work against domestic violence and protection of different vulnerable groups. The group will be encouraged to reflection how this example is relevant for them. The group will receive two tasks:

Make a plan on how to measure the scope of domestic violence in their geographical area.

Make a plan for developing a local action plan against domestic violence and mainstreaming gender based violence and gender equality in social work development project at local level.

The work to develop a local plan could be followed up and each representative from each organisation will share the progress of following up their plan after study tour on the occasion of organising the technical seminar between MOLISA and BLD/KUN in Hanoi in October.

PROGRAMME

Date	Topic	
23.june	The work of the faith based organizations	
08:30*	Meet in the hotel lobby with Thora Holter, Senior Gender Adviser in Norwegian Church aid	*The NCA group only
09:00*	Visit to Nadheim, the Church City Mission in Norway: Centre for men and women with prostitution experience	
11.30*	Lunch	
12.00	Arrival of the MOLISA group	
13.00*	The Church's Counselling Service for Family Affairs	
15:30	Welcome to NCA	Eivind Aalborg, Director of International Programmes,
16.00	Expectations and questions for the study tour, presentation of the programme	
17.30	Travel to The Norwegian folk museum	
18.00	Dinner and celebration of mid-summer	The Norwegian folk museum
24.june	Introduction	
09.00	Welcome and Introduction of the topic: Why is it important to work against domestic violence? The situation in Norway - how do BLD work?	Inge Ovesen Director General Department of Childhood, Youth and Family Affairs, Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion.
9.30	Gender equality, domestic violence and social work. What are the main concerns in MOLISA at the time?	MOLISA
10.00	Painting the broad picture - The Norwegian model - welfare for all	Lise Østby and Elin Skogøy Senior Advisors, Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs
11.00	Main strategies and working methods at the time	Juliet Namuli Birabwa Haveland senior advisor, department of Consumers affairs, Anti-discrimination and Equality Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion
11.30	Lunch	At the Ministry
13.00	To ensure that the opinions of children and young people are heard, and that their rights are upheld.	Frøydis Heyerdahl, senior advisor at the Children's Ombud
14.30	Travel to RVTS Øst, Sognsvannsveien 21	Bygg 12, Gaustad sykehus
15.00	Training for workers dealing with people in	Mary Irene Vold and Gudrun

	crisis	Nordmo Senior Executive Officers Regional Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies
16.00	Back to the Hotel	
18.00	Boat to the restaurant Lille Herbern	
25.june	Assistance	
8.00	Travel from Oslo to Drammen	30 min
9.00	The shelter – from grass root initiative to governmental responsibility. Protection of survivors, counselling of women and hot line services	Anita Grønning Vanebo Chief Adviser/deputy director Betzy centre, Drammen
11.00	Travel from Drammen to Oslo	
12.00- 13.00	Lunch	Hai Café Calmeyers gate 6 Telefon 22 20 38 72
14.00	How to develop a shelter? – experiences from Norway, Cyprus, South Africa	Tove Smådahl Managing director Women's shelters secretariat
15.00	How JURK helps to ensure that all women are conscious of their legal entitlement and that equality is practiced.	Marte Trzcinska Managing director Legal advice for women, JURK
18.00	Dinner	Brasserie 45 Stortingsgaten 20 inng. fra Roald Amundsens gate 22 41 34 00

26.june	Cooperation and coordination	
09.00-10.30	National action plans and other tools for cooperation and coordination To measure the scope of domestic violence	Line Nersnæs and Hilde Knotten Senior Adviser Ministry of Justice and Public Security
10.30-12.00	Local action plans – development and implementation”	Maria Stensvold Ånonsen Coordinator Municipality of Ski
12.00-13.00	Lunch	R5 (at the ministry)
13.00-14.30	A police perspective on changing attitudes towards violence in the family	Dag Simen Grøtterud Superintendent, Police Domestic Violence Co-ordinator, Oslo Police District
14.30-16.00	Cooperation and coordination for the child’s best	Oslo Children’s House
	Dinner	Four seasons dining Rosenkrantz' gate 11, 0159 Oslo 22 83 95 10
27.june	Prevention and awareness rising	
9.00	Help for perpetrators – alternatives to violence	Are Saastad Managing director Reform- resource centre for men http://reform.no/in-english/
10.30	Help to mainstream gender equality	Karin Hovde, Senior adviser/ deputy director KUN centre for gender equality
12.00	A place to get help, counseling and care : the track (Sporet)	The Church City mission, Oslo S
13.00	Lunch	Café Celsius Hansketorget
14:00	Group work: Make a plan on how to measure the scope of domestic violence in their geographical area. Make a plan for developing a local action plan against domestic violence and mainstreaming gender based violence and gender equality in social work development project at local level.	
	Dinner	Optional

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