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# Impact of HIV/AIDS on household vulnerability and poverty in Viet Nam



*Report of UNDP-AusAID supported Project - VIE/98/006*

Ha Noi, August 2005

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# IMPACT OF HIV/AIDS ON HOUSEHOLD VULNERABILITY AND POVERTY IN VIET NAM

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# Foreword

HIV/AIDS affects people in every province and virtually every community of Viet Nam. If left unchecked, the epidemic has the potential to reverse the nation's remarkable achievements in poverty reduction.

Viet Nam has taken steps to develop an effective national response to reduce HIV/AIDS. This increasing commitment has included the approval of a national strategy on HIV/AIDS prevention and control, considered among the best in the world.

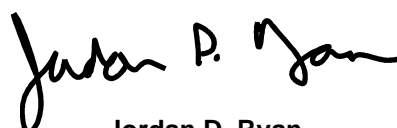
HIV/AIDS is a development issue and to respond to it as such is essential to understanding the epidemic's socio-economic impact. Assessing this impact in low-prevalence countries like Viet Nam, remains a difficult task. Even with low overall incidence, a very small percentage change in HIV/AIDS rates in Viet Nam's large population can mean huge increases in the actual numbers of people affected.

While the general macroeconomic impact of HIV/AIDS is still low, the epidemic has already had a considerable impact on the country's poor and on general progress towards poverty reduction and achievement of the first Millennium Development Goal (MDG), to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. Put bluntly, HIV/AIDS has the power to reduce and even reverse gains made in poverty reduction by driving families affected with HIV/AIDS, into poverty.

This report sheds light on the impact of the epidemic on this micro-level. It presents a novel approach to the analysis of the implications of HIV/AIDS on Viet Nam's socio-economic development by linking the impact of HIV/AIDS to household poverty levels.

There are strategies to alleviate the pressure at the family-level. Providing financial and material support to households with one or more members living with HIV/AIDS, for example. If these households had easier-, cheaper or even free access to healthcare, HIV/AIDS would cease to have such a negative impact on poverty reduction efforts. This report also suggests a framework for socio-economic impact assessments to be conducted on a more regular basis in the future in order to facilitate policy making and planning.

Large numbers of Vietnamese are already feeling the impact of HIV/AIDS, especially the most vulnerable and poor. With this report, we hope to better understand the negative influence HIV/AIDS has on household income, and by doing so, promote action to prevent the dramatic effects it could have on poverty reduction efforts in this Viet Nam.



**Jordan D. Ryan**  
UNDP Resident Representative

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Gayle Martin from The Futures Group International led the research team and drafted the report. The team of consultants consisted of Le Minh Giang (independent consultant), Nguyen Chi Dung (Ho Chi Minh Political Academy), Nguyen Duy Tung (independent consultant), Nguyen Hong Ha (Mediconsult), Nguyen Xuan Thanh (independent consultant), Pham Huy Dung (Institute of Health Policy and Strategy) and Vu Ngoc Uyen (Institute of Economics). John Stover (The Futures Group International) and Jim Knowles (independent consultant) also provided input and assistance.

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