

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE: VIET NAM
**SHOWCASING SUCCESS IN
NUTRITION ADVOCACY**



WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL NUTRITION ACTIONS?

[Essential Nutrition Actions](#) (ENA) are a comprehensive set of nutrition services for people of all ages. These services are provided through national health systems, and include prevention, early detection, and treatment of malnutrition, support for pregnant and lactating women, prevention of micronutrient deficiencies, and much more.

As a part of the [ENOUGH Global Campaign](#) on hunger and malnutrition, World Vision is focusing its advocacy strength on improving coverage of ENA through strong, resilient health systems. In this Good Practice Guide, we will learn how World Vision Viet Nam (WV) has been successful in advocating for ENA implementation in the most vulnerable areas with the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement's Civil Society Alliance (CSA).

KEY SUCCESSES

1. WV was the co-chair (2021–2023) and now chair of the Viet Nam SUN CSA (2023–2025), and through leadership in this group, many advocacy successes have been achieved. Most notably, the SUN CSA's advocacy led to the Vietnamese National Assembly taking on the responsibility for monitoring the Government of Viet Nam (GoV)'s nutrition activity implementation. As a result, the **GoV budgeted 2,093.181 billion Vietnamese dong (approximately USD \$92M) for ENA implementation from 2021 to 2025**, especially in mountainous and rural areas where the most vulnerable children and women live.
2. World Vision's Health and Nutrition Technical Programme Manager, Dr. Vu Nguyen, was one of two experts from international non-governmental organisations and United Nations' agencies invited by the GoV to be **a member of the national board to develop Viet Nam's national nutrition strategy (2021–2030) and National Plan of Action on Nutrition (2021–2025)**.
3. Under Dr. Vu's leadership, WV successfully advocated to the National Institute of Nutrition for **government uptake of several WV core project models** ([Positive Deviance Hearth Plus](#), [Timed and Targeted Counselling](#), and the [Nutrition Club](#) platform, which also include integration with WASH and Livelihoods). WV also provided expert advice during the development of technical guidelines for ENA Implementation at the Grassroots Level, as well as conducting expert trainings for all 63 of Viet Nam's provinces and providing technical assistance to GoV. As a result, the Regional SUN CSA has supported plans to **adopt WV's Nutrition Club platform in four additional countries** (Côte d'Ivoire, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Nepal).

WV's advocacy efforts dating back well before the formation of Viet Nam SUN CSA have contributed to significant improvement of malnutrition in Viet Nam, although a big gap remains, especially [in mountainous rural areas which are home to ethnic minorities, where malnutrition affects 65 per cent of the population](#).



JOINT ADVOCACY WITH SUN CSA

When Viet Nam joined the SUN Global Movement in 2014, there was little activity until the SUN CSA was established in 2019. WVV became co-chair of the SUN CSA for the period of 2021 to 2023 and then chair of this network for the period of 2023 to 2025, and Vietnamese civil society advocacy for nutrition was revitalised, being gathered formally under a single umbrella and common purpose.

The Vietnamese SUN CSA has 15 partner organisations¹ and focuses its advocacy for nutrition on the following objectives: joint capacity building, learning, research, coordination of civil society organisations in nutrition-sensitive interventions, maximising impact on nutrition and policy, advocacy for increased government support and funding to implement nutrition policy, reaching more women and children, improved collaboration, and supporting the government's systematic monitoring of nutrition commitment implementation.

At the 2021 Nutrition For Growth (N4G) Summit, the Viet Nam SUN CSA made a commitment alongside the government to develop and operate a system to monitor and track progress towards reduction of stunting for children from ethnic minority communities.

OVERCOMING BARRIERS

The WVV team achieved these successes despite facing many challenges. For example, the government strategy to reach mountainous areas of Viet Nam, where the most vulnerable people live, lacked effective technical models. In addition, the government has not allocated adequate resources to implement its plans – for example, they have not yet unlocked the budget to implement ENA at the grassroots level.

Additionally, budget advocacy takes a very long time. WVV began advocating more funding for nutrition activities under the previous national nutrition strategy (2011–2020), and continued doing so with the SUN CSA over the last five years. After Dr. Vu joined the national board, WVV had increased leverage to advocate directly and with partners to the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the National Assembly.

LESSONS LEARNED

All of World Vision's offices can learn from WV Viet Nam's efforts and successes to improve ENA implementation through advocacy.

Some of the key lessons learned over 15+ years include:

1. Working in coalition and alignment with partners like SUN CSA and UN Agencies can increase the impact and success of advocacy efforts.
2. Working closely with government bodies, such as the National Assembly, is key to support implementation monitoring and develop recommendations. The National Assembly can then make recommendations to the government on issues such as budgeting.
3. Advocating to the MoH and partnering with the national technical agency for nutrition enables success both on the technical nutrition side as well as with budgeting.
4. Regularly documenting good practices within technical models ensures that evidence is readily available to support the development of technical guidelines when opportunities arise to share with the MoH.

¹ Alive & Thrive/FHI 360; Center for Community Health Promotion (CHP); Centre for Community Health Research and Support (CCHS); Center for Education, Promotion, and Empowerment of Women (CEPEW); ChildFund International; Foundation for International Development/Relief (FIDR); Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHAi); HealthBridge Foundation Canada; Institute for Development and Community Health (LIGHT); Medical Committee Netherlands-Vietnam (MCNV); Plan International; Research and Training Center for Community Development (RTCCD); Save the Children International; Slow Food Ha Noi; World Vision International in Viet Nam

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