Medical Management Plan
Vietnam

OVERVIEW

Company Mission
Our mission is to encourage young people to volunteer for worthwhile work in developing countries. We expect that doing this kind of voluntary work will in time become the norm. As more and more people join us, we aim to create a multi-national community with a passion to serve, to learn, to understand, to teach, to inspire, and to be inspired.

Medical Programme Mission
Our Medical programme mission is to enable an exchange of medical knowledge and facilitate a greater understanding of global healthcare practices. By empowering local communities, we aim to improve standards of health through awareness, prevention and treatment.

Background Information
Vietnam is a long and narrow country in Southeast Asia, plagued by all of the similar healthcare issues faced by many developing countries. Though the recent rapid social and economic development of Vietnam has brought about a number of improvements and reforms within the system, notably in infant and maternal mortality, but the country’s diverse social, economic and geographical mix continues to pose particular challenges to its healthcare system.

Recent health sector reviews have identified a number of challenges, including an emergence of a double burden of non-communicable diseases – which are adding a financial strain on the system with the increase in treatable long-term chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes – and infectious diseases. The extreme marginalisation and distress among Vietnamese mothers whose children have disabilities, an ageing population, inadequate capacity of the healthcare system, and problems of inequity in access to healthcare further exacerbate these issues. The disparities between urban and rural communities, with regards to quality, access and affordability, are problems that need to be faced in order to improve the overall national health indicators. On the other hand, urban hospitals are often overcrowded, making it difficult to access good quality care even where the best doctors are available.

Partners
Projects Abroad Vietnam is based in Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam. We registered as a non-governmental organisation (NGO) and work with a number of state-run institutions, as well as partner NGOs.

Medical students and professional volunteers will be placed within one of Hanoi’s public hospitals or centres, which are often understaffed and severely lack resources. Inexperienced volunteers will have the opportunity to work closely with local staff where they will gain invaluable knowledge about healthcare problems as well as gain some basic treatment skills. Specialist volunteers will be placed within a relevant centre, NGO, such as Thuy An or TRCCD where we focus on physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy and psychology.
GOALS

In order to work towards our Medical programme mission, we have set the following goals to achieve in the placements where we send our volunteers:

1. **Encourage an understanding of medical practices and promote an exchange of medical knowledge (*** priority goal ***)**

Many of our medical volunteers have no or little experience within the medical field. Their project allows them to gain invaluable insight into the healthcare system and procedures within a developing country, as well as prevalent local diseases. We aim to create a platform for a true cultural exchange, with volunteers learning from local staff as well as sharing their experiences with one another. Professional medical volunteers are able to share their knowledge and experiences both with other volunteers as well as the local teams, initiating a discussion and exchange around best practices. We also aim to promote a better knowledge of best medical practices with other partner institutions such as local schools and orphanages, to encourage better hygiene and healthier lifestyle choices. Through these actions, the project is able to become a real learning experience.

2. **Improve the quality of healthcare provided to patients (*** priority goal ***)**

Vietnam is a lower-middle-income country; therefore, the public investment for the health system is limited in comparison to population size. The number of hospitals, doctors and equipment are not matched with treatment demands for the community. Funding from the government towards doctors and nurses is extremely low; therefore, even urban hospitals are overcrowded and working at overcapacity, making it difficult for even the best doctors to offer good quality care and attention. Volunteers who prove to be committed and proactive will be able to lend a hand and become an extra workforce alongside permanent staff and interns within hospitals, thus allowing all staff the time required to offer the right level of dedicated care to patients.

3. **Improve the quality of specialised or alternative healthcare to patients (*** priority goal ***)**

Due to indigenous beliefs and a lack of education, disabled children are often seen as a bad omen. Their families often hide them or leave them behind. We work alongside partner institutions to promote the development and independence of people with disabilities, with the parallel goal of changing people’s attitudes towards those with disabilities. Experienced volunteers provide training and workshops to medical staff and family members with the hope of improving the quality of services toward disabled people.

4. **Improve hygiene standards**

Standards of cleanliness and sanitation within different institutions (hospitals, schools, orphanages) are often quite poor. Many people also come from low income families where this is not a priority. We educate, raise awareness and run activities to promote proper hygiene with the aim of improving the overall health of the population.

5. **Improve access to basic healthcare for disadvantaged groups**

In Vietnam, three quarters of its land is used for farming, and about 80% of the Vietnamese population lives in these rural areas. Two thirds of the workforces work in agriculture. Conditions in rural areas are tough and it is hard for people to access healthcare facilities. Indeed, doctors are hard to come by in more rural areas\(^6\). Through our community outreach programme, we aim to provide basic healthcare to some of these vulnerable groups as well as raise awareness about some of the more pressing health issues facing the country.
Projects Abroad provides a range of resources for each of our programmes. These fall into four interdependent categories:

**Human**: Volunteers themselves are our most crucial asset in achieving our goals. Through their creativity and energy, all of our ambitions can be realised. Another central support team is our extensive network of Projects Abroad staff worldwide, dedicated to supporting volunteers and achieving our company mission. We also depend greatly on the staff in all of our placements; whose support guides volunteers through their daily activities.

**Physical**: Projects Abroad has offices in all of our destinations, where volunteers can come to speak to staff or attend workshops. There are also office materials and placement supplies available to volunteers.

**Online**: The Volunteers Resources Database and myprojectsabroad webpages all provide vital support before, during and after their placements.

**Financial**: Funds for all of Projects Abroad’s work come solely from volunteer placement fees. These are distributed via monthly budgets, to ensure fair allocation of funds for each destination. Occasionally volunteers may also send donations directly for a specific placement or project.

**Intangible**: The good reputation of volunteers in local communities is what makes our work possible. This reputation has been earned over years of dedicated volunteer contribution. This is supported by the combined knowledge of our extensive staff network. With over 700 staff across every continent, we are proud to be a diverse and accomplished team.

### Resources Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human Resources</strong></td>
<td>Average 30-60 Medical volunteers per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Projects Abroad global staff teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Placement staff support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical Resources</strong></td>
<td>Projects Abroad offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Placement materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Online Resources</strong></td>
<td>Volunteer Resources Database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Myprojectsabroad webpages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financial Resources</strong></td>
<td>Monthly budgets for overall operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Donations to specific projects or placements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intangible Resources</strong></td>
<td>Reputation in destination communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Goodwill; genuine desire to help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expertise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


MONITORING & EVALUATION

| Placement visits | Volunteer workshop sessions | Staff meetings | Volunteer Resources Database | Feedback evaluation |

**Physical monitoring:** Through placement visits and volunteer workshops, volunteers are in frequent contact with staff members, who will observe and advise volunteers in action. Staff participate in regular meetings to discuss best practices within and between destinations.

**Online monitoring:** The Volunteer Resource Database is a platform for staff and volunteers to share and develop ideas.

**Feedback evaluation:** Feedback from placement staff, Projects Abroad staff and volunteers is continuously gathered and used to inform future plans.

LOCATION OF PLACEMENTS

Projects Abroad Vietnam is currently based in Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam. Our medical placements are located in different areas of Hanoi.

---