A PROJECT OF HEALTH PROMOTION AT WORKPLACES IN VIETNAM: DEVELOPMENT AND EXPANSION

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I. Background

- In the process of industrialization and modernization, workforce of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) plays an increasingly important role.

- The number of these enterprises has been increasing and makes up 80-90% of the total of registered enterprises with diverse industries.

- Developing SMEs doesn't only contribute to the growth rate of annual GDP, but also attracts a big amount of workforce and takes part in the process of workforce redistribution and work distribution in the society.
• However, Vietnam is in the initial stage of market economy development, the economic burst also means the non-controlled development which causes work environment-related problems.

• A survey results in 135 small and medium-sized enterprises in Vietnam: the risk of exposures to work hazards is high, for example: Dust-96%, noise-29%, and adverse microclimate - 81%.

• The disease prevalence in SMEs is different, the popular diseases are ore-rhinolarynlogic, gynaecologic diseases, headache, bronchitis, etc.
The SMEs managers' awareness of occupational health and safety is modest because they have not accessed to the issued law documents. They are therefore not aware of their responsibility.

Another case is that they are too busy with looking for market of their products as well as with their business activities.
In 1997, the MOH summed up Ministrial level project of occupational health development in districts with the theme: "More productivity, better workplace" in small and medium sized enterprises.

The report of the project was stated in the conference:"Health Promotion in small and medium sized enterprises" held in Shanghai in September 1997.

Experts of WHO proposed to support Vietnam for pilot implementation of this programme since 1998.
2.1. National occupational health network

- Vietnam Administration of Preventive Medicine. MoH
  - National Institute of Occupational and Environmental Health.
  - Nha trang Pasteur Institute.
  - Ho Chi Minh City Hygiene and Public Health Institute.
  - Tay Nguyen Epidemiology Inst.

- Ministries/Branches Personnel-Policy Dept.

- Provincial Health Bureau
  64 provinces

- 64 Occupational Health Division–Preventive Medicine Centers

- 675 District Preventive Medicine Centers

- 10275 COMMUNE HEALTH CENTER

- Communication…. Health Center

- Cooperatives. small and medium enterprise

- Factory. enterprise
II. Introduction of health promotion at workplaces in Vietnam

1) 1996-1997 period

- The MOH pilot implemented an occupational health model in SMEs with the theme: "More productivity, better workplace" which applied wise and enforcement of OHS legislation in 5 provinces and expanding to 9 others in 1997.

- Its result was reported in the conference "Health promotion in small and medium-sized enterprises" held in Shanghai, in 9/1997.
Achievements:

- Enthusiasm participation of enterprises
- Initially implementing the improvement of working conditions.
- Occupational health and safety laws implemented by enterprises
- Good implementation of health personnels at district level in these activities.
- Warm response of Ministries, Sectors and Technique Organs
2) 1998-1999 period

- Starting from 1999, with the help of WHO, MOH developed the project "Health promotion at workplaces in SMEs" following the guidelines of WHO combining with wise and enforcement of OHS legislation.

- Published by WHO as a case study document "evaluation a 1-year implementation of the regional guidelines for healthy workplaces in SMEs in Ngo Quyen district, Haiphong city and in Hue city - Healthy settings - Case study Documents Series, No1".
Achievements:

- Identifying the developing process of a health promotion at workplace program in SMEs in a district that is suitable with Vietnamese conditions.

- Publishing and distributing materials about hazardous factors at workplaces and prevention to enterprise managers and employees

- Building health services for labourers in SMEs at the district level.
3) 2000-2001 period

*In Haiphong and Hue city:*

- Expanding the project to 15 new enterprises in each city, Haiphong and Hue.

- Maintaining the activities of health promotion in 30 enterprises having implemented the project since 1998.

- Holding the competition for these enterprises.

- Integrating health promotion at workplace program into routine occupational health activities.
## Training courses conducted in Hue city in 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizers</th>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>No of courses</th>
<th>No of enterprises</th>
<th>No of trainees</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Center of Preventive Medicine of Hue city</td>
<td>Professional foster and plan implementation</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>9 districts, cities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Training on occupational health, prevention of occupational diseases for local health workers</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>30 districts, cities</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Health promotion at workplaces</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>30 districts, cities</td>
<td>195</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Legislation enforcement in the Safety Week</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>50 enterprises</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td></td>
<td>First aid and prevention of occupational diseases for enterprises</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>54 enterprises</td>
<td>62</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Training for enterprises and companies on chemicals with strict requirements of occupational health and sterilization and insecticides permissibly used in households and the health sector</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>42 enterprises</td>
<td>62</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Competition of first aid</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>50 enterprises</td>
<td>160</td>
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<td>District Health Centers</td>
<td>Occupational health - First aid and prevention of occupational diseases</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>125 enterprises</td>
<td>216</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Guidelines for use, preservation of pesticides and prevention of pesticide poisonings for commune health workers</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>8 districts, cities</td>
<td>165</td>
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<td>DoPM-MOH, NIOEH, PPCMC</td>
<td>Health promotion at workplaces in small and medium enterprises</td>
<td>01</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Health promotion at workplaces in small and medium enterprises</td>
<td>01</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>42</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1166</strong></td>
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Training Material
IEC’s Material
The jury of HPW Competition in Hue City
Pre-test and post-test were conducted in the above courses. In the end of the courses, all of trainees received the certificate of participation. Therefore, all of trainees seriously followed the courses and post-test results were very good.

**Inspection in Hue city**

To prepare for the annual Safety Week, Center of Preventive Medicine of Hue city actively plans intersectoral inspection and then hold a meeting, in which all members of the inspection group are invited, to inform the inspection contents and select enterprises for inspection.
The inspection is also done in enterprises having not conducted periodic health check for workers and annual measurement of environment factors and being slow in report.

Contents of OH legislation and of the health promotion at workplace project are integrated into the inspection.

In the end of the inspection, all enterprises are obligated to propose the schedule time to complete unimplemented activities.

The inspection group also gives measures of penalization for administrative violations of the stipulation on OHS legislation.
- Occupational health is now actively implemented in enterprises. Most of enterprises asked the Center of PM for health examination and measurement of environment factors in the beginning of the year.

- Center of PM annually conducts training courses on OH for district PM Groups. Then, district PM Groups actively work with enterprises. There are now 110 enterprises having healthy corners with booklets and leaflets about improvements of working conditions, workers' health protection, and first aid. Etc.
In Hue city, there is not only a health station, but also a network of concurrently health personnel in each production group in large firms and in small enterprises, there are at least 2 concurrently health personnel, who are trained annually.
Health corner at canteen of My Huong enterprise in Hai phong
In other provinces:

- Conducting pilot training courses about workplace health promotion for district health workers, enterprise managers and workers of 4 localities.

- Then providing training courses for health personnel of 30 provinces/cities and Ministries, Sectors.

- Publishing propaganda and training documents about workplace health promotion and providing them for all localities, related-Institutes and Ministries, Sectors in the country.
Evaluation meeting 2000-2001 on HPW

Teacher group discussion
With C. Chu in Hue city

4) From 2002:

- To continue expanding the workplace health promotion programme in SMEs over the country.

- To set up Video tape about the project of health promotion at workplaces in SMEs which was pilot implemented in Haiphong city and Hue city: its steps and achievements.
Training course in Ho Chi Minh city on HPW, Sep 2001
To set up CD disk including the contents of training documents about workplace health promotion for district health workers, enterprise managers and workers.

To publish training documents for trainers about workplace health promotion and conduct pilot training courses: one class in the north and the other in the south.

To establish health promotion model for labourers in large firms, joint-ventures foreign capital enterprises, village enterprises and for agricultural workers.
Since 2000, MOH has started activities of health promotion for agricultural workers

- To investigate working conditions and health of the female employees in agriculture in 8 agricultural typical provinces.
- To set up a health care model for female employees in agriculture.
- To publish training and propaganda documents about health care and promotion in agriculture for health, intersectoral personnel, and farmers.
Initiative activities
HPW in agriculture
Training course for farmers
• To carry out some researches about the health situation of the female employees in agriculture, risks caused by agriculture production.

• To continue developing the health care model for female employees.

Recently, the MOH has pilot implemented health promotion models for large firms, join-ventures, foreign capital enterprises and village enterprises:

• Carry out investigating working conditions and the health of employees.

• Start implementing the model of workplace health promotion in Vietnamese railway sector.
- Set up national guidelines of workplace health promotion for all vary types of businesses.

- In corporation with the MOLISA to hold a workshop on workplace health promotion for SMEs.

- After 2 years of being issued, the Circular that guides health care for workers in SMEs has been implemented in nearly **70% of localities at district level** (in 573 districts in all) and in **approximately 2000 SMEs**.
<table>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Number of the provinces disseminated the Circular</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Number of the districts disseminated the Circular</td>
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<td>268</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Number of the workplaces trained on the Circular implementation</td>
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<td>2533</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Number of the workplaces implemented</td>
<td>928</td>
<td>1042</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Integrated activities:

a) *All the activities/steps require multisectoral and multidisciplinary cooperation:*

- The Central Steering Committee includes: representatives from the MOH, the MOLISA, The NIOEH, Hanoi Medical School, etc.

+ The roles of the Central Steering Committee:
  
  - To draft strategies, objectives, policies, and plan of action for the project
  
  - To guide and publicize all the steps in the project
• Hold seminars and meetings to introduce the meaning and the roles of healthy workplace promotion as well as the results of the project.

• Supervise and investigate the need of health promotion.

• Develop propaganda and training documents and references for district health personnel, enterprises' managers and workers.

• Train for trainers about HWP.

• Supervise and evaluate project activities through monthly, 6 month reports, healthy workplace evaluation checklist, field visits.
Provincial and local Steering Committee (ST)

The roles of the provincial and local Steering Committee:

- To establish provincial and local plan of action.
- To conduct investigation on the demand of health promotion.
- Monthly visit enterprises to collect data and information following the monthly and 6-month reports;
- urge the progress of the project; take documentary photographs of technical improvement;

- discuss with the enterprise leaders about the development as well as the difficulties that they need to get over;

- guide enterprises in establishing the healthy corner.

- Report to the Central Steering Committee the results of the project activities, difficulties and suggestions

- Take part in evaluating the project activities,
b) **Beside the HPW Project in SMEs headed by the MOH**, there are some similar activities initiated and implemented by VCCI named Vietnam Footwear Industry - Business Links Initiative. In the programme, the MOH is a member of the Steering Board. The Programme has been achieving positive results as follows:

- To create a Management Support System including books, CD with the aim to assist managers in reviewing current working conditions, practices and procedures in their workplaces and in developing action plans for improvement of working condition for the employees.
- To train on OHS management and chemical safety management.

- To conduct a research on the current monitoring and inspection work of OHS in footwear businesses.

- To implement a pilot project in 5 selected trial shoes and footwear factories.

However, the activities of the project are still fragmental, the outcome of the activities has not frequently been evaluated, the results of the project are not persuasive.
6. Support provided by the Government includes support on human resource, equipment, issuing related legislation.

- Intersectoral participation at local and central level. Especially, local authorities take part in and organize HPW competitions, training courses and enterprise inspection.

- Only in 2001, Center of PM of provinces/cities bought 52 equipment for measuring environmental factors.
7. Resources, maintenance and development:

- Human resources: from Center of PM, DHC, the Central and local agencies. To enforce the human resource for the project and the ability to complete the project it's necessary to strengthen the partnership with other sectors at all levels.

- Financial resource: basically depends on local budgets, makes the best use of support from other agencies and sectors as well as from project implementing enterprises and the international organizations.

- At enterprises: budget for HPW activities is put into the labour protection plan.
8. The successes of the project

- Lift up the position and roles of enterprise managers in the market, this is also an indirect way to attract more contracts for the enterprises.

- Have an overall review about relevant matters at enterprises in order to reach the such goals of health promotion as: revenue, production capacity, employer's points of view, employees' opinions, working conditions and health, etc.

- Integrate and combine many different sectors, agencies, and organs: in each working groups the health agencies play the key role to give useful consultation to the local governments.
Systematically manage: the strict control comes from all levels from national to provincial and local, and feedback from level workplaces are reported to relevant agencies.

Interventions are mapped out masterly for different subjects with many different strategies of prevention on labour organization, individual habit and practice changes, environment change, upgrading and reinforcing employees' knowledge, etc.
9. The failures and reasons:

- Slowly improving working conditions especially when the matter relates to such factors as toxic gases, dust, noise, and waste water. The reason is from limited budget spent on the matter.

- Occupational diseases are possibly diagnosed but there has not been any official document regulating policies for employees suffering from those diseases.

- As workers are usually changed, training and information updating need to be strengthened.
10. Lessons learned from the implementation of the project:

- To use WHO and ILO modern approaches of health promotion and working condition improvement.

- It's necessary to do a pilot programme before implementing and developing a strategy.

- During the implementation it's essential to mobilize leading experts on the field and on management in order to combine technique with management.

- There should be consultancy given by either foreign or domestic experts who visit enterprises and suggest solutions to obstacles in each stage.
Evaluation process must be taken with seminars. The seminars should be attended by various participants. In the seminars, localities implementing the pilot programme should report their experiences and the chairman board should introduce the program and steps of building relevant legislation.

Development of documents (training and propagandating documents) need being carefully prepared at all levels from national, provincial, local to workplace.

To do the activities, it's essential to build legislation.