

Vietnam Project report - August 2022

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### **Executive Summary:**

This project was created in alignment with one of HERhealthEQ's main pillars of service, Cervical Cancer. The objective was to deliver equipment that would assist in the reduction of mortality rate in Vietnam as seen in women who test positive for abnormal cervical cells. The devices

### **Introduction:**

Established in 2016, HERhealthEQ was born out of a need to reduce the equity gap in access to healthcare for women around the world. What began as a singular donation of a mammography machine to a Costa Rican hospital, has now grown into an international web of healthcare solutions. The HERhealthEQ team is driven by a desire to see fewer women face the choice between their own healthcare and putting food on the tables of their families.

Our Mission is to improve women's health in developing countries by providing access to medical devices & equipment, creating an equitable standard of care.

HERhealthEQ partnered with Wisap and CureCervicalCancer (CCC) to deliver 3 thermal ablation devices to the Hue province of rural Vietnam in August 2019. The thermal ablation devices assist in the prevention and treatment of early stage cervical cancer. The devices were donated to 3 different clinics: the ICRC Karin Higa Clinic, the VAM Fishman Family Clinic, and the Nam Dang Cervical Cancer Prevention Clinic. During the first week of the devices' use, each of the clinics was staffed with 3 or 4 trainees and an expert facilitator who worked efficiently to screen more than 200 women daily.

### **Key Milestones:**

- In total, the trainees screened 877 women during the first week, using visual inspection with acetic acid.
- These women include Hue locals, teachers, and police officers.
- On the third day of training, a CCC record was broken when the trainees screened 321 women in one day

### **Project activities:**

The socioeconomic status of women in Vietnam has witnessed significant improvements, owing to the country's economic growth and progressive policies. Nevertheless, disparities persist, and these disparities often manifest differently in various regions. In the Hue region of Vietnam, situated in the central part of the country, women confront similar challenges as their counterparts nationwide. While progress has been made in areas like education and employment opportunities for women, traditional gender roles and cultural norms still exert influence, particularly in rural areas. Additionally, healthcare access can be a significant concern in the Hue region, with women sometimes facing barriers to accessing quality healthcare services. HERhealthEQ's intent for this project was to improve healthcare access, aiming to narrow the gender gap and promote comprehensive gender equity.

The positivity rate was relatively lower in Hue compared to rates from CCC projects in northern Vietnam. This is likely due to the fact that many women who arrived for the CCC screening were previously screened in the past. In order to screen women in remote mountainous regions we have partnered with the Nam Dong District Hospital located in the countryside of Hue. By providing training to expert ObGyns and midwives from this rural district hospital, many women from this mountainous region will be able to access cervical cancer screening for the first time.

HERhealthEQ worked with CureCervicalCancer (CCC) Executive Director, Rebecca Lepsik, to identify the most in need region for deployment. Initial feedback had a low positivity rate (which, although promising, is not reflective of the incidence of Cervical Cancer detected in the region). Due to influences from the Covid-19 pandemic, the devices did not reach complete implementation in the new region until late in December 2021. This heavily impacted the utilization rates and eventually became redundant again at this location. HERhealthEQ understands that CCC has since moved the devices for increased impact, however metrics reporting is no longer required and has not yet been shared.

### **Results and Impact:**

- 3 Wisap thermal ablation devices deployed
- The female population of the Hue region in Vietnam is 182,544
- The CCC project has 13 locations within Vietnam, with 2000+ women seen annually
- More than 2,366 women have been screened, with 137 treatments using the Wisap devices

**Financial Summary:**

Equipment value:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost (USD)</b>
(3) Wisap Thermal Ablation device	\$7,910
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,910</b>

**Conclusion:**

Looking ahead, it is essential to ensure that receiving regions match reported incidence rates of the target NCD project. It is imperative that the project can be sustained by local teams with the assistance of strategic partners. Additional strategies to ensure the continuation of benefits to beneficiaries include; involving local media for information dissemination, running marketing campaigns to create program awareness and executing site visits to maintain interpersonal relationships with field healthcare teams. The pandemic played a large role in affecting the success of this project, eclipsed by the need for more immediate treatment for the virus and its prominence at the forefront of media coverage / educational materials.

Overall, HERhealthEQ identifies this project as below satisfactory in result. Impact metrics are not reflective of strong usage and effectiveness. From this deployment HERhealthEQ has outlined the below areas of improvement:

1. Ensure training is completed within first month of delivery
2. Monitor early results to ensure utilization rates are matching forecast numbers
3. Create more detailed local campaign marketing to educate receiving community about availability of devices
4. Establish strong interpersonal relationships with receiving healthcare providers as well as local strategic field partners for ease of data collection and field commentary
5. Schedule quarterly check-ins with all partners for feedback and learning

The effectiveness of this project is not reflective of a lack of need for screening and treatment of Cervical Cancer in Vietnam. HERhealthEQ continues to be committed to having impact here and intends to revisit this project as part of our future pipeline for improvement. We are grateful to the corporations and individuals who graciously donated to our project, as well as the HERhealthEQ, Wisap and CureCervicalCancer team members who made this project possible.