

JICA and World Bank Jointly Support Vietnam to Meet Needs of Aging Population

Vietnam's population is ageing at a pace faster than any of its regional peers.

HANOI, August 7, 2019 – The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the World Bank today jointly launched a knowledge-sharing program to assist policymakers in Vietnam with developing new models of elderly care services as Vietnam's population is ageing at a pace faster than any of its regional peers.

The first activity under this new program was a learning seminar in Hanoi where 40 government officials from various line ministries, including Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance and Vietnam National Committee on Aging participated to gain a better understanding of the nature of the issues and challenges of eldercare the country is facing.

Based on current demographic trends, Vietnam's elderly population will double from 7% to 14% of the total population – the threshold for a country's population to be considered aged – in about 17 years. In comparison, it took Singapore and Thailand 22 and 20 years, respectively, to reach this threshold. Vietnam is projected to become an aged society around 2035.

*"Rapid population ageing in Vietnam will have significant economic, social and fiscal implications," said **Ousmane Dione, the World Bank Country Director for Vietnam.** "Vietnam needs to start preparing for an ageing society now by developing a comprehensive and financially sustainable health and social care service system that can provide the elderly with the care they need."*

Like many other countries, family members, particularly women, have been the de facto care-givers for older adults in Vietnam. However, as the family structure evolves and the needs of elders become increasingly complex, there is an imperative for interventions to go beyond the household level to be effective.

To facilitate a transition to a new eldercare model, Vietnam needs to address major structural bottlenecks including limited access to essential medical and social care services as well as weak collaboration across relevant sectors (health, social, and finance, among others). But the country stands to benefit from the experiences of other peers. At the seminar, experts from Japan and Thailand shared their experiences and lessons learnt in designing policies and institutional arrangements with proper attention to the associated fiscal impacts.

*"Over the past decade, JICA has been supporting Thailand to develop Community-based Integrated Care Model while adopting to the local context. We believe that by utilizing experiences and lessons learned from Thailand and Japan, Vietnam can learn how to develop and implement an effective care model for elderly people," said **Tetsuo Konaka, JICA Vietnam Office's Chief Representative.***

The joint program will be implemented in three phases from August 2019 to March/April 2020. Following today's seminar, there will be a study tour to Thailand to enhance the learning for participants and promote South-South learning. The last phase will focus on internalizing key learnings from the study tour, synthesize these learnings into policy recommendations and develop a service model.

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