

ANOTHER PEARL S. BUCK INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS STORY

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Health Worker Learns How to Effectively Support Children with Disability

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In Vietnam, one of the most successful programs implemented by Pearl S. Buck International is the Community-based Integration of Disabled Children, funded by USAID. In addition to raising awareness of the needs and issues of disabled children in the central highlands, the project provides: rehabilitation services, healthcare and educational support for disabled children, training programs for teachers and nurses, rehabilitation equipment and devices for the children, as well as ways to help community integration of the disabled.

An example of a success story through this program involves Y Nhon – an ethnic minority woman who participated in Pearl S. Buck International’s training courses on community-based rehabilitation. As a hamlet health worker in Dak Ruong commune, Kon Ray district, Y Nhon has provided support to children with disability since the program was implemented in 2004. During the training courses, Y Nhon was taught how to identify disabilities in children, as well as ways to help rehabilitate the children and teach their families how to best support them.

When Y Nhon met Y Thuy – a two-year old girl who lives with her mother in the same hamlet – she noticed that there was something abnormal with the little girl’s foot. Although Y Thuy was not included in the list of disabled children Y Nhon was managing through the project, she realized that the abnormality in Y Thuy’s foot needed immediate attention. Y Nhon remembered what she had learned from the physiotherapist during the instruction course and turned to the training manual she was provided to develop a support plan for Y Thuy. Because Y Thuy was very shy, Y Nhon began by showing the little girl’s mother how to exercise the deformed foot. When Y Thuy became more comfortable with Y Nhon, she performed the rehabilitation exercises herself.

Y Nhon also realized that to help reduce the deformity, Y Thuy needed a supportive device for her foot. Because there was no where in Kon Tum to get the plastic ankle-foot

orthosis described in the training manual, Y Nhon instead designed an orthosis made of bamboo.

When the physiotherapist specialist visited the hamlet to conduct additional hands-on training for the health workers, she was very impressed by the amount of progress Y Thuy had made as a newly diagnosed child with disability. The physiotherapist acknowledged that the little girl had received the proper support to improve significantly. This recognition made Y Nhon feel very happy that her efforts had made such a difference in Y Thuy’s life.

Y Thuy is now included in the Pearl S. Buck International Community-based Integration of Children with Disability program and has been sent to the Center of Orthopedic Surgery in Quy Nhon to be fitted for a plastic ankle-foot orthosis. Although Y Thuy still has a long road of physical therapy ahead, Y Nhon’s early detection and rehabilitation efforts have made a positive impact on the little girl’s outcome.

This is just one example of the many ways Pearl S. Buck International continues to respond successfully to the needs of disadvantaged and disabled children in Vietnam.



Y Thuy (right) received rehabilitation therapy from Y Nhon (left) which has given her a chance at a normal life.



Y Nhon at “A Day of Nutrition for Children”, with Y Thuy, in red, who is sitting in her mother’s lap.

For more information about this program, call (215) 249-0100 x. 165