



STEREOFIGHT

AUSTRALIA IN VIETNAM

EQUALITY

STRATEGY

2022 - 2027



Australian Embassy  
Vietnam



Australian Consulate-General  
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam





*Ethnic minority women and men in Moc Chau, Son La have been supported by Australia's GREAT program to improve incomes through agriculture and gender equality within their households and communities.*

**Credit: GREAT Program**

*Cover photo:*

*Youth participants at #ThanhNienChuan campaign closing event. In June 2022, the #ThanhNienChuan campaign hosted an online competition that engaged over 112,000 people on Facebook and generated 80 articles on mainstream media, increasing participants' knowledge of gender equality.*

**Credit: Plan International Vietnam & Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union**



# 01

## Context

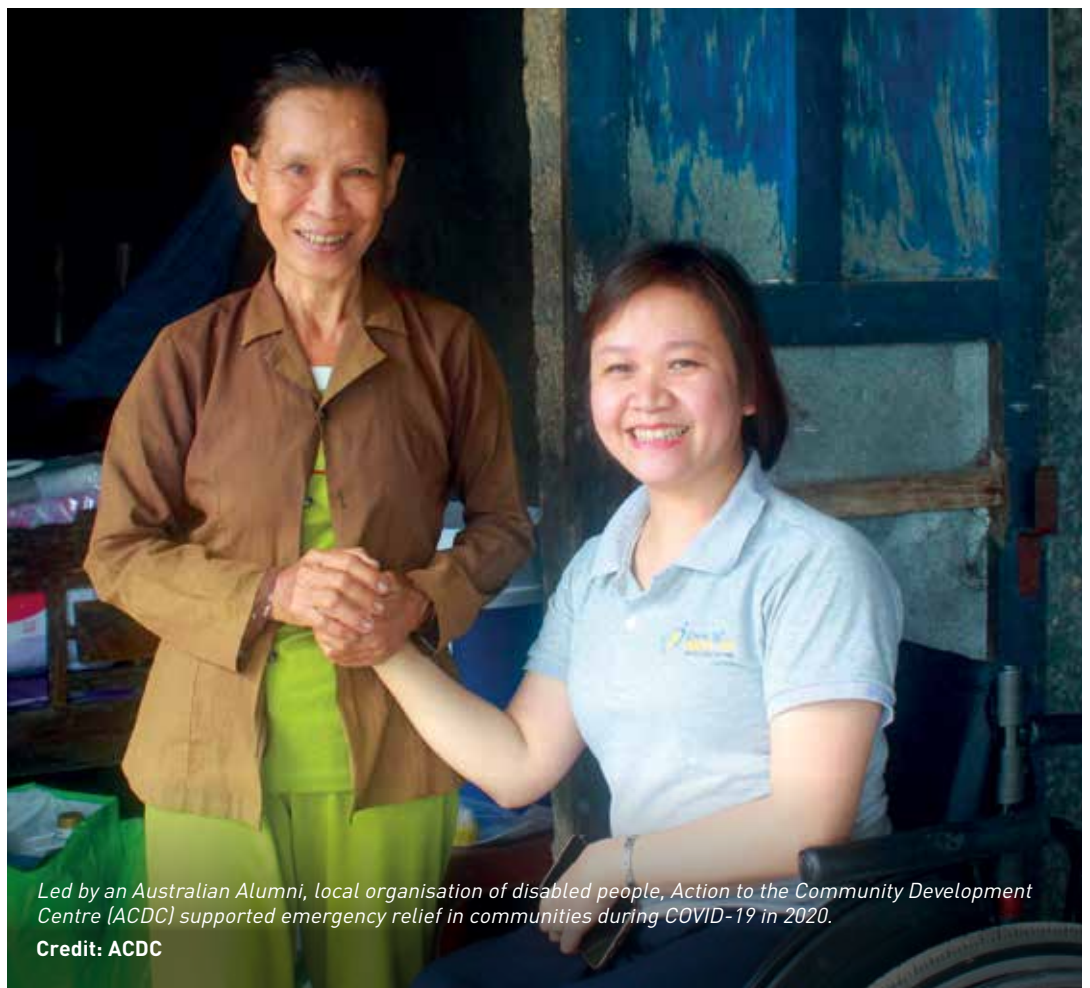
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**Vietnam has recovered rapidly from COVID-19, with growth rates returning to pre-pandemic levels. As the country sets itself towards its ambitious objective of high-income status by 2045, it will need to find new sources of growth and resilience, while also ensuring sustainability.**

Critical to this will be greater levels of social and economic inclusion. Ensuring that all segments of society can participate in the economy and reach their full potential will be essential to Vietnam's next stage of development.

The Australian Government has a commitment to gender equality and disability inclusion, LGBTI<sup>1</sup> advocacy, and to a First Nations Foreign Policy. Long term bilateral commitments are already in place in areas including human rights, women's leadership, safety and economic empowerment, including for ethnic minorities, and the promotion of disability inclusion.

This Equality Strategy builds upon this momentum.



*Led by an Australian Alumni, local organisation of disabled people, Action to the Community Development Centre (ACDC) supported emergency relief in communities during COVID-19 in 2020.*

**Credit: ACDC**

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1. Formally, especially in human rights discourse and law, the abbreviation SOGIESC is used to describe people with diverse 'sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics'. This strategy adopts the terminology 'LGBTI' (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and/ or Intersex communities of people) used in DFAT's LGBTI Workplace Strategy 2018-2021. This also aligns with Vietnam's own reference to 'LGBT people' in Vietnam's National Strategy on Gender Equality 2021-2030. This strategy uses LGBTI 'people' rather than 'persons' to be consistent with references to people with disabilities and ethnic minority people. It also reflects the preferred terminology of the Vietnamese government and civil society organisations.

# 02

## Lessons learned

**Australia has long prioritised gender equality and women 's and girls ' empowerment across its foreign policy, trade and economic, development and defence and security collaboration.**

We have found ways to promote gender equality in the diverse sectors of science and innovation, economic and workplace reform, public administration, skills, law enforcement, agriculture, defence, and immigration. This has provided deep engagement for Australia with a range of government, multilateral, business, and civil society partners in Vietnam working towards these same goals.

This experience has underlined several lessons: the importance of a long-term commitment; investing in evidence for dialogue and policy; partnering with champions that are leading change; and pursuing equality through our own workplace policies. It has also highlighted the intersectional nature of disadvantage, and the need to appreciate gender diversity.

We have learned much from this endeavour and now lend our voice, capabilities and resources to a broader remit, including and beyond gender equality.



*Ms Tan Ta May, Director of Red Dao Community Cooperative in Lao Cai learned new digital skills to manage her traditional medicinal herbs business with support from Australia 's GREAT program.*

**Credit: GREAT Program**

# 03

## What Australia will do

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**The goal of the Australia in Vietnam Equality Strategy 2022-27 is to deepen our efforts on gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment while substantially increasing attention to the socio-economic priorities and inclusion of people with disabilities, ethnic minority groups, and to LGBTI people.**

The Strategy is framed around the value of `equality´ to support the rights of all people to make the most of their lives - with dignity, safety and respect.

The Strategy commits Australia in Vietnam to the following approaches:

- Ensure women, people with disabilities, ethnic minority groups, and LGBTI people participate in, influence and benefit from Australia's programs and initiatives
- Consistently highlight equality-related issues in dialogue, events and communications
- Prioritise partnership with organisations and individuals that advocate for equality
- Reflect commitment to equality in the public face of Embassy representation and internal workplace policies.

The Strategy is a joint statement between the Australian Embassy in Hanoi and the Consulate-General in Ho Chi Minh City, and represents a whole-of-government commitment endorsed by all Australian agencies represented in Vietnam.

Collectively, this covers agencies with a range of mandates and counterpart relationships, with differing opportunities for engaging directly on equality. However, all agencies have their own workplace policies on equality, inclusion and diversity and so commitment to this Strategy is shared.





# 04

## Supporting Vietnam's objectives

**Vietnam's legislative agenda to deliver its own socio-economic objectives has been formative in the development of this Strategy, and guides where Australia can best direct its actions.**

### **Gender equality, women's and girls' empowerment**

The *National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2030*<sup>2</sup> identifies objectives and targets across six domains to close gender gaps. It seeks to create conditions and opportunities for women and men to equally participate, socially and economically. The six domains include political leadership, economy and labour, family life and gender-based violence prevention and response, health care, education and training, and information and communication. Vietnam is also revising two foundational laws for gender equality – the *Gender Equality Law 2006* and the *Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control 2007*.<sup>3</sup>

### **People with disabilities**

Vietnam is revising its *Law on Disability 2010* to align it with the *Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) 2008* which Vietnam ratified in 2015. Vietnam has prepared its Initial Report to the CRPD Committee<sup>4</sup> covering rights ranging from participation and accessibility to health, education, work and employment, leisure and sport, and humanitarian emergencies. *The National Action Programme to Support Persons with Disabilities 2021-30* provides a roadmap for Vietnam's priorities, including a focus on vocational education, employment, accessible transportation and independent living. The General Statistics Office is planning a second national survey on people with disabilities in 2023.

### **Ethnic minority people**

The *National Target Program on the Socio-Economic Development of Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas (NTP-SEDEMA) 2021-2030*<sup>5</sup> is one of Vietnam's three national development programs. NTP-SEDEMA includes ten projects focusing on land and housing, agriculture and forestry production, essential infrastructure, training and human

resource development, preserving culture in tourism, public health, and gender equality.

### **LGBTI people and their representative organisations**

*Vietnam's National Strategy on Gender Equality 2021-2030* includes the first reference made in law to 'LGBT' persons. In mid-2022, the Ministry of Health issued a directive aligned with the World Health Organisation instructing the health sector that diversity in gender identity and sexual orientation is not an illness, and forced treatment and discrimination is not accepted. Vietnam has removed directly discriminatory provisions from laws. However, there is no formal recognition of the rights of LGBTI people under law. Planned legal reform, such as revision of the *Gender Equality Law 2006*, and the *Marriage and Family Law 2014*, and drafting of a 'gender affirmation law' offer scope for Australia to support future reform.

2. For more information, see the official version online (Vietnamese language only): Nghị quyết 28/NQ-CP Chiến lược quốc gia về bình đẳng giới giai đoạn 2021-2030 (luatvietnam.vn)
3. Australia has provided support to all three processes, through its partnership with UN Women, and through the joint UN program, Ending Violence Against Women and Children (2021-2025) with UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women.
4. [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CRPD/Shared%20Documents/VNM/CRPD\\_C\\_VNM\\_1\\_8348\\_E.pdf](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CRPD/Shared%20Documents/VNM/CRPD_C_VNM_1_8348_E.pdf)
5. For more information, see the official version online (Vietnamese language only): Quyết định số 1719/QĐ-TTg phê duyệt Chương trình mục tiêu quốc gia phát triển kinh tế - xã hội vùng đồng bào dân tộc thiểu số và miền núi (cema.gov.vn)



Young people celebrating the 2022 Hanoi Pride event

Credit: Darren Boyd

# 05

## Equality priorities

**Over the duration of this Strategy, Australia will partner with Vietnam in areas where our cooperation is specifically sought, and where Australian expertise can accelerate the achievement of Vietnam's own equality objectives.**

We will also take initiative to engage in areas where Australia has policies, experience and value propositions to share.

Through consultation and research, Australia has identified four priorities which are among the most crucial in progressing equality, irrespective of sector. Where there are choices and a need to be selective in what Australia supports in future, these priorities will be instructive. They will also frame reporting on implementation of this Strategy.



### SAFETY

Being safe and secure is fundamental to existence. Safety has interpersonal dimensions, such as freedom from violence, exploitation or harmful practices. It also has social and systemic dimensions such as resilience to climate change and disaster impacts, coverage of social security, and peace and security.

### SKILLS

Vietnam's future global competitiveness and graduation to a high-income economy by 2045 depends on a workforce and leadership that is highly trained and qualified, and digitally literate. It includes expanding skills for all, making full use of those skills and addressing occupational segregation and inequalities in the workplace.

The promotion of job-oriented educational pathways for those most excluded, particularly people with disabilities and ethnic minority groups, women and LGBTI people as well as equitable leadership, across the public and private sector is particularly important.

### REPRESENTATION

Diversity in decision making offers access to a broad repertoire of perspectives and solutions, ensures the better tailoring of services, and has proven benefits for innovation and profitability. This includes overcoming physical, attitudinal and institutional barriers that limit women, LGBTI people, ethnic minority people and people with disabilities' participation, representation and progression to leadership.

Non-traditional disciplines and occupations, particularly science and technology, trade and investment, urban development, infrastructure, and peace and security are particularly important.

### RECOGNITION

At its core, equality is about the recognition of universal human rights and everyone's full humanity and worth. Rights begin with recognition and valuing citizens as being equally deserving of opportunities, entitlements and protections.

# 06

## Strategy implementation

**To support implementation of the Strategy, Australia will develop and monitor an internal Action Plan whereby each agency identifies what it can do to materially contribute to the above approaches. Australia commits to these initial actions:**

### Actions

#### Leadership

An annual equality dialogue will be held with representatives from development partners to provide an opportunity to review Australia's implementation of the Equality Strategy, involving the civil society-led ethnic minority working group, organisations of persons with disabilities, and LGBTI groups.

Australia will establish a consultation group of representative organisations that can inform policy positions and peer review the designs of all of the Embassy's Official Development Assistance (ODA) investments to ensure women, people with disabilities, ethnic minority groups, and LGBTI people participate in and benefit from programs. This will be a remunerated role.

Australia will undertake public diplomacy activities on a regular basis, on traditional and social media, to profile gender equality, disability inclusion, LGBTI, ethnic minority and human rights issues. It will also mark international days with content on Australia's engagement on the relevant theme. (See table 1 below)

The Embassy and Consulate General will host an annual Equality Month, spanning from Vietnam Women's Day on 20 October until the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on 25 November.

Official speeches and prepared media interviews will include at least one equality message, where possible, while official dialogues that Australia convenes will include discussion of equality issues.

#### Partnership

The Embassy will maintain participation at Ambassador-level in the Ambassadors and Heads of International Agencies Gender Policy Coordination Group, the Informal Development Partners Group on Human Rights, and be an active co-chair / member of the Ethnic Minority Working Group.

Australia will monitor Vietnam's reporting to the UN human rights committees, including to the Committees on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, and on the Rights of the Child. We will identify areas where Australia can support partners in Vietnam to respond to recommendations of the Concluding Observations.

#### Resourcing

Australia will strengthen and report on investment performance on gender equality, disability inclusion, LGBTI, or ethnic minority issues and support localisation where possible. All new investment designs over \$3 million will have a gender objective/s.

The Embassy will host 6-monthly investment performance clinics that will include a focus on equality. Access to advisory support on mainstreaming and strengthening equality programs will be available within the Embassy.

Australia will maintain resourcing for gender equality and disability inclusion on staff and in-projects, and source external support for dedicated training, research and designs.

Training for staff and partners on Equality Strategy commitments and how to promote them across activities will be conducted within six months of the Strategy launch, and every two years thereafter. Resources and contacts will also be provided for staff to take action.

#### Accountability

Within six months of the Strategy's launch, an internal, whole-of-government Action Plan will be produced to accompany the Strategy with targets for each Australian Government agency. This will include standards relating to hiring and promotion practices, workplace policies and culture.

A short report on delivering against the Equality Strategy will be prepared for Embassy Executive annually.

The share of investments with gender equality as a principal objective, will remain equivalent to 20 per cent or more of Australia's total ODA to Vietnam.



## Responsible

Ambassador

Section Heads

Strategic Communications Team /  
Section Heads

Section Heads

Section Heads

Ambassador / Section Heads

Political and Development Counsellors

Deputy Head of Mission

Development, Economic and  
Political Counsellors

Economic and Development Counsellors

Deputy Head of Mission /  
Development Team

Deputy Head of Mission / Section Heads

Deputy Head of Mission / Section Heads

Deputy Head of Mission



*Students of Thu Duc Technical College attending training as part of Aus4Skills at Cat Lai Port, one of the busiest ports in the South of Vietnam.*

**Credit: Australian Embassy in Vietnam**

# 07

## International Days to be commemorated

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11 February	International Day of Women and Girls in Science (since 2015)
21 February	International Mother Language Day (since 1999)
8 March	International Women's Day (since 1913)
21 March	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (since 1979)
17 May	International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (since 1990)
19 June	International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict (since 2015)
3-10 July	NAIDOC Week (since 1975)
9 August	International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples (since 1994)
11 October	International Day of the Girl Child (since 2011)
15 October	International Day of Rural Women (since 2008)
20 October	Vietnam Women's Day (since 1930)
25 November	International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (since 2013)
3 December	International Day of Persons with Disabilities (since 1992)
10 December	International Human Rights Day (since 1950)



*"Love for science" Rural women are increasingly engaged in scientific work. The Malaria Parasite Testing Class is run every year to enhance knowledge and skills for malaria testing in remote areas of Tan Phu district, Dong Nai province, a high-risk area for malaria.*

**Credit: Phạm Quốc Hưng**