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# & PUBLIC HEALTH AND EPIDEMIC DISEASES

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## **The Vietnam-Australia Primary Health Care Project for Women and Children (VAPHC)**

**James Cameron Mielke**  
VAPHC, Thailand

The VAPHC was a six-year primary health care project implemented through the Government of Viet Nam (GOV) Ministry of Health (MOH) and four provincial Departments of Health (DOH); two in the south and two in the central region. Planning started in 1993 with implementation from March 1998 to September 2003. The overall budget was A\$ 22.6 million. The Project provided support to health services delivery for women and children through improved facilities and capacity for essential obstetric, gynecological and pediatric care, strengthening of systems for skills-based training, supervision, monitoring and referral and to the users of the public health system through health promotion and community development activities. VAPHC aligned with GOV health policy objectives and priorities by focusing on primary care and community health improvement, safe motherhood, reducing infant and child mortality and improving preventive measures and anticipated many of the GOV strategies to meet Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and health development strategies. The project's aims and operating modalities also matched the AusAID health development framework, for example: strengthening health system fundamentals; addressing priority health needs of women and children and supporting country-specific priorities to address high-burden health problems. Project management units within the provincial DOHs managed implementation, guided and supported by the Australian Advisory Team. An ex-post evaluation (2007) found a sustained impact from improving trends in provincial and individual health center MCH data. The generally positive impact indicators and outcomes cannot be totally attributed to VAPHC (although key informant interviews in many districts and communes referred specifically to the role of the Project in improved processes, outcomes and results). Rather, VAPHC contributed to overall health improvements in Viet Nam achieved through GOV and international partner activities. VAPHC initiatives have been incorporated into other GOV and donor interventions such as MOH projects supported by the Netherlands and the Asian Development Bank.

### **Biography**

James Cameron Mielke, over the past 35 years, he has a doctorate in Public Health, has had the distinct privilege of living and working in some of the poorest, most remote and under-served countries (23 so far) in the Asia-Pacific region, where he has assisted governments, international aid agencies and communities to strengthen local and national health systems for improved community-based primary health care, women and child health and communicable diseases control, including HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support. In recent years, a big part of his mission has been to mentor students, members of voluntary organizations and other interested groups on international travel, study and overseas volunteer and professional opportunities. He also enjoys teaching yoga and mindfulness meditation in schools, YMCA conference and family retreat centers and health and fitness centers in the USA and abroad.

jim\_mielke@hotmail.com

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