

Overcoming the walls of stigma

Misconceptions that tuberculosis is a highly contagious and dangerous disease still persist, creating one of the biggest barriers to early screening and treatment access. Mr. Duc was no exception. The avoidance by friends and the indifferent attitudes of neighbors left him feeling discouraged and ashamed. During his struggle with illness, he withdrew into his small home, isolating himself from the outside world.

After multiple attempts to persuade him, Ms. Hoai - a CSET member in Vinh City - became Mr. Duc's companion on his TB treatment journey. Beyond providing encouragement and support, she deeply understood both the concerns of the patient and the fears of those around him. She organized community education sessions to share knowledge about tuberculosis, helping neighbors and locals better understand the disease and reduce stigma toward TB patients.

The dedication of CSET members like Hoai has been a powerful source of motivation, helping Mr. Duc and other TB patients overcome self-stigma and shame. By breaking these barriers, they create a more supportive environment where everyone can access adequate healthcare.

Thanks to everyone's frequent visits
and encouragement, I have been
able to maintain a positive mindset
and focus on my treatment

Mr. Duc, project's client in Vinh city



COMMUNITY SYSTEM TO END TB

The Community System to End Tuberculosis (CSET) was established in 2021 as an initiative of The Centre for Supporting Community Development Initiatives (SCDI), with funding from the Global Fund to Fight Tuberculosis, National Lung Hospital, and StopTB Partnership.

CSET work to support TB patients, their families, and those affected by tuberculosis, working towards the goal of ending TB in Vietnam



We are CSET...

CSET consists of local community members with extensive experience in public health initiatives and infectious disease prevention. Currently, the network has over 500 members working across multiple provinces and cities.

Our mission...

CSET is dedicated to supporting communities affected by tuberculosis by enhancing access to quality TB diagnosis and treatment services, contributing to the goal of ending tuberculosis in Vietnam by 2035.

CSET's goals...

CSET's efforts focus on three reductions: TB incidence, TB-related mortality, and catastrophic costs for TB patients and their families.

TB incidence



TB-related mortality



Catastrophic costs for TB



CSET SYSTEM AND ITS ROLE IN ADVANCING UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE (UHC) IN VIETNAM'S TB RESPONSE



Universal Health Coverage (UHC) ensures that everyone can access essential healthcare services whenever and wherever they need them, without facing financial hardship

Population coverage

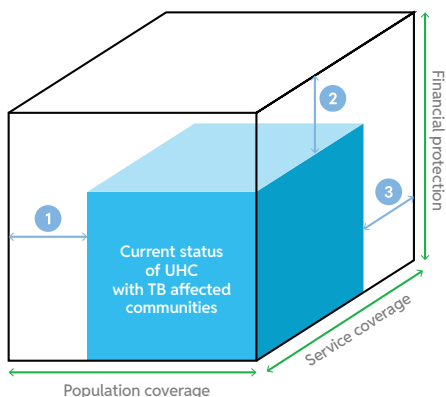
Everyone has equal access to healthcare services.

Service coverage

Ensuring the availability of essential healthcare services that meet quality, safety, and effectiveness standards.

Financial protection

Guaranteeing access to necessary healthcare services without financial hardship.



- 1 CSET bridges the gaps in population coverage by identifying and supporting the most vulnerable and marginalized communities, increasing their access to screening and treatment services.
- 2 CSET helps patients access specialized healthcare services early and supports treatment adherence to minimize both medical and non-medical costs. Additionally, it mobilizes resources and provides social assistance to reduce the financial burden on patients
- 3 CSET identifies the needs and barriers faced by TB-affected communities in accessing healthcare services and provides timely feedback to stakeholders, proposing solutions to improve access and care.

The UHC model is represented as a cube, where the volume inside corresponds to the extent of universal health coverage. The three axes represent the three dimensions of UHC. A larger cube signifies a more effective level of healthcare coverage.

Every recovered patient is a spark of hope



For people who have many years of experience in supporting community like Ms. Thuy and Mr. Phuc, or young volunteers like Vy and Quy, everytimes tuberculosis patients updated about health improval or complete treatment is an indescribable joy.

Starting with healthcare support, the CSET network continues to expand its efforts to provide comprehensive assistance, including nutrition, ID documentation, and access to available supporting resources. It also helps connect adult patients with suitable job opportunities and ensures education for children.

The most important thing is to listen to the patients' needs throughout their medical journey and treatment. Each person has different concerns, and CSET is here as a companion to provide the best possible support for every individual."

Vy, CSET in Ho Chi Minh City

"When parents complete their treatment, regain their health to work, and their children can return to school, we are truly happy. Our efforts to support them, and their commitment to treatment, are not just about recovery—it's about ensuring a better future for their children as well."

Ms. Thuy, CSET in Ho Chi Minh City



Persistent efforts for a sustainable future



Ninh, a 22-year-old woman, faced overwhelming treatment costs. She was diagnosed with multidrug-resistant tuberculosis, had no health insurance, experienced financial hardship, and had to continue treatment in Gia Lai while working in Da Nang. Although the treatment costs are covered, traveling between two cities incurs additional expenses and time. The loss of labor capacity adds even more pressure to the treatment process. TB not only wears down Ninh's health but also takes away her hope.

As soon as SCDI learned about Ninh's situation, SCDI connected her with the local CSET to promptly assist in purchasing health insurance. CSET mobilized resources from various sources to provide support for nutrition and transportation costs for her trips between Da Nang and Gia Lai for follow-up appointments and medication. The support helped Ninh maintain her health and find a job suitable for her condition as soon as her treatment allowed.

Health insurance support is one of CSET's key strategies to enhance TB patients' access to public welfare benefits. Only when they can reach sustainable healthcare programs available where they need them can patients reduce financial burdens and avoid falling into the cycle of poverty caused by illness.

"I never thought health insurance was that important before. It wasn't until I got sick that I realized having insurance gave me a chance to live and be healthy"

I can work again, support myself, and help my parents at home."

Ninh, project's client in Gia Lai



EARLY SCREENING

EARLY DETECTION FOR ALL

According to the 2023 report by the World Health Organization, Vietnam records over 172,000 new tuberculosis (TB) cases annually, with 11,000 deaths. However, 40% of these cases remain undetected.

In an effort to ensure early screening and detection for all, the CSET community system actively collaborates with local healthcare authorities to provide screening services for underserved populations. These include people living with HIV, people who use drugs, the elderly living alone, impoverished individuals, the homeless, and those in remote areas. Screenings take place at specialized TB healthcare facilities. Beyond detection, CSET provides comprehensive support to ensure that patients have the necessary resources to adhere to and complete their treatment.



The initiative has been implemented between 2021 and 2024 across 10 provinces and cities: Hanoi, Hai Phong, Thai Binh, Hai Duong, Nghe An, Dak Lak, Dak Nong, Gia Lai, Binh Phuoc, and Ba Ria-Vung Tau. In Hai Phong, CSETs are crucial for TB screening and diagnosis access for people who inject drugs.



123,194
high-risk individuals
received TB screening



1,299
TB patients were
diagnosed and
supported in receiving
treatment



15,742
close contacts of TB
patients received the
Mantoux test



2,691
individuals with latent TB
infections were identified
and supported in
receiving treatment

COMMUNITY-LED MODEL FOR TB INTENSIVE CARE & SUPPORT

According to the 2024 WHO Report, TB patients often face multidimensional challenges, especially among vulnerable and marginalized communities.



63% of drug-sensitive TB patients and 98% of drug-resistant TB patients, along with their families, experience catastrophic costs (defined as TB-related expenses exceeding 20% of a household's ability to pay).

11% of detected TB patients fail treatment due to inability to adhere and overcome barriers.



The Community-led model for TB intensive care & support is the first community-driven approach that mobilizes local networks to provide personalized assistance to each TB patient, addressing their unique challenges and ensuring effective treatment adherence.

312

TB patients with treatment adherence challenges received support

872

support sessions, with each patient receiving 4-6 support sessions

in 2024

100

TB patients received social support, including health insurance cards and/or nutritional aid

₫200M

approx. USD 4,000 in total financial support provided to TB patients

in 2024

101

group communication sessions on TB prevention and treatment.

768

turns of high-risk individuals participated in raising awareness communication sessions.

in 2024

partnership

CSET actively engages with local health authorities, including provincial TB hospitals, district health centers, and commune health stations, to address patient challenges and develop effective support strategies

in 2024

The river of hope flowing through the valley of illness

The journey of treating tuberculosis for Methadone users like Cuong comes with countless challenges. Withdrawal-like symptoms emerge when combining the two regimens, and the side effects of TB medication during the intensive phase made Cuong want to give up many times.

Having worked with substance users since 2016 and received training in tuberculosis knowledge, Hang (CSET in Hai Phong city) deeply understands the difficulties which Methadone patients face when taking TB medication. Supporting Cuong throughout his battle with tuberculosis, she consistently communicated with doctors at the Methadone facility to adjust the medication dosage appropriately, helping to alleviate the side effects between the two regimens. As the tough days gradually passed, Cuong's health improved, and his family's small tea shop at the alley entrance was once again filled with laughter and chatter. Cuong cheerfully said, "Illnesses will pass—as long as we still have hope to live."

"The community system plays a crucial role in promoting early detection and early treatment. As local individuals with shared experiences, CSET can easily connect with and understand the unique needs of each patient, providing comprehensive support tailored to each case."

When I was diagnosed with TB, I was afraid that taking TB treatment would interfere with my Methadone treatment. Two diseases, two treatment regimens—I truly didn't know if I could make it through."

Mr. Cuong.
project's client in Hai Phong city



Client's information and photo has been altered