

April 16th, 2024

As a milestone event for the first phase of the “Smiles & Health for Children” program in Vietnam, **Morinaga Milk Group donates kindergarten kitchen facility to the Department of Education and Training in Tuan Giao district, and contributes to the improvement of children's health and nutrition.**

From June 2024, support will expand to 6 kindergartens and the second phase of the program will begin.

Morinaga Milk Industry and World Vision Japan (hereinafter WVJ) ^{※1}, an international NGO, have launched “Smiles & Health for Children,” a program called to provide meal support to kindergarten children in Vietnam as a part of the Tuan Giao Area Development Program, in the Tuan Giao District of Dien Bien Province in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, starting in May 2023.

We are pleased to announce that as part of the first phase program (May 2023 to April 2024), the construction of kitchen facilities with improved hygiene environment has been completed at two kindergartens in Tuan Giao District. These facilities were then donated to the Department of Education and Training in Tuan Giao District. On April 11, program stakeholders, including Vietnamese government officials, participated in a handover ceremony for the kitchen facilities at the supported kindergartens.

In the second phase (June 2024 to May 2025), we will expand our efforts by including three additional kindergartens within the same district, bringing the total to six kindergartens. We will continue to monitor and follow up on both the health and nutrition status of children as well as the nutrition and hygiene knowledge and skills of the staff at the three kindergartens supported in the first phase. Additionally, we will continue our collaboration with WVJ to participate in the Child Sponsorship Program (community development program) ^{※2}, deepening our interaction with the children at the supported kindergartens and providing support toward improving their health and nutrition status.



The attendees at the handover ceremony



The new kitchen facility in the kindergarten

◆Background of Smiles & Health for Children

The Tuan Giao District in Dien Bien province, which is located about 570 km northwest of Hanoi in a mountainous area, has a high poverty rate of 50%^{*3} along with a high proportion of children suffering from malnutrition. Morinaga Milk aims to achieve a ratio of overseas sales of 15% or more by the end of the fiscal year 2029 as part of its 10-year vision for the Morinaga Milk Group. Vietnam is one of the countries where the company is focusing its business efforts on production and sales, as part of its 2030 Sustainability Medium-to-Long-Term Plan. One of the goals of this plan is to contribute to solving health and nutrition issues in the region by providing high-quality products unique to the Morinaga Milk Group. Over the next 10 years, this effort is expected to help improve the health of 300 million^{*4} people.

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kindergarten children in Vietnam as a part of the Tuan Giao Area Development Program, in the Tuan Giao District of Dien Bien Province in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, starting in May 2023. This project was selected as one of the authorized projects by the Japanese Executive Committee of “The 50th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and Vietnam.”

- ※1 World Vision (WV), established in 1987, is the world's largest international NGO. It operates in about 100 countries and works for the betterment of children worldwide through three primary approaches: development assistance, emergency humanitarian assistance, and advocacy.
- ※2 Child Sponsorship Program is a program in which individuals or groups sponsor children in developing countries. The program addresses local issues such as water sanitation, health & nutrition, and education with the aim of creating an environment where children can grow up healthy.
- ※3 Nutrition Measurement in June 2022 conducted by World Vision Vietnam
- ※4 Refers to both the number of people estimated to receive goods that address health issues from fiscal 2021 to 2030 and the number of people expected to participate in health promotion and nutrition education activities provided by the program.

◆Main details of Smiles & Health for Children-Second Phase (June 2024 to May 2025)

Project Location: Tuan Giao Area Development Program site in the Tuan Giao District, Dien Bien Province, Socialist Republic of Vietnam (same as the First Phase)

Number of kindergartens: 6 (including three kindergartens from the first phase)

Beneficiaries: 310 children, and 22 staffs and teachers

1. Improvement of the meal service facilities

- ① Improvement of kitchen facilities at kindergartens
- ② Provision of furniture (desks, chairs, etc.) and cooking equipment for use when eating meals

2. Improvement of knowledge and skills related to nutrition and hygiene

- ① Survey of the current menu and development of a nutritionally balanced menu using locally available ingredients.
- ② Provide training on nutrition and hygiene to teachers, health and cooking staff

3. Strengthening the knowledge and skills of teachers and health staff in measuring the nutrition and health of children

- ① Implementation of training on measuring height and weight and nutrition monitoring
- ② Provision of tools (scales, height scales, recording boards) for monitoring children's nutrition and health status
- ③ Monitoring and follow-up of the first phase kindergartens (3 schools)

<Reference information>

Of the three kindergartens supported within the Tuan Giao district, we constructed kitchen facilities for two kindergartens and provided furniture and kitchen equipment for meal consumption at one kindergarten. Additionally, we aimed to enhance the nutrition and hygiene knowledge and skills of kindergarten staff and cooking staff at the three kindergartens. This included creating and distributing handbooks on nutrition and hygiene, conducting training sessions, and providing support for cultivating high-nutrient vegetables (such as mustard greens) on site. We also improved the knowledge and skills of teachers and health staff in measuring children's nutrition and health.

Targeted kindergartens: 3

Beneficiaries: 134 children, 22 teachers, health personnel, and kitchen staff



Training sessions for kindergarten staff and cooking staff.



Use of handbooks in educating parents



Kindergarteners and parents viewing the handbook

Overview of the kitchen facility handover ceremony

The handover ceremony for the kitchen facility, held on April 11, was attended by children, kindergarten teachers, cooking staff, parents, community members, as well as Vietnamese government officials, WVJ, World Vision International in Vietnam, and 11 representatives from the Morinaga Milk Group. During the ceremony, Mr. Takahiro Yanagida, Executive Officer and head of the International Division, expressed gratitude to the project's stakeholders and sharing the project's aspirations by saying, “In Vietnam, an important country for our global business, we would like to promote children's mental and physical health through this project, leading to a society full of smiles and a bright future.” One of the attendees, Mr. Lo Van Toi, the Chairman of People’s Committee of the commune, has expressed joy and gratitude through saying “We hope that this project lays the foundation for students to develop physically and mentally, and contribute to building their village and country,” and there were many smiles seen throughout.



Mr. Yanagida giving lunches to children



Ribbon cut at the handover ceremony



Attendees at the new kitchen facility



“We can stand up and cook, and we have a lot of cooking equipments, which is very helpful,” a staff says