



February 26, 2025

Progress Report on “Smiles & Health for Children,” a Sustainability Initiative to Improve the Health and Nutritional Status of Children in Vietnam

First Year Project Confirms Reduction in Malnourished Children;
Second Year Project Underway Utilizing Achievements

Morinaga Milk Industry Co., Ltd., with the cooperation of an international NGO, launched the "Smiles & Health for Children" project in May 2023. This project aims to improve the health and nutritional status of children in Tuan Giao District, Dien Bien Province, Vietnam. The initiative focuses on establishing facilities for providing school meals, enhancing cooking infrastructure, and improving the knowledge and skills of teachers and health staff responsible for managing children's health and nutrition in the target kindergartens. Below are the achievements of the first year and the progress of the second year.

1. First Year Project (May 2023 - April 2024)

In the first year project, completed in April 2024, the proportion of malnourished children in the three kindergartens within the district's communes decreased from 20.7% (at the start of the project) to 8.9% (at the end of the first phase), confirming the project's contribution to improving children's nutrition. Additionally, through the creation of health and nutrition awareness handbooks, the development of nutritionally rich meal plans, and training for teachers, the efforts to improve the health and nutrition of kindergarten children have been understood by the educators, showing positive changes.



Kindergarten children
eating lunch



lunch at a kindergarten supported
in the first year, at the time of
monitoring in October



Teachers checking the nutritional status of children at
a kindergarten where we provided first-year support,
at the time of monitoring in December

2. Second Year Project (June 2024 - May 2025)

The second year project, which began in June 2024, aims to build on the achievements of the first year by targeting three kindergartens in adjacent communes. The project focuses on improving cooking facilities, providing equipment, and enhancing the knowledge and skills of teachers and health and cooking staff regarding children's nutrition and health, aiming to improve the health and nutritional status of the children.

Upon starting the project, surveys were conducted on the nutritional status of children, staff knowledge about children's nutrition and hygiene, and parents' perspectives on kindergarten attendance. The surveys revealed the need to secure

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spaces for children to eat at kindergartens, improve staff knowledge about nutrition, and a demand from parents for monthly reports on their children's nutritional status from the staff.

To address these issues and improve children's health and nutrition, similar to the first year, the project focuses on improving kindergarten cooking facilities, and enhancing the knowledge and skills of staff regarding nutrition, hygiene, and health measurement.

In November 2024, training on children's health, nutrition, and hygiene management were provided to kindergarten teachers and health and cooking staff. Participants commented on their newfound awareness, saying, "I realized that the meals were not as nutritionally rich as I had imagined. I would like to discuss with parents to improve the quality of meals at home."

In December, teachers who received the training held sessions for parents, providing guidance on children's health, nutrition, and hygiene management. These sessions utilized the handbook created during the first year, which includes easily understandable examples of high-nutrition meals and good care practices. Parents who participated expressed their appreciation, saying, "We are grateful for the handbook summarizing excellent practices for kindergarten children's health. We want to use this knowledge for managing our children's health at home. The six recommended menus in this material seem easy to prepare at home."

The project will continue to focus on improving cooking facilities and other infrastructure, aiming to complete the project by the end of May.



Left: In December, a session led by trained teachers for parents on children's nutrition and health management, using the handbook (kindergarten).

Right: A mother and child reading the handbook distributed during the session (kindergarten).

Key Support Activities in "Smiles & Health for Children" (Second Year Project)

- Project Location: Tuan Giao District, Dien Bien Province, Socialist Republic of Vietnam, within the "Tuan Giao Area Development Program" of the international NGO
- Target Kindergartens: 3 kindergartens
- Beneficiaries: 312 children, 33 teachers, health, and cooking staff
- Project Period: June 2024 - May 2025
- Project Overview:

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1. Improvement of School Meal Facilities

- Development of cooking facilities in two of the three target kindergartens
- Provision of kitchen equipment and utensils

2. Enhancement of Knowledge and Skills in Nutrition and Hygiene

- Training for teachers, health, and cooking staff on nutrition and hygiene
- Implementation of vegetable gardens within kindergartens

3. Strengthening Knowledge and Techniques for Measuring Children's Nutrition and Health

- Conducting contests themed around school meals and nutrition
- Holding workshops to share the project's initiatives
- Post-monitoring and follow-up of kindergartens supported in the first year

☐ Morinaga Milk Industry Group's Engagement with Vietnam

- In 2010, Morinaga Milk started exporting formula milk to Vietnam through Le May Production, Trading and Service Company Limited (Le May), a local distributor in Vietnam.
- In June 2021, Elovi Vietnam Joint Stock Company (Elovi) became a wholly owned subsidiary to strengthen sales in the Vietnamese market. In November 2022, Elovi began local production and sales of Morinaga Milk Industry Co., Ltd. brand products.
- In 2023, Morinaga Milk Industry Co., Ltd. established a joint venture company with Le May and signed a share transfer/underwriting agreement and a shareholder agreement with the aim of making Morinaga Le May Vietnam Joint Stock Company (Morinaga Le May) a subsidiary
- In March 2024, changed the name of Elovi to Morinaga Nutritional Foods Vietnam Joint Stock Company to foster a greater sense of unity within the group.