

April 12 - 13, 2007 | Best Western Resort Country Club | Gurgaon, India

## **The Use of Pharmacy Vouchers to Expand Injection Drug Users' Access to Sterile Needles/Syringes: Experience from a Cross-Border HIV Prevention Project in Vietnam and China**

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# Funding Support

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- **For Interventions:**
  - **Ford Foundation (Beijing and Hanoi);**
  - **Global Fund (for Chinese sites only);**
  - **National and Provincial budgets (all sites).**
- **For Research and evaluation components:**
  - **National Institute on Drug Abuse, Grant No. 1 R01 DA-14703;**
  - **Anonymous donor in NYC.**

# Background of the Cross-Border Project

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## ■ Earlier presentations

- Vouchers for health services
- Targeting poor
- Financing mechanism

## ■ This presentation

- Vouchers for products
- Targeting marginal populations – IDUs
- Behavior change/motivation mechanism

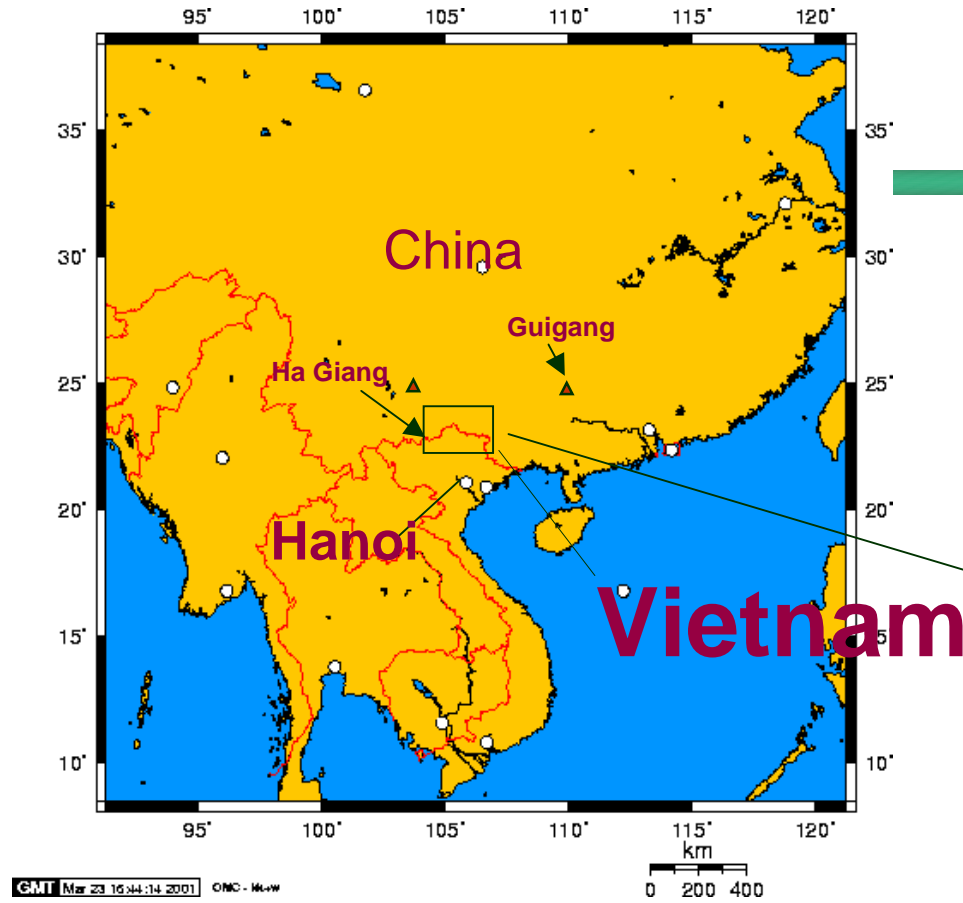
# Background of the Cross-Border Project

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## ■ Cross-Border movement

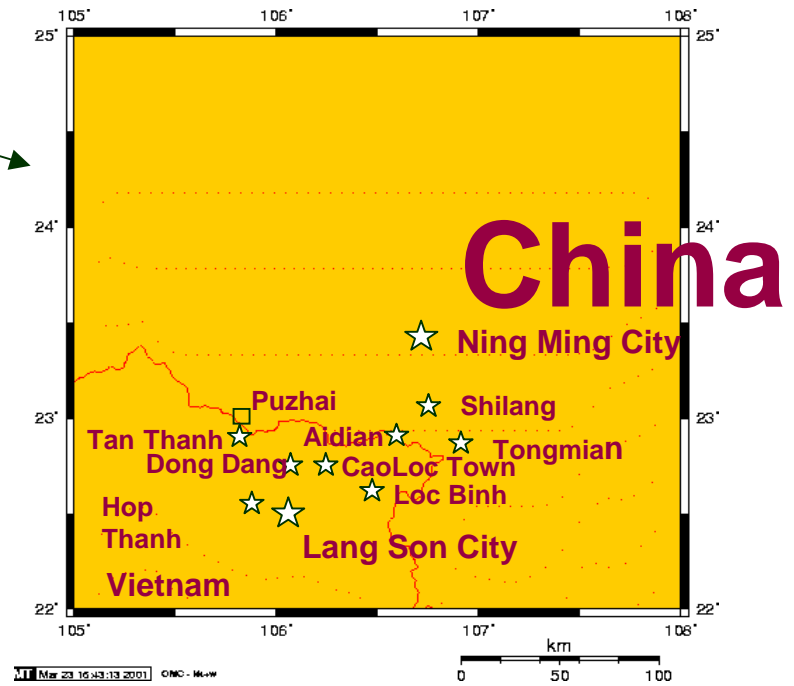
- Drug Trans-shipment Routes → Heroin Use → Heroin Injection → HIV Transmission → Increasing HIV Prevalence → Cross-Border Transmission (Molecular epidemiology: Beyrer et al., *AIDS*, 2000)
- Small-scale movement across long, porous border
- Trade, migratory employment, “floating population”
- Intermarriage, ethnic minority groups on both sides.

# Geographic Setting



- Key:**
- ☆ Large Project Site
  - ☆ Small Border Site
  - △ PDI Site

## Area of Detail



# Interventions

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- **Peer-based education of Injecting Drug Users (IDUs), sex workers, and sexual partners of IDUs.**
- **Distribution of needles/syringes and condoms – directly and through redemption of vouchers at participating pharmacies.**
- **Collection/safe disposal of used needles/syringes.**
- **Community education.**

**Full implementation of IDU interventions began in 2002.**

- **This presentation will focus on the pharmacy voucher component of the IDU interventions and will highlight marketing and behavior change communication (BCC).**

# Pharmacy Vouchers

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- Pharmacies involved in the voucher scheme should be convenient for IDUs in terms of opening time (from 7AM to 7 PM); location; willingness of pharmacy operators to serve IDUs.
- Each voucher has value of 1,500 VND (16,000 VND = 1 USD) and is redeemable for 1 syringe/needle + 1 ampoule of water or 1 condom.
- In order to offer IDUs multiple choices, we distribute pharmacy vouchers (PV) as well as directly distribute new needles/syringes.
- PV has some advantages such as: they are easy to keep in the pocket, they can be exchanged when the IDU needs supplies; they may help avoid stigma against IDU... but PV also have some disadvantages: depend on opening time and convenient location of pharmacies; PV may also be damaged or lost.

# Pharmacy Vouchers *(Continues)*

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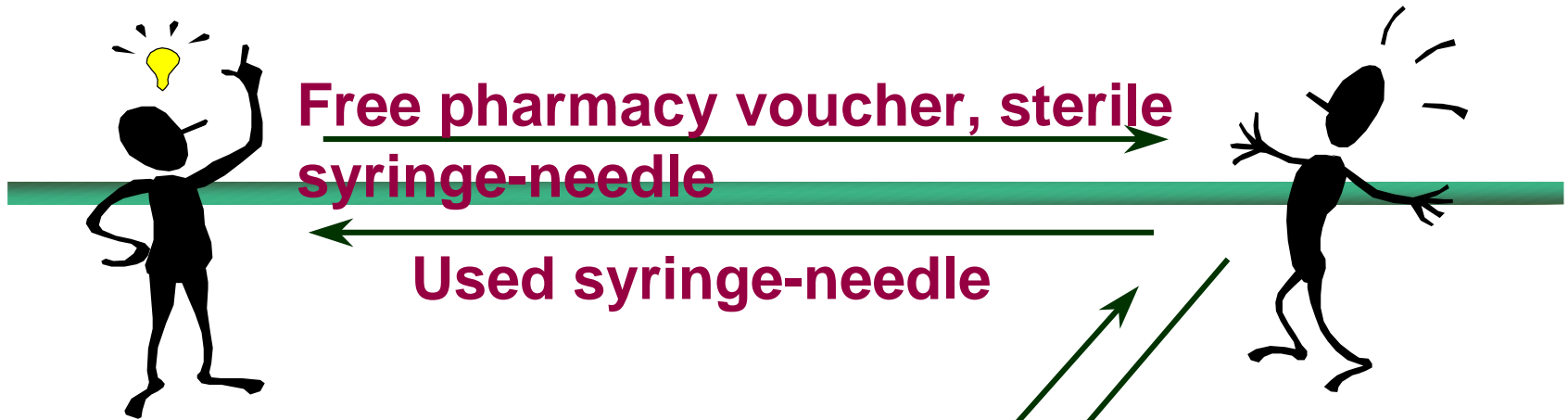
- **In the context of reducing harm related to drug injection, the BCC aspect plays very important role because it helps people to practice safer behaviors**
- **Outreach peer educator is assigned to meet IDU in the community to provide knowledge on HIV/AIDS and also offer them safer materials for their practice, so this could help them reach IDUs more frequently.**
- **Broader advocacy targeted to local authorities and communities to improve social acceptance of the intervention program and to seek consensus**



# Pharmacy vouchers and BCC for HIV prevention

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- **Vouchers include HIV prevention messages (see next slide).**
- **Vouchers are distributed by peer educators along with other oral and printed HIV risk reduction information, including brochures.**
- **Vouchers, as well as direct distribution of syringes, are used to put into practice the risk reduction messages being delivered, including IDUs having a sufficient supply of sterile injection equipment and using a sterile needle/syringe, or at least his/her own needle/syringe for each injection.**



Peer educator

*Health check,  
HIV testing  
Free Pharmacy voucher*

Drug User

**Collect used syringe-needle**

Health service

**Sterile needle, condom**

**Free Pharmacy voucher**

**Provincial project board**

**Free Pharmacy voucher**  
**Noted**

Pharmacies

# Pharmacy Voucher – Lang Son Province, Vietnam

"I Care Do you...."? □

NASB      LSPHS      FORD FOUNDATION

*Project:*  
**A COMPREHENSIVE INTERVENTION FOR INJECTION DRUG USER BASED ON PEER EDUCATION IN LANG SON**

**HEALTH CARE SERVICE CARD**

*"Vượt qua rào cản kỳ thị và phân biệt đối xử"*

NO: \_\_\_\_\_

*"HIV/AIDS Prevention is the responsibility of each individual, each family and the society"*

NATIONAL AIDS STANDING BUREAU (NASB)      LANG SON PROVINCIAL HEALTH SERVICES      FORD FOUNDATION

*Project:*  
**A COMPREHENSIVE INTERVENTION FOR INJECTION DRUG USER BASED ON PEER EDUCATION IN LANG SON**

**HEALTH CARE SERVICE CARD**

The Project is implemented by:

1. LANG SON PROVINCIAL HEALTH SERVICES;
2. NATIONAL AIDS STANDING BUREAU OF VIETNAM;
3. WITH SUPPORTS FROM THE FORD FOUNDATION (USA).

*Please Document exchanged materials (For Pharmacy Use)*

One needle and syringe and a water tube.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
One needle and syringe and a condom.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Specify).....	

*"I Care Do you....?"*

*"To overcome stigmatization and discrimination"*

NO.: \_\_\_\_\_

# Pharmacy Voucher – Lang Son Province

## " CARE FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS "

### USAGES OF THE CARD:

1. To have your health checked, to receive counseling and some anti-opportunistic infection drug at:

- LANG SON PROVINCIAL GENERAL HOSPITAL.
- PROVINCIAL CENTER FOR ANTI SOCIAL EVILS
- LANG SON PROVINCIAL PREVENTIVE MEDICINE CENTER

2. To exchange a package of 01 needle and syringe and water tube; or a package of 01 needle and syringe and a condom or regular drug costed 1,500 VND at the following pharmacies:

#### LANG SON TOWN

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| Pharmacy No.12 - Printing House            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pharmacy No.2- House No.22 - Phai Ve Str   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Kioque No.3 Book Company- Bac Son Str      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| General Department - Lang Son town HCC     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pharmacy, House No.165 Le Hong Phong Str   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pharmacy No.4, House 118-Tran Hung Dao Str | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pharmacy House 145B Le Loi Str             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pharmacy House 05 - Ngo Quyen Str          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pharmacy No. - Ba Trieu Str                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pharmacy No.169 Bac Son Str                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pharmacy No.6-House 423Tran Dang Ninh Str  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pharmacy House 207 Tran Dang Ninh Str      | <input type="checkbox"/> |

#### CAO LOC DISTRICT

- |                                     |                          |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Cao Loc Town's Pharmacy             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pharmacy House 22, Group 7, Cao Loc | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pharmacy No.43 Dong Dang Market     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Dong Dang Market's Pharmacy         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pharmacy No.14 Dong Dang Market     | <input type="checkbox"/> |

#### VAN LANG DISTRICT

- |                                   |                          |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Pharmacy of Ward No.2 - Tan Thanh | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pharmacy Bamako-Tan Thanh HCC     | <input type="checkbox"/> |

#### LOC BINH DISTRICT

- |                           |                          |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Pharmacy No.01 - Loc Binh | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pharmacy No.02 - Loc Binh | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pharmacy No.03 - Loc Binh | <input type="checkbox"/> |

3. The card can be used for just once and is invalid on 30/09/2002.

4. The card can not be exchanged for money

5. The card can be exchanged for the above-mentioned materials from 7h00 to 19h00 everyday

**"DO SAFE BEHAVIORS TO PREVENT HIV/AIDS INFECTION"**

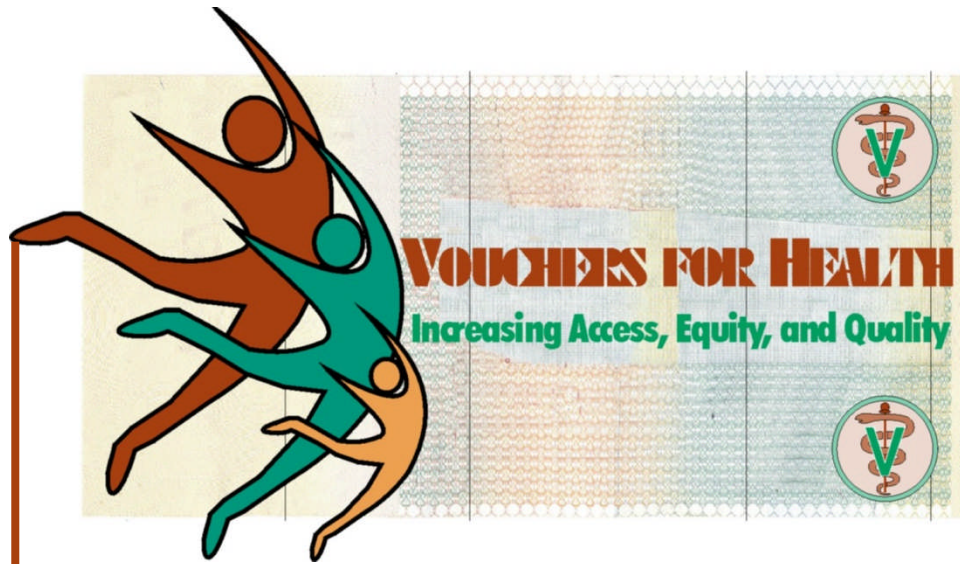
# Exchanging a voucher for a new needle/syringe: Ning Ming, China



# Pharmacy voucher component: Implementation issues

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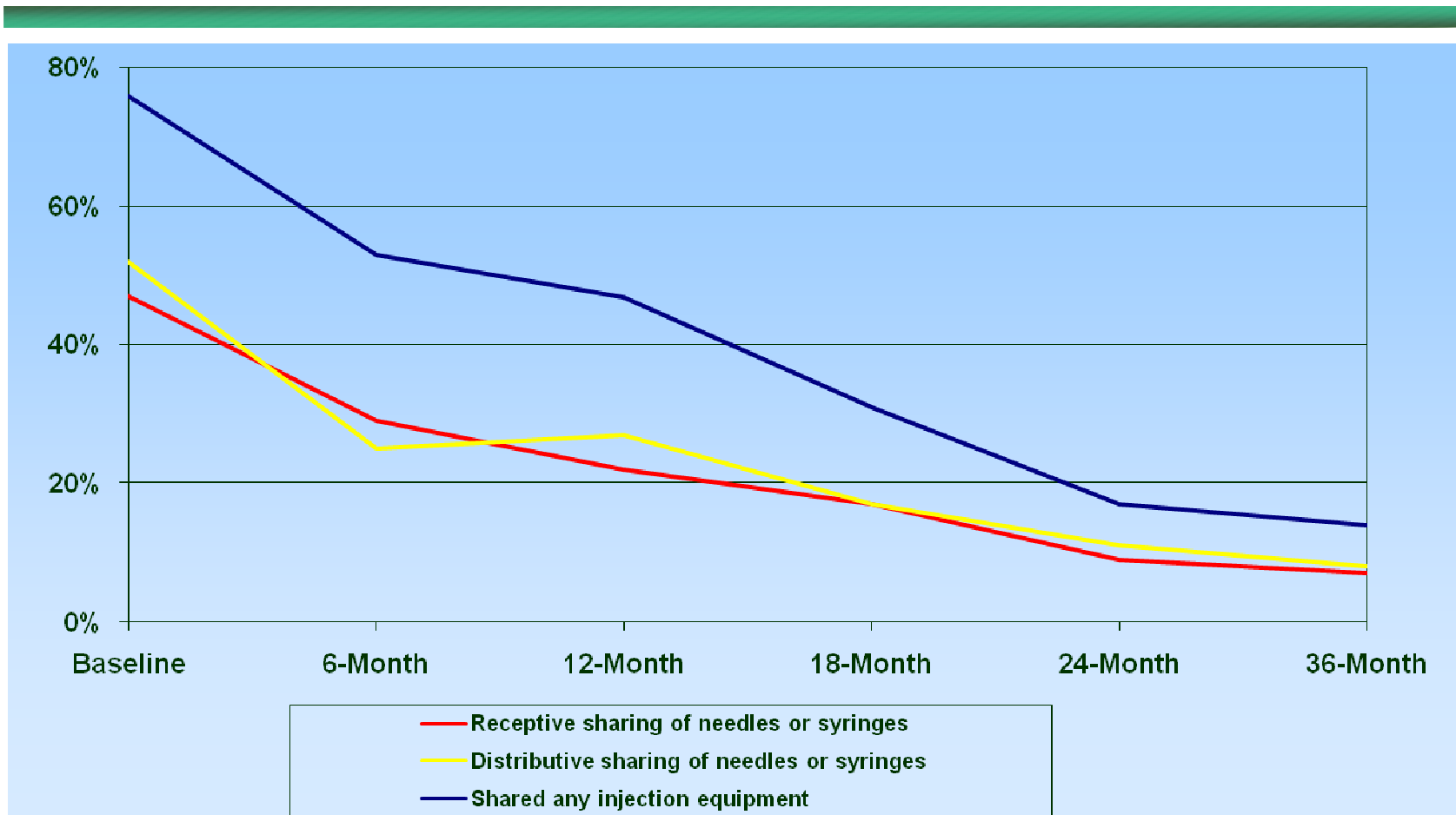
- Importance of identifying pharmacies that are conveniently located for IDUs to access and that treat IDUs with respect.
- In Vietnam, IDUs like both vouchers and direct distribution (previous slide); vouchers are most popular in sites where participating pharmacies are convenient and considered safe. Some pharmacies have been replaced with more convenient ones.
- In China, IDUs initially accepted vouchers, perhaps as a novelty, but fairly quickly came to prefer direct distribution, probably because they considered it simpler and more convenient. Very few vouchers now used in China (previous slide).
- In Vietnam, some problems with fraud – some peer educators selling vouchers directly to pharmacies. Several peer educators and pharmacies were removed from the project.



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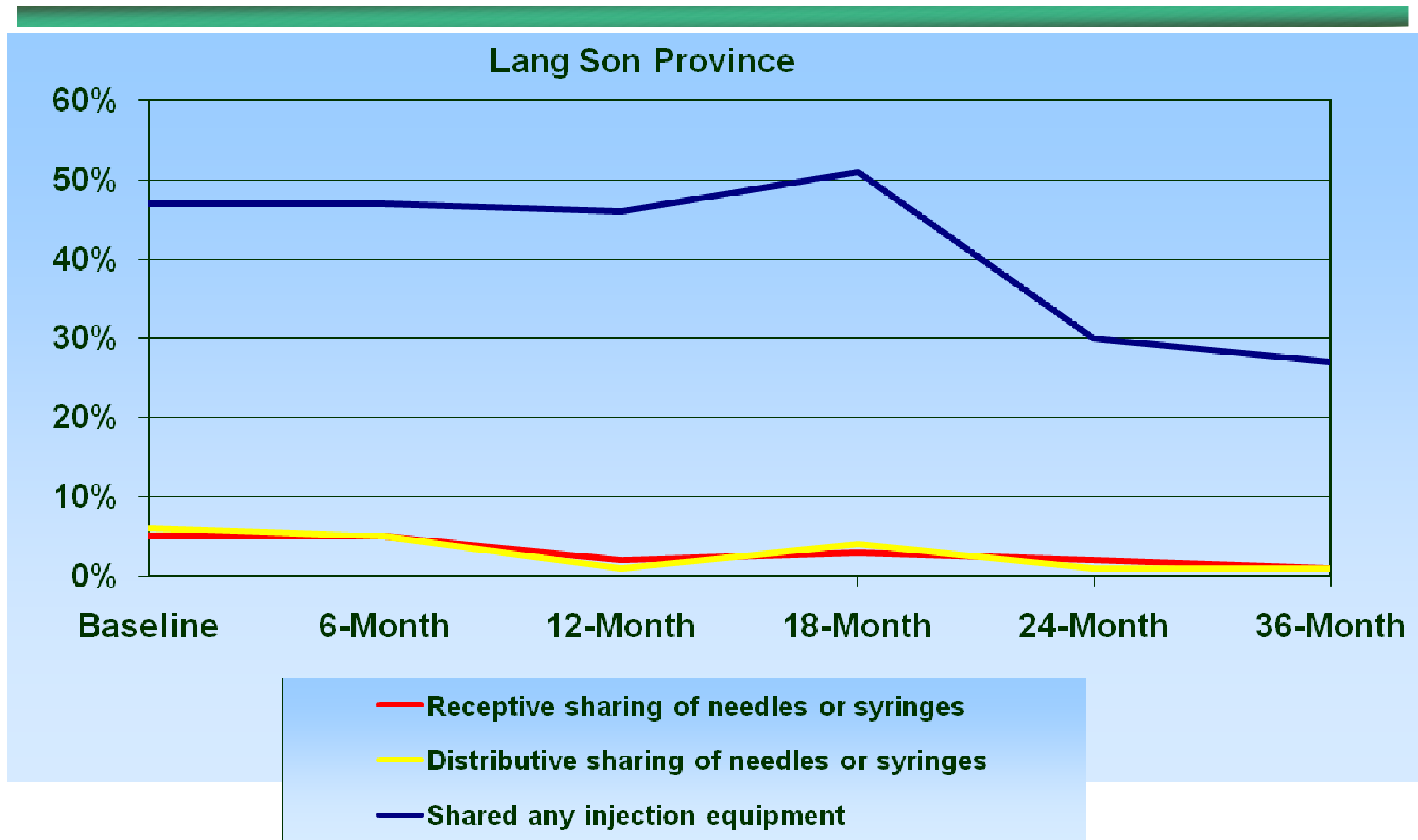
# Some project results

## Drug-Related Risk Behaviors (over past 6 months) – Peer Outreach Sites: Ning Ming County, China

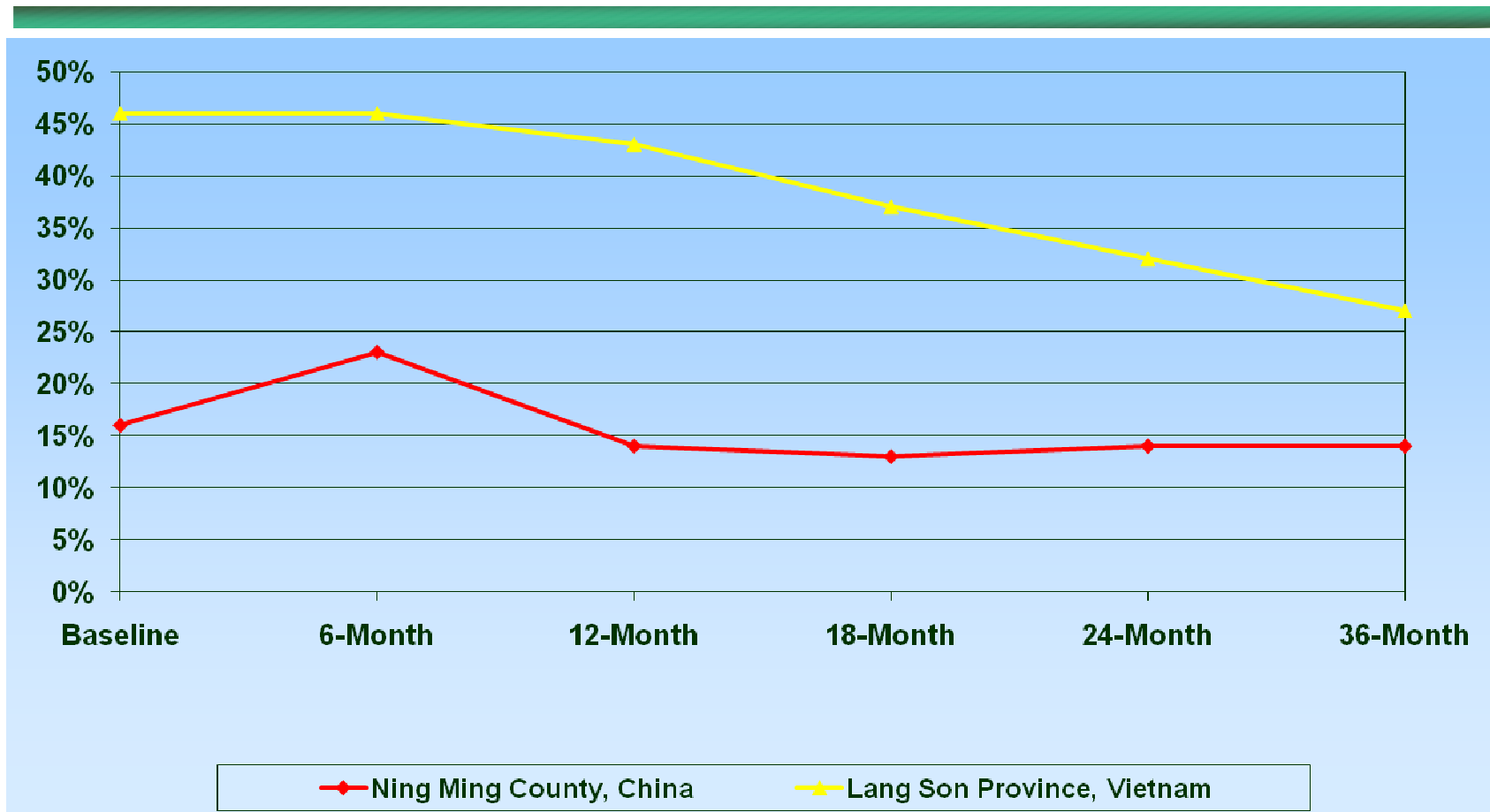




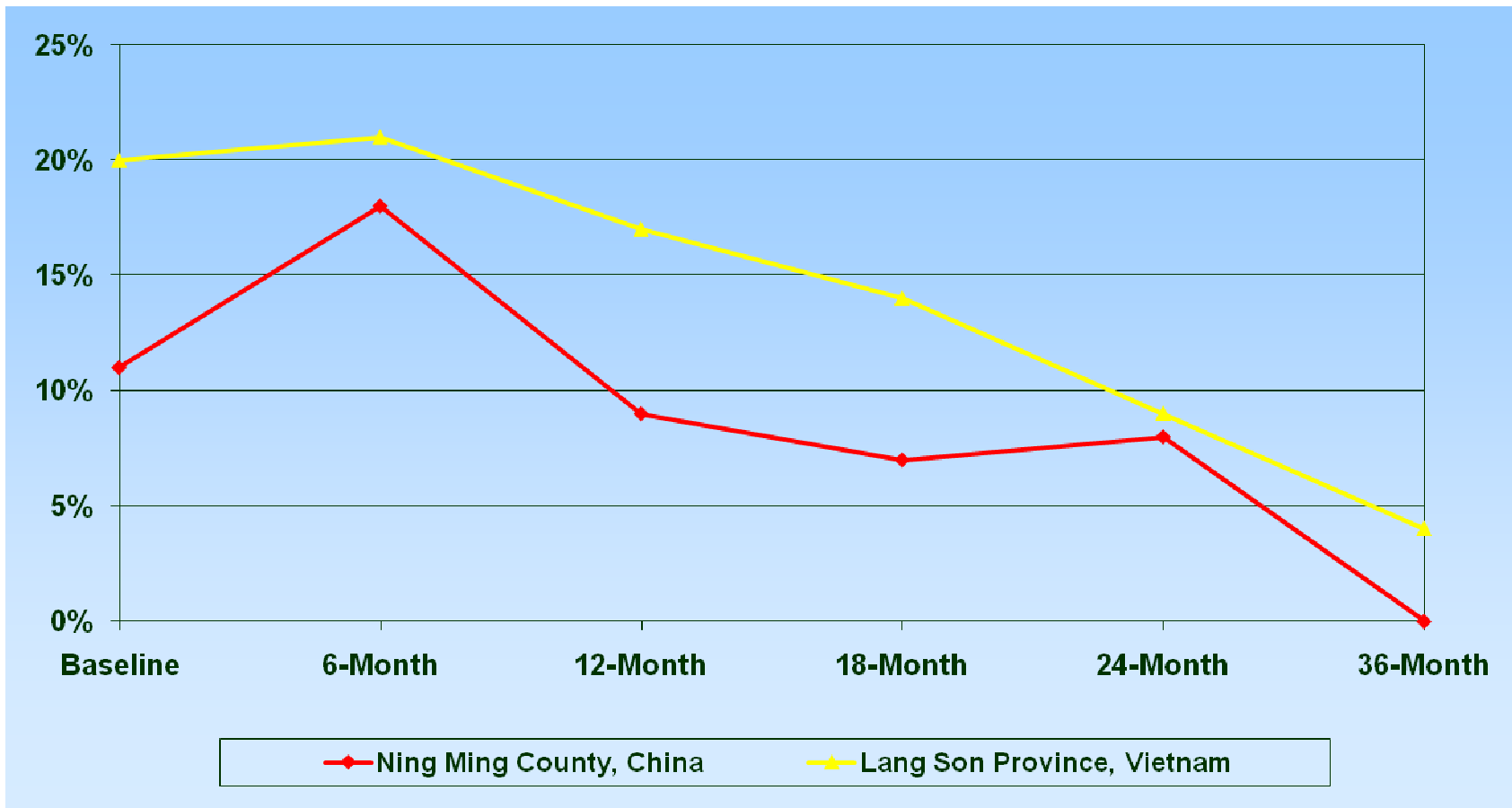
## Drug-Related Risk Behaviors (over past 6 months): Vietnam



# HIV Prevalence among IDUs



# HIV Incidence Among New Injectors



# Conclusions and Lessons Learned

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- **This is an innovative project, offering important opportunities to control a cross-border HIV epidemic and increase cross-border collaboration.**
- **The interventions are reaching substantial proportions of IDUs and providing public health benefits.**
- **HIV prevalence among IDUs is stable or declining and HIV incidence among new injectors is coming down since their behaviors may change to have practice more safer injection and sex.**
- **Pharmacy vouchers represent an important component of the project, especially in Vietnam.**
- **It is important to provide IDUs with multiple and flexible ways to access sterile injection equipment. However, pharmacy vouchers may not be acceptable to IDUs everywhere.**
- **Careful and regular monitoring is critical to prevent fraud of the voucher scheme.**



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# Thank you

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**And the Cross-Border Project Team**