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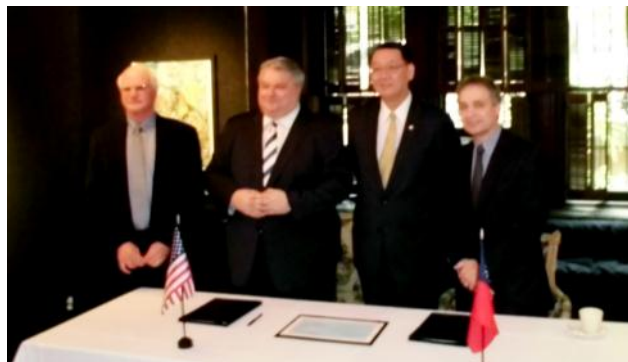
Taiwan, U.S. Government expand support for HDI, MWM



HDI Chairman William J. Rouhana, Jr. (right) and Andrew J.C. Kao, Ambassador and Director General, TECO in New York, at the signing ceremony.

On May 23, 2012, the Humpty Dumpty Institute (HDI) and the Republic of China (Taiwan), represented by the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) in New York, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to continue funding HDI's Mine Victims Assistance Program in Quang Tri, Vietnam, called "Mushrooms with Mission" (MWM). Through training and providing beneficiaries with the tools they need to grow and sell mushrooms, the MWM program generates extra income for survivors of mine accidents including women, the disabled and ethnic minorities, to help bring them out of poverty. The extra profits from selling the mushrooms are used to fund the removal of unexploded ordnance. The event took place at the National Arts Club in New York City. HDI Chairman William J. Rouhana Jr. (pictured above, right) and Andrew J.C. Kao, Ambassador and Director General, TECO in New

York (left) signed the MOU together and pointed out the incredible difference MWM is making for the Quang Tri community and the importance of continuing this project. HDI was presented with a check for \$100,000 to cover the first year of the project. Also attending the ceremony was special guest James F. Lawrence, Director, US Department of State Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (pictured below left). The Department of State has also funded MWM since 2009 and Mr. Lawrence surprised the crowd by announcing that WRA will renew its funding with a contribution of \$240,000. Thirty people attended the ceremony including Mr. Quang Pham - Deputy Permanent Representative of Vietnam, Han Thu - Deputy Permanent Representative of Myanmar, Millie Meyers - Director of Special Projects at U.S. State Department, and staff from HDI and TECO.



Joining Bill Rouhana and Ambassador Kao at the ceremony were (far left) James F. Lawrence, Director, US Department of State Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement, and next to him Ralph Cwerman, Founder and President of HDI.

Hope comes home

These days, even though Ms. Doan Thi Cuc is very busy with work, there is always a smile on her face. She now has the opportunity to help care for her two grandchildren, something she has longed to do for years.

Ms. Cuc's husband, Mr. Nguyen Bui, fought for South Vietnam during the War. Luckily he returned home after the war with no major injuries. But sadly, having survived the war, he was still not safe from the aftermath of the war. In 1976, while farming his land, Mr. Bui hit a UXO and lost a leg. The accident had a terrible impact on him and his family. Because of his disability, Mr. Bui's six children had to leave home in search of employment so they were not able to complete their educations. And even with the income provided by Mr. Bui's children, he and his wife still had a difficult time making ends meet.

Reaching their seventies, Mr. Bui and his wife continued to struggle, Mr. Bui with his disability and his wife with exhaustion from her responsibilities, until she was no longer able to contribute to any of the heavy manual labor. Poverty and disability seemed to be the destiny of this elderly couple. Then they were selected by the Farmer's Union to receive support from RENEW's program to assist UXO victims, Mushrooms with a Mission (MWM). Ideally suited for the special needs and limitations of old age, the mushroom program allows Ms. Cuc and her husband to work together and produce needed income.

The most recent mushroom season harvested 146 kilograms of wood ear mushrooms from the 1,500 blocks provided by MWM. After deducting the

investment costs, which were advanced to them by RENEW, the couple earned a net income of 1,300,000 VND (equivalent to US \$65). That was double their income from growing rice and secondary crop production.

Mr. Bui is reinforcing his mushroom growing house for the next crop. He is interested in expanding production and adopting oyster mushroom cultivation in the future, since his son's family moved back home recently and Mr. Bui's daughter-in-law will join this business.

"My son and daughter-in-law moved to Ho Chi Minh City because they had few opportunities to find work here," Ms. Cuc said, "and working in a field of just 2,000 square meters did not provide enough to support all of us. Working in Ho Chi Minh City was not that easy for my son and his wife either. They had to send their first son home for us to care for. Now that they have the second child they have decided to come home.



Mr. Bui is reinforcing his mushroom growing house, preparing for a new crop. The growing house was funded by HDI with a co-payment from Bui and his family.

"My son has found a job in South Dong Ha Industrial Zone," Ms. Cuc said. "His wife will assist us in growing mushrooms, allowing her the opportunity to take care of her two children." Ms. Cuc smiled, happily holding her nine-month-old granddaughter.



Ms. Cuc shares her happiness with her granddaughter, now living at home since Ms. Cuc's son and his wife have returned with their two children.

HDI Spokesperson Singer-Songwriter Mary McBride and Band entertain mushroom farmers, disabled children and adults in Quang Tri

American singer-songwriter Mary McBride, renowned for her hit song “No One’s Gonna Love You Like Me” - from the soundtrack of the Academy-award winning film *Brokeback Mountain* - visited Quang Tri Province in April, in her roles as HDI spokesperson and goodwill ambassador for the U.S. Department of State.

As part of a tour of Vietnam, Laos, and Taiwan, Mary and her band performed in Quang Tri Province on April 9th, their arrival eagerly anticipated by local young people and adults. To a packed crowd at the Mine Action Visitor Center opened last year by Project RENEW, Mary and the band presented their unique blend of American country, R&B and old-school rock and roll to children and adults, many of them disabled by bomb and mine accidents. For the people of Quang Tri Province, this was a rare opportunity to enjoy a true international cultural exchange. And in the spirit of the occasion, Mary surprised everyone by singing a traditional Vietnamese song in quite fluent Vietnamese!

Before the afternoon show, Mary and the band visited the Mushrooms with a Mission initiative and saw first-hand how UXO-affected families are being helped to overcome their injuries and disabilities with much needed extra income. Mary learned that the families supported by HDI and Project RENEW are she met are not only disabled, they usually are impoverished as well. The money they earn from raising mushrooms provides them with them with better livelihoods and opportunities.

Mary and the band met other special guests including HDI’s partners from the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) in Hanoi, Vietnam, Mr. Borshow Chen and Mr. Fu Heng Chang. Together

they visited an EOD site where a RENEW team safely destroyed a cluster bomb that had been found near a local family’s residence.



Mary and her band performing for disabled children and adults at the Mine Action Visitor Center, where an enthusiastic audience of more than a hundred local residents were entertained with a blend of American traditional, country, and rock tunes -- and one popular Vietnamese song. In her role as HDI Spokesperson, Mary McBride has traveled all over the world as an emissary of peace and understanding, reaching out to disabled and disadvantaged families who are helped by HDI's humanitarian programs.

At the end of their trip, Mary said she and the band had had a wonderful time in Quang Tri Province, noting that it was one of their favorite stops on the tour. “After everything I have heard about HDI’s work, I was so happy to meet everyone and see it up close,” Mary said. “It was so meaningful for all of us to have been a part of it. We are so proud to support the extraordinary work that you all are doing.”

From the Vietnamese, the appreciation was mutual. As Mary and the band departed late in the day, the lingering crowd of Vietnamese waved and shouted a warm “goodbye” and urged them to return, calling out in English, “See you again!”



Mary and the band members holding a NAMUS package during their visit to the Mushroom Center.

Beating the heat in Quang Tri

Anyone visiting Mushrooms with a Mission from June to August will tell you that Quang Tri Province can be very hot during the summer time. The average temperature ranges from 35-40°C (95-104°F), which means that mushroom-growing under these conditions takes special care.



Dr. Ai checking internal lines of the automatic water cooling system operational in a mushroom growing house.

Dr. Ta Nhan Ai, Ph.D in agriculture and Co-Manager of Mushrooms with a Mission, studied the problem of over-heated grow houses which would damage the mushroom crop and which limits the growing season to cooler periods, mostly fall and winter. Dr. Ai came up with an innovative initiative. He developed an automatic watering system using pipes, hoses, spray nozzles and recycled water, powered by simple pumps and automatic timers. The indoor-outdoor system ensures adequate moisture for the mushrooms as well as cooler temperatures during the heat of summer. If on-going tests continue to prove successful, reducing grow house heat sufficiently, it may be possible to grow mushrooms year-round at the Mushroom Center and expand that option to the growing families as well, with installation of a simple and



The water cooling system is made from locally available pipes and hoses, and automated with simple pumps and timers.

inexpensive cooling system. Production and volume could be increased, along with income and profits for the families. Dr. Ai is monitoring the system under controlled conditions and hopes by the end of the summer to demonstrate that this is a way that mushrooms in Quang Tri can beat the heat.

MWM hosts VIP delegations



Australian Ambassador Allaster Cox shakes hands with Do Thien Dang, an MWM mushroom farmer who lost both legs in a UXO explosion in 1980.



Charles Stonecipher from the U.S. State Department, a major donor to the Mushroom Program in Quang Tri, examines a package of NAMUS mushrooms.



Kuzuko Maruyama, Japanese Embassy First Secretary, views the technical design plan of the Mushroom Center.



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About NAMUS

NAMUS is the official trademark of the brand of mushrooms grown by UXO survivors in Quang Tri Province, part of Mushrooms-with-a-Mission (MWM), a program jointly implemented by Project RENEW and New York-based Humpty Dumpty Institute (HDI). RENEW has worked for 10 years to clean up bombs and mines in Quang Tri Province, reducing accidents and injuries and improving the lives of victim families. HDI is a non-profit humanitarian organization which has conducted post-war poverty-reduction and mine action programs in Angola, Armenia, Eritrea, Lebanon, Mozambique, Sri Lanka, Laos, and now Vietnam.

MWM supports victim families and poor communities in ERW-affected areas in Quang Tri Province by creating jobs for people with physical disabilities, helping them achieve stable incomes and contributing to socio-economic improvements in the communities where they live.

MWM ensures that growers will be able to earn a good income from their mushroom products. Profits from the program will go back to support Project RENEW's humanitarian activities including ERW cleanup and removal programs, and to expand opportunities for more victim families to join the program.

