

POLICY BRIEF

PROFESSIONALISING NON-MEDICAL CAREGIVING IN VIET NAM

Driving the Silver Economy and Advancing Gender Equality



Viet Nam is ageing at one of the fastest rates in the world, creating an urgent need for a professional aged care workforce.

While recent national policies have established a strong foundation for developing the silver economy, home-based and community-based care, the occupation of **Non-Medical Caregiver (NMC)**¹ remains unrecognised, with no nationally endorsed occupational standards or competency-based training framework.

The **YGRACE** Project has demonstrated that competency-based training adapted to the Vietnamese context is both practical and effective. This Policy Brief recommends recognising the NMC occupation, establishing national competency standards, expanding flexible training pathways, and strengthening public-private partnerships to improve the quality of aged care services, advance women's economic participation, and support the sustainable development of Vietnam's silver economy.

01

VIET NAM IS AGEING RAPIDLY AND CARE DEMAND IS GROWING

Viet Nam is entering one of the fastest population ageing transitions in the world while still pursuing rapid economic growth.

According to the General Statistics Office and UNFPA:

2034

Viet Nam will officially become an **aged society**, with people aged 65+ accounting for **14% of the population**.

2034

Older persons (60+) will outnumber children (0-14) for the first time.

2039

Vietnam's demographic dividend is projected to come to an end, with a shrinking working-age population and growing demand for aged care.

2050

Viet Nam will become a **super-aged society**, with over **21%** of the population aged 65 and above.

Although life expectancy has increased to **74.7 years**, healthy life expectancy is only **65.4 years²**, meaning older people spend nearly **10 years** living with illness, disability or functional decline. The population aged **80+**, who require the highest level of long-term care, is expected to **triple by 2050³**. This creates a rapidly increasing demand for long-term care that hospitals and families alone cannot meet.

At the same time, shrinking household sizes, increasing labour migration, and the growing participation of women in the workforce are significantly reducing the availability of traditional family-based care. In this context, developing a professional aged care workforce has become an urgent priority to meet the rapidly growing demand for care while alleviating pressure on families and social protection systems.

Beyond its social value, this also represents an important economic opportunity. Investing in the care workforce can create sustainable jobs, attract private sector investment in care services, enhance women's economic participation, and support the growth of Vietnam's silver economy.

⁽ⁱ⁾ Non-Medical Caregivers (NMCs) are the care workers who provide assistance with activities of daily living, mobility, companionship, nutrition, and home- and community-based support. They complement – but do not replace – medical professionals.

⁽²⁾ Statistical data from the Department of Population (Ministry of Health) and the World Health Organization (WHO), 2025.

⁽³⁾ Viet Nam Population Projections 2024–2074, General Statistics Office and UNFPA, 2025.

02

A PROFESSIONAL CARE WORKFORCE IS THE MISSING PIECE

As Viet Nam's population continues to age, the needs of older persons are becoming increasingly diverse, extending beyond healthcare to include a broader range of long-term care and support services.



While hospitals and healthcare professionals provide clinical care, older persons also require support with activities of daily living, mobility, nutrition, rehabilitation, emotional well-being, social participation, companionship, and maintaining independence at home and **in the community**. These non-medical care needs become increasingly important as people live longer with chronic conditions and functional decline.

In the context of rapid population ageing, the demand for long-term care is increasingly exceeding the capacity of the health system. Developing a professional non-medical aged care workforce has therefore become an urgent priority to ensure that older persons can access quality care services at home, in the community, and in residential care settings. However, Viet Nam has yet to formally recognise the occupation of non-medical caregivers, with no occupational classification, national occupational skills standards, or nationally recognised training and certification system in place.

As a result, much of this essential daily care is still provided by family members, most of whom are women or by untrained informal caregivers without professional qualifications, resulting in significant gaps in the quality, safety, and continuity of care services.

NMC complements – not replaces – medical care. Together, they form the foundation of a comprehensive long-term care system, enabling older persons to age with good health, independence, and dignity.

03

THE POLICY FOUNDATION IS ALREADY IN PLACE

Recent national policies have established a strong foundation for Viet Nam's care economy. Key policy developments include the following:

- **The 2025 Population Law**, strengthening Vietnam policy framework for response to population aging.
- **Decision No. 383/QĐ-TTg**, approving the National Strategy for older persons and introducing the concept of the '**Silver Economy**'.
- **Resolution No.72-NQ/TW**, promoting private -sector investment in care services
- **Decree No.168/2026/NĐ-CP**, trengthening home-based and community-based care for older persons
- **Decision No. 1116 /QĐ-TTg**, advancing a more comprehensive approach to aged care beyond medical services; and
- **Decision 1976/QĐ-BYT**, promulgating professional guidelines for the provision of home-based and community-based care services for older persons.

The policy direction is now well established. The priority for Viet Nam is to accelerate the implementation of these policy commitments by strengthening the legal and institutional framework and expanding training systems. This is essential to developing a professional and competent non-medical caregiver workforce capable of meeting the growing demand for long-term care services.

04

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE: IMPLICATIONS FOR VIETNAM?

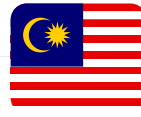
International experience shows that countries with well-developed aged care systems share several common features:



Australia has supplemented formal qualifications with modular training and micro-credentials, providing flexible pathways into care work while supporting faster workforce development and addressing skills shortages.



Japan promotes person-centred care that supports older persons to maintain independence and dignity.



Malaysia strengthens private sector participation and technology-enabled care services.



Thailand standardises short-term aged care training programmes aligned with national competency standards.



These experiences show that professionalising the NMC requires not only occupational recognition, but also national competency standards, flexible training pathways and strong collaboration among government, training institutions and employers.

Competency-based modular training and micro-credentials offer a practical approach to rapidly expand the aged care workforce while maintaining quality. This approach is especially responsive to the flexible learning needs of diverse labour market participants, including women returning to work, family caregivers, career-transitioning workers, and employed individuals unable to commit to lengthy full-time training programmes. By allowing learners to progressively acquire competencies and earn recognised credentials through modular pathways, it expands access to the profession and supports the development of a skilled workforce capable of meeting the rising demand for aged care services.

05



DEMONSTRATES A PRACTICAL SOLUTION

Drawing on international good practices and Melbourne Polytechnic's competency-based vocational education model, the GRACE Project adapted learning materials, case studies and practical training activities to reflect the Vietnamese context while maintaining internationally recognised competency standards.

The resulting training model provides a practical and scalable pathway for developing a professional aged care workforce that responds to the needs of learners, employers and the evolving care service market. Early implementation results demonstrate that the model is both feasible and effective in the Vietnamese context:



29 Trainers from 5 cities and provinces were trained and awarded Australia's micro-credentials by Melbourne Polytechnic.



More than **300 people** registered for the GRACE aged care training within three months of its public launch, with **206 caregivers trained** to date, demonstrating strong demand for professional aged care skills development.



Registrants and participants represented a diverse range of backgrounds, including men, women, people of other gender, Kinh and ethnic minority communities, religious organisations, informal and formal caregivers, etc.

(Source : GRACE project monitoring & evaluation data, VCCI-HCM, 2025 -2026)

The project provides practical evidence that competency-based training can effectively support the development of a qualified aged care workforce responsive to labour market demand in Viet Nam.

The Midpoint reflection identified GRACE as a pioneering model for aged care workforce development that responds effectively to market demand. Stakeholders emphasised the need to strengthen collaboration with care providers and employers to expand workplace learning opportunities, improve training-to-employment linkages, and further refine blended learning and specialised training pathways aligned with labour market needs.



06

POLICY PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

To build a sustainable aged care workforce, Viet Nam should prioritise:

1 Officially recognise the **Non-Medical Caregiver (NMC)** occupation in Aged Care.



2 Develop National Occupational Skills Standards and a Core Competency Framework.



3 Establish modular, competency-based training and certification pathways.



4 Promote partnerships among government, training institutions and employers.



5 Encourage greater private sector investment in care services.


KEY MESSAGES

Building a professional Non-Medical Caregiver workforce is essential to meeting the needs of Vietnam's ageing population and unlocking opportunities in the silver economy.

Caregiving is a skilled profession that requires specialised knowledge, practical skills, and professional competencies. It provides inclusive employment opportunities for individuals dedicated to supporting older persons to live with good health, independence and dignity, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic circumstances, or geographic location.

Investments in training, competency-based certification, and the formal recognition of the non-medical aged care workforce are critical to improving the quality of care services, creating quality employment opportunities, reducing unpaid care responsibilities, and delivering sustainable economic and social returns.

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