



VYA Monthly Bulletin

SPECIAL ISSUE

VIETNAM

HOW TO COMBAT COVID-19 WITH ZERO DEATH AND POSITIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH SO FAR

“At the Tet (Vietnamese Lunar New Year day) dinner in London, on the 25th of January, 2020 among other things, we chatted about the historic lockdown of Wuhan in China due to new corona virus spread from a wet market there. A Vietnamese friend, who then already on high alert and rerouted his way to work, so that he would not by chance to meet potential infected people. Early Prevention! For my own professional interest in testing development for infectious diseases, I read the news on COVID-19 from UK and Vietnam regularly. As you can see the long list of articles have been written about Vietnam, it is a remarkable story. I just wish to give my glimpse view, to de myth a few things: many articles missed the point why people in Vietnam would comply with quarantine despite the inconvenient. For them, Covid-19 is the enemy and to find it effectively you need to **unite**. They fought and won the wars with the Chinese, the French and the American. They are determined to win this war with Covid-19. They have very strong **community spirit**, and they are really in it together. They have effective communication strategy with most up to date information from other countries in the mainstream media, so they **learn from the experience from other countries** to bolster their strategy with testing, tracing and isolation. It is still early day of the pandemic. The war on the COVID-19 is not over. What they achieved so far will help them to continue to combat with this deadly disease and for them to help others too.” Nguyen T. K. Thanh

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Test, test and test; isolating infected people and tracking down their second- and third-hand contacts made Vietnam the overall best performer of in the war fighting with COVID-19 globally according to [POLICICO](#) (with only 355 cases, zero death, and 2.7% GDP growth in 2020). Vietnam has gone through 73th day without detecting COVID-19 infection in the community up to now. There are only 25 active cases and with the rate of 4 infections per 1 M population, whereas the number for UK is 4596.

How did they do it, quite simple strategy really: as the first case in Vietnam was identified on 23 January 2020, the border with China was closed on 1 February 2020. The school was closed at the end of February and re-opened on 4 May 2020 and Vietnamese Government asks people must wear mask regularly and correctly.

Carrying on the strategy of the epidemic prevention, Vietnam still under the motto of preventing, detecting, isolating, zoning and suppressing epidemics thoroughly. All passengers entered to Vietnam are isolated and tested and they have to monitor their health when they go home.

We Listed Here Some Articles Published By Major Media Outlets Outside Vietnam:

On the 23rd February 2020, Handwashing Song provided by Vietnamese Institute of Occupational and Environmental Health went viral on [you tube](#), now has nearly 52 M views. UNICEF [twitter](#) loved the handwashing dance from Vietnamese dancer, Quang Đăng. It was a big hit in [USA](#), [France](#) and around the world.

Professor Anthony Costello, Professor of Global Health and Sustainable Development, at Institute for Global Health, Faculty of Population Health Sciences, University College London retweeted an article entitle: Vietnam's coronavirus offensive wins praise for low-cost model from Financial Times. [Reed, J. and P. H. Chung \(24 March 2020\). Vietnam's coronavirus offensive wins praise for low-cost model. FINANCIAL TIMES](#)

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Photo: Golden Bridge in Danang city, Vietnam, copyright: Nguyen T. K. Thanh

Viet Nam's proactive efforts come after two decades in which the country has experienced a large improvement in quality of life. Between 2002 and 2018, an economic transformation helped to lift more than 45 million Vietnamese out of poverty. Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita has more than doubled, to over \$2,500 in 2018, when the country saw real GDP growth of 7.1%. The health of the nation has improved, too – life expectancy rose from 71 years in 1990 to 76 years in 2015. *Fleming, S. (30 March 2020). Viet Nam shows how you can contain COVID-19 with limited, resources. WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM*

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Vietnam has expedited the shipment of 450,000 DuPont protective suits to the United States to help healthcare professionals there fight the coronavirus, the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi said on Wednesday. [\(8 April 2020\) Vietnam to ship 450,000 protective suits to United States. REUTERS.](#)

“Despite a border with China, nation has kept confirmed cases low through quarantining, contact tracing, testing – and propaganda”. [Humphrey, C. \(9 April 2020\). 'In a war, we draw': Vietnam's artists join fight against Covid-19. THE GUARDIAN.](#)

Designers in Vietnam are creating hand-embroidered and stylish facemasks, hoping to people to don protective gear in the fight against coronavirus. [\(13 April 2020\) Vietnamese designers put style into coronavirus face masks. EURONEWS](#)

Vietnam has applied a very strict methodology from day one: identify people and groups at risk, contain them, test them and isolate positive cases. A methodology not far from the method recommended by the Director-General of WHO: “*test, test, test and isolate*”. Written by a Former French Ambassador to Vietnam [Poirier, J.-N. \(15 April 2020\). Confucian armies and European hordes. CAUSEUR.](#)

Vietnam is donating 250,000 domestically made medical masks to the U.S [Uyen, NDT \(16 April 2020\) Vietnam Gives the U.S. 250,000 Locally Made Medical Masks. BLOOMBERG](#)

Vietnam planned to have a year packed with activities as the chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) for 2020 and a nonpermanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the 2020-2021 term. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to the cancellation or postponement of numerous events and summit meetings. While it is said that the outbreak has [derailed Vietnam’s diplomatic ambitions](#), the door remains open for Hanoi to transfer its domestic success in fighting the disease into diplomatic achievements. [Minh V and Bich T \(18 April 2020\). The Secret to Vietnam’s COVID-19 Response Success. THE DIPLOMAT](#)

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MP Imran Ahmad Khan said he organised the shipment “through my own connections” with charity Solidarités International and the Vietnamese Government. And in speaking with people about the issues that I'm facing in Wakefield and seeking help and support with those I've worked with in other previous environments, it became apparent that there was an opportunity to be provided with, by Solidarités International and the Government of Vietnam, **110,000 reusable, silver-lined face masks, high quality face masks.** [Scott, G. \(18 April 2020\). Wakefield MP arranges delivery of 110,000 reusable face masks from Vietnam for NHS. WAKEFIELD EXPRESS.](#)

Vietnam has started to lift the strict movement and social distancing restrictions that remain in many of its Southeast Asian nations, allowing daily life in major cities slowly to come back to normal. [Smith, N. \(23 April 2020\). Vietnam lifts lockdown: How a country of 95m bordering China recorded zero coronavirus deaths. THE TELEGRAPH.](#)

Amid the UK's dire shortage of personal protective equipment ([PPE](#)) for health workers, two children in Vietnamese capital [Hanoi](#) have apparently funded a gift of 20,000 facemasks, which have been sent to Britain. [Cockburn, H \(24 April 2020\) Vietnamese children donate 20,000 face masks to UK after saving up 'lucky money'. INDEPENDENT](#)

Made-in-Vietnam Covid-19 test kits have been recognized by the Emergency Use Listing procedure (EUL) of the World Health Organization. [Ngoc, B. \(26 April 2020\) WHO approves made-in-Vietnam Covid-19 test kit. VNEXPRESS](#)

It can even detect errors in the collection of samples as well as safeguarding the entire diagnostic process. The kit includes 9 primer and probe sequences to detect 3 target genes of beta coronavirus including SARS-CoV, SARS-CoV-2 and bat SARS-CoV. Amplification result and the limit of detection of 3 target genes equal to Realtime RT-PCR multiple primer of the biological kit. [\(28 April 2020\) Vietnam Announces New COVID-19 Test Kit Eliminating Gross Error Caused by Incorrect Collection of Samples. BUSINESS INSIDER](#)

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Due to limited treatment infrastructures, the Vietnamese government has focused on mass testing and aggressive contact tracing – a tactic it had employed to fight SARS 17 years ago. Only this time on a larger scale. As of 30 April, Vietnam had conducted 261,004 tests and put tens of thousands of people in isolation. [Bui, T. \(1 May 2020\). Aggressive testing and pop songs: how Vietnam contained the coronavirus. THE GUARDIAN.](#)



Photo: Ha Long Bay, Vietnam, copyright: Nguyen T. K. Thanh

“After being closed for nearly a month, Vietnam's once bustling stalls, shops and restaurants are open once again. But, in a preview of what is likely to happen in other countries, things have not gone back to the way they were before the arrival of coronavirus. There is less

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seating and greater space between customers, and there is an added emphasis on personal hygiene. Hand sanitiser has also been made available for all customers, while employees must wear masks when interacting with guests”. [Tatarski, M. \(2 May 2020\). Life after lockdown: Vietnam reopens tentatively after zero deaths. THE TELEGRAPH.](#)

“Vietnam didn’t just flatten its coronavirus curve, it crushed it. Whatever the future holds, Vietnam, a nation of 96 million, appears to have contained the virus. As Vietnam emerges from lockdown, the eyes of the world will be watching.” [Humphrey, C. \(6 May 2020\). Vietnam crushed the coronavirus outbreak, but now faces severe economic test. THE GUARDIAN.](#)

“A 43-year-old British man may undergo a lung transplant in Vietnam, where he is critically ill with Covid-19. The man, a Vietnam Airlines pilot, developed a fever and cough on 17 March, and was later admitted to Ho Chi Minh City Hospital for Tropical Diseases”. [Le, L. and Ratcliffe, R. \(8 May 2020\). British Covid-19 patient in Vietnam could have lung transplant. THE GUARDIAN.](#)

Vietnam responded to the Covid-19 outbreak early and robustly, initially closing schools and contact tracing and isolating those arriving from abroad. The success of this approach has been based on a combination of strictly monitoring all people entering the country; ramping up testing and tracing; communicating actively with communities; and effectively treating those infected. Written by the British Ambassador to Vietnam [Ward, G. \(10 May 2020\). Covid-19: How UK and Vietnam can help each other reach a new normal. VNExpress International.](#)

"It very, very quickly acted in ways which seemed to be quite extreme at the time but were subsequently shown to be rather sensible," says Prof Guy Thwaites, director of Oxford University Clinical Research Unit (OUCRU) in Ho Chi Minh City, which works with the government on its infectious disease programmes. [Jones, A. \(15 May 2020\). Coronavirus: How 'overreaction' made Vietnam a virus success. BBC NEWS.](#)

“A notable exception to all the grim national statistics is Vietnam. At the time of this article, it has had only [55 active Covid-19 cases and zero deaths](#), and in the 21-day sequence between

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April 16 and May 7, 2020, it reported [zero new infections](#). It is worth emphasising that Vietnam is one of the poorest nations in Southeast Asia, with GDP per capita of barely \$2,500 – 13 times less than Italy and 25 times less than the United States. Moreover, it shares a 1,444km-long border with China and relies heavily on Chinese imports and exports. Finally, Vietnam's population is roughly 100 million, making it one of the most densely populated countries in the world". [Laura, H. \(24 May 2020\). Vietnam's prudent, low-cost approach to combating Covid-19. THE CONVERSATION.](#)

"While many countries around the world remain in various forms of lockdown as they battle the coronavirus pandemic, Vietnam has entered a form of self-contained normalcy. International borders remain closed, but nearly all forms of business have been allowed to re-open following a 'national social distancing' campaign which lasted for most of April". [Martin, C. \(28 May 2020\). What's next for Vietnam's Retailers? LinkedIn.](#)

There is one overlooked success story -- Vietnam. The country of 97 million people has not reported a single coronavirus-related death and on Saturday had just 328 confirmed cases, despite its long border with China and the millions of Chinese visitors it receives each year. [Gan, N. \(30 May 2020\) How Vietnam managed to keep its coronavirus death toll at zero. CNN](#)

Following the British pilot story above, the pilot woke up from coma but needs lifesaving lung transplant. "Reports said 30 people had volunteered to be donors for the man's lung transplant but a potential complication with the surgery has arisen in that lung transplants are normally allowed only from brain-dead patients under Vietnamese medical regulations. It has been reported that the Vietnamese health system has spent more than £163,000 on treating the pilot." [\(30 May 2020\). Coronavirus: British pilot with COVID-19 in Vietnam wakes from coma but needs lifesaving lung transplant. SKY NEWS](#)

"When the health care systems of most powerful countries in the world have failed to curb the spread of COVID-19, the South Asian country of Vietnam performed an outstanding work

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against the pandemic cutting swath through the globe”. [Sorwar Alam \(5 June 2020\). Vietnam: A success story in fight against COVID-19. AA](#)

“I owe a debt to Vietnam. Maybe I can give something back. Maybe I can just be better.” was a perspective from a British who has been living in Vietnam since the coronavirus outbreak. He said: “I’ve heard those who criticise Vietnam saying that “ugly nationalism” and “populism” are appearing in Vietnam. I disagree. It’s called pride. Pride and confidence. Still zero deaths. “. [Steve, J. \(21 June 2020\). Covid-19 in Vietnam - the fear, the tears, the pride and the debt. MEDIUM](#)

“The 42-year-old Scottish pilot spent 68 days on a ventilator, thought to be a longer stretch of time than any patient in the UK. He did so not in a hospital in his hometown of Motherwell, but in Vietnam's sprawling and hectic Ho Chi Minh City, with no close friends or family for thousands of miles” [Barnes, O. and Bui Thu, B. \(27 June 2020\) Patient 91: How Vietnam saved a British pilot and kept a clean Covid-19 sheet. BBC NEWS](#)

More videos recently:

- [Coronavirus: Why Vietnam is not needing to socially distance amid pandemic | ITV News \(4 May 2020\)](#)
- [COVID-19: Vietnam lifts lockdown in rural commune, CNA \(6 May 2020\)](#)
- [Vietnam's coronavirus success, 7 NEWS Australia \(16 May 2020\)](#)
- [How Vietnam Beat The Coronavirus, NEWSY \(2 June 2020\)](#)
- [What's Happening with Covid-19 in Vietnam, CSIS \(2 June 2020\)](#)
- [How Vietnam's authoritarian government succeeded at containing COVID-19, PBS NEWS HOUR \(9 June 2020\)](#)
- [Report from Vietnam, Dr John Campbell \(13 June 2020\)](#)
- [Vietnam seen leading Southeast Asia in COVID-19 response | ANC \(17 June 2020\)](#)

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