

The Linkages

Supporting community environmental protection initiatives

Internal Newsletter of the Sida Environmental Fund in Vietnam





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Annual Issue for 2007-2008

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The Way Travelled **and the New Journey**

*Hoang Thanh Tam
Bui Thi Thanh Thuy
Nguyen Huy Hien*

The Sida Environmental Fund (SEF) was established in 1997 by the Swedish Embassy, Hanoi and started in the same year its operation to respond to local initiatives on environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources. In the period 1997-2005, SEF has supported 188 projects throughout Vietnam, covering its influence across the nation and actively contributed to the environmental protection on a local level and strengthening the role of social organizations in Vietnam.

To harmony with the development trend of the world and to meet the social change process in Vietnam, the period 2006-2008, SEF decided to allocate a larger portion of its funding to support projects proposed by civil society organizations in order to facilitate their involvement in promoting environmentally sustainable development in Vietnam. In this period, SEF has supported 75 projects.

Supporting community environmental protection initiatives

The three-year period between 2006 and 2008 is considered as a landmark for SEF in sponsoring initiatives and efforts of the community in environmental and natural resources protection. That is a break-through change made by SEF to expect a positive outcome from the community in more sustainable environmental protection. Going beyond the support for traditional models (ecological toilets, bumping wells, biogas cells, etc.), for the past three years, SEF has paid more attention to those projects stemming from people's own ideas and enterprise on environmental issues and their urgent needs for radical and consistent solutions. It can be said that these are the projects featuring relations among people and interaction between people and local authorities for the common objective of improved environmental protection. In another word, within the community under the project, there has been an ongoing self-evolution to identify clearly the reasons for environmental pollution, and depletion and exhaust of natural resources, wildlife, stagnant and unsustainable production, and to seek an internal solution to associate with responsibilities and win over backward practices that damage the environment.

After 11 years of its operation, SEF actively contributed to the community initiative in environmental protection sustainable use of natural resources. SEF has supported 263 projects throughout Vietnam. We really hope that through supporting these local initiatives, SEF can help raise environmental awareness and knowledge, as well as improve capacity of community groups and organizations. Consequently, the small grants can be effectively translated into solutions for environmental problems at local levels. Results of these projects and changes made at the grass-root can then gather momentum for us in the next period at any operation form.



The Way Ahead

Civil society has just been formed and started in Vietnam. The Fund's activities during the past years have met requirements from Vietnam's society changes in accordance with the world's development trend. In the coming time, although the Fund shall finish, their activities should be continued and developed sustainably. Hence, based on the experiences, the maintained and developed outcomes from the implementation of SEF during the past 11 years, the Center for Development of Community Initiative and Environment has been established in a hope to continue contributing to the development of civil society and sustainable environment in Vietnam.

SEF has provided support in setting up, maintaining and connecting activities of such networks in the North, Central and South as CSOs specializing in environmental protection, Student clubs and the Environment at schools, Volunteering Group for environmental protection, resource users, interest groups, clubs and small cooperatives, village communities, etc. They really need opportunities of capacity building, and information sharing to cooperate in raising a common voice for the purpose of social development and enhanced life quality.

To maintain continuity and facilitate the Center's initial activities as well as support civil society organizations in Vietnam, according to experience of SEF and some international NGOs as Keep Sweden Tidy, ForumSyd, etc. of Sweden and CSE of India, the Center for Development of Community Initiative and Environment will seek the cooperation with Vietnam organisations and to develop and start up programs relating to issues affecting the community such as Sustainable Consumption and Production, food safety, socio-environmental impact of land withdrawal for industrial zone construction and public purpose, community's participation in monitoring, management and effective use of natural resources. Develop and implement Green Action Program at schools. This is a program enabling the students themselves to assess the environment's quality and calculate utilization of resources like water, air, land, energy and waste as well as consumption or waste amount through research, information collection, calculation and assessment. Besides, enhance linkage to maintain and connect environmental initiatives of community and civil society organizations (CSO) nationwide will be interested by C&E such as develop and implement Capacity Building Program for communities and CSOs in the forms of training, workshop, dialogue, and forum related to emerging environmental protection issues and effective use of natural resources to enable them to participate effectively in development activities and decision-making process at localities; disseminate and share information of environmental issues through "Green Information" paper and website with community, CSOs and interested people nationwide.

Story from the field



The community participation in the decisions related to environment protection in Ham Kiem industrial park

*By Nguyen Nguyen Cuong
Director of Center for Education and Environmental Communication*



In the process of industrialization and modernization of the nation, attracting foreign investment in industrial aspects in recent years had many contributions in push up domestic revenue, improving revenue for the people and job for many classes of the people. Variety activities of the industrial park with many different sectors, using many kind of material, fuel and industrial park, where there are large amount of people live in, so

all activities there can cause bad effects for environment. These effects in many conditions can affect to elements of environment (natural and society), cause changes with landscape, bad effects to environment, adverse effects to human' health and other creatures.

Building Ham Kiem industrial park have great meaning, with the desire to increase income, improve the liv-

ing standard, change career structure. However, to gather with developing economy there is the pressure for society and environment. Firstly, we have to mention the difficulties due to losing used land (most of the land for Ham Kiem I industrial park project is for agriculture). From previously to now, people in two communes: Ham Kiem commune and Ham My commune are specializing in planting fruit tree (dragon). When specialized land of the resident here is moved to use as the ground for Ham Kiem I industrial park, it will make resident unemployed, reduce revenue remarkably. Besides, when project is implemented and initiated there are environmental problems around industrial park such as: Latency the impacts created due to environment pollution from industrial park, about security when concentrating a large number of labour, about water waste of industrial park when project initiate, exhaust fumes, noisy.... These are the heavy pressure for local authority as well as for resident surrounding Ham Kiem I industrial park, So it is necessary to have solutions.



The problem are policy texts, decisions on protecting environment, policies related to Ham Kiem I industrial park, the agreements about resident's right and duty in protecting environment....haven't been widely universalized and the resident haven't been completely approached. So the project: "Community attending in the decisions related to protecting environment of the business building investment project in Ham Kiem I industrial park – Ham Thuan commune – Binh Thuan province" was carried out in order to popularize the information of protecting environment and policy texts, which related to Ham Kiem I industrial park with the aim to enhance the speech, the position, the role of residents and ensure the process "people know, people discuss, people make and people check".

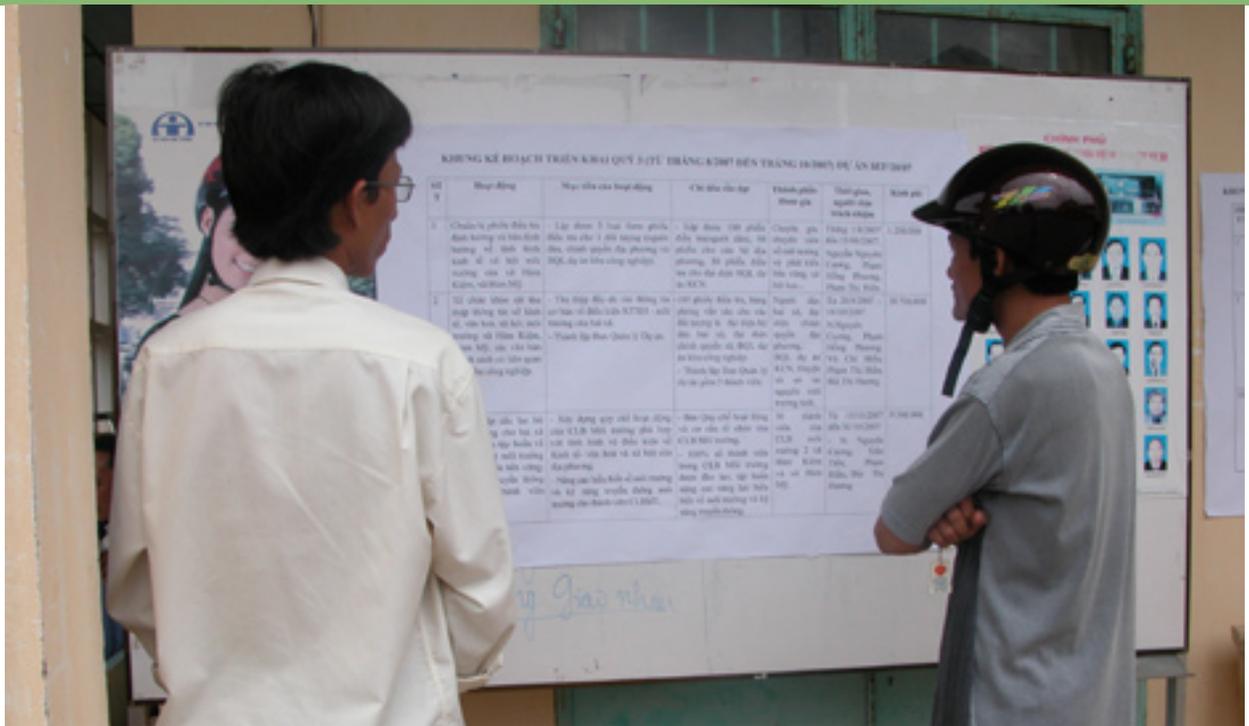
The cadres in Ham Kiem, Ham My, Ham Thuan Nam communes – Binh Thuan province had basic information about industrial park. These information are reported officially to people. Estimating about industrial park, most commune's cadre think that building industrial park will improve living standard, develop service sectors but beside that, industrial park will cause bad influences on local environment. Water waste from industrial park make cadres in two communes have the most anxiety and they want that indus-

trial park's cadres should have good measure to avoid causing impacts to resident's health. About attracting the resident's participation into environment protection decisions, commune's cadre have just carried out integration in commune people meeting, there haven't official meeting discussing about these. However, the reason commune's cadre haven't organized is building industrial park haven't initiated, they also don't have information about business sectors so they can't predict what environmental problem will occur for location. The special care problem is local cadre interested in local environment problem. Most asked people told that they care to water waste problem, air waste, rubbish when industrial park go into production.

People in two communes are the main object will be effected when there is industrial park. At the first stage- clearing ground, people's cultivated land area in two communes will be cut down. During the industrial park building process, people will continue to be influenced from industrial park about these problem: water waste, waste, exhaust fumes. So, people need the right, the duty to contributing ideas together with managing board of industrial park to give measure reducing disadvantages from industrial park. At the first stage, most people in two communes know information as: area, industrial

park location through commune cadres' reports. People are interested in environment problem when there is industrial park, there are 90 percent answered that they are anxious about environmental problem and especially is water waste from industrial park. To contribute ideas for giving total environment protection decisions, people in two communes took part in discussing of their small village and commune. Although meeting wasn't organized separately to discuss about environment problem, it is only integration but it show the care of resident and local authority in these problem. We can see that at the first step there is participation of resident in environment protection decision.

Managing board of industrial park had objective overviews about environment problem caused for local when they think that there will impacts to environment if there is no modern and suitable measures to solve the problems as: water waste, refuse. There 90 percent answers show that they are anxious about water waste, more than 60 percent anxious about exhaust perfumes, more than 40 percent are anxious about rubbish caused for the local from industrial park. To solve these problems, managing board of industrial park discussed with the cadres in two communes Ham Kiem and Ham My to find water waste treating mea-



sure and local environment protection for long time. To draw the widely attention of people into decisions relating to the environment protection problems, industrial park’s managing board organized interviewing residents, letter box collecting ideas, but it really haven’t widely participation of the people.

Industrial park’s cadre have sense of initiative in local environment protection and in attracting the people Participation in the environment protection decisions. Firstly, they need detail environment protection measures, then popularize to people through means of communication so that people can give their opinions and finally, take ideas by meeting and interviewing.

Enhance the people’s participation into decisions through conferences and training program, people in two communes approach environment problems. From the time they do not know any environmental information(zero level) to the time they catch and understand general conception about environment, policy texts, environment protection policies, environmental decrees in and around the industrial park. From that, people have foundation and more knowledge when giving ideas about their right and responsibilities in the environment protection commitment. Nguyen Phuong Nga – a resident in Ham Kiem commune said: “Only when CEACE come here to introduce, we know the right, responsibilities of residents, especially, the people living around industrial park and export processing zone are participated in environment protection. Previously, through newspaper, television, we see that many areas around industrial park (both the North and the south) are serious polluted, even many place must wear comforter all day due to dust and even we must do that when having meal. Living near industrial park, we must face with exhaust fumes, dust and we hope that when going into production, Ham Kiem indus-

trial park won’t fall into bad situation like other industrial parks. The member were improved environmental knowledge and sustainable development and comprehend policy texts, state policy about environment surrounding industrial park. Training program teach communicating skills about environment for club member, first step helping club members understand the role of communicator in environment protection. To have practical efficiency result, local communicated with agency caring out the project to have activities right after class in order to help trainee apply studied knowledge in to practice. Most of the trainee agree and support the decision setting up environment club

Building model: “Community participating in decisions related to environment protection” in Ham Kiem industrial park to bring into play people’s mastery. The model is the good connection among three sides: Residents, local authority of two communes: Ham Kiem and Ham My, managing board of industrial park in protecting environment together. Community attending decisions of the projects in Ham Kiem I, create condition for people to give their opinions to complete decisions base on: people know - people discuss - people examine - people get benefit.

* People know: Enhance the community’s awareness into decisions of the project. Environment club member have to introduce in detail to help people know that when industrial park are built, they have to face with environment problems as: using land, infrastructure, noise, dust... All of them impact to people’s life. In the deploying process of the project, it is researched carefully to find out the particular problem of industrial park about new environment and project will be more deployed in the model so that all people will participate together.

* People discuss: Environment club member is the connection among people, local authority. Ham Kiem in-

dustrial park managing board will discuss together, chose the main activities, which are implemented to approach a green, clean, fine environment.

*People work: The main member of environment club, authority, and representatives of industrial park managing board will play a role as organizing board together with community taking part in environment protection in Ham Kiem industrial park.

*People investigate: The main member of environment club together with community's representatives set up evaluating group and check deploying process of activities as well as the results of the project.

* People get benefit: To mobilize the participation of people in two communes Ham Kiem and Ham My about environment protection, environment club member have to supply information about benefit(land using right, fresh water, managed rubbish...), which people will get when they participate into project.

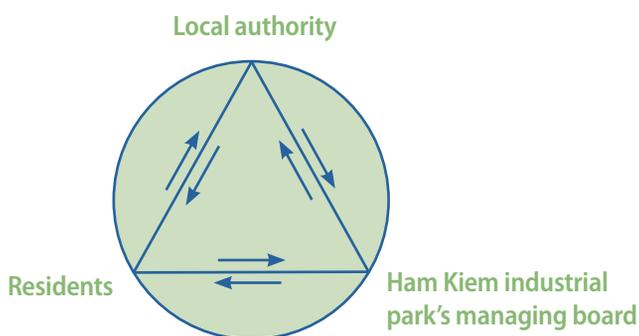
Model structure: triangular type, it is close interaction of 3 tops: local authority, local community and Ham Kiem industrial park managing board.

Motive power of model: Orient conservation in order to obtain the agreement among partners.

The routine of model: Deploy community communicating program about content "the community attending in the decision" such as: leaflet, message, stage, communicating on local radio. Organizing 2 conservations among 3 sides: office staff, community, business in a day. The objects, who will deploy communicating program: environment club member.

Through building model "Community participating in environment protection decisions" in two communes: Ham Kiem and Ham My, at the first stage when Ham Kiem industrial park initiated building, the first thing we can see is that people in two communes increased their awareness about environment protection. They realized the important role of environment protection, they don't rely on the others as previously when they usually look forward to the government, especially is environment problem, that relate directly to people' daily life. They are enthusiastic in participating environment protection activities begin with signing into environment protection commitment among 3 sides: People, local authority and managing board of industrial parks. It is the first model in province so it is received the special care of Binh Thuan natural-environment service, of Ham Kiem people's committee, Ham My people's committee and highly unified participation of people community in two commune location. With the final goals are: People know, people discuss and people check. Community attending into decision model was born in 2/2008 is suitable with local's situation at present – The time Ham Kiem industrial park initiate building Ham Kiem II industrial park with total area 433.26ha. The model's result - people's commitment among 3 sides: people, local authority and Ham Kiem industrial park managing board like a connection to connect tightly among people, authority with business.

Model:





The model community attend in the environment protection decisions gained remarkable achievements. The supports and commitment of managing board of industrial parks in Binh Thuan province – which seem not to be occurred. This is considered as the first important factor, that led to the commitment’s success. The relationship, good combination among the sides related (inhabitant community, local authority, managing board of industrial park in Binh Thuan province) is the essential factor to come to the commitment’s unification. Bringing model “the community attend in decisions relating to environment protection” in Ham Kiem industrial park have highly socialization, meet the demand: people know, people discuss, people make and people check. Model “the community attend in decisions relate to environment protection” in Ham Kiem industrial park is assessed as a remarkable model to bring into play the role of community in environment protection, it is possible to duplicate, widen, and widely apply in other province location, where there is industrial park

The project carried out the outlined tasks and targets, implemented investigating, estimating the texts relating to environmental stage around Ham Kiem industrial park, affirm the strength of the strong connection, protecting environment among residents, local authority and industrial park managing board. The

project finished 4 targets with 9 basic contents, ensure the time and the rate of progress. Delivered and collected 300 voting papers investigating about social – economy situation and environment for 3 objects: residents, Ham Kiem cadres, Ham My cadres and Ham Kiem industrial park managing board. Organized 2 conferences about environment protection and sustainable development in two communes Ham Kiem and Ham My for 60 delegations. Organized 4 resident meeting for people in two communes Ham Kiem and Ham My with the participation of 200 delegations. Set up two environmental club in two commune location (15 members per club).

Especially, The project built, implement successfully model: community attending in the decisions protecting environment related to Ham Kiem industrial park – This is the first model that have had strong connection among three objects: residents, local authority and industrial park managing board – Which seem to be unable to carry out. Model’s results lead to environment protection recognizance text consist of 15 points with the highly unanimous of 100 percent delegations attending in the people meeting, seminar, expert meeting and conservation meeting. A special success of the project is that attracted many objects who pay attention to environment protection problem around the living location from the children to the old, from the

younger to women, from the farmer to cadres.... The project like a starting point, the opening for environment protection activities and the main force is the club members in two communes.

Suggestion.

The environment committing text of residents, local authority and industrial park managing board need to be implemented rapidly.

*Environment club: Enthusiasm start, actively participating, implement the activities, environment protection movements of local and other activities related to Ham Kiem industrial park.

* Local cadres: Create condition for environment club to participate more enthusiastic. Usually follow, oversee the implementing situation the environment protection commitment text of three sides.

* Natural environment service of Binh Thuan province. We suggest Natural environment service of Binh Thuan province to create condition, help, give priorities to all club member and people in two communes (if possible). From that helping they will be trained, improved ability, supported activity expenditure.

* Ham Kiem industrial park managing board: Ham Kiem industrial park managing board should usually organise exchanging with residents information related environment protection activity of Ham Kiem industrial park.



Recommendation of measures for conservation and development of the Tam Dao National Park in relation to the project Tam Dao 2

By Nguyen Ngoc Sinh
Chairman of VACNE

In recent years, Vietnam had exerted itself for rapidly increasing forest covering surface as well as surface of the national parks and conservation areas. However, the development and conservation of the national parks and conservation areas are always complicated matters, thus a lot of them are usually encroached upon or endangered to be encroached upon. Deforestation, land occupation, animal hunt down, genes source stealing are usually take place in the national parks and conservation areas. Moreover, taking unfair advantages of the policies to adjust areas of the forest subdivisions, many intension for economic development, especially road construction and development of ecotourism projects (with untrue meaning of the ecotourism) in the areas of the national parks and conservation areas is having increasing trend, that provides the risk of destroying previous effort to increase quantity and areas of these parks.

The Tam Dao mountain chain is over 80km lengths, crossing populous and rich land areas in 3 provinces Vinh Phuc, Thai Nguyen, Tuyen Quang. This is the mountain chain having many topographical types and different attitudes with the highest peak of 1,592m. Based on the specific ecosystem with many precious fauna and flora genus and species having conservation values, the Tam

Dao had been officially recognized as the prohibit forest in total area of 19,000 ha since January 1977. Biological value as well as important impacts of the Tam Dao in regulating the climate conditions in the Northern midland prove that its role does not limited within the range of a prohibited forest.

On March 6th 1996 the Government had made a Decision No 136-TTg to approve an investment project to create a Tam Dao National Park. According to this Decision, the Tam Dao National Park has a total area of 36,883 ha with the planned boundary of 80km length and from 10 to 15km width, that is located in 3 provinces Vinh Phuc, Thai Nguyen, Tuyen Quang and ranges in the altitudes from 100m to 1,592m a.s.l. The buffer zone for the Tam Dao National Park has a total area of 53,496ha ranging in the altitude below 1000m. The buffer zones belongs to administration border of 27 communes having about 200,000 inhabitants from 7 ethnic groups, which mainly support themselves by agricultural cultivation. Beside advantages on nature and climate, the Tam Dao is also a residence of over 490 flora species including many endemic and precious ones such as Sam bong, Fokienia, Pinus, pedocarpus fleurgi, Len xanh, Amomum, Do quyen and famous orchids. The Tam Dao National Park has also



218 fauna species including tigers, panthers, monkeys, francois's langur, stags, deers, pheasants, lesser oriental civets etc. The specially valuable and rare species are Tam Dao sea robin (Tam Dao toadfish), red-necked partridges together with hundreds of original insect species. The most special in the Tam Dao NP is probably the wetland, starting from the altitude of 1,100m to 1,403m, in the spine of the Tam Dao mountain range, that is usually called the Short forest. The Short forest is located in the Tam Dao 2 area (extend by about 50km in the Northwest –southeast direction). The Short forest in the peak of the Tam Dao mountain is considered the specific auxiliary type of the closed subtropical wet evergreen rain forest with the main flora belonging to the families of Ericales, Re group, Illiciales...

Since 2005, the Vinh Phuc province had allowed the Viet Nam Partners LLC, USA (the VP Company) to employ American experts from the Belt Collin Hawaii Ltd to outline the plan of developing the Tam Dao 2 project into the ecotourism area with primary total square of 300ha and then reduced into 200ha, which belongs to the strictly protection subdivision,

with total investment of hundreds millions USD. According to the project, there will be in the area many constructions, a amusement park and a resort with casino in dimension of 200-to- 400-room hotel.

To risk of losing hundreds hectare of the core areas of the Tam Dao National Park to the tourist business area, many NGOs and scientists in Vietnam had raised their voice against this project. The public had also taken parks with tens of newspapers, journals, electronic newspapers publishing articles relating the Tam Dao 2 project. Confronted with the situation, the central committee of the VACNE had decided to raise the voice against the Tam Dao 2 project. Effectuating the decision, the VACNE had send an official correspondence to the People committee of the Vinh Phuc province and related branches and ministries, organized task force to the Vinh Phuc and express the opinions to the local authority, created the special topic "The focus – Tam Dao National Park" in the VACNE website (www.vacne.org.vn). In recent time, the VCANE had also sent an official correspondence to the Governmental Office against the Tam Dao 2 project.

The case of the Tam Dao 2 project is still in the hot moment. The opposing people still want to go clear out and go to the last gasp with the highest level of authority. On the other hand, the people taking the initiative of the project quite believe that the project will be approved. The case of the Tam Dao 2 project had already crossed the border of the Tam Dao National Park and even cross the border of conservation matter and is a hotspot in Vietnam. The conservation matter in the present context, through this particular case study, needs to be approached and solved in objective and systematical ways in order to gain necessary solution and experiences.

After a thorough collection of relevant information, VACNE and SEF have jointly organized a workshop to collect ideas and comments from scientists, NGOs in Vietnam, and relevant ministries/sectors on conservation and development of the Tam Dao National Park in relation with Tam Dao 2 project. The workshop has been conducted for 1 day in Hanoi with the title "Environmental issues related to the idea of the Tam Dao 2 project". There were about 90 participants attending



VACNE also cooperated with the mass communication organizations to make the activity results and proposals available to the public, as follows:

- The National VTV, Hanoi TV, VTC broadcasting stations.
- Inspection Newspaper, Science and Life Newspaper, Journal of Health and Environment, VACNE's Website.

the workshop, including: experts on biodiversity and environment, representative of the Tam Dao national park, representatives from the related ministries/sectors, from the Vinh Phuc People's Committee, from the community living in Tam Dao, from the Northern, Central and Southern national parks, from SEF, IUCN, WWF and other related international NGOs in Vietnam. After the workshop VACNE has summed up all comments from the participants that were made both orally and through questionnaires, integrated them into the Advisory Board's paper which was sent, together with VACNE's official letters, to following authorities:

- The Prime Minister, The National Assembly's Committee for Science, Technology and Environment.
- Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE), Ministry of Construction (MOC), Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), and Vietnam Administration of Tourism (VAT).
- People's Committees of Vinh Phuc, Thai Nguyen, and Tuyen Quang provinces.

With effort and determination, VACNE together with SEF engaging a large number of experts from fields of biodiversity, environment, construction, geology, hydrometeorology, and history in the Advisory Board to ensure the quality of petitions and contributing to the wider and more comprehensive angle of the view on the issues completed a number of petitions to the highest authorities in Vietnam to stop the Tam Dao 2 project.

Just after the workshop, a large number of articles and news were published in mass communication means such as television, radio, newspapers, and magazines. They reflected fully, systematically, and objectively insufficiency of the project by quoting the Advisory Board's Comprehensive Report, through interviews in the margin of the workshop, and in statements at the workshop. This information was reflected focusing on the period from 26th September to 5th October 2008 generating an impressive communication campaign.

Petition to the Prime Minister asking him to stop the Tam Dao 2 project:

- In accordance with the conclusions of the workshop "Environmental issues related to the idea of the Tam Dao 2 project", on 2nd October 2007, VACNE sent the letter No. 203/HMTg to the Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung petitioning him to supervise relating ministries, sectors, and provinces to stop following the Tam Dao 2 project concept.
- In the letter, beside a brief description of the working process between VACNE and the Vinh Phuc People's Committee and other related bodies, of the results of study and discussion of the Advisory Board, of the results of the workshop of 25th September 2007, also potential short-term as well as long-term harmful effects of the project on the environment has been given.
- The letter has also stressed that if the project is implemented, it would form a bad and danger antecedent for other provinces in encroaching national parks and natural conservation areas there. This would also damage the strictness and clearness of the legislation, harm the faith of people from Tam Dao area as well as of the whole country in the campaign "To live and to work in accordance with legislation", create a negative appreciation of relevant international community on the Vietnam environmental protection and biodiversity conservation efforts as well as its commitment



to implement the millennium objectives that are highly appreciate at present.

- The letter has proposed the Prime Minister to direct related ministries, sectors, and provinces to stop following the Tam Dao 2 project concept and to promptly develop an alternative sound project corresponding to Vietnamese legislation and cultural tradition in order to apply a sound eco-tourism in Tam Dao.
- VACNE has also sent this letter, together with concrete proposals to the Office of the Communist Party's Central Committee, Presidential Office, the National Assembly Office, Vinh Phuc, Tuyen Quang, and Thai Nguyen People's Committees, MARD, MONRE, MOC, MPI, Ministry of Police, Ministry of National Defense, Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Sport, and VUSTA.

Assessment of the project effectiveness:

In accordance with the project's desire to conserve and develop the Tam Dao National Park, after collection of relevant documents, meetings, discussions on issues related to the building Tam Dao eco-tourism area, together with comments from experts of the Advisory Committee, VACNE has

come up with following remarks: The Tam Dao 2 project would cause a severe harm and numerous unbearable damages to biodiversity; The project would cause many urgent environmental issues, namely after its operation; The project would encroach the national spiritual, beautiful land and might start a conflict process with traditional culture.

Tam Dao National Park is a national precious asset which is full of interesting natural, historical, and cultural issues and laws. Therefore, VACNE proposes that agencies of all local levels and sectors to promptly conduct needed studies and enhance its protection.

VACNE objects the Tam Dao 2 project implementing by the two companies Vietnam Partner and Belt Collin Hawaii and petitions Vinh Phuc People's Committee to stop following this project concept. VACNE also proposes MARD and MONRE, within their competence, to stop the implementation of the Tam Dao 2 project concept.

VACNE proposes that Tam Dao National Park continues in development of the sound eco-tourism in the Park. To promote this development, the Tam Dao National Park should intensive further tourism promotion ac-

tivities, make a good comprehensive eco-tourism planning for the Park (by combining activities of exploiting TAM Dao 1 area with building a system of footpaths, halt stations, etc.), set up a good mechanism for management and reasonable exploitation of Tam Dao potential for eco-tourism by leaning from experiences of domestic and foreign sound eco-tourism activities. Especially, there is a need to work out a program of strengthening Tam Dao National Park management to match the role and position of this unique national park.

After objections from VACNE and its petition to stop Tam Dao 2 project being submitted to the Prime Minister and relevant agencies, up to now, this project has not been developed further and it's tended to be totally cancelled. If the Tam Dao 2 project continues in the development, VACNE will continue in petition to the Party and Government on this issue.

Support on regulations and local community involvement on tourism activities and environment protection in Minh Chau commune

By Le Van Lanh
Director of Center for National Parks



Minh Chau commune, lies in core zone of Bai Tu Long national park, directly under Van Don district, Quang Ninh province, is a island commune which has total area is 5120ha; among land area is 740 ha. Minh Chau is suitable for beach-tourism, relaxation tourism and summer vacation which are from April to August and forest trekking in early summers (from September to November). Minh Chau is a commune that dest not have many population in Van Don district. Whole commune has 1125 heads; among have 480 people who are in labour age (The summary report of Minh Chau commune, 2007). Minh Chau people consist of Kinh and Hoa groups which have long history and spend many generations. Income of Minh Chau people mainly bases on exploiting and growing marine resources to add breeding pigs and chickens, grow rise and small services.

Minh Chau flora and fauna system is among the most biodiversity ecosystems: Forestry ecosystem: There are forests in Ba Mun Island and Quan Lan Island. The forest

in Ba Mun Island is secondary (second growth) tropical broadleaf deciduous with many rare species that have name in the Red Book. Forests in Quan Lan Island include tram (local name) forest, protecting plantations in beaches and other plantations in mountains. Coral reef systems at Ba Mun and Dau Cao with many coral reef species like turtle, sea cucumbers and others. Low land ecosystem: with 2 beaches where sa sung can be found. Mangrove forest: Not occupies large area. Fauna system: many species include dolphin, turtle, sa sung, many types of fishes and shells. Minh Chau is a island commune that has long history with archieological sites and history areas in Ha Long bay

Potential of tourism development and environment protection at Minh Chau commune

Minh Chau commune is an island commune lies in Vinh Bai Tu Long bay, which has beautiful landscapes (caves, archaeological sites, mangrove forest sites and land islands,



rock islands...), beautiful beaches with white sand and quiet space... are special features that are attracting international and domestic tourists. The tourists come to Minh Chau include both domestic and international tourists. Most of their customers are students and pupils come for nice climate, beaches and landscape during the period from April to September and their purpose is relaxation. Tourists who come at other time are foreigners most of the cases. All most of local people who live in Minh Chau commune is maintaining their life base on catching fish and exploiting marine resources, so that their income is quite high (however, that income is not frequency and stable) and beside, some of them went oversea and often send money back. Therefore, it is that makes economy at Minh Chau to become developed quickly. Those houses which have modern architecture with full equipments have been developing quite quickly. Together, the tradition houses and the modern houses can be 2 homestay options for tourists.

Tourism activity has just be developed since 2005, although local people and local government awareness and understood big tourism potential here. Development of tourism types has been taking place slowly and monotonously. Generally, finance resources for tourism development at Minh Chau commune is

not limited as other areas in Vietnam. However, it is important thing is how to encourage them to invest tourism activities. Moreover, local people should try to take advantage of finance resources from province and district government or some non profit organizations to support tourism development.

Difficulties and constraints need to be solved to promote tourism activity at Minh Chau commune.

During process of finding way to develop tourism, Minh Chau people have been meeting below difficulties and constraints. One part of local people here lives based on exploiting marine resources surrounding to Bai Tu Long national park. Therefore, natural resources and environment in Bai Tu Long bay have been impacted by activities of local people. Some households are in the first stage of investment finance in tourism activities but they still exist in unprompted and no oriented type. From there, they cause waste of money and labour. The poor awareness of the habitants about the protection of natural resources and environmental problems (sewage, pure water...). Local people can not be awareness of tourism development orient and tourism types as well as when and what they should begin? Pressure of increasing tourists come to Minh Chau commune yearly and

demands of using tourism services are the most important problems for local people when they do not have any prepares for this mass development. To solve important problems needs to have projects to support local community and aim to below objectives: Be aware for local people on tourism development, specially is community based on ecotourism which is tourism type that attracts power of local people and has the at least impacts on natural resources. Investing on repairing and building infrastructures. Developing finance resources to support local people in developing service types, such as: home stay, food service, entertainment services... Building policy foundations to aim to create a legal corridor for local people to feel safety in investment tourism development. However, all of these problems need to be solved based on agreement of whole community and be suitable for development strategies of district, province governments and for whole country tends of tourism, eco-society development.

When National Park Center had an activity that supports for Bai Tu Long national park in that case, NPC knew Minh Chau commune, especially the tourism potential and current situation as well as urgent problems that were suitable for criterions of Sida Environmental Fund. Therefore, NPC discussed with Minh Chau leaders



and community to collect their opinions. They really desire that Minh Chau would have a project "Supports on regulations and local community involvement on tourism activities and environment protection in Minh Chau commune, Van Don district, Quang Ninh province" to support tourism development here with NPC support. From August, 2007- May, 2008, NPC combined Minh Chau People's Committee and Bai Tu Long national park to or conduct project activities. Moreover, NPC had dates with SEF delegates to give their suggestions to correct activities to be suitable for local situation.. Monitoring duty was responsible by delegates of Minh Chau community and began from building proposal to finishing project. The members of Monitoring Board were people who were truth and were voted by community. It was that helped project to be successful.

* Organizing successfully Project Opening Ceremony attracted 40- 50 local people, delegates of other organizations to attend. Project Management Board and Project Monitoring Board were voted by local people. Related stakeholders were informed on signification, purpose of project as well as project activities. Stakeholders undertook in implementing well the project together.

* Investigating to determine community based ecotourism potential and environmental protection in Minh Chau. With more than 30 local people and stakeholders participated in the activity, full report with good contents was sent to some stakeholders, such as: Bai Tu Long NPs, Minh Chau People's Committee... Participants were introduced on objectives, signification of project activities and teamwork toolkit with communities (resources map, problem tree, team discussion....

* Supporting for Minh Chau Plan of Community based ecotourism: 30 local people who have high effect on com-

munity attended. Participants were given materials and introduced methods of planning by experts' direction. Local leader and local people participated in contributing ideals and in deciding development activities of community based ecotourism of Minh Chau commune for next years. A plan (will be corrected suitably with Minh Chau development objectives in 2008). Contents in the plan were taken suggestions to complete and proposed Minh Chau Tourism Management Board.

* Because of community demand, they desire would have an organization that play role as legal person to help them to organize community based ecotourism activities easily and conveniently, set up interested groups: 03 interested groups: Home stays and restaurant business group; Transport, Rescue group; tourism guide group including core members who will participate in tourism activities in community.. Each groups consisted of at least 05 members. 05 service groups is core for Minh Chau Service and Tourism complex: Security, environment and rescue group; Transport group; home stay and food service group; Group of producing and supplying products and food and souvenir; Guide, entertainment and tourism marketing group. Members in groups participated as volunteers and were trained necessary skills by project experts. Members hope that they will participate in strong organization. Set up Minh Chau Tourism Management Board will continue to mobilize policy corridor.

* Training on Skills and knowledge of community based ecotourism and environmental protection for interested groups, based on practical and local people demands,



that training course for service groups is long strategy in Minh Chau community based ecotourism development. Training course for service groups: Skills on processing, cooking and displaying food; Rescue skills; Bar skills; tourism guide skills. Participants were trained on theory and then, practiced under experts and lecturers introductions.

* The thought that need to be expended the effects of the project; moreover, the project could collect high quality products to serve for communicate the project and the community based on ecotourism activities later. A successfully Opening ceremony of competition : "Marine environmental protection" was organized. The mobilization was organized solemnly with participants of more than 20 teachers, delegates of Mink Chua leaders and Communist Young Union and more than 200 pupils. Participants were introduced and informed the competition regulations. Delegates of stakeholders made speeches to engage and promote the competition. * The competition « Marine environmental protection », ccollected more than 700 competition products in 2 types (tourism slogan and writing papers). Selecting and give prizes for 2 types: Slogan (Minh Chau tourism slogan): 11 prizes. Writing papers: 15 writing papers in tourism, environmental protection in Minh Chau.

* Encouraging local people and leaders in writing communication papers (articles) following subjects to prepare for propagandizing on loudspeakers in order to propagandize on the project, project activities, ecotourism activities and environmental protection activities of local people drawing participant of stakeholders and attracting potential of many community members. Continuously mobilizing local people and officers to writing papers following subjects to prepare for communicating on loudspeakers aiming at propagandizing the project, community based ecotourism regulation and other project activities. The project collected writing papers which follows requested contents and subject

* Supporting for Building Minh Chau community based ecotourism regulations through informing about the activity to local leaders, stakeholders and Minh Chau community, building the activity schedule, building materials and methods; preparing document and questionnaires to facilitate local people in developing the regulation; facilitating and collecting suggestions from local people and participants; collecting suggestions of stakeholders for completing the Regulation. A completed regulation attracting near 100 people to attend collecting suggestions of stakeholders and local leaders.

Advantages

To have successful results over our expectation, the project and the project management board received many advantages and interested as well as support from below organizations: Sida Environmental Fund; Van Don People's Committee and leaders of Bai Tu Long national park; Leaders of Minh Chau People's Committee; Moreover, the project recieved support and enthusiasm participation of Minh Chau local people. Additionally, the project also had participation of top experts in conducting activities, therefore they helped the project to achieve the best results.

Difficulties and constraints

Among 05 interested groups were established, including: Rescue and environmental cleaning group; Transport group; Home stay and food service group; Guide and Bar service group; Souvenir and other service group, Transport group and Guide and Bar service group were groups that operated the most actively, rest of groups was not enough activities because establishment of those groups was earlier than practical development and removal (tourism development there), therefore, activities of those groups were organized following formalism. To be specific to guide group due to be sent training on specialist skills at Viet



My tourism company more than 01 month, so their professional development orient was identified clearly.

Changing of transportation policy, such as: "It is forbidden to run three-wheelers on roads" affected to development of tourism transport types there. Therefore, old opinion of Project management board and experts and local leaders thought that Minh Chau could develop this transport type until now has to be changed.

During project implement process, main organization as well as local community agreed together that Minh Chau should be developed following orient was community based ecotourism. However, local people have been bear pressure of big tourism companies which would like to buy land areas to build Resort areas to develop max-tourism type there.

Development speed of service types and infrastructure at Minh Chau commune was slower than increase of tourist amount come to Minh Chau yearly. Therefore, community and local people have to face difficulties, including: lack of preparation on infrastructure (fresh water, rest-rooms, electric system, system of waste water treatment and waste... especially strengthen environmental protection awareness of local people. It is reason that makes to appear many potential environmental problems.

During project implement process, NPC also looked for and trained core officers including delegates of local people who have knowledge and understand) to facilitate for tourism development in Minh Chau commune. However, because of training is long process while the rate of tourism development in Minh Chau changes continuously following each year. On other hand, local officers were usually people who have poor knowledge and do not have capacity to give deals. It is a difficult problem for Minh Chau community.

Comments and assessment

The achievements from project showed out below things: Project was conducted seriously and followed closely project plan including contents and time progression; Achievements are in high level and satisfy demand of local community; Experts who participated in the project carried out seriously and played important roles for general development objectives of community.

Assessment of local people, stakeholders and local government on effectiveness from project. Local people, local government and stakeholders evaluated highly on project implement and organization as well as interest and support the project. Those things were expressed throughout contributing and giving suggestions for contents and activities in order that they became suitable for local requests. The project helped local community in building eco-social development orient and strategy for 10 years, among tourism development is one of key objectives at Minh Chau commune.



Experience lessons.

Before project implement, execution organization should establish good relationship with district and commune leaders and community to have their support in all activities. During process of project implement, execution organization should widen relationships and take advantage of support of stakeholders (District Committee, Culture Department, press clients, schools lie surrounding project areas...) to aim to communicate on project objectives and meanings and to take advantage of supports.

All activities have to be planed and corrected based on discussion with local leader and local people. They also should focus on urgent demand of local people and should execute exactly and completely following inform to be able to create trust and effectiveness of project on local community. As for a commune in marine areas, suitable time for organizing activities should be started after eighteen day of moth following lunar calendar because local people are usually busy to catch fish or exploit molluse species on sea regions from the first day to eighteen. Therefore, after eighteen day is the best suitable time to concentrate all local people. In activities implement organization, experts should prepare carefully contents, methods and tools and facilitate questionnaires to instruct local people.

During implement process, experts should only play the role as facilitator groups, people who make decisions and execution for information and results were to be themselves local people that attend the activities. Execution organization should also organize meetings and discussions in community to help members to have chances to share and contribute their opinions. Therefore, they will help execution organization understand and follow closely community.

Execution organization should invite partners and funds as well as interested organizations to observe and share their experience with local people in order that local people have confidence in their achievements and objectives. Need to mobilize more finance resource from other funds to remain activities after finishing the project. That's why that project achievements can increase, especially represent in changing behaviour and actions of local community.

In short, after more than 08 months of project execution, although finance resource was not much and time of project implement was not long, the project SEF/04/07 achieved very good initial results, detail as: Drawing participation of Minh Chau local community; Encouraging local people invest their own money to build infrastructure, services to serve tourists; Attracting interest of district and commune leaders as well as related organizations that located in this region, some international organizations and some tourists with regard to potential of tourism development at Minh Chau commune... Thence, creating opportunities for local community to draw investment funds and build development strategies of eco-social professions during next 10 years.

To obtain big achievements, the project received interests and actively participations of related organizations that located in Van Don District region, especially local leaders and Minh Chau community which participated in and benefited from the project. However, beside successful achievements, the project also has some constraints, especially powerful development of interested groups, although it was one of key priorities in project. It is an important reason that makes experts to try finding other funding resources to continue to support for developing those groups and help community to solve other urgent problems.

To remain project achievements, local leaders and local people should execute below duties: Minh Chau People's Committee, Bai Tu Long national park should manage and remain project achievements; Local people should continue to remain and develop interested groups through practical activities; Execution organization should continue to find other funding resources to remain project achievements and support local people to solve difficult problems and promote development of community based ecotourism type here.



Social-environmental impact of industrial zones voiced by local people

*By Truong Dang Thuy,
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- The group whose houses and land were partially cleared away: They are also discontented with compensation price; however, they think that their economic conditions are better than before because there are more business opportunities (workers in industrial zones have needs for housing and food, etc.).
- The group affected by “suspended planning”: some households living in industrial zones affected by “suspended planning” are heavily influenced, especially farmers households. The industrial zones occupy the production land of the farmers. Compensation amounts have not been settled or paid in dribs and drabs or settled unsatisfactorily. As a result, local people without any capital have to shift to other jobs. Many households affected by “suspended planning” are not allowed to continue their crop cultivation, repair of facilities for animal husbandry, transfer of land use, and not compensated. Thus, their life is very difficult.

Below is the brief report of research findings about social-environment impact in the eyes of local people at industrial zones in Ho Chi Minh city with 11 zones, Dong Nai province with 19 zones, and Ba Ria-Vung Tau province with 6 zones prepared by the Centre for Environmental Economics and Sustainable Development under the auspices of Sida Environment Fund.

Affected subjects

Based on the outcome interviews with 60 households, the subjects can be divided into 3 groups:

- The group, whose houses and land were totally cleared away, thus having to resettle themselves, is to suffer most losses. Most of them are discontented with compensation price and meet difficulties in stabilizing their life after resettlement.



Besides, the group whose houses and land were not cleared away at all is the overall beneficiary. However, all groups have a common comment that the environment has been affected. Although industrial zones have a certain green area, they still cause environmental impacts. The most pressing environmental impacts in order are listed as air pollution, water pollution, and noise pollution.

Social-Environmental issues

More than 50% of households moved in after industrial zones are established. However, few of them have employment in these industrial zones. Most of people there say they moved in because they thought it might be better for their livelihood with the presence of industrial zones. This has indicated considerable economic and employment impacts of industrial zones.

Less than 5% of households own shops, restaurants, coffee shops, or boarding houses in industrial zones. Their activities depend on industrial zones. Outcomes of the survey have shown that two thirds of agricultural households think industrial zones affect mainly negatively their agricultural production.

However, up to 80% of them think that their income is higher than before when there was no industrial zone. Although it is not possible to come to any conclusion that their increased income is attributed to industrial zones, two thirds of them say their family economic conditions are better because of the industrial zones.

*Land: The most pressing problem is related to the land. Many people say that the lengthened "suspended planning" and unsatisfactory compensation have affected substantially people's life.

*Air pollution: Almost 100% say the air is polluted mainly because of more vehicles and activities of the industrial zones. 34% say air pollution has affected their family's health.

*Garbage: Most of people say that the area where they

live does not have untidy scattering wastes.

*Noise: 10% say it is very noisy in their living area, 26% say it is noisy. There is no obvious impact of noise on people's health.

*Water pollution: There is no clear evidence that industrial zones cause pollution to the underground water, but 17% say there is a signal that water has become more stinking and smelly than before, and it is very likely that results from industrial zones.

*Traffic jam: 19% say there is usual traffic jam in their living area, mainly in Ho Chi Minh city. Most of these interviewees agree that this situation is attributed to the industrial zones.

*Health: Few say that industrial zones cause diseases for the community. Some others say industrial zones cause respiratory diseases and rhinitis. However, majority of respondents are worried about long-term impact on their health from air and water pollution.

*Infrastructure: Almost all say infrastructure has become better than before the industrial zones and these changes are attributed to industrial zones.

*Social order and safety have become more complex, mainly because of the rapid development speed of surrounding areas of industrial zones.

Potential conflicts:

Only 23% say enterprises in industrial zones are very active in reducing environmental damages. This indicates that the majority say enterprises are not active in settling negative impacts, thus representing a potential conflict between local people and enterprises in industrial zones.

63% of interviewees say local authorities are very active in easing negative environmental impacts. Most do not comment on the change in relations within the community. However, 11% say these relations have got worse. Few say that immigrant labour does not affect social order and safety in the locality. This indicates a potential conflict between local people and immigrants. 86% of respondents say in general industrial zones have exerted good impact on their life.



Impacts on the community in the eyes of local people

Economy and employment

Most of jobs in industrial zones require workers to have high level of skill (graduate of vocational school or college and university). Meanwhile, local people are mostly farmers and are not educated at tertiary education level. Thus, with the presence of industrial zones, many local people have been left unemployed. Many surrounding family members have to move to other places to seek employment.

The family economy in general is not sustainable. Compensation money is used up gradually for purchase of home furniture and appliances but not for investment or business. As their residential area has been narrowed, they do not have enough space for their children's housing needs.

Many families have to move to other places to live as their residential land has been withdrawn and they are unemployed. Only some families with better-off economic conditions can manage to run restaurants and boarding houses for rent to workers. Most of local people can not afford that. Labour conditions and salary in some industrial zone are not satisfactory.

The environment

Local people had to suffer from dust and smoke right from the beginning of construction works. Lorries carrying construction materials had caused a lot of dust. Chimneys in operation discharge a lot of smoke. New metal roofing had got rusty after a short period.

The water source has been seriously polluted because no factory has a sewage treating system. Therefore, surrounding families can no longer do animal husbandry. The bad smell has become unbearable. Mosquitoes have caused diseases for local people. In some places, cattle have died from drinking sewage.

Chemicals have penetrated into soil, thus making it uncultivable. A lot of solid wastes have not been identified as poisonous or not. Wastes have been discharged in disorder, and in some other places wastes are burned untidily, creating very bad smell.

Some people say there have emerged a lot of diseases like cancer, rhinitis, and sore throat. Especially in Bien Hoa industrial zone, local women officials

say infant mortality rate tends to increase since the presence of industrial zones. This may be because pregnant mothers have to live in a polluted environment or infants have to suffer from pollution.

Vehicles travelling to and from industrial zones have caused irritating noises for local people.

Social impact

Almost everywhere local people complain about site clearance and compensation. Compensation is unsatisfactory and its progress is slow. "Suspended planning" has made a lot of difficulties for local people. There had never been social problems in these areas before the appearance of industrial zones. The emergence of industrial zones has brought about prostitution, theft, tussle, and drug problems. It is partly because of immigrants. Better roads have brought about illegal motor racing and some losses of deaths from it. In general roads, schools, and hospitals have become better.

Local people's proposals:

- The area for workers should be built in order to improve the life of local people and train them, thus giving them opportunities of employment in industrial zones.
- There should be some residential compounds for workers
- There should be some vocational schools for local people to train them for employment in industrial zones.
- Treating environmental problems, reducing dust and smoke, treating garbage and sewage.
- The quality of underground water should be checked to ensure safety for local people.
- The rights of workers have to be guaranteed.
- There should be organisations of workers to give them ideological and political education with a view to reducing social problems.



In Vietnam, Government's socialization policies have been developed and adopted in many fields such as education, health care, social welfare and environment, which encouraging people from all walks of life are actually joining actively in the social innovation and development. The large participation of people in socio-economic development activities that is the core of civil society.

In recent years, there have been many volunteering groups or organizations established and operated, gathering hundreds youths and students to work on many social activities based on their interests. Small volunteering groups usually self-organize and implement activities with little help from outside. In fact, those groups' volunteerism has been received the support from community and media agencies.

However, the activities of young EVGs are often "random", sparse, unplanned and lack of scientific approach. The number of EVGs' members is not much because of limited ability in gathering and organizing. PanNature realizes that the biggest challenge to young EVGs is the shortage of skills to implement environmental activities as well as capacity to connect and make up volunteering network and share information because they have not been guided and experienced.

In environmental volunteerism, the groups are required to provide with many skills, such as team working;

Developing environmental volunteer groups towards civil society in Vietnam

By Nguyen Viet Dung



planning, activity designing, organizing, supervising and evaluating; problem selecting and solving; promoting and explaining skill; participatory training skill; environment communicating; developing materials of raising awareness; social survey and marketing, fund seeking...These skills are not only necessary for volunteering groups but also helpful for each volunteer to personally develop. Young EVGs in Ha Noi, Da Nang and Ho Chi Minh just focus on awareness raising campaign on solid waste, water source conservation and keeping clean the urban environment. Many other environmental issues need resolution urgently, especially in big cities, such as air pollution (due to high density of motorbikes), soil pollution (because of overuse nylons), water pollution in city rivers and lakes caused by non-treated running and industrial sewage, wildlife and wood trade illegally in many restaurants, businesses and households, environmentally unfriendly and irresponsible lifestyle.

Curbing with the reality, young volunteering groups may help solve problems through education, communication and raising community awareness in order to protect environment and improve life quality in a more scientific, methodical and effective manner. Many others lack in necessary knowledge of environment as well as information assess and have not been guided on thinking method to solve environmental problems. Therefore, it is needed to



raise awareness, build up and share information on environment for EVGs. People and Nature Reconciliation (PanNature) realizes the necessity to maintain current EVGs' activities, create more opportunities for others, broaden young environmental volunteering network nationwide and develop new initiatives.

For this reason, the Sida Environment Fund – Sweden (SEF) did approve to finance the PanNature's project "Strengthening capacity and developing environmental volunteerism oriented on civil socialization in Vietnam" in the period 2006 – 2007. The project activities were implemented with the cooperation and participation of many volunteers and EVGs in Vietnam. The project aims to promote the development and to enhance capacity of young EVGs, which contribute to the environmental protection in Vietnam through the detailed objectives such as: supporting the organization development and management to EVGs; enhancing capacity and to improve activity skills for current local EVGs; connecting and developing the network of young environmental volunteerism in Vietnam.

In order to achieve the above objectives, the project is designed with 4 major activities as followings: survey current situation, assessing the demand for training and capacity enhancement of EVGs; designing the training program of capacity enhancement and to implement the training courses with EVGs in Ha Noi, Da Nang and Ho Chi Minh city; composing and producing the guidebook and references for EVGs; sup-

porting EVGs to implement model activities and broaden the volunteerism network

Generally, selected EVGs have fulfilled the proposed objective and subject of model activities. Especially, PYNNet has implemented the cycling campaign to communicating on environment in Ha Noi continuously and regularly for weeks, which attracts the participation not only young volunteers but also old people and private enterprise (partly financial support). The point is that model activities is an opportunity for EVGs to not organize and implement volunteering activities "randomly", without plan and objective and without considering social impacts. There has been no specific assessment on community awareness change after finishing projects, however, the participation of many civil groups, of many journalist and media agencies is considered as an important indicator of project effect.

Another example is that with the project support, PYNNet has canvassed and established a new organized volunteering group which is Cycling for Environment (C4E). The group initially gathers nearly 200 students and young people and has management board and group logo as well. The group is planning to campaign private enterprises and Vietnam Association for Conservation of Nature and Environment (VACNE) to support for trans-Vietnam cycling journey from Ha Noi to Ho Chi Minh city in summer 2008. From this campaign, they expect to expand C4E network in Hai Phong, Thanh Hoa, Vinh, Thua Thien Hue and Da Nang. According

to PanNature's statistics, at the moment, there are 2 other volunteering groups which largely are campaigning on cycling and walking for environment.

With the financial support for Sida Environment Fund – Sweden (SEF), the project "Strengthening capacity and developing environmental volunteerism oriented on civil socialization in Vietnam" is considered as the first initiative on experimental support, development and capacity enhancement for EVGs in many cities and provinces of Vietnam. Despite of limited fund for small-scaled project, PanNature's project team has made intense effort to broadcast, connect and bring up EVGs of students and youth nationwide together to implement the project, especially in the northern and central areas. Many volunteering groups to implement model activities on community communication locally. The activities have got good effects with the involvement of many social groups and journalist agencies.

Some groups have developed the national network and organizational mechanism. The number of volunteers has been significantly increased. The project result has partly promoted youth participation in the environmental protection, created the active movement with abundant kinds of activities. Beginning with initial seeds who has joined with PanNature, the environmental volunteerism has been strongly and largely developed with numerous volunteers, especially in Ha Noi. The online forum of environment as well as environmental volunteerism to work and share information with the participation of more than 230 members nationwide. The forum has been maintained by PanNature on the address: <http://groups.google.com/group/tinhnguyen>;

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Using Community Art in raising awareness of environment protection for teenagers in Ha Long bay fishing villages

*By Nguyen Thuy Duong
Team Leader of GreenZoom*

Ha Long bay is one of the most famous heritage site in the world that has a potential for tourism. In Ha Long bay heritage site, besides the islets and stones, there are also some households, mostly located in 4 fishing villages: Cua Van, Ba Hang, Cong Tau, Vung Vieng, which belong to Hung Thang ward, Ha Long city. Life in such villages is still isolated from the mainland. Villagers still have to encounter hardship, while children education has to stop at 5th grade, which reduce chances to access education opportunity.

In order to take advantage of Community Art in environment education, as well as bringing kids more chances to experience, thus enhancing their confidence, with the sponsor from Sida Environment Fund, GreenZoom has undertaken the project Using Community Art in raising awareness of environment protection for teenagers in Ha Long bay fishing villages, in particular, at Vung Vieng village, Hung Thang ward, Ha Long city (the project has another name: Vung Vieng 2007-2008 project).

Vung Vieng is a floating village on Ha Long bay, on the North East of the country. In this village, there are 54 households. The residents build floating house nearby the islets, mostly earn their livings by aquaculture activities, which build up a special community.

During this year, tourism has slowly developed in this fishing village. Thus, a cultural communal house was built up

to satisfy the tourism demand. When tourism develops, villagers' life is improved, but this also leads to some potential negative impact on the environment. Moreover, because of both objective and subjective conditions, environment education for fishing communities in floating villages has not received attentions.

In Vung Vieng, there are about 22 children who are learning at floating village, ranging from 1st to 5th grade. During school or after graduation (finishing grade 5th), they usually get involved in their family economic activities. Living far away from the mainland, the kids are limited to access to the information from outside world. The most common information channel is television and radio. However, not all households in this village are equipped with those tools, and the electricity supply from the generator is not enough to run equipments. The number of students continues study in mainland is limited.

In fact, kids in Vung Vieng lack of accessibility to education chances, especially the outdoor activities, environmental communication training, heritage study, etc. Although they are living in heritage site, their knowledge on heritage preservation and environment protection is very limited. (In fact, their knowledge on kinds of fish is excellent).

This increases the demand for building an awareness raising program on environment for the young people in floating villages in Ha Long bay in general and Vung Vi-

eng in particular. They are the future generation of the fishing village, who are influenced by the current unsustainable development manner. The project is the first step to guide the children who can make the change and take the chance in their own community. GreenZoom decided to conduct the project of raising awareness on environment protection for teenagers in Ha Long bay area, especially the Vung Vieng commune, Hung Thang ward, Ha Long city.

Project approach and impacts

The participants of the project were the children aged from 7-15 in Vung Vieng village. To this object, GreenZoom has chosen to use Community Art as a tool in environment education. The project training programs will be conducted as outdoor activities, which bring kids excitement and joys.

Through training workshops, games, photograph taking, painting and drawing act as catalyst for their curiosity, observation and creativity of participants. It also enhanced sharing feelings, thus building confidence, raising their awareness on common issues in life in general and environment protection in particular.

The project has given to the Vung Vieng students chances to experience and enjoy photograph taking, statue modeling, painting, etc. After first hesitation, they became more confident and active to share many aspects of their life. The methodology of community art used in the project has proven to be an effective way of pushing community communication and participation.

The project has been succeeded in raising awareness of Vung Vieng village's youth about environmental protection which is reflected in their putting wastes in rubbish bin instead of throwing to the sea. That makes a viral affect on the whole community and it has led to the sea environment here is cleaner than the time before the project.

The project has built up a multimedia DVD (including photos, sound-recording tapes, paintings, video clips, etc.) which focused on Vung Vieng floating village life. From that, some products has been edited into sets such as: "Wedding at the sea", "Floating class", "Making a living", "Portrait", etc. However, those films and sound records are just raw materials. They could be widely used in environment education and communication.

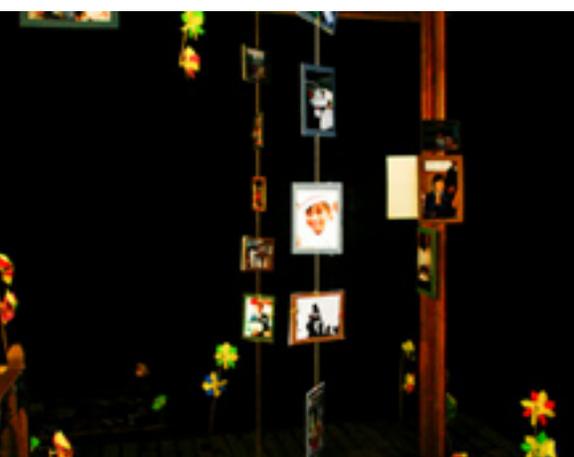
Besides, the project affects on children other than on environment, mostly enhance their confidence in life. Activities such as watching cartoon films, making To He, painting... give kids in floating village a picture of continental life. Moreover, they are support to share their opinions on their surroundings.

Training courses on awareness raising on Environment for the fishing village children was given initially access to the concept of environment of the kids, quizzed by photos (travel with pictures), introduced "Ha Long – the world natural heritage", encourage sharing their own opinion from what do they see form those pictures to share their different concepts of environment. At the same time they can share on daily life of the children family life and floating village, access to the term sustainable development "Sustainable development in fishing village".

Workshops on Community photography has been organized for the kids to show their point of view on their surrounding environment and raise their awareness on environment. 1,000 photos were taken by Vung Vieng kids on the photographic theme as Your surrounding environment, Fishing life, Your relatives, etc.

Beside the day of collective painting has been on for kids to paint together and show their ideas on a large size cloth. Taking photographs, painting is another chance for kids to show themselves thinking and point of view on environment.





From the initially demand of reading of kids in Vung Vieng, the project built up a small library, introducing 68 Vietnamese story books, 114 international books, 4 Vietnamese poetry books, a globe model and many other posters, brochures, etc...in order to introduce and make sure that the library is managed by the kids in supervision of teachers; to encourage kids to build up common rules (through talks and sharing), ask one kid to note down those ideas as well as to design, decorate and arrange the library the way they like. Beside they can exchange with each other through telling story on a picture, a book or a film you have seen recently, researching on the demand of reading through sharing hobbies, dreams and knowledge, consulting innovative ideas on small contests on telling stories, drama, test, etc. with prizes and awards.

Statue modeling ("to he") to bring kids chance to experience a traditional art of Vietnam. Each kid has modeled at least 2 favorite statues for themselves.

At the same time, GreenZoom members have researched on 3 aspects: Architecture, Environment and Life in fishing village. The products include: More than 80 GB of data, including photos, films, sound records, etc. on all aspects of fishing village life. Some photo sets such as: "Wedding on the sea", "Way of fish", "House architecture", Portrait, Class, Earn for life, etc. Study some architectural figures on house, location, etc. to build up a poster 3x0.8m on Architecture of Vung Vieng. Building up a 3D model on house architecture on Vung Vieng. Propose a solution for toilet in the fishing village.

Successfully organize a community exhibition in Vung Vieng floating village on June 28th, 29th, 2008. The exhibition has consolidated one year project conducted by GreenZoom in Vung Vieng, attracting children as participants of the project, local residents, other mass media, etc.

In addition, build up many channels of sharing and communicating the results of the project. In particular: develop and update 01 blog at: www.360.yahoo.com/greenzoom_hn Develop and update the website of GreenZoom at: www.greenzoom.org .Share and discuss about the project through yahoo group: greenzoom@yahoo.com

Throughout the project, GreenZoom has received a lot of concerns, interests and attention from the mass media such as: Dan tri, Tuoi tre, An ninh thu do, Heritage, etc. GreenZoom's activities in Vung Vieng had been supported by the press and other environmental organizations. After the project, GreenZoom was sponsored by Project Aware Asia Pacific – an Australian organization to carry out project "Floating Zoom Zoom" which would expand the activities on environmental education for floating villages in Ha Long Bay

GreenZoom, moreover, proposes 3 more activities:

To continue environmental communication in Vung Vieng

- Books project for Vung Vieng kids
- Making film about life in Vung Vieng

To give exhibitions and promote communication activities in Hanoi

- Exhibit outcomes of the project in Hanoi
- Implement other exhibitions in other communities
- Promote communication in other channels such as the press, website, blog, etc.

Expand the activities to the nearby floating villages

GreenZoom activities in Vung Vieng could be expanded to nearby floating villages such as Cong Dam, Ba Hang, etc.



Green Ocean Group and initiatives for environmental protection

Vu Thi Trang
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Tho Quang is a ward of Son Tra peninsula with an area of 4750 hectares and a long beach. The ward's population is approximately 22,000 of which one third is youth. The people live mainly on fishing, tourist services or seafood processing services (drying, squeezing, and packaging dry fish). For many years, Tho Quang ward has been suffering from heavy pollution of bad smell from seafood processing facilities. Besides, due to people's poor awareness of environmental protection, households living alongside Son Tra mountain foot have the habit of scattering rubbish in the restricted area.

Xangsane hurricane (in early October 2006) made most people's houses lose roof and collapse. The ward's infrastructure suffered heavy losses. Broken and fallen trees were lying in disorder and in the way. Waste water from sewers overflowed into streets. Alongside the beach, wastes had been piled up. The bad smell of rubbish affected local people's health and the scenery. According to statistics, infrastructure and housing losses amounted to 95%. The green area of mountains and hills have fallen by 30% compared to the situation before the ravage of the hurricane; 60% of the ward's green tree area had been destroyed and the beach had been seriously polluted; the amount of garbage in the ward had been increased disproportionately.

At the moment, there have not been many environmental protection measures in the locality. People's aware-

ness, especially among the youth, towards environmental protection is still limited. However, quite a few young people have been active in organising and participating in environmental protection activities. Those members of "Green Ocean Group" gather like-minded youths and students in environmental protection. Under the auspices of Sida Environment Fund (SEF), the Group has taken various initiatives in the locality and the group's activities have been supported by the community, relevant mass organisations and local authorities. With SEF/32/06 project, the Group has coordinated with local authorities to organise a variety of activities to attract a great deal of youths and people.

Skill training: This is an important activity with an aim to enhance capacity and knowledge for the youth to participate in and implement activities proactively with necessary skills. There have been 3 training courses to enhance management capacity for the project team with 100 participants. By means of training courses, members have grasped those skills like youth and community access skill; new planning skill (to enable local youths to have the project proposal writing and planning skill to seek resources to support environmental protection activities when the Green Ocean Group completes the project) and the ward's youth union had written a project proposal and received sponsorship for a project in teenager reproductive health; community meetings skill; sub-project proposal writing, promoting, implementing, managing and moni-



toring skills. Besides, more than 400 youths from grassroots youth union, population block and pupils in the locality have been trained to disseminate such knowledge as concepts on the environment, environmental pollution and its effect to life, wastes, kinds of wastes, methods of waste classification; ecological tourism and its impact on the living environment; sustainable development and environmental sustainable development and the role played by the youth in sustainable development. What is more, through training courses, participants have learned other skills like team work skill, communication skill, and presentation skill.

Through training courses, environment ideas for the community have been materialized by the youth themselves. Two ideas had been presented at the workshop "Community and Environmental Protection" to advance proposals of effective environmental protection measures in the community initiated by the youth to local authorities. As the subject of the training courses are the youth, the project had chosen a 'very young approach' for lecturing. The lectures had been approved by the Project Management Unit (PMU) followed by the design of teaching tools by the group and finally the PMU approved before it was used for the training courses for the youth. The meaning of each lesson is incorporated into funny and exciting games to create novelty and inspiration for learners. After each lesson learned, partici-

pants assess it and learning method by means of 'assessment questionnaire'. On this basis, the trainer understands the ability of the participants and recommends new themes for learners. Based on learners' suggestions, the lecture-writing team shall prepare new lectures.

Green Sunday: This is a regular activity at the ward on every Sunday morning with crowded participation of the population like women association, veterans association, and youth union. The campaign has partially settled 'flash points' on environmental pollution at the ward such as fishing boat anchoring areas and the mountain edge. Especially, the campaign for "overcoming Xanngsane hurricane's consequences" attracted the participation of 120 students from the University of Da Nang, urban environment company and 100 local inhabitants. This activity had been highly appreciated by the ward People's Committee and people and reported by the mass media (Da Nang Police newspaper, Youth Newspaper, School Flower magazine and some e-newspapers like www.suctrevietnam.com, www.ttvnl.com...). People in the ward have been proactively involved in the campaign for a weekly "green Sunday". Initially, it has changed the waste-scattering behaviour of business households, the community in general and particularly the youth in the ward. Each campaign has two teams: Communication team by means of posters, slogans, news bulletin reading, en-

vironmental protection call by loudspeakers and cleaning team to deal with the assigned areas with the participation of the community, pushing mobile dust bins attached with a slogan of environmental protection along main streets and collecting garbage at fixed areas.

Environment Communication: The project has used a lot of community communication and approach like individual approach by leaflets and interviews; team approach by workshops, training courses, ecological camp, group meetings; community approach by the press, radio broadcasting, television, e-newspapers, posters, banners, film shows, roadshows, and performances. The project has supported the construction of 2 large-sized posters (4m x 0.5m) at the centre with slogans like Environmental protection is to protect your own life; Green house - green ward - green homeland; Environmental protection - put wastes into dustbins, act for a green-clean-beautiful environment as well as equipped the ward with 01 book case with more than 100 selected book titles suitable for the youth as a basis to enhance knowledge for the ward's youth. The book case is located at the office of the ward's youth union and managed by this organisation.

Roadshow: This is the largest general communication event of the project that attracted 400 people of different groups including youths, women, veterans, and pupils at Ly Tu



issues. With full participation of parties concerned, the workshop “The Community and Tho Quang environmental protection” was held as an act of transfer between the PMU and the ward’s community in environmental protection. After the workshop, concerned parties had agreed on a common voice through the commitment “the community and environmental protection” signed by representatives present at the workshop. The commitment was certified by the local authorities and each party retained one copy.

The project “Enhancing awareness and actions on environmental protection for teenagers and youths aged from 15 to 22 at Tho Quang ward” was finished and brought about practical benefits to the ward’s people, changing behaviours and enhancing awareness for quite a few youths in the ward. As the project had been initiated in line with the aspirations of most of youths and people, after the project’s completion, such activities as building bookcases, broadcasting, and green Sunday, collecting garbage along the beach... are still carried out and developed by youths and people in the ward.

Although the project has achieved some initial encouraging outcomes, there still remain many shortcomings and experience lessons to be drawn from the project’s implementation, i.e., as members of the PMU were all students, they had no experience or knowledge in dealing with obstacle problems; the project’s funding had not met the real needs, thus many scheduled programs and plans had not been materialized due to insufficient funds; the PMU and Investment Monitoring Board had not spent much time for the project; as most of those who were to implement the project were students, their study at school had considerably affected the project’s progress; and there had not been a close coordination between the PMU and the Investment Monitoring Board at the project.

Trong and Hoang Hoa Tham junior secondary school. It had been carefully prepared and exerted a great impact towards coastal communities, business households, and people alongside the mountain foot, etc., and had the vast support from the community and local authorities. The roadshow took place on the main streets along 3 km and parading people shouted out slogans of environmental protection.

Environmental knowledge contest: The contest was held when the project had undergone two thirds of its period at the ward. In the form of performances with the theme on environmental protection and small meaningful games, such contests like fashion design and musical play composition on the theme “The earth is unique” had drawn 15 teams including 150 youths belonging to 15 youth union units. The contests were conducted mostly through physical, intellectual, and solidarity training games on the environment. For example, as for the obstacle race with a water jug on the head, the team that crosses the finish line first wins. The game trains the physical strength that means we should save water because more than one billion people in the world now are short of clean water. Each contest is normally divided into two parts. The first part is for knowledge on the environment among different units in such forms as painting, presentation of ideas for environmental protection solutions (the theme “the environment and the creative youth”). The second part is for the audience in the form of crossword puzzle and questions hung on a tree to be picked at random.

Ecological camp: It is a form of sightseeing tour with various meanings. The ecological camp can be held in a tourist spot or a green tree area. The ecological camp aims at educating campers on the awareness and responsibility towards the environment through their feelings and observations by sight in the nature. This is a highly effective reality-based learning method. The project has successfully organised the ecological camp with 500 campers as pupils and youth union members of the ward at Phu Ninh ecological tourist spot and Tien Sa sea resort. The project has organised various activities like “green” fashion design contest (no use of environmental pollutants or other substances damaging to the environment); camp-fire musical performance on the theme “Tho Quang youth look into the environment”; journey to the “green forest” (through exploratory games); film shows on the environment “The tomorrow of yours and mine” (the United Nations), Precious forest and sea (WWF), and camp-fire night with small games.

Workshop: The project’s workshop is a form of dialogue among concerned parties, that is, representatives of local authorities, community, youth, and PMU to seek long-lasting and positive solutions to the local environmental



Forest management, protection and sustainable development based on people's rights

*Pham Ngoc Dung
(Chief of Nature Care branch of Thua Thien Hue province)*



At the moment, environmental protection and natural conservation have become an interest of the government and concerned organisations in many different activities. However, activities have mainly focused on natural conservation zone, national park, or those areas with a large problem related to the environment or natural resources. In other aspects, the society seems to have been left 'open' to non-friendly acts towards the environment, separated relations between the nature and human, stimulated short-term calculations, exploited and used wastefully and destroyed natural resources. Environmental deterioration in "hot spots, green spots and red spots" is directly linked to the whole society's livelihood quality. Efforts put on "hot, green and red spots" are surely insufficient and it is very challenging to carry out the task of natural and environmental preservation, or even impossible if the society does not follow a philosophy of life and a moral foundation in line with proper decisions and actions. It also means that environmental protection and natural preservation should be paid attention in a broader aspect and carried out by the whole society, and the participation in environmental protection and management of natural resources should be made a self-consciousness and high sense of responsibility of every people.



However, in the current conditions of our country, it is difficult to help people be self-aware of environmental protection and good management of natural resources without community organisations as the core for activities. Therefore, in their activities, the Nature Care branch of Thua Thien Hue province always attaches importance to establishing community organisations to help people implement their initiatives by themselves.

Context: Phu Mau is a resettlement village of Huong Phu new economic commune in Nam Dong mountainous district of Thua Thien Hue province. The majority of the commune's population is Ko Tu ethnic minority people and their life is still very difficult. The population lives next to the edge of natural forests



which have an area of hundreds of hectares and belongs to a kind of poor forest due to inappropriate exploitation for many years. The forest resources have depleted, creepers and bushes have strongly developed, and there exist very few purposeful trees. However, this forest area plays a critically important role as it is protective for the life-line road linking National Highway 1A with Nam Dong district and is one of the major valleys of Ta Trach river, upstream of Huong river where Ta Trach lake is being built. Besides, it is a green belt for protection and supply of wood products and fuel, and equability of the climate, water sources, and ecological balance, etc., for production and life of people in the region.

In the past, natural forests in the village are managed by Khe Tre forest yard. In 2003, Nam Dong district People's Committee carried out a pilot scheme to assign nearly 400 hectares of natural forests for people in the village to manage and protect. After 3 years of implementation, the outcome is very limited. The illegal logging and poaching have not been prevented radically, and such measures as clearing, fostering and enriching the forest have not been taken, thus the forest capital has not been further developed, otherwise depleted.

Through meetings with local people and authorities to understand, analyse and assess the situation, the Nature Care branch has identified 3 major reasons resulting in poor performance of people's forest management and protection. First, people's capacity of forest management and protection is still very limited. People's forest management, protection and afforestation have not been well-organised; the community's role has not been developed. As they have been done individually and separately, illegal encroachment upon forest resources has not been tackled effectively. Besides, people's awareness of the State's rules and policies on the forest like Law on forest protection and development, Land Law, Decision 178 by the Prime Minister, etc., has been also very limited, thus making them confused and passive in implementing their responsibilities and rights towards the forest area assigned by the State. Second, technical measures for forest

sanitation have not been taken, thus making it impossible to protect, develop and enrich the forest capital. Third, people have not truly got economic benefits from forest management and protection as expected.

With the support of SEF, during two years from 2006 to 2007, the Nature Care branch had implemented the project: Building a model of forest management, protection and sustainable development based on people's rights.

Project's objectives: Strongly developing the ownership and responsibility of local people in natural forest management and protection; Maintaining and promoting values of indigenous knowledge in combination with proper application of technical advances to increase the effectiveness of forest land use; Increasing training and policy dialogue to create opportunities for people to get full access to State policy system related to land use, forest management and protection, and benefit from forest resources to ensure the full and effective implementation of rights and responsibilities of people in accepting forest assignment for management, protection and enrichment. Thus, preventing the deterioration of forest resources for better forest management and protection, the improved forest capital and people's living standard.

Some concrete outcomes

After nearly 2 years of implementation, the project's activities have overcome part of major shortcomings mentioned above, thus realizing objectives set out, namely:

Establishing and organising effectively the Club of farmers for forest management, protection and enrichment (Phu Mau agricultural and forestry extension club): 30 members, mostly people assigned by the State with natural forests for management and protection, are organised into a club to create an environment and a collective mechanism to develop the community's role, particularly the ethnic people. The Club meets regularly twice a month on the first and middle day of each month. Through regular meetings, members of the Club discuss and exchange information to build a plan for the Club, a plan and method to implement the project's activities; exchange and share information and knowledge on the State policies related to agriculture and forestry; help each other with experience and knowledge in production and business for joint development.

Enhancing people's awareness of the State policies on land, forest management, protection and development: Through training courses, seminars, dialogues and communication about policies among people and between people and the State so that competent authorities know the problems in implementing policies, and at the same time helping people understand thoroughly them, and implement them better. Members of the Club understand, remember, and implement major contents of the Law on



forest protection and development, Land Law, and Decision 178 by the Prime Minister, especially people's rights and responsibilities in forest land management, protection and use.

Equipping and enhancing people's capacity on team work skill, planning skill, and implementing forest sanitation measures for management, protection and effective development of forest capital: Through training courses, the project has transferred to people such forest sanitation measures as techniques to clear and foster the forest, techniques to grow and take care of rattan under the shadow of natural forest, techniques to assess the growth and development of the newly planted baby rattan trees, techniques to conduct surveys and assessment of forest resources, techniques to grow and take care of bamboo for sprout, lo o, do bau (aloe wood). At the same time, members of the Club, especially the executive board have been trained to enhance teamwork skill, participatory planning skill, management skill, etc., to organise and manage the Club effectively.

Managing and protecting the forest area assigned by the State: preventing forest fires; preventing radically illegal logging and poaching by local and non-local people. This outcome is attributed to the fact that the Club has organised regular forest patrols every 15 day; putting poster and banner to communicate about forest management and protection in the forest; promulgating rules on forest management and protection. The above activities have made the true owner of the forest, thus local authorities have paid attention and supported to prevent agents of forest damages.

Developing and enriching forest capital: By implementing combined measures of forest sanitation like clearing rotten trees to clean 30 hectares of forests and grow rattan trees and do bau trees under the shadow of the 30-hectare forest. 5 hectares of dien truc for bamboo sprout

and 1500 lo o trees for materials to a district's factory producing chop-sticks and tooth-picks have been grown by the edge of the forest and alongside streams.

Forming 01 library at the common meeting place of the Club: the Club has a bookcase with various materials on agricultural and forestry production for members to study; images, maps, charts of natural resources in the area to build a model of forest enrichment have been stored at the library to contribute to the improved quality of regular meetings of the club so that activities of the club have been made regular, convenient and highly effective.

Success lessons

The project's success is mainly attributed to its appropriate approach. People received more encouragement and empowerment in implementing the project's activities. The Nature Care branch mostly functions as an advice provider, inspector and supervisor to evaluate and impulsive the clubs' activities with a view to achieve the set target.

Effective realization of people's rights and obligations in forest management, protection and enrichment originated from gathering the people provided with forest and land to set up an organization called Agro-forestry extension club. The club managed to create very effective cooperation, support, and share among people through exchange of their experience and knowledge in forest protection, promotion of people's traditional unity and cherish, mobilization and exploration of individual sources in forest management, protection and expansion to constitute a unified strength of high added value. The club also helps people get better access to public and social services thanks to support by the project, local authorities and relevant agencies through supplementing resources.



The club also performs in forest management, protection and enrichment, frequent guarding and patrol of forests in a well-structured, scientific and effective way, setting up principles of forest protection with sufficient legal base and ability to prevent and tackle with violation in forest entrance. Forest sanitation and enrichment could be carried out easily thanks to internal cooperation and support from external sources. Investment by Agriculture Division is made in growing 05 hectares of bamboos and 1,500 lo o trees (apart from SEF's support).

Another important cause of the project's success is the method of organizing and arranging its activities. It is obvious that such outcomes not only result from gathering people into an Agro—forestry extension club. In fact, local agencies related to agro-forestry extension have set up numerous clubs, but most of them operate in a perfunctory way and nearly fail to create a close linkage among club's members; the clubs are passive and largely dependent on investment by agencies in charge of agro-forestry extension, and fail to act as a bridge connecting the clubs' members and local authorities and relevant agencies ... In achievement of such results, the Nature Care branch has exercised a close and scientific collaboration with district agro-forestry unit, commune people's committee, village people's committee and particularly the club's members to establish proper and advanced regulation, principles and action plan for the club's application and timely support its activities. Besides its focus on holding a host of training courses to equip the club's members with necessary knowledge and skills of work, the branch has sent experts to monitor the club in the first 6 months and in person participate in all meetings of the executive board and the club to listen to and share the club, providing solutions to its challenges and constraints. Accordingly this helped the club executive board gradually enhance capacity and confidence in operation, organization and guidance provision, especially its proactiveness and confidence in undertaking work meetings with agencies and local authorities of different levels to speak out demands and desires of the club; and manage to create a close, friendly and effective relationship between people and local authorities and agencies.

Difficulties and solutions

The 3 reasons for the limited outcomes of natural forest assignment to the community's management have not been settled resolutely: The project has helped enhance capacity and create opportunities for people to apply technical measures for forest sanitation to manage, protect and develop natural forests more effectively; however it has not brought about true benefits for them. This is because those trees grown to enrich the forest like rattan, bamboo for sprout, lo o, and do bau need 3 to 4 years more to be harvested. However, due to the small area of forest, large economic benefits for people have not been realized.

The solution is that the Club should continue to seek technical support from specialized agencies to identify short-time trees for quicker harvest in accordance with local conditions while waiting for the forest management, protection, fostering and enrichment to generate stable income for re-investment for forest sustainable development.

The authorities and concerned agencies are still used to the top-down approach other than bottom-up approach: Due to the features of low level of knowledge of people living in the mountainous area, the limited capacity of the local authorities and concerned agencies and the habit of programmed work, agencies of forest rangers, natural resources, agriculture, agro-forestry extension, and commune authorities are often very confused about receiving proposals made by the Club. Sometimes they lack confidence that the Club will pursue their initiatives and proposals to the last and pass the buck to other agencies... Therefore, it has taken a lot of time for the Club to help these agencies realize the rationale of its proposals for support and assistance.

The solution is to continue to support and help the Club in its operations and establish more clubs in the region to facilitate a change on a greater scale. Besides, consistent measures should be taken like enhancing capacity of the local authorities and agencies, changing their thinking and approach from bossing to listening, understanding and appreciate people's initiatives.



Enhance knowledge of environmental preservation through the voice of people at the coastal of the Cu Lao Dung district

*By Nguyen Phuong Dong
Director of Center for Vocation of CuLaoDung district*

Cu lao Dung district is a coastal district of Soc Trang province, located between 2 big river mouths that meet the Orient Sea. This district is overall enclosed by many waterways, like an oasis. It is bordered by Long phu district to the North and Northwest, by the Orient Sea to the South, by the Ba Sac river (belong to the Dinh An seaport) to the East and by the Hau river (belong to the Tran De seaport) to the West and Southwest. Most people here live on cultivation and breeding. The population is sparse, people do not have occupational awareness and most people do not have stable jobs yet. About administrative unit, this district has eight villages including 4 villages that are beneficiaries of Program 135 (in the project's area that financed by the SEF) and 02 villages. There are more than 1750ha of mangrove forest, that is living environment of various types of aquatic animal and wild animal, especially, "natural oyster and crab ground" on the alluvial ground of An Thach Nam village and An Thach 3.

This district was 24,942 ha in area, of which the agricultural production area was 13,094 ha, accounting 52.52% of total natural area, including: 9,108.75 ha of annual plants area (farm products area: 5698 ha, area remaining for sugar cane), perennial area: 2,842.25 ha, aquaculture area: 1,742 ha (830 ha of industrial and semi-industrial shrimp hatching, total production of aquatic product exploitation: 2,520 tons). The area of fruit trees is approximately 2300 ha. About breeding activities: the total cattle and poultry: more than 40,425, including 14,500 of pigs. About forestry, from the beginning of the year up to now,



entire region has planted 34,000 trees of many kinds on fence lines and dykes. About agricultural and piscicultural encouragement activities, the district opened 50 classes for transferring agricultural and piscicultural technology. There were more than 2,000 participations, and more than 2,000 training documents were used. Cooperative economy and farmstead: for the first 6 months of the year, the district has established 1 keeping oysters cooperative. Till now, entire district has had 3 cooperatives. Total real production value in the first 6 months of the year has been 8,026 millions dong. About electricity, there has been 12,819 households, accounting 92.32%. about land survey, 12,823 households have been issued Right of land use testimonial, accounting 92.32%. There were 30 schools (2 high schools, 6 secondary schools, 19 primary schools and 3 infant schools) in the whole district. About public health: there were a general hospital with 90 hos-



pital beds, 5 among 8 medical stations that gave national standard.

For several recent years, although the region's economy has grown, but more slowly than other areas. Most people were labourers and the developing of resources was undynamic. Especially, people did not understand clearly about the important of environmental protection. At the coastal area, the infrastructural system for production and life has grown at a good rate, but has not satisfy the economic growth. Traffic has been comfortable only on dry seasons.

Coastal area of Cu Lao dung district is one of the regions that have complicated and unstable weather, the flood often happens in this area so production activities are carried out by them difficultly and inefficiently, especially, the price, market and products consumption problems. Recently, the rapid and continuous changes in the sugar cane and shrimp prices have made local people's lives afflicted for many years. Besides, the shortage of clean and sanitary water resources for subsistence has also been a difficult problem, put pressure on people's lives and jobs more.

Based on the these issues with the supported by SEF, Center for Vocation of CuLaoDung district carried out activities of the project of "Enhance knowledge of environmental preservation through the voice of people at the coastal of the Cu Lao Dung district, Soc Trang province". The project content touched upon a very important and meaningful problem that not only enhanced people's awareness and environ-

mental management, but also solved many aspects of production, agricultural prices under the influences of market economy, and checked some legal documents that had concern community's benefits and responsibilities. In addition, the project coordinated with many scientists to support farmers some knowledge and methods for developing production effectively and comprehensively, minimized influence to ecological environment.

To reach the project achievement, the Implementing conference was organized for people and commune's Unions to discuss and approve the project performance and action planning and asked the conference's advice about the Project management establishment and supervising group. After reaching the agreement there were 4 training courses to enhance people's awareness of environmental protection and sustainable development as well as to enhance the managing skill of environmental protection, oriented agricultural and aquicultural production sustainably, and helped farmers and associations to approach the national legal documents at 4 communes (An Thach Dong, An Thach Nam, An Thach 3, An Thach 2) with more than 200 participants. This was cadre in propagandizing environmental protection and organized production in the region.

Beside a environmental sanitation communication meeting to mobilize pupils to propagandize environmental protection activities (took place at An thach Nam high school) with more than 100 pupils as members. 3 panels propagandized environmen-

tal sanitation were placed along the street and allocated 3,000 leaf-lets for people. This activity created good influences to the people's awareness about environmental protection. In addition, a bookshelf including environment protection, sustainable agriculture production books, with more than 300 books for pupils of schools around center to refer and study. Although, due to limited content of books hence, in long term plan, the center will plan to supplement scientific, technological, natural and literacy books for meeting the reading demand of pupils.

The aquatic product, bees and bats catching, industrial shrimp hatching increased to influence adversely the water environment. In the past time, to prevent the influences, many efforts were implemented to reduce these but the effecting was very small. Therefore in the process of the Seminar about environment and sustainable ecological aquiculture, 50 participants representative of farmers, suppliers and the People's committee helped each other to realize industrial shrimp hatching effectively but reduce environmental pollution, and at once, researched ecological shrimp hatching model to provide purchasing companies with high price shrimp. This activity helped farmers enhance their awareness of sustainable aquiculture, and minimize environmental pollution, restrict diseases.

In the past time, the sugar-cane and shripm had many difficulties of price, because there was not connection among parties. Though the project, the project management cooperated with the Economic dept., Agricultural encouragement station, Sugar refinery, Agricultural insurance, People's committee of An Thach dong and more than 40 farmers organized a Seminar about cooperation and orientation for agricultural and aquatic products for the closer connection and cooperation among 4 parties, and orientation for kinds of plants, crops rotation, changes in plant structure, increasing of using



green manure, muck in order to improve soil effectively. This seminar also instructed farmers the balanced use of fertilizer, reducing the cost price of product. Moreover, sugar cane companies concluded contracts with farmers to purchase their products according to the Decision No 80 of the Government.

In reality, most of work-people in the countryside had not got a good hold of documents which related to their rights and obligations, especially, the problems of soil, agricultural tax, security and national defense cost, poverty reduction fund, houses of gratitude, marriage law... This problem makes people afraid of contacting with appropriate authorities and they could not express their thought and expectation. Therefore, the project management cooperated with the resources and environmental dept., the people's court and the people's committee of AT2 commune to invite 40 core households to organize seminar and training to hold a discussion for reviewing the legal documents related to people's lives helped people to understand the legal documents and retransmit to the community.

To support local community in using clean water, the project management board co-operated with People Committee of 4 communes (An Thanh Dong, An Thanh Nam, An Thanh 3, An Thanh 2) considered to vote 50 poor households which being faced a great number of difficulties to support through distribution water containing tools. This support of project contributed in problems solving for the poor, prevented somewhat epidemic diseases and communicated in environment and food safety sanitation

Aim to developing household's economy towards eco-friendly and marketing trends, the Project Management Board co-operated with Agriculture and Rural Development Department, encourage aquaculture expansion Station and People Committee of 4 communes (An Thanh Dong, An Thanh Nam, An Thanh 3, An Thanh 2) built up 15 production models following sustainable development which have an aim of developing household's economy

towards eco-friendly and marketing trends. Especially, there are no chemicals in production, it will be replaced by available materials of local community such as fish medicinal plant (effectively exterminate pest and induce the plant growth), including 06 models raising "Bach Tuong" fish (a new and easy raising breed, model developed in 4 communes, used waste from agriculture production with high economy value, currently have not been developed in Soc Trang province); 02 models cultivating American corn; 07 models planting new sugar-cane seed (having short reproductive cycle about 9-10 months, currently in pilot planting however presents a potential of high productivity and sugar reserves, at the moment sugar-cane well grow with average height of 2m). It is said that multiplication these seeds is possible.

Besides, the Project Management Board cooperated with People Committee, Women Union of An Thanh Nam commune to establish a women community development group with the participation of 30 members who are Khomer's ethnic group, concurrently they invited trainers from Women Association at city and provincial level to conduct a training course which have an aim to strengthen capacity of management for member of community group in Vo Thanh Van ward, An Thanh Nam commune where have a large area of coastal mangrove forest. This group was split into 3 units with 10 women living nearly in each one. Therefore, they easily helped each others in everyday life and production, there are 1 leader in one unit. Monthly, they gathered in Ward People Committee for a meeting. Executive Board of Commune's Women Association also supported for this activity in order to find out, contribute and communicate promptly governance policies for minority people. Based on monitoring results, it is considered that this community group has initial changes of attitude in environment, food safety and sanitation, concurrently learn to protect themselves of preventing from gynecological disease which used to meet in female of the poor. At the present, this group monthly keep organizing activities.



Experiences in project eexecuting:

Through the project, activities have been implemented to local people living in 4 communes: An Thanh Dong, An Thanh 2, An Thanh 3 and An Thanh Nam, community awareness of environment protection have an considerable changes, a part of community was guided to agricultural production, aquaculture towards sustainable ways, thence governance legal documents and policies were enforced in a very strict manner, for instance the implementation of plan policy, changing production approach towards sustainable way; promotion in natural protection, food safety and sanitation, well-protected coastal mangrove forest, restriction of uncontrolled forest damage to create production land.

Local authority at all levels have fully supported for project activities and highly appreciated project investment, because of its contribution to some programs in local sites such as: hygienic water using, hunger elimination and poverty reducing and other relevant activities.

Based on project management board assessment, after ending, pilot production models will be enlarged in the following years, community group will step by step be extended and transferred experience in the whole of district. Local people and authority will invest more into environment protection, sustainable development promotion.

Project stability and monitoring planning

Activities mentioned above were extremely practical and relevant to following fields

Reality and effecton regarding solving production and environment problems. With comparison of previous production models which market pricing always is problem that people worried, at the present, production have a concern of enterprises, banks, scientists and local authorities, which created a great belief of community people. Pilot production models will be multiply to local people in subsequence years, especially new seed such as "Bach Tuong" fish which brings high economy affection (around 60.000-80.000 VND/kg). Sugar-cane seed could create condition to increase productivity for people in project sites.

Participation of local people and other society relation after project ended. The establishment and development of community group was useful in conservation and management of natural resources in coastal area, as well as making good conditions for people who live closely with forest. The community group were established and orgarnized with the reconization in legal aspect and fully supported by local administration. There are more

and more local people participating in natural resources protection towards effective and permanently ways. In addition, through seminar in production, reviewing polies and legal documents, local people will have a common voice in production, environment protection for a objective of improving local people's standard living.

However, in executing period, some downward point still remain such as: Too short duration (10 months), limited number of meetings (4), limited number of local people could take part in meetings (average 40-50 attendees per meeting), in some sites, local authority recommended to conduct more meetings (limited budget make these recommendations could not be occurred). For a small scale project, duration should be in consideration, proper duration is 1 year and concurrently, market pricing should be referred to make financial plan. Project Management Board should have experience in activity organizing and executing, before conducting these activities should be commented by local authorities at all levels in order to fully supported by society unions under management of local administration.

Pilot models should select new seed carefully in order to multiply and diversify models at local (models for poverty community which can produce and consume productions in shortest time such as: weave, arts and crafts...). When supporting water containing tool for the poor, the list of supported households should be selected and voted in each ward, commune administration will review and check the list then report to Project Management Board to consider and approve (as project done). Number of meetings should be increased (for example meeting on production, environment should be conducted in each commune of project sites with the participation of 50-60 people).



Establishment of targeted farmer group for scaling up fertilizer depth placement model for sedge intensification

By Mai Van Thanh
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Nga -Son is a coastal district, situated in the extreme north-east of Thanh-Hoa Province, about 40 km far from Thanh-Hoa City. Lying along the coast of the district, 8 communes are main points which grow sedge with 2,500 ha under sedge – the largest area of the whole country. This is a specific tidal and fertile zone, where is suitable only for the growth and development of sedge, beside for aegiceras. Because of the specific natural conditions, after processing, Nga-Son sedge quality is very shining and durable, creating the quite famous trade mark of Nga-Son sedge mats.

The sedge cultivation is closely attached to the production of handicraft-fine arts (HFA), absorbing tens of thousands of labour, maintaining and developing traditional trade villages, thanks to that, creating jobs, taking full advantage of leised and non-agricultural labour, and contributing to make the rural sector prosperous. The HFA products made of sedge are very diversified, self-disintegrated after their use life, friendly with environment. Therefore, they are very adequate for the world environmental policy and favourite commodities of numerous countries. They have penetrated deep into markets of 29 countries, including some fastidious ones such as European and Northern American. Relying on that, they can improve incomes and ameliorate the people's livelihood.



However, there is the problem of environment apart from the sedge development. Because of the increasing demand of raw sedge, the people become to invest in intensive cultivation of sedge instead of leaving it in natural growth as before. It results in applying overdosage of chemical fertilizer, pesticide and growth excitatory, not only with low effect and financial waste, but also with bad influences on surrounding environment: polluting water sources and atmosphere, increasing nitrate contents in underground water... Land and water environment at many sites has been polluted to an alarming level, influencing incomes and health of the communities.

Facing the above-mentioned urgent problems, in 2006, the Sida Environment Fund of Sweden sponsored the



SEF 07/06 project to the managing board of hamlet 3 , Nga-Tien commune, Nga-Son district, with the technical assistance of using pressed granulated fertilizer for sedge intensification by Hanoi University of Agriculture. After 1 year of execution by the project, the project established a core farmer group skilled at applying new technology of fertilization. These farmers became active propagandists exerting great influence on communities, always maintaining the good sanitation of the village, day by day improving the people's consciousness of environment. Sedge growers concerned in the project enthusiastically desire to apply new technology, as the investment costs in sedge production can be reduced up to 30-40%, hence pollution of land, water and air environment can significantly decrease, meanwhile, sedge yield can increase up to 10-15% with just one time of fertilizer application for the whole season. However, project results were reached only on a small scale of the studied commune. So, in order to largely multiply the model in the whole Nga-Son district and sedge growing surrounding areas, it is necessary to propagandize and popularize this new technology of fertilization more largely to each sedge growing farmer household by many means, and exert influences on local authorities. In 2007, the Sida Environment Fund – Sweden continued to sponsor the SEF 12/07 project. Main objectives of the project are to build many core farmer groups at other sites in the district, create the clues of new technology transfer for sedge intensification in the whole Nga-Son district and surrounding areas.

The objectives of project to establish and enhance the ability of core farmer groups in order to largely multiply the model of improved fertilization technology for sedge intensification in Nga-Son district, thence, increase the people's incomes as well as ameliorate sedge growing environment of Nga-Son district. After the project had been approved, the Center for Refresher Courses, Research and VAC Technology Transfer - Hanoi University of Agriculture, in association with the Department of Agriculture of Nga-Son district, held a Project deploying conference with a view to announcing the public objectives, activity contents and financial budget of the project to all of people, unions and local authorities, and electing a supervising board consisting of chairmen of all the concerned communes.

The Managing Board (MB) and the Supervising Board (SB) had a meeting to build their activity plan in the year and in each quarter, ask the people's opinions, and to assign tasks of each activity to their members. This plan was openly hung at cultural house of all the villages. Nga-Thai and Nga-Thuy communes were chosen to deploy and enlarge the project. With the technical advice offered by experts of Hanoi University of Agriculture and the collaboration of local organizations , 02 core farmer groups were established at the 2 communes. They participated in the project in voluntary spirit. After the training courses, 19 households voluntarily registered to participate in the project (11 households of Nga-Thuy, 8 households of Nga-Thai). All members of the 2 groups had study-excursions of the farmer group model established at hamlet 3 of Nga-Tien commune. Through this excursion, they could more clearly understand the meaning and role of groups in familial economic development and mutual assistance in production activities. At the same time, they could learn more experience of organizing and managing groups. The number of households voluntarily registering to participate in group activities was increasing up to 25 households after 4 months (counting till October, 2007) . The majority of people at the communes carrying out the project enthusiastically participated in 05 training courses on introduction of pressed granulated fertilizer application technology, technical guide of pressed granulated fertilizer application for sedge intensification, on enhancing awareness of environment and skills of fertilizer production – supply. Their monthly group activity order and discipline was regularly maintained . Besides, the field classes and workshops were organized in early and late spring and winter seasons in 2007 with a view to introducing to local authorities and non-tested households the efficacy of pressed granulated fertilizer technology. In order to deploy and build the models in a transparent and democratic manner, the project had to hold meetings with inhabitants of different communes to diffuse standards to discuss those households who merit the fertilizer support from the project. The discussion was conducted on the basic of voluntary principle and on proposed standards, especially in favour of poor households. The total number of households at the test model of pressed granulated fertilizer technology was 30 in 2007 spring season and 66 in 2007 winter season, in which 17 households themselves invested in fertilizer for the model. Numerous meetings of exchange and assessment of activities between households directly participating in the model and experts of Hanoi University of Agriculture were regularly held in order to assess strong and weak points of pressed granulated fertilizer technology for sedge intensification, and , based on that, find out adjustments in the technology for the following crops. The project established 03 core farmer groups, who really became active factors to exert great influences on communities in the transfer of new fertiliz-



er application technology for sedge intensification as well as to maintain the sanitary order in villages. Beside the above-mentioned information channels there were others such as hand-outs, posters ..to popularize the project activities to each inhabitant. Moreover, the project activities were also updated and broadcasted by loudspeakers of the communes. All these communication activities created spreading effects, attracting the communities in the project zone and the surrounding ones to learn about the economic, environmental and healthy efficacy of the pressed granulated fertilizer technology for sedge intensification.

After the excursion of the test model of new fertilizer application for sedge intensification sponsored by the Sida Environment Fund – Sweden, Mr. Mai Van Ninh, chairman of the People’s Committee of Thanh-Hoa province very highly appreciated this model, especially in the aspect of economizing on fertilizer. He affirmed it was a right direction which really gave socio-economic and environmental efficacy, adequate to the orientation of “3 decreases – 3 increases” in agricultural production, laid down by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in order to encourage different localities. He also thought it was a good solution which sedge growers in 27 provinces of the whole country, in gen-

eral, and inhabitants of Nga-Son, in particular, have groped around to find for a long time. In order to speed up the model development in large scale, he asked authorities of Nga-Son to promptly direct the implementation of the model into communes, and different functional departments and offices to propagandize the model and mobilize farmers, and give them technical guidance.

After the excursion of the Chairman of the Thanh-Hoa People’s Committee, numerous mini-workshops at the sites of the project at communal level were held, so that they made a strong impact on leaders of the communes about the project model. Subsequently, mini-workshops at district level were also organized in order to largely introduce the fertilization technology to the most important leaders and advanced farmers in the district. Participants in these workshops were the most important of Nga-Son People’s Committee, Department of Agriculture, chairmen, Comparty Committee Secretaries and typical farmers of 08 sedge growing communes of Nga-Son district.

Moreover, there were representatives of experts from Hanoi University of Agriculture and those of households participating in the model of the 03 communes. At this

workshop, the participants listened to the report of a representative of the Nga-Son Department of Agriculture on the process of deploying the project, different impacts of the project on economy – politique-society-environment, on advantages and difficulties of the model multiplication. Experts from Hanoi University of Agriculture presented model results and prospects in Nga-Son. Representatives of concerned households made reports on the process of application, advantages and difficulties, on proposals of techniques and policies to Hanoi University of Agriculture and leaders of Nga-Son district. Workshop results created drastic changes in awareness of the model multiplication for leaders of different levels and inhabitants.

The 10-month execution of the model attracted the attention of leaders at different levels and sedge growing communities of Nga-Son district. Project results exerted positive effects, created global changes from the people to local authorities in the new fertilizer application model for sedge intensification. The project contributed to the transfer of scientific-technological progresses in sedge intensification directly to poor farmers, the reduction of input production costs, the increase of sedge production efficacy, and thence, the minimization of environment pollution.

The core farmer groups themselves showed active nuclei, contributing to impulse the model multiplication in sedge growing communes and increasingly improve the awareness of communities about environment and health.

Ethnic minority Community participation in waste management and environment pollution elimination

Vu Dinh Loi
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Muong Phang is an extremely difficult commune of Dien Bien district. It is located 50 km east of the Dien Bien district centre. The total area of the commune is 9,270 ha of which farming land forms 1,084.7 ha, forest coverage is 2,674.5 ha, arable land is 1,106 ha, and unused land is 4,404.5 ha. There are 43 villages with 7,451 persons among 1,291 households. Number of workable people is 1,890 where there are 908 women and 982 men. The population consists 69.51% of Thai, 2.25% of Kinh, 17.09% of Kho Mu, and 11.15% H'Mong ethnic groups. Average number of a household's members is 6. The poor Muong Phang commune is a pure agriculture and self-service area. The main income is from farming and animal husbandry. Income per capita is 400,000 – 1,000,000 VND. Poverty rate under the new criteria is 51%. Infrastructure and production service system are very poor that do not meet the cultivation requirements. Farming and animal husbandry are farmers' main income sources. Total area of grain is 669ha with annual production of 2,809 ton. Waste from produc-

tion line is estimated of 2,500 ton. There are 2,469 buffaloes, 713 cows, 689 goats and 4,014 pigs, i.e. every household owns around 6 cattle. The waste from these animals is estimated of 20kg/household/day.

Together with the development of cultivation and animal husbandry in the recent years the waste from these activities as well as from people increases significantly. The big amount of waste has not been processed or improperly processed seriously affects environment and people. Particularly in the raining seasons, the above-mentioned waste is soaked into the well water of the community, which is seriously polluted causing the diseases of digestion, sore eyes, female disease. The high expenditures to treat these diseases is one of major causes of poverty. In addition, the project area is characterised by a low yield productivity that does not serve enough people living condition. So forest is an important source of income for the upland farmers, its importance for livelihood in the short run is largely limited to

fire wood. This puts great pressure on the environment and causes annual food. To counter above negative developments is a difficult task for local authorities and community. It is necessary to develop the deployment of Biogas from domestic fowls; poultry litter combination with production of organic fertilizer from agriculture waste. This solution is to take advantage of waste product from agriculture development, less affect the forests and create a sanitary environment.

The project "Community participation in waste management and environment pollution elimination" supported by SEF through CCD to help ethnic community (Thai, H'mong, Khomu), local authorities, environmental agencies be aware of the importance of the processing of waste from cultivation and husbandry into gas and organic fertilizer, which improve the village environment, increase soil fertility, improve yield productivity, and reduce the family expenditures.



Impact on Community

Economic Impact

The household use of organic fertilizer contribute to high economic effectiveness, taking full advantage of waste, cultivation carp, with simple process of production and use. It is a simple process with low cost where 60,000 VND investment gets 1 ton of organic fertilizer. 410,000VND is saved per ton, reducing cost of resource collection, workforce and materials. Every 1ton of organic fertilizer brings profit of 790.000 VND compared with market chemical fertilizer. Home based production is not only comfortable for the users but also meets the fertilizer demand. Using organic fertilizer improves humus, develops plant growth, limits pests and reduces 30% of nitrogenous fertilizer. The typical example is of Mr/Mrs Luong Thi Panh in Phang II village, Muong Phang commune correctly used organic fertilizer in spring crop to make rice productivity surpass (5- 10 quintal/ hectare), lessening the grass work.

Besides, application of the bio-organic fertilizer production gradually raises awareness of community of the village hygiene. Use of organic fertilizer also reduce hazard of chemicals used in agricultural products, promoting cleaner and safer production. Household organic fertilizer uses workforce during crop intervals. In the situation that resource inputs for agriculture production such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides... are costly, production much depends on those inputs helping the household bio-organic fertilizer production is significant and creates great impact on agriculture production, contributing to local food security..

Construction cost of a 5m3 biogas plant is 5,300,000VND where the project provides 3,500,000VND, the remaining 1,800,000VND cost is of the household labour force, including material transportation and building work. This is not a small investment a household can bear, however it

brings great effectiveness. Economic analysis shows that in 2009(???) when that gas flow is stable the supply will reach 1.75m3 per day, thus the annual capacity will be 638.8m3 which is equivalent to 256kg liquid gas. Market gas price at the time of June 2008 was 24,300VND/kg. This means a household will earn 6,209,000VND from the biogas in 2009. Minus initial investment of 5,300,000VND for construction, the first year the household gets 909,000VND and whole benefits for the following years. Before the Biogas practice each household spent 5-10 days a month for firewood which cost around 200,000-300,000VND. This means every household spent 2,400,000-3,600,000VND for firewood per year. With the Biogas use each household can save that amount of money, the forest is also saved.

Scientific and technological Impact

There were 8 training courses organised for 160 group members where the theory was integrated with practice of the households. The training feedback showed that 100% trainees had a thorough grasp of the organic fertilizer production. In the implementation period 160 households of the self-managing groups produced over 300 tons of organic fertilizer. Use of bio-organic fertilizer instead of muck and part of inorganic fertilizer has increased plant productivity up to 15-20%. Use of bio-organic fertilizer for cultivated crops is to improve productivity. 8 training courses were held for 160 members of 8 self-managing groups. Learner-centred approach combining theory with practice accounting the community knowledge helped the trainees understand the process, techniques of timetable, period of fertilizing for plants. The bio-organic fertilizer and processed liquid discharge from the biogas plant does not contain worm eggs, harmful germs, wild grass seeds or bad odour. The group members know how to fertilize main crops such as rice, maize, vegetables, and fruit trees (orange, plum, apricot...). The households applied the trained techniques to effective production



For handover of techniques of Biogas construction, maintenance and operation, in order to select right beneficial Biogas households there was consultation meeting for selection criteria with the community. 10 households were finally selected. A 2 day training course on Biogas construction techniques was held for the selected households. Visual training method was used for non-builder trainees with practical work helped the participants understand basic techniques of a Biogas construction. The outcome of Biogas operation and management training to promote effective and long term use of Biogas a training course on Biogas management, operation and maintenance was held for 10 selected households. 10/10 households completed their biogas plant meeting all techniques requirements and have gas for daily use and had a thorough grasp of operation process, gathering resources and maintenance techniques.

Household's application of bio-organic fertilizer production and biogas technology have gradually changed the community awareness on fertilizer and fuel use, particularly in remote areas where the national power network has not been covered the biogas model also delivers lighting system. The bio-organic fertilizer and processed liquid discharge from the biogas plant does not contain worm eggs, harmful germs, wild grass seeds or bad odour.

Environmental Impact

Household organic fertilizer production salvages cultivation and animal husbandry wastes such as straw, grass, green manure, muck etc., reducing bad affect on water sources, especially in rainy season, improving environment quality. Besides, application of the bio-organic fertilizer production gradually raises awareness of community of the village hygiene. Use of organic fertilizer also reduce hazard of chemicals used in agricultural products, promoting cleaner and safer production. Household bio-organic fertilizer production and biogas takes full advantage of cultivation wastes, wild grass/plants

and muck around the villages, thus reduces the village environment pollution and also water contamination, especially in the rainy season. Use of bio-organic fertilizer increases humus rate, prevents erosion, improves soil quality along years of use, limits use of pesticides, gradually abolishes custom of use of raw manure. Alternation of biogas to firewood reduces forest destruction which has recently caused soil erosion and ecological imbalance.

Socio-cultural Impact

Self-managing community group operation is an important factor to constitute and sustain the project outcomes. As a result, establishment of the self managing community groups are one of the earliest activities. The groups activities base on rules and principles voluntarily discussed and agreed by the group members. The project has supported to set up 8 self managing community groups in 8 project villages, the total members of which are 160. 80 member meetings have been organised with 12,800 times of people attending where they learned, exchanged, shared knowledge and experience, and supported each other in family economic development and monthly village sanitation activities. As a result, the project village environment is gradually improved.

Establishment of community self-managing groups has step by step improved people's participation in village environment hygiene. Discussions on environmental impact on people's health have been raised in group meetings which contribute to awareness raising, capacity building for the people in cultivation and animal husbandry waste management and use, reducing bad affect on environment. The project activities have gradually changed the people's attitude and behaviour of use of raw manure to use of bio-organic fertilizer for cultivated plants and reduced use of inorganic fertilizers as well as chemicals in agriculture production. Labour force in the crop interval is used. The farmers step by step approach modern science



Group leader is a prestigious person who has been voted by the group members and is the key in each and every project activity. Therefore capacity building as well as improvement of knowledge and management skill is important to ensure effectiveness of the project activity implementation. The project organised a training course on management skill for 18 group leaders. The training approach encouraged the attendees' active participation in the course activities with easy and practical knowledge and skills. Besides, lessons have been learnt through group discussion with practice. The training feedback showed that 75% group leaders could then effectively run meetings with note taking, report writing, making simple plans as well as managing the group finance.

The project activities have gradually changed the people's attitude and behaviour of use of raw manure to use of bio-organic fertilizer for cultivated plants and reduced use of inorganic fertilizers as well as chemicals in agriculture production. Labour force in the crop interval is used. The farmers step by step approach modern science and technology cleaner agricultural products with higher quality and safety, removing burden on women in fuel delivery.

Sustainability

Within its activity implementation the project did not simply transfer a model or ready technology to the beneficiaries. Moreover, these model and technology were created in compliance with specific objectives, poor communities and ethnic groups. Based on the project activities in the

feasibility study, community consultation meetings were held for inputs/comments or adjustments to meet the local needs and situation as well as coordination of commune with district and provincial development orientation, especially when it is under National Development Goal (NDG) on economical and effective energy use. As a result, this coordination creates variety, effectiveness and sustainability for the project activities.

- * Community participation: Ethnic community in the project villages provided full participation in planning, design, implementation and management of the project activities.
- * Technological sustainability: Technology of bio-organic fertilizer production and biogas plant construction matched the community knowledge and capacity, and also meets the local economic condition.
- * Financial sustainability: The involved households contributed fund to the bio-organic fertilizer production and biogas plant construction which has brought significant benefits, therefore the households will carry on gradual management and maintenance.
- * Organizational sustainability: Management system from commune level to the community self-managing groups has full capacity and has also been provided with management skills and technical support.
- * Economic sustainability: When recent agriculture production material prices are rapidly increasing use of local resources will bring great impact to the community, contributing to food security and sustainable economic development as well as environment protection.



- * Community capacity building: Focus of the project was also on technical training and on site demonstration in order to improve capacity of the households to carry on after the project phases out. This is the right measure to expand the model and sustain the project achievements.
- * Policy: The project activities meet National Development Goal (NDG) on economical and effective energy use 2006-2015 approved by Prime Minister in Decision No. 79/2006/QĐ-TTg dated 14/4/2006. Thus, commencement of the project does not only meet the national development strategy and policy, but also shows multipurpose of the model of using biological gas in production process and daily life of rural area.
- * Project implementation capacity: Project staff are capable with multiple knowledge and skills, rich experience of long term working in community development field, project coordination, PPA, monitoring, training and project planning and management.
- * Project management and monitoring: A close management and monitoring system from CCD to commune PMB and self-managing groups was established through regular meetings, field trips and project progress reports. Commune monitoring boards have perfectly taken their responsibility in monitoring, supporting and mobilising people to carry out the project model.

In order to maintain the project achievements one important factor is the establishment of a community self management mechanism basing on its traditional culture. People's participation is the decisive factor for the project success. All project activities are based on principle: People know, discuss, decide, implement, monitor and benefit. Technology transfer should be based on the

community needs and in compliance with the community capacity. The technology should be simple, applicable and suitable to the local condition.

The project has got initial achievements to help the local authorities and people have gained basic knowledge on science and techniques of biogas and bio-organic fertilizer production, creating premise for change in custom of intensive cultivation, productive agriculture and qualitative products. Biogas and bio-organic fertilizer production model together with community capacity building have provided contribution to the village environment improvement. Besides, biogas development is a factor to reduce forest cut down for firewood. The project has provided necessary conditions for multiplication of crops, improvement of productivity of plants and animals, increase of income, impact in people's living standard, contributing in poverty reduction.

However, for the project effectiveness promotion as well as its result expansion, many efforts from various sides as the financial support of the donors, the local authorities and specialised agencies. These support aim to launch applying the model achievement dissemination to other districts, communes and villages within the province.

In light of achieved results of the project, the households in the community self managing groups are carrying on investment in bio-organic fertilizer production and biogas plant construction. In order to confirm value and effectiveness of the project for the future, leading to a green agriculture production, ensuring safe environment and energy saving, CCD is planning to provide support to 1,000 households for bio-organic fertilizer production and 20 biogas plants in the period 2008-2009.

Economic development and forest plantation of community in Ho Tre village

*Uong Thi Bich Lien- Vice-director
Center for Support and Development of Business and Community*



Ho Tre village is one of the poor village in Tam Tien commune, Yen The district. Main source of income of people mostly rely on agriculture production and forest plantation. However, area of agriculture land is limited. There is totally 90 ha of agriculture which makes the average area of agriculture land per household is only 1.8 Agriculture land is scattered in mountain creeks or located near the rivers and it is used for farming rice and other crops. Because of lacking of irrigation system, agriculture production activity mostly depends upon natural conditions. For many years, rice crops have been destroyed by stone rain and flood. Though there have been some Government Programs such as 134, 661 on forest plantation, those are all at small scale and not efficient. Planting forest often takes from 7 to 10 years to be exploited and investment required is rather high so local people do not focus on this activity. Especially, local people still keep the habit of burning forest for cultivation which causes a reduction on forest area and consequently leading to negative impacts on environment.

Furthermore, local people lack of information, knowledge on legal regulations concerning natural resources and forest protection. Local people also don't have knowledge and understanding on the impacts of forest on their life as well as what are their impacts on the reduction of natural resources, which cause natural calamity such as landslide, flood, soil erosion...etc. The local people don't have in-

formation, understanding on natural resources conservation or sustainable exploitation. They think that it is the government responsibilities to protect environment and forests. Local people don't know what are their roles in protecting forests and preventing natural calamities. Burning off land for cultivation, using fire to catch honey is the way that they have followed so far. And according to them, forest fires are not avoidable.

The community needs

Local people in Ho Tre village wants to be supported to get basic knowledge on forests, roles of forest to people life, causes of serious natural calamities, legal regulations concerning forest protection and what they can do to protect and develop the forests.

Local people also would like to have knowledge and capacity in initiating ideas, considering and selecting economic activities on the contracted forest land and gardens for improving their lives and at the same time participating in forest protection and plantation.

Local people in Ho Tre village would like to be supported to carry out some environmental friendly economic models that bring quick and high income while have good impacts on forest conservation and development. Development of environmental friendly economic activities that bring quick income is seen as a way for the poor households to get quick returns for developing longer term activities. The income gained from short-term economic activities will be utilized for improving people life and investing in forest plantation.



Results from the implementation in practice

Through the implementation of project activities in Ho Tre village, there have been great improvements with the local environment. Local people have acknowledged the importance of forests on their life and their responsibilities in protecting forests. They have participated actively in ginger farming activity to cover denude hills and bare lands while bringing income for the family. Through the implementation of two models of bees keeping and ginger farming that bring quick income, life of local people have been gradually improved. Thanked to the available forest flower, the bees keeping model has developed stably and give honey of good quality. Thanked to the technical on-the-job training on bees keeping, the members now can implement difficult techniques that previously they have not been successful as it was carried out based on their experience.

The success in developing bees keeping models in the locality has created additional income for local people as well as a new economic model that can be conducted in the locality. Besides, ginger farming model which has been carried out in the locality is evaluated to be very suitable with the local conditions. This is the model which requires small investment and can get the return in a very short time. According to a survey conducted by CBC recently, the price of ginger has been on increase and there is potential market for ginger. Therefore this model is considered as the ones that can bring quick income for local poor people.

With the supports of the project, the Organic Bees keeping Club of Ho Tre village has been created with the participation of 20 members. Each family was supported with one beehive. At present the number of beehives has increased to 37 (after only 6 months). The beehives have good quality and it is expected to continue to rise in the coming time. The members of the club have mastered

the techniques of taking care and preventing diseases for bees. Difficult techniques such as creating queen bees by removing lavas have been well carried out by the members of the Club. At present the Club has 21 members, a new member has just been admitted and was supported with 1 beehive. In the coming times, there will be more new members who have the same interests of keeping bees to participate in the Club.

Together with bees keeping model, ginger farming model has been selected to be carried out in the project. Farming ginger requires simple techniques and small investment and can get quick return. In recent years, ginger can be sold easily with quite high price. There are 44 members in the Ginger farming Club. The members have been trained on mechanizes to farm ginger and supported with raw material for farming ginger. Each member was given 80kg of ginger seedlings. At present ginger plants in Ho Tre village all develop well with the height of from 40 to 50cm. It is expected that the ginger will be harvested in September. CBC will support the local people to sell the products when it is harvested.

The change in awareness and action – Experience from the practice

The objective of the project is to change awareness of local people in Ho Tre village on forest protection and development and create a linkage between local people and forest by building capacity and developing successfully some environmental friendly economic models that bring quick income, combining environmental friendly economic activity that bring quick income with forest protection and plantation

After taking part in on-the-job training on environment, local people acknowledged the importance of protecting the surrounding environment and realized that the living environment will have direct impacts on their life and family and destroying the environment will have long-term impact on their life. People have also been aware that burning off land for cultivation, destroying forests will cause floods and pollute the environment..etc. Local people in Ho Tre village have been aware that planting forest, covering bare lands and denude hills will create a good environment for the locality and minimize foods that have been previously occurred and at the same time bring stable income for the family. Each family has been initiative in keeping the surrounding environment clean. They have stopped discharging animal waste on rivers, streams which badly affect the water sauce as well as people health. Local people now will not wait for government supports. They have been initiative in applying production models that bring higher income. Local people know how to select economic activities that don't have negative impacts on environment while bringing high benefits such as keeping bees, farming ginger, producing and farming forest trees.



**Impact and effect – Assessment
Community and other partners**

Before local people have been involved in keeping bees but they were not successful as they did not have experience. Bees were kept mainly based on their experience. After participated in training on techniques of keeping bees and given consulting supports during the bees keeping process, members of the Club have been given direct technical supports. Thanked to this, problems faced by local people in keeping bees have been timely solved. At present the beehives of the Club develop well, the number of beehives has increased from 20 to 37. Beehives start producing honey of good quality, each beehive can give from 3 to 5 liter of honey with the average price of from VND 80,000 to 90,000/litre. Thanked to the development of bees keeping activity in the locality, the utilization of pesticide on agriculture production is reduced because it has bad impacts on beehives. Particularly, thanked to bees keeping activity, the output and quality of many plants such as maize, litchi, longan... are improved because it is pollinated. Supporting local people to farm ginger has opened a new way in developing economic activity in the locality. Farming ginger brings quick income and is suitable with the local conditions of Ho Tre and it is easy to farm with very few diseases. Farming ginger will help local people to have additional income for developing other economic models.

The project has helped local people in Ho Tre change awareness on environment. Now they have realized that environment is very important to the locality. Local people acknowledged the importance of business production plans. From being inactive in production, now local people know how to formulate business and production plan, particularly for economic activities that don't harm the environment while bring higher economic benefit. Organic bees keeping has firstly been confirmed to be an economic model that is suitable with the local conditions and can help improving the life of local people in the village. Farming ginger will help local people to earn additional income for developing economic model at family scale or other longer term one such as forest plantation. Maintain and replication of project results

The selection of economic activities that is suitable with the needs of people and local conditions is considered as a decisive factor to the project success. Lesson learnt from the project is that local people need to be supported to identify clearly their needs. The poor people in Ho Tre village lack of information, knowledge and they are very confused in selecting economic activities that bring high benefits and at the same time don't harm the environment. The combination of activity of building capacity, supporting raw material, organizing on-the-job training with technical consulting during production process is considered as a key factor to the success of the project.

Maintain

The two created Clubs of Ginger Farming and Bees Keeping will continue their operation. Production plans for the coming year will be formulated. Models of farming ginger and keeping bees will be replicated to other households in Ho Tre village. The old members will support the new members in techniques. Management Boards of the two Clubs together with the Project Management Board, Project Supervision Board will be responsible for supporting the two clubs in finding market for honey and ginger produced by the local people. Ginger farming activity will be continued in the locality.

For poor local communities like the ones in Ho Tre village, the right selection of types of activities and their scale for starting is very important. The strategy of going steps by steps is very suitable; the new model should be started with small ones and replicated when it is successful.

Local people need to have their own organization. The establishment of the two clubs gives local people chances to meet and discuss the problems that they are facing with while carrying out the activity. Club is the room for people to make important decisions concerning their production. Participatory methods should be used during the project implementation to motivate the poor people, especially the ethnic minority ones to participate actively in the decisions making process.

Reflection



Connecting community-based initiatives in environmental protection

By Dr. Nguyen Manh Cuong
VUSTA

Over two decades, along with the rapid economic growth, Vietnam has also experienced many environmental problems such as environmental degradation and loss of natural resources. Environmental protection has gradually attracted the concern of the Vietnam society. In addition to government's efforts, community-based initiatives have proved their significant importance in solving local environmental problems.

Since the 1990s, there was an emerging trend of civil society development and its initiatives in the field of environmental protection and natural resource management initiated by players such as researchers, non-governmental organisations, civil society organizations (CSOs), grass-root groups and community-based organizations (CBOs). However, these players often find it difficult to access funds from the government or international organisations. They also had to struggle with different obstacles in terms of institutional and organisational capacity as well as resource mobilization to effectively carry out their own initiatives.

To support the participation of community movement in environmental protection, there have been several funding schemes implemented by the Government of Viet Nam and some international organisations. The SIDA Environmental Fund (SEF) is one of them. Established by the Swedish Embassy in July 1997, SEF aims to promote local and highly participatory initiatives in environmental protection and natural resources conservation.

VUSTA and SEF, IUCN and VUSTA co-organized the workshop: "Connecting community-based initiatives in environmental protection" on 27/November/2007, Hanoi to facilitate opportunities for exchanging and sharing experience and lessons among CSOs in environmental protection and suggest recommendations for CSOs to improve their capacity and government to create favorable legal framework for their operations.

There were approximately 100 participants (40 from SEF, 60 from other organizations) from International organisations in Vietnam: GEF/UNDP, WB, IUCN, SNV, CIDA, DANIDA, WWF, CARE, Action Aid, GTZ, NGO resource center; Government agencies; National NGOs in Hanoi and from other regions; CBOs including SEF typical projects during last ten years; Scientists and researchers in the related field; Media agencies. Thus, it is one of the largest consultation of multiple stakeholders to produce the common actions for all of them with the major objectives of the workshop: (1) To share experience and lessons learnt from community-based initiatives in order to strengthen the capacity for development and participation of community-based organizations (CBOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) in environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources. (2) To review on the existing





legal framework for the participation of CSOs and CBOs in environmental protection activities and discuss the way to promote the roles of these organisations in protecting the environment and natural resources in the new context; (3) To connect the network of CSOs and CBOs in environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources. The major findings of the workshop as follows:

Roles and Best practices of CSOs in environment protection

Roles of CSOs

- CSOs and local communities should be the center for government policies and development projects where they are the direct and indirect beneficiaries for their projects. Thus, the legal framework for CSOs and environment protection should be favorable for protection of rights of local people and CSOs.
- CSOs could cooperate successfully with local government as the model of public-private partnership for environment protection programs where local government provides some technical and legal support and advice for the projects.
- Mobilizing the grassroots-farmers, communities to protect the environment.
- Initiating the innovative environment protection programs which combine both indigenous knowledge of local people and modern knowledge and skills in local areas.
- Sharing experiences and knowledge and information for local people and communities for environment protection.
- Changing the perception and awareness of local people for sustainable production and livelihoods.
- Influencing the local government to manage the natural resources in an efficient and sustainable way.
- CSOs at national level like VUSTA members can play national roles in monitoring and evaluating the development projects and government policies related to environment protection as well as civil society development. VUSTA can be a bridge among CSOs and government in the policy lobby and advocacy.



- VUSTA has been successfully facilitating the network among CSOs for partnership and experience sharing for environment and development projects.

Best practice and experiences of CSOs

The successful CSOs usually employ the following experiences and practices:

- They adopt the participatory and bottom-up approach where they survey the local demands, and encourage the active participation of local people in their programs. At the same time, the local ownership of the programs is clearly confirmed through the whole process of the program implementation.
- The projects use the information and expertise of the multiple stakeholders: scientists, local people, local government, public media which can help to resolve multi-dimensional development problems such as poverty alleviations, environment degradation, and institutional weaknesses.
- Some CSOs have been successfully organizing the research experts to contribute to drafting legal framework for CSOs development and environment protection.
- The successful CSOs usually have good collaboration with international CSOs and donors as well as adopt the modern and transparent governance structure.



Current problems to CSOs in environment protection

- Human resource problems: most CSOs lack qualified human resources because the low income and instable financial capacity of CSOs exist.
- Financial resources problems: most CSOs in this field have difficulties to approach to the long-term and sustainable financial resources for their long-term development. At the same time, Donors have not made the long-term commitment to CSOs development.
- The unequal treatment between CSOs and government organizations have existed, and became the major constraints for CSOs to approach the financial resources and support of the government.
- Most of CSOs are weak in governance and management, especially financial management, given the non-transparent legal framework.
- CBOs and CSOs especially in poor and ethnic minority areas have difficulties to access the information and knowledge related to project management and environment protections.
- The lobby and advocacy on the basis of scientific research and studies have not been implemented at a large scale and national levels.
- The network and partnership among CSOs and government has not been promoted to ensure the enabling environment for civil society development and environment protection in Vietnam.
- The local governance lacks expertise and financial resources to encourage the participation of communities and CSOs in environment protection. The programs for "Socialization" means encouraging the participation of non-state sectors in environment protection has been adopted by Prime Minister in 2005, but it has not been implemented effectively by Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment.

Recommendations

Based on the challenges and difficulties, the workshop has proposed the following recommendations:

- It is necessary for CSOs and VUSTA to build up a working network among CSOs for environment protection which help to share information and knowledge as well as cooperate with each another in environment protection.
- The Donors should have a program for capacity building for Vietnamese CSOs for improving the human resources as well as good governance structures.
- VUSTA should be a bridge among CSOs, Donors, government and private sector to help CSOs to approach the diverse funding sources, to initiate the lobby and advocacy programs for CSOs, to encourage government and donors to support CSOs.
- The government needs to encourage the participation of CSOs in "Socialization public service" programs where they need to allow CSOs to bid for financial support of the government as well as involve in propaganda for environment protections.
- It is necessary to set a website and newsletter for CSOs to discuss and share their experiences in Environment protection.
- The draft law on associations should be issued by National Assembly to ensure the freedom of associations whereby CSOs can have more spaces for their development.
- The policy studies on environment issues for lobby and advocacy among CSOs should be supported to facilitate the influences of CSOs on government policies at national level. At the same time, VUSTA should help to open channels for local CSOs to register easily and to get access to high-ranking government agencies as well as National Assembly.
- The participation of CSOs in environment programs should be integrated into another programs such as poverty alleviation, community development and grass root democracy support, which can help to efficiency utilize the existing tangible and intangible resources.
- CSOs by themselves should build up their own capacities, non-profit culture and strategic visions with professional activities in environment protection.



Current changes in the countryside have made those once being born and growing up there proud. Changes have come to rice-fields, house roofs, gardens, village roads and alleys. There is no longer scenes of muddy roads during rainy days and winter cold, leaves roofing which could not prevent rains and sunlight, those thin clothes that could not prevent the chilling cold in winter, and the hunger. Therefore, many people sometimes forget about the losses that are difficult to retrieve. These losses seem invisible but present everyday, and exerting an increasingly profound impact on the life and health of each individual and the community as a whole.

There are no longer scenes of post-harvest fields full of fish, shrimps, snails, and frogs, children bailing out water to seek food home, or the image of birds or storks looking for food on the rice-field and along bamboo hedge. The pleasant smell of ripe rice and rice straw can not drown various bad smells coming out from black drains and ditches within the village and the field. Many nylon bags are elsewhere. Quite a few people have caught diseases and died at young age and have not enjoyed the fruits of their hardwork. Strange and popular diseases have become familiar now in most of the countryside. These losses are invisible because they have not come to the farmers overnight but silently, patiently and in cold blood while people have

Improving the rural environment: A problem with an initial solution

By Nguyen Van Long- AG

not been aware of them. Even today, then they have gone rampant to every home, we have not seen their horrible devastation.

Against this reality, reactions by different localities differ. In many places, people and local authorities are still indifferent, regarding this fact as natural and unchangeable. Many other localities talk much about it but have not taken any considerable action about it. Elsewhere families and communities protect themselves by their own rules and conventions to reduce negative impact of the environmental problems on them. Quite a few localities are fully aware of the losses and develop the entire community's strength to improve their living environment. Despite the modest number, they represent the light at the end of the tunnel and the direction for the whole countryside in future. How do we encourage those localities with such "before time" ideas of improving their living environment (their meaningful contributions to improving the environment of the entire humankind)? This is a difficult problem and their experience lessons serve as a core of success for improving the rural environment in future.

It is impossible to deny the great role played by the central and local authorities with large project investment worth tens of billions of dong. These projects serve as an agent for the proud changes. However, basically farmers have to deal with their living environmental problems on their own. Why? Because the State could not afford enough budget to settle all above mentioned problems. Because the issue of the rural environment is as complicated as that of the city. And because of economic development pressures, etc. Only a small evidence tells: Such a vast area of the countryside of more than 16,000 km² with nearly 2.5 million population of Nghe An province in 2008 was allocated a budget of only 475 million dong for improving the rural environment (other provinces, perhaps, have the similar conditions).

Fully aware of the environmental problems, difficulties faced by farmers in improving their living environment, and difficulties of limited budget from



authorities at all levels, right from its early days (1997), Sida Environment Fund (SEF) gave a special priority to investments in community's initiatives for environmental protection in rural, mountainous and difficult areas. The projects which have been supported arose from the initiatives of the community, from concrete proposals to be implemented at the locality, and from necessary actions to be taken. Outcomes achieved nationwide which are mentioned here are only representative in a hope to communicate experiences tested to partially help other localities improve their own living environment.

The key thing is that local authorities and community have a profound awareness of their environmental problems and their serious impacts on people's life. Because though losses from the polluted living environment are serious, they occur very silently, thus quite a few communities and individuals are willing to trade them off for immediate economic benefits. That is why they can talk a lot about it but take no action. Based on the above mentioned awareness, only those localities with full conditions and willingness to take action can recommend proper and feasible proposals at their place. The most successful projects have proved this right. There are three typical examples, that is, Vinh Quang project (Vinh Linh district of Quang Tri province), Gio My project (Gio Linh district of Quang Tri province, Son Kim project (Huong Son district of Ha Tinh province). Although they are three different rural areas (Vinh Quang is a coastal area, Gio My is a sandy coastal area, and Son Kim is a mountainous area) and the environmental problems have many different features, there is one thing in common, that is, the determination of local authorities and communities in dealing with their environmental problems.

In Vinh Quang where people live mainly on fishing, tourism business, aquaculture, and farming. Based on the realities of pollution, the project initiated by the locality has put forward priorities like building an awareness that a clean environment creates scenery attractive to visitors, ensure the health of the community, raise the competitiveness of the processed seafood, facilitate aquaculture,

generate a common sense of sanitation; and classifying garbage and collecting it at the concentrated population areas, tourist spots, seafood processing facilities...

In Son Kim, it is different. Garbage problem is not urgent but because of long-time habit of local people in their use of stream water (in the past it was clean and pure, but it has been polluted now), non-facility animal husbandry, free household sanitation, rash deforestation, the problem is with the water source, household cleaning and forest protection.

As for Gio My, the phenomenon of flying sand has buried agricultural soil, thus making people's life very difficult and there should be support for animal husbandry to ease the difficulties, considering it as a basis to mobilize support for people in growing sand-proof trees.

It is because the fundamental question is identified, after the project went into operation with many different methods, maximum support from the community's participation has been garnered. The outcomes are still maintained and multiplied when the project's funding finishes and the current achievements are extremely impressive:

In Vinh Quang, the garbage collecting group's activities have become a regular practice and they have become financially self-reliant (contribution by people) to keep their activities regular and continuous. In rural areas, everyday, households do the cleaning job and at the village roads and alleys, garbage has been classified, organic rubbish is buried in the garden to manure plants, non-organic rubbish is put into bags and brought to a fixed place to be collected by the group. Every week, according to the convention (project owner's proposal approved by People's Committee of the commune), all population blocks do the cleaning job for common areas under the guidance of members of garbage collecting group. All restaurants and guest houses strictly abide by sanitation rules. Business households pay fee for garbage collection depending on their business and level of pollution. Waste food and processed garbage are collected at the right



place. The group regularly cleans the bathing beach, and group members always call violators of rules to order. Cua Tung has truly become the cleanest beach. The most important thing is that people have got accustomed to the new environment and are willing to contribute financial resources to maintain these activities.

Gio My project has achieved impressive outcomes in growing sand-proof trees. Although the project invested only 60 million dong as a kind of support, the tree area has amounted to hundreds of hectares. All these trees are owned and their owners are entitled to proper exploitation to best protect their trees. With a view to achieving these outcomes, the project has known to make use of organisations' strength. Each village has members in charge of the project's tasks. Thus, the project has trained a pool of old men experienced in cultivating seedlings to the extended area of trees, and youths, teenagers, and women able to plant, care and exploit properly the forest. Based on outcomes achieved by the project, local people and authorities have realized the potential of the so-called 'dead' land, many people have been bold enough to move in to the centre of the sandy land to grow timber trees and use the shadow of these trees to grow peanuts and beans and raise domesticated animals. Economic conditions of households have been markedly improved in comparison with that of traditional residential areas. Outcomes achieved have initially asserted the ability to conquer this sand-flying area into a residential area and it is feasible. The concern of sandy erosion has been partially eased. Besides, the rotated support capital for animal husbandry has generated a stable income at the beginning for people living in the sandy area to carry out their main task, that is, to cover this sandy land with green trees.

Kim Son project's success has not made such an impression as the two above mentioned projects have done but an in-depth one. Starting with investments in digging wells for clean water source, in building toilets, pigstys, almost all ethnic households who used to take stream water polluted by animal husbandry and narrowed forest area have now built their own wells, caging facilities, and

toilets to use manure. This success is attributed to truly effective investment model which persuade local people to expand it and it has become a must-have in the life of the community. Despite many difficulties and shortage, many young couples (newly separated households) have given priorities to investment in toilets. Along with that, members take charge of environmental protection tasks like growing and protecting green trees in public areas, participating in afforestation and forest protection projects, and cleaning village roads and alleys, etc.

However, with regards to the outcomes achieved, the path has not been smooth at all. In Vinh Quang, we saw changes, met with members of the community, and the most impressive thing is their confidences in the project have quite adequately shown both difficulties and successes there. A small shop owner told that although the environment fee is not small compared with his family's income, it has not been commensurate with efforts made by garbage collecting group members. Our responsibility is to try to keep clean, avoid scattering rubbish, and remind customers to have a common sense to reduce their burdens. A group member has very difficult family conditions (her child is regularly ill, her husband does not have a good health, and his job is unstable) but she confirms to do best the job confidently assigned by the community. She is worried and thrifty in her income to maintain, overhaul, and procure equipment for the long-term tasks. In her opinion, the most difficult days have passed, the task is to do something for further development. The most concern of the chairman of the commune People's Committee is to generate such a mechanism that the garbage collecting group can be completely self-reliant. Thus it can develop their creativeness, raise their sense of responsibility, and improve their income. It is possible that they will not limit themselves to garbage collection but do other related tasks for an in-depth environmental protection and maintenance.

It can be said that the concerns of the group members allow us to assert that the project has been successful and will be maintained to make a substantial contribution to sustainable development of a rural area.





Effectiveness from a project model of growing grass and building cow and buffalo breeding facilities for Van Kieu ethnic community

By Nguyen Thi Na – RDPR communication officer
(Fund for Rural Development and Poverty Reduction of Quang Ninh district)



Truong Son commune, Quang Binh province is a particularly difficult and poor commune under the Government's Program 135. Poor households of which more than 90% are Van Kieu ethnic people account for 49% of the entire commune. Major income of local people comes from cultivation, animal husbandry and forestry exploitation.

Van Kieu ethnic people's income in Truong Son commune from animal husbandry is mainly from raising cows and buffaloes. However, cow and buffalo breeding had yielded very low income and efficiency in the past. The particular reason is that most cows and buffaloes in Van Kieu ethnic people's villages were herded freely in the forest, on the hills and in the village without any caging facilities. After some tens of days or some months, people went to seek and take them back. This kind of cow and buffalo breeding has resulted in their diseases and deaths due to lack of care and food.

Free tending of cows and buffaloes heavily affects the areas of farm produces and forest trees as they devastate these areas, leaving fallow. Moreover, free tending also results in environmental pollution at the village and water pollution due to cow pat and buffalo shit.

With an aim to solve these problems, the Fund for Rural Development and Poverty Reduction (RDPR) of Quang Ninh district had implemented one-year project sponsored by Sida Environment Fund (SEF). At the beginning, the project supported 30 kinds of facility breeding combined with composting and 9 kinds of grass breeding at 39 households of Van Kieu ethnic people at 3 villages, that is, Khe Cat, Co Trang, and Cay Ca of Truong Son commune.

In order to carry out the model, participating households have contributed efforts and muck with the project's support in terms of elephant grass seed, training courses on growing,



caring, and harvesting techniques and technical advices during the development of elephant grass. During the past one year, participating households have harvested 4-6 crops of grass, achieving the productivity of 6-10 tons/500m²/year. Thanks to the grass grown by their own, breeding households have been self-reliant in food supply for cows and buffaloes, thus limiting the free tending in the forest. During the long damaging chill, although there were 70 deaths of cows and buffaloes throughout the commune, those grass breeding households suffered no loss of cattle owing to sufficient food supply. Furthermore, growing grass is a measure for appropriate use of land resources from long-time fallow and wild land.

Based on the outcomes of the project and effectiveness from grass breeding for cows and buffaloes, the commune's project management unit has coordinated with grass growing interest group to summarize and review the model for its duplication in the whole commune. The number of those households participating in elephant grass model has increased from 9 to more than 50 with a total increased area of approximate 2 hectares of elephant grass in the commune.

In combination with grass growing model in Truong Son commune, RDPR has implemented facility breeding model combined with composting. Among 30 cases implemented at such villages as Khe Cat, Cay Ca, and Co Trang with 30 participating households as beneficiaries from the

project. Those participating households have attended training courses on technical composting and have been provided with materials to build caging facilities. Through the model, the project has conducted many meetings to communicate techniques of tending cows and buffaloes, cleaning the caging facilities, and mobilize people to build caging facilities for breeding. At the moment, the number of households building facilities to cage cows and buffaloes has increased. They have obeyed and applied caged breeding and facility cleaning techniques combined with composting to make manure for plants.

After one year of implementation, the project's models have brought about substantial effectiveness such as solutions to environmental pollution, reduction of epidemic diseases for cows and buffaloes due to good care and techniques. Besides, the caging facility system has helped local people make use of composted manure, increase nutrition for plants, contribute to land improvement. Remarkably, the model has helped Van Kieu ethnic people more or less change from habits of free tending to facility breeding.

Although the project met some difficulties during the implementation process as the free tending had been their long-time habit and a frequent production method of ethnic minorities and illiteracy and low level of knowledge of most Van Kieu ethnic people have made it difficult for new technology transfer, with the responsible and enthusiastic assistance of project staff, appropriate support approach during the implementation of the project, active participation of the community, the support of local authorities, the information, education, and communication have enabled the project's model to be successful and increasingly multiplied throughout the commune, helping poverty reduction and environmental protection.





“GREEN VILLAGE” Community participation in improving the rural environment

By Nguyen Huy Hien-AG



Tam Dai commune is a half-mountain half-plain area lying next to Phu Ninh lake and consisting of 6 villages. Most of the villagers are working in agriculture (accounting for 95%); according to the new poverty line, the number of poor households in the commune amounts to nearly 25% (1,485 households). The project “Green village” donated by Sida Environment Fund has proved to be effective over the last time in terms of raising awareness and mobilizing people to take actions in environmental protection and sustainable development.

New changes

People in the commune support the project in hope of basically changed awareness and better behavior to the surrounding environment. Through the project, the team of commune staff as a whole and members of Project Management Unit and Supervision Unit in particular have obtained enhanced capacity, awareness and understanding of their tasks as well as measures and direction in en-

vironmental protection in associated with local sustainable socio-economic development. Accordingly it has come up with long-term initiative and plan of local development, particularly attention to the relation between economic and service development and protection of ecosystem surrounding and inside the lake of Phu Ninh – currently a famous and attractive tourist spot in Quang Nam province.

Community’s awareness of and actions in environmental protection (EP) have been raised. Although the project only funded training of few learners (40 learners cum communication workers in 6 villages) compared to the whole commune population of 3,200, EP related knowledge and measures have been well understood by a number of people such as the project’s name and objectives, EP activities and work, behaviors badly affecting the environment to be removed (pesticide containers, safe-guard production, chop-down of protective woods to create combustibles and construction materials).

Awareness of keeping villages clean among people has been clearly improved. Unlike the first time visiting the project when numerous pressing issues remained in the rural environment (scattered cattle’s excrement and hays, lack of green trees, and messy houses and gardens...), the field inspectors found that the environment received much attention in improvement and preservation time after time. It should be noted that before the project started, cows’ and buffaloes’ excrement were scattered all over the roads but it has been collected and utilized since the



project began. (a pair of excrement baskets can be sold at VND 20,000 for the purpose of fertilizing crops).

The useful activities of the project have stimulated the creation of initiatives and enhanced policy-making capacity of the authorities in undertaking their EP obligations in the coming time. Particularly, the local authorities clearly see that sustained ecologic environment results in 'food, clothes and prosperity' of Tam Dai commune in the future, along with tourism service development trend; concurrently efforts in sustainable EP and managerial and supervisory skills of the project's key personnel have been much enhanced.

In general, capacity of the Project Management Unit and Supervision Unit has been improved through training and field work in the commune. Having youthfulness, activeness and experience from the project, they actually will become active participants in EP activities and provide advice to the commune leaders on EP planning.

Making a contribution to the success of National tourism year called "Quang Nam province – a 2-heritage destination", Tam Dai commune is attractive to a host of tourists thanks to shared efforts of the community in keeping clean of Trung Dan and Dai An villages. This results from the community's awareness in company with timely support by Sida Environment Fund in moving 30 cattle sheds on the path side to Phu Ninh Lake area and setting up panels along the road.

Community's active participation

The project's achievement in creation of open atmosphere, democracy and unity among groups of people is reflected through their voting activities for beneficiary households, participation in training to enhance knowledge of the environment and in volunteer groups (20 groups, 20 people in each group) and sustained exciting and enriched exchange activities every month; concurrently starting a trend for long-run performance through exchange meetings between social organizations and village community every month.

Establishment of communication groups all over the commune has created a network consisting of numer-

ous active factors encouraging and persuading people to "keep hygienic in daily life and environment friendly and cooperate to keep village roads and alleys clean"

Sustaining the project's outcomes

The project in Tam Dai commune is also successful in broadening vision and creating a pervasive effect in surrounding areas, including the neighboring commune of Tam Thai – a good example of displacement of cattle sheds on the road side and active communication activities to persuade people living on the 2 road sides to collect cattle excrement, hays and plant trees.

However, the project's implementation has faced certain difficulties due to objective factors (effect of the storm No.6 in year-end 2006 on the crops, year-long production and living practice of people) and subject factors (change of PMU's role at the beginning of the project, the PMU's limited capacity and unpersuasive voice failed to have impacts on the commune authorities to change their mind and forcefully and concertedly carry out the activities, etc...).

Some participants to the project met with difficulties in life, production and harvesting crops leading to their limited capacity of knowledge comprehension and poor implementation of the assignments, thus unable to be persuasive and effective to the community. On the other hand, the commune has an advantage of raising cows and buffaloes – a popular job to provide pulling strength in agricultural production. Given modest support models and high attention to tourist focal points, the scale-up of each model will exceed the capacity of each household's limited income, thus a number of residential areas are still full of cattle sheds next to people's houses and inter-village concrete roads have very bad smell.

Post-project challenges

Sustaining and developing communication groups is a factor ensuring the project's pervasion and sustainability. In fact, each village of Long Son, Dai Hanh has 3 groups consisting of 60 people, however it is attributed to useful activities (including art performance, responsibility division among chief and vice chief of the group, and carefully-prepared programs) each group has now developed and participated by nearly a hundred people.

Tam Dai is an agricultural commune with "a buffalo pulling a plough". The commune leaders' thinking over economic development keeps unchanged (consistent economic structure of agriculture-forestry-fishery), so issues emerged from bad effect of agricultural production on the environment are always ongoing. This requires time to renew awareness of the commune officials while the trend of urbanization and economic development in Tam Ky provincial capital will result in coming changes.



Ho Chi Minh City's Environment Club

By Nguyen Trung Dung (HCM city Environment Club)
Tran Vo Hung Son (AG)

Environmental protection is the responsibility of everyone in the society. The environment provides us with living conditions, but human daily activities are deteriorating the environment and we will have to face numerous challenges to our health and life. With a view to people's active involvement in environmental protection, the first is to make them fully understand the importance of environmental protection, the current situation of Vietnam's environment and actions to be taken to prevent pollution and improve the environment.

People have to make positive impacts on the natural resources and environment through their awareness and life-style. Here we should look at the natural resources and environment at two aspects: "what the natural environment brings us and what we are responsible for"

Over the last time, the State has issued national policies, strategies and plans as well as mapped out a host of important programs on natural resources and environmental protection; concurrently pointed out practical measures to minimize the level of pollution increase, and improve the quality of the degrading environment and natural resources. However, many appropriate issues remain in environmental protection in Vietnam, and the panorama related to all the issues has not got brighter.

Through the radio, newspapers and other kinds of mass media, we have known more about environmental issues in various places in the country. With a view to better enhancing awareness and the living environment, supplying systemic information on the environment for people in Southern provinces in general and people in Ho Chi Minh in particular, an Environment Club was established. The Club has created a playing ground through which awareness is raised and capacity is improved in environmental protection for the Club members who are professors, doctors of philosophy, researchers, journalists, scientists, and interested public members.

The inception of Ho Chi Minh city Environment Club has created a close link among members interested in the cause of sustainable environmental protection. In 2006, with the support of Sida Environment Fund (Swedish) Điển), Project SEF/37/06 of the Environment Club coordinated with localities to organize workshops, seminars, talks, exhibitions and discussion to enhance awareness and capacity in environmental protection for the community.

The environment through pictures is an exhibition organized by the Environment Club in cooperation with Ho Chi Minh city University of Fine Arts and Gia Dinh Study Encouraging Association with 31 canvass painting works by artist Pham Do Dong painting between 1998-2004 and 60 pictures taken by members of applied fine arts club. "The protagonist" in these paintings and unnamed



pictures is the image of Nhieu Loc-Thi Nghe canal during the years both in black mud and in light, the polluted image before and the peaceful and pure image now. They represent an overall view from the past to present and future to confirm the outcomes achieved by concerned parties in improving Nhieu Loc canal. Beyond the art value, these pictures and paintings shown in this exhibition have an in-depth reality value which portrays the life by a canal, awakening the awareness for environmental protection in the community.

Mentioning Thi Vai river, people often imagine about the terrible worry about the living environment caused by industrial waste discharged by factories which are poisoning Thi Vai river. People of Tan Thanh district who live around Thi Vai river have been suffering the worse consequences from this river pollution. "Enhancing awareness and capacity in environmental protection for the community alongside Thi Vai river" is the theme of a workshop held by the Club in cooperation with the Women Association with 50 participants as representatives of the local community, management bodies, specialized agencies, and factories, etc. There were presentations on the realities of pollution, the effectiveness of the entire community's participation in environmental protection, experiences in successful treatment of wastes, etc., at the workshop to help concerned parties to be aware of the problems and seek solutions together. Many hold a view that the wrongdoings of enterprises in environmental protection are attributed to the extremely high costs of waste and sewage treatment and the undetermined action by local authorities. And the community has been free to scatter wastes and discharge sewage because of their low awareness. Thus, besides education on the sense of environmental protection for pupils at school, information and communication for the population, competent authorities should consider carefully the licensing for any enterprise and be determined to tackle, or even suspend the activities of those intended violating enterprises.

In addition to the problems of Thi Vai river, Dong Thanh garbage dumping ground with an area of 40 hectares located in village 3 and 4 of Dong Thanh commune, Hoc Mon district, Ho Chi Minh city, is also infamous. Despite the dumping ground has been closed, its legacy and damages in the living environment still affect considerably the life of local communities. The full participation and heart-felt comments by representatives of village communities, local authorities, and education sector and teachers of Hoang Hoa Tham school in the workshop held by the Environment Club in the locality have shown the concern in reducing the increased level of pollution in a heavily polluted area.

With a simple thought in mind, each person cares about his/her surrounding nature everyday, considering it as part of his/her community ownership, environmental protection will truly become sustainable and necessary for our existence, contributing to our future better life.

These are practical and meaningful activities of the Environment Club to help local communities to understand clearly and develop environmental protection movements by themselves in their places, organizations, schools and community. The beginning is often very difficult; however, it will gradually create changes and new thinking in the community. And this is also the regular and long-term task of the Club.



Challenges when increasing community participation in improving legal normative documents related to sustainable tourism development

By Nguyen Huy Hien-AG

“Creating a mechanism so that concerned people and community can actively and positively participate in forming normative documents as well as making village conventions related to environmental protection and sustainable tourism development” is a key content set out by the Institute for Environment and Sustainable Development when implementing SEF/16/07 project in Quang Tri province.

Four places under the project are prominent tourist spots of Quang Tri province, including 2 sea resort eco-tourist areas (Cua Tung and Cua Viet) along the beach, a historical revolutionary tourist spot at the Old Citadel (Quang Tri town) on the lowland, and a tourist spot at Lao Bao cross-border checkpoint in the mountain area. As these tourist spots are located at the outlet of the East-West Economic Corridor and at the centre of the country, they attract a large number of visitors in the country and abroad for sightseeing and convalescence purposes. Anticipating this prospect, Quang Tri province calls these places “local tourism resources, tourist advantages” and has made large investments in infrastructure development and urbanisation, and at the same time developed policies to turn these tourism and services advantages into an economic spearhead.

The project has carried out consistent measures to increase awareness and actions for the community at these key tourist spots of Quang Tri province. Through these



activities, people’s comments are collected, and training courses, mobile communication (leaflets and campaign launching meetings), visual and direct communication (website, television, radio broadcasting, oral communication within population blocks, groups, and village) are conducted to equip a certain amount of knowledge for local people, commune and town officials on environmental protection as well as broad social participation in environmental protection. People have reached a common understanding that environmental protection is the way to highlight the brand-name of local tourism potential, sustainable environmental protection is to protect households’ long-term economic interests and the socio-economy. Based on the awareness change, there have been changes in attitude and behaviours of the community to attach importance to the environment, to regard a



clean natural environment as a condition and foundation for development, thus local authorities have always supported the project's activities and made concrete normative and directive documents for the immediate environmental protection, promoting the mobilization of mass organisations, families, and individuals to strictly abide by articles of village conventions and rules.

With regards to people under the project, through activities of in-depth and extensive communication and training for the right target, there has emerged the awareness that "good maintenance of the surroundings of our households is part of environmental protection for the group and village, and at the same time for the commune, town, tourism environment and the social and natural environment as a whole", thus they are aware of collecting garbage and dumping them at the right place and right time, and mobilizing their neighbours to follow.

Particularly, as the owner of the project and the community, people by means of their representatives as deputies to the commune and town People's Council, Chief and Vice Chief of villages, groups, chief of family clans, chief of mass organisations have actively contributed ideas to environmental protection issues where they live and do business, for example, the protection of green trees, wells, ponds and lakes, beaches, clean roads, etc., and sanctions for violations. In people's opinion, these are useful activities and give them a chance to understand their rights and obligations about environmental issues that require the entire community to join hands and voices.

Vinh Giang project model which generated outcomes after implementing SEF project twice (in 2004 and 2007), that is, the establishment of self-managed groups and garbage collecting groups in the community, has become a place of interest for surrounding localities like Ho Xa and Vinh Thach town to make study visits to learn about the management, operation and maintenance of groups.

Community's awareness:

As for local people: Despite their low starting level of knowledge, by means of training courses, information and communication by the project, and the direct image of garbage collecting people, local people have their knowledge on environmental protection strengthened as it is to protect their own family's health and their children's future. Hence, it is best to regularly clean the garden and house, collect garbage and dump it at the right place and time, and to mobilize neighbours to follow as well as educate their children about this practice.

As for local authorities: As environmental protection is a regular task and authorities mass organisations at all level pay special attention to it as well as understand its importance, they should participate in training courses to have an in-depth understanding of Law on Environmental Protection, Law on Tourism and other State regulations on environment administrative governance. Key officials at commune and district level and mass organisations are interested in fully participation in training courses, listening to people's comments, taking full notes and draw out issues of interest for internal discussion and direction in the immediate time. Thus, there is a confirmation of the consistent viewpoint that "environmental protection is the driving force for local stable socio-economic development".

Positive actions of the community:

Owing to the community's improved awareness, the environment and scene at tourist spots have been cleaner and tidier to create first good impression for visitors. In Vinh Giang, the provincial road 594 and Cua Tung beach are kept clean. In Quang Tri Old Citadel and Lao Bao Commercial Complex, there are fixed trashcans and posters with slogans on keeping the environment green-clean-beautiful. That is the indicator of the community's determination on the environment which is very important now.



Besides Quang Tri Old Citadel and Lao bao Commercial Complex, there should be policies to maintain self-managed groups and garbage collecting groups and the community and authorities should make effort to deal with environmental sanitation issues in the trend of increased urbanisation and population density. Vinh Quang commune has always paid attention to maintaining a volunteer group in environmental protection. The commune has issued a directive on the continued implementation of waste treatment and environmental protection, issued a decision on the establishment of a self-managed group in environmental protection and tourism comprising 13 members and operational rules of the Group including 13 articles, and issued some other guiding documents for implementing the project. Cua Viet town has also issued a decision on the formation of a self-managed group in environmental protection with 14 members, a decision on the promulgation of rules on environmental and tourism protection of the town with 4 chapters and 12 articles. Along with the policies and rules to strengthen and improve the organisation, communes have developed policies to generate stable income for each member of the garbage collecting group, thus creating incentives for the members' voluntariness and attachment to the long-term task assignment.



The commune officials return to the community through training course and approach discussion on environmental issues which directly affect the community and their capacity and thinking of State governance on the environment have been improved. They have understood legal regulations concerned, scientific knowledge and realities of the environment at their locality for example, the concept of the environment, the living environment, the meaning of the environment, awareness of damages to the environment, measures and sanctions under the Government's Decree 121). The project has brought about effective awareness about the environment not only for public officials but for members of the self-managed group, garbage collecting group, members of youth union, women's union, and chief of family clans as well.

Community's willingness and responsibility are clearly reflected by their compliance with request of monthly sanitation fee payment and the installed trashcans at each household.



As the comments, discussions and approval of village convention and rules are directly related to the rights and obligations, the meetings at the community have crowded participation. In Vinh Giang, people point out that 7 villages of the commune (An Duc 1 and 2, An Hoa 1 and 2, Quang Hai 1 and 2, and Hoa Ly) have reached the cultural village standard (3 of them at provincial level), thus they should continue to strive to realize the targets in terms of environmental issues which are among contents of a cultural village convention. People in Gio Viet (where the rate of participation in meetings and training courses reaches 70-75%) think that village and commune officials should absolutely not be indulgent to and warding off violations of environmental protection rules, and if necessary, the village should propose the commune to levy an administrative fine for the second time repeated offence, and the village should warn, criticize or even impose an administrative fine of less than VND 50,000 for the first time offence. People in Vinh Giang say that such acts as running karaoke business with over-noise and over-time, dumping construction materials and wastes untidily at the wrong place, etc., should be heavily punished.

Besides, during discussions, people under the project area spend most time on clarifying, adding and cutting, supplementing, and adjusting articles of "Rules of awards and punishment" and "Enforcement" in the village convention and rules. In their opinion, awards for good individual examples should be made in a way to create incentives for emulation and set good examples for the community; levels of punishment should be identified clearly as normal, serious, quite serious, and very serious to take appropriate measures; if children commit an offence, then who will be held responsible; the delegation of responsibilities for punishment between the village and the commune; the agreed level of punishment for each offence, etc. Although most people want to reduce the level of punishments and raise the level of awards, in general these comments have reflected the sense of responsibility in applying sanctions for fair punishment and award to make environmental protection a common practice, thinking and friendly habit.

Challenges when the project finishes

Marine economy and sea tourism is the economic spearhead and the immediate and long-term livelihood of people under the project areas (Vinh Giang, Gio Viet). However, at the moment, the sea ecological tourist environment is facing a number of challenges.

Wrong awareness has resulted in wrong doing: As business households and people bury garbage under the sand, the garbage during the disintegration process is merged with underground water to generate bad smell and pollution at the beach. Similarly, Cua Tung and Cua Viet beaches have suffered from human actions, directly by business households. People think that organic garbage buried under the sand causes no problem as it will disintegrate into water. However, tourists and individual households do not bury organic garbage only but every kind of wastes without any classification.

Over-exploitation of underground water for business and sea tourism and tourist bathing also causes problems. 55 households doing business in restaurants at Cua Viet with 55 drilled wells for bathing and cooking are likely to cause a substantial reduction in the underground water resources due to water drainage on the surface, thus affecting the stability of the protective coastal duong forest growth.

Cultural and business environment: ecological tourism risk falling into oblivion and waste with few customers when there still exist common insistence with customers, price pressure, chilly reception, sticking street vendors, etc., at Cua Tung and Cua Viet beaches, which has caused order and safety instability in the area. There are a lot of problems with the behavior culture of shop owners and local people among themselves and towards visitors. They pursue customers and revenues only for themselves. Although they compete in prices and services, their business quality is low, the food served has not been ensured safety while they do everything from living to cooking in a very narrow and tight area. Particularly, due to small-scale and near seashore fishing (small fishing boat), most of fishermen operate near the coast and exploit whatever resources they catch provided that they can earn from VND150,000 to VND200,000 for each voyage, thus risking the depletion and extermination of aquatic resources near the coast soon and they as breadwinners in their families are vulnerable to unemployment, creating a burden to the society. Therefore, there should be increased information, education, and communi-





education for these people to enhance their awareness of their job and relevant authorities should have supporting measures in terms of training to shift their job to services and other kind of businesses.

Accelerated urbanisation and increased need of visitors to go on a sightseeing tour to Quang Tri province mean an increased pressure on the local environment and tourism industry. According to Ms.Gai, a member of the garbage collecting group at Quang Hai village (Vinh Giang), garbage from the population and restaurants is collected every two day. There are four times of garbage collection every week. Each time, there are two dust-carts to collect basic rubbish and each dust-cart has a carrying capacity of 300 kg. Thus, on average, each week garbage within the population (by initial estimate) amounts to 5 tons. The temporary rubbish dump of Tay Hoa Ly will be overloaded soon and local authorities will be unable to manage and treat the garbage. Sooner or later, Vinh Quang will become a town with a population of 1400 households including 120 tourism-based business households and expect 70-80,000 tourist arrivals/year, and then the total garbage will be quite large. The current income of the rubbish collectors will not guarantee the job security. Hence, upper-level authorities and local ones should discuss to solve this problem. The future realities are completely similar to those of Cua Viet town and Lao Bao Special Commercial Complex.

The extension of deposits of silt and land erosion at Cua Tung and Cua Viet occur at the same time during the Northeastern wind and risk affecting the existence of these two charms of nature, thus risk losing their attractions to visitors and losing income of a large number of local people who live on sea tourism based business. Remarkably, Cua Tung beach within the last 10 years has been seriously eroded, reducing the beach's width (the distance from the sea water edge to the road) from 80m in the past to less than 30m now. Without some measures to rectify the sea current and proper embankments and dykes, the erosion will continue in the coming years.

Vinh Quang project model which has yielded some outcomes like the establishment of self-managed groups and garbage collecting groups in the community has become a place of interest for surrounding localities like Ho Xa and Vinh Thach town to make study visits to learn about the management, operation and maintenance of groups.

The two issues, that is, the environment and tourism, in Quang Tri province are close-knit. If the environment is encroached and polluted, then the tourism will be seriously affected and vice versa. Thus, maintenance and development of both are equally important and have a direct impact on the livelihood of local people. In terms of the environment alone, with the increased awareness in the community through various channels of information and projects, there has emerged a common sense of the community to protect the environment, which means the protection of their own future life. Particularly, as for the area under SEF project, the community's awareness have recorded a more remarkable progress, representing a pervasive and resounding element for the surrounding communities.

On account of positive elements intertwined with shortcomings and limitations, there should be a review, discussion and experience lessons drawn to point out best practices, good models and people which will be multiplied, and rectify and solve shortcomings for the urgent environmental problems.



SEF-Funded Projects in 2007: Characteristics and Patterns

By Hoang Thanh Tam- SEF Chairwoman

Most of projects approved in 2007 have been so far completed and recorded a number of considerable results in localities. However, as some projects such as SEF/07/07, SEF/24/07, SEF/08/07 and SEF/28/07 have progress delayed, some of their activities have been cut off or stopped.

With the support of SEF, there have been many projects which focus on networking in SEF/13/07, sharing information in SEF/23/07 and SEF 32/07/07, contributing community voice, partnering, and promoting dialogue among different interest groups in SEF/05/07, SEF/06/07, SEF/20/07, and SEF/27/07. Through a series of workshops and seminars, SEF/27/07 project in Cu Lao Dung, Soc Trang province has promoted close cooperation among four partners, that is, farmers, scientists, service providers, and businesses, to render

support to farmers in planning and seeking outlet for agricultural and aquatic products, raising knowledge on sustainable aquaculture, helping reduce environmental pollution, epidemic diseases and commodity prices, for example, breeding bio-shrimps and signing a collection and sale contract with a sugar cane company under Decision 80 by the Government. SEF/06/07 project in Thinh Quang, Dong Da district, Hanoi has enabled 19 local youngsters to take photograph and get immersed in the community to study about environmental issues of To Lich River and express their viewpoints as well as perspective through pictures taken and stories told. Through information sharing seminars and picture-taking tour, the group of core youngsters have become information, education and communication (IEC) workers on the environment for the community alongside To Lich river. Pictures and

stories told by these young people have featured prominently everyday real problems which cause pollution to the river and have never been recognized before. Photo exhibitions at the community have attracted great audience from people in the ward and others. Many feelings and initiatives to help improve and preserve the cleaner living environment alongside both banks of the river have been recorded. Through an exhibition at the Ethnology museum and various information channels like press, media, and website, the project has helped raise awareness of Hanoi people in general and influenced Hanoi and local leadership. The group of core young people had chances to discuss with wards' leadership and propose solutions. Wards' culture workers have introduced To Lich river environment contents into daily bulletins broadcast on the wards' radio. Representatives of mass



organisations have agreed to include the criteria of environmental protection in the contents of selecting typical examples and families. The vice chairwoman of Hanoi municipal People's Committee attended the opening ceremony of the exhibition and suggested that the project continue mobile exhibitions to communities alongside To Lich river. SEF/05/07 project in Vung Vieng village - a fishing village on Ha Long bay - has chosen an approach to use effectively community art performances in environment IEC work. The project has created an opportunity for Vung Vieng pupils aged from 7 to 15 to experience and participate in new art forms like photography, painting, and clay modelling,... These children have changed from being reserved at the first moments to being bold and confident in sharing many aspects of their life. Nearly 1000 pictures taken by Vung Vieng children and a collective painting on a large-size cloth reflecting their perspective and feeling about the surroundings among other products of the project have been introduced in the community exhibition at Vung Vieng fishing village, helping raise the awareness for local children and adults towards general life issues and environmental protection in particular.

Besides, there are various projects that focus people's voice for the protection of environment and natural resources like SEF/04/07, SEF/14/07, SEF/16/07, SEF/18/07, SEF/21/07, and SEF/25/07. Under the auspices of SEF, people are enabled to participate in such activities as dialogue, suggestions on those environmental issues related to their own life. A commune level workshop organised by Primary School 1 Thuy Phu (Hue) Project Management Unit raised all issues about local environmental realities. Each kind of pollution like air, noise, soil, and water source has been analysed in various aspects by local people and public officials with certain level of knowledge to come to an agreement on measures to enforce village conventions and commitments to village-building and cultural family-building, to mobilize the community in a stronger manner to join hands keeping as a good school and living environment as green-clean-beautiful. On the other hand, the workshop had proposed some recommendations regarding relevant district authorities' responsibility in their

intervention to minimize environmental pollution in Phu Bai industrial zone which is beyond the commune's control. At Bao Loc town, Lam Dong province, through a seminar, the community, authorities, environment watchdogs and the mass media have agreed to build and approve a document including 6 groups of solutions serving as a legal basis for wards and communes to settle environmental pollution problems like dust in coffee production, sewage from tea producing, silk-spinning, and sewage treatment factories. There have been many meetings of local people to discuss village convention on environmental protection at villages and beaches like those in Dai Hai village, Thach Hai commune, Ha Tinh province or to contribute ideas and comments to some draft legal documents related to tourism development and environmental protection at some tourist spots of Quang Tri province, to contribute comments to building ecological tourism development plans, environmental protection and tourist operations regulations in Minh Chau commune, Van Don district Quang Ninh province.

SEF has always paid attention to seeking solutions to new environmental issues that affect the community during the past years. SEF/07/07 project in Hanoi is an example for realizing solutions to limit nylon bags use and serves as a premise to prove that the community and businesses can join hands to protect the environment. The project has assessed the realities of people's use of nylon bags in some districts like Thanh Xuan, Hai Ba Trung, Dong Da, Hoan Kiem, Ba Dinh, and Cau Giay and in some supermarkets in combination with conducting surveys at facilities producing and recycling nylon bags in Thanh Tri district, Hanoi. On that basis, the project has designed communi-



cation products like logo, leaflets, and blog with various messages to communicate to the community about the damage of nylon bags to limit their use. The project has designed, printed and delivered 500 leaflets, 100 T-shirts, and 1000 paper bags with the message 'Say No to nylon bags' for information, education and communication (IEC) at some supermarkets, shops, and commercial centres through the activities of Environmental Protection Volunteer Group which includes environment students of Hanoi University of Architecture as the core. Through the activities of the project, the volunteers are the first to have their knowledge improved and behaviours changed, thus generating a domino effect on environmental protection in the community where they live. The delivery of paper bags to consumers has facilitated their behaviour change and provided them with the means to limit the use of nylon bags. Beyond a call, it is the first time that consumers have the right and opportunity to choose other kinds of bags other than nylon ones. With SEF/20/07 in Ham Thuan Nam district, Binh Thuan province, the participatory community model related to decision making about environmental protection in Ham Kiem industrial zone has closely linked people of Ham Kiem and Ham commune, local authorities and management boards of industrial zones ranging from participation in building programs, plans, and regulations on environmental protection to supervision over activities of industrial zones in operation. The model has initially developed people's ownership of local environmental protection by means of dialogue with a view to managing to build and sign the commitment among three parties, helping reduce harm to the environment and negative social impact on the local community in withdrawing land for the industrial pur-

poses. Thanks to efforts and determination of the Vietnam Association for Natural and Environmental Protection, SEF/31/07 has promptly gathered scientific materials and comments from scientists, managers at all levels, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and local people to advance timely proposals to the high-ranking leaders of Vietnam on the abrogation of Tam Dao 2 project which has a lot of potential environmental risks and to recommend some solutions for preserving and developing Tam Dao national park in a sustainable way.

SEF/13/07 project in Nghe An province follows SEF/08/06 to strengthen and expand network building and policy lobbying on food safety. After 9 months in operation, the network has admitted 11 members more, and has advised and lobbied for the People's Committee of Vinh city to promulgate a policy supporting safe vegetable production and consumption under Decision No.741/QD-UBND dated 24/1/2008 and to issue Decision 582/QD-UBND dated 28/2/2008 on the approval of detailed planning of Vinh city's vegetables and flowers zone with an area of 93.8 hectares including 40.05 hectares of safe vegetables. Starting from a safe vegetable growing model in Hung Long commune, Hung Nguyen district, facilities of safe vegetable production within the entire network have covered 6 communes and there is a collective brand-name of 'safe vegetable' introduced and sold at three pilot markets, that is, Quan Lau market, Quang Trung market and MAXIMAX supermarket. Besides, there are some other projects which concentrate on environment-friendly products by means of building and developing vegetable growing, abalone and straw mushroom growing, and linchi growing groups like those in SEF/22/07 or SEF/27/07 with technical training sessions on limited use of pesticide and antibiotics in aquaculture, pilot model of raising bio-shrimps. With SEF/21/07 project in Loc Phat ward, Lam Dong province, people have learned the technical process of growing safe tea that helps reduce



environmental pollution and protect tea growers' health. Tea growing households have managed to own a sewage treating system or change production method from tea-boiling to tea-frying, which reduces 80% of sewage in the environment. Households providing restaurant services and collective meals, kindergartens, nursery schools, and grammar schools have committed to strict compliance with regulations on food safety as instructed.

Almost all projects focus on capacity-building and institutional development for civil society organisations and voluntary organisations with a view to increase the ability to participate in activities and decision making process related to the management and use of local natural resources and environmental protection through the establishment of teams, clubs or volunteer groups combined with skill training, making of operational rules, and seminars to raise knowledge. For example, SEF/04/07 in Minh Chau commune in the core area of Bai Tu Long national park which has great potential for community ecological tourism has supported people to establish 3 interest groups in tourism and 5 service team as core of Minh Chau tourist service cooperative. All teams and groups are entitled to participate in skill trainings on ecological tourism like cooking skill and food decoration skill, first aid skill, bar service skill, and tour guide skill. What is more, they can participate in other activities like workshops, meetings, and knowledge contests on environmental protection, enabling sustainable development of Minh Chau commune's tourism. As in such projects as SEF/05/07, SEF/07/07, and SEF/11/07 which are implemented by young volunteer group, the group members have been equipped with necessary knowledge like community surveying skill, negotiation-mobilization-information skill, public relations and communication skill, campaign organising skill, knowledge on environmental education and wastes treatment in order to work with the community more effectively for local environmental protection.

People has positively appreciate and participate in teamwork activities in many projects like SEF/01/07, SEF/02/07, SEF/03/07, SEF/04/07, SEF/10/07, SEF/12/07,

SEF/14/07, SEF/15/07, SEF/17/07, SEF/21/07, SEF/26/07, and SEF/29/07. As people have truly been well aware of the importance of teamwork and group meetings, they are enthusiastic participants and key member in IEC work on the local community's environmental protection, thus radically changing the awareness of the community and gradually attracting more people for a clean environment and environmental protection, turning into people's self-conscious and regular acts. In SEF/10/07 project - Phuc Tho district, Ha Tay province, 160 members from 4 women group for a green-clean-beautiful environment at 4 residential areas have mobilized people to actively collect rubbish, clean village roads and alleys, clear drains, and take care of green trees every Sunday. As in SEF/14/07 of Thach Ha commune, Ha Tinh province where there had never been any practice of garbage collection, since SEF was in operation, there have been 5 self-managed garbage collection and environmental protection groups in 5 village which were established by similar regulations. The active participation with people and local authorities, they have kept this activity as frequent as twice a month. SEF/15/07 in Truong Son commune, Quang Binh province has managed to establish 7 community environmental protection groups at 7 villages including 5 villages inhabited by Van Kieu ethnic group. After 10 months in operation, the groups have conducted 26 meetings to share experience in production, disseminate information on environmental protection, and keep the village clean. Typically, the environmental protection group of Khe Cat village has performed regular activities of cleaning and collecting garbage. SEF/01/07 in Muong Phang commune, Dien Bien province with 8 self-managed groups at 8 villages of Thai, H'Mong and Kho Mu ethic people has conducted 80 group meetings to learn and exchange knowledge and experience for mutual help in households'



economic development (through building the micro-bio organic manure and biogas model) and mobilized local people to clean their villages monthly. SEF/02/07 at Thuong Ha village, Tung San, Ha Giang province with a group of 20 young persons for the environment has become a pioneering force in growing preventive upstream forest and forest cultivating garden for such precious trees as Po Mu, Sa Moc, and Keo tai tuong. Besides, the group has also helped the village's youth and people know the technology of cultivating seedlings and design their own seedlings cultivating gardens at home. Owing to the active IEC work by the group on the protection of environment and natural resources, villagers' lifestyle has been partly changed, and there is a marked reduction in deforestation, some households have move livestock breeding facilities to far away from their living houses and build separate toilets. SEF/26/07 in Thach My C village, Hau Giang province after the project completion, still maintains activities of environmental protection groups, water hyacinth carpet weaving and cord plaiting groups, and an aquaculture club. With regards to SEF/12/07 in Nga Son, Thanh Hoa province, at first there was only one core farmers group in Nga Tien commune, there have now been 3 core farmers groups established in the district as truly positive elements who have exerted great influence in the community in applying advanced fertilizer technology for effective sedge intensive cultivation economically, socially and environmentally, and at the same time as positive elements in keeping good cleaning practice at the village..

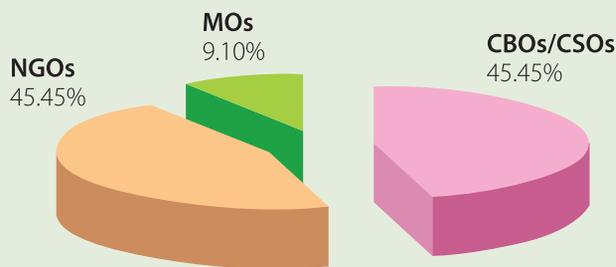
Some SEF projects has supported the linkage and cooperation among households in production, consumption, and management of resources with community-based and rights-based approach, use of indigenuous knowl-

edge in the preservation, sustainable use of national resources, and sustainable development of livelihood. At Ho Tre village, Yen The, Bac Giang province, with the support of SEF/03/07, the Centre for Business and Community Development Support has helped local people enhance capacity and successfully developed some environment-friendly economic models yielding quick income and high efficiency and exerting positive impact on forest protection and development. Development of quick income yielding ecological activities is the way for poor households to make ends meet. Through the form of bee-raising and ginger-growing clubs, households have been provided with technical advices and seedlings and materials support as well as outlet support, thus people have more peace at mind and are more associated with the forest. What is more important than linking households into clubs is for them to support each other and jointly discuss important decisions related to their production and business. At SEF/29/07 in Nguyen Phich commune, U Minh, Ca Mau province, households are linked together to patrol and guard the forest, to build an economic model of agriculture, forestry and aquaculture combined, especially the model of raising fish under the forest umbrella to improve the living standards of people living in forest areas to help them manage, exploit and protect the forest more effectively. With the support of SEF/17/07, it is asserted that gathering forces of separate forest contract households into a collective force through the establishment of agricultural extension and forestry extension clubs in Phu Mau village, Nam Dong, Thua Thien Hue province is a step in the right direction to increase people's self-reliance and responsibility in implementing the project and enhance their accessibility to public services, developing indigenous knowledge values in combination with technical and scientific measures in agriculture and forestry to manage and protect forest capital and at the same time, develop and enrich the forest, thus improving people's life. Remarkably, the club has got access to the rights stipulated by the State and make use of them in building legal documents to propose competent authorities to assign land and natural resources. As a result, the club has been assigned the right to manage and protect 41.6 hectares of natural forest by the district People's Committee.

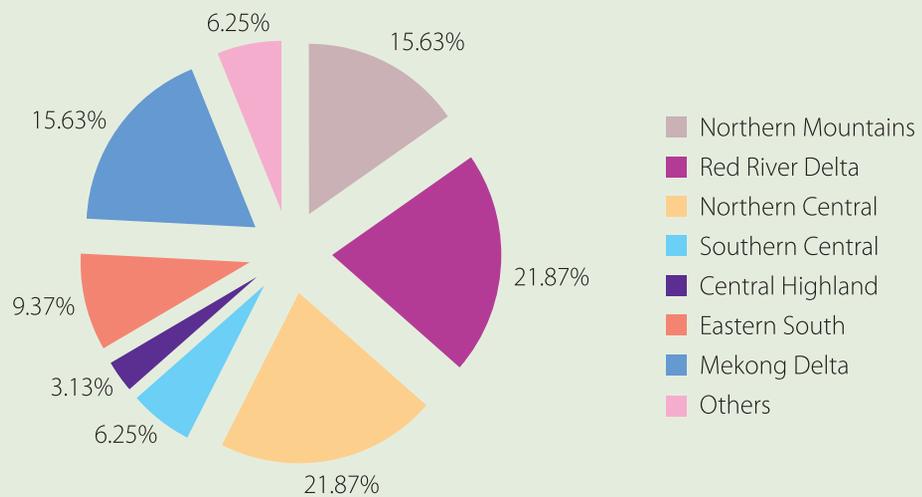
Statistics of SEF-funded Projects 2007

Total submitted applications: 100
 Number of eligible applications: 88
 Total projects approved: 32
 Total funding budget: 243,300.00 US dollars equivalent
 Smallest project budget: 3,000.00 US dollars
 Biggest project budget: 15,000.00 US dollars

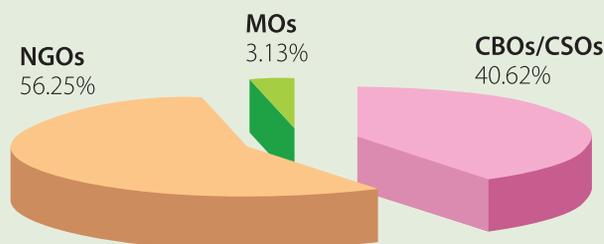
Summary of submitted applications:



Classification of Submitted application by geographical distribution



Classification of SEF-funded projects by types of organizations



Funded project 2007

SEF/01/07. Community participation in agricultural waste management to reduce environmental pollution. Muong Phang commune, Dien Bien district, Dien Bien province. *Centre for Community Development of Dien Bien province.*

SEF/02/07. Raising environmental awareness for Thuong Ha community through building indigenous plant nursery garden and planting tree along the road and in the watershed forest. Thuong Ha village, Tung San, Hoang Su Phi district, Ha Giang province. *Group for Environmental Protection of Thuong Ha village, Tung San commune, Ha Giang province.*

SEF/03/07. Capacity building for the poor ethnic minority community through establishment and development of Ecological Production Club to raise environmental awareness and develop sustainable livelihood. Ho Tre, Tam Tien commune, Yen The district, Bac Giang province. *Centre for Support and Development of Business and Community, Ha Noi.*

SEF/04/07. Supporting institution and strengthening the local community participation in tourist activities and environmental protection. Minh Chau commune in the core zone of Bai Tu Long National Park, Van Don district, Quang Ninh province. *Centre of National Parks, Ha Noi.*

SEF/05/07. Photography on Ha Long Environment-fishing villages in the Bay. Vung Vieng, Cua Van fishing villages, Hung Thang ward, Ha Long City, Quang Ninh province. *GreenZoom, Ha Noi.*

SEF/06/06. Community Talk "To Lich River- The corner views through photos". Thinh Quang ward, Dong Da district, Ha Noi. *Action Centre for City Development, Ha Noi.*

SEF/07/07. Just say NO to plastic bags. Ha Noi and suburb -districts (Supermarket, Trade Centers). *Office of Inclusive Development Action, Ha Noi.*

SEF/08/07. Developing and strengthening capacity for Volunteer Group on Environmental Communication to reduce the business and consumption on wildlife animal. Ha Noi. *Group for Conservation and Environment Education Da Vang, Ha Noi.*

Funded project 2007

SEF/09/07. Protecting ground water by community participation in Ta Xa village. Ta Xa village, Dai Thang commune, Phu Xuyen district, Ha Tay province. *Research and Development for Population, Society and Environment, Ha Noi.*

SEF/10/07. Strengthening capacity and volunteer activity of Women Group for green-beautiful-clean environment. Cam Dinh commune, Phuc Tho district, Ha Tay province. *Women Group for green-beautiful-clean environment of Cam Dinh commune, Ha Tay.*

SEF/11/07. Environmental communication for community in Loc Vuong ward. Loc Vuong ward, Nam Dinh city. *Club of Life Skill, Nam Dinh.*

SEF/12/07. Development of target farmer group for up scaling fertilizer depth placement model for Sedge intensification. Nga Son district, Thanh Hoa province. *VAC Training Research and Development Centre (HAU-VAC) Ha Noi.*

SEF/13/07. Consolidating and expanding network of scientific and technical information providing on safety food in Vinh city and surroundings. Hung Nguyen, Nam Dan district and Vinh city. *Environment and Development, Nghe An province.*

SEF/14/07. Raising environmental awareness and building environmental protection regulation on the beach of Thach Hai commune. Thach Hai, Thach Ha, Ha Tinh. *Science and Technology Union of HaTinh province.*

SEF/15/07. Strengthening the participation of community groups in protecting environment and natural resource in Truong Son commune. Truong Son commune, Quang Ninh district, Quang Binh province. *Centre for Pro-poor of Quang Ninh district, Quang Binh province.*

SEF/16/07. Strengthening community participation in completion legal documents relating to tourist development and environmental protection in some tourist site of Quang Tri. Cua Viet (Gio Linh town), Cua Tung (Vinh Quang commune), Ancient Wall (Dong Ha town), Border door (Lao Bao Border door), Quang Tri province. *Vietnam Environment and Sustainable Development institute, Ha Noi.*

Funded project 2007

SEF/17/07. Consolidating and developing model for management and protection natural forest based on people right. Phu Mau village, Huong Phu commune, Nam Dong district, Thua Thien Hue province. *Head of Sub-organization for Nature Conservation in Thua Thien Hue province.*

SEF/18/07. Raising awareness and capacity in environmental protection for teacher, school-children and local people in Thuy Phu commune. Thuy Phu No1 Primary School and 12 villages of Huong Thuy commune, Thua Thien Hue province. *Thuy Phu No1 Primary School, Huong Thuy commune, Thua Thien Hue province.*

SEF/19/07. Building models for protecting environment, water resource and developing forest for mountainous people in Canh Hiep commune. Canh Hiep commune, Van Canh district, Binh Dinh province. *Women Union in Canh Hiep commune, Binh Dinh province.*

SEF/20/07. Community participation in decision making relating to environmental protection in investment projects of Ham Kiem I industrial zone. Ham Thuan Nam district, Binh Thuan province. *Centre for Education and Environmental Communication, Ha Noi.*

SEF/21/07. Strengthening capacity for VAC Club in environmental protection and sustainable production in Loc Phat ward. Loc Phat ward, Bao Loc district, Lam Dong province. *VAC Club of Loc Phat ward, Bao Loc town, Lam Dong province.*

SEF/22/07. Solutions to reduce environmental pollution in remote commune. Minh Hoa commune, Dau Tieng district, Binh Duong province. *Club of Agricultural Extension in Minh Hoa commune, Binh Duong province.*

SEF/23/07. Publication workshop proceeding on Rehabilitation and management Mangrove Forest for Sustainable Development in Viet Nam. Can Gio National Biosphere Reserve Park. *Centre for Natural Resources and Environmental Studies, Ha Noi.*

SEF/24/07. Environmental education for community. Quarter 1, ward 10, Tan Binh district, HCM city. *Sub-association for Elder in quarter 1, ward 10, Tan Binh district, HCM city.*

Funded project 2007

SEF/25/07. Raising awareness and presenting community voice to environmental protection and expanding area to plant medicinal herb in the rural. Phu Tho commune, Phu Tan district, An Giang province. *Red Cross of Phu Tho commune, An Giang province.*

SEF/26/07. Activity to prevent environmental pollution and building community capacity for environmental protection and sustainable development. Thanh My C village, Binh Thanh commune, Phung Hiep district, Hau Giang province. *Group for Agricultural Cooperative No1 of Thanh My C village, Hau Giang province.*

SEF/27/07. Raising awareness on environmental protection though forum on community voice in coastal zone of Cu Lao Dung island district. An Thanh 2, An Thanh 3, An Dong, An Thanh Nam, Cu Lao Dung district, Soc Trang province. *Centre for Vocation of Cu Lao Dung district, Soc Trang province.*

SEF/28/07. Strengthening community capacity and social organisations in environmental protection in Phu Quoc island district. Cua Duong, Bai Thom, Cua Can communes, Phu Quoc district, Kien Giang province. *Learning Encouragement Association of Phu Quoc, Kien Giang province.*

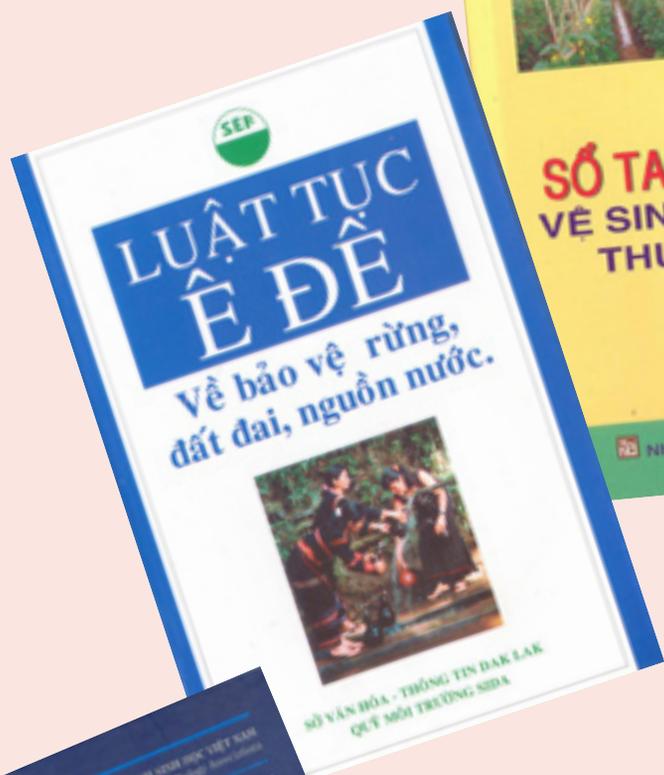
SEF/29/07. Increasing capacity in forest management, exploitation and protection for community living in U Minh forest area. Nguyen Phich commune, U Minh district, Ca Mau province. *Group 8 for Forestry Production of Nguyen Phich commune, Ca Mau.*

SEF/30/07. The Fifth Contest on "Improving the use and the protection of water resource for high school student". High Schools and Vocational Education Schools in national wide. *Editor in chief of Science and Life Newspaper, Ha Noi.*

SEF/31/07. Recommendation of solutions to conservation and development of Tam Dao National Park relating to project Tam Dao 2. Ha Noi and Vinh Phuc. *Vienam Association for Conservation of Nature and Environment.*

SEF/32/07. Expanding and disseminating the Result on assessment method of public access to environment for community. National wide. *Vienam Association for Conservation of Nature and Environment.*

SEF resources and materials



SEF resources and materials

By Bui Thi Thanh Thuy-AG office

After more than 20 years of doi moi (renewal), with a view to the country's sustainable development, the State, enterprises, domestic and foreign organisations have made enormous investments for environmental protection through programs and projects. For the past ten years, the support by SEF serves as a catalyst and stimulus for people to resolve environmental issues at their living places. And the SEF publication and other communication is one of the most activity that will be useful for the community in implementing environmental protection measures resulting in fresher air and a reduction in damage to our environment for future generations. Beside various publications were made in the last years, the year 2007-2008, we would like to introduce the collection of books relating to community and environment published in Vietnamese and English version by SEF or cooperated with other organisations.

Recently storms, floods, flood-tides, northeastern monsoons and droughts have led to heavy losses in life and property in Vietnam: severe shortage of water in dry season, and avalanche and flood in the mountain areas in rainy season; a number of coastal areas are so seriously eroded and national dykes broken or washed away that the State has to make large investment in repairing and reinforcing them. In fact when big storms enters our country in the last 3 years the national dykes in those areas with well-grown and well-protected mangrove forests still stand firm before strong winds and great waves although they were built by pressured soil while the concretized dykes reinforced by stone jetty in those areas where the preventive mangrove forests has been cut down or has been transformed into shrimp hatching areas like in Cat Hai (Hai Phong) or Hau Loc (Thanh Hoa) had been broken. In some workshops on dyke protection and natural disaster control, the protective effect of these green walls have been discussed and measures to protect the dyke roof by grass cover have been introduced. Regrettably, in the interest of immediate economic benefits, the coastal protective forests have been substantially re-

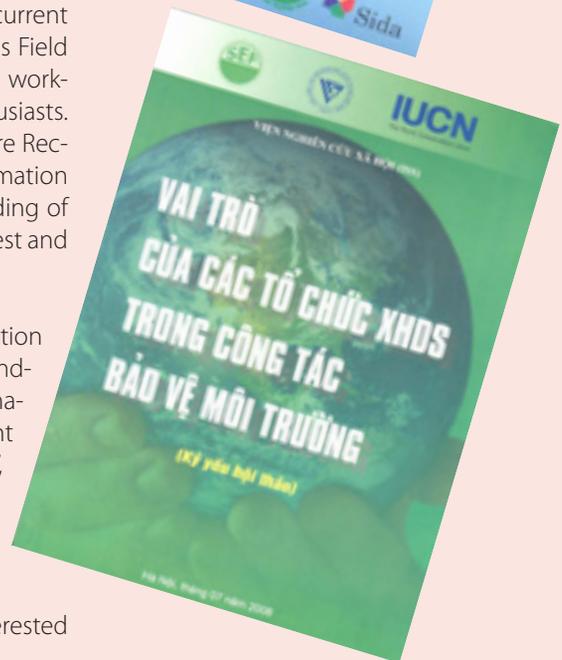
duced. Under the auspices of Sida Environment Fund (SEF) and IUCN Vietnam, 51 reports presented at the workshop on “Mangrove Forest Rehabilitation in response to climate change for sustainable development” held by Mangrove Ecosystem Research Centre (MERC) in coordination with IUCN, ACTMANG, and Can Gio Protective Forest Management Board had been selected and edited together with some other articles to be published into the book with the same name to serve as a reference for managers and those readers interested in the climate change as well as rising sea level and other issues related to coastal sustainable development. The major contents of the book include 4 parts. It is hoped that this book will provide policy-makers and managers at the central and local level, lecturers, and students with useful information to serve as a basis to make a correct assessment of the role played by the entire mangrove forests in response to the climate change and the rising sea level as well as its role in life, thus contributing to the coastal sustainable development and improving the life of poor communities.



Along with the climate change issues, there is another book “Proceeding of the 6th Vietnam National Conference on Entomology” published by SEF in collaboration with Vietnam Entomological Society mentioned on entomology affected by climate change. That document will contribute positively to disseminate the research results and exchange experiences on research and training in different disciplines of Entomology for Entomologists, IPM/ ICM practitioners, Environmentalist, pesticide-Manufactures and Distributor, Chemist, Educator, Students and as well as for interested groups. The conference will be met the objective to determine activity strategies of Entomological Society of Vietnam in the future especially in the circumstance of globalization and global climate change.



Vietnam has one of the highest levels of biodiversity in the world. The Government of Vietnam is committed to biodiversity conservation, devoting much effort and investment to preserving the country’s natural resources and protecting typical and fragile ecosystems and wildlife. However, Vietnam’s biodiversity is increasingly threatened by illegal hunting and trading of wildlife, especially mammals. These problems result from the public’s lack of understanding about mammals and their importance in nature. This is partly due to the scarcity of wildlife publication, in the case of existing such publications, their insufficient content and attractiveness. The Field Guide to the mammals of Vietnam presents our current understanding of the most prominent large mammals in Vietnam. This Field Guide will be an excellent resource for all readers, not only for those working in nature conservation but for scientists, students and nature enthusiasts. With the co-financial support of SEF, World Bank and People and Nature Reconciliation for development of this field guide to disseminate of information on wildlife in Vietnam and to raise the Vietnamese youth’s understanding of the mammals of their country as well as draw the general public’s interest and conscience towards the research and preservation of wildlife.



More over, SEF has co-supported to Vietnam Association for Conservation of Nature and Environment (VACNE) of SEF/42/06 has published 4 handbooks namely “Linkage environmental protection with hunger elimination and poverty reduction”, “Socialisation the collection and treatment of living solid waste”, “Youth volunteer and Environmental protection”, “Education on environmental communication”. In addition, Project SEF/32/07 of VACNE publishing the document “Pilot - testing Result on assessment method of public access to environment in Vietnam”. The publication will contribute positively to disseminate the documents for community as well as the toolkit of indicators for groups interested



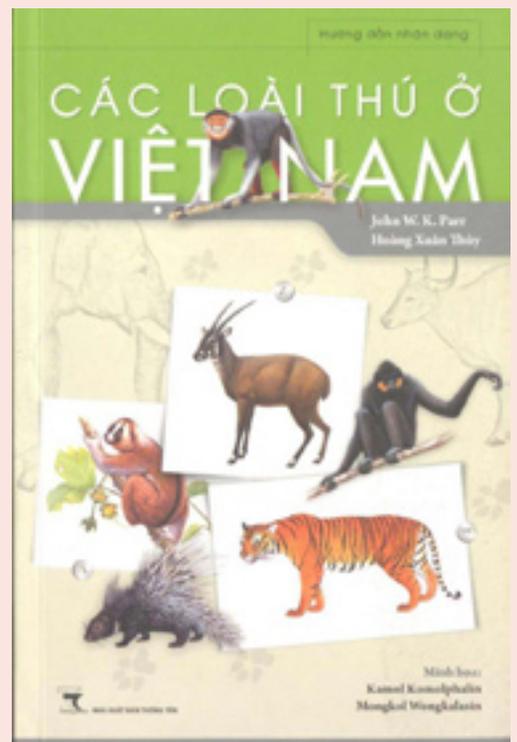
in assessing the performance of their own governments and information on how to get involved. Hopefully, this method will be applied by the government agencies, NGOs and community to contribute effectively in environment protection.

Relating the public health, under Project SEF/08/06, two TV reports and a number of handbooks titled “Food Safety Hygiene” were developed and published, which provided necessary scientific and technical information for households and establishments in producing and trading safe foodstuffs in Vinh City and the surrounding areas.

Realizing the need to have a joint plan of actions for all organizations operating in environment protection and to increase the participation of the CSOs, CBOs, in environment protection, SEF, IUCN and VUSTA co-organize the workshop on “Connecting Local initiatives in Environment Protection”. In order to evaluate the role of CSO and CBOs in environment protection-the difficulties and barriers and the advantage difficulties and challenges for CSO and CBOs and their participation in the conservation of nature and environment. Institute for Social Study under VUSTA (Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Association) with the SEF financial support to published the book “The Role of civil society organisations in environmental protection”. At the same time, to contribute positively to disseminate the documents relating to the policy and regulation about the role, organisation structure, operation and management of voluntary organisations to associations, members and leaders of voluntary associations and state managed staffs at all level, the Publication of VUSTA on “Collection of documents relating to voluntary organisations of people. This also contributes to promote effectively the self-control in activities of voluntary organisations and the management of state at all level under law framework.

Furthermore, beside many regular documentation of SEF, the publication issued by SEF at Labor Publishing House namely “SEF together with community to protect environment” for summary some SEF activities as well as some stories from the field during the last ten years in Vietnamese and English. This book collects more than 20 articles and dozens of pictures showing sincere sentiments of the Advisory Group members, Project Owners and Local People throughout ten years of strong attachment with SEF in environmental protection. Thus, there is a high level of sustainability and viability of these activities after the end of SEF’s projects. Although ten years of SEF operation is not long for an organisation, the period has left good feelings in the community where SEF’s projects have been implemented and multiplied in various regions and places nationwide.

It is hoped that these publications will be useful for the community in implementing environmental protection measures resulting in fresher air and a reduction in damage to our environment for future generations.



SEF and AG office activities



AG Members and Office

The AG members are young and working closely to the community and representing different areas of the society, including NGOs, government agencies, and media agencies in different regions of the country. Besides the administrator, a part-time secretary and accountant were added to AG Office to help with the large amount of works.

AG Meetings

Quarterly AG meeting was organized to examine of proposals and review SEF activities quarterly as well as make plan for the next.

Training courses

SEF project implementation and management for project directors

In order to strengthen capacity for project directors providing them knowledge, skills and experience in mobilizing the communities in project's activities and management, training workshops for project directors 2007 were organized with 2 participants of each project. Contents of the training course are:

- General introduction of Sida and SEF
- Instruction for making plan to implementing project
- Instruction for carry out project

activities (paid attention to skills of Group Development and integrate the guideline for policy dialogue between different groups)

- Instruction for supervising, examination and maintaining project
- Instruction for managing project, account document and project reports.

Organisation Development and Advocacy

There were many cooperated activities with CSE, India and other VN NGOs in the year 2008.

Two training courses organised in India from 1-6 of July, 2008. The training programmes are: Taking Green Education into Schools and Documentation, information management and outreach. The participants are the 2 SEF office staffs and 11 SEF projects selected from various organisation working in above –mentioned field

A training course on "Organization Development and Advocacy" for 30 representatives of the SEF projects 2006-2008 in Da Nang from 2-6 August, 2008 was organised by SEF office and cooperated with some experience experts from national and international organisations such as Center for Science and Environment (CSE)- India and Institute of Consultancy on Development, Center for

People and Nature Reconciliation.

Information and Knowledge Dissemination

Internal Bulletin and Newsletter:

Internal bulletins that disseminated knowledge and experience on community and SEF activities were published quarterly (in Vietnamese) and SEF newsletter (in English) by the end of the year.

Other Materials:

AG office collected, compiled, documented and published some other materials including, a collection of SEF 2004-2005, 2006 and 2007 project reports the booklet on SEF projects in 2002-2005, the SEF brochure for 2006-2008, photographs of SEF project activities, ...and etc.

SEF office cooperated with Labor Publishing House to complete a Vietnamese and English Publication "SEF together with community to protect environment" for summary some SEF activities as well as some stories from the field during the last ten years.

Publication "Green Information" issued for three versions in October, November and December 2008.

Under Project SEF/32/07, SEF has co-supported to Vietnam Association for



Conservation of Nature and Environment (VACNE) for a part in Publication on "Pilot - testing Result on assessment method of public access to environment in Vietnam".

After workshop on "Connecting Local initiatives in Environment Protection" to evaluate the role of CSO and CBOs in environment protection-the difficulties and barriers and the advantage difficulties and challenges for CSO and CBOs and their participation in the conservation of nature and environment, Institute for Social Study under VUSTA with the SEF financial support to published the book "The Role of civil society organisations in environmental protection".

These materials are summaries of practical and useful experiences from the reality that can be of realistic help for SEF projects and good references for other local communities.

SEF Website

Website www.sef.org.vn has been developed and updated regularly. From the 3 quarter 2008, SEF website has been redesigned with large interface to update for providing more and more information relating environment and sustainable development beside SEF project activities. The website has made convenient for all concerned or interested individuals and organizations to reference.

Networking

- SEF project network continues to expand for information and experience exchange in order to help one another maintain environmental protection activities in each local area through its contribution to bulletins, newsletters and materials of AG office.
- SEF bulletins, newsletters and other materials were distributed regularly to organizations implementing SEF projects (including completed ones).
- In July, AG office cooperated with 2 projects of Hoi An Conservation Club and Women and Environment Club in Tam Dao assisting 2 Swedish students who received Sida scholarship, visiting Hoi An for ten days and Tam Dao for 3 days to study the Sida cooperation activities on policy field.
- Relating the SJWP National Contest in Vietnam: "Improving the use and the protection of water resources" of SEF/43/06 and SEF/30/07. the Vietnam National Committee organised a Dialogue in Hanoi, September 12, 2007 to evaluate the result of last four contests and discuss on the difficult as well as the solution to promote effectively for the next contests. Due to the experience sharing from this dialogue will be helpful to the next contests therefore SEF has supported for 4 persons including a teacher and 3

students, who are the winners of the fourth contest from Soc Trang province to participate therein.

- There are 2 workshops were organised in November in Hanoi successfully, the SEF internal workshop on exchanging experience among SEF projects on the 26th and the Workshop on Community-based Initiatives in Environmental Protection on 27 November in cooperation with VUSTA and IUCN. The workshop "Connecting community-based initiatives in environmental protection" facilitates opportunities for exchanging and sharing experience and lessons among CSOs in environmental protection and suggests recommendations for CSOs to improve their capacity and government to create favorable legal framework for their operations. There were approximately 100 participants. Thus, it is one of the largest consultations of multiple stakeholders to produce the common actions for all of them with the major objectives of the workshop.

During the second quarter of the year 2008, with Sida approval, SEF co-supported with some organisations for some special contents besides project activities such as training workshop, event and publication:

* Vietnam Entomological Society for "Proceeding of the 6th Vietnam Na-



tional Conference on Entomology". That document will contribute positively to disseminate the research results and exchange experiences on research and training in different disciplines of Entomology for Entomologists, IPM/ICM practitioners, Environmentalist, pesticide-Manufactures and Distributor, Chemist, Educator, Students and as well as for interested groups. The conference will be met the objective to determine activity strategies of Entomological Society of Vietnam in the future especially in the circumstance of globalization and global climate change.

* Network of Vietnam Clean Air to organise Training workshop "Improving awareness on protection of air quality and understanding on global climate change" for reporters and journalists from mass media. The participants will fully awareness of the imminence of the issues and the message that protection of air quality and dealing with climate change are the responsibility of not only scientific researchers and policy makers but also every one of us as a dweller of the Earth.

* Department of Nature Resources Environment and Housing for The World Environment Day 2008 on the topic "Climate change" for two parts of this event which are setting up 3R exhibition and green biking program of 150 volunteers. That event will raise the public and key decision maker

aware of climate change challenges, its impacts on people's health, benefit of cleaner air and the need to act now in reducing pollution.

* People and Nature Reconciliation to Publication of the "Mammals of Vietnam" Field Guide. for a part of printing and launching publicity expenditure. That document will contribute positively to disseminate of information on wildlife in Vietnam throughout the general public as field guide to raise the Vietnamese youth's understanding of the mammals of their country as well as draw the general public's interest and conscience towards the research and preservation of wildlife.

Project Supervision, Evaluation and Administration

AG office and members made efforts in supervision, monitoring and evaluation of project activities in order to speed up completion of these activities as well as reporting procedures, including financial reporting. However, some projects still do not complete as requirements.

With practical experience from the previous years, AG and the administrator updated the "Guidance on SEF Project building", "Guidance on SEF Project Management" that specified necessary procedures for this issue. AG and its office also improved forms of reports and procedures for better financial management.

AG office prepared the annual report (SEF mid-term 2007 report, 2007, 2008 annual report) as well as the work plan of the phase including proposed time schedule and budget (from July 2007- September 2008, January to December 2008) submitted to Sida.

AG capacity building

In January 2008, SEF organised a training course for AG members on advocacy capacity in the field of environmental protection in India. SEF office submitted a report on the result of the trip to Sida.

Set up a independent organisation

After eleven years of SEF operation, AG were founded the independent organisation named "The Center for Development of Community Initiative and Environment" (C&E) to contribute to the promotion of a civil society and environmentally sustainable development in Vietnam. The Center was established by the Decision 1202/QD-LHH (establishment approval) in 27th August 2008 in Vietnam. C&E received operating license No. A-754 from the Ministry of Science and Technology on 12th September 2008. The operation of "The Center for Development of Community Initiative and Environment" (C&E) will be prepared after finishing the SEF activities.

The AG members of Sida Environmental Fund (1997-2008)

Sida Environmental Fund would like sincerely to thank for the participation of AG members over past ten years. Your efforts has helped SEF turning idea into reality, contributing to protect environment and natural resource of the country, promoting the friendship between Vietnam and Sweden to be more and more solidarity.

Participants from 1997-2008

AG Chairperson



Later. Prof. Le Quy An, Former Vice Minister of Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment



Hoang Thanh Tam, Vietnam Forestry, Science and Technology Association

Embassy of Sweden, Hanoi- Sida Representative



Do Thi Huyen, Programm Officer, Embassy of Sweden, Hanoi



Tran Thanh Phuong, WB Environmental Programm

AG members and Secretaries



Nguyen Ngoc Ngoan, Thai Nguyen College of Agriculture and Forestry



Nguyen Van Long, Religious Department of Nghe An province



Ydechdok, Dak Lak Homeland Front Committee



Ly Hoa Khuong, Sub- Department of Forestry, Soc Trang



Tran Thi Lan, Institute of Social and Ecological Policy



Vo Dinh Thanh, Department of Science, Technology and Environment, Thua Thien Hue



Nguyen Huu Dung, HCMC University of Economics



Bui Thi Thanh Thuy, Sida Environmental Fund



Trinh Le Nguyen, Center for People and Nature



Pham Minh Thu, Ha Ba Trung High School, Hue city



Tran Vo Hung Son, HCMC University of Economics



Nguyen Viet Hoa, Sida Environmental Fund



Nguyen Thanh Vinh, WB Environmental Programm



Nguyen Huy Hien, Thua Thien Hue Newspaper



Vo Thi Lang, Can Tho University



Nguyen Hoang Ngoc, Sida Environmental Fund

Nguyen Canh Dung, Can Tho University
Dang Anh Nguyet, National University, Hanoi

On this occasional, AG members would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to Swedish Government and people through their representatives as Sida and Swedish Embassy, Hanoi during the past ten years for their support to SEF in particular and to Vietnam as a whole. Hopefully, the Sweden is the best friend of Vietnam people and has new form to support our country development sustainably and prosperity



The Sida Environmental Fund (SEF) was established by the Swedish Embassy in Hanoi, Vietnam and started operating in July 1997 aiming at promoting local initiatives in environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources.

SEF is managed by Sida with assistance of a Vietnamese Advisory Group (AG). Based on the voluntary principle, eight AG members are the representatives of different organizations with responsibility to provide overall guidance and strategic directions for the fund, study and evaluate the applications, and monitor funded projects.

SEF Advisory Group

Chairwoman

Mrs. Hoang Thanh Tam

Members

Mr. Trinh Le Nguyen

Mr. Nguyen Van Long

Mr. Nguyen Huy Hien

Mr. Ly Hoa Khuong

Mr. Tran Vo Hung Son

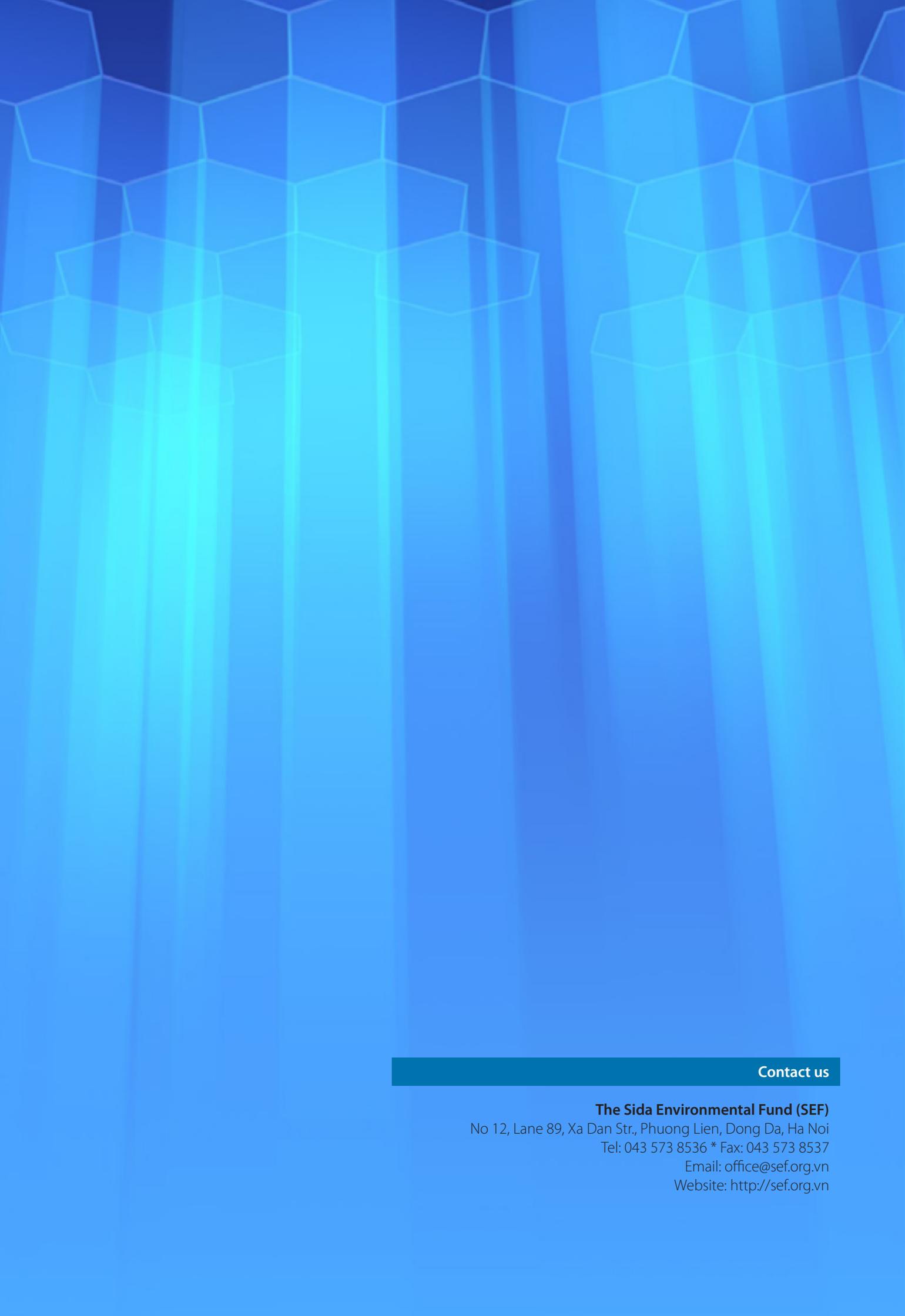
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