

ADRA in Vietnam

INTRODUCTION

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is a global development and humanitarian organization with a mission to work with people in poverty and distress to create just and positive change. ADRA has global partnerships with various institutional donors eg. Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), USAID, European Union, United Nation agencies, World Bank and Asia Development Bank.

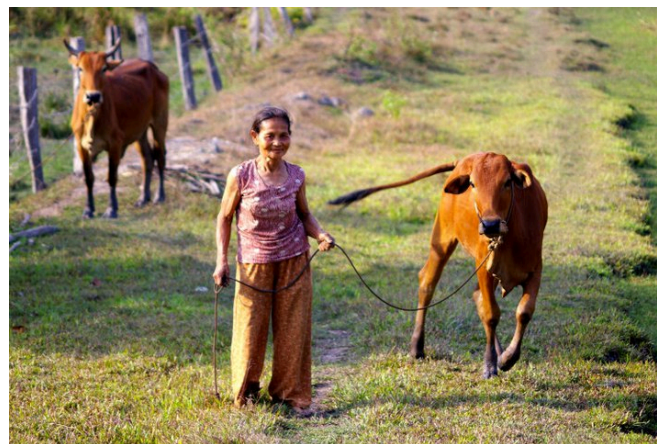


Photo 1: Economic empowerment initiatives built women's confidence and prepare them for improved decision making.

ADRA in Vietnam belongs to the worldwide ADRA network, comprised of over 130 supporting and implementing country offices. ADRA in Vietnam has operated within the nation's territory since 1989 and officially registered as an International Non-Government Organization in 1993. During the last few years ADRA has implemented more than 200 development and disaster response projects across Vietnam. ADRA is a strategic partner of Australian DFAT and has received approximately \$10 million AUD during the last 25 years, targeting over 3 million of the most marginalized people in society including ethnic minority groups, people with disabilities and women.

ADRA in Vietnam works on five core sectors including Economic Growth, Health, Education, Environment, and Disaster Response. The organization's expertise also covers a wide range of subsectors, specifically sustainable livelihoods, agriculture, education on gender equality and health, disability inclusion, Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. Recently renewable energy has become one of the focuses in ADRA's project, which contributes to improved living conditions of marginalized people significantly through access to more reliable energy sources.

ADRA Vietnam employs a team of experienced staff with strong understanding of context and stakeholders that together with our local partners design, manage, and implement programs in accordance with the donor, ADRA policies and requirements. ADRA's technical team includes lawyer, gender specialist, geology engineer, water engineer, community health workers, educators, and counselors/social workers. The administrative and managerial team includes country director, programs director, operations manager and monitoring and evaluations unit.

TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

Education and Gender Equality

ADRA Vietnam considers gender mainstreaming to be a key element contributing to its programs/projects' sustainability, creating a clear road map for developing projects and linking them with donors. Education is the pathway towards Gender Equality. By empowering communities with the knowledge and awareness of their rights and encouraging social inclusion, for example through leadership opportunities for women, especially focusing on ethnic minorities, communities are motivated towards gender parity.

In the 1990s ADRA Vietnam supported rural women with vocational training programs, which provided income generation and raised the economic status of women.

In 2009, the *Literacy Class Empowers Ethnic Minority Women (LICEEM) project* was financially supported by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Private Funded Program through ADRA Australia. This three-year project aimed to empower women and improve the overall social status of ethnic minority women in Cao Bang Province through awareness raising on key themes (e.g. education, health care, child labour, women trafficking, domestic violence and sexual exploitation) and educational activities. The project strengthened capacity of the Cao Bang Provincial Women Union and its branches in Ha Quang, Bao Lac and Bao Lam districts to execute project activities and programmatic initiatives.

At the beginning of the project approximately 70% of women aged 25-35 were illiterate. Final testing results at end of project showed that 80% of women progressed equivalently with grade 2 students while 72% reached grade 3 based on the national educational system using REFLECT methodology. Along with literacy competency, it was recorded an improvement in self-confidence of women while managing household duties and business activities.

In the second phase, the project focused on livelihood improvement. Female participants held community meeting and shared ideas about economic models for registering loans. Additional recorded impacts of the project include the improvement of business deals made by women compared to the baseline, increased attendance and involvement in community decision making and local governance, and helping children to do their homework.



Sustainable Livelihoods

ADRA Vietnam has been delivering livelihood improvement programs for over 20 years. While income generation is crucial to alleviate poverty, our activities apply more holistic and people centric sustainable livelihood models. They support sustainable economic development and enhance communities' strengths and capabilities for the long-term rather than simply addressing their immediate needs. We focus on

building capacity and promoting leadership and ownership of local communities, enabling our beneficiaries to become more proactive in seeking solutions for themselves, instead of relying on outside intervention.

The Sustainable Livelihood Development Project (SLDP)

The SLDP project was funded by the Australian DFAT through ADRA Australia and directly co-implemented by ADRA Vietnam from March 2013 to June 2016 with a budget of 550,000 USD. The project pioneered the establishment of Community Development Clubs (CDCs), a demonstration of grass roots democratic processes and governance strengthening for communities and women, focusing on ethnic minorities. This women's economic empowerment project improved business skills for women entrepreneurs, improved leadership role of women in the community and local governance structures, and increased knowledge and understanding of women and child rights by 80%.

In total, 28 CDCs were set up and actively functioned as platforms for capacity building, learning and sharing; 1,629 households were constantly involved in Club activities which included attending communication events and implementing 165 community-based initiatives (50% co-funded by community) with focus on improving critical socio-economic and environmental issues in the area. The Club provided loans and encouraged savings and promoted various household economic models. During the project lifecycle, 1,041 households or 85% of the CDC members accessed these funds and increased their income by at least 20%, and at least 80% of beneficiaries diversified their income.

Following SLDP, women's participation in decision making at the CDC level and in community governance improved by 90% compared to the baseline, transparency and accountability improved by 92%, and reduced gender-based violence by 60%. SLDP encouraged positive behavior change within communities through Participatory Action-Oriented Trainings (PAOT), a behavior change package promoted and piloted by ADRA Vietnam successfully. It focuses on 25 health and hygiene, sustainable economic growth, business literacy, environment protection, DRR and CCA, gender equality, and good governance messages. Approximately 99% of community became aware of such behaviors and approximately 60% adopted them at scale.



Photo 3: Implementing community initiative of building bridge

Renewable Energy

ADRA Has piloted and implemented successfully a Climate Smart Agriculture and Renewable Energy (CARE) project providing off-grid communities with access to sustainable energy using PV Solar, biogas, pico-hydro, and clean water using sand filters. CARE project is increasing and diversifying income of rural households but also reducing carbon footprint as a result of reduction of wood cutting, forestation and promotion of fuel efficient cook stoves which have resulted to reduce work load, time spend on domestic work and wood collection for women by 70%. The second phase of this project will work with the private sector to develop a market for renewable energy in Cao Bang province and continue to increase and diversify income for farmers by participating in lucrative value chains, and creating more jobs for women and youth entrepreneurs to enable uptake of such technologies by communities in the province.



Photo 4: Solar electricity serving production in mountainous province



Photo 5: Model of pico-hydro generator

Disaster Management

ADRA Vietnam has implemented many disaster preparedness and response projects targeted at reducing the vulnerability of marginalized groups and poor communities who are often more severely impacted by climate change or when a disaster strikes. We have a long history of more than 24 years of responding to natural disasters in Vietnam, delivering relief and nutritional packages to most affected areas and helping these communities recover. During 2016 ADRA responded to the draughts impacting thousands of families in the south suffering from the impact of El Nino.

Climate Change



ADRA Vietnam aims to facilitate sustainable agriculture and natural resource management while dealing with climate change adaptation techniques. This ensures that rural community members possess the tools they need to plan for the future in building resilience. For sustainability reasons, a number of elements have been incorporated, such as cooperation with local district government counterparts, community members and corporate partners to take on the responsibility of driving climate change responses. Finally, climate change adaptation has been systematically integrated into all our program activities to achieve a more holistic way of approaching the issue.

In 2013, ADRA in Vietnam in partnership in ADRA Laos, implemented a regional initiative which aimed to foster innovation in climate change adaptation (CCA) concepts and practices of the local communities involved in the project. ADRA partnered with other international organizational and technical experts to share innovative models, best practices and lessons learned in the field of adaptation in the Lower Mekong region in order to enhance regional dialogue and future collaboration in CCA at a community based level. This project culminated with an international symposium organized and facilitated by ADRA in CCA in Asia, with participation of many CSOs, media, academia, UN agencies, private sector, and government entities.

In 2014, ADRA Vietnam partnered with ADRA Australia to implement the Capacity Building for Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management (CADIM) project funded by ADRA Australia. This was a continuation of a previous regional project, taking its experience and lessons learned to effectively enhance capacity of local government staff and community leaders. The project trained local government officials, community leaders and members, teachers and students on School DRR, and advocacy for greater climate-resilient approaches. As result of this project 15 community Disability Inclusive DRM Plans and 2 Commune DRM Plans were developed and approved by local government and incorporated into the local Development Plans.



Photo 6: Disaster response simulation



Photo 7: Climate Resilient Agriculture model – the Sloping Agricultural Land Technology piloted in Cao Bang

PARTNERSHIPS WITH GOVERNMENT ENTITIES

- All ADRA projects are developed in cooperation with local government partners and approved by the Department of Foreign Affairs and other relevant bodies.
- Any intervention has to be in line with and supporting the province to achieve its development plans. Projects goals are in line and support the execution of 5-year or 10-year socio-economic development plans of the provinces. This ensures vertical management, which still allows innovations and adaptation at grassroots level.
- A Project Management Committee (PMC) with representatives from provincial-level departments, mass organizations, and representatives from People's Committees from the beginning of the project ensures 'buy-in'.
- Each project addresses existing local systems and governance issues. Regular field visits and monitoring reports addressing indicators of the province development plans ensures continued buy-in and support for any project.
- The provincial government should perceive any project as an opportunity to increase investment in the province and job creation for its people. This will encourage executive support and maximize investments made by both the province and project

With local and specialized knowledge, ADRA partners help to implement programs more effectively and achieve goals. One of the challenges we face is ensuring the sustainability of development activities and impacts after each project ends. For this reason, ADRA Vietnam has adopted an intense focus on leadership and good governance for its projects. We seek to strengthen local capacity in leadership, project cycle management and holistic economic development of our partners and beneficiaries, which enables them to design, implement, manage and evaluate each project during its lifecycle and also to ensure project sustainability.

It is recommended that any large scale program takes into account the role of various public, private and CSO entities in the development of the entire community. Any project viewing them as solo players will fail to build a sound exit strategy that should be built in from the beginning. A new business and operation model that takes into account the uniqueness of all these actors should be in place. In order to further influence change, business solutions should come from community, key institutions and private sector in the province. A bottleneck analysis of various public and private systems becomes critical to identify challenges, who has an influence over the status quo and to identify gaps. A communication campaign similar to PAOT targeting different stakeholders with relevant approaches and messages need to be developed and implemented. Such campaign will cater for the different roles and needs of various stakeholders.

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