

NEWSLETTER

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CARE Project Closing and Remarks

Marking first quarter of 2017, I wanted to share the successes and achievements of CARE project with all of you. The Climate Resilient Agriculture and Renewable Energy for Sustainable Livelihood Improvement or abbreviated as CARE project in Cao Bang – a very poor and remote province – reached approximately 5,000 beneficiaries.



This pilot project was funded by 2 ADRA offices in Europe – ADRA Austria and ADRA Netherlands, and it was implemented by ADRA Vietnam with the local partners during the period from January 2015 to February 2017. As a result of CARE project, ethnic minorities in the selected Bao Lac district have: increased awareness and skills in climate resilience, environment and forest protection and reforestation, and after practiced climate resilient agricultural techniques; improved access to safe drinking water by using 210 sand filter water purification systems; installed renewable energy and energy efficient technologies including 16 hydropower generators, 45 solar PV systems, 10 biogas systems, 240 fuel-efficient cook stoves; and engaged in advocacy events and sharing lessons learned.

In all of the above, community members co-financed the technologies by contributing resources in-cash and in-kind. The use of energy efficient cook stoves resulted in improved health of people by reducing the release of smoke that is the number one cause of respiratory infections and deaths in the world, decreased amount of collected fire wood by 70% and therefore lessened women's hard labor. More prevalent access to clean water led to a remarkable decrease of water-borne diseases and forming better hygienic practices.



More positive results contribute to the scale up of CARE project in second phase, which will focus on increasing income of farmers, building a market for renewable energy technologies in rural areas. Stay tuned with ADRA Vietnam to learn more about the second phase or CARE project.

Kind regards,

Elidon Bardhi
Country Director
ADRA Vietnam

ADRA kick-started the Climate Change Adaptation project in highland



The 36-month-project funded by ADRA Australia, titled Community Empowerment on Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation for Building Safety and Resilience (CEM), is aiming at enriching knowledge, building awareness and changing behavior of local authority staffs and highland ethnic minority communities towards DRR and CCA. CEM project will also help communities and local authorities to develop plans and initiatives to build resilience against climate change. During the first quarter of 2017, Community Development Clubs (CDC) monthly meetings in 12 villages of Co Ba, Phan Thanh and Khanh Xuan commune (Bao Lac district) took place.

These were followed by capacity building for project staff and key community members and project partners. Some of the topics discussed during these trainings included health hazards and environment protection, including reducing indoor harmful smoke to reduce respiratory diseases, cutting deforestation because of the need for firewood, and using energy-efficient cooking stoves to save cost and reduce forest exploitation.

"This is one of effective measures contributing to the reduction of disaster risks like landslides, flash floods as results of forest loss. The introduction of energy-efficient cooking stoves is applicable in a wide area. I believe so because when people acknowledge the negative impacts of traditional practices in cooking, they will be motivated to change and be ready to invest in new and efficient technologies."

Duong Thi Nga – a project participant in Co Ba commune

"The CEM project is executed in Bao Lac district, this is one of the most difficult regions of far north Cao Bang province. Few of the challenges while approaching the indigenous communities are the existing travel route and the ethnic diversity. This location is also one of the most difficult accessible areas in the northern Vietnam. When it rains, majority of communities become inaccessible making it difficult for ADRA staff to reach the houses of local residents due to narrow, curvy and slippery paths. Instead we will stop somewhere in the main road, and walk to the villages. Basic infrastructure including not only roads, bridges, but also water and sanitation facilities, electrical systems is not yet fully available and functioning. This limits the opportunities for local people to access better socio-economic services.



The diversity of seven ethnic groups create a rich culture area of traditions and values, of which several practices are shared and exchanged; however, the minority groups still face challenges. Many of them are illiterate of the common language, thus limited to access to information.

Bringing the new ideas to the local people is not an easy task; persuading them to work with the project is even harder. Nevertheless, the methodology of project to build up Community Development Club, where grass-roots democracy is promoted, works effectively in building trust in people and enhancing their capacity throughout the project. I believe in the hard effort of ADRA staff and the indigenous people who are involved in the CEM project, positive changes will blossom in this beautiful land."

Luan Viet Quoc – CEM Project Officer

“Whoever has a neighbor, should not struggle, cry, be lonely or go to be hungry”



When I arrived to Vietnam, I got there full of expectations. How the people from Vietnam would receive me? Was one of my questions. I wasn't familiar with their culture and local customs.

I only knew 2 things about Vietnam, the War and the Pho. The first one evoked feelings of sadness, the second one made me hungry. When I go to a place where people serve out of love, I feel good, I feel optimistic about the future.



Getting there became a great experience, meeting the people from Vietnam changed my life. I was unsure if coming from America would make people look at me with a raised eyebrow, especially since America took a part on this war, and not as an allied. My fears vanished and my doubts were cleared, the Vietnamese people turned out to be very welcoming, with an easy smile. Visiting the province of Thai Binh broke my heart, and it is still bleeding.



The needy people touched me like nothing else before. Visiting the blind association made me evaluate how much I have comparing with how little they had and still were able to give me a huge smile.

Finding out that many were blind, in many cases, because of the infamous agent orange, made it even harder, knowing that we were responsible for such suffering. That very thing made my commitment to help stronger than ever. I could perceive a sense of dignity, without the pride that often accompanies it. Their stubbornness not to give up taught me an important lesson: *Never, never give up.*

A very touchy moment came when one of the blind ladies, while packing toothpick started to sing, I couldn't understand a single, but I was able to perceive the passion coming from her heart, and that, made my eyes watery.

Every person I have encountered with made me feel welcome. I'm looking forward to come back soon, and learn more from this beautiful country and its more amazing people.

Vietnam, I love you!

Sergio Romero

*Multi-Cultural Director, Church Growth
Allegheny West Conference*





Most recently ADRA Australia has been working with ADRA Vietnam and partners to improve livelihood and well-being of the ethnic minority communities through the sustainable Livelihoods

Development Project (SLDP). The toughness of life and the resilience of local communities in the remote area is inspiring. Villages are often very remote and spread out, therefore as part of the Project some of these rough and often muddy pathways have been cemented to allow safer travel for locals in the wet season.

We met with Miss De Huyen who is in-charge of the Village Women's Union and a Community Club Leader. She explains that Club Leaders attend 'Training of Trainers' then take replicated training in monthly club meetings. As a leader she has learnt many useful skills including operations management, communication skills, how to be more inclusive, financial record keeping and agricultural training.

ADRA has supported three community led initiatives in this village including culture preservation through music, health checks and water tanks. Village households still participate in the savings and loans initiative started with ADRA seed money, mainly to raise pigs, ducks and start small grocery shops. Greeted in Bao Lac by Mr Thinh, the ADRA Vietnam Programs Director, we attend the opening ceremony of the new ADRA Australia supported project which aims to strengthen preparedness and response mechanisms by engaging local authorities and communities in reducing vulnerability to natural disasters and climate change.

I was encouraged by the engagement of the local community and leaders. Chair of the District Women's Union, Ms Huang Thi Da asked for close collaboration with the project to conduct Training of Trainers. "ADRA's model is successful as it emphasizes local participation to build capacity and resilience," she said.

Bao Lac consists of 16 communes that have already been seriously affected by climate change and natural disasters. This was illustrated in many of the villages targeted by the new Project, where the roof tiles are easily blown off or damaged by strong winds, heavy rain or hail.

Sitting inside a traditional house on stilts, a grandmother, mother and baby heat tea on an open cooking stove which is fuel intensive and the smoke is bad for lungs. If the prioritized by the community, the project will introduce new fuel efficient stoves that reduces smoke decreases the burden of collecting firewood and reducing deforestation.

Before visiting each village we meet with the Commune Women's Union and Peoples Committee. They are enthusiastic and motivated to work with their communities to implement project activities. I am happy to be involved in this project that will bring about positive change to the lives of these marginalized people.

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