



CHAPTER VII

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**Let's see our efforts
A small success is better than the failure of a
great idea!**



I. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MONITORING

1.1. What is community development monitoring?

Monitoring is constant supervision on community development activities under implementation, inspection and comparison between outcomes and targets (in term of progress and financial expenses) in order to propose timely adjustment to gain the best results and effectiveness.

1.2. Purpose of monitoring

- To provide necessary information in order to make timely and suitable adjustment of the plan;
- To collect data for evaluation.

1.3. Principles of monitoring

- It must be done regularly and continuously;
- It must be done based on the plan;
- The arising problems must be solved during monitoring in accurate, timely and objective manner;
- It should base on the purpose of improving the project's effectiveness.

1.4. Monitoring methods

a) *Expert method*

It is implemented by a team of experts or qualified staff.

- Advantage: scientific ingenuity; it can be adopted to almost all activities and contents of the Project.
- Disadvantage: The cost is usually high and the coverage is low due to the limitation of resources (not enough quantity). It is required non-stop monitoring, it is costly.



b) Community-based monitoring method

This is the monitoring method that the monitoring agency is the community itself where project has been implemented.

- Advantage: Wide embracement.
- Disadvantage: This monitoring method only can be applied for the activities or contents which do not require high techniques.

With the above-mentioned characteristics of monitoring methods, we see that expert monitoring method can be used independently during project monitoring process but community-based monitoring is not applicable. In fact, expert monitoring method is mandatory (in some projects or programs on community development) in combination with community-based monitoring (mainly acting as supporting) to increase closeness and accuracy of community development activities.

c) Regular monitoring

It is a monitoring method that has been conducted regularly, continuously during the project implementation.

- Advantage:
 - The information is recorded and monitored timely to make timely proposal and may help reduce the cost in case of adjustment.
- Disadvantage:
 - This method is time-consuming and requires a patient monitoring staff;
 - Sometimes, it is not fully applicable to the projects which have high technical requirements.



d) Result-based monitoring

It is the method which bases on the results of each project activity to decide to keep on implementing the activities as planned or alter them to fit the requirement before conducting next steps.

- Advantage:
 - It does not require much time
- Disadvantage:
 - It requires sufficient tools and equipment. The cost for monitoring is relatively high;
 - Sometimes, it is impossible to detect the errors or deviation if the implementation agency tries to hide their mistakes.

😊 As a result, we realize that it is impossible to use a single monitoring method. The combination of different methods is necessary for monitoring project's activities. Depending on requirements, suitable monitoring methods are selected to intensify effectiveness of monitoring activities.

II. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION

2.1. What is community development evaluation?

It is an activity to consider comprehensively and systemically how its outcomes can meet the objectives, quality of activities and effectiveness of the project/ program or its influence towards the community.

2.2. Types of evaluation

- a) **Evaluation on on-going activities (mid-term evaluation)**
 - The evaluation activity to be conducted during implementation of the project/program;
 - This type of evaluation is to exam how those procedures have been utilized, their relevance as well as the risks or opportunities to the activities of the project/program.



Evaluation objective

To find out the relevance and irrelevance in activities of the project/program in order to make adjustment to the following activities to increase their effectiveness.

Evaluation criteria

- The achievements in comparison with the plan;
- The relevance of activities, including the relevance in implementation process, implementation agency and impacted people;
- Level in meeting the needs of beneficiaries;
- Sustainability, the dissemination of the project/program;
- Initial impacts of the project/program to the community.

Evaluation time

It is normally conducted during the implementation of the project/program upon the request of relevant stakeholders such as donors and executing organizations.

Who involve in the evaluation

- Evaluators are outsiders:
They are the experts, who are qualified in that field and hired by the donors.
- Evaluators are the community residents:
 - Beneficiaries;
 - Stakeholders;
 - Implementation staff.

b) Terminal evaluation

Purpose of evaluation:

Aiming at identifying the level of achievement in terms of the project's objectives to get lessons learnt for following projects. That is to evaluate project's results and impacts at evaluation time, the sustainability of the achieved results and effectiveness.

Criteria to be evaluated

- Does the project achieve its objectives?
- Level of success of each activity;
- Level of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the project;
- Socio-economic effectiveness of the project and each specific activity;
- Effectiveness in terms of environment, capacity enhancement or others;
- Should the similar project be developed?

Evaluation time

Terminal evaluation is conducted at the end of the project term (at the completion of the project).





Evaluators and evaluation process

Evaluators and evaluation process are **similar to the monitoring process** of the project's activities. However, please note that the target of this evaluation is different. It concentrates not only on relevancy but also mainly on the impact and effectiveness as well as the sustainability of the project.

III. PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION AND MONITORING

3.1. Some different points between monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are called management activities or in other words they are management tools of community development activities. However, there are some differences:

- Monitoring is conducted periodically not only single time. It aims to verify the selected indicators to identify the effectiveness of a certain intervention in terms of policy or changes. Therefore, **monitoring is an event that occurs frequently** even every day; while **evaluation is conducted less frequently**, one or several times during implementation period, it can be midterm or terminal one.
- Monitoring is mostly conducted based on expected indicators as described in **the activity plan**, while evaluation is conducted based on general questions or verification of data or information about:
 - How have the activities been implemented?
 - What variable orientation has appeared?
 - What kind of activities has achieved their objectives?
 - How to improve the future efforts?
- **Participatory evaluation is the last activity** to evaluate the situation and impact value. Evaluation is a tool to verify comprehensively the development programs/projects as well as the impacts with different meanings to the development of the community.

- Monitoring is more frequently conducted to provide information on the progress of the project, while evaluation is conducted in a certain time and it emphasizes the results and general impacts of the project.
- Participatory monitoring and evaluation have the same target. It is a tool for stakeholders to improve their effectiveness and efficiency. It also is a learning process, in which the participants increase their understanding and awareness about diversification of factors and their impacts on community development activities. That process also increases their control capacity over the development process, as well as evaluates their progress and learns from the past shortcomings.

3.2. Steps of participatory monitoring and evaluation

Step 1: Make decision on conducting monitoring, evaluation

Step 2: Identify the members, who are able to participate in

- Who are capable or what kind of knowledge, skills necessary to ensure effective monitoring?
- Invite relevant stakeholders to be monitoring members; make clear all steps with stakeholders.

Step 3: Identify the purpose of monitoring and evaluation from the viewpoint of member groups

- Why do they concern about monitoring? Scope and scale that each group commits and participates in different tasks.
- Indicators of monitoring must be clear for each target of project's intervention.

Step 4: Clarify the targets of activities under monitoring, evaluation

This is an important step to conduct focused monitoring on the targets of ongoing activities. Accurately, the targets of the



project must be formatted precisely in each phase; the target contents must be clarified and shared among all monitoring members.

Step 5: Identify and select criteria

This may be one of the most difficult steps. Each objective may have different evaluation and monitoring indicators. The general guidance shows monitoring indicators should follow **SMART** formula (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, and **R**elevant, **T**imely)

Step 6: Select methods

Method selection depends on factors related to timing, skills, techniques, technology and available resources. The best way is to find out a method which is able to verify a number of indicators. As requirements of monitoring, it is necessary to identify the best method for collecting, recording, analyzing and sharing information in correspondence with each criterion.

Step 7: Decide frequency and monitoring time

Each criterion must be verified and the collection of the best information for each criterion must be done in a certain time during the implementation period.

Step 8: Prepare and finalize methods

Apply methods and tools as trial in evaluating indicators to ensure that they are relevant, practical, reliable and feasible for application. Consider the training for monitoring and evaluation members in different steps to ensure that they can perform the jobs in accurate manner.

Step 9: Systematize data

It is very important to systematize collected data in order to understand the changes; which points are changed and when?

At the early implementation, it is necessary to collect and record information and data on community development activities which are planned to carry out at that time.

By the time of completion, it is necessary to inspect, collect information and data for the evaluation of the changes occurring during the project implementation.

Step 10: Compare data, information

After collecting information, data, it is necessary to compare, analyze and share data with members and relevant groups. It is very important in considering information analysis methods and deciding who will analyze data. Ideally, the person, who involve in information collection will conduct analysis also to avoid misunderstanding of the collected data.

Step 11: Document the findings

The findings should be documented systematically to meet the requirements of project managers, activities and executive agencies.

Step 12: Utilize information

Finally, the data is sufficiently provided to relevant groups including the local people in order to make decision in dealing with problems or making future plan.

For example, findings from monitoring may be used to change the attitude of users, community-based organizations or non-government organizations, government, sponsors, researchers, policy makers; it aims at improving the implementation of objectives or minimizing the negative impacts on the outcomes of community development.

3.3. Who will involve in monitoring, evaluation and when?

In order to determine who will involve in monitoring, evaluation, it is necessary to discuss with stakeholders to answer following questions:

- What do groups relate to monitoring process?
- Who will use final information?
- How difficult is it when conducting monitoring and evaluation?



Contents	By whom?	When?
Method design		
Data collection		
Comparison, calculation		
Analysis of findings		
Information supply		
Implementation, report and feedback		

3.4. Contents need to be evaluated

- a) Evaluate **cost effectiveness** of the community development activities
 - It is the comparison between the outcomes and the invested resources;
 - In order to evaluate project's cost effectiveness, firstly, we must quantify the cost of different resources. Please pay attention to the time value of money when making the evaluation;
 - Besides, we also need to quantify the activity results;
 - Based on the above-mentioned calculation, we compare the cost and result in terms of value or ratio to know that the cost effectiveness is high or low.
- b) Evaluate **the relevance** of community development activities

The relevance of the community development activities is examined and evaluated based on the following aspects:

 - The relevance between project objectives and the prioritized issues set by the beneficiaries or community. The relevance allows the project to solve the problems raised by the community and increases the project's effectiveness;



- The relevance between resources and objectives helps the project's activities in particular or a community development activity in general brings into full play its effectiveness or not. It is impossible to achieve large-scale objective if the resources are limited or vice versa, if the objective is low, the resources will be wasteful;
 - Evaluation on the relevance of the process is to examine the level of relevancy in the activity implementation as well as the linkage among those activities. Inappropriate implementation cannot lead to the achievement of expected objectives;
 - Consider the relevance of the community development projects/activities with other projects in the region. Consider there is any support or competition between these activities and other projects in the region or not? This may be the reason for higher or lower effectiveness of the project than it is planned.
- c) Evaluate **social effectiveness** of the community development activities/projects

Besides considering the economic effectiveness, it is necessary to take into account social effectiveness brought in by the community development. Depending on the type of the project/activity, social effectiveness will be big or small, major or auxiliary.

- As for the community development projects, social effectiveness plays very important role in the community development's goal.
- The following aspects should be paid attention in social effectiveness:
 - Possibilities of creating jobs within the framework of the Project;
 - Project's contribution level to hunger alleviation and poverty reduction;



- Level of dealing with inequity in income distribution;
- Level of improving the status of the vulnerable, the poor, female, ethnic, the old groups in the community (their voice, opportunities, participation, benefit);
- Changes in percentage of children going to school;
- Level of health service improvement;
- Level of improvement of other social services.

Normally, it is difficult to quantify social effectiveness but the evaluation in different aspects will show us more specific views on community development's effectiveness.

d) Evaluate **the sustainability** of community development projects/ activities

The sustainability of the project is the capacity in maintaining community's activities after the termination of the project. The sustainability of the project helps increase and expand the effectiveness of the project.

The sustainability of the project is shown in different aspects as follows:

- Level of maintenance, sustainability of the outcomes created by the project;
- Possibility of continuous utilization of those outcomes;
- Possibility of effective maintenance of project's activities;
- Possibility of expanding the project's results in the community.

e) Evaluate **effectiveness in terms of environment** of community development projects/ activities

Environmental effectiveness of the community development is the contribution of the project in terms of



preserving or improving environment. It is often shown in following aspects:

- Possibility of soil erosion prevention and maintenance of soil fertility;
- Impact on disaster, flood reduction;
- Possibility of waste reduction or discharge;
- Possibility of regulating the micro-climate within the framework of the project;
- Possibility of salinity reduction, climate change adaptation in all fields in the community.

f) Evaluate the **impact** of community development projects/ activities

Evaluating the impact of community development is to exam, evaluate the influences of the activities based on combination between current and long term; direct and indirect influences.

This evaluation comprises all the above-mentioned contents. However, evaluation should pay attention to following aspects:

- Possibility of long-term impacts of the community development activities;
- In-direct impacts on community development activities;
- Negative impacts of community development activities;
- Positive impacts of community development activities.

In the process of evaluation of community development impact, it is necessary to identify what are the impacts of the project or impacts by other factors. The changing process of the community is very complicated and it is influenced by different factors. Therefore, the



identification of those impacts is very difficult and requires careful investigation.

😊 **Note:** Some risks may occur during evaluation:

- The implementer works unenthusiastically and pretendedly;
- Beneficiaries under some impact reflect the reality incorrectly;
- The person who makes wrong activities will cause some obstacles for evaluators;
- Information from different sources is not matched;
- Viewpoints of stakeholders are different.

Therefore, process of information collection is important and plays a core role in evaluating precisely the community development activities.





CHAPTER VIII

THE MAINTENANCE AND DISSEMINATION OF THE ACHIEVEMENT IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**It is difficult to reach successful outputs,
But it is more difficult to maintain and
disseminate them**





I. MAINTENANCE OF RESULTS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

During the period of implementing community development project, there is participation of stakeholders and out-of-community people. After the project ends, they do not keep on supporting the local people with project activities. By that time, the local people play a main role in maintaining the achieved results. The great challenge they have to face is how to keep those activities continue.

There are some suggestions for community development workers and local people below:

1.1. Step 1: Strengthening the collaboration among stakeholders

During process of developing and implementing the project, the stakeholders (community and outside organizations) should have close relationship and frequent information sharing.

 **Note:** If the local people do not or rarely participate in community development activities, they consider it as project scheme itself (the outsiders') which bring the benefit to the project, thus they pay little or no attention to.

Stakeholders' benefits to be ensured in harmony

- Beneficiaries: the project brings benefits to specific groups (including women, children, old people, ethnic minorities and etc.), households and community.
- Local authorities: the project contributes to the achievement set by the locality.
- Research/training institutes: the project can meet the targets in terms of training, researches on science and technology transfer.
- Donors: the project can meet the development objective set by the donors.



- Other individual/organizations: the project can work in orientation to the core values of individuals/organizations.

1.2. Step 2: Commitment of community

The maintenance of community development activities depends much on the commitment from community because they are people who decide all the related issues.

The community only commits, respects and maintains the activities when:

- The benefits brought to the community are well-defined and effective;
- Project's contents must be described in transparency at the first stage;
- The local people are encouraged to participate in all project activities.

1.3. Step 3: Formulating a monitoring board/group/team and person in charge

During the project implementation, the stakeholders should discuss with the local people to formulate a monitoring board/group/team to monitor the project activities and outcomes after the project termination. This board/group/team comprises of local people which is legalized by the local authorities and fully meet the requirement as follow:

- It is established with the consensus of all local beneficiaries;
- There must be the participation of direct beneficiaries acting as core members. The number of members depend on activity requirement and are nominated by local people;
- A leader is assigned by the board;
- There must be a general regulation and rules to maintain its activities (see step 5) with the collaboration with the project beneficiaries.



The more flexible, the more sustainable maintained and developed

When setting up a group, it is advisory to temporarily determine the numbers of group members, scope of activities, list of members, and even group leader. After a period of operation, the group leaders can be re-selected through their actions and thinking for the groups. The leader needn't be the best but trustworthy. Besides, the number of group members can be flexibly changed, or scope of activities can be modified, or groups can be merged or split so that members have chance to learn from each other. Thus, groups do not be fixed for flexible innovation. It is better to let groups be free and flexible to change for bigger and stronger development.

1.4. Step 4: Modification after project termination if required

After the project ends and outcomes are applied in practice, monitoring board/group/team should organize regular meetings to collect the comments, feedback from the local people to timely modify it to match with the real situation. This may cause some disagreements among the community members; thus, it is required to have detail discussion with them to come to a consensus.

If modifications go beyond the power of the beneficiary group, the monitoring board/group/team need to report to authority to seek for a suitable modification plan.

The purpose of the modification is to make the activities more suitable with the local people's expectation.

1.5. Step 5: Formulating and finalizing the general regulations

Regulation is a firm basis to maintain community development activities. There are 2 regulation categories:

Official and legal regulation:

Based on the project outputs, local authorities (at commune and district level) make up official regulation on activity



maintenance. These documents are used as a basis when the community and Project Management Board effectively maintain the output/ activities after the project termination.

The document defines clearly the duties and responsibilities of organizations, individuals, community in maintenance of the activities.

Unofficial regulation

This regulation is issued by the community or beneficial group to maintain the activities/ outputs after the project termination. The regulation is used as the local custom based on which the local people show their commitment, responsibilities and right in maintaining the project activities.

For example: Regulation on usage, preservation and repair of local community house; Regulation on planting a garden of nutritious vegetables for children; Regulation on usage of domestic water; etc.

When making up unofficial regulation, it is advisory to:

- It is developed by all local people or beneficiary group;
- The regulation contents are explicit, enclosed with sanction policy;
- The regulation contents are concise, understandable, doable.

 **Note:** In community development, the unofficial regulations are respected and obeyed by the local people because they feel they are what they develop and belong to.

1.6. Step 6: Maintain the sources to implement project activities

In order to maintain sustainably and permanently the project outputs/ activities on community development, it is necessary to determine the sources as follows:

- **Financial source:** Beneficiary households take responsibility to make financial contribution to maintain the activities. The contribution amount is calculated based



on the settlement and agreement among the members. The monitoring board/group/team is responsible for managing in/out expenses and preparing periodical financial report.

😊 **Note:** *Without a financial source, the activities cannot be maintained sustainably.* The monitoring board/group/team and community have to work out a plan on establishing financial source for the maintenance.

- **Technical source:** In order to maintain, service some facilities, it is required a support of technicians. The monitoring board/group/team and community must determine the technical source to timely response to the maintenance in case of expected circumstances.

For example: the repair of broken items in domestic water supply system or malfunctions, broken equipment.

- **Labor source:** Regular or routine activities of the monitoring board/group/team or arranging additional labor source are requested to discuss to have consensus and financial contribution from all members of beneficiary group and community.

😊 **Note:** It is necessary to have transparency in usage of financial, technical and labor sources to build up the trust of all community members. The monitoring board/group/team should record fully, publicly all activities with the supervision of the community.

Financial autonomy determines the existence of the local network for result maintenance and expansion

It is not difficult to establish a local network in aid projects. However, it is challenging to maintain this network to expand the project results. There are not few cases when governments stops funding after aids project finishes, then the local network also stops working. It is advisory to balance the benefit for the community key members in terms of physical and spiritual life so that without financial support from government authority or project, this local network can continuously operate and support other areas with their own financial independence.



1.7. Step 7: Regular monitoring and evaluation

By the time of project termination, all outputs will be handed over to the community. The monitoring board/group/team is responsible for monitoring regularly the activities and organizing periodical meetings to report on project progress with beneficial group.

 **Note:** In project implementation, it is necessary to set up a financial plan in order to maintain the project activities sustainably. Thus, before project termination, stakeholders need to discuss on sustainable financing mechanism to maintain the activities sustainably.

II. DISSEMINATION OF ACHIEVED RESULTS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The dissemination of achieved results will bring benefit to more people. It is the last objective of community development.

At the beginning, a project for community development cannot be deployed with participation of large group of people. Due to the constraint of implementing capacity and financial condition, a project for community development usually starts up with introduction of some pilot models to some households or some small groups. Starting with these initial activities, if they bring success, they will be disseminated in other households and other communities which can bring benefit to more households and communities.

2.1. Facilitating factors for successful dissemination

a) Motivation for dissemination

It is necessary to know what motivation drive the local people and the community to take action. The local people are smart and active! They evaluate the "model" or the "success" of the project in their own way. The diversity of the community and the reason why they really need is the motivation for dissemination.



b) Sources for dissemination

At the stage of project implementation, the pioneer households usually receive the support of financial and technical sources. These sources come end when the project terminates. In order to disseminate, which sources is mobilized. There may be two possibilities:

Well-off households may have their own financial sources and can easily access technical sources. Let encourage them to apply and disseminate the project's outputs.

Needy households are unable to self-finance or approach the technical access to apply this model. You should access them to know more about what they could do and encourage them to get started within their capacity. They need support from other households and community, you are supposed to set up the collaboration to facilitate the sharing or support among them.

For example: Members of a group help each other to develop chicken farming by lending breeding. Others groups support each other with breeding, fertilizes and sharing farming techniques.





Small change makes big impact in expansion

In agricultural projects, simplifying new technique application played essential roles in expanding. Keeping essential technical steps and making in small scale to create achievements, reduce risks led to expansion in bigger areas. Besides, it is necessary to set up local key farmers system to develop its effect in expanding under condition of limited human resources from the Government. In the Project for Food Security Improvement in Central Viet Nam (FIDR), some technical steps of The System of Rice Intensification (SRI) were omitted for the easy application but still met the target yield (yield increase, decrease of input costs). Simultaneously, the project organized TOT trainings to key farmers for expanding the project results. The support to the key farmers were prescribed in the policies issued by Quang Nam province (Decision No. 2834/QĐ-UBND dated 20th September 2018).

c) External support

Outside organizations/ agencies work on community development in a specific period of time and they will move to other areas. The support from those agencies to the communities is so valuable after the project termination. They can continuously consult the communities how to maintain, develop the successful models, as well as provide them with further information and recommendation to other supporting sources. Some organizations have not cooperated with you or the community before, but the project success can attract their attention. They can be new counterparts.

Facilitators and the community should grasp this chance to access them. Because they are interested in the project outputs, there is refresh atmosphere created in the cooperation between them and the community which can lead to a great motivation toward the maintenance and dissemination of the successful results.



Promoting and utilizing support from outsiders who share the similar conditions in expanding the model

As for the new area, we can ask for technical support from those in the successful projects. For example, in expanding the model of SRI, Mr. Nguyen Bo, a Kinh farmer of over 65 years old living in lowland of Bac An Son hamlet, Que Tho commune and Mr. Thai Van Tinh were the key farmers of the Project for Food Security Improvement (FIDR). They voluntarily went to remote and mountainous area to transfer their experience. In spite of their old age, far distance, differences in language and culture, they studied about the local situation, talked with the local to know more about the local's thought and desire. Day after day, they helped the farmers of ethnic minority groups in Hiep Duc commune improve rice productivity, gained the trust from the community and expanded innovated SRI model to more than 300 households in 2 mountainous communes.

d) The role of the typical model in the process of dissemination

The households and communities who pioneer in application of pilot and initial successful results will turn them to the typical models for dissemination later on.

The project needs to be shared with typical models in order that the other households, communities can learn from and apply the successful results. The board/group/team of monitoring should cooperate with them to make a plan on implementing the dissemination.

e) Information access and learning

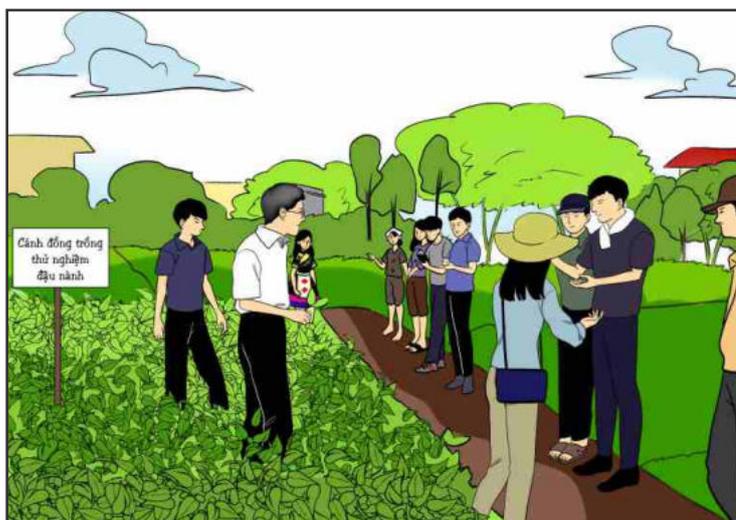
In order to disseminate the results, the local people should collect information and embrace a leaning mind. Board/team/group of monitoring/you should:

- Organize a site visit for those who show their interest for their study. Pay attention to the timing and the numbers of visitors. Define who they are and their actual demand. The visit should be practical for them to directly learn from the project's local people with specific activities;



- Activate the sense of learning in the community. The learning does not only rely the outsiders who bring them technology and information but also can be conducted among the community's members who directly take part in developing and implementing the project activities. They must be those who propaganda and share information with other members efficiently;
- Encourage the youth, active persons to learn, share and develop their ideas in their community.

😊 **Note:** Dissemination of project result cannot be done by imitating servilely or copying the successful models but by adapting with adjustment to match each household and community for better efficiency.



2.2. Forms of dissemination of community development

There are two forms of dissemination of achieved results of community development project as follows:

Form 1: Horizontal dissemination – spread

Horizontal dissemination often called spread is applied when project can bring practical and specific benefit to beneficiary people. From that, other households follow without the support from the project or authorities.



For example: New variety of rice is introduced as a pilot in some households and achieve higher crop yield. From that, other households actively follow and learn the new technology, buy and grow that new variety on their own fields without asking support from the project or commune authority.

Starting from some households or initial models, after a period of time, the results are acknowledged by the local people and they adapt them to match with their household's or community's manner.

Those forms of dissemination are conducted spontaneously from one household to another one, from one community to others.

 **Note:** In the implementation, it is advisory to support those who are not the project's direct beneficiaries.

The more participants, the greater impacts

Opportunity open to everyone, no selection, no screening of participants are key words to activate the community's initiative. The more participants, especially women, the more opportunities they have to access updated knowledge, bravely apply them into practice and gain success which can make spreading impact in the other communities.

Form 2: Vertical dissemination – Policy advocacy

The successful results from some projects have been bringing useful benefits to the local people and the community. With early successful models, leaders at all levels (local or central levels) want to disseminate the results in a wider scale. Collaborating with other agencies related in community development, management agency to organize workshops to introduce and evaluate the results. The practical situations and results gained from the workshops are expected to influence on policy, guideline making in order to disseminate these successful models.

**For example:**

(1) The garden-pond-pigsty model is applied effectively by reducing the rate of kid malnutrition in some mountainous communes. Local authorities (at district, province or central levels) with the cooperation with other related agencies evaluate the effectiveness of this project, based on which they launch movement on developing the garden-pond-pigsty model to promote the kid nutrition in mountainous areas accordingly. The Project is participated by many agencies, organizations. In that way this project is disseminated effectively in many regions nationwide.

(2) A community development project for domestic waste collection is implemented in a commune of district A. The local people propose and successfully sort household garbage at home by placing different bins in hamlets such as organic garbage bins, recycled plastic bins, other solid waste bins. Besides, they also work out the regulation on clearly defining the specific time for garbage collecting and the fine for disobedience and etc. This model helps their environment become beautiful, clean and free from littering. In order to disseminate this successful result, the local authorities in District A organize field trips for related agencies and other communes within the district. Accordingly, District People Committee issues the guidelines in order that all communes can learn and follow it. As a result, this model is applied widely in all communes within the district.

😊 Notes:

- The dissemination conducted in a way of top-down approach easily leads to the status of development as “**a trendy following**”;
- It is advisory to call for the enthusiastic participation of the decision makers from related agencies.





CHAPTER IX

STORIES AND LESSONS LEARNT IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN LOCALITIES

**Community development is a journey,
not a destination**





STORY 1: CONSTRUCTION OF DOMESTIC WATER SUPPLY WORKS AND COMMUNITY HOUSE, “RONG” HOUSE IN LO PANG AND KON THUP COMMUNES, MANG YANG DISTRICT, GIA LAI PROVINCE

Central highlands are the home to ethnic minorities and where the people's life faces many difficulties. For many past years, Development Assistance Funds (FDI) have been contributed significantly to the construction of infrastructure, production development to improve the living standards of the people here. But there is a drawback that grant aids funded by FDI are often surveyed, developed and implemented by outside organizations so the local people show their little care, become passive and rely much on outside support.

Since 2009 ~ 2014, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) supported to implement the “Project on Capacity Development of Participatory Agricultural and Rural Development for Poverty Reduction in the Central Highlands” in Lo Pang and Con Thup communes, Mang Yang district, Gia Lai province. It was a large-scaled technical cooperation project by JICA with many diversified activities which was implemented with new approach – participatory approach, meaning the local people could participate in all steps of implementation.

The below story briefs the process and all steps of the project implementation with the evaluation of an officer of National Institute of Agricultural Planning and Projection. The detail steps are as follows:

Step 1. Situation evaluation: The project arranged many meetings with local people, conducted site surveys, discussed with different people in the community in order to determine the prioritized issues in the construction of community infrastructure.

Step 2. Activity selection: Through many meetings, public discussions, it came to decision on constructing domestic water supply works, community house and communal house.



Step 3. Plan making and implementation: the project discussed with the local people about the financial budget funded by JICA. The local people came to consensus on the financial sources for the project implementation. A layout on construction site, scale of construction, works and budget, demarcation on duty, responsibility of organizations, individuals and implementing progress. After the master plan was finalized, the project was implemented with the participation, support and supervision of the local people.

Step 4. When the works was constructed completely, the community worked out a regulation and a plan on management, utilization, maintenance and repairs.



Thanks to the active participation of the local people, the works was completed with the satisfaction of everyone. The works were immediately brought into use. During the period of use, some items were modified to match with the users' requirement and help bring their sustainability.

The evaluation mission had interviews with 57 people, 50 men and 7 women in 15 hamlets of the two communes. Some of questions and answers are shown below for reference.

	Interviewer	Local people
Domestic water supply works	Where did you take domestic water daily before?	We had to go far from here, around 2~3km
	Who took water to home?	We went for a bath and carried water on the back for the whole family's use on the way back
	How long did it take you?	It was about several hours because it was quite far. It was heavy for women to carry water on their back.



	Currently a water supply works was constructed near your house, do you take water from it?	Yes, I do. I like it much because I do not have to carry water to home.
	Do you usually use this water source for cooking?	Yes, of course. But in rainy season, the water is quite muddy, it is better to use for bathing and washing.
	In the past, it took you 2-3 hours for carrying water, now it is right near your house, you will have more spare time. So what are you doing at your spare time?	Because I have more free time, I hire my labor to get more income, care for my kids, plant pepper and do more housework
	When the water supply works get trouble, who repairs it? Where does the repair expense come from? It is for small repairs, with big repairs, which budget pay for them?	The hamlet chief and 01 technician are paid VND150,000/ month for the works repairs and maintenance. Fund gained from cassava planting in the hamlet. Calling for the contribution from the local people (VND500,000/ year)
Comm unity house	Before there was not community house, where were hamlet meetings organized?	In the hamlet chief's house
	At present, there is a community house, do your hamlet organize meeting there?	Yes. The Youth Union organize class for singing and dancing, we are very happy.
	Is community house reserved for meetings only?	No, it is not. Sometimes it is hired for training by some organizations so we have more profits for maintenance work.
	Who is keeping that fund and which activities was financed from it?	The hamlet women union manages the fund and spends for community activities.
"Rong" house	The "Rong" house was constructed by the project, are you satisfied?	Yes, I am much excited about it. Many cultural activities are organized here.
	Are traditional events and fests organized here?	Yes, of course. They can improve the spiritual life of the local people





STORY 2: DEVELOPING COMMUNITY-BASED ECOTOURISM FROM SCRATCH IN SON LA HYDROPOWER RESERVOIR AREA

A story of business startup from scratch of a young man of the Black Thai named La Van Phong is a convincing evidence for the pioneer in community-based tourism development which utilizes and promotes the available resources in locality and local and indigenous knowledge, boosts up the different types of production of the local people. It could help contribute to the socio-economic development of Quynh Nhai district, attract more tourists and investors to Son La Dam reservoir area.

Son La Hydro Power Plant inaugurated in December 2012 made up a huge dam reservoir area, creating a beautiful and charming landscape painting, with the length of 175km originated from a hydroelectric dam in Muong La – Son La stretching to Muong Lay – Dien Bien. In the area of Son La province, starting from Penh hamlet – upstream of Son La hydroelectric dam in It Ong commune, Muong La district running to the end of Quynh Nhai district, it is 88.5km long going through the areas of 15 communes and 3 districts (Muong La, Thuan Chau, Quynh Nhai districts). All of them make up an imposing natural scenery of mountain and river which is likened to “Ha Long Bay on the mountain”. Along the river, there are fascinating caves, hot streams like Co Noong cave, hot stream (Muong La); hot stream in Bon Muong Chien hamlet (Quynh Nhai). Most of the residents are the Thai people (Black Thai and White Thai), the villages along the river still keep their own traditional cultural values of which both material and non-material cultural heritage are preserved.

Being known of such a tourism potential, many people in Quynh Nhai desired to develop tourism but did not know where to start. In 2016, when meeting by chance the teachers of Tay Bac University who were on the survey trip for a provincial-level scientific research on sustainable tourism development in the



reservoir area, Phong told about his plan on doing tourism business but he did not have capital. The teachers invited Phong to join their research at the early time of doing the primary survey to help him understand about the way of community development and consulted and encouraged him to get creative with what he and his community is having and utilize his good relationship with the local people. After 3 months of accompanying with the teachers doing site surveys, studying the local people's and stakeholders' needs, defining what valuable natural resources and sources can be used for tourism development, Phong's capacity of working with local people was gradually improved, he could spread out his pride and introduced the valuable natural resources to his friends. Phong and his friends started up by setting up a fan page on their Facebook. They posted photos and articles about the beauty of the reservoir area, organized sightseeing tours, served meals on boats and the islands. They did not have money to build boats, Phong hired boats from the local people, ordered the traditional food in his acquaintances' restaurants to serve the customers on boats. He acted as a tour guide to introduce about the beauty spots, culture and history. After the trips, Phong used the tours' fee to pay to the boats' owners and the restaurants' owners. His creative and brave doing can defeat the thinking of without money, there is no business.





In order to meet the tourists' demand, Phong proposed to cooperate with the boats' owners, fish farmers, chicken raisers and vegetable farmers to provide foodstuff to the cook group. Selecting some households having many fish cages and large farms where tourists could visit and buy fish. The farmers could sell their products without looking for output market so they were happy and grateful to Phong. In 2017 they established Quynh Nhai ecotourism cooperative (at present it is Quynh Nhai Travel) and additionally they produced dried anchovy caught in Da river, creating jobs for 10 regular workers, at the same time opening new production orientation to the local people in Quynh Nhai that recommended them to catch small types of fish, dry them to sell to tourists. After a period of capital accumulation, by 2018 Quynh Nhai Travel built two double-decker boats which could accommodate up to 40 passengers / boat with their market share of 85% of the tourist volume in the reservoir area. In 2019 Phong's group invested to construct and exploit Uy Phong Bay providing a floating house serving some rest and meals, recreation, water sports, boating. Quynh Nhai Travel linked up with the local people to exploit 5 small islands close to Uy Phong Bay to breed livestock, grow vegetables and raise fish in cages to provide foodstuff to serve tourists and for sales. During their development, Phong and his group always kept close contact with the local people, receiving the advices from scientists, developed the relationship with state authorities and other enterprises to develop community-based ecotourism in the orientation of economic, environmental, cultural and social sustainability.

Therefore, community-based ecotourism development could effectively utilize the available natural resources, indigenous knowledge which could help the young man named La Van Phong to start up successful started his business. At the same time it could be spread and bring more benefit to the community, promote different types of aqua-cultural and agricultural production and services. From that, it could help create sustainable livelihoods to the local people in Son La dam reservoir area.





STORY 3: LIVELIHOOD IMPROVEMENT LINKED WITH COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN PHU MAU HAMLET, CHIENG YEN COMMUNE, VAN HO DISTRICT, SON LA PROVINCE

Phu Mau hamlet is located in the center of Chieng Yen commune, Van Ho district, Son La province. There are 2 roads linking the hamlet to external roads, including the West-South route, about 12km long via Na Bai hamlet heading to National highway No. 6, called "the old jungle", it is the border area between Son La and Hoa Binh provinces; the other route of about 20km runs to National highway No. 6 in Dong Bang junction, Mai Chau, Hoa Binh province. It is the home to ethnic minority with 197 households, 830 people including the Thai people (covering majority up to 90% of the population), the Dao people (2.9%), the Muong people (2.9%), embracing abundant traditional culture of the ethnic minorities in Northwest region and old agriculture-based livelihood. It is rich for natural resources with primeval forests of 1,317ha, Tat Nang waterfall (recognized as a provincial-level beauty spot in 2016), hot stream and natural caves potential for tourism development.



Blessed with beautiful natural scenery and ethnic culture with distinct characteristics, Phu Mau hamlet has been developing



community-based tourism since 2000 in a kind of spontaneous activities, mainly focusing on foreign tourists in the tour of Mai Chau – Phu Mau hamlet – Na Bai hamlet – KIA Pa Co cave. There was almost no overnight tourists. They just went sightseeing in Tat Nang waterfall, having bath at hot stream, visiting the cave during the day time.

In 2016, Phu Mau hamlet established a management board of tourism development comprising of 5 members representing to the hamlet's unions of whom a secretary of the hamlet party committee cum hamlet chief took the role of the chairman, and other members represents to the hamlet Veteran Association; Women's Union; Youth Union; Security board. Up to now, the management board's members have been working voluntarily with no charge funded by tourism business. The hamlet Youth Union, Women's Union established an entertainment group and opened shows to the tourists and attended district-level performance contests. The hamlet appealed the local people to protect the environment, not to cut down forests.

In 2018, Tay Bac University in association with Women's Initiative for Start-ups and Entrepreneurship (WISE) conducted a survey, consulted and supported the local people to do community-based tourism business utilizing the strength of valuable natural resources, restoring and developing agricultural production modes linked with community tourism. Initially, 7 households registered to run homestay business. They repaired, re-arranged their houses and built restrooms to meet the sanitation standard to receive tourists. The Youth Union participated in clearing the path, building a bridge and path to access Tat Nang waterfall, dredged and renovated the hot stream to receive tourists. The hamlet Women's Union participated in sweeping and cleaning the hamlet roads and planting flowers at the roadsides. Some households did not directly join in community-based tourism activities but in foodstuff supply chain such as wet-rice



cultivation, rice whisky brewery in teak wood tubes or young bamboo picking, tealeaf picking. Some households were able to restore the career of traditional brocade weaving (making cloth bags, carrier-bags). The community-based tourism development plan was fully supported and developed by the hamlet people.

Almost people living in the hamlet have blood relations. The hamlet chief was the main person and represented the people's voice to the communal authorities; simultaneously he joined in the hamlet management board of tourism development.

From that time, visitors could stay overnight in the locals' houses, visiting Tat Nang waterfall, having bath in hot stream, experiencing the local people's daily life, going strolling around the hamlet, enjoying the Thai's traditional specialties and using the local products.

By the end of 2019, except for Tay Bac University and WISE, there were two more organizations, namely Volunteer for Education Organization (V.E.O) and Action on Poverty (AOP) also supporting the local people to develop and accomplish the community-based tourism development model, taking full





advantage of the community's strengths in community-based tourism development associated with producing agro-forest products and local specialties.

Community-based tourism activities made a specific influence on the local daily life in Phu Mau hamlet. Home stay hosts were aware of keeping their house tidy and clean, their communication became more active while other neighboring households also paid more attention to save clean environment in the hamlet, knew how to connect to one another to build a tourist product supply chain which could bring more profit and improve the living standard.

In addition, the development of producing agro-forest products, local brocade are paid more attention, restored and maintained. Cultural values, local tradition, customs were gradually preserved and maintained. The local people were more conscious of conserving and protecting natural resources in the hamlet such as primeval forests, waterfall and caves.

There were difficulties in restoring traditional culture values. For example, vernacular architecture was ruined by time, traditional costumes and some folk games, feasts, traditional crafts had been in danger of dying out. The number of tourists coming to the hamlet became increased but in small amount and with infrequent visits so the production of local products serving tourism remained passive and unstable. Thus, the local peoples could not pay full attention to and focus on tourism business. Construction of recreation areas was limited due to constraint sources such as lack of fund or master planning. In order to maintain stable life, combine agricultural production with community-based tourism, Phu Mau hamlet needed the support from more professional enterprises, organizations to efficiently and effectively develop the local people's potentials.





STORY 4: A MODEL OF COOPERATIVE GROUP IN COW BREEDING BY POOR WOMEN IN THAM THANH COMMUNE, QUAN SON DISTRICT, THANH HOA PROVINCE

Tam Thanh commune, Quan Son district, Thanh Hoa province is classified as extremely poor under National Program 135. It is a mountainous commune sharing a border road of 18km in length with Lao, with total natural area of over 9,935.73 ha of which forest land is 7,994.73 ha, and agriculture land is 216.69 ha. There are 9 hamlets in the commune with 798 households, 3,822 people, 3 ethnic groups including Thai, Muong and Kinh people, of which the Thai people make up 90% of the population. In 2017 there were 262 poor households (34%), 100 near-poor households (12.6%). Of which, 16 poor households and 2 near-poor households were headed by women. They mainly lived on agricultural and forest production.

In the past years, cattle raising played an important role in the local economic mechanism. However, the numbers of cattle was limited because the local people were lack of money to invest in breeds. They almost, especially poor people could not raise cattle. Besides, the local people did not have sufficient knowledge of cattle raising techniques. They selected and bought breeds mainly based on their traditional cattle raising experience, many breeds were unqualified. Moreover, the prevention and control of livestock diseases were constraint so cows often died of diseases. Most of cows were local breeds in small size, low beef productivity so effectiveness of livestock farming was low.



Women's Union of Thanh Hoa province chose Tam Thanh commune to implement the Project for "Developing the model of cooperative group of cow breeding in Tam Thanh commune, Quan Son district". The project could



change the farming methods from the small-scale, free-range farming to large-scale breeding in confinement applied with strictly scientific husbandry procedures.

In order to gain such an achievement, the project organized many propagandas to the farmers, established a cooperative group under the Decree No. 151, currently it is Decree No. 77; trained and transferred animal husbandry techniques combined with livestock diseases prevention and control methods. The commune Women's Union trained on plan making for group-based business, household enterprises, savings and supported startup capital to purchase 20 cows with high quality breed at the age of 12 to 36 months old and with a weight of 120kg per cow and more. The cows could adapt the grazing conditions in Thanh Hoa mountainous area. During the implementation period, the women's union members often visited each household to inspect and follow up the situation. After 3 years, the project could help the poor women have opportunities to apply scientific technologies into cow breeding which helped all members sustainably escape from poverty and near-poverty, and improve their living standards. The achievement could be gained thanks to the hard-working and diligence at work of the poor women plus the thoughtful concerns from the commune women's union. The households grouped to buy materials, breeds and support to each other in husbandry techniques, cattle feed production techniques, cowshed construction. They organized periodical meetings to exchange and update the techniques and experience to well grow their cattle. After gaining the profits from cow breeding, they refunded the startup capital to the commune women's union which would be funded to other poor women.

By now, 54 members have joined the two cooperative groups of cow breeding comprising of 101 cows. With the startup capital of 290 million dong, the commune women's union released a regulation on management, monitoring of cow breeding.





STORY 5: SIGNIFICANT FEATURES IN THE PROJECT FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT BY LOCAL INITIATIVE OF THE ETHNIC MINORITY COMMUNITIES IN NAM GIANG DISTRICT, QUANG NAM PROVINCE

Introduction on Nam Giang district and the Project

Nam Giang district is mountainous area to the west of Quang Nam province and bordered by Lao. Ethnic minorities make up more than 80% of the total population, mainly the Co Tu, Ve and Ta Rieng people belonging to Gie Trieng ethnic group.

“Project for Rural Development by Local Initiative of the Ethnic Minority Communities in Nam Giang District” (project for Rural development) was implemented since July 2016 under the cooperation between Quang Nam province People's Committee, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Nam Giang district People's Committee and Foundation for International Development/Relief (FIDR) in the framework of JICA Partnership Program. The project purpose is to promote comprehensive rural development for local resource development, regional revitalization, and marketing by ethnic minority communities.





Main Approach of the project

FIDR has developed and introduced a “Initiative – Discovery – Maximization of Local Resources (IDM)” Framework for promoting “PARTICIPATORY” and “Initiative – Discovery – Maximization (IDM)” of their local treasure. The process of IDM framework is implemented as follows:

In order to materialize the above approach, the key method used in the project is “Treasure Hunting”. The difference of “Treasure Hunting” is to focus on rediscovering “Local Treasure” rather than “what local community have” or “treasures from outsiders” because:

- Find treasures, find the uniqueness. If seeking for what local community have, it is just normal products.
- Find treasures, find the person who are willing to refine it. Once the local people find their treasures, they will be guaranteed persons to “polish” and make their treasures shining.

The products generated from the community treasures are shaped in two forms: intangible products such as tourism, traditional songs and dances; and tangible products such as agricultural products, non-timber forest products, etc. We would like to introduce experience in developing the two above products based on the local resources as follows:

A: Community-based Tourism Development

There are many community tourism, community-based tourism (CBT) in Viet Nam. However, most of these CBT destinations are outside-driven or under control of travel company. There is rare independent community-based tourism site. Cotu – Nam Giang Community-based tourism is managed and operated by the local community itself. It share equal partnership with tourism companies. They have their own Tour Operation Unit (TOU) under CBT Cooperative and operated with strong support from Cooperative Board of Management and Community Tourism Groups (CTGs).



While in other areas, income criteria is put at the top of the priority list in tourism development, the local people in Nam Giang do their tourism development to strengthen the sense of community and solidarity. Hence, they selected community-based tourism development – a type of tourism that can help their community become stronger and more active. And, as expected tourism will bring a long-lasting happiness to both tourists and local people.

Community-based tourism development is a challenging but valuable journey to the community. Let see how we applied the participatory method in some basic steps in tourism development as below.

The journey of establishing community-based tourism destinations by Cotu ethnic people in Nam Giang

Step 1: Establishing a focal point and tourism development network

One of the decisive factors influencing the success of the tourism in Cotu, Nam Giang is tour operation unit. The tour operation unit is a focal point connecting tourists and community. It is a communication channel who helps tourist easily access and connect tours. The tour operation unit has functions of establishing tour itineraries, receiving and coordinating tours and takes responsibility of accounting work.

In addition, participatory tourism groups were established in the hamlets in the entire commune to supply the different services for the tours and other tourist-related activities such as dancing group, traditional, regional cuisine group, brocade weaving group, local tour guide group, etc.

Thus, in order to establish the above focal points, the local people discussed and elected the representatives (the tour operation unit) and chose the group leaders (at first the group leaders were selected temporarily, then after a period of operation, the official leaders were re-elected).



A story of group management

Group management is a challenging issue. Cooperative of Cotu community-based tourism in Nam Giang faced a difficulty when the leader of dancing group used the fund for his private purpose and reported to the group that the cooperative had not paid to the group yet. Although the leader reimbursed that amount finally, that group dissolved due to loss of trust. With the lesson learnt from the dancing group, a solution came out. As a result, all groups opened a joint bank account with dual signatures of the two members who were most trusted for withdrawals. Only when the two signatures were confirmed, it was sufficient for withdrawals. From that time, all financial transactions in the cooperative and groups are conducted via bank transfer. It could bring more benefits for their groups including increasing the group's properties (some groups withdrew by the yearend), increasing the financial transparency between the cooperative and groups.

Step 2: Establishing tourism regulations

Establishing tourism regulations to have a friendly and convenient environment of tourism for both tourists and local people. Tourism regulations can “Maximize the benefits” and “Lessen the negative impacts” of tourism development. Thus, the project organized meetings with local people, the project counterparts to discuss on the regulations, commitments of the local people and community and tourists as well. As a result, a full set of tourism regulation was finalized and received consensus from all parties.

Sep 3: Developing tourism products

Before developing the tourism products, the project had discussed and determined which tourist markets the community desired. As for the oversea markets, we focused on the ones that could utilize our strength in promotion, PR and relationship development.



Then, with the re-discovered treasures, the local people could use their treasures to develop and turn into their tourism goods and modified, improved the goods to meet the target market. It is noted for treasure development: Be simple to easily follow, Small scale model to reduce the risk, and Be cheap for everyone to join at anytime and anywhere.

Step 4: Organizing pilot tours

Pilot tours were a good opportunity for tour operators and community to learn what and how to do. Therefore, at the first year of implementation, pilot tours were sold to state agencies, schools and etc. Thanks to pilot tours, tourism products had been gradually improved and adapted to match the market demand and groups' skills were enhanced as well.

Points to be noted:

- Though the tourist spots are not perfect, you can start to sell tours so that the community can learn, improve it and generate the initial capital.
- Hospitality and smiles from the local people will be an unforgettable image to tourists.
- When conducting the promotional measures to the



tourist destinations, it is advisory to find and cooperate with trusted and dedicated business partners. They will be wonderful partners who will support to sell tours with their respects to the tourist spots.

- Community-based tourism must be conducted by the local people. Therefore, it is specially noticed that no allowances are paid to the local people who participate in the project, for example traveling fee and allowance and etc. in order to enhance the "Ownership" and "Sustainability" later.
- Community-based tourism is means for the community to strengthen their solidarity. Thus, income increase should not be put on the top priority.
- Focus on the "strength" and the "local people's desire" to activate the community's initiative.
- The number of tourists is not an important figure. It is important to attract and call for the support from regular tourists who are fan to the community, regularly visit and recommend the destinations to others.
- Lastly, we – facilitators – need to define our position. The key words for community-based tourism are "the Ownership", "Initiate – Discover- Optimize". Because we are out-of-community people, we cannot fully understand the community. Hence, we should question and listen to their ideas and take them into account for the process of design and development of community-based tourism.

B: Development of local products

Regularly, they have various "local products". They sell what they have as product-oriented approach (selling what you have). Many places have faced failures! Gradually, it has been noticed that it is not enough and ineffective to sell what they have, then they changed the sale method.

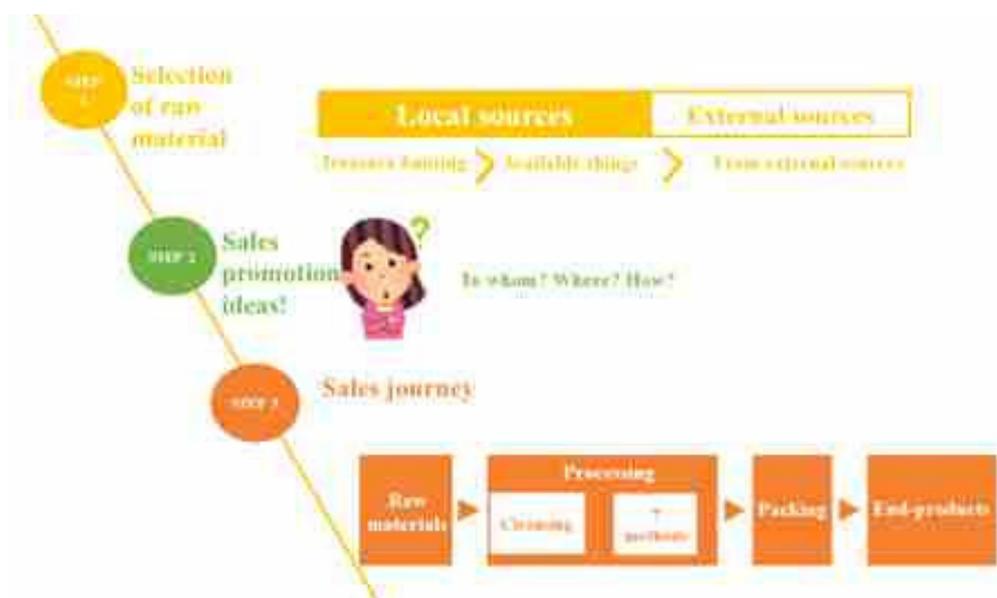


Nowadays, many people have known the concept of market orientation (selling what the market needs). It is necessary to study market orientation, then produce the goods that customers need and want. This is an effective approach.

However, it is not easy to do market research because of there is constraint of suitable methods and internet access. Thus, sometimes it is not easy for almost all of us to choose MARKET-ORIENTED approach.

Based on the practical experience, we would like to introduce a method combining the approaches of selling what you have and selling what market needs to the communities who have the similar conditions with Nam Giang district, Quang Nam province. That is a mountainous area where the local people have many treasures to introduce to outsiders with their spirit of pride. Let see how we could utilize the local sources to turn them into products and bring them closer to Market orientation with participatory approach.

The journey of product development and sale





Step 1: Selection of raw materials (Proposing to conduct Treasure Hunting)

Usually, the local people tend to seek for something “available” to make a product. In the project for rural development, the local people selected “TREASURE” to make valuable products. For further information on treasure, you are recommended to “Treasure Hunting” by FIDR.

The priority list on product development is as follows: 1) your treasure; 2) what you and your community are having; 3) external sources (for example: something can be bought / got from other area).

Step 2: Visualization of how we sell the product. Before developing a product, the communities need to answer the following questions:

- What do we want to sell? (treasure or general goods and etc.)
- Where do we want to sell the product? (in our area or in other provinces/ cities, etc.)
- When will we take an action? (right now or 6 months later, etc.)
- Why do we choose this treasure? (feeling a pride of it or it is abundant, etc.)
- Who do we want to sell the product to? (Age, sex, Vietnamese people or foreigners)
- How do we sell the product? (Wholesale or retail, etc.)

Step 3: Product development

1. Primary processing: Cleansing, removing impurities. It is the most simply way to increase the product value.

2. Product processing: adding more value to the treasure:

- With 07 methods: 1) drying; 2) fermenting; 3) pickling; 4) boiling; 5) smoking; 6) frying; and 7) combining the above methods.

- The key point to create a qualified product is to duplicate the processing. For example: drying twice, boiling twice. Drying and boiling are the easiest methods if there is not tools or additional materials.

3. Handicraft products: it is necessary to fix the product defects, and improve the product durability.

We believe that with IDM method, the community can develop their product, at least to this step, however sometimes they need support from others.

Step 4: Packing

- Making the local product have more value and meet the standard. Building customers' trust when they want to trace the product origin and can see the product's information on the product label.
- Depending on the target market, packing is modified accordingly.

Step 5: Certificate of quality

- Creating an opportunity for the community to challenge as much as possible their capacity on developing their product. Asking district-level officers to consult and work with them to register for the Certificate of quality. Taking it as the first experience, they can register by themselves later on.
- If they want to sell the product in big stores or shopping malls, encourage them to register for product quality inspection in relevant agencies in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh or Da Nang.

Step 6: End-product

- Paying attention to the transportation, clean product, certain price.
- Responding quickly and meeting the scheduled delivery dates, building the partners' trust.
- Keeping contact with customers to update their feedback and comments.



Know-how of product development

Know-how 1: Long tail strategy: means selling unique, hard-to-find products in limited quantities at high price to a specific market (the long tail part), instead of selling popular, highly competitive products in great quantities (the head part). This strategy is suitable with the farmers who have small scale production with diverse and unique categories, especially when they know how to turn the disadvantage to advantage. For example, the community in the mountainous area, far from big cities, they meet difficulties in market access. However, it can create a trustworthy brand name for a natural, chemical-free, safe and unique product.

Know-how 2: Proving flexibility

- A material can be used to make various type of products in different sizes.
- Giving more options to customers. The more a product can meet customers' demand, the better it is.

Know-how 3: Creating the difference

- Unique culture and conventional chemical-free cultivation can verify the product value; introducing the product to customers through its story.
- Each product represents to the specific feature of its community, not to an individual which is a different trait from a general product.

Know-how 4: Testing and continuous product innovation

- Do not hesitate to test new product with different label and packing.
- Some ways to effectively collect feedback from customers:

A: Making a sample product - Bringing it to the shop to collect comments - Listening advices - Innovating it.

B: Making a sample product - Introducing it to tourist - Listening comments - Innovating it.



Know-how 5: Attracting local people to join in a natural and friendly way

- Everyone can join to develop the product. When a product is made from the treasure, everyone feels excited to shine it in a mood of joy and happiness.
- Do not limit the participants, utilize the strength of the potential members in the community itself. It is not considered as a skill to attract the participation from the community. When the entire community works together, it is what we call participatory approach.

Know-how 6: Maintaining the motivation of product development from the community

In reality, in the issue of product development, not every product can be sold out as expected. Sometimes, it fails which makes them give up easily. How to maintain motivation to the local people to keep on developing the product is an important issue. There is an experience taken from the project in Nam Giang, Quang Nam province as follows:

- Choosing a treasure to develop. People tend to maintain and develop something that is their passion, pride for a long period of time.
- A regular interaction of the state agencies on the programs, projects or activities on Product Development is the best support to the local people. For example, using local products as gifts in state's events; product launch events such as local festivals, fairs; promoting "Buying local" campaign, etc.





STORY 6: SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD FOR KHMER WOMEN WITH BANG GRASS (LEPIRONIA ARTICULATE) IN PHU MY COMMUNE, GIANG THANH DISTRICT, KIEN GIANG PROVINCE

An area of 2,000 ha wetland in Phu My commune, Giang Thanh district, Kien Giang province is the last Bang grass field (*Lepironia articulate*) in Mekong delta. This wetland area not only plays an important role in biodiversity conservation but also provides livelihood and preserves cultural heritage with bang grass handicraft of Khmer people. Khmer people, the largest ethnic group in Phu My commune, long time ago knew how to exploit bang grass, but mostly to make simple items as household tools for their use. Their products seem low values. Thus, bang grass was harvested unsustainably because a great deal of bang grass could bring sufficient income for a family.

Originating from the legitimate concerns for food security and poverty alleviation, the economic development plans have been commenced since 1990s with an aim to convert natural wetlands to farmlands. Because it was an infertile land, it became a pilot area of unsuccessful economic development activities. The conversions from wetlands to forest land for sandalwood plantation or to farmland for paddy rice farming or extensive shrimp farming were failed because they could not only reduce poverty in the long term but also ruined the natural source – an internal strength for sustainable economic development in the local area.

Phu My Bang grass Wetland Conversation Project was formulated in November 2004 which was managed by The Southeast Asia Program of the International Crane Foundation in order to conserve the wetland with the combination of biodiversity conservation and income improvement. The project budget of the first three years 2004-2006





was funded by the World Bank and International Finance Corporation. For the period of 2008-2009, the project was mainly funded by Holcim company, a company in Viet Nam's private economic sector. In 2005, the project was granted international UN-HABITAT Dubai award as one of the best project for Best Practices to Improve the Living Environment. In 2006, the project was granted Equator Prize by the Equator Initiative of the United Nations Development Program to recognize outstanding community efforts in nature conservation and sustainable livelihood through local community participation.

The project commencement was successful by persuading Kien Giang province authorities to reserve Phu My bang grass field as it was natural. The project was monitored by a steering committee including representatives of counterpart agencies, district level and province level agencies, local community, donors and education organizations. The project conducted a feasibility study based on ideas of the local community on how to manage the natural resources the most effectively. The project activities were implemented in close consultation with principal Buddhist masters because Buddhism is an important religion to Khmer ethnic people in Phu My commune.

Project's strategy was to formulate an open sanctuary so that exploitation of wetland's natural resources was conducted while it was managed sustainably. The local people were allowed to exploit bang grass in the reserve and took part in all project activities and maintained them when the project terminated. The



project organized occupational trainings so that local people could make more high value products from bang grass in addition to the trade of raw bang grass or simple general items for household use as they did before. Trade promotion



activities were organized to introduce the products in domestic and oversea markets with an aim to increase the local people's income. The innovated products which required less material could lessened the exploitation of bang grass volume.

The survey result of Phu My Bang grass Wetland Conversation Project showed that before the project, Khmer women knitted cushions from bang grass. A cushion was sold at VND10,000 (equivalent to US\$0.62 in 2007). It took 2 days to complete a cushion. Because the profit from cushion was low, a great deal of bang grass was exploited. They had to make as many as products to ensure their living standard. The project confirmed that high-quality handicraft products made of bang grass had a good potential for consumption in Ho Chi Minh city where tourism market was growing well, where a handicraft bag had a price of US\$3 (almost VND 50,000) or more.

By 2007, the project had organized trainings on handicraft production for 200 households out of 350 households in the project area to produce more handicraft items from bang grass. The project products were sold in many provinces in Viet Nam and exported to 12 countries. Usually, men harvested bang grass while women produced items. Cushion makers' income is VND30,000/day (equivalent to US\$1.86) by now and handicraft workers can gain VND 50,000/day (US\$3.10). A person who worked on bang grass production could gain only VND8,000 to VND10,000 before the project. The awareness of the value of wetland ecosystem in the locality was improved significantly.

From Phu My Bang grass Wetland Conversation Project to Phu My Bang grass Women Cooperative

Cooperative group of cushion knitting was established during the operation period of Phu My Bang grass Wetland Conversation Project but it could not fully use up the local potential. In order to maintain and develop the project results, a Phu My Bang grass Women Cooperative was established from the base of the original cooperative group on August 1st 2017 with the participation of 25 Khmer women in Tra Pho hamlet, Phu My commune, Giang Thanh District, Kien Giang province. The



foundation of the cooperative could meet the demand of wide and comprehensive cooperation in bang grass collection, cushion knitting and services on input, and output sources in order that commercial activities could gain more profits.

The cooperative mobilized charter capital of VND20,000,000 from its members with minimum VND800,000/share and maximum VND4,000,000/ member. The cooperative was equipped with 3 bang grass pressing machines with a value of VND59.85 million by Viet Nam Women's Union and capital loan of VND50,000 from Kien Giang province's women union. Those budgets could help the cooperative more effectively organize their production activities.

During the period of 2017-2022, the cooperative targeted to sell bang grass cushions made by its members. Other activities including bang grass pressing to provide raw material, product development and other services will be conducted in the next period when the cooperative is in a smooth and stable operation. As a result of business activities in two years 2017-2019, the cooperative members received profit share of VND678.64/ bang grass cushion. A member who shares capital contribution received profit of VND625,953/ share.

With a strategy of providing more services to meet the members' demand; admitting more members to widen the production scale; taking full advantage of supporting policies issued by the state; seeking for input and output markets; Phu My Bang grass Women Cooperative will keep on creating more stable income for the members and conserve biodiversity in Phu My bang grass wetland.





STORY 7: WOMEN UNION IN HUONG VAN WARD, HUONG TRA TOWN, THUA THIEN HUE PROVINCE WITH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION

Huong Van ward, Huong Tra commune which is located in Bo river basin, one of the 2 largest rivers in Thua Thien Hue heavily suffers from flooding. In this region, livestock production is conducted in more than 70% households. With this work, women take main responsibility in entire production. The production scale, level of success and failure are diverse practices. Huong Van ward's women union proposed a measure on livestock production development with technical support from Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry.

The women union made a development plan for their hamlet with the local people's participation in order to share their experience in this field. Based on the collected ideas, the women union established some hobby groups in livestock production with 21 members at the beginning.

The hobby groups shared their advantages, disadvantages in livestock production and show their solutions.

<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source of livestock feed is available. • Labor source is abundant, hardworking and diligent. • There is vast land for livestock farm. • There is high possibility of technique access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good breeds, especially pigs for extra lean pork. • Animal diseases on pig respiratory syndrome and reproduction. • Unstable market. • Lack of fund, especially in poor households. • Feed is expensive and green feed is not sufficient. • Small production scale and lack of cooperation in livestock production; low profit; technical transfer is not conducted widely in the locality.



Based on the assessment of the local demand, training courses on enhancing knowledge and skills of farming, livestock production, veterinary care and marketing were organized in different forms and at different levels with the support and promotion of researchers. Site visits to best livestock production models were paid attention and organized because the local people thought "a picture is worth a thousand words". After each study tour, the women union held meetings on information sharing and suggested good points from the models which matched with the local sources and each household. As a result, the following models were introduced in the locality:

- Processing and use of feed: cassava leaves and roots, beer spent grain, green plants for livestock feed.
- Pilot production on F1 female pigs (Large White x Mong Cai)
- Two-storey pig shed to avoid flood
- Pig production combined with biogas system



The women union eagerly sought for and mobilized fund and investment from NGOs and guarantors for their loan in banks. Simultaneously, the women union set up a monitoring mechanism on loan payment and repayment which fits the local situation. Moreover, the union took periodical inspection on livestock production and recovered loan amount by monthly base. Because it was thought that it was a heavy burden and risky for the households to repay full loan amount by the due date.

Being aware of the importance of environment protection to ensure the lives and health for the households and community, the union held periodical meetings to share environmental news and information. Through those activities, the union members turned their awareness into actions. The livestock waste was managed by biogas system which received interest from many



households. Because biogas system fed with livestock manures was not only effective in term of environment but also efficient in term of economy and people's health. The households were aware of the fact that thanks to this system development, their livestock production could be spread widely.

In order to timely update information and increase the opportunities on accessing information on production and life, it is really essential to set up an information sharing network. With this idea, a center for community information was established where information was shared in the following methods: putting a series of bulletin boards in public area of all hamlets, and providing bookcases which can help with production guides.

Lessons learnt from application of approaches on community development in order for women's capacity enhancement in livestock production:

- Activities are developed based on the demand and benefit of the local people and community;
- A decision is made with the consensus of almost local people, which is suitable with available sources and specific condition of each household and locality;
- Information is shared clearly and precisely and opportunities on information access is increased to minimize conflicts and misguided understanding on information to be conveyed;
- Attracting the participation of the local authorities and other social, political organizations to build a legal corridor, which can boost up the activity progress and effect;
- Activity implementation is regularly monitored and evaluated, especially documentation is absolutely required to summarize experiences and lessons learnt and easily spread out the results.





STORY 8: COMMUNITY TOURISM IN NUA HAMLET, CON CUONG DISTRICT, NGHE AN PROVINCE

Con Cuong is a mountainous district located to the West of Nghe An province, sharing border with Lao, 120km far from Vinh city. This is the land of beautiful sceneries, magnificent waterfalls, pure clear Giang river, and ethnic and cultural diversity, well-known unique regional specialties.

Nua hamlet is one of the habitats for Thai people in Yen Khe commune, Con Cuong district, Nghe An province. The local people are used to living in stilts. Rice farming and livestock production bring them main income. In addition to farming, women spending time on brocade weaving and care for their family.

In 2004, UNESCO chose some hamlets of Thai people in Con Cuong district to cooperate in conducting a study on community tourism development within the scope of program for Pu Mat primary forest conservation and support. Those activities were merely in primitive stage and were not paid attention and concerns by relevant agencies. By 2015, JICA Project for Livelihood Diversification through Heritage Tourism in Remote Agricultural and Fishery Villages was implemented by Showa Women's University, Japan and Nghe An Department of Tourism, a standing agency in cooperation with Con Cuong District's People's Committee, Nam Dan. Project target areas were Nua hamlet, Con Cuong district and Pha hamlet, Yen Khe district. In the early time, Department of Tourism's officers who had good knowledge of guidelines on state governance were assigned to instruct and guide the locality and local people to implement project activities because the joint target was "tourism development – creating sustainable livelihood for local people". Department of Tourism's officers and Japanese experts directly worked with each local people in the project site to identify their needs and desire. It was difficult to make acquaintance with the local people because of differences in culture and languages and custom. Almost men did not want their women to participate in



social activities, especially in tourism. Tourism was a strange term to them at that time. It was said that tourism would lead to conflicts in their family when tourists might bring bad things to their hamlet and mess their life, blend the external culture into their tradition.

In order to make them understand about community tourism, the project shared and showed several models and their photos implemented in Duong Lam – Hanoi, Phuoc Tich – Thua Thien Hue. Day by day, the local people were open to talk about and share with the project their local potentials for tourism development.



Conducting tourism surveys with the local people, they introduced some households who can make homestay, their local specialties, the people who were good at cooking traditional cuisine, musical instruments, traditional

songs and dances performed in local festivals. Besides, they also introduced natural sceneries such as waterfalls, forests, Thai people's terraced rice fields. Those potentials would attract tourists

Ms. Lo Thi Hoa told that in the past, her family prepared simple dishes then served the food onto porcelain bowls and put them on an aluminum tray. Since I participated in community tourism development, with the advice of professional chef, I could recover Thai traditional dishes in Con Cuong and properly used the household tools handed over by our ancestors. In the past, when there were not pans, pots, bowls or plates, food was served in bamboo tubes and put them on leaves to attract the tourists.

if they were well managed.

3 conventional stilts of Mr. Vi Van Thu and Ms. Lo Thi Hoa, Mr. Vi Xuan Hanh and Ms. La Thi Chien, Mr. Lo Dinh Nhuong and Ms. Vi Thi Thanh were built in 1980s with Thai



ethnic group's conventional structures and architecture. They voluntarily provided their stilts for homestay service. Those families together with others in the hamlet renovated natural landscapes, roads and their houses to make them more beautiful and convenient for tourists' stay.

Nua hamlet's people organized cultural activities which were significantly distinctive and unique in term of culinary culture. Traditional dishes such as purple sticky rice, bamboo-tube rice, young bamboo shoots stuffed with pork, green papaya salad, banana flower salad and etc. were very appealing which were served in a tactful and delicate way full of taste of west Nghe An mountainous area. Folk-dance, fan dance, Lam Vong dance, bamboo dancing was prepared and organized meticulously. Conventional brocade weaving with unique items was restored and developed. It could be said that distinctive and impressive culture and custom of Thai ethnic group could appeal the interest of tourist inside and outside the province.

This region was famous for its sweet and soothing orange. Oranges were produced into essential oil, soap, wine, jam etc. Tourists could visit, take photos and eat orange in orange farms.

Tourist could take sightseeing tour around the hamlet by buffalo cart ride, experience fish catching in streams with conventional tools, seek for medicinal herbs in forest. They all attracted tourists.



Since community tourism activities were organized, the local people could earn 4 to 6 million dong each month. They felt happy and motivated to do their job. They expressed their thanks to relevant agencies for building and helping them improve the livelihood through community tourism.



At present, activities on spreading out the models and trainings are carried out in Nua hamlet and other hamlets of the district. They share and learn how to organize sustainable community tourism activities.

Currently, the Provincial People's Council has released Decree No. 07/2020/NQ-HĐND dated 22nd July 2020 on policies supporting community tourism development in Nghe An for the period of 2021-2025. This action could help the local people conducting community tourism in Nua hamlet in particular and in other areas in Nghe An in general feel more delighted and confident in their business for a sustainable development in their own hometown.





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