



PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE CHANGE: COMMUNITY BASED CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION GRANTS 2012-2015

Vietnam is greatly affected by climate change and natural hazards, experiencing many negative impacts such as unpredictable weather patterns, flooding, storms and drought. The effects of these changes are felt most strongly by the poorest communities.



Community-based activities can play an important role in helping developing countries respond to climate change, while also contributing to poverty reduction and enhancing livelihoods. In recognition of the important role that non-government organisations play in developing and implementing community-based climate change responses, from 2012 until 2015, the Australian Government has dedicated over AU\$15 million to supporting seven organisations to implement six different climate change and disaster risk reduction projects, in 13 provinces across Vietnam.



The Community Based Climate Change Adaptation Grants (CBCCAG) program has had an impact on over two hundred thousand people. The projects worked at community level to improve the resilience of local people to the negative impacts of climate change and natural hazards, and to mitigate those factors which contribute to climate change. Relevant local authorities at the commune, district and provincial levels were engaged throughout to ensure that individuals and communities are supported to continue to mitigate and adapt to climate change after the projects complete.

The models, methods and evidence developed and gathered throughout the CBCCAG have been documented and are now being shared with decision-makers, to support Vietnam to continue to develop and implement effective climate change and disaster risk reduction policy which has a significant impact at community level.





INTEGRATED COMMUNITY-BASED ADAPTATION IN THE MEKONG

Through ‘Integrated Community-based Adaptation in the Mekong’ (ICAM), CARE worked with women and men who are most at risk from the impacts of climate change and natural hazards, to increase the resilience of communities in the Mekong Delta.



The project was implemented in three communes in An Phu District (An Giang Province) and two communes in Vinh Chau District (Soc Trang Province). Implementation was conducted in partnership with the Centre for Rural Communities Research and Development (CCRD), and the Women’s Unions of An Giang and Soc Trang.

ICAM had three main objectives:

- 1. Communities and local authorities have improved capacity to undertake gender-sensitive analysis and planning for community-based adaptation (CBA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR).** 33 villages participated in gender-sensitive CBA planning, facilitated by the Women’s Union, and the resulting action plans informed approaches to livelihoods, DRR, and behaviour change. At risk populations, including women, the land poor and the landless, were able to better communicate their experiences and concerns via methods such as community digital storytelling. Communities were also supported to plan for a resilient future by using a ‘visioning approach’ to prepare for different climate scenarios.
- 2. Improved community resilience through the implementation of sustainable, community-level, integrated CBA and DRR interventions that benefit vulnerable people, particularly women.** These interventions included: working with communities to develop and test climate resilient agricultural livelihood options; facilitating livelihood diversification through improving access to existing credit and savings options; promoting long-term behaviour change amongst communities and the authorities by using participatory action-oriented training (PAOT); and increasing the ability of communities and local authorities to prepare for and reduce the risks posed by natural hazards, including information sharing, training and practical measures.
- 3. A strong evidence base and strengthened civil society provided a foundation for the scale up of community-based, equitable, and gender-sensitive adaptation in the Mekong Delta region.** CBA plans have been integrated into commune level Socio-Economic Development Plans (SEDPs), and efforts to integrate these plans into district-level SEDPs are ongoing. Gender-sensitive, climate resilient livelihoods, and climate smart disaster risk reduction, is being replicated through farmer field schools, community groups, and mass organisations, led by government and civil society partners.



KEY OUTPUTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

More than 1,283 women and men in 33 villages have worked together to develop village-level gender-sensitive **community-based adaptation plans**, which have been integrated into commune-level government planning. **Five communes outside of the ICAM target area** have replicated the community-based adaptation planning model. Government partners have developed strategies to sustain and **expand the process of community-based adaptation**.

1,238 households were supported to develop **new climate-resilient livelihood activities**, such as climate-smart agriculture options like indoor organic mushroom growing or bio-bedding and manure management for chickens and pigs, or diversifying into non-agricultural livelihoods such as small businesses which are less affected by the weather.

295 households gained increased access to credit for climate-resilient livelihood diversification, from a customised and flexible Women’s Union-run microfinance system, and **391 women were trained in financial and business skills**.

Over 12,000 people have directly or indirectly benefitted from **gender-sensitive and climate-smart disaster risk reduction activities**: 150 people took swimming lessons; 16 schools improved their infrastructure to protect against natural hazards; 50 loudspeakers for warning systems were installed; and 634 people, including search and rescue teams, participated in first aid training.

44 organisations have joined the **CARE-initiated Southern Climate Change Working Group**, which facilitates civil society networking, technical capacity building and exchange of good practice in the Mekong Delta.



SOWING THE SEEDS OF CHANGE: COMMUNITY BASED CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION THROUGH SUSTAINABLE RICE PRODUCTION

The project 'Sowing the Seeds of Change: Community Based Climate Change Mitigation through Sustainable Rice Production' (SSC) supported rice farmers in Quang Binh and Binh Dinh provinces to implement low carbon and low risk rice production systems while achieving community development outcomes, including an increase in household income and support for women's empowerment.



The SSC project had four components:

- 1. System of Rice Intensification (SRI):** eco-friendly rice production techniques that support farmers improve their income, reduce GHG emissions and increase resilience to climate change. SRI was applied successfully over five crops from December 2012 – May 2015, and approximately 4,000 ha of SRI rice has been planted in total. Compared to traditional practices, SRI yields were 15-20% higher in unfavourable weather conditions. A women led SRI field was successfully organised in Phuoc Thang commune, Binh Dinh, and 120 Women's Union officials were trained on SRI techniques and climate change.
- 2. Renewable energy for rice residue management:** three bio-energy solutions that utilise rice residue (husk and straw) to reduce GHG emissions and alleviate the negative environmental and health impacts from waste disposal were introduced into project provinces: rice husk briquetting machines, straw baling machines and gasifier stoves.
- 3. Inclusive Business and market linkages:** promotion of inclusive business and development of an SRI 'clean rice' value chain, to create growth and market linkages between different value chain actors. The rice value chain has been restructured to better service farmers and private industry selling SRI rice.
- 4. Knowledge management and advocacy:** documentation and dissemination of knowledge, experiences and lessons learnt to ensure learnings and techniques are shared and are used to influence and inform decision making at all levels. Project research findings and lessons learnt are being used to advocate policy makers on agriculture, gender and climate change related policies and local agriculture development plans. An evidence-based advocacy package, technical guidelines and research reports are published and widely shared. Important knowledge exchanges with Ministries and government agencies in the agriculture sector, women's unions, NGOs and donors are ongoing.

KEY OUTPUTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The SSC project has achieved a **15% income increase for 9,000 farming households** (including 5,000 women), a **reduction of 4 tones CO₂/ha/crop** and a **total reduction of 25% of CH₄ and N₂O emissions**.

Three straw baling machines were purchased, and **720 metric tons (mt) of straw were reused for mushroom farming and livestock feed** rather than being burnt. Two rice husk briquetting machines turned 280 - 560 mt of rice husks into briquettes, **reducing rice husk dumping and the use of coal**. A re-modelled gasifier stove using rice husks was developed, and **800 of these stoves were commercially distributed**, reducing indoor air pollution caused by cooking with traditional stoves for 600 households.

Four millers and six farmer groups have signed supply contracts and MOUs for SRI rice, and 12 shops are selling SRI rice. Retailers are taking ownership of SRI branding and sales. **1,000 SRI farmers have sold rice through Farmers Group Businesses and 500 farmers, including 200 women, have received training** in business, marketing and financial management.

SRI is being considered in key policies and programs including the Agriculture Restructuring Programme 2014-2020 and in provincial large scale field strategies as well as nationally in Restructuring Vietnam's Rice Sector 2020 and Views to 2030, the MARD Action Plan in Response to Climate Change 2016-2020 and the Women's Union Women's Economic Empowerment Plan.

The DARDs of Quang Binh and Binh Dinh have agreed to an SRI up-scale strategy over the next 5 years. In Quang Binh this will involve expansion of SRI to at least 7,000 – 10,000 ha by 2020, and Binh Dinh is expected to expand the area to 40.000 ha.





PARTNERSHIP FOR EQUITABLE RESILIENCE TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE OF THE COASTAL COMMUNITIES IN DELTAS OF VIETNAM

The 'Partnership for Equitable Resilience to the Impacts of Climate Change of the Coastal Communities in Deltas of Vietnam' project aimed to increase the resilience of 51,000 vulnerable people, especially women, living in coastal communities affected by climate change and natural hazards.



The three-year project was run in partnership with the Centre for Marine Life Conservation and Community Development and provincial governments in five provinces (Nam Dinh, Thai Binh, Hai Phong, Tien Giang and Tra Vinh) in the Red River and Mekong River deltas.

The project focused on three objectives:

1. Helping poor people and local authorities in the five provinces to **better understand the impacts of climate change** and what practical measures they could take to adapt. Local authorities were also supported to **integrate disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation issues into their local socio-economic development plans and flood and storm control plans.**
2. Supporting households to **identify livelihood options** not affected by climate change that could increase their income.
3. Improving the **awareness of local authorities and communities** of climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and natural resource management policies.

Overall, the project was successful in reducing the risks faced by vulnerable households and improving their livelihood options. The project promoted participatory approaches and made sure to include vulnerable households in the discussions. The project also made a specific effort to ensure that women were represented and included in all project activities. Poor women were, for example, provided with leadership training and skill-building opportunities and were the major beneficiaries of the livelihood support work.

Furthermore, there has been an increased awareness among a wide range of stakeholders of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction legal frameworks. At the commune level, for example, all local leaders who were part of the final evaluation reported that they had used project learning on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction in the development of their socio-economic development plans and local flood and storm control plans.



KEY OUTPUTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

An independent evaluation concluded that the project has helped **52,110 people (including 26,150 women)** and local authorities to better understand climate change risks, the impact of climate change on livelihoods and how to best manage and adapt to these risks.

The project also recorded clear results in terms of improving local livelihood options. **More than 3,000 vulnerable households implemented a range of different livelihood options** that have been adapted to a changing climate. As a result, after one year the **average income of the households rose dramatically, almost quadrupling** in the Red River delta.

As a result, the **number of women participating in the local planning processes increased by 28 percent.** The project also noted positive changes in the gender roles between men and women in the target communities, with men being encouraged to take on household chores so that the women could attend training and meetings outside of the home.

More than **550 local authority staff were trained in participatory planning** and how to integrate disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into local planning and decisions, while ensuring that the voice and needs of vulnerable people are included.



CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITY BASED DISASTER RISK REDUCTION PROJECT IN THE MEKONG DELTA

The 'Climate Smart Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction Project in the Mekong Delta', implemented by Vietnam Red Cross, with support from Australian Red Cross and German Red Cross, managed to increase the resilience of 15 disaster-prone communes to current and projected climate change impacts in An Giang and Kien Giang provinces in the Vietnamese Mekong Delta.



The project targeted the most vulnerable groups in 15 communes as well as students of 15 primary schools, focusing on:

- **disaster preparedness** (improving people's knowledge and behaviour on how to prepare for disasters);
- **disaster response** (training and equipping of commune-level Emergency Response Teams and schools, on topics such as First Aid and Search and Rescue);
- **disaster risk reduction** (training, awareness raising and small-scale mitigation interventions prioritised through Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments; and
- **climate change adaptation** (training, awareness raising and climate-resilient livelihood options designed by local scientific institutes).

Based on the independent evaluation and endline survey results, the project's main successes have been identified as the promotion of the Safe School model; hygiene and sanitation; and climate-smart livelihoods. All these activities are continuing in the target areas beyond the scope of the project.

One fundamental factor behind these successes is Vietnam Red Cross' widespread presence at national, province, district and commune level. Collaboration with local authorities and other stakeholders such as the Agricultural Extension Centre, the Department of Education and Training, and the Commune Committee for Flood and Storm Control greatly facilitated the government's involvement in key aspects of the project at all levels.



KEY OUTPUTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Approximately 20,000 people directly benefited from the project, including 75 Vietnam Red Cross staff at different levels; 375 members of commune-level Committees for Flood and Storm Control (CFSC), 750 emergency rescue team members; 155 teachers; 5,956 primary students; and 13,000 local people who participated in wide range of project activities.

15 communities participated in **Vulnerability and Community Assessments** and plans, facilitated by the Red Cross and government partners. Several **'climate-smart' livelihood models** were developed and tested. These include bio-matress pig raising, eel raising, shrimp and sedge, and clean vegetable growing.

375 commune-level CFSC members were trained in **Community-Based Disaster Risk Management**. 15 commune government officials were trained in **gender and disability inclusion**.

99 teachers and school managers were trained in the **Safe School model**. Core teachers and students were trained in disaster preparedness, hygiene and First Aid, who then facilitated trainings for other students.

Small-scale mitigation interventions were put in place to mitigate the impact of disasters including 1 anti-salinity gate, 3 bridges to connect villages to evacuation centres, 408 household latrines, and 446 household water tanks. **75 village-level Search and Rescue teams** (including 33 women and 341 men) were established, and work alongside **375 Emergency Response Team members** who were trained in Community Action for Disaster Response. **12 early warning systems** were also installed in 12 communes, with coverage up to **70% of the population** (100,000 people).



THE VIETNAM LOW-CARBON RICE PROJECT

The ‘Vietnam Low-Carbon Rice Project’ (VLCRP) sought to significantly reduce GHG emissions from rice cultivation, an activity responsible for more than 30% of Vietnam’s overall GHG emissions, while improving livelihoods for the rice farmer community through decreased costs and enhanced yield, as well as providing supplemental farmer income through the sale of carbon credits.



Rice cultivation is the main source of income for 80% of farmers in the Mekong Delta. These farmers face great challenges in creating sustainable livelihoods due to the high cost of inputs, prices that can fall precipitously in years of good harvests, and a risk of extreme weather events that is only expected to rise due to climate change. By adopting VLCRP’s sustainable rice farming technique, **1 Must 6 Reductions (1M6Rs)**, rice farmers **reduce their input costs while maintaining or improving yields**, become **more resilient to climate change, decrease greenhouse gas emissions**, and deliver other environmental co-benefits, such as reduced water pollution; this is a “triple win” approach to agriculture.

In response to Vietnam’s Green Growth Strategy and with the support of the Australian Government, VLCRP was launched in November 2012 in Kien Giang and in December 2012 in An Giang. VLCRP completed 11 crops as of December 2014 and trained DARDs, Extension Services, the Women’s Union and 500 farmer households (or over 4,000 farmers) in 1M6Rs. Rice farmers in Kien Giang and An Giang have been organized into **10 Production Groups, led by Farmer Group Leaders who provide technical training and assistance** to farmers in implementing 1M6Rs techniques and keeping accurate farm records, with a special focus on poor and female farmers. The project has actively focused on **improving the capacity of Women’s Unions and Local Authorities** in both Kien Giang and An Giang in order to share knowledge of the 1M6Rs farming technique with women within and beyond VLCRP project sites.

VLCRP has been successful in demonstrating a **multi-stakeholder approach** that involves the close collaboration of farmers, scientists, government agencies, and the private sector in researching, developing, and applying sustainable rice farming techniques that can create real benefits for farmers and their surrounding communities. Strong buy in from such a diverse set of stakeholders lends itself to project strength and sustainability. The success of the 1M6Rs model, including its implementation via on-farm assistance provided by Farmer Group Leaders and local extensions services, also makes a powerful case for its adoption and scalability across other regions.



KEY OUTPUTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The 1M6Rs farming technique help **farmers use significantly less inputs** (50% reduction in seed, 30% reduction in fertilizer, 40-50% reduction in water, 30% reduction in pesticide) while **improving yields by 5-10%**, leading to an **increase in profit from 10% to as high as 60% per hectare**.

Preliminary results indicate that 1M6Rs practices have led to approximately **40-65% reductions in greenhouse gas emissions**, equivalent to 4 tons of CO₂e/ha/yr in An Giang and 35 tons of CO₂e/ha/yr in Kien Giang. The project also reached agreements with export companies to arrange for the **purchase of project farmers’ low-carbon rice at higher than market prices**.

Women’s Unions have integrated 1M6Rs into their regular meetings and are advocating its adoption outside the project area. In An Giang, during crop 1 and 2 in 2013, **five training sessions reached a total of 502 farmers**, and two sessions were delivered to 61 representatives from the local women’s unions, ensuring **inclusion of people living with disabilities**. Similarly, in Kien Giang, **ten training sessions reached approximately 1,000 farmers**, with three additional sessions held for a total of 73 members of the area’s women’s unions and disability groups.

The economic, agronomic, and emissions data that VLCRP has collected demonstrates the benefits of the practices, and can help national authorities such as MARD, local authorities and DARD **quantitatively assess the impacts of 1M6Rs and support its inclusion in upcoming strategic plans**.



VIETNAM CHILD-CENTRED CLIMATE RESILIENCE PROGRAM



Save the Children®

To respond to this increasingly uncertain and volatile environment, Save the Children and Plan International developed the ‘Vietnam Child-Centred Climate Resilience Program’ (VCCRP). The project aimed to build the adaptive capacity of children and their communities in Vietnam to manage the impacts of climate change.



The Vietnam Child Centred Climate Resilience Program was implemented in Thai Nguyen, Quang Ngai, Quang Nam and Tien Giang provinces through a consortium model with Save the Children as the lead partner and Plan International as the sub-grantee. The project was implemented with key local partners at provincial and district levels, including who provided input to all stages of project design and delivery. These partners were: Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Agricultural Extension Centre, Department of Education and Training, Provincial Disaster Management Centre, Vietnam National Red Cross, Women’s Union, and Youth Union.

The overall goal of the program was to build the adaptive capacity of children and their communities in Vietnam to manage the impacts of climate change. This goal is supported by two main objectives:

1. To increase the ability of children and their communities to **directly plan for and manage the negative impacts of climate variability and change**; and
2. To improve the ability of **government and civil society to meet the adaptation needs of children** and their communities, in line with national objectives.

The child-centred community-based approach (CCCBA) adopted by the program was central to the overall approach undertaken by Save the Children and Plan International, which provided a platform for children to learn and thus become actively engaged and informed across the entire program, including those who are most marginalised in matters concerning them directly or indirectly. By using a CCCBA to climate change adaptation, the program placed communities at the heart of decision-making and planning processes, to better link their existing knowledge with innovative strategies to address current vulnerabilities and risks, and build the resilience of those that are faced with the impacts of climate change. Overall, the program has contributed towards building the resilience of children and their communities to a changing climate.



KEY OUTPUTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Overall, the program reached **83,121 people in 28 communes across seven districts in four provinces of Vietnam**: 3,897 more people than planned. Of these, 15,455 were women, 16,280 were men, 25,513 were girls and 25,873 were boys.

The program has supported **33 child/youth clubs (367 girls, 263 boys, 107 young women, 103 young men)** to have regular meetings and **communicate climate change information to others in their school and community**.

There has also been an **increase in community based adaptive behaviour and participation in planning and policy development** of children and their communities: **33 school-level and 90 village-level climate change adaptation-disaster risk reduction (CCA-DRR) plans** were completed, which fed into **17 commune-level CCA-DRR Socio-Economic Development Plans (SEDPs)** and **two provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development CCA-DRR SEDPs** and **one Department of Education and Training Provincial Action Plan**.

Importantly, the program **increased sub-national government and civil society partners’ capacity to implement CBA programs**, and policy makers have increased their understanding, and their engagement, in CBA. **More than 500 officials and civil society representatives (approximately 50% are women)** have **participated in training opportunities**, including financial skills training; training for the integration of CCA and DRR into commune and district level SEDPs and SEDP coordination.

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