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SPERI YEARLY REPORT



MECO-ECOTRA & SPERI

SOCIAL POLICY ECOLOGY
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MECO-ECOTRA PROGRAM - VN102011

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**Part II: Yearly Report of
MECO-ECOTRA's Thematic
Networks and SPERI's
Departments**

MECO- ECOTRA in Quang Binh Province-Vietnam

Farmer Networking in Quang Binh province has been supported since 1997 and is seen as a pioneer network in promoting social capital towards building civil society at the grassroots level.

MECO-ECOTRA in Quang Binh incorporates diverse community based groups e.g gardening, animal husbandry and savings-credit from village to regional levels. These groups are well self-functioning with voluntary and shared responsible members.

These community groups have worked closely with each other to fight against poverty, tackling with land right issues, and struggling with continued severe degradation of livelihood resources. More crucially, the network is an inclusive environment for the majority (Kinh ethnic) to help other ethnic minorities including Malieng, Ruc, Sach, Arem, and Macoong in Quang Binh region. They share experiences, raise issues related to traditional culture preservation, self-confidence, and self finding solutions.

Farmers Networking in Quang Binh currently raise a movement towards developing eco-farm models, like other farmers in MECO-ECOTRA network. Farmers are also interested in giving practical training for minority youths by use of their eco-oriented farm sites. Farmers also addresses a continued need in further helping Ma Lieng minority group (the smallest minority group in Vietnam) to ensure their livelihoods security and maintenance of cultural identity.



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Acronyms

CCCD	Centre for Community Capacity Development, locates in Dong Le town
CIRD	Centre for Indigenous Knowledge Research and Development
IK	Indigenous knowledge
KF	Key-farmer (reputable, social activist farmers, who pioneer to set up pilot models and retrain other farmers)
MB	Management Board
MECO-ECOTRA	Mekong Community Networking for Ecological Trading
SPERI	Social Policy Ecology Institute
S&C	Savings and Credit
VEC	Village Elders' Council

Introduction

Activities of the period from July 2008 to June 2009 in Quang Binh province focused consulting to expand Ma Lieng network and training groups of students practice skills in advanced development of eco-farming model in CCCD¹ - Dong Le. In the first 6 months of 2009, SPERI staff² receive CCCD for oriented ecological farming from the from Key-farmer³ model owner, which they have transferred according to strategy of model self-control, self-responsibility in the period 2007-2008⁴.

This progress report of Quang Binh region focuses on evaluating its thematic activities, including: Ma Lieng network, Ecology Village, the school network at CCCD. Through which, the report will show some results and impact of activities for people and local authorities. Key activities are recently taken place in the Quang Binh region, including: i. Advising and support the Ma Lieng network leaders for implementation of community development, for example, Ke and Ca Xen villages, Tuyen Hoa district; ii. Training ethnic youths of the Ma Lieng network; iii. Transferring model of CCCD ecological farm from farmer owners of key farmer network to SPERI staff for self-management, self-operation and development towards autonomy; iv. Implementation consulting and development models of S&C in the districts of Tuyen Hoa, Bo Trach and Minh Hoa in Quang Binh Province; and v. Evaluating models on eco-farming of Key-farmer network in Quang Binh, to promote the cooperation in training and development of the chain of ecological products.

Objectives for the period 2008- 2009

1. Have a qualified, confident and active team of the Ma Lieng network for operating and implementation activities in the development of Ma Lieng villages.
2. There is a Ma Lieng youth team that have enough skills, knowledge and confidence to join the organization and support of Ma Lieng network effectively.
3. CCCD is operating effectively 3 main functions: i) research, experiment for suitable alternative of land enrichment, desert prevention; ii) the practical training of agricultural ecology for students from ethnic minority in mountainous areas; iii) the model of autonomy in the production and consumption of agricultural ecological products.

Specific objectives

1. Continue to strengthen and improve the capacity of Ke village elders' council, Lam Hoa commune, Tuyen Hoa district (Ma Lieng people) in the coordination and evaluation of development activities, the ability to detect and resolve problems arose in the community.

¹ CCCD – Centre for Community Capacity Development

² Chau Van Hue and Bui Tien Dung - SPERI staff

³ Mr. Hoang Phuoc from Lam Trach commune, Mr. Tran Dinh Minh from Lien Trach commune of Bo Trach district, Mr. Pham Dinh Mon from Dong Le town, Tuyen Hoa district, Quang Binh province

⁴ See the next section.

2. Strengthen the Ma Lieng network coordination board confident enough to identify and resolve emerging problems of the community. There are also opportunities to exchange, share experiences, customs, and habits of the Ma Lieng for the sake of economic development, preserving the cultural traditions of ethnic group.
3. Advice to Ke Village Elders' Council (VEC) for the operation, self-implementation of 'Ngoi hoa' program (house style and accommodation improvement) in the final phase of the Ma Lieng program.
4. Select and train Ma Lieng students in practical skills, household economic management of stage two in CCCD - Dong Le.
5. There are models of the garden of ecological agriculture in the Ma Lieng network gradually contribute to change their thoughts and behavior of the system for slope land cultivation.
6. Models have been developed organic agriculture in CCCD-Dong Le to maintain and expand the lessons and experiences and local culture in management and sustainable use of forest, land, water resources.
7. Support Ma Lieng women group of formation of saving group. Initially, the habit of saving and management of capital investment is effectively formed.
8. Transfer the CCCD models from KF network to SPERI staff for self-management, operating, self-responsibility to continue the economic development towards ecological agriculture.
9. Cooperate with management board of KF network and local authorities to speed up repayment of credit in the previous project.
10. CCCD is to create products and autonomy in the cultivation and breeding directly towards ecological agriculture i.e. compost, terraces, banana circles, animal husbandry, biogas and worm farming to serve for land enrichment and create revenue for the models in a stable way.

Approach

Ma Lieng network

Through the Ma Lieng network coordination board⁵ deploy, support and consulting activities of production, construction of gardens, livestock, savings and credit. They hold meeting every three months⁶ and shared activities between villages.

Strengthening collaboration with staff and government officials at the field⁷ to advise Ma Lieng network. In addition, students who have been trained in Human Ecology Practice Area (HEPA) - Kim Son I commune, Huong Son district, Ha Tinh province also participated actively with the network to implement such activities as: management and

⁵ Mr. Cao Dung of Ke village, Ms. Cao Thi Lam of Cao village and Mr. Cao Hung of Xen village

⁶ Support to Ma Lieng network was focused until December 2008. Focal point of 2009 activities is second phase of the training for Ma Lieng youths.

⁷ Ms. Cao Thi Cat – party leader in Ke village, Mr. Nguyen Van Bac, Lam Hoa communal staff, Mr. Nguyen Van Ty, party leader of Ca Xen village and Mr. Nguyen Ky staff of agricultural extension at the village

operation of rotational saving group of women, organized construction garden and nursery. Also, the youths conducted pilot models on eco- garden in their villages.

Restart some activities of breeding, cultivation production of the Ma Lieng. Therefore, mobilizing the participation of key-farmer network members⁸ from Quang Binh to support and advise techniques for rotational saving group, building up nursery, gardens, livestock, and household gardens effectively.

Practical training course on permaculture (second phase) for Ma Lieng youth⁹

In 2008, as the end first phase Ma Lieng students came back home for practice the knowledge and skills learned in school. Besides, students also have the opportunity and access to learning Ma Lieng network in implementing the community development. In particular, the students confidently self-organized and managed activities, including: i) operating rotational saving group of women in Ca Xen village; ii) Setting up and care for

nursery of acacia in Ca Xen village iii) implementing test construction model of ecological agriculture.

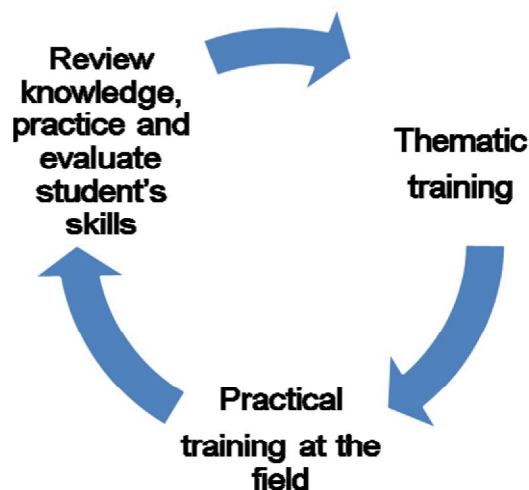


Diagram 1:

Methodology for second phase of practical training course for Ma Lieng youths

Ma Lieng students of the first phase of the training were selected to participate in the second phase of training practical skills in basic ecological agriculture at CCCD in Dong Le in 2009. Method in

this stage is mainly the combination of practical training and production at CCCD. CCCD is live training curricula for practical skills and develop management skills for each student (see diagram 1).

CCCD in Dong Le town

CCCD was assigned to the Quang Binh Key-farmer network for their self-management and operation since July 2007 to September 2008. The evaluation results showed that the transferred trial encountered many difficulties, particularly related to labor sources. At the same time the farmers must implement two models: i) CCCD in Dong Le, and ii) in their own family. Therefore, the transferred trail for farmers stopped, and the key-farmers

⁸ Ms. Nguyen Thi Hoa, a key-farmer from Kim Hoa commune, Tuyen Hoa district, Quang Binh province

⁹ The first phase of the training course was organized at HEPA, Son Kim I commune, Huong Son district, Ha Tinh province during 2007-2008. Students of second phase training (2008-2009) were selected from those trained in the first phase.

transferred CCCD back to SPERI staff for their direct responsible for, operate and develop with 3 goals:

- a. Research, experiment and application of solutions of ecological agriculture;
- b. Create model training practice – live curricula of ecological agriculture;
- c. Self-responsible creating ecological products to supply the market create revenue for the model and can reproduce stably.

Therefore, the new owner of the CCCD - SPERI staff have discussed, worked together to identify suitable goals for each period to maintain, develop and expand the lessons of experience. First is to improve the function of raising and production, the anti-erode land, land enrichment, thereby contribute to strengthening the inheritance, association, and adaptation of different components stably. Second, CCCD gradually creates the value chain in the network of agricultural ecology. At the same time, CCCD provides environment to strengthening the connection between members of both inside and outside of the network to introduce products to market.

Activities and main outputs of each program

Ma Lieng network

From the end of 2008 to the first half of 2009, the staff of Quang Binh region mainly support, give advice to network and student group of the Ma Lieng: 1) Methodology for organization, household economic management through different interest groups: husbandry, rotational savings, credit for animal raising, 2) development activities by small household groups on the construction of household gardens and nutrition gardens, 3) build a model of community nursery.

Main activities focused on selection and training on practical production at different garden components and self-management skills for group of Ma Lieng students at CCCD - Dong Le in 2009. Field activities mainly prioritize to strengthen the information exchange between the Ke village elders' council, the coordination network of the Ma Lieng and field staff in Lam Hoa and Thanh Hoa communes, Tuyen Hoa district.

Advising of setting up and implement plan for Ma Lieng network

The last six months in 2008, coordination board of Ma Lieng network organized activities relating to receive visitors, volunteers from Australia and New Zealand and selection of students to continue second Phase of the training to improve their practical skills in CCCD-Dong Le.

Activities related to cultivation production, breeding are mainly supported by the communal field staff in the combination with coordinators from key farmer network of Quang Binh province in the time as harvesting, processing and storage of products¹⁰.

¹⁰ Advise, support and implement:

To Select 4 households in group who are capable to build pilot models of keeping animal in stables. Objective of model is contributory apprehension for people and their practical skills for making animal stables improve village sanitation, reduce animal diseases. At the same time, improve management and use of waste from livestock to make compost for cultivation. Then coordinators instruct S&C members to study tour, share and discuss on strengths, weaknesses, and (dis) advantages of each model.

With the encouragement of the village leaders, consultants of the village elders' council, each village is able to self-organize production activities in their community.

Continue advisory, support interest groups for household economic management and growth

SPERI field staff and coordinators of the Quang Binh key-farmer network inherited results of the period 2007-2008, coordinated and cooperated to provide advice for operate and manage Ma Lieng interest group in Ca Xen and Ke villages, especially how to return savings and use the credit for capital investment for planting and husbandry to promote household economy in the last six months of 2008.

Interest group has started implementing regulations of savings and credit for the second cycle. The members have started their confidence and self-development activities of the group in the first six months of 2009. Therefore, group members obtained further confidence for their self-management of the group.

Results from advisory and support to Ma Lieng network

Advising and support S&C group to improve the capacity, management skills for Ma Lieng women in Ca Xen village

Savings-credit activities of Ca Xen village were built according to criteria and principles of simple rotational saving group. The women in the group have favorable opportunities for sharing experiences to improve skills in group management, which gradually improve the practice of the capital use from small to large scope. Presently, 2 groups were set up in Ca Xen village, which operate fairly active and effective.

In fact members of the group are quite active as they understand benefit through the mutual support turnaround savings. Therefore, they all continue to have access to credit sources for small return investment for raising local pigs since October 2008. The objective of this activity aims to enhance the management and investment in the economy, especially for Ma Lieng women to achieve food security for people. .

Presently, these households are effective from loan credit and start the next investment. Savings groups still meet regularly and periodically deposit for the remainder of the loan. Group members are raising chickens effective, no disease occurs.

Advice for setting up and develop community nursery in Ca Xen village

With lessons learned, Ma Lieng students self-organized, set up community nursery to ensure local needs of seedling in Ca Xen village. Community nursery has produced more than 1,000 plants. During implementing, risk encountered. Seedling died due to multiple effects of rime. However, Ma Lieng youths' participation for organization and operation

Each household found materials to make animal stables themselves. Group members helped each other to scoop, install and set up animal stables. Communal field staff provided training on selection of location for animal stables, storage of compost and planning for nutritional garden. This approach helped villagers to improve arrangement of the common work of household, group of households or clan. This also encourages sharing and mutual help among villagers.

Besides receiving credit support, household members of interest group involved in practical training courses on basic skills for pig raising, selection of local breed, food processing and setting up animal stables. Additionally to breeding activities, advice is provided for improvement of planning for household garden, nutritional garden and their landscape.

of the community nursery was appreciated by local authority. That is illustration of outcome criteria for the potential promotion of youth students after the training at FFS-HEPA.

Advice for setting up household garden pilot models in Ca Xen village

Since September 2008, Ca Xen village has formed the group of labor exchanging with the participation of seven households (see details in Table 1). The group works on the principle of voluntary, mutual assistance and sharing of experiences, and plant and livestock varieties as banana, papaya, potato, etc. The group has also formed in the process for management of flocks of cattle and reduces their bad affecting to the garden plants, crops of the village¹¹.

#	Name	Resources			Husbandry			Crops	
		Labor /hh members	Land	Fund	Cows, buffalos	Pig	Chicken	Rice (sao = 500 m2)	Peanut (sao = 500 m2)
1	Ho Thong	3/6			2	1	10	3	7
2	Ho Dan	¾			4		30		
3	Ho Thi Long	½				1		3	1
4	Ho Kinh	2/4					15	3	
5	Ho Bot	3/5			2		2	4	2
6	Ho Van	2/3			1		5	5	3
7	Ho Xuan	2/3			1			3	

Table 1: List of garden group members of Ca Xen village

Strengthening coordination skills of Ke village elders' council

The leaders, Ke village elders' councils become confident in self-operating village activities. Coordination capacity of the village leader (Mr. Cao Dung) in setting up and implementing the community plan is significantly enhanced. Leaders have guided the household, through the carpentry group¹² has implemented the first program to build cattle stables for villagers following the support of the Province. During August 2008 to November 2008, 17 cattle stables have been completed.

¹¹ Within 7 members of the group, 5 households were located close together, so they built up common garden fence to combat cattle and conducting at the same time to build the garden on the same unique system. 2 other households (located in other independent area) also join exchanging labor with 5 other households. Currently, those household members support Mr. Ho Thong, who lives close to village cultural house and Mr. Ho Xuan who live close to the road to make and strengthen garden fence.

¹² The Carpentry group of Ke village was set up during implementation of Ngoi Hoa program (house style and accommodation improvement).

Training on permaculture for Ma Lieng students

CCCD had received 2 Ma Lieng students from Ke village¹³ to participate and study in CCCD since December 2008. Many difficulties appeared before students at CCCD at the beginning time. The costs related to cover them too large for the results and outputs for a model of self-responsibility. That challenges the determination of the model owner to help them get the skills and habits of a farmer. It can be said that the training methods initially succeeded a number of basic skills. Students i.e. Mr. Cao Phong has operate very timetable for a day time: from 5 am to 7 pm. He is quite proficient in the care of the cows; take care of grass, cut grass for cows, clean stables, tracking the different manifestation of cattle. Mr. Cao Bieu takes responsibility for joining SPERI staff to work at vegetable garden, to make the frame for pumpkin, calabash and do stable for the chicken. During this time, they also develop the skills and knowledge according to trainers, SPERI staff and only have the sense of self-awareness and ability to do many things better.

With self-awareness and skills of students growing up, support and supervision from teachers also decrease gradually. Over nearly 3 months of study and practice, they saved money to buy a piglet for breeding, and to get familiar with the work of a household owner. Expectantly, the practice of saving and breeding pigs can help them have a certain capital to invest in their own families after the end of the training. This has encouraged increased virtuosity and efforts of the Ma Lieng students in the gardening activities.

We have assessed the highly spectacular of the methods of implementation models and training for students of ethnic minorities in CCCD nowadays. That is especially meaningful for Ma Lieng youths, who suffer shortage of the opportunity and knowledge in new animal husbandry, cultivation techniques. Practical training offer Ma Lieng students to become members and participate in production activities in CCCD. Retrieved topics of CCCD become live lessons of practical skills for them. Construction procedures and curricula for production management was built from animal raising activities, offer them with observations, implementation, exchange, feedback and suggestions.

Ma Lieng students have opportunities to get the capital through participation in production, raising animal at CCCD. Thereby, they can self-deploy to apply a theme or a combination of components such as animal husbandry, gardening at CCCD. Over a period from 2 to 3 years, all funded by both cash and kind as the seeds, plant seeds, they are confident and return to self-develop garden model in their own village¹⁴. If implemented effectively, the students continue to be consulted Advanced Technical gardening skills, management of peasantry household, marketing and selling products.

¹³ Two Ma Lieng youth students are Ho Phong and Cao Bieu, both come from Ke village, Lam Hoa commune.

¹⁴ Starting building up household pilot models of the students in their own village will be integrated in the second year of this training. Whenever they pause the training at CCCD and come back their village, their pilot gardens will be started.

Promotion of self-responsibility, self-management of CCCD

SPERI has piloted the strategy of transferring CCCD to Quang Binh Key-farmer network for their self-responsible operation since 2007. Three members¹⁵ became owner of CCCD, who are responsible to organize and operate it towards self-accountability. In the first phase (the end of 2007), everything started good and in accordance with expected plans. However, difficult circumstances then appeared harder for the farmer owners (Mr. Phuoc and then, Mr. Minh) because of their remote family responsibility for their family¹⁶. Therefore, it only remained Mr. Pham Dinh Mon responsible for the organization and operation of CCCD in 2008. Labor are limited and the lack of expertise exposed obstacles to the development of CCCD in a high effective way¹⁷. On November 20th 2008, KF network has been officially handed back CCCD to SPERI staff. Then, the SPERI continue to try to transfer CCCD to its staff for their responsible for organizing and operating with the following functions: experiment research¹⁸, organization of training¹⁹ and self-sufficient production²⁰.

Presently, CCCD models are gradually improved and operate quite well with the practical training and production. In the first 6 months of 2009, CCCD developed and planned construction, completed with the animal raising area and began testing fish, rabbit, chicken, honeybee, pigs and cows. Model of fruit garden, crops and vegetables, plant for animal food is also promoted²¹.

Besides, CCCD also held to share for the farmers within and outside of MECO-ECOTRA network in association with owners of the pilot garden in and out of Quang Binh province:

¹⁵ Key-farmer owners of CCCD included 3 persons: Mr. Hoang Huu Phuoc from Lam Trach commune, Mr. Tran Dinh Minh from Lien Trach commune, Bo Trach district, Mr. Pham Dinh Mon from Dong Le town, Tuyen Hoa district.

¹⁶ Two pilot gardens of Mr. Hoang Phuoc and Mr. Tran Dinh Minh are operating in an effective organic trend.

¹⁷ According to CCCD evaluation by Quang Binh key-farmer network and SPERI staff in September 2008.

¹⁸ Experiment research means conducting production on components of CCCD, so that to draw out lessons learnt from animal raising, cultivation, application of organic agriculture, permaculture techniques. Those lessons learnt, curricula are used for training, facilitating for farmers to discuss and find ways of application.

¹⁹ Training: Draw out lesson learnt and set up curricula from CCCD development process, to offer practical training for those, who like permaculture. Young ethnic minority students are first priority for this type of CCCD training.

²⁰ Self-control: Members of CCCD self-organize cultivation, animal breeding, to create organic products for the market, self-finance for reinvestment.

²¹ Fruit garden: All fruit trees in CCCD are cared by Ma Lieng students according to permaculture principle. Litchi was destroyed seriously by stinkbugs this year. Staff and students made experiment of various types of herbal treatment at CCCD, but the result was not so good. So, income loss of litchi is estimated of around VND 10 million this crop.

Crops: Recently focus in planting peanut and cassava for animal food. Approximately 2,500 m² total area is used for this purpose.

Food for animals: According to experiment result, the following trees are preferred: elephant grass is processed for fish, cow, rabbit; potato tree is used for pig, chicken, rabbit goose; *sai dat* (a kind of herb) is good for rabbit and pig, this is also good for animal's deworming. Hoary pea, fig tree, va are used for rabbit food. Other human-eatable vegetables, such as spinach (*rau den*), *bo de*, *la lot*, etc are additional food.

- Receive farmer delegation from Cao Bang province to share experiences on approaches to form and develop Key-farmer network of Quang Binh province;
- Organize training courses on permaculture for a group of farmers in Bo Trach district, Quang Binh province, which was supported by COUNTERPART. Particularly, the most lively observation and curricula are mainly deployed by different components of CCCD;
- Links with Dong Le bee keeping association in Tuyen Hoa district, Quang Binh province to organize, cooperate in honeybee breeding in CCCD. Through which to exchange and support techniques for the farm owners, and search market, build development strategy to promote the bee honey products for the members of Dong Le bee keeping association;
- Links to technical staff²² of Tuyen Hoa district the fish farm²³ of Bo Trach district in Quang Binh province to supply fish seed and find market for CCCD products;
- Links with the farm owners²⁴ of the network to share experiences, provide seeds and technical support for staff and workers of the model.

Through the collaboration, sharing with farmers in and outside the project area, as well as organizations and individuals, who have similar concern for permaculture, CCCD gain further support and larger network. This has created the brand for CCCD products, which obtain specific characteristics and competitive advantages in the market. This is one of the actions to build a brand for the organic products of MECO-ECOTRA.

Activities of Kinh (Vietnamese Majority) network

In 2009, activities of the Kinh network mainly focused on: 1) advice and maintain the grassroots-level network, such as interest groups, saving and credit (S&C). Besides, SPERI staff collaborate with members of management board (MB), local authority to repay loan and gradually withdraw from the credit funds of the S&C network, 2) advising, support owners of pilot models for farming development towards eco-principles.

S&C activities

Through nearly 10 years of development, six communes has built and operated sustainably S&C fund with nearly 1,300 members. Total credit capital from CIRD (now is SPERI) to support rotational credit fund is VND 1,250,350,000. Total capital mobilized from people in communities is 527,785,000 VND. Total capital accrued from the interest accrued (except risk and management fee) is VND 311,115,117. Currently, S&C funds are still operating and maintaining the regular collection of interest, capital, savings and distribution of loans to community.

Network of Sustainable Organic Farming (currently namely eco-farming network)

Although without much advice of SPERI for Quang Binh network in 2008 and 2009, many members of the network step up to work towards eco-farming. Typically, pilot models of Mr. Hoang Huu Phuoc of Lam Trach commune, Mr. Tran Dinh Minh of Lien

²² Mr. Nguyen Van Thuong, aquaculture expansion staff of Tuyen Hoa district.

²³ Mr. Truong Tuan Vu, owner of fish farm of Bo Trach district of Quang Binh

²⁴ Ms. Tran Thi Binh and Mr. Hoang Huu Phuoc of Lam Trach commune, Bo Trach district are owners of cultivation and husbandry farm towards organic trend.

Trach commune and Ms. Nguyen Thi Binh of Lam Trach commune are pioneering. Scale of those models is from large to medium in comparison to local people. One of the emerging trends of those models is converting from inorganic production to eco-base. For example, the model of pig farm of Ms. Nguyen Thi Binh: She has boldly step by step reduced the amount of industrial food and gain more independent before external sources.

One strategy to develop network in eco-farming last year is to enhance information sharing between farm owners. The owners of CCCD and others in the network communes maintain regular contact and share information, techniques, seeds, and market for their products. This is one of the positive steps to form network of farm owners with safety products, which can be introduced soon on the market and those, who have relevant concern. They perform together with a common goal of eco-farming, to create products with competitive capacity in the market and gradually build a brand of products for MECO-ECOTRA.

Outcomes and impacts

Training for Ma Lieng students has affected very actively in the community. The students have been very actively involved in some village activities as nursery, savings and credit, building models on ecological farming. So that, the operation and organization of rotational saving group in Ca Xen village is well appreciated by the local authorities.

Students in particular and Ma Lieng community in general understand of the value of knowledge and skills of cost-benefit management at household level, especially ability and confidence for organizing community activities. This is a good foundation for the development of each village and Ma Lieng network later on.

Support, consulting, on-site training for Ke villagers since 2003 up to now has created the sense of self-awareness and habits of people about gardening, planting and care of trees in their garden. Ke village changed from the internal side (the sense of alert and confidence of the community) to outside appearance (home, garden). Therefore, local authority appreciates SPERI approach and outcomes. Local authorities often discuss with SPERI staff for advice in terms of implementation of development project in the locality.

In 2008, local government in Hoa Lam invited the SPERI staff in Quang Binh to participate in discussion and making plan of support for Ma Lieng people as well as provincial minority department's project to improve their animal cages. Until November 2008, Ke villagers completed the 17 cages for cow. Some families made it themselves, the others who lack of labour was supported by carpentry team and villagers.

CCCD-Dong Le was interested by many organizations, who want to contact and cooperate. CCCD received and shared with a farmer group from Quang Tri province, who were supported by Center for Resources and Environment Studies (CRES) in 2008. CCCD received and shared with the delegation of staff, farmers from Cao Bang province who were supported by Provincial Center of Agricultural Extension in 2009. Moreover, CCCD has cooperated with COUNTERPART to organize a five-day training course on solutions for sustainable farming development for farmers from Bo Trach district, Quang Binh province

Difficulties and challenges

Ma Lieng network was formed 3 years ago, now they face new needs and new challenges. For that buzz is walking quite reckless and breakthrough. Previously, they used to sit in the house overlooking the door, take products from forest for a living. They did not think much about a plan at all, because if they were hunger, they would go for cassava, potatoes. Local officials and Kinh people in the surrounding area used to think that Ma Lieng only look for support from the state. However, the three years seem short time for Ma Lieng network to prove their inter-strengths. Due to the different values, view, concept and way of life, transition from traditional clan or mutual support to new management for support between different Ma Lieng villages may initially face challenges.

The Ma Lieng changed step by step from traditional rotational slope land cultivation to wet rice cultivation and other crops. Traditional cultivation system included of each family or group of family (grandparents, parents, children), so the operation and management fit to small scale. Nowadays, they move to level field background in larger farming systems of multiple batches, land plots close together. Therefore, the Ma Lieng must have certain time to get familiar with new skills related to production relations and community management in broader scope. From a subsistent economic, from exchange in kind within the community to switch to a market economy, which forced Ma Lieng to get familiar with trading with outsiders? Therefore, people will face many new difficulties and challenges.

Currently, there are some good prestigious persons, such as Mr. Cao Dung, Ms. Pham Thi Lam, Mr. Cao Chau involved in the coordination board of the Malieng network. They experienced a process of participating in local and other development project activities, or work as communal or district People's Council. Therefore, they have made greater influence to the authorities and local community. When there is any development program or policies related to Ma Lieng people, members of the network are actively to give suggestions. Besides, over operational process of the network, some members, such as Ho Bot and Ho Xuan from Ca Xen village, Ho Phinh from Ke village recently start to obtain more influence and greater role in the community. Therefore, there should be a specific strategy to create opportunities for key-persons of the network to improve knowledge and ability in organization and coordination of activities of the village. Besides, they also need to be equipped with the skills, techniques, knowledge of appropriate cultivation and breeding for timely support for people's production. The setting up pilot models of self-responsible eco-farming is extremely necessary.

Three years is not enough time for the coordination board of the network to be totally capable to deal with challenges facing Ma Lieng people. There should be available time and the participation of the whole society. Therefore, in the coming time, it is necessary to continue support and create opportunities for the coordination of the network for participation and organization of development activities in Ma Lieng area. Also, the coordination board of the network should be supported and offered further opportunities to exchange, share and learn from other ethnic groups i.e. H'mong and Thai, so that to help them more confident.

It is time forest resources started exhaustion, people, especially ethnic minorities living nearby forests, whose livelihood depend on forest will face more difficulty. Therefore, creating opportunities for people to subsist themselves with the more practical activities as more cultivation land, garden for their production, create jobs to encourage their strengths, advantages of available natural resources, production based on local materials such as palm-leaf hat, rattan, bamboo, etc. So, it is necessary to build up stronger cooperation with local authority to reach community support more effectively.

Recommendation

For Ma Lieng network

As analysis above, continuous supports for Ma Lieng community are still necessary. That needs a long-term strategy in the training and finding people to participate in activities in the Ma Lieng network. Community-based organizations, interest groups for the Ma Lieng to develop a foundation of economic development and the value of cultural traditions of the Ma Lieng could be an appropriate. Therefore, continuous supportive activities should include:

- Continue to organize training for Ma Lieng student group with the method of onsite training - practice - building model in place - and link to establish interest groups in the community, set up mutual support and labour-exchanging groups.
- Continue to support for Ma Lieng network in coordinating development activities in different villages. Consultant for setting up development strategies and detailed action plan for Ma Lieng network.
- Continue to give advice and technical assistance for gardening models and animal husbandry. Gradually set up group of cultivation, handicraft production in the Ma Lieng network, building appropriate foundation of socio-economic development, so that to limit the influence from outside market economy.

It is necessary to connect and continue coordination with development programs at local level for ethnic groups, so that to continue support development activities for Ma Lieng people. In particular, vocational training classes for Ma Lieng youths are extremely necessary at present, while natural resources become increasingly exhausted. As economic integration increases in Vietnam, Ma Lieng youths require more skills of household economic management, service provision and additional jobs to agricultural activities is an urgent for the new and sustainable development of Ma Lieng community.

For Quang Binh development activities

After more than 10 years of operation (1997-2008), CIRD has supported and developed a network of key-farmers in 6 communes of Kinh people in Quang Binh province (as Xuan Trach, Lam Trach, Lien Trach of Bo Trach district, Cao Quang, Ngu Hoa, Kim Hoa of Tuyen Hoa district), which have a good foundation and affect in community development activities. Until now, many members of the network attain remarkable development steps in a confident manner. The key farmer network was recognized and highly appreciated by authorities at all levels for the network's presence, role as well as its contributions. The factual recognition is the contribution of the coordination board of the network in

research activities, support for Ma Lieng ethnic group in Ke village in the program of conservation of human ecology of the Ma Lieng in period 2003-2006.

The community deployment activities of the network were in accordance with practical and strategic needs of local people, which contribute to local socio-economic development and sustainable management of natural resources. For that achievement and evaluation, the network coordinators have experienced many development stages with their specific different success, as well as the crisis. However, with higher development scale, the network's better support and advice for local authority and community in the future is an actual trend of key-farmers network of Quang Binh province and their coordinating representatives.

In the reform period (2006-2008), the coordinator returns to work locally and build their household economic development models. Until now, the network is maintaining simple linkage at grassroots level. Recently, the network does not have favorable conditions to become a formal community organization. Poverty is not well decreasing, especially in mountainous and middle land. Therefore, the operation of CIRD and recovery of its support in poverty area and Quang Binh in particular is also an option.

Supports from the key farmer network are essential needs for a number of ethnic communities in the region. The network of ethnic community (specifically Ma Lieng network) was formed to start the new approach in development assistance to community. Therefore, it is necessary for them to share, support each other to cope with the challenges of the market in the situation of integration.

Demand for implementation of technology services, and the linkage between science and technology organizations and civil society with the state programs for implementation of agricultural, rural development support activities is another possible option for CIRD's coming activities.

For CCCD

The development of the CCCD has created a network of household-level farms which are inclined to green agricultural products with integrated technologies. However, it can not say did satisfy the needs farmers in development, particularly the needs of information technology, exchanges and experience sharing, fair market access and enhance services for agricultural development in general and eco farming in particular. In particular it is needed to strengthen local people's management capacity and sustainable development of resources.

The handing over CCCD to SPERI staff's self-responsibility is only one facet of the issue, because that merely mentions "production-consumption-reinvestment." However, CCCD expected function is a model of learning community to trail and apply appropriate varieties, seeds for the region, transfer of scientific and technical skills to the people and the youth in and outside Quang Binh province. CCCD should also take the role of promotion of science and technology. From practical needs of local people, that is very necessary. CCCD should really act as a practical school, a forum and a center to provide necessary services, information technology, and concern of sustainable natural resource management to farmers, related researchers and policy makers.

To fulfill its mission, CCCD must clearly define its functions, tasks and it needs SPERI support, advice for long-term strategy, so that it will become a strategic bridge for fair trade of eco-farming products of MECO-ECOTRA. CCCD specific functions should be:

- Experiment researches in the varieties of plants, animals which can highly adapt to the condition of the locality with the support of solutions for sustainable cultivation on slope land.
- Evaluate pilot models of the key farmer network and partial component models at CCCD to have lessons and experience which can be transferred to the local farmers and training of eco-farming for ethnic youths.
- Conduct practical training and transfer of suitable skills and techniques in eco-farming.
- Provide information on suitable skills and techniques, market for eco-products, storage, and distribution of products and the State preferential policies for clean products.
- Support to build and promote a brand of eco-farming products for the network members and other farm owners.

To perform the functions and duties of the CCCD effectively, it should take the following strategies:

- Develop database related to eco-farming of the organization with different expertise to meet the diverse and increasing needs of farmers' network and farm owners.
- Systematize specialist information of different fields related to rural agriculture and foreign areas develop rural agriculture, especially with senior experts of mountainous areas, areas with ethnic groups.
- Set up data on the development of effective and eco-farms; science and technology information, information of market for agricultural products and policies for rural agriculture development to provide and meet the needs of farmers or to advise when their needs appear. Gradually build CCCD's Website to provide, update and link development activities.
- Facilitate networks of farm owners with eco-farming products which can be introduced soon to the market and to concerned people.
- Expand cooperation with research institutes, Center for Science and Technology research and provide services for market approach internally and abroad according to functions of CCCD.