

**Mid Term Evaluation**

**1. Introduction**

This report presents the findings of the evaluation of the project **ILO/Japan Asian Regional Programme on Expansion of Employment Opportunities for Women (EEOW), Vietnam chapter**, hereafter referred to as EEOW VN. EEOW VN started in July 2002 with a duration of five years. It became operational in early 2003 at the national level and in late 2003 in the provinces and the project reached a half way through the project life in 2004. In this context, a mid-term evaluation took place in November 2004. The objectives of the evaluation were to (i) assess progress and achievements of the project against the project objectives, (ii) draw lessons learnt by identifying strengths and areas for improvement for all the stakeholders, and (iii) explore options for sustainability. It covered design, implementation and performance of EEOW VN from July 2001 to December 2004 and it was expected that the evaluation would provide recommendations for future development and follow-up and contribute to the design of a new project framework if deemed necessary.

The evaluation team consisted of four members including Ms. Dang Huong Giang and Ms. Ngo Thu Hang as co-team leaders and external consultants from the Center for Community Empowerment (CECEM) in Vietnam, Mr. Yoshiyuki Fukuzawa, Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) and Overall Coordinator of the ILO/Japan Multi-Bilateral Programme, and Ms. Aya Matsuura, Technical Officer on Gender and Women Workers' Issues of the ILO Subregional Office for East Asia (SRO-BKK).

The team started with desk review of project related documents followed by field visits during 15-24 November 2004. During the field visits, the team carried out focus group discussions, household visits, and in-depth interviews to collect information. Ms. Huynh Lan Phuong, National Project Coordinator and Ms. Kim Lan Nguyen, Project Secretary of the EEOW also joined the field as resource persons. Ms. Tran Thi Thang, Expert, Department of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), Vietnam and Mr. Taiju Sasaki, Chief of Cooperation and Coordination Section, International Affairs Division, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW), Japan joined the mission as observers.

The evaluation found that the project has made significant impacts on the lives of women in seven communities by raising awareness on gender equality, providing technical training for income generation activities, and helping women access bank loans. These impacts were brought by as the project successfully improved the capacity of key staff of the project partners from the provincial Women's Union, Farmers' Union and Cooperative Alliance. As a result of the training provided by the project, Implementing Partners (IPs) have become more capable and effective in designing and managing employment promotion projects with gender lens. While the mission recognized a high potential for sustainability through cooperation and strong commitment among stakeholders, some areas for improvements were also identified.

These findings were presented at a mid-term review workshop which was held on 17-18 December 2004 in Hoi An, Vietnam. All the project stakeholders discussed and agreed on the findings and developed a plan of action for 2005-2006.

The report was assembled by the co-team leaders of the evaluation team based on the team's findings and the outcome of the workshop. This report is organized as follows. The context in which the project came into effect is introduced with information on project background and implementation. The description of evaluation methods follows in chapter 3. In chapter 4, the major impacts that the project brought to various stakeholders are given. Chapter 5 explains the factors which contributed to bring impacts as project strengths. Chapter 6 identifies areas for improvement, chapter 7 explores options and necessary conditions for project sustainability, and the reports ends with conclusion in chapter 8 and recommendations in chapter 9.

The terms of reference, the plan of the evaluation mission, the list of interviewees, as well as analysis of Action Programmes (APs) are given in Annexes 1 – 4.

## **2. Project Background**

### **2.1 Justification**

For a large part of the past decade Vietnam has experienced rapid economic growth, following the transition to market economy and the opening up to foreign investment. The introduction of economic reforms in the late 1980s has brought about important changes in the labor force but with different consequences for women and men. These consequences arise from different levels of skills and education endowment of women and men and their different opportunities in the labor market, which are rooted in traditional attitudes towards women's and men's appropriate roles and responsibilities in society. These factors combined have limited the ability of women and men to enjoy the fruits of the reforms on an equal footing, with women generally at a disadvantage.

While the transition to a market-based economic system has brought about new opportunities in the labor market, the income disparity and social stratification between regions and between segments of the population have also increased as a result. Despite notable progress being made by the Government, poverty is still largely recognized as a major and widespread problem in Vietnam, with strong gender implications. In Vietnam, it was reported that women spend twice as many hours of work at home<sup>1</sup> than men, both in female and male-headed households, and regardless of women's economic activity outside the home. This reflects multiple responsibilities and workload of women, as well as the persistence of traditional attitudes towards the gender division of labor inside the household. The decrease in subsidized support services such as health care and childcare in the rural areas may also add to a certain degree to women's workload.

Such impacts of the economic reforms are particularly pronounced in rural areas, where the majority of those living in poverty are located and where the major

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<sup>1</sup> ADB, *Women in Development: Vietnam*, 1995

share of total female labor force are concentrated. Statistics from the 1997-98 Vietnam Living Standards Survey (VLSS) shows that 68 per cent of the total female labor force are engaged in agriculture and that women takes up 93 per cent of the new jobs created in agriculture each year. With men's high levels of out-migration to urban areas and better access to non-farming self-employment, the burden of agricultural work increasingly falls on women. Many rural women are vulnerable to poverty due to such factors as limited access to productive resources, such as land, credit and training; lack of job opportunities in non-farm sector; and limited access to labor market information.

In view of this situation, there is a need to provide assistance to rural women in terms of creation and expansion of non-farm opportunities, improved access to information about markets and new technology and increased awareness among policy-makers of women's role in rural household economy. Indeed, the concern with poverty and its gender implications has been reflected through the Vietnamese Government's identification of Hunger Eradication and Poverty Reduction (HEPR) as a priority area for gender mainstreaming and women empowerment. HEPR provides a framework for improving rural women's access to and control of economic and social capital, as well as for strengthening capacities of concerned agencies in planning and implementing gender-responsive poverty-alleviation and employment promotion programmes.

## **2.1 Objectives**

### *Development Objective*

To contribute to the national efforts to alleviate poverty and promote opportunities and conducive environment for quality employment for rural women, as well as to elevate the social and economic standing of women workers and their families in society in general.

### *Immediate Objectives:*

1. To empower poverty-stricken women in the rural area, economically and socially, through gender-oriented employment promotion and poverty reduction schemes at the community level;
2. To strengthen the institutional capacity of relevant national and local government and mass organizations in designing, co-coordinating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policies and programmes in respect to women's employment promotion and empowerment; and
3. To identify policy concerns and formulate policy recommendations concerning women's employment promotion and empowerment based on the experience and good practices garnered from the EOW community-based employment promotion and poverty reduction schemes for purpose of policy advocacy at the national level.

## **2.3 Beneficiaries**

There are three groups of direct beneficiaries:

- Poor women living mainly in rural area in selected districts. These women involved in identifying needed areas of assistance and in planning the action programmes. They benefited from pilot community-based employment promotion and poverty reduction activities with a focus on credit and saving,

entrepreneurship training, access to social and economic capital and participation in decision making machinery, as well as social empowerment programmes.

- Staff of concerned organizations, including local government (communal) bodies, mass organizations, line ministries at national and local levels, and community-based groups engaged in employment promotion. They also received assistance in the form of training to improve their technical and managerial capacity to respond effectively to the needs of women in regards to quality employment; and
- Government officials at the national level responsible for making legislation, policies and programmes on employment promotion, poverty alleviation and gender equality to benefit indirectly from policy recommendations to improve their awareness and understanding of gender-sensitive employment promotion.

#### **2.4 Management structure**

MOLISA, in collaboration with ILO, established Project Advisory Committee (PAC) to act as advisory body for the EEOW Vietnam chapter. Mr. Nguyen Dai Dong – head of the department Labor and Employment of MOLISA was identified to chair the PAC. Membership to the PAC included representatives from a broad spectrum of social partners which are key to the promotion of gender equality in the world of work including MOLISA, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development; Vietnam Women's Union, Vietnam Farmers' Union; Vietnam General Confederation of Labor; Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Vietnam Co-operative Alliance; and ILO.

Within the PAC, a Project Management Unit (PMU) was established at the Department of Labor and Employment Policies. This unit was the focal contact within MOLISA, responsible *for* coordinating meetings and consultations within PAC on matters related to EEOW activities, as well as to facilitate actual implementations of EEOW activities in close collaboration with the ILO National Project Coordinator.

The National Project Coordinator and a secretary was hired as ILO staff to manage the day-today activities of the project and contact with the PAC through PMU, partner organizations and implementing agencies;

The project is executed by the ILO under the overall guidance and supervision of the Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific. Overall coordination and implementation was provided by the Chief Technical Advisor and Overall Coordinator of the ILO/Japan Multi-Bilateral Programme (CTA). Technical guidance is provided by the ILO/Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) and the ILO Subregional Office for East Asia (SRO-BKK). Administrative support is provided by ILO/ROAP and ILO/Hanoi office.

#### **2.5 Project partners**

Six Implementing Partners (IPs) have been sub-contracted to implement community-based activities in 7 communes in 3 provinces. In order to ensure smooth project implementation, Project Advisory Committee (PAC) consulted

several institutions to assess the capacity of local mass organizations. Implementing Partners are:

- Thai Nguyen Women’s Union (TNWU)
- Thai Nguyen Farmer’s Union (TNFU)
- Quang Nam Women’s Union (QNWU)
- Quang Nam Cooperative Alliance (QNCA)
- An Giang Women’s Union (AGWU)
- An Giang Farmer’s Union (AGFU)

The director of each Implementing Agency is also head of the project team in the province. Each Implementing Agency assigned a project coordinator and an accountant to manage the day-today activities of the project and contact with the national project coordinator.

## 2.6 Project area

During the National Policy Workshop held on 26 February 2003, Project Advisory Committee identified 9 provinces which are in need of assistance for poverty alleviation and socio-economic empowerment of women. Subsequently, three provinces of Thai Nguyen, Quang Nam and An Giang, representing northern, central and southern parts of Vietnam were selected by the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) for the project implementation.

Below is a chart of target areas by each Implementing Partner (IP)

<b>IPs\Target areas</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Commune</b>
Thai Nguyen Women’s Union	Vo Nhai	La Hien
Thai Nguyen Farmer’s Union	Dinh Hoa	Son Phu
Quang Nam Women’s Union	Tien Phuoc	Tien Tho & Tien My
Quang Nam Cooperative Alliance	Tien Phuoc	Phu Tho
An Giang Women’s Union	Que Son	Phu Tho
An Giang Farmer’s Union	Tan Phu	Binh Thanh Dong

## 2.7 Project activities to date

Below is a summary of activities implemented under each objective.

### Objective 1:

*To empower poverty-stricken women in the rural area, economically and socially, through gender-oriented employment promotion and poverty reduction schemes at the community level.*

#### Activities under Objective 1

Province	Thai Nguyen (North Vietnam)		Quang Nam (Central Vietnam)			An Giang (South Vietnam)		Total
Commune	La Hien (WU)	Son Phu (FU)	Tien Tho (WU)	Tien My (WU)	Phu Tho (VCA)	An Thanh Trung (WU)	Binh Thanh Dong (FU)	
<i>Gender training</i>	180 (143 women, 37 men)	160 (119 women, 41 men)	125 (60 women, 65 men)	125 (60 women, 65 men)	100 (79 women, 21 men)	200 (113 women, 87 men)	71 (54 women, 17 men)	961 (628 women, 333 men)
<i>Tea planting training</i>	80	200						280
<i>Pig raising training</i>	20					52		72
<i>Mushroom training</i>			50	50			97	197
<i>Hay planting training</i>					100			100
<i>Other agriculture technique training</i>	180						77	257
<i>Business development training</i>	40				100			140
<i>Tailoring training</i>						50		50
<i>Book keeping training</i>			30			10		40
<i>Borrowing bank loan</i>	300	100				52	113	565
<i>Group management training</i>	390		25					415
<i>Cooperative model training</i>		100					84	184

Women club's	2 <sup>2</sup>	4	2	2	0	2	2	14
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### Objective 2

*To strengthen the institutional capacity of relevant national and local government and mass organizations in designing, co-coordinating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policies and programmes in respect to women's employment promotion and empowerment.*

#### Activities under Objective 2

Training course	Date	Place	No. of participants
ILO Proposal Development Workshop	22-24 July 2003	Hanoi	25 (13 women, 12 men)
Training of Trainers Workshop on Gender and Participatory Training Methods	22-28 October 2003	Hanoi	24 (17 women, 7 men)
Gender Mainstreaming and Participatory Project Design, Monitoring and Evaluation	26-30 July 2004	Hanoi	22 (16 women, 6 men)
Gender and Entrepreneurship Together: GET Ahead for Women in Enterprise	20-24 September 2004	Hochiminh City	(26) (7 participants from EEOW: 5 women and 2 men)
Gender and Entrepreneurship Together GET Ahead for Women in Enterprise	25-29 October 2004	Hanoi	(22) (6 participants from EEOW: 3 women and 3 men)
<b>Total</b>			<b>119</b>

#### Monitoring and backstopping

In addition, EEOW project office carried out monitoring visits every three months.

### Objective 3

*To identify policy concerns and formulate policy recommendations concerning women's employment promotion and empowerment based on the experience and good practices garnered from the EEOW community-based employment promotion and poverty reduction schemes for purpose of policy advocacy at the national level.*

<sup>2</sup> Number of clubs in each commune. On average each club has 20-25 women. Women's club in Binh Thanh Dong has 12 women. These clubs were established by the project to promote exchange of knowledge and experiences among members.

In order to achieve the objective, the following workshops & meetings were held:

**National policy workshop:** 1 meeting– 26 February 2003 in Hanoi

Objectives:

- To facilitate a clear understanding among the PAC members and relevant people on the needs, opportunities and constraints faced by women in the field of employment;
- To facilitate the decision by PAC on the project sites, target groups and main interventions for the project

Participants: representatives from Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan, ILO/Japan Multi-Bi Programme, PAC members and representatives of MOLISA, Women Union, Farmers' Union, Vietnam Cooperative Alliance from Thai Nguyen, Da Nang, Dong Nai, Ha Tay and Tuyen Quang provinces

**Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting:** 4 meetings

1<sup>st</sup> PAC Meeting – afternoon 25 February 2003 in Hanoi

Objectives:

- To provide the PAC members and concerned persons with a better understanding on EEOV Vietnam; and
- To come to an agreement on the working procedures for PAC.

Participants: representatives from MOLISA, all PAC members, donor representatives, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) of Japan, ILO/Japan Multi-Bilateral Programme and ILO Hanoi Office,

2<sup>nd</sup> PAC meeting - 13 May 2003 in Hanoi

Objective:

- To short-list project's potential Implementing Partners (IPs)

Participants: Nine out of 10 PAC members.

3<sup>rd</sup> PAC meeting - 23 September 2003 in Hanoi

Objectives:

- To collectively review and select action programmes submitted by short-listed IPs;
- To put forward recommendation to the ILO/Japan EEOV to consider supporting the selected action programmes; and
- To discuss/finalize the Training of Trainers on Gender and Participatory Training Techniques.

Participants: representatives from MOLISA, PAC members, ILO/Japan Multi-Bilateral Programme, and ILO Hanoi

4<sup>th</sup> PAC meeting – 23 March 2004 in Hanoi

Objectives:

- To report to PAC members on the progress of the EEOV Vietnam project in 2003;
- To seek the endorsement of the PAC members for the project workplan for 2004; and
- To identify the needs of the PAC members for a policy research to be conducted in 2004 in the framework of the EEOV Vietnam project.

Participants: representatives from MOLISA, PAC members and ILO Hanoi



### 3. Evaluation methods

Methods used in the evaluation include desk review, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and household visits.

- **Desk study:** The evaluators studied project-related documents including the EOW project document, IPs project proposals and progress reports written by the national project coordinator and Implementing Partners. The desk study was mainly carried out during 12-14 November 2004.
- **Focus group discussions:** Sixteen focus group discussions were conducted in seven communes with women beneficiaries, their husbands and community staff. Some groups were mixed whereas some groups only had women. Each focus group discussion used different methods to create a comfortable atmosphere and stimulate conversations to share their views and experiences from the project. The participants were also asked to share their expectations on the project. The methods used included role-plays, games and drawings.
- **Household visits:** In every village, the evaluators visited households of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. The evaluators observed the household situations of both groups and talked with beneficiaries about their participation in the project and their income-generating activities. The results of household visits provided supporting evidence for focus group discussions.
- **In-depth interviews:** The evaluators conducted 11 in-depth interviews with IPs' key people and their leaders in three provinces. Once interviewees understood the objectives of the evaluation and their role in it, they expressed their ideas about the project impacts, strengths and weaknesses, and recommendations.

## 4. Project impacts

### 4.1 Impacts on women and their families

First, the project activities have improved **women's knowledge and skills in agriculture production**. Specific knowledge and skills regarding planting and husbandry were introduced to women through various training activities. For example, women in both communes of Thai Nguyen province, who have planted tea for generations, highly appreciate the new methods such as safe use of chemical fertilizer and pesticide, integrated pest management and tea picking methods. Women in La Hien commune of Thai Nguyen province and An Thanh Trung commune of An Giang province speak highly of the pig-raising techniques such as feeding and preventing diseases.

#### Story of Mrs. Dung – Son Phu commune, Thai Nguyen province

In the past, I hesitated to join the Women's Union as I thought it was useless. After observing Women's Union members in the village improving their technical skills in planning tea, I decided to join. I also attended several training courses in tea planting organized by the project and changed my production method. Before, I just threw fertilizer into the tea plants' roots, as I thought the plants would absorb it immediately. Sometimes, following others' suggestion, I even threw fertilizer on top of the plants. After attending the trainings, I understood the disadvantages of those fertilizing methods. At present, I dig small holes around the roots to put fertilizer. In addition, this year I could produce good colored green tea that looks much better than the "red" tea last year. This is also a result of the techniques I learned in the course. I dried the tea leaves right after I picked them, which was different from the past when I kept them for two or three days. As a result, my tea had higher quality than before and I could sell it for a higher price.

Second, regarding **capacity in business development**, the most significant improvement among women is in budget management skills. The poor women can primarily calculate the investment and profit of their earning activities. They have learned to record every investment, such as investment in hay planting and pig-raising. Despite the difficulties in recording, women feel proud of their new ability to keep records which allow them to calculate profits from each investment or monthly income. For example, women in both communes of Thai Nguyen province are able to compare the profits from planting different tea breeds, based on which they choose the best breed for the next crop.

Business development training also helps women **become more sensitive to the market oriented economy**. They primarily follow the market needs and trends. Women in all three provinces emphasize the importance of ensuring good quality of their product and building a good business reputation. Before selecting a tea breed to plant, women in Thai Nguyen province studied clients' taste and preference. Women in Tien My commune of Quang Nam province go beyond the local market in search for a better market in nearby towns when selling their mushrooms.

**Story of Mrs. Hien – village 1 - Phu Tho commune- Quang Nam province**



I began working as a street vendor selling fish and vegetables after attending the training course on business development. At that time, a friend of mine asked me to sell fish sauce with her. She would provide fish sauce for me to sell to every household. After analysis, I realized that each family will consume only 1 bottle of fish sauce per month. Then, I will not sell much fish sauce for them. I decided to sell fish and vegetable as every household needs them daily. At that time, I had only 150,000 dong (about USD10) cash in hand for the initial capital. I then borrowed an additional 150,000 dong from my sister. I also borrowed a bicycle and scale from my nephew and my neighbor. I could earn about 10,000-12,000 dong (about 70-80 cents) profit per day from selling fish and vegetables around the commune. Now, my family becomes better off as I could earn daily income. I already have bought a new bicycle and a new scale. Next, I would like to be trained in pig raising and receive bank loans to raise pigs.

Third, training courses and meetings on agriculture production and business development have created **a thirst for knowledge and motivation to learn** for women. For many women, it was the first time they were invited to attend a training course on agricultural techniques, because it is often seen as men's responsibilities to attend technical training. After attending training and meetings, women have gained confidence in their ability to learn and apply new knowledge

and skills. This confidence in turn leads to a strong motivation to acquire more learning.

Fourth, women' improved capacity in agriculture production and business development have resulted in **increased productivity and improved quality of agriculture activities**. For example, women in An Thanh Trung commune of An Giang province and La Hien commune of Thai Nguyen province were able to shorten the time for raising pigs from six to four months after learning feeding techniques. They have also increased the quality of pigs by selecting good breeds and ensuring proper feeding for the pigs. Women in La Hien commune of Thai Nguyen province have raised rice production by 20-40 kg per *sao* (a measuring unit used in the North, equivalent to 360 square meters), leading to cash earning increases of 50,000 -100,000 dong per sao (about USD3.5 -7).

Fifth, increased productivity has contributed to **higher household income**. In Thai Nguyen and An Giang provinces, women earned higher income from selling more tea, rice and pigs. Besides, the improved quality of these products allows women to sell them at a higher price. For example, a kilogram of good tea is worth 20,000 VND (about USD1.3) more than the one of medium quality. In Quang Nam province, women have an additional source of income through growing mushrooms and hay. With these new earning activities, women could earn about 300,000 VND (about USD20) per month. The increased income has consequently contributed to better living conditions of beneficiaries' households. Women have more money for common household consumption such as food, children's books and clothing. In some cases, women were able to buy electric water pumps, rice-cookers and televisions.

**Story of Mrs. Nang – An Tinh village**  
**An Thanh Trung commune, An Giang province**



My family is among the poorest households that received the commune’s support to build a small house. With the guarantee of my group members, I received a three-million-dong (about USD200) loan from the bank. I first spent two million dong to rebuild a pig cage which was made of thatch before. After that, I bought four piglets for 800,000 dong (about USD 53) and the initial pig food for 200,000 dong (about USD 13). After five months, I earned almost three million dong (about USD200) from selling the pigs. I bought four more piglets for one million dong (about USD 70). We also bought a television for 1.6 million dong (about USD 107). I am the head of the credit and saving group. Every month, I collect the interest and savings of all group members and go to the district bank to deposit it.

Sixth, women’s **awareness on gender equality** has improved. Women can see how society and culture shape the way men and women relate to each other. Instead of attributing gender inequality and the low status of women to fate, many women realize that they can change the situation. They also talk to other women in the community about the importance of gender equality and how it can contribute to the happiness of their families.

Seventh, a **change in the division of labor between husband and wife** is one of the significant achievements of some women. Many women share that after attending the gender trainings, women have improved their communication skill with their husbands. Instead of complaining or being passive, they start asking their husbands to share housework in a positive and confident way. Many men

who used to think that housework is the woman's job have started taking some housework responsibilities.

Eighth, **women group leaders' capacity in facilitation and group management** has been significantly improved. After one year, women group leaders, who were not the leaders before participating in these groups, can design the group meeting's agenda, facilitate the meetings well and record the meeting minute properly. These are the significant capacity improvements as they have never done such activities before.

Finally, the project has contributed to the **improved status of women in family and community**. Joining the project, women began to attend social activities such as group meetings, training and study tours which were unfamiliar to them before. As a result, women became more confident in their ability to attend social gatherings. At present, the number of women going to village meetings, which previously were attended mostly by men, significantly increased. Women are very proud that they also contribute ideas and opinions to community matters at those meetings.

Women also obtained higher respect from their husbands and villagers. Because of women's self-confidence, improved knowledge and their significant contributions to household production and income, women gained their husbands' admiration. The husbands started listening to their wives' opinions and discuss household business with them. Women's additional earnings from new skills or new activities also contributed to improve the women's status in family. Since men used to be the income earner, women had to be dependent on men. With new or additional income, women gained confidence and improved status in the family. Many women share proudly that they have more say in making decisions in the family.

#### **4.2 Impacts on commune officials and village leaders**

First, the project **raises awareness on gender equality** for commune officials and village leaders. All of these leaders now realize the importance of promoting gender equality in families and the community, as well as the challenges in achieving gender equality. Commune officials and village leaders, who are mostly men, initially approached gender as a professional task. They recognized the crucial contribution of women to poverty reduction and supported the idea of improving women's income and promoting employment. As they became more involved in the project, commune officials and village leaders started applying gender sensitivity to their personal lives. Some leaders share housework with their wives and encourage their wives to take part in community activities.

**Story of Mr. Mao – head of the village Farmers' Union**  
**La Hien commune, Thai Nguyen Province**

In the past, I refused to attend the gender training. Now, I have more sympathy for my wife and share in the housework. I currently wash clothes for my wife, despite being made fun of by other men. I hope that all men in my village can be trained in gender equality. I also recognize my wife's changes after attending this project. She shows her respect for me and communicates more gently. She has also learned good techniques in agricultural production. The neighbor women recently come to ask her about how to use pesticides. I thought it was good to provide agricultural techniques for women, which the Farmers' Union has never done before. I also found that the training courses held by this project are much more detailed than our Farmer's Union courses.

Second, commune officials have improved their **capacity in monitoring and supervision** through participating in the project. They recognize the value of coaching during their monitoring visits. Commune Farmers' Union representatives in Thai Nguyen, Quang Nam and An Giang provinces pay more regular visits to households to monitor their production. During monitoring visits, they provide technical assistance to the beneficiaries. For example, farmers in Son Phu commune of Thai Nguyen province spoke highly of the advice on tea harvesting and processing from the Farmers' Union representative.

Third, commune officials have strengthened their capacity to **cooperate and mobilize resources** through project activities. Staff of the Women's Union and Farmers' Union at commune level cooperated well together in different activities from selection of beneficiaries, needs assessment to supervision and monitoring of project implementation and impacts. The cooperation has been strengthened not only among commune officials, but also between commune and district levels. For example, IPs in all 3 provinces have successfully coordinated with the district banks in providing loans for women. In Tien My commune of Quang Nam province, commune officials invite the district agriculture extension worker as a resource person to provide technical inputs for beneficiaries at women' club meetings.

Fourth, participation in project activities has **increased a sense of commitment** to promoting women's social and economic status among commune officials and village leaders. The project shows a good model of how leaders can play an

important role in mobilizing external and internal resources for women's empowerment when they are involved in project planning and implementation. They work directly with beneficiaries and they also participate in decision-making. Commune officials and village leaders express strong willingness to be more involved in the project in the future and believe that commune-level contributions will ensure the sustainability of the project.

#### **4.3 Impacts on provincial Implementing Partners (IPs)**

The evaluation team has found that the project has had positive impacts on IPs' capacity in designing and implementation programmes that promote women's employment and empowerment. The improved capacity includes attitudes, knowledge and skills regarding gender equality and women's employment promotion.

First, adopting a **more participatory working approach** is a significant change in IPs' capacity. They have learned the importance of involving different stakeholders, especially beneficiaries, in making decisions about project activities. At the beginning, beneficiaries' participation was limited to being informed about project activities or giving information about their needs and priorities. Over time, IPs have encouraged beneficiaries to be more active in giving feedback about project activities and making decisions about project improvements. Towards the end of the second year of the projects, IPs in all 6 provinces have initiated participatory planning workshops in which beneficiaries and commune leaders participate in prioritizing needs to be addressed by APs and planning for project activities of the following year.

Second, IPs have not only improved their **understanding of gender concepts and issues**, but also have become **gender sensitive**. This change has been most noticeable among IPs from the Farmers' Union and Cooperative Alliance, who had not been exposed to gender promotion prior to the project. However, IPs from the Women's Union have also gained a deeper understanding of what gender sensitivity and gender mainstreaming mean.

Before joining the project, IPs' understanding of gender promotion was limited to women being present at training, at meeting and in leadership positions. In the case of the IPs from Thai Nguyen Farmers' Union, gender mainstreaming used to mean having an assigned number of women represented without sufficient consideration of the quality of their representation. Since joining the project, they have learned about gender issues such as women's three roles, lack of opportunities and lack of control over resources and benefits. They have been able to analyze gender issues and design programmes that address women's strategic needs, including access to technical knowledge and skills training, raising income, having decision making power in the family, and participating in community affairs. Thai Nguyen Farmers' Union set a target for women's participation to be minimum 50% in all the training events. After involving more women in training activities, they found that the result is more effective because women are the ones who do farming work in reality.

IPs have also applied gender sensitivity to non-project programmes and activities. They have incorporated gender content into trainings of the Farmers' Union,



Women's Union and Cooperative Alliance. Gender terms and concepts have been introduced at official meetings of the Farmers' Union and Cooperative Alliance. Leaders of these organizations have considered gender as an important factor when they develop organizational plans including human resource management and development strategies.

**Story of Mr. Hoa, project coordination for the Thai Nguyen Farmers' Union**



I've worked for the Farmers' Union for a decade. However, I was new to the concept of gender when I joined the project. At first, I was not convinced of the whole idea of gender equality. I thought women and men did what they ought to do and there was no problem in the labor division. However, I did think about this a lot after the training of trainers course on gender. I knew I was going to be a trainer on gender. How could I do that if I myself did not believe in gender equality?

Again I spent a lot of time thinking about gender, reading materials about gender and discussing gender equality with my co-workers. I came to believe it more. Before I taught my first training course, I practiced teaching my co-workers in my office. They asked me a lot of questions, and it was hard for me to answer. But I realized afterwards that I became more convinced of gender equality and so did my co-workers.

However, the most significant turning point for me was when I conducted the training for women in the community. Their stories and experiences affected me a lot. I came to understand more about women's experience of inequality. I have become a strong advocate for gender equality, both in the community and in my office. I am so proud that I can contribute something to improve women's status through my training and my role in the project.

Third, IPs are now able to **look at women's employment through a gender lens**. They no longer attribute women's low income and underemployment to a

single cause such as a lack of capital or lack of technical training. Instead they link economic causes with underlying social and cultural ones such as gender values and gender roles which hamper women's economic and social status. This comprehensive analysis enables IPs to design interventions which target not only women (through provision of training and loans) but also target men and community leaders (through gender training).

Fourth, IPs' capacity in **project management** has improved significantly as a result of the training and coaching activities. This improvement is in all stages of project management including planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and making adjustments to improve project implementation. IPs are able to use the logical framework to identify interventions that address the issue of employment systematically and comprehensively. IPs have also learned about the importance of needs assessment from the experience of project design and planning in the first year. Instead of relying only on available statistics, information from local officials and quick consultation with women in the community, they have organized planning workshops with the participation of different stakeholders to identify needs and solutions for project implementation in the second year. IPs also highly appreciate the project's guidelines on how to plan activities. They are proud that their plans are now more realistic and detailed with specific information such as who, how many, where, when, how, how much, and why.

Good planning makes it easier for IPs to monitor the project activities. During monitoring trips, IPs collect specific information to measure project implementation against the plan. IPs are more conscious of listening to beneficiaries' feedback and discussing solutions with them. Many IPs stress that the project's coaching activities have improved their report writing skills significantly. In addition to providing numbers and statistics and describing facts, IPs' can analyze the causes of success or failures of project activities and recommend follow-up activities and adjustments.

Fifth, participating in the project has strengthened IPs' **ability to network and mobilize resources** for project activities. IPs from the Farmers' Union, Women's Union, and Cooperative Alliance not only cooperate with each other, but also link with other agencies such as the Department of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs and the Peoples' Committees at provincial, district and commune levels. All IPs from 3 provinces are able to work with the bank to provide loans for women. The An Giang Women's Union was able to mobilize and obtain 40 sewing machines from the fund of the provincial People's Committee.

Finally, IPs' capacity in **delivering training courses and coordinating training activities** has been improved as a result of the project. All IPs speak highly of the participatory training methods and skills they gained from the training of trainers course organized by the project. They have changed from lecturing to employing active learning methods such as role play, story telling, group discussion and games. They have shifted from the role of "a teller and teacher" to the role of "a facilitator and supporter". Another important change in IPs' capacity is their focus on assessing participants' training needs. IPs apply this skill in assessing women's needs to identify topics for women's group meetings. As a result, IPs

are able to help women's groups come up with interesting and relevant topics such as reproductive health, nutrition and access to bank loans.

## 5. Project strengths

This section discusses the project's strengths in three categories: (1) design, (2) implementation, and (3) management.

### 5.1 Project design

First, regarding **relevance** of the design, **all three strategies of the project are appropriate** to promoting women's social and economic status. The first strategy of developing APs to support women socially and economically address real needs at both community and policy levels. On one hand, the need to empower poor women socially and economically existed at the time when the project was designed and still exists at the time of the evaluation. There is evidence from IPs' statistics as well as from field work that women in the project communes, districts and provinces need support to better their social and economic status. On the other hand, the APs can serve as models for poverty reduction programmes implemented by the government.

The second strategy of building capacity of relevant national and local government and mass organizations is also relevant. While DOLISA, Women's Union, Farmers' Union and Cooperative Alliance at the provincial level are in charge of designing and/or coordinating programmes that support the poor, their capacity in doing so remains limited. Building their capacity through training and involving them in actual activities at the community level address their needs for technical knowledge as well as opportunities for hands-on experiences.

The third strategy of documenting lessons learned for policy advocacy address real needs for (1) a good model of poverty reduction through capacity building and (2) more attention from related government agencies and mass organizations on capacity building. The recently released evaluation report on the National Program on Hunger Eradication and Poverty Reduction (HEPR) reveals that less than 1% of the total budget of the program is allocated for capacity building activity. The report also calls for a significant increase in budget allocation of HERP for capacity building in the period of 2006-2010. This confirms that the project's strategy to document lessons learned from APs and capacity building activities is a right direction.

Second, the **three strategies are cohesively related and supportive** of each other. Building capacity of IPs leads to good design and implementation of APs. Good APs directly improve the lives of women, at the same time serve as good models for policy advocacy. Finally, favorable policies and IPs' improved capacity regarding gender and employment promotion will ensure sustainable empowerment of women.

Third, the project's **focus on capacity building** has shown to be correct. Capacity building for IPs and community people will result in IPs' ability to implement similar programmes on a larger scale and in women's and local

leaders' ability to sustain the project's impacts. Furthermore, this strategy allows the project to focus its resources into one important activity, while creating opportunities for mobilizing inputs from government and community sources.

## 5.2 Project implementation

### 5.2.1 Action Programmes

The APs are generally **relevant to the needs of women**. In the project locations where women already had income generating activities such as tea planting (in two communes of Thai Nguyen province) and pig raising (An Thanh Trung commune of An Giang province and La Hien commune of Thai Nguyen province), APs focus on providing technical knowledge and skills to increase the productivity and quality of these agricultural activities. Women highly appreciate this approach because it addresses their real needs for technical support. In the locations where women were searching for new income generating activities, APs introduced new opportunities such as vocational training in tailoring skills (in An Thanh Trung commune of An Giang province), planting hay (in Phu Tho commune of Quang Nam province) and growing mushrooms (in Tien Tho and Tien My communes of Quang Nam province). Again, APs correspond to the needs of women in these communities.

The designs of APs include **diversified and comprehensive interventions**. This approach enables APs to address the issue of women's low social and economic status in a systematic way. Women are not only provided with technical inputs (through training courses) but also with capital (from bank loans) for their income generating activities. APs also look at not only inputs for women's production and business, but also outputs (i.e. how women can sell their product or apply for jobs with their new skills). In order to support the output, APs focus on building models of small cooperatives or cooperative groups where women can work together in producing and selling their goods. One successful case is the group of women in Tien My commune of Quang Nam province. They help each other in identifying the markets for mushrooms, then assign women who have motorbikes to transport the mushrooms to the market.

One of the main reasons for relevant designs of APs is IPs' good situational analysis. Most IPs studied the needs of women and their strengths, at the same time analyzing the policy and economic environment of the commune and district where women live. For example, IPs from the Women's Union of Thai Nguyen province surveyed the situation of women and economic development in each village of La Hien commune, then came up with suggestions of different activities that are most relevant to women's needs and advantages of the environment (such as tea planting, rice farming, and pig raising). While the results of IPs' situational analysis are good, the process can be improved by involving women in identifying needs and interventions from the beginning (this will be discussed more in the section on Areas for Improvement).

Regarding **training courses** of APs, women highly appreciate **the relevant contents** and **participatory training methods**. Since IPs surveyed women's training needs, they were able to select practical and relevant training topics that meet women's expectations such as safe use of fertilizer and pesticides, how to

pick tea leaves properly, or how to distinguish good breeds of piglets from inferior ones.

The methods used in training are empowering and participatory. Men and women who participated in gender training courses feel that they can learn actively through games, role plays, songs, poems, stories and drawings. Being involved in class activities makes participants feel confident and highly motivated to learn. Methods used at technical training courses are visualized, demonstrative and practice-focused. For example, women learned about tea picking in the tea fields and about mushroom growing through the actual process of doing it. In addition, good logistic arrangement also contributed to the training's success. For example, the courses were mainly held in villages where all women beneficiaries could attend.

Organizing **follow-up activities after training courses** is another strength of APs. After training courses, trainers, IPs and commune leaders visit households to monitor the application of new skills and knowledge, at the same time provide technical inputs. They also attend club meetings to listen to women's difficulties and concerns, and then answer questions to provide further support.

**Good cooperation among different stakeholders** is also an important factor that ensures good implementation of APs. As discussed in the Section on Impacts, stakeholders at village, commune, district and province levels as well as beneficiaries cooperate well in project activities. This good cooperation leads to the success in mobilizing human, financial and technical resources.

Finally, there is a **relatively high level of cost effectiveness** among APs. Cost effectiveness is understood as both economic and social returns/impacts against initial financial and time investment. Regarding economic impacts, most of the training courses lead to women's making good products (whether these are tea, mushrooms, or pigs). There have been initial signs that these products bring women extra income (for example, women who grow mushrooms earn an extra 300,000 VND (about USD20) after a crop, while the investment is 140,000 VND/women (about USD9) for training and equipment costs). However, it is important to stress that the increase in income is very initial. In order to ensure a longer term profit, other factors need to be taken into account such as marketability of products, material costs, and product cost. This issue will be discussed further in the Section on Areas for Improvement. Regarding social impacts, APs provide women with improved knowledge and skills, and in some cases new skills to generate income. This in turn leads to increase women's confidence in their ability and the community's respect for women.

### **5.2.2 Capacity building activities for provincial IPs**

Many of the successes of APs can be attributed to IPs' improved capacity in designing and managing APs. Similarly, improvements in IPs' abilities are results of the project's capacity building activities.

One of the strengths of the capacity building activities is the selection of **relevant training topics**. Three areas of capacity that IPs need to improve include gender mainstreaming, employment promotion through income-generation activities and

vocational training, and project management. The project has provided training courses that cover all three areas: training of trainers in gender mainstreaming, gender and business development, proposal development, accounting skills and gender mainstreaming participatory monitoring and evaluation. The training contents of these courses are also relevant to IPs' needs. Many IPs express appreciation of the contents of the training-of-trainers course in gender and the workshop on monitoring and evaluation. The first part of these courses includes sessions on basic gender concepts, training methods and skills, while the second focuses on project design, problem analysis and participatory monitoring and evaluation.

Using **participatory training methods** at training courses is another strength of capacity building activities. IPs speak highly of learner-centered methods such as role play, story telling, group discussion, and demonstration. These methods involve participants in the learning process and make participants feel empowered. In addition, IPs share that they have learned a lot about training skills such as listening, observation, questioning, summarizing and providing feedback. The positive experiences at these training courses convinced IPs of the importance of participatory training methods and skills, hence they are willing to apply these methods and skills to their own training in the community.

**Practical and useful training materials** also attributed to the success of those training course.

Follow-up activities that **created opportunities for application** is an important strength of the training activities. For example, after the training of trainers course on gender mainstreaming, IPs started designing and delivering training on the same topic for women and men in the community. After the training course on gender mainstreaming participatory monitoring and evaluation, IPs organized participatory planning workshops in which knowledge and skills about project design, monitoring and evaluation were employed. The capacity of IPs, therefore, has been improved through both formal training and on-the-job application.

Finally, **on-going coaching and technical support** provided by the National Project Coordinator (NPC) is essential for sustaining the impacts of the training courses. IPs share that when they apply new learning to their work, whether to gender training or designing and managing APs, they often encounter difficulties. They highly appreciate the availability and technical support from the NPC, whom they can consult with on the phone or during regular monitoring visits. For example, when IPs delivered the first training course on gender, the NPC came to the training, observed and provided on-the-spot support. After the course, the NPC also gave feedback for IPs on how to improve the training. The NPC also came to the participatory planning workshops and showed IPs facilitation skills and tips. Support from the NPC reinforces what IPs have learned from the training courses and at the same time supplements what IPs need in real-life situations.

### **5.2.3 Project management**

One of the important strengths of the project's management is a **good partnership between the project office in Hanoi and provincial IPs**. This

partnership is based on clear communication, good will and mutual support. Staff of the project office in Hanoi and IPs communicate on a regular basis through phone, emails, mail and direct meetings. The National Project Coordinator (NPC) and Project Secretary visit project sites every three months to monitor the project implementation, discuss difficulties directly with IPs staff, and provide on-the-job training as deemed necessary. Through close monitoring and communications, the project office in Hanoi and provincial IPs developed close relationship where they could freely and jointly discuss about the project. They are willing to share difficulties with each other and work together to find solutions. The role of the NPC is more of a supporter than a supervisor. Provincial IPs highly appreciate this partnership.

Another strength of the project is the **good cooperation among provincial IPs and district and commune level players**. As described in the Sections on Impacts and Strengths of APs, this cooperation allows the project to mobilize technical, human and financial inputs from various resources.

## **6. Areas for improvement**

This section discusses areas for improvement in three categories: (1) design, (2) implementation and (3) management.

### **6.1 Project design**

**Revise responsibilities and operation of the Project Advisory Committee (PAC).** At present, the PAC meets twice a year to review project activities and achievements and to provide technical inputs on policy advocacy. However, the PAC members' attendance has not been consistent, with some members tending to send their staff as replacements at the meetings. PAC members share that they do not feel confident about their technical inputs to the project, because they are not kept up to date about developments within the project. They want to learn more about the project through taking part in monitoring trips and other events. The project should revise the operation of the PAC and develop a plan to increase their inputs, with a special focus on policy advocacy. If the project is to involve PAC members in monitoring trips and other events, there should be a design of what their inputs will be and how they can follow up afterwards.

**Clarify responsibilities of provincial DOLISAs within the project management structure.** While MOLISA has a coordinating role of the project at the central level, there are no guidelines about the responsibilities of provincial DOLISAs. Up to now DOLISA staff has taken part on a case-by-case basis in designing APs, conducting gender training, and helping IPs with procedures for making loans for women. However, the project has not yet tapped on their main strength in policy making and advocacy on employment and poverty reduction. The project, therefore, should define DOLISA's roles more clearly, with special consideration of their strength in advocacy. One suggestion is to organize regular meetings between DOLISA and IPs from the Farmers' Union, Women's Union and Cooperative Alliance to review project activities, draw lessons learned, and discuss solutions. By doing this, DOLISAs can contribute knowledge on current government policies and programmes regarding employment and poverty

reduction, at the same time providing inputs on how IPs can work together for policy advocacy.

## **6.2 Project implementation**

### **6.2.1 Action Programmes (APs)**

**A more participatory approach should be used in decision-making, needs assessment, and project management.** The APs are not universally relevant to the needs of poor women. In some areas, the interventions proposed by APs have been unfeasible. In Binh Quoi village, Binh Thanh Dong (An Giang), many beneficiaries are landless. Despite this, they were trained to grow mushrooms, soybeans and papaya. Without land, these beneficiaries could not apply anything they learned. Similarly, a number of women beneficiaries in Quang Nam does not have enough straw to grow mushrooms. At the same time, another group had to sell their mushrooms at low prices, since many people were selling mushrooms in the same small market. Another group of women was trained in business development, but could not start their businesses. Some women admitted that doing business was new to them and they would have preferred training on animal raising.

These limitations are caused by a lack of participatory methods in project design and planning on the part of provincial IPs. Although Thai Nguyen Farmers Union applies the participatory approach the most among the IPs, IPs in general take the lead in situation analysis, assume they know the needs of poor women, and then initiate all the APs' interventions. Women beneficiaries just participate at the lowest level of participation, which is "to be informed".

Provincial IPs also lead the AP management at the commune level, with limited participation of commune staff and village leaders. Provincial IPs choose trainers, sign contracts, and prepare the plan for each training course before telling commune staff to organize the course. Commune staff thus just follow the IPs' assignment to invite participants and prepare for logistics.

The working methodology of provincial IPs is rooted in an inadequate understanding of community development. The IPs do not demonstrate a belief in the capacity of community people to solve their own problems. Because provincial IPs underestimate the capacity of community people, they try their best to do everything for the women beneficiaries. Provincial IPs in Quang Nam and An Giang, especially, expect to help beneficiaries entirely from input to output, despite their own limited capacity and lack of professionalism in some aspects.

**Selection of beneficiaries should be more pro-poor.** The APs have not fully reached poor women. In Tien Tho, Tien My and Binh Thanh Dong, some women beneficiaries come from better-off or even rich families. At the same time, many of the poorest women were not involved.

This problem is caused by a lack of clear guideline to select beneficiaries, therefore, selection methods were not consistent in project locations. In general, AP activities are introduced in Women's Union meetings, which the poorest



women rarely attend. In some cases, women then volunteer to participate in the APs. However, some poor women express hesitation to raise their hands. In other communes, village level Women's Union leaders selected beneficiaries from their own members.

The unclear objectives and target groups of APs also make poor women hesitant to participate. When hearing the message, "The women's club is for those who want to grow mushrooms, who are in a difficult situation but are hard-working," poor women in Tien Tho commune (Quang Nam) felt uncertain, since they did not have any straw to grow mushrooms. In other communes, women were informed that "joining the women's club is in order to take out loans from the bank".

The project offers no clear guidelines for participation of poor women. IPs, whether they are Women's Union, Farmer's Union or Cooperative Alliance, selected women only among Women's Union members. Project documents do target poor women, without specifying the poorest. Thus, in many cases poor members of the Women's Union are selected to participate, while poorer non-members are not.

**More practical training and technical support are necessary.** After the training course in Binh Thanh Dong, some women were able to practice what they had learned, but many were not. They were also not clear about the new technical knowledge provided by the trainers. In other APs, women beneficiaries faced certain difficulties in applying what they had learned. Women beneficiaries in Tien Tho (Quang Nam) faced some technical problems when they grew mushroom. It was also hard for women beneficiaries in La Hien (Thai Nguyen) to identify different kinds of pests in tea farming.

Those difficulties are caused by impractical training and insufficient coaching. For example, 100 women trainees in Binh Thanh Dong formed two classes. During the course, they had no chance to practice but only listened to the trainer's presentation and observed demonstrations. Accordingly, they could not remember what they were taught. Second, even women in other APs who were trained with more visual and practical methods could hardly absorb all the technical knowledge after only one short training course. Thirdly, in some APs<sup>3</sup>, none of the resource persons providing technical support is based locally but rather based in the provincial capital. When women beneficiaries in Binh Thanh Dong want to contact a trainer or technician for support, it takes long time for them to respond. To take another example, beneficiaries growing mushrooms in two communes in Quang Nam were still worried about their future crops when the technician had already finished his coaching contract.

**Misunderstandings of gender equality should be corrected.** Women beneficiaries in Quang Nam and An Giang have not yet understood gender equality precisely. When asked about gender equality in their families, they provide few specific examples but only general statements showing incomplete understanding. For instance, they think that men should do women's work and

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<sup>3</sup> Binh Thanh Dong, Tien Tho and Tien My.

vice versa. Many women share that after the gender training, they help their husband in watering, working in the field and even carrying bamboo. For others, husband and wife showed their equality by both attending the women's club meeting. In some APs in these two provinces, men have attended training courses with their wives as well. Some men have been so active that they have become informal leaders of the groups. In Tien My, Quang Nam, one-third of the participants in the women's club meeting are men. The men talk extensively and ask many questions, taking a leading role in the meeting. In Binh Thanh Dong, one man was assigned to lead the model of growing mushrooms and consequently received many technical inputs from the trainer. His wife's capacity, however, was not improved as she just followed his instructions and assignments.

Women and men both can benefit from men's participation in meetings if men's involvement is controlled. Therefore, leaders of the women's clubs need to improve their skills in facilitation so that they can prevent men's domination in the meeting and provide opportunities for women to freely participate. Women themselves need to improve their life skills so that they become more assertive when negotiating with men. Men need to improve their understanding on gender through more training and discussions.

Gender trainers and the IPs themselves also demonstrate incomplete understanding about gender equality. Firstly, during the gender training, they did not explain the concepts clearly and convincingly. Secondly, they have not coached the beneficiaries and commune staff properly in order to achieve gender equality. In other words, they did not stop the communes from doing those activities in such unsuitable ways. In addition, community people could not understand thoroughly about gender concept after such short training. They need further enhancement through frequent meetings and activities.

**Women's capacity should be further strengthened.** Women's capacity in situational analysis and decision making should be improved. At present, they just follow instructions by IPs and commune staff with little analysis or adjustment. This practice leads to the fact that all women beneficiaries grew mushroom at the same time to sell in the same small market. They then passively wait for the IPs to find out about new market opportunities. In addition, women beneficiaries express a desire to implement every earning activity conducted by people in other villages and communes. It is necessary to improve their ability in analyzing the situation to find out their strengths, weaknesses, and feasibility before deciding an activity.

Women also face a problem of household budget management. In AP areas, all household expenditures rely on income from seasonal agriculture. Women are in financial straits during the off-season. In Thai Nguyen, women have to postpone buying bicycle tires or children's books until they harvest the tea. In order to cover household consumption, some others even sold good tea at very low prices rather than storing it until the price went up. Those beneficiaries clearly face a problem of risk management. They haven't formed the habit of saving for risk management but spend all the money they earn after each crop. This may cause

them difficulties in repaying loans, as each of them has a considerable loan from the Vietnam Bank for Agriculture.

**Women's club meetings should be more useful.** The main activity of women's club meetings in most of the APs is sharing experience among women beneficiaries. The meetings have not yet either held discussions on practical topics or provided useful inputs for women beneficiaries. The fact that some men attend the meetings, in some APs, also restrains women's discussion and participation. In addition, the facilitation and management skills of the group leaders are still limited. Leaders are not able to facilitate a good discussion, listen to the needs of members, explore useful topics or make proposals to the IPs.

### **6.2.2 Capacity building activities for provincial IPs**

**IPs should consolidate their knowledge of gender equality.** As discussed in the above section on Areas for Improvement in APs, there is some misunderstanding among women about gender concepts. This shows that some IPs who train women in the community have limited understanding of gender concepts and have difficulties in linking the concepts with real life situations. One of the main reasons for this limitation is a lack of training content about applying gender concepts in everyday life. This should be added to the training of trainers course on gender, and IPs should receive further training on how to apply gender concepts.

**IPs should improve their capacity in coordinating training activities.** Again, as the above section shows, some community training courses are limited by large class sizes, inappropriate timing for courses, too much technical contents, and insufficient follow-up activities. While IPs are responsible for organizing these courses, they have not been trained on coordination of training activities (conducting training needs assessments, making training plans, selecting good trainers, assessing training designs and methods, and evaluating training courses). There is a need to train IPs on how to coordinate training courses, with a special focus on training women with limited education.

**IPs should strengthen their capacity in group management and business development.** Although IPs play an important role in helping women in setting up clubs and cooperatives and promoting business, their capacity in these two areas is still limited. IPs have difficulties in advising women's clubs on initiating new activities, fundraising and managing the club. Similarly, IPs feel unconfident in coordinating training courses on business development or helping women's groups in business planning because of their inadequate knowledge on the subject.

**Reconsider logistical details of training courses.** These details include duration of training courses, selection of participants, language used at the training and training materials. A common comment among IPs is about the short duration of the training courses they attended. The amount of time was too short to cover the training contents, which led to ineffective learning. Some training courses included participants of different backgrounds (such as women from village, commune and province levels) without proper tailoring of training contents and methods to meet the needs of each group of participants. Another comment is

about English being used at training courses. This is a challenge to participants who are not used to spontaneous translation. Finally, training materials need to be revised to fit the Vietnamese context and to be more user-friendly. For example, IPs think that the training manual on business development (GET AHEAD) can be revised to include case studies from Vietnam and to have more clear instructions for users-trainers.

**Plans of coaching IPs need to be developed, with a focus on participatory methods.** During the first phase of the project, IPs were new to all APs' focus areas which included gender promotion, business development and project management. The NPC, therefore, coached IPs on case by case basis, focusing on difficulties they face in designing and implementing APs. After two year of project implementation, different IPs' capacity in different areas have developed differently. It is important, therefore, to assess IPs' capacity and develop a plan to coach them. From the analysis in the Sections on Project Impacts and Areas for Improvement of APs, it is clear that even though IPs have started working in a more participatory way, they still need on-going support on how to be fully participatory and empowering.

### **6.2.3 Project management**

**Improve communication between the project office in Hanoi and MOLISA.** Communication between the Hanoi project office and the Department of Labor and Employment (DLE), Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) has room to be improved. In the future, ILO and DLE need to focus on improving the communication.

**Improve cooperation between DOLISAs and provincial IPs.** As mentioned earlier under Project Design in the Section on Areas for improvement, cooperation between DOLISAs and IPs has been limited. In order to increase DOLISAs' role in the second phase of the project, especially regarding policy advocacy, the project needs to consider a mechanism for regular meetings between DOLISA and IPs to update on project activities and initiate advocacy efforts.

**Promote participatory monitoring and evaluation at all levels.** As discussed in the above sections on Areas for Improvement in APs and Capacity Building for IPs, the participation of stakeholders (women beneficiaries) in monitoring and evaluation of project activities was limited to "being informed" and "giving information". This affects their sense of ownership of the project, and their involvement in monitoring and evaluation has been insignificant in comparison with that of provincial IPs. The project, therefore, needs to include a participatory monitoring and evaluation framework so that stakeholders at all levels can take part in identifying project successes and limitations and in working on solutions.

## **7. PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY**

The evaluation team finds that the project can attain sustainability if one or more of the following scenarios takes place before the end of the project: (1) IPs replicate the good

AP models and apply lessons learned from the project, (2) women beneficiaries use knowledge and skills gained from the project for the improvement of their lives, or (3) commune leaders sustain current APs and extend AP models to other villages. The following analysis will discuss the existing favorable and unfavorable conditions for the realization of these scenarios.

**(1) IPs replicate the good AP models in cooperation with commune officials and village leaders and apply lessons learned from the project.** There are several favorable conditions for this scenario. First, IPs' responsibilities within the project are similar to their existing job descriptions within their organizations. For example, IPs from the Women's Union work for the organization's Employment Service Center, and IPs from the Farmers' Union work in the Farmer Support Division. The overlap in responsibilities creates opportunities for IPs to apply what they learn from the project to their work and vice versa. This also places IPs in ideal positions to replicate AP models in the future. Second, IPs' capacity in gender and employment promotion has been strengthened through the project. This enables them to develop future programmes to support social and economic empowerment of women. Third, there is a strong level of commitment among leaders of IPs. They are convinced of the positive impacts of the project and see similarities between the project's direction and their organizations' missions. Finally, regarding financial resources, there are funds available from the government, province, and IPs themselves to support poverty reduction and employment promotion programmes. In brief, there are favorable conditions in organizational structure, human capacity, organizational commitment and financial resources to replicate AP models.

However, there are two main challenges to this scenario. First, the project's capacity building activities have focused entirely on one or two key individuals in each IP. The challenge is to transform individual capacity on gender-sensitive employment promotion into organizational capacity. The second challenge is that some provincial IPs do not take full advantage of advocacy opportunities, either vertically to the central level of their own organizations or horizontally within the provincial government. This limits the extent to which IPs can gain support and resources to replicate APs in the future.

**(2) Women beneficiaries use knowledge and skills gained from the project for the improvement of their lives.**

**(3) Commune leaders sustain current APs and extend AP models to other villages.**

Regarding the sustainability of impacts on women beneficiaries, it is likely that women will apply what they learn to improve their lives. Most women have applied new knowledge and skills successfully, gained confidence in themselves and developed a strong motivation for new learning. They also benefit from their better understanding of gender and improved gender equality at home and in community. At the same time, there are favorable external conditions such as access to bank loans, development of women's clubs and support from commune leaders. These internal and external resources are conditions that make it possible for women to sustain the project's positive impacts and results.

Regarding the expansion of APs to other women in the community, the project has already followed a direction that makes expansion possible. The project mobilizes people from the existing structure of local government and mass organizations, instead of creating a new structure for project management. It also takes advantage of locally available financial resources (bank loans) and technical resources (training and inputs from commune and district agriculture extension divisions). For example, staff of the Farmers' Union in Binh Thanh Dong commune of An Giang province is committed to learning about mushroom growing to provide on-going support for women. The agriculture extension worker from Tien Phuoc district of Quang Nam province regularly attends women's club meetings to provide technical inputs. Finally, women beneficiaries are willing to share their knowledge and skills with other women in the community. The successful mobilization of resources and commitment of women and commune community officials are important factors for the future expansion of APs.

However, there are several challenges to scenarios 2 and 3. First, even though commune leaders and staff of the mass organizations are committed to the project, their capacity in designing and managing APs remains limited. It is also difficult for them to provide inputs on technical aspects of APs such as gender equality, business development and group management. Second, there are not enough local trainers or technicians for on-going support after the training courses in agricultural techniques. In some APs, technical trainers were hired on a contract basis from the provincial Center for Mushroom Cultivation. The trainers provided training and coaching services for APs and received significant compensation. After completing their contract, they no longer provide technical support for the beneficiaries, as this is not included in their regular job responsibilities. The women then only relied on one commune Farmers' Union staff who is not clear about the techniques of growing mushrooms. Although it is not always possible to employ local trainers, the limitations of employing outsiders should be taken into consideration when designing training courses.

Another challenge to sustainability of APs and their expansion is the practice of giving allowances to women for attending club meetings.<sup>4</sup> This practice is based on IPs' assumption that women would only attend meetings if financial incentives are provided. On the contrary, women in many APs are happy to come to the meetings because they gain knowledge and support from resource people invited to the meetings and from other members. The money used for allowances limits the possibility to invest in more useful activities and at the same time creates financial dependency among women. This also affects the financial sustainability of APs.

## **8. Conclusion**

Overall, we conclude that this is a successful, well-managed project with potential for expansion to reach out to many other women in Vietnam who are in need of empowerment both socially and economically.

In less than two years, the project has made significant impacts on the lives of women in seven communities by raising awareness on gender equality, providing technical

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<sup>4</sup> Binh Thanh Dong commune by the Farmers' Union in An Giang province, Tien My & Tien Tho communes by the Women's Union in Quang Nam province

training for income generation activities, and helping women access bank loans. The project has successfully improved the capacity of key staff of the Implementing Partners (IPs) from the provincial Women's Union, Farmers' Union and Cooperative Alliance. As a result of the training provided by the project, Implementing Partners have become more capable and effective in designing and managing employment promotion projects with gender lens. The staff of government offices and mass organizations at different levels also contributed to the project by successfully mobilizing human, technical and financial resources from various sources. With the effective cooperation and strong commitment among the stakeholders, the project has shown a high potential for sustainability.

While the evaluation team found many good practices which brought positive impacts at community and provincial levels, the team identified areas for improvement to further strengthen the project including overall project management, Action Programmes, capacity building for Implementing Partners, and policy advocacy. In the future, the project should work more on areas for improvement and focus more on utilizing lessons learned and best practices from the community-based action plans to recommend policies concerning women's employment promotion and empowerment. This can be achieved by involving stakeholders from the commune to central level to document lessons learned and disseminate information about the project.

## **9. Recommendations**

This section provides recommendations in 4 areas: (1) overall project management, (2) APs, (3) capacity building for IPs, and (4) policy advocacy. Most of the recommendations presented here are the results of the analysis in the section on Areas for Improvement.

### **9.1 Overall project management**

1. Communication between ILO and MOLISA should be improved.
2. During the second phase of the project, policy advocacy should be prioritized as a special focus. Good models and best practices from APs should be documented and disseminated.
3. ILO and MOLISA should clarify responsibilities of provincial DOLISAs within the project management structure, with a special consideration of their strength in policy advocacy.
4. ILO and IPs need to include a participatory monitoring and evaluation framework so that stakeholders at all levels can take part in identifying project successes and limitations and in working out solutions.
5. While Farmer's Union, Women's Union and Cooperative Alliance remain to work as Implementing Partners (IPs), DOLISA should be considered as an important partner of project implementation since it is expected to contribute to project sustainability and policy integration at provincial level.

## **9.2 Action Programmes (APs)**

### **9.2.1 Capacity building for women beneficiaries**

6. Consider organizing training courses on business-related topics such as household budget management and marketing.
7. Consider refresher training courses (study tours may be included) and follow-up technical support after technical courses on agricultural production.
8. Consider organizing training courses on life skills that lead to women's self-empowerment, such as decision making, communication, negotiation and group management.
9. Leaders of women's clubs should be trained in facilitation skills and group management.

### **9.2.2 Capacity building for key people from commune People's Committees and mass organizations**

10. Commune and village leaders and mass organizations' representatives should be trained in participatory project management including community assessment, project design and planning and monitoring and evaluation.
11. Provide refresher training courses on gender mainstreaming for commune and village leaders and mass organizations' representatives, with a special focus on application of gender concepts to daily life.
12. Consider training representatives from the Women's Union and Farmers' Union in business development.
13. Consider providing intensive training on special agricultural techniques, such as mushroom growing and hay planting, for commune mass organizations' representatives and/or women beneficiaries so that they can act as resource people.
14. Encourage commune and village leaders and representatives from mass organizations to include gender equality as a topic for discussion at the meetings of the commune, village, the Women's Union and Farmers' Union. Consider training more men in community on gender topics.
15. Strengthen the cooperation relationship with district bank (Policy and Social Bank) making them understand well and support gender equality issue.
16. Improve commune staff's capacity on policy analysis especially the Poverty Reduction policy.

### **9.2.3 Operation of women's clubs**



17. Include gender equality topics to the agenda of women's clubs meetings to improve women's understanding of gender.
18. Verify the advantages and disadvantages of men's participation in the APs trainings and women club meetings. Besides, it is also important to promote women's participation in the meetings dominated by men.
19. Women's club meetings should include non-member women in the village to expand the impacts of APs and to promote best practices. Other club activities such as competitions and festivals should be expanded to include women and men non-members in the community.

#### **9.2.4 Management of IPs**

20. Revise and finalize the criteria for selection of beneficiaries, with special consideration for reaching out to the poorest women. Instructions on methods of beneficiary selection should also be provided.
21. Consider using qualified district trainers to provide training and coaching for women beneficiaries so that commune staff can communicate with them more easily without relying on provincial IPs. It is more likely that district trainers will continue to provide training and coaching for women because it is part of their existing responsibilities.
22. Strengthen the cooperation with other projects in the same areas.

#### **9.3 Capacity building for IPs**

23. Consolidate IPs' knowledge of gender equality by providing refresher training and/or on-going coaching. Focus should be placed on how to apply gender concepts to real life situations.
24. Improve IPs' capacity as trainers and training coordinators. Training courses and/or coaching activities should focus on methods and skills for training women with limited education, training needs assessment, training design, and training evaluation.
25. Provide training courses on group management and refresh training courses on business development for IPs, so that they can work as trainers in these areas.
26. Reconsider logistical details of training courses such as duration, selection of participants, language used and training materials. Consider organizing training in each province for cost effectiveness.
27. Develop coaching plan for IPs from each province, with a special focus on participatory working methods.

28. Consider transforming individual capacity of key people into organizational capacity by promoting sharing and learning within IPs.
29. Improve capacity for the cooperation partner should also be considered. e.g.; principles in working with the poor and participatory training method for resource trainers on agriculture; gender equality for staff of district bank.

#### **9.4 Policy advocacy**

30. IPs should take full advantage of advocacy opportunities, either vertically to the central level of their own organizations or horizontally within the provincial government to gain support for project implementation and to influence policies on gender-sensitive employment promotion.
31. ILO and MOLISA should develop a plan to increase role of the Project Advisory Committee in policy advocacy.
32. ILO and MOLISA should consider a Policy Research on the current policies on women employment in the project area (three provinces).
33. ILO should network with other donors such as the World Bank, UNDP, ADB, and international non-governmental organizations working on poverty reduction and employment promotion to share lessons learned and initiate advocacy efforts at the national level.

**ILO/Japan Asian Regional Programme on  
Expansion on Employment Opportunities for Women  
Viet Nam Chapter**

**Provisional Terms of Reference  
Mid-term Monitoring and Evaluation**

**November 2004**

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## **Background**

Following the adoption of Beijing Platform for action by the Beijing Fourth World Conference on women in 1995, the ILO has further strengthened its efforts to mainstream gender concerns at all levels, at headquarters and in the field. Seven of the twelve critical areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform of Action and which are related to the ILO's mandate are the priorities for implementation. ILO has categorized these seven areas of concern under (1) poverty eradication and productive employment, (2) working conditions and social protection, and (3) international labour standards and normative action on women workers.

Within this framework, a number of specific programmes and projects were launched including the Asian Regional Programme on Expansion on Employment Opportunities for Women (EEOW). This Project was launched in Indonesia and Nepal in 1997, Thailand in 2000 and it has been expanded to Cambodia and Viet Nam in 2002.

## **EEOW Viet Nam Chapter**

The ILO/Japan EEOW Viet Nam Chapter has been officially operational since February 2003. The Project is aimed to contribute to the national efforts to alleviate poverty and promote opportunities and conducive environment for quality employment for rural women, as well as to elevate the social and economic standing of women workers and their families in society in general.

The immediate objectives of the Project are:

- To empower poverty-stricken women in the rural area, economically and socially, through gender-oriented employment promotion and poverty reduction schemes at the community level;
- To strengthen the institutional capacity of relevant national and local government and mass organizations in designing, co-coordinating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policies and programmes in respect to women's employment promotion and empowerment; and
- To identify policy concerns and formulate policy recommendations concerning women's employment promotion and empowerment based on the experience and good practices garnered from the EEOW community-based employment promotion and poverty reduction schemes for purpose of policy advocacy at the national level.

The EEW's programme approaches are three folds, starting with 1) policy development, including research and gender awareness raising for policy makers, 2) institutional strengthening in the form of training, and 3) direct assistance programmes (action programme).

As per the direct assistance programme, 6 Implementing Partners (IPs) were selected to undertake 6 Action Programs (APs) in Thai Nguyen, Quang Nam and An Giang. All APs started in December 2003 and consisted of various activities such as training on agricultural extension and processing techniques; raising gender awareness for local leaders and local men and women; and establishing and maintaining of women's groups. At the time this Terms of Reference is prepared, all IPs have finished the 3rd quarter of APs' implementation.

Asides from 6 APs, EEW Viet Nam also has parallel supporting activities in forms of training, manual development, and etc.

EEW Viet Nam is the joint project between the ILO and the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA). The Project is implemented based on the recommendation of Project Advisory Committee (PAC).

The Project has now reached the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the implementation, which is half way through the project life. In order to further improve EEW implementation, Mid-term M&E will take place to analyze all EEW activities and assess progress made and impact to date. The Mid-term M&E will study and document the successful implementation approaches, the best practices and the lessons learned of the Project at all levels.

### **Objective of the Mid-term Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)**

The main objectives of this exercise are to:

- assess overall performance against the Project objectives as set out in the Project Document and other related documents;
- assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the Project;
- monitor and evaluate results and impacts of the Project since its inception;
- provide a basis for decision making on necessary amendments and improvements;
- promote accountability for resource use; and
- document, provide feedback on, and disseminate best practices and lessons learned.

### **Scope and Focus of the Mid-term Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)**

The Mid-term M&E will focus on, but not limit to, the following areas:

- Identification of the Project's best practices, lessons learned, successes and challenges
- Assessment of the Project's performance in term of achieving the immediate objectives
- Identification of any unintended outcomes, results, and impacts
- Identification of opportunities that have contributed to the successful implementation of the Project
- Identification of constraints, if any, that have affected the effectiveness of the Project
- Provision of realistic recommendations to further improve the Project

## M&E Methodology

The main sources of data/method of data collection will be:

- a) *secondary data* - review the Project documents and reports
  - Project document
  - EEOW Vietnam quarterly, mid-year and annual progress reports
  - PAC meeting minutes
  - Mission reports
  - Workshops' reports
  - IPs' proposals
  - IPs' quarterly progress reports
  
- b) *interviews* - conduct interviews, using an open-ended framework and questionnaire
  - **ILO Hanoi:** Ms. RoseMarie Greve, Mr. Hoang Ha
  - **MOLISA:** Mr. Dong, Ms. Van and Ms. Thang (it is better to talk with Thang separately but may be Mr. Dong does not like thi idea)
  - **PAC members:** not yet identified - may be representatives from Women's Union, Farmers' Union and VCA
  - **EEOW Vietnam:** Ms. Lan and Ms. Phuong
  - Staff of other ILO projects?????
  - IPs: Managers and Project Officers of 6 APs
  - Representatives of DOLISA in 3 project sites
  - Representatives of local authorities in 6 project sites
  - Women's groups (1 group of about 10 women in each project site)
  - Men's groups (1 group of about 10 men in each project site)
  
- c) *site visit* - travel to all EEOW project sites

## Composition of the Mid-term M&E team

- |   |                |
|---|----------------|
| 1. Ms. Ngo Thi Thu Hang<br>External Collaborator  | Co-team leader |
| 2. Ms. Dang Huong Giang<br>External Collaborator  | Co-team leader |
| 3. Mr. Yoshiyuki Fukuzawa<br>Chief Technical Advisor and Overall Coordinator<br>ILO/Japan Multi-Bilateral Programme                           | Team member    |
| 4. Ms. Aya Matsuura<br>Technical Officer in Gender<br>Subregional Office for East Asia (SRO-BKK), ILO   | Team member    |
| 5. Mr. Taiju Sasaki<br>Chief of Cooperation and Coordination<br>International Affairs Division, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan | Observer       |

6. Ms. Tran Thi Thang  
Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs, Vietnam

Observer

Ms. Huynh Lan Phuong, National Project Coordinator, and Ms. Nguyen Kim Lan, Administrative Assistant of the EEW Vietnam will act as resource persons in this evaluation exercise.

### Assignments

Tasks	Responsible persons
1. Desk review of all relevant project documents, progress reports, annual reports prepared by the ILO/Japan EEW; pilot action program proposals, pilot action program progress reports and final reports; and final products of all EEW parallel supporting activities.	External collaborators (all)
2. Prepare a list of the additional secondary information required, if any, and send it to the NPC for further action.	External collaborators
3. Prepare the tentative Mid-term M&E program and schedule.	EEOW VN NPC
4. Have a briefing, debriefing and meetings with concerned ILO officials, and high rank officials and/or representatives of Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs responsible for the Project, Project Advisory Committee members, Employers Organizations and Workers Organizations of Viet Nam.	External collaborators (all)
5. Interact with EEW's counterpart and EEW's constituents regarding the implementation of the Project.	External collaborators (all)
6. Participate in field visits to 6 action program areas and interactions with Project beneficiaries, local authorities, implementing partners and relevant government officials involving in the Project to listen to their opinions regarding the Project implementation.	External collaborators (all)
7. Document and analyze all of the information gathered; prepare the draft Mid-term M&E report and send it to the ILO/Japan CTA in Bangkok through EEW country office and the Director of the ILO Hanoi for comments and suggestions.	External collaborators
8. Finalize the draft Mid-term M&E report incorporating the comments/suggestions from the ILO and submit the final Mid-term M&E Report to the CTA in Bangkok through EEW country office and the Director of the ILO Hanoi.	External collaborators
9. Participate and present findings and recommendations to the ILO/Japan EEW M&E Outcome Workshop in December 2004.	External collaborators
10. Spend one day prior to the ILO/Japan EEW M&E Outcome Workshop to participate in a discussion on the meeting preparation and one day after the Workshop for the internal round-up discussion on the conclusion of the meeting with the CTA, the Director of the ILO Hanoi, the NPC and the M&E team members.	External collaborators
11. Prepare and finalize the proceedings of the ILO/Japan EEW M&E Outcome Workshop incorporating the suggestions/comments from the Workshop, for submission to	External collaborators

the CTA in Bangkok through EEOW country office and the Director of the ILO Hanoi.	
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**Duration**

25 days (spread out during mid November to end December 2004):

- Desk review + evaluation design + tool preparation (3 days)
- Briefing, discussion, and debriefing (1.5 days)
- Meetings, interviewing in Hanoi (2 days)
- Field Visit (9 days)
- Report preparation and finalisation (8 days)
- Presentation (1.5 days)

**Outputs**

An electronic file via e-mail or diskette and one hard copy of the Mid-term M&E report in both English and Vietnamese

## Plan of the Evaluation

Time	Activity	Implementer
<b>THAI NGUYEN</b>		
<b>November 15</b>		
9.30 – 11.30	Meet People's Committee (PC) & Farmer Association (FA)- La Hien Meet one group of beneficiary (Focus group discussion) - La Hien	Giang Hang
13.30 – 15.30	Meet commune Women's Union (WU) – La Hien Meet one group of beneficiary (Focus group discussion)	Giang Hang
15.30 – 17.00	Meet another stakeholder (to be recommended by WU) or/ household visit – La Hien Household visit (Deep interview and observation)	Giang Hang
20.00 – 21.00	Summarize information	Whole group
<b>November 16</b>		
8.00 – 11.30	Meet provincial WU (2 separate meetings with 3 persons) Meet Son Phu PC, FA and WU Household visit – Son Phu	Giang Hang
13.30 – 15.00	Meet provincial FA Meet one group of beneficiary – Son Phu	Giang Hang
15.00 – 16.30	Meet one group of beneficiary – Son Phu	Hang
16.30	Travel back to Hanoi	Whole group
<b>November 19</b>	Interview director and staff of ILO	Ditto
<b>QUANG NAM</b>		
<b>November 18</b>		
13.30-15.30	Meet Provincial CA Meet one group of beneficiary – Tien Tho	Giang Hang
16.00-17.00	Meet Provincial CA (con't.) Household visit – Tien Tho	Giang Hang
<b>November 19</b>		
8.00 – 10.00	Meet commune PC, WU and FA – Tien Tho Meet commune PC, WU and FA – Tien My	Giang Hang
10.00 - 11.30	Meet one group of beneficiary – Tien Tho Meet one group of beneficiary – Tien My	Giang Hang
13.30 – 15.00	Meet DOLISA Meet one group of beneficiary – Tien My	Giang Hang
15.00 – 17.00	Household visit	Hang
20.00 – 21.00	Summarize information	whole group
<b>November 20</b>		
8.00 – 11.30	Meet provincial WU Meet one group of beneficiary – Phu Tho	Giang Hang
13.30 – 15.30	Interview Mrs. Mot - Interview Mrs. Lan – ILO staff Meet one group of beneficiary	Giang Hang
15.30 – 16.30	Meet PC – Phu tho	Hang
<b>AN GIANG</b>		
<b>November 22</b>		



8.00 – 11.30	Meet Provincial WU (2 separate meetings with 3 persons) Meet commune PC, WU and FA – Binh Thanh Dong Meet one group of beneficiary	Giang Hang
13.30 – 17.00	Meet DOLISA Meet FA Meet one group of beneficiary Household visit	Giang  Hang
20.00 – 21.00	Summarize information	Whole group
<b>November 23</b>		
8.00 – 10.00	Meet PC, WU and FA – An Thanh Meet one group of beneficiary	Giang Hang
1.00 – 11.30	Household visit Meet one group of beneficiary	Giang Hang
<b>November 24</b>		
8.00 – 11.30	Summarize information	Whole group
<b>November 25</b>	Interview staff of ILO	Whole group
<b>November 26</b>	Interview MOLISA staff Interview PAC members	Whole group
<b>December 10</b>	Submit the first draft of evaluation report	Giang, Hang
<b>December 14-15</b>	Workshop design	Phuong, Hang
<b>December 17-19</b>	Workshop in Hoi An	Whole group

### Appendix 3

#### List of interviewees

Order	Name	Title
<b>Thai Nguyen province</b>		
1.	Phan Minh LuËn	Communist Party standing member La hien Commune- Vo Nhai district, Thai nguyen
2.	Hoàng ThÞ Danh	Agriculture Extension worker - Vo Nhai district
3.	Võ ThÞ ChÝn	Vice chairwoman of People's Commitee (PC)
4.	Mít ThÞ TØnh	Chairwoman of Women's Union (WU)
5.	§Æng Do·n B»ng	Chairman of Farmer Union (FU)
6.	Hoàng ThÞ NghÛa	Beneficiary
7.	NguyÔn V"n Nh©m	Beneficiary
8.	D- ThÞ TuÊt	Beneficiary
9.	D--ng V"n Huyªn	Beneficiary
10.	Cao ThÞ Kú	Deputy director of Employment Service Center 20/10
11.	Bii ThÞ Minh T©m	Project coordinator - Thai Nguyen WU
12.	Phan ThÞ Hµ	Vice chairwoman -Thai Nguyen WU. Director of Employment Service Center
13.	D--ng ThÞ Ph--ng	Accountant of the project
14.	NguyÔn ThÞ H»ng	Directo of DOLISA Thai Nguyen
15.	Lª Ngãc Liªn	DOLISA Thai Nguyen
16.	NguyÔn Xu©n Sang	Chairman of Thai Nguyen Farmer Union
17.	Võ §øc Høu	Project coodinator - Thai Nguyen Farmer Union
18.	NguyÔn ThÞ Th,i	Accountant of the project
19.	Ms. B×nh	District farmer union staff - Dinh Hoa District
20.	Mr. Ng¹nh	PC chaiman
21.	Mr. NghÛa	Chairman of Son phu FU
22.	Mr. D©n	Agriculture extension worker
23.	Mr. TuÊn	Monitoring staff of Thai nguyen

		FU
24.	Ms. Hụ	Chairwoman of Sonphu WU
25.	Ms. Dung	Beneficiary
26.	Ms. V@n	Beneficiary
27.	Ms. Hi@n	Beneficiary
28.	Ms. G,i	Beneficiary
29.	Ms. Hu <sup>a</sup>	Beneficiary
30.	Mr. M•o	Farmer union at village level in La Hien
31.	Ms. Vui	Beneficiary
32.	Ms. TỠnh	Beneficiary
33.	Ms. Mụu	Beneficiary
34.	Ms. T@n	Beneficiary
35.	Ms. Tróc	Beneficiary
36.	Ms. H>ng	Beneficiary
37.	Ms. Hụ	Beneficiary
38.	Ms. H@n	Beneficiary
<b>ILO staff</b>		
39.	Ms. Rose Marie	Director of ILO Hanoi
40.	Mr. Fukuzawa	ILO Bangkok
41.	Huính Lan Ph->ng	Project's National coordinator
42.	Nguy@n Kim Lan	Project assistance and accountant
43.	Nguy@n H@ng Hụ	ILO programme coordinator
44.	Nguy@n BỠch V@n	Micro-finance Project coordinator
45.	Nguy@n Thanh Bxnh	ILO staff
46.	Truong Duc Tĩng	ILO staff
<b>MOLISA staff</b>		
47.	Ms. Nguyen thi Hai Van	Deputy-head of Labor and Employment Department
48.	Ms. Tran thi Thang	Staff Labor and Employment Department
<b>Qu@ng Nam province</b>		
49.	Nguy@n C@u Qu@ec	Chairman of Quang Nam Cooperative Alliance (VCA)
50.	Nguy@n H÷u Ngé	Project coordinator - Quang Nam VCA

51.	L <sup>a</sup> Th <sup>đ</sup> V <sup>o</sup> n	Chairwoman of Tien My commune WU
52.	Do <sup>o</sup> n T <sup>o</sup>	Chairman of commune FU
53.	Nguy <sup>o</sup> n Th <sup>đ</sup> Thu H <sup>o</sup> - <sup>o</sup> ng	Quang Nam DOLISA staff
54.	Nguy <sup>o</sup> n Th <sup>đ</sup> Th <sup>o</sup> - <sup>o</sup> ng	Deputy director of Quang Nam DOLISA
55.	Nguy <sup>o</sup> n Th <sup>đ</sup> M <sup>e</sup> t	Chairwoman of Quang Nam WU
56.	Tr <sup>o</sup> n Th <sup>đ</sup> B <sup>y</sup> ch Thu	Project coordinator-Quang Nam WU
57.	Nguy <sup>o</sup> n Th <sup>đ</sup> L <sup>o</sup> Thu	Chairwoman of Phu tho commune
58.	Tr <sup>o</sup> n Ng <sup>a</sup> c L <sup>e</sup> p	PC chairman of Phu tho commune
59.	Nguy <sup>o</sup> n th <sup>đ</sup> Hi <sup>o</sup> n	Beneficiary
60.	L <sup>a</sup> th <sup>đ</sup> Ti <sup>o</sup> t	Beneficiary
61.	Nguy <sup>o</sup> n th <sup>đ</sup> Hu <sup>o</sup>	Beneficiary
62.	Ng <sup>o</sup> th <sup>đ</sup> Ch <sup>y</sup> n	Beneficiary
63.	V <sup>a</sup> th <sup>đ</sup> H <sup>u</sup> i	Beneficiary
64.	Tr <sup>o</sup> n Th <sup>đ</sup> Trinh	Queson district WU staff
65.	Anh Qu <sup>a</sup> n	PC chairman of Tien My commune
66.	Ch <sup>đ</sup> Ch <sup>o</sup> t	Vice-Chairwoman of Tien My WU
67.	Anh Kh <sup>o</sup> m	Chairman of commune FU
68.	Anh Tu <sup>o</sup> n	Beneficiary
69.	Anh H <sup>o</sup> sa	Beneficiary
70.	Ch <sup>đ</sup> S <sup>o</sup> ng	Beneficiary
71.	Ch <sup>đ</sup> L <sup>e</sup> p	Beneficiary
72.	Ch <sup>đ</sup> Ph <sup>o</sup> - <sup>o</sup> ng	Beneficiary
73.	Ch <sup>đ</sup> H <sup>a</sup> ng	Beneficiary
74.	Ch <sup>đ</sup> Sen	Beneficiary
75.	Ch <sup>đ</sup> S <sup>u</sup> o	Beneficiary
76.	Ch <sup>đ</sup> Tr <sup>o</sup> c	Beneficiary
<b>An Giang Province</b>		
77.	Nguy <sup>o</sup> n Th <sup>đ</sup> Li <sup>a</sup> n	Chairwoman of Angiang WU
78.	Mai Th <sup>đ</sup> Thanh Thu <sup>u</sup>	Director of Employment Service Center of Angiang WU
79.	Nguy <sup>o</sup> n Th <sup>đ</sup> Li <sup>a</sup> m	Vice -chairwoman of WU- project accountant
80.	Nguy <sup>o</sup> n Th <sup>đ</sup> Thanh Giang	Deputy director of Angiang DOLISA

81.	L <sup>a</sup> Th <sup>u</sup> nh S <sup>u</sup> n	DOLISA staff
82.	L <sup>a</sup> H <sup>i</sup> ng C <sup>-</sup> êng	Vice-chairman of Angiang FU
83.	Nguy <sup>ê</sup> n Ng <sup>ä</sup> c Dung	Project coordinator- Angiang FU
84.	§Æng Th <sup>u</sup> p V <sup>u</sup> nh	Chairwoman of An Th <sup>u</sup> nh Trung commune
85.	§o <sup>u</sup> n Th <sup>u</sup> p Nh <sup>ê</sup> m	commune staff of Labor- War invalid and Social Affair
86.	Ng <sup>ä</sup> c Qu <sup>ä</sup> c § <sup>u</sup> t	PC Vice Chairman
87.	V <sup>u</sup> Th <sup>u</sup> nh T <sup>u</sup> i	Chairman of Commune FU
88.	Ph <sup>u</sup> m Th <sup>u</sup> p B <sup>u</sup>	Chairwoman of District FU
89.	Ch <sup>u</sup> Th <sup>u</sup> p Kim Giang	Vice chairwoman of commune WU
90.	Ms. Loan	Beneficiary
91.	Ms. Xu <sup>u</sup> n	Beneficiary
92.	Ms. H <sup>u</sup>	Beneficiary
93.	Ms. Th <sup>u</sup> nh	Beneficiary
94.	Ms. Trang	Beneficiary
95.	Ms. Son	Beneficiary
96.	Ms. Ng <sup>ä</sup> c	Beneficiary
97.	Mr. N <sup>g</sup> ng	Beneficiary
98.	Mr. Th <sup>u</sup> -ng	Beneficiary
99.	Mr. Nghi <sup>u</sup> p	Beneficiary
100.	Ms. Thu	Beneficiary
101.	Ms. Xuy <sup>u</sup> n	Beneficiary
102.	Ms. Thu Ba	Beneficiary
103.	Ms. Nang	Beneficiary
104.	Mr. Nghi <sup>u</sup> p	Chairman of Commune FU - Binhthanhdong
105.	Ms. Thoa	Tan phu district FU staff
106.	Mr. Ngoan	PC Vice-Chairman
107.	Ms. H <sup>u</sup>	Chairman of commune WU
108.	Mr. H <sup>u</sup> -ng	Beneficiary
109.	Ms. Thu <sup>u</sup> n	Beneficiary
110.	Ms. Ho <sup>u</sup> ng	Beneficiary
111.	Ms. E	Beneficiary
112.	Ms. Nghia	Beneficiary

113.	Ms. An	Beneficiary
114.	Ms. A	Beneficiary

## Analysis of Action Programmes (APs)

### I. AP 01 - La Hien commune- Vo Nhai District – Thai Nguyen Province Implementing Partner (IP): Thai Nguyen Women's Union

#### 1. Commune & AP background information

- Total population: \_\_\_\_\_ No. of household: \_\_\_\_\_
- Poverty rate: \_\_\_\_\_
- No. of beneficiaries: 200
- AP activities:
  - Provided training courses on tea planting, pig raising, agriculture techniques (rice and food tree planting) and business development for 320 women beneficiaries;
  - Set up and maintain 2 women clubs;
  - Provided training courses on gender equality for 180 participants including women beneficiaries, village & commune leaders;
  - Cooperated with district bank to provide production loan for 300 women beneficiaries;
  - Conducted a contest on gender equality.

#### 2. AP's major impacts

- Women's capacity on agriculture production was improved;
- Women are able to raise productivities of tea planting, rice production and pig raising;
- Household income of poor family was increased primarily;
- Women beneficiaries can calculate the investment and profit of their production. Some women carefully recorded the investment for each pig farrowed;
- Women understood the gender equality's concepts and advantages. Their communication skill was improved significantly. They are able to convince their husband to share the house work.

#### 3. AP's Strengths

- Women's union staff & IP surveyed the situation of economic development in each village, then came up with suggestions of different activities that are most relevant to women's needs and advantages of the environment such as tea planting, rice farming, and pig raising;
- AP's activities met poor women's need for technical supports as they had never had a chance to participate in any training course;
- AP provided the practical training courses including relevant contents and participatory training methods and the experienced trainers;
- IPs conducted frequent monitoring to training courses and other AP activities;
- Mutual understanding and cooperation between IPs and commune women's union.

#### **4. Areas for improvement & recommendation**

- Refresher trainings and coaching (technical support) are necessary. Women beneficiaries need to be trained more carefully in tea planting. They were not able to remember all the technical inputs after the only three-day course. It is still difficult for them to identify different kind of pests. Women beneficiaries also want to learn more about tea processing technique;
- Participatory method should be used in needs assessment. When designing this AP, IPs and women's union staff selected the training topics for each village based on their situational analysis. The beneficiaries then were asked whether they agree or disagree with the selected training topics;
- AP should raise awareness on gender for men in community. At present, only women and commune and village leaders were trained on gender. It is essential to provide trainings on gender equality for women beneficiary's husband and other men in community. Gender contents should also be included in commune and village's meetings to raise awareness of community people on gender;
- AP needs the significant involvement of commune leaders (PC chairman, farmer union and other association) in its management and implementation. At present, PC chairman did not pay much attention to this AP after assigning Ms. Chin, PC vice-chairwoman to be responsible for its implementation. Additionally, provincial IPs play an important role in AP's implementation such as planning, monitoring, selecting trainers. Commune staff's capacity in AP management & implementation therefore needs to be improved in the next phase;
- Participatory monitoring and evaluation should be introduced in AP management as well. AP's monitoring and evaluation is quite new concept to commune leaders and beneficiaries. They therefore too nervous and hesitate to participate in this evaluation.



## II. AP 02 – Son Phu commune- Dinh Hoa District – Thai Nguyen Province

IP: Thai Nguyen Farmer’s Union

### 1. **Commune & AP background information**

- Total population: No. of household:
  - Poverty rate:
  - No. of beneficiaries: 200
  - AP activities:
- Provided training courses on tea planting and processing for 200 women and cooperative model for 100 women;
  - Provided training courses on gender equality for 160 participants including women beneficiaries, village & commune leaders;
  - Set up and maintain 2 women clubs;
  - Cooperated with district bank to provide production loans for 100 women beneficiaries.

### 2. **AP’s major impacts**

- Women’s capacity on tea production was improved;
- AP helps to raise productivities and quality of tea planting;
- Women beneficiaries primarily raised their household income and improved the living condition such as electric water pump for watering, children’s books and daily food assumption;
- Women beneficiaries can calculate the investment and profit of their tea production. They are also able to compare the profit of different tea breeds after calculating the investment for each breed;
- Women understood the concepts and values of gender equality. Through the improvement in communication technique, some women are able to convince their husband to use new tee breed. They therefore primarily participate in their household’s decision making process;
- Women obtain higher respect from their husbands, commune leaders and community people because of their significant contribution into household’s production and household income;
- Commune leaders committed to capacity building for women;
- Community people become closer to each other.

### 3. **AP’s Strengths**

- AP created a good cooperation among partners to mobilize different resources. Farmer union from provincial, district to commune level cooperated well in providing training courses for beneficiaries (the trainers from provincial and district levels). People’s Committee (PC) chairman supports this AP and participates in its activities. There is also a good coordination between commune women’s union and farmer’s union in beneficiaries selection and AP implementation. Additionally, with good cooperation between farmer union and the companies, beneficiaries could buy fertilizer with the deferred payment. Finally, women beneficiaries also received bank loan for their production with the guarantee of PC and farmer’s union;
- AP was able to provide the diversified and comprehensive interventions to address the issue of women beneficiaries in a systematic way. Beneficiaries

received not only technical inputs (from training courses) but also bank loans and fertilizer for production and technical assistance during their implementation;

- AP's activities met poor women's needs for technical supports in tea planting. Although those people have been planting tea for decades, they have never had a chance to participate in any technical training course;
- Women beneficiaries were trained thoroughly on tea production through different courses from tea planting technique to tee processing tips;
- AP held the practical training courses including relevant contents and participatory training methods and the experienced trainers;
- Women received technical support through the frequent monitoring by district and commune farmer union and agriculture extension worker.

#### **4. Areas for improvement & recommendation**

- Women beneficiary's capacity in credit & saving and household budget management should be improved. Women's production capacity has improved enabling them to increase the household income primarily. However, they need to have better household budget and/ or expenditure management skill. At present, they have not developed the saving habit nor expenditure plan but spent all the income after each tea crop. They even sold the tea product at low price for daily assumption rather than keeping it until the price went up. Therefore women beneficiaries may face the difficulties in risk management;
- Beneficiaries should be trained on market analysis and decision making. Women beneficiary's income depends on the market's price, market's trends and needs. They consequently need to have better understanding on those concepts and the analytical skill in decision making. The women then will be less vulnerable/affected by the market's challenges;
- Improve capacity for commune women's union and women club leaders;
- Participatory monitoring and evaluation should be introduced.

### **III. AP 03.1 – Tien Tho commune - Tien Phuoc District – Quang Nam Province**

**IP:** Quang Nam Women’s Union

#### **1. Commune & AP background information**

- Total population: \_\_\_\_\_ No. of household: \_\_\_\_\_
- Poverty rate:
- No. of beneficiaries: 125
- AP activities:
  - Provided training courses on mushroom growing, book keeping and group management;
  - Set up and maintain women clubs in two villages;
  - Provided training courses on gender equality for women beneficiaries, their husbands and village and commune leaders.

#### **2. AP’s major impacts**

- Women beneficiary were provided with a new earning activity which is mushroom growing;
- Women beneficiary are able to grow mushroom with minimum of one harvest;
- Some women beneficiaries primarily raise their household income;
- Women initially realize the value of gender equality.

#### **3. AP’s Strengths**

- AP provided not only technical input on mushroom growing (through the training) but also coaching (technical support after training) to enable women beneficiaries to grow mushroom. The training course was well designed including the technical inputs and the practice session. Additionally, during the practice session, the trainer based in the commune to provide technical support for beneficiaries. All women beneficiaries therefore can grow mushroom and achieve the initial success and good experience;
- AP provided gender training not only for women beneficiaries but also their husbands with an aim to raise their awareness on gender;
- AP supported the small, initial financial capital (200.000 dong) for women beneficiaries to practice growing mushroom right after the training. This amount was actually the beneficiaries’ allowance for the 10-day training course. However, IPs used it as the initial financial support for their practice. While the result of this initiative was good, IPs should discuss with ILO in advance for the agreement and guidelines for financial clearance. In the training’s financial report, the amount was still claimed as training allowance;
- Provincial IPs also paid regular monitoring trips to the training course and beneficiaries’ households.

#### **4. Areas for improvement & recommendation**

- Selection of beneficiaries should be more pro-poor. The AP has not fully reached the poor women. Many women beneficiaries come from better-off families. This problem is caused by inappropriate selection method. AP

activities were only introduced in Women's Union meetings, which the poorest women rarely attend. The unclear objectives and target groups of AP also made poor women hesitant to participate. When hearing the message, "The women's club is for those who want to grow mushrooms, who are in a difficult situation but are hard-working", poor women felt uncertain, since they did not have any straw to grow mushrooms;

- Gender awareness among beneficiaries and community people should be reinforced. Women and men beneficiaries in this AP have not understood gender equality precisely and thoroughly. They need an additional training on gender and/ or the practical discussions in the women club meeting;
- For its sustainability, the AP should focus on (1) Improving management capacity for commune women's union, especially capacity to coordinate and mobilize resources; and (2) Attaining further support from PC and other commune staff. Currently, PC chairman does not pay much attention to the AP's implementation, beside the approval in women's loan application form. Consequently, the AP also does not receive support from farmer union and agriculture extension;
- Regarding sustainability, AP should also have trainers and technical assistance from district or commune levels. The provincial trainer invited by IPs cannot work in community longer than his contract so beneficiaries will face difficulties in finding technical support during their production/cultivation. Representatives from farmer union, women's union and beneficiaries therefore should be trained intensively in mushroom growing. They then provide technical support for women beneficiaries when necessary. AP should also cooperate with the experience and skillful agriculture engineers from district level. They will be resource people to provide technical assistance for beneficiaries as they worked closely with community people;
- AP should also consider the advantage and disadvantage of distributing the allowance for members in women club meeting. The amount of 20.000 dong may badly affect member's participation in the future when AP do not have any financial support from donor.

**IV. AP 03.2 – Tien My commune- Tien Phuoc District – Quang Nam Province**  
**IP: Quang Nam Women’s Union**

**1. Commune & AP background information**

- Total population: No. of household:
- Poverty rate:
- No. of beneficiaries: 100
- AP activities:
  - Provided a training course on mushroom growing;
  - Set up and maintain women clubs in two villages;
  - Provided training courses on gender equality for women beneficiaries, their husbands and village and commune leaders.

**1. AP’s major impacts**

- Women beneficiary were provided with a new earning activity which is mushroom growing;
- All women beneficiary practiced to grow successfully at least one crop of mushroom;
- Women beneficiaries become closer to each other. They provided self-help and cooperate well with each other;
- Women beneficiaries primarily increase their household income;
- Women initially realize the value of gender equality.

**2. AP’s Strengths**

- AP obtains the support of PC and good cooperation with other commune staff (farmer union);
- Beneficiaries received frequent monitoring and technical support by provincial IP, PC chairman, women union and farmer union staff;
- Commune PC, women union and farmer union cooperate well with district agriculture department to provide technical inputs for beneficiaries every quarter (in the women club meeting)
- AP provided not only technical input on mushroom growing (through the training) but also coaching (technical support after training) to enable women beneficiaries to grow mushroom. The training course was well designed with the technical inputs and the practice session. Additionally, during the practice session, the trainer was based in the commune to provide technical support for beneficiaries. All women beneficiaries therefore can grow mushroom and achieved the initial success and good experience;
- AP provided gender training not only to women beneficiaries but also their husbands with an aim to raise awareness on gender;
- AP supported the small and initial financial capital (200.000 dong) for women beneficiaries to practice growing mushroom right after the training. This amount was actually the beneficiaries’ allowance for the 10-day training course. However, IPs used it as the initial financial support for their practice. While the result of this initiative was good, IPs should discuss with ILO in advance for the agreement and guidelines for financial clearance. In the training’s financial report, the amount was still claimed as training allowance.

### **3. Areas for improvement & recommendation**

- Selection of beneficiaries should be more pro-poor. The AP has not fully reached the poor women. Many women beneficiaries come from better-off or even rich families. This problem is caused by inappropriate selection method. AP activity was only introduced in Women's Union meetings, which the poorest women rarely attend. The unclear objectives and target groups of AP also made poor women hesitant to participate. When hearing the message, "The women's club is for those who want to grow mushrooms, who are in a difficult situation but are hard-working", poor women felt uncertain, since they did not have any straw to grow mushrooms;
- Gender awareness among beneficiaries and community people should be reinforced. Women and men beneficiaries in this AP have not understood precisely and thoroughly on gender equality. They need an additional training on gender and/ or the practical discussions in the women club meetings;
- AP should consider the participation of men in the women club meetings;
- For its sustainability, AP should have resource trainers and technical assistance from district or commune levels. The provincial trainer invited by IPs cannot work in community longer than his contract so beneficiaries will face difficulties in finding technical support during their production/cultivation. Representatives from farmer union, women's union and beneficiaries therefore should be trained intensively in mushroom growing. They then provide technical support for women beneficiaries when necessary. AP should also cooperate with the experience and skillful agriculture engineers from district level. They will be resource people to provide technical assistance for beneficiaries as they worked closely with community people;
- AP should also consider the advantage and disadvantage of distributing the allowance for members in women club meeting, regarding its sustainability. The amount of 20.000 dong may badly affect member's participation in the future when AP does not have any financial support from donor.

V. **AP 04 – Phu Tho commune - Que Son District – Quang Nam Province**  
**IP: Quang Nam Cooperative Alliance**

**1. Commune & AP background information**

- Total population: 6,200 people                      No. of household: 1,600
- Poverty rate: 21%
- No. of beneficiaries: 100
- AP activities:
  - Provided training courses on hay planting and business development;
  - Set up and maintain women clubs in one village;
  - Provided training courses on gender equality for women beneficiaries, village & commune leaders;
  - Cooperated with district bank to provide women beneficiaries with the production loan.

**2. AP’s major impacts**

- Women beneficiaries are able to plant hay/grass which they have not done before;
- Beneficiaries households have grass for their cow and primarily raised income through selling grass;
- Some women started their small business and attain initial successes;
- Women beneficiaries initially can calculate the investment and profit of their production;
- Women understood the concepts and values of gender equality. Through the improvement in communication technique, some women are able to convince their husband to share the housework.

**3. AP’s Strengths**

- AP is able to reach the poor and poorest people due to its thorough selection method. Prior to the AP, women union staff and IPs visited women’s households (focusing on the poor and poorest households) to introduce the hay planting activity (its objectives and advantages); and to check the family’s ideas toward the new activity. The hamlet’s meeting was held, sometimes after that, to select poor families willing to practice hay planting. Many poor women volunteer to participate in this new activity after thinking carefully and discussing with other family members;
- This AP’s daily activity is managed by district and commune WU staff. They participated in AP management, under the guidelines and supervision of provincial IPs, from beneficiaries selection, training organization, monitoring the beneficiary’s application and women club’s meetings. Through participating in this AP, their capacity in project management will be improved which is good preparation for AP’s sustainability. Both of them were paid to do those tasks (We will discuss this point in the sustainability);
- The AP also cooperates with the district bank to provide production loan for women. Beneficiaries then received not only technical inputs but also bank loan to buy a cow.

#### **4. Areas for improvement & recommendation**

- Participatory method should be used in need assessment and AP design decision making. AP activities were mainly suggested and decided by provincial IP, district and key commune staff. Community people were not involved in the decision making process. As a results, only 13 out of 100 women attending business training start doing business. Other trainees still hesitate as business is totally new to them. Some women prefer to be trained in raising animals;
- AP should focus on coaching activity to ensure the impact of the business training course. After the business training, it is necessary to have coaching activity to facilitate the beneficiaries' application as it is new to community women. At present, not many women thought they could apply the business concepts in their daily production activities but only in doing business. In addition, beneficiaries' application plan should be set up in the last day of the course to make sure every trainee is clear about their follow-up activities. As a result, women beneficiaries will learn (through sharing and discussion) more clearly about the application possibilities of business knowledge and skills;
- AP should set up women clubs on "women interested in business". Currently, women attending business development have not formed the club as they have not received bank loan. Those women then lack opportunities to discuss the application plan/ideas or to learn from each other's experience;
- IPs and commune staff should cooperate with district bank to provide the loans for women attending the business training course. Some of them have been waiting for the bank loan for several months to start and/or expand their business;
- AP should focus on capacity building for commune staff and women beneficiaries. Commune staff's management skills including situation analysis, decision making and monitoring should be strengthened. Those practical working skill will enable them to manage the AP and other project in the future. Additionally, women beneficiaries should be trained on saving and household budget management which are critical for them not only in bank loan repayment but also maximize the impact of business training.



## **VI. AP 05 – Binh Thanh Dong commune- Tan Phu District – An Giang Province**

**IP:** An Giang Farmer's Union

### **1. Commune & AP background information**

- Total population: 15,060 people                      No. of household: 3,208
- Poverty rate: 4,09%
- No. of beneficiaries: 100
- AP activities:
  - Provided training courses on mushroom growing, soybean and papaya planting;
  - Set up and maintain women clubs in two villages;
  - Provided training courses on gender equality for women beneficiaries, village & commune leaders.

### **2. AP's major impacts**

- 8 women primarily practiced to grow mushroom successfully;
- Household income of those 8 families initially was increased.

### **3. AP's Strengths**

- AP introduced a new and relevant earning activity for farmers having a big rice farm. Farmers in this commune have a lot of straw after harvesting. Before joining the AP, and being trained on mushroom growing, those people just burned all the straw. Currently, they know how to use straw for growing mushroom. In addition, they can sell mushroom in community easily. All those women therefore are willing to continue to grow mushroom in the next harvest;
- AP has commitment of district and commune farmer union. District farmer union staff pledges to organize the refreshment training on mushroom growing for poor women. Additionally, commune farmer union is willing to learn carefully on mushroom growing in order to provide technical support for women beneficiaries when necessary.

### **4. Areas for improvement & recommendation**

- Participatory decision making is necessary in this AP. Provincial IPs selected the intervention based on their analysis and assumption and not based on people's needs. IPs then decided to provide trainings on mushroom growing, soybean and papaya which are not relevant with the majority people's condition. After attending the training courses on planting, many landless women therefore cannot apply anything. Among trainee women, only a few of them can practice growing mushroom;
- Participatory training methods should be applied to ensure the training results. Women beneficiaries hardly to remember the content and technique which they were trained. During the training, they had no chance to practice the planting techniques but just listen to trainer's presentation and observe the demonstration. In addition, the fact that too many participants (around 50 people) in the class also made women beneficiaries unable to learn effectively;

- AP should provide refresher training and technical support after the training courses. During the mushroom growing season, women beneficiaries could not access the trainers for technical support as he worked at the provincial level. Consequently, there was no technical staff to help them solving the technical problems when they grew mushroom. Almost seven months after the training course, a group of women in Binh Quoi village has not practiced growing mushroom. They really need refresher training before growing. During the training, those women must have a chance to practice and learn by doing;
- AP should promote gender equality and women empowerment. In this AP, one man who is a husband of a woman beneficiary- was assigned to lead the model of growing mushrooms and consequently received many technical inputs from the trainer. His wife's capacity, however, was not improved as she just followed his instructions and assignments. By doing that, the AP did not promote gender equality and women empowerment as the project's objective.

## **VI. AP 06 – An Thanh Trung commune- Cho Moi District – An Giang Province**

**IP:** An Giang Women's Union

### **1. Commune & AP background information:**

- Total population: \_\_\_\_\_ No. of household: \_\_\_\_\_
- Poverty rate:
- No. of beneficiaries:
- AP activities:
  - Provided training courses on tailoring and pig raising;
  - Set up and maintain women clubs in two villages;
  - Provided training courses on gender equality for women beneficiaries, village & commune leaders;
  - Cooperated with the bank to provide women beneficiaries with the production loan.

### **2. AP's major impacts**

- Women's capacity on pig raising was improved;
- Women beneficiaries are able to raise productivities of pig raising and pig quality;
- AP helps to raise household income of poor families and improve their living condition primarily;
- Young women from poor and very poor household have a new job/earning activity which is tailoring;
- Women beneficiaries understand about the gender concepts.

### **3. AP's Strengths**

- AP built up a great commitment and good cooperation among partners to mobilize different resources. While district bank provides loan for women beneficiaries, the provincial PC provides sewing machines, commune women's union provides training venue, and commune PC tries their best to find job for young women;
- AP's activity met women's need for technical inputs in pig raising; Women beneficiaries are happy with the useful techniques from piglet selection to proper feeding;
- The vocational training was conducted in community. Young women from poor and poorest families, who cannot travel to the town, therefore were trained on a new job in the local community;
- Women beneficiaries received not only technical inputs but also bank loan. As a result, they can apply what they learned in raising pig;
- AP receives close monitoring and practical support from provincial IPs.

### **4. Areas for improvement & recommendation**

- Provincial IPs should conduct feasibility study and sustainability study before conducting the training on tailoring. 50 young women in one commune were trained on tailoring at the same time. Although the training course was successful and the trainees can work as tailors, it is hard to find a job. They can not find jobs either in the garment factories or in foreign companies because they have not been trained in the industrial sewing

machines but in the normal one. They also can not open the tailor shop since there are many tailors in one commune. In addition, some of them are still too young (14 – 16 years old). Provincial IPs therefore should conduct the market survey to find out the need for tailoring before providing training course. They then can decide the number of people should be trained and which machines should be used in training.