Project Proposal

Project for training local cadres on participatory poverty reduction methods

Receiver: Steering Committee for the Vietnam’s National Program for Hunger Eradication and Poverty Reduction

Initiator: The LPRV project, National Centre for Social Sciences and Humanities
1. LPRV introduction:

The project Localized Poverty Reduction in Vietnam is a cooperative project between Vietnam and Canada. It was developed to achieve the objectives of building self-sustaining capacity for researchers to develop and teach low-cost, participatory policy assessment and project planning methods that are effective in generating appropriate solutions to localized poverty.

LPRV partners, on the Vietnamese side, are the National Centre for Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Thai Nguyen, University of Vinh, University of Dalat, University of Hue, and University for Social Sciences and Humanities in Ho Chi Minh City. University of British Columbia and University of Laval also join the project as the Canadian side. Project directors are Professor Nguyen Duy Quy, Director of the NCSSH; and Professor Terry McGee of UBC.

The LPRV program has been developed for five years, from 1998 to 2002. During the first several years of operation, it focused on the formation of Centers for Poverty Reduction at each Vietnamese partner university. This is the time of building and promoting the relations of information exchanges with the Vietnam’s National Program for Hunger Eradication and Poverty Reduction and other organizations for local poverty reduction.

2. Foundation of Cooperation

One of the main objectives of the LPRV program is to make a significant contribution to the course of poverty reduction in Vietnam in terms of methodology and experience. Despite having existed for several years, the tie-ins between the LPRV program and the Vietnam’s National Program for Hunger Eradication and Poverty Reduction are mainly in the form of information exchanges. So far, based on the project results, after the discussion with the office of the Vietnam’s National Program for Hunger Eradication and Poverty Reduction, realistic foundations for a full cooperation between the two sides have been found. They are the experiences that LPRV has derived from research and training activities on poverty reduction. The detailed results are as follows:

- Seven teaching materials on participatory poverty reduction method have been developed. They will be taught for students in various departments of the LPRV Vietnamese universities.

- Actual experience and lessons that have been derived from projects for poverty reduction in ten pilot communes. Project members have gathered and drawn experience in defining causes of poverty reduction, building development plans for communes, hamlets, designing and implementing participatory projects for poverty reduction.

- The capability of research, teaching and training on participatory poverty reduction method of many lecturers and students at the LPRV Vietnamese universities has been improved.

At each LPRV Vietnamese university, a Center for Poverty Reduction was established and put into operation each with ten official members who work as lecturers, and many collaborators who work at local authorities. With the function of coordinating activities of the five LPRV Vietnamese universities, a Coordinating Center for Poverty
Reduction was also founded at the Vietnam’s National Center for Social Sciences and Humanities.

2. Training cadres for poverty reduction

An urgent requirement for localized poverty reduction is to promote knowledge and skills of cadres to implement poverty reduction activities. Awareness of local cadres needs updating on issues related to localised poverty reduction activities, policies of the Vietnam Communist Party, the central government, policies of the Vietnam’s National Program and skills and methods of building and implementing projects for poverty reduction. In spite of being improved, the professional knowledge of local cadres, for many reasons, is still weak, especially in terms of specific methods and skills relating to inspecting, assessing the situation of poverty and hunger, building and implementing projects for poverty reduction.

Due to this situation, government authorities and ministries have paid special attention to building the poverty reduction capacity of cadres working for MOLISA.

To realise this policy, the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) has held many activities to foster and improve professional skills for cadres of poverty reduction. One of these activities is the formation of the Center for Training Cadres of Poverty Reduction in the Northern Mountainous Areas which was established in Viet Tri, in June, 2001. Additionally, a Center for Training Cadres of Poverty Reduction will also be established in Thanh Hoa province in 2001.

Further, MOLISA also aims to fundamentally train the people who implement poverty reduction activities by teaching the program of hunger eradication and poverty reduction to students of the College for Labour and Social Affairs. This policy began with the training classes which were held for teachers and lecturers of the College for Labour and Social Affairs on poverty reduction skills in September, 2001.

To summarize, training and fostering cadres for hunger eradication and poverty reduction is now an urgent requirement. It means available resources and experience need to be gathered in order to train cadres for hunger eradication and poverty reduction. Target is to mobilize maximum resources of knowledge and money to multiply and diversify training and strengthen knowledge of cadres of poverty reduction, especially in local areas.

3. Participatory method in poverty reduction

Various methods can be applied to reduce poverty. However, participatory methods that mobilize the participation of local people, especially of the poor have significant advantages. The most important of which is to raise the sense of initiative and activeness of the poor. This method allows the poor not only to participate but also to voice their opinions in analyzing the situation of poverty reduction, planning, implementing and tracking projects for poverty reduction. It makes a considerable contribution to promoting the capacity of the poor and consistently maintaining projects’ activities.
In Vietnam, participatory methods are not completely new. There are the precepts of “the three together” (eat together, live together and work together with poor peasants in land reform) and of “people know, people discuss, people do, people examine”. Due to the requirements of implementing regulations of democracy in rural areas, these precepts have taken a vital role in community activities in general and poverty reduction in particular.

Detailed skills, forms and methods to carry out the precept of “people know, people discuss, people do, people examine” in order to realize the regulations of democracy and promote the effectiveness of activities of localized hunger eradication and poverty reduction are the targets of the LPRV project. At present, the LPRV project has accumulated some good and detailed experience in this field. That’s why participatory poverty reduction methods are selected as the main theme for developing the capacity of local cadres.

4. Project proposal

This proposal has been developed based on the necessity of cooperation among sides that are concerned with cadre training on hunger eradication and poverty reduction. In addition, it is also initiated based on the idea of cooperation to promote available resources of related organizations.

Project name: Training local cadres on participatory poverty reduction method.

Coordinator: The LPRV project, including the Coordinating Center for Poverty Reduction - Vietnam’s National Center for Social Sciences and Humanities - and the five Centers for Poverty Reduction at University of Thai Nguyen, University of Vinh, University of Hue, University for Social Sciences and Humanities in Ho Chi Minh City and University of Dalat.

Objectives:

- Promotion of local cadres’ skill on participatory method in poverty reduction.
- Development of training materials for participatory method for local cadres to broadly use in poverty reduction.
- Using experience of local cadres in order to enrich teaching materials.

Main activities of the project:

1. Develop the training materials on participatory poverty reduction method for local cadres. Based on the seven teaching materials for students, compile training material with suitable content and method for training local cadres to meet the requirements of the Vietnam’s National Program for Hunger Eradication and Poverty Reduction.

2. Hold experimental training courses to complete the training materials on contents and methods.
3. Apply the training materials in order to hold training courses on participatory poverty reduction method for leaders of communes that are the objects of the Vietnam’s National Program for Hunger Eradication and Poverty Reduction.

4. Assess the contents, methods, and appropriateness of the training materials for local cadres.

5. Print and distribute the materials for broader use.

**Objects of the project:**

Local cadres, especially commune leaders, will be the key objects of the project. In addition, some leaders of the district who directly track poverty reduction activities will receive appropriate attentions of the project. Students for each class will be determined later based on local specific requirements.

**Scope and duration of the project:**

The project will be implemented over the course of 5 years, 2001-2005. The first year that detailed activities of the project are implemented will be 2002.

The scope of the project spans five provinces (cities) where the five LPRV universities are located. It can be broadened to other provinces, according to location distributions and requirements of the Vietnam’s National Program.

**The detailed plan for each year is shown in the below table:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Field of action</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Develop the materials</td>
<td>At the five Vietnamese universities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Hold five experimental training courses and complete the materials</td>
<td>Vietnamese universities and Thai Nguyen, Vinh, Hue, Ho Chi Minh City and Dalat.</td>
<td>May assess and print for the first time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Hold 10 training courses</td>
<td>May-be in the five above provinces/cities or will be determined later according to the requirements of the Vietnam’s National Program for Hunger Eradication and Poverty Reduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Hold 10 training courses</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Hold 10 training courses</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Expected results of the project**

- A training material on participatory poverty reduction method may be applied for educating local cadres and people who are interested in poverty reduction.
• After taking training courses, about 900 - 1000 local cadres can practise participatory methods in defining real situations of poverty reduction, in designing, planning and implementing projects for poverty reduction, etc.

• Formation of a framework of training programs for local cadres with appropriate training methods that may be applied to other contents of fostering and training.

• Completion and improvement of training methods for poverty reduction and community development for lecturers, faculty in universities.

5. Training course

Specific agenda and contents of training classes will be determined later in the process of developing and completing the training materials. Proposed program for the training courses will be as follows:

Training course: Participatory poverty reduction method.

Duration: 4 days
Major methods: Opinion exchange, discussion, situation settlement.
Class amount: 25-30 students
Lecturers: Some members of Centers for Poverty Reductions at the five Vietnamese universities and people who participated in building seven LPRV’s teaching materials.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 1 Morning</td>
<td>Opening ceremony, self introductions, and introductions on the objectives, methods and agenda of the training course. Subject 1. Thorough information about the 2001 - 2010 poverty reduction strategy and the 2001 - 2005 poverty reduction program. Subject 2. Introduction on participatory method: its necessity, meanings, contents and connections.</td>
<td>Situation exercises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>Subject 3. Examination and assessment on the actual situation of poverty and hunger; identification of poverty and hunger causes; Emphasis of methods which attract the poor to participate through discussion and situation settlement.</td>
<td>May have practical exercise in group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 2, Morning</td>
<td>Subject 4. Making plans for hamlet or village development and for poverty reduction. Practice building a plan for poverty reduction.</td>
<td>Similar methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>Subject 5: Gender in poverty reduction. Discuss methods of gender analysis in poverty reduction activities through specific examples.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 3, Morning</td>
<td>Subject 6: Implementation of poverty reduction projects. Implementation steps and specific requirements that ensure the participation of the poor.</td>
<td>Similar methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>Subject 7: Tracking, assessment and summation of projects for poverty reduction. Building assessment criteria and keeping participatory tracking.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 4</td>
<td>Subject 8. Practice of a specific lesson: for example, define the Practise in group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Subject</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>causes of hunger and poverty at a commune through meeting and opinion exchanging with the poor.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>Subject 9. Major obstacles when participatory method is applied and overcoming solutions. Final section: Class assessment and summation</td>
<td></td>
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