



REPORT OF INDEPENDENT FINAL EVALUATION



ILO/JAPAN ASIAN REGIONAL PROGRAMME ON EXPANSION OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN (EEOW) - VIET NAM CHAPTER -



by

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ILO Office in Viet Nam, Ha Noi
ILO Subregional Office for East Asia, Bangkok
ILO/Japan Multi-Bilateral Programme

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the final evaluation of the EOW project in Vietnam. The project was approved in 2002 but many elements did not become operational until 2003, and new project sites were opened as recently as 2006. A mid-term evaluation in 2004 focused on implementation issues and made a number of recommendations which led to adjustments in the project. As the evaluation team started its work, the project was informed that a 20-month extension had been approved. This offered the opportunity for the evaluation to make concrete and specific recommendations for the project's final phase, as well as drawing conclusions about the overall intent and impact of the project to inform subsequent projects.

The evaluation is focused on the results achieved by the project in each of its three 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, coordinating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policies and programmes in respect to women's employment promotion and empowerment;
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.

A review of the findings shows that the project has had significant and positive impacts in terms of the first two objectives. One definition of empowerment states "Empowerment is the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives"¹. Hence, increased empowerment of women should be visible in terms of both increased assets of women (incomes, knowledge) and their capacity to use their assets to influence others to achieve their own interests. Income data collected in the evaluation shows that incomes have increased, and the increase has been greater in areas where the project provided training. Reports from the Action Programmes indicate that households involved in the project have increased their incomes to the point that they no longer figure on the official list of poor households, thus helping to achieve commune and provincial goals for poverty reduction as well as the objectives of the project. Reports from beneficiaries, local leaders and implementing partners supports a conclusion that women have gained confidence and greater authority, and are taking more active roles in their families and communities due to their increased knowledge and the experience they have gained in public participation. In terms of the second objective, improving the capacities of implementing partners, they report that they have built new skills and are using them successfully in their ongoing work as well as for activities related to the projects.

¹Narayan, 2002, p. 14 quoted in Some Analytical Issues In Measuring Empowerment For The Poor, With Concern For Community And Local Governance, Norman Uphoff, 2003, presented at the Workshop on "Measuring Empowerment: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives" held at the World Bank in Washington, DC on February 4 and 5, 2003.

In the first three cycles of the Action Programmes in the project, the planned number of attendees for all training sessions held were 1,800, 2,462, and 4,670 respectively. The actual number of attendees (up to the end of 2005 only) were 7,515 (including 942 men)². More analytical data on the number of participants (as in most cases individual participants attended more than one training), the different combinations of training received by each, the length of their involvement with the programme, and impacts on their income and other empowerment measures would be useful in drawing lessons.

Efforts were made to advocate for acceptance and broader adoption of the project approach at the provincial and national levels. Impacts are difficult to assess at the national level, but changes in knowledge, behavior and practice can be observed at the provincial and to some extent at ministerial levels. The project has documented its activities, has featured successes in a number of documentary films, and produced an important new resource in a revised Vietnamese manual (GET Ahead) for women's entrepreneurship which other development projects and the implementing partners have found useful and intend to continue to use. During the evaluation it was understood that the implementation initially focused on the first two objectives of the project, intending to draw lessons and develop a strategy for policy advocacy as the project rolled out. The project extension offers a good opportunity to further consolidate and analyze the lessons of the individual action programme, to identify the individuals and organizations that have the capacity to implement good models as part of their ongoing policies and programmes, and to advocate for broader adoption of the project's models.

The project was intended to focus on empowerment, and to draw lessons about that as the basis of advocacy. Effective advocacy is grounded in understanding the needs and interests of key stakeholders, and the context within which messages may be received. While the project was not solely oriented towards improved incomes and better means of instruction, these were elements critical to achieving greater empowerment of women in the action programmes. Because poverty reduction is a major agenda item in Vietnam, the project's strategy for policy advocacy could focus on lessons that are immediately applicable and of interest to that agenda (raising incomes, for example), that have as an additional, welcome quality achieving improved gender equality and empowerment for women.

Another feature of the Action Programmes that could be helpful for national policy advocacy has been the experience that training women in improved agricultural techniques appears to lead to a higher rate of retention and dissemination than training for men only: in the action programmes, women who are trained in new techniques overwhelmingly report that they immediately train their family members, friends and neighbours. This has implications for the selection of trainees in Agricultural Extension and other services already provided. Similarly, the project has tested in-depth, longer term, participatory training (rather than lecture style) – if the retention and subsequent application rates are significantly higher, this could lead to changes in the basis on which training funds are allocated (currently the target numbers of trainees and costs for provincial training budgets are calculated based on short, lecture style training). Another useful policy lesson from the project is that training of local leaders, non-Women's Union mass organizations and local men in gender equality has impacts in terms of how planning and resource allocation is done, and in how family violence is understood and dealt with at the local level. These ideas have the potential to impact how government and other programmes are structured and financed, and are relevant to current Vietnam policy concerns.

² See Appendix 7

Poverty reduction and promotion of gender equality in planning processes at all levels (including Village Development Plans) are high profile agendas in Vietnam. The Hunger Eradication and Poverty Reduction (HEPR) programme, a government initiative first launched in 1992, has now become the focus for donor support to Vietnam. Village and Commune Development Plans (VDP and CDP) are basic required processes and serve to channel national and provincial training, development and HEPR funds at the local level. It is therefore logical to assume that the target for objective 3 of the project would be the key policies and stakeholders driving HEPR and local plans. The HEPR programme is undoubtedly interested in learning about more effective strategies to improve incomes; the National Employment Promotion Programme (NEP) is certainly interested in finding new methods to improve the effectiveness of vocational training for farmers; and all levels of government are under obligations (under the National Committee for the Advancement of Women in Vietnam (NCFAW)) to address gender equality in their programmes. This project should produce information that assists local authorities and national policies to be more effective in improving women's incomes and status.

There is scope to further improve the connections between the project and these major national programmes. The Department of Labour and Employment (DLE) of MOLISA is the key partner of the project, while the Social Protection Department (SPD) is responsible for HEPR. Although the SPD is now (following efforts by the project to secure their involvement) represented on the project's Project Advisory Committee (PAC), the link is still weak. The mid-term review suggested working more closely with other UN agencies and government related poverty reduction/gender equality programmes, and this emphasis should be continued in the remaining term of the project. Means to make the project's findings and its advocacy more visible to HEPR management are needed and should be explored during the project extension.

This evaluation may also suggest a further lesson for the ILO's approach to technical cooperation in general. This project was universally described by partners and local leaders as small in size, and by working with a range of different partners in scattered locations it was inherently limited in its capacity to effectively scale-up and therefore have good information on the practicality of a larger scale version. While it has collected information on the project activities and results, there is little comparative information (such as the comparative cost and effectiveness of different training approaches – those normally used and the ones tested in the project). A question for future ILO technical cooperation projects (with relatively small funds) intended to demonstrate more effective approaches is whether they might be structured as 'value added' elements to one or more existing initiatives. A project like EEOW Vietnam could for example be designed specifically to test whether certain approaches (training in gender equality, participatory training approaches, small business orientation, etc.) improved the effectiveness of existing poverty reduction strategies. Conceiving of a project in this way might more effectively ensure buy-in from the intended audience, and provide a broader reference framework for testing the marginal impacts of the new approaches. Such an approach would be highly consistent with the drive towards greater UN integration and with the principles of gender mainstreaming. It must however be acknowledged that the project in Vietnam arose out of a specific history of discussion and partnership, and was designed to best fit the prevailing circumstances.

The present evaluation recommends a number of concrete steps to take to ensure that quality lessons can be drawn from the work that has taken place, and that they will find a hearing where they may have an influence. The larger question of how to structure relatively small projects, such as this one, to maximize their impact remains as a challenge to the ILO.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AG	An Giang
AP	Action Programme
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DLE	Department of Labour and Employment
DOLISA	Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
EEOW	Expansion of Employment Opportunities for Women
FU	Farmer Union
HEPR	Hunger Eradication and Poverty Reduction
ILO	International Labour Organization
IP	Implementing Partner
MHLW	Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
NEP	National Employment Promotion
NPC	National Project Coordinator
PAC	Project Advisory Committee
PC	People's Committee
QN	Quang Nam
ILO-ROAP	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
ILO SRO-BKK	Subregional Office for East Asia, Bangkok
TN	Thai Nguyen
TOT	Training of Trainers
VCA	Vietnam Cooperative Alliance
VLSS	Vietnam Living Standard Survey
VN	Vietnam
WU	Women Union

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the finding of the scheduled final evaluation of the project ILO/Japan Asian Regional Programme on Expansion of Employment Opportunities for Women (EEOW), Vietnam Chapter (EEOW VN). The implementation of the project was reviewed in-depth in the mid-term review of December 2004. This report, therefore, focuses on the extent to which the stated objectives of the project were achieved. The project staff were informed at the time this review started, in late November 2006, that the project would be extended for a further 20 months after its scheduled end date of December 2006. This allowed the evaluation team to consider both the achievements of the project and lessons for further replication or adoption by national bodies, and issues to be addressed in the final stage of the project.

The objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Assess the project's progress towards achieving its objectives
- Identify and document the project's good practices which brought positive impacts on the lives of women and other key stakeholders
- Identify lessons learned and key strategies on women economic and social empowerment for future use by the project's partner organizations and possible other actors.

The evaluation team consisted of

Nguyen Van Hung. Mr. Hung was programme manager for Plan International in Hanoi for 5.5 years, serving as a gender coordinator for Plan in Viet Nam. He has developed and managed projects on vocational training, income generation for the poor and gender equality, including training on gender mainstreaming for Plan staff and partners in Viet Nam. He has also worked for the ADB and on many evaluations, including a final evaluation for ILO/IPEC in November 2005.

Hoang Thuy Lan. Ms. Lan is the Director of the Research Centre for Family Health and Community Development, a Hanoi-based NGO. She is experienced in managing community-based projects on gender promotion and income generation and has been involved in many evaluations, including the final evaluation for the ILO project "Better jobs for young women" in December 2003.

Anne Richmond. Ms. Richmond is the ILO Skills Development Specialist for the ILO in East Asia, based in the ILO Bangkok Office. She has an extensive background in Canada as a manager of government policies and programmes for women's equality and skills development and spent four years in ILO's PROGRAM and BUDGET Department before moving to the field.

Project Background

Following the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, the ILO has further strengthened its efforts to mainstream gender concerns at all levels within the work of the organization. Within this context, a number of gender-specific programmes and projects were launched including the ILO/Japan Asian Regional Programme on Expansion of Employment Opportunities for Women (EEOW). This project was launched in Indonesia and Nepal in 1997, in Thailand in 2000 and it was expanded to Cambodia and Vietnam in 2002.

EEOW Vietnam has been officially operational since December 2002. The project aims to contribute to the national efforts to alleviate poverty and promote opportunities and a 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.

The immediate objectives of the project are:

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, 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 EEOW community-based employment promotion and poverty reduction schemes for purpose of policy advocacy at the national level.

The EEOW's strategies are:

1. Direct assistance to poor women and their families for demonstration purposes

Six Implementing Partners (IPs) were selected to implement community-based Action Programmes in 7 communes in Thai Nguyen, Quang Nam and An Giang provinces. The IPs were:

- Thai Nguyen: Women's Union (La Hien commune) and Farmer's Union (Son Phu commune)
- Quang Nam: Women's Union (Tien My and Tien Phuoc commune) and Cooperative Alliance (Phu Tho commune)
- An Giang: Women's Union (An Thanh Trung and An Son communes) and Farmer's Union

In December 2003, the IPs started their Action Programmes (APs) which included various activities such as raising gender awareness, carrying out training on agricultural extension and processing techniques, and vocational and business skills, and establishing and maintaining women's groups in selected villages.

2. Institutional strengthening and capacity building of partner organizations

The project carried out training materials development, training workshops and technical backstopping missions to strengthen IP capacities in implementing their Action Programmes effectively. The training topics included participatory training of trainers, gender awareness raising, gender equality promotion through gender mainstreaming, gender and life skills and fundamental rights at work and in life, gender and enterprise development, participatory project design, monitoring and evaluation, and safe work.

3. Policy advocacy and development

It was planned that experiences from the EEOW's community-based Action Programmes would be the basis for developing policy recommendations and replicating good practices. Studies were carried out by MOLISA in the 3 provinces at the start of the project and another study is currently being carried out by MOLISA in these provinces to assess the gender dimension of existing policies/programmes on employment promotion

and poverty alleviation with a view to inform policy makers on removing structural constraints faced by women and men and improving their access to quality employment opportunities. Upon the request of MOLISA, the project also recently supported dialogue among labour institutions and gender networks to review employment and labour issues in a draft new Gender Equality Law.

At the end of 2004, the project carried out a mid-term evaluation to assess the project's progress and achievements. The mid-term evaluation identified many positive impacts among poor women and officials of the Implementing Partners and identified good practices as well as some areas for improving the project's sustainability. These included increased involvement of the Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (DOLISA) in AP management, increased application of the participatory approach, further strengthening local capacities on gender mainstreaming and participatory project design, monitoring and evaluation, and enhancing the training capacity among the IPs' staff through refresher courses. The project work plan for 2005 addressed these recommendations, and in 2006, upon the request of various stakeholders, the project started to further extend successful strategies, for example it is now working with the national Vietnam Women's Union to replicate EOW good practices in Nam Dinh, Thai Binh, and Lam Dong on a pilot basis.

Evaluation Approach

Because the mid-term evaluation had looked in considerable detail at the Action Programmes and the status of implementation, this evaluation focused on the results achieved. This had four linked purposes: first, to establish the effectiveness of the project approach and implementation in terms of concrete impact to improve women's lives; secondly to explore the capacity of partner organizations and others to adopt, adapt and use the various tools and approaches piloted to better address women's needs in their ongoing programming; thirdly to establish a body of evidence to support advocacy for national policies and programmes; and finally to consider issues of sustainability and adoption in the Vietnamese national context.

The evaluators therefore established four areas within which they would seek evidence of results, oriented around the three objectives of the project and the sustainability issue:

1. Empowering women
2. Building capacity of national organizations
3. Policy and advocacy
4. Sustainability and replication

Key informants for the evaluation were:

- Women beneficiaries who participate in the project activities (clubs, training, etc.)
- Husbands of women beneficiaries
- Poor women who are not project beneficiaries
- Leaders of commune people's committees
- Leaders of women's union and mass organizations at village and commune level in project communes
- Implementing partners at the provincial level
- Partners at the provincial level (DOLISA)

- Partners at the national level (MOLISA, Women's Union)
- ILO project staff
- ILO staff of related projects in Ha Noi office.

Information was obtained from three main sources:

- **A desk review** of project materials and documents, including the original proposal and mid term review, as well as the annual Action Programme proposals from each Implementing Partner
- **Field study:** the evaluation team applied a participatory approach to the field study, using the following tools and methods (mainly qualitative techniques):
 - Focus group discussion with women beneficiaries, their husbands, commune leaders and related stakeholders (including ILO staff and partners) at the provincial and national level
 - In depth interviews were used to collect information from beneficiaries, commune leaders and related stakeholders
 - Field observations and site visits to project villages and the offices of provincial and national government and mass organizations concerned
 - Income sheets for quantitative estimation provided additional information on income generation activities.
- **Data and reports** provided by the Implementing Partners and other stakeholders in the course of interviews or in follow up.

An initial set of guideline questions for interviews was developed, after the first two days this was refined to provide a reference framework for discussions, attached as an Appendix 3. Interviewers also adopted participatory techniques such as history maps to support participants to contribute to the discussions. A data collection form was developed to gather information on income effects directly from participants, to supplement statistics collected for communes and provinces.

Because the focus of this evaluation was results, the team concentrated on specific issues in each of the four areas.

Under the first, empowering women, the evaluation sought evidence of impacts:

- On their family incomes, through direct reports by participants and indirect statistical measures for the total population;
- On their status in the community and family
- In the degree to which they were involved in the projects' design, delivery and monitoring.

In terms of the capacity of implementing partners and other national government and mass organizations, the evaluation sought to determine if they had been impacted in terms of their:

- Ability to understand and apply gender sensitive analytical and planning approaches, and intention to continue to use these
- Use of participatory methods to assess needs and plan employment programmes
- Improved training approaches
- Better collaboration with other agencies and organizations.

For policy advocacy, the evaluation tried to determine:

- Whether evidence-based information and advocacy materials existed and were being used
- What was being done, and what else could be done to ensure the lessons of the project were available and actively used to replicate some or all of the good lessons in other programmes and government policies.

In terms of sustainability and replication, the evaluation explored:

- Which organizations had good potential to extend the approaches of the project
- What factors would motivate them to or prevent them from doing so.

The findings in this area are included under each of the three objectives above.

Boxed texts throughout the report provide examples of how the project's impacts are being sustained.

During the evaluation, a total of 176 people participated in interviews and focus group discussions. Of these, 75 project women beneficiaries and 22 husbands provided income data, and a further 7 women who were not project beneficiaries also provided income data.

The evaluation plan and schedule initially included 7 site visits in 4 different provinces, however, at the request of the evaluation team the final site visit, to Vinh Hao, was cancelled. The project there had started operation only in July 2006, and the team was of the opinion that the added value of the additional information was low compared to the cost (a full days travel), particularly considering that the team had agreed to provide a draft text of the final report a week earlier than initially scheduled at the project's request. The evaluation team regretted the inconvenience caused by this late change of plan, and thanks the local project participants for their understanding.

Following the development of a draft final evaluation report, a workshop on the EEW final evaluation outcome and future planning was organized for 38 project stakeholders (Project Advisory Committee members and IPs – 22 women and 18 men) to:

- Review and agree on findings and recommendations identified by the final project evaluation team
- Discuss and identify how to sustain and replicate the EEW good models and practices
- Develop a draft plan of action for 2007 – 2008 to reach EEW Vietnam objectives based on the recommendations from the final evaluation.

The comments from the evaluation workshop were integrated in this final evaluation report.

Evaluator Bias

The evaluators acknowledge that they came to this evaluation with some inherent biases, which necessarily affected their explorations and conclusions. They did not see the role of the evaluation as primarily to report on the impacts of the project per se, seeing that as the responsibility of the project itself. Rather, their focus was to extract lessons from the project in terms of design and implementation as it influenced impact, so that (a) the remaining term of the project could maximize desired impacts, and (b) so that subsequent projects could learn from the experiences, both positive and negative, of this one. The Vietnamese evaluators started from a perspective of their knowledge of the existing poverty, development and gender equality policies and programmes in Vietnam. Their perspective was to see what new information and ideas were being generated and tested by the project

and how effective the project was in ensuring the new information was available to and used by other, ongoing and national policies and programmes. The ILO evaluator's perspective was on how to most effectively derive information that would lead to broader adoption of piloted strategies, with the piloting and subsequent national adoption of the TREE programme in Pakistan as a reference.

The evaluators were of the opinion that the mid-term evaluation had looked in depth at implementation issues and that there would be little value in re-visiting these points. They requested that the project prepare a report on how the 33 recommendations of the mid term evaluation had been addressed, to be included in this evaluation (see Appendix 6). They recognize and endorse the positive engagement and commitment of staff and Vietnam partners in the project, and commend them for their efforts. The perspective of the evaluators was "how can the good ideas piloted here be better publicized?"

FINDINGS ON PROJECT PERFORMANCE

Objective 1: Empowering women

The project's main strategy in this area was 'direct assistance to poor women and their families for demonstration purposes'. Our understanding was that the specific approaches used to identify and then support opportunities for improved income generation (economic empowerment) and improved social status (social empowerment) constituted the ideas being demonstrated. We further considered the nature of empowerment and how it can be measured effectively. Some recent literature recommends looking at three elements:

- Improved resources and assets (incomes, knowledge)
- Improved capabilities (individual's ability to act, speak out)
- Evidence of empowerment (changes in how public decisions are made, resources are allocated).

Hence, the evaluation assessed impacts of the project in terms of each of these areas.

(A) Improved resources and assets

Technical skills and knowledge

The project Action Programmes have provided a range of training courses to increase women's knowledge and skills for income generation. The skills provided have differed based on local economic opportunities. The main locus of training is village-level women's clubs, organized with the participation of the local Women's Union.

In focus group discussions most beneficiary women had an optimistic view of the impact the new skills and knowledge had for their incomes. They believed their income had increased and could potentially continue to increase. Training on new techniques and knowledge involved both existing crops and new income areas, depending on the local opportunities.

In Thai Nguyen, training focused on improved production techniques for the existing income crops of rice and tea. Beneficiaries particularly commented on the value of new skills on safe and clean production and OSH, and new varieties of tea that can be grown without insecticide for higher production and quality.

In La Hien commune an additional training focus was pig production. Thanks to new skills in selecting piglets, health care and feeding, pigs are grown to sale weight in 3-4 months as compared with 7-8 months before the training. Beneficiaries have also shared their knowledge with their relations and neighbors.

"Observing my success in raising pigs, other women in our village had come to asked me how to do that. I had helped at least 20 more women to learn basic techniques in pig raising. Some of them had decided to invest to raise pigs or expanded their current practice. We also pay much attention to prevent/vaccinate for disease prevention. We also know how to sell our pigs for the best profit".

Beneficiary, Truc Mai village, La Hien, Thai Nguyen.

Application of new techniques in tea planting and processing and in rice production in Thai Nguyen were seen as the most effective income generation measures. Farmers typically supplement crop earnings with income from other sources such as pig raising, chicken raising, etc. In Phu Tho commune, Quang Nam province the local Action Programme combined training and new techniques for an existing income source: cattle raising; and for new income sources – grass planting for sale of seeds and grass, and new products - rattan and bamboo weaving. Cattle raising training helped beneficiaries improve the quality and reduce the risk in this area, and to develop an additional income source from grass. The province as a whole is actively promoting cow raising; the project provided specific skills that have enabled beneficiaries to capitalize on this opportunity.

However, there are many external factors affecting the price of agricultural products. During the project's life, the sale price of both pigs and cattle have been affected by disease and markets, so that income improvements cannot be considered certain. In An Hoa commune (An Giang), the cost of loans to buy pigs, the fall in pig prices, and the small scale of most women's pig operations means they have had limited improvements in their income from this source, despite having better skills. In addition, waste products from increased pig production could be a challenging issue in the future if environmental training and infrastructure are not taken consideration. In Phu Tho (Quang Nam), there are significant risks associated with cow raising – the initial investment is high, and the time to sale is long – several years. While grass provides good fodder, it is dependent on the supply of water, which is limited in this commune. The impact of diseases and lowered sale prices due to increased production of cows in the province means that beneficiaries are not able to realize as large income gains as they anticipated, even though they have better quality animals due to their improved knowledge. In this case, the project's strategies of introducing a range of new income generating activities, including rattan and bamboo products, may help beneficiaries better cope with market changes.

In Tien My commune (Quang Nam) the Action Programme has focused on adding an entirely new crop, mushrooms, to the existing income generating activities of the beneficiaries. They received intensive, one-month long training and some of them used the travel allowance provided to purchase the necessary tools and materials at the end of the training. This new crop represents additional income for beneficiaries. The original idea was to supply mushrooms to a commercial company, but volumes were too low so the beneficiaries independently identified local markets for their products and collaborated to sell them. They have also adopted effective market analysis techniques to identify larger demand during the lunar phases when many customers prefer vegetarian food. This new income source does come with risks: seed materials are not readily available and the crops are highly seasonal so delays in receiving seeds mean an entire crop is lost.

Although none of the Action Programmes have focused specifically on creating micro-enterprises, most of the focus group participants were highly appreciative of the business development training courses. They described the ways this training had helped them understand their current income strategies in a new way, as well as helping them plan for the future:

"In the past (before the project), we did not care about inputs, such as food for raising pig; we just thought about how much we receive in selling our products. We did not record and track to see if our business were good or not. We have learned a lot from training on business development even though only few of us can apply what we learned to start a real business, but we can apply to improve our current activities".

Beneficiary in An Hoa commune, An Giang.

"I had participated in 10 days training on veterinary medicine, and learned how to prevent as well as provide treatment for diseases suffered by cow and pigs. I had practiced well with my own cow and pigs, and with knowledge from business development training course, I had developed my small business to sell some medicines and provide vet services for our neighbors. I have helped many women and people in my village to treat cow and pigs when needed with a very cheap price and any time during the day and night. I hope to learn more about this profession to maintain my business and help our people".

Nguyen Thi Hieu in Phu Tho commune, Quang Nam.

"I have a small business to sell fried cakes in the morning. With knowledge learned in marketing training course, I have applied a "promotion activity"- I offer one free cake with every ten bought. This helps, to attract my customers/clients.

My income is increasing since then" Beneficiary in Phu Tho commune, Quang Nam.

Women described how they applied the knowledge learned from business development training to their existing activities, for example, they were able to discuss the investment and returns, as well as the risks involved in raising pigs, and how to reduce risks through better feeding and disease control. They were comfortable discussing the issues involved in securing loans, and could compare the impact of lower and higher interest rates from the different banks as it impacted on their decisions to invest in pigs or cows, for example.

In addition to business development and new activity skills, in Phu Tho commune the Action Programme has also established a new cooperative, so that women trained in the new income generating activity of rattan weaving can work together to produce and sell their goods. Training in cooperative management for the members and their selected chairwoman and vice chairwoman represents a new skill area for participants, as well as an opportunity to practice leadership and democracy as well as have additional income from a new source.

Income changes

An improved income is a key asset of empowerment. It is also an issue of great interest to policy makers in Vietnam (and elsewhere), who are seeking examples of effective approaches to improved incomes. Improving incomes for beneficiaries was one of the strategies of the project. Consistent information on the income impacts was not readily available. DOLISA offices maintain records of 'officially poor' households and project staff in some provinces report the number of participant families which have officially 'escaped poverty' by no longer qualifying for official certification as a poor family. The Farmers Union in Son Phu commune surveyed 100% of the project beneficiaries and found that 88 of 200 households had now escaped poverty. In La Hien, 133 of 188 households had made this transition. Interestingly, in La Hien a larger proportion of women-headed households had improved their incomes and no longer qualified as poor than male headed households (78.4% compared to 62.6%). The evaluation team was not aware of systematic in-depth analysis of changes in source and level of income directly and indirectly attributable to the project being carried out and suggested that such analysis would generate useful policy advice including cost/benefit on investment in the approaches piloted in the project.

As part of the evaluation, the team undertook a very simple data collection and analysis exercise during field visits to provide some income data collected on the same basis across a number of project sites. Beneficiaries who participated in the focus group discussions were asked to complete three data sheets, listing their annual net family income, by source, for

2002 (the year prior to the earliest Action Programme start date), 2006, and a projection for 2010, based on their best realistic estimates. The purpose of this was twofold:

- To gather evidence of impact to complement information provided by the project
- To explore the type and quality of data and analysis that would be simple for the project to generate and provide useful materials for fact-based advocacy and policy.

The findings are preliminary in nature as they are based on a small sample – a low of six couples at one location (where there are a total of 200 project beneficiaries), to a high of 16 responses at another location. In all there were 75 responses, including a small number (7) of non-participants to serve as a further comparison. Respondents were asked to report on their incomes in 2002 to create a baseline figure against which income in 2006 could be compared. They were asked about their projected future income to see whether they expected the amount and sources of their incomes to change further.

To demonstrate the value of the project in terms of its impact on incomes, we analyzed the responses to address three questions:

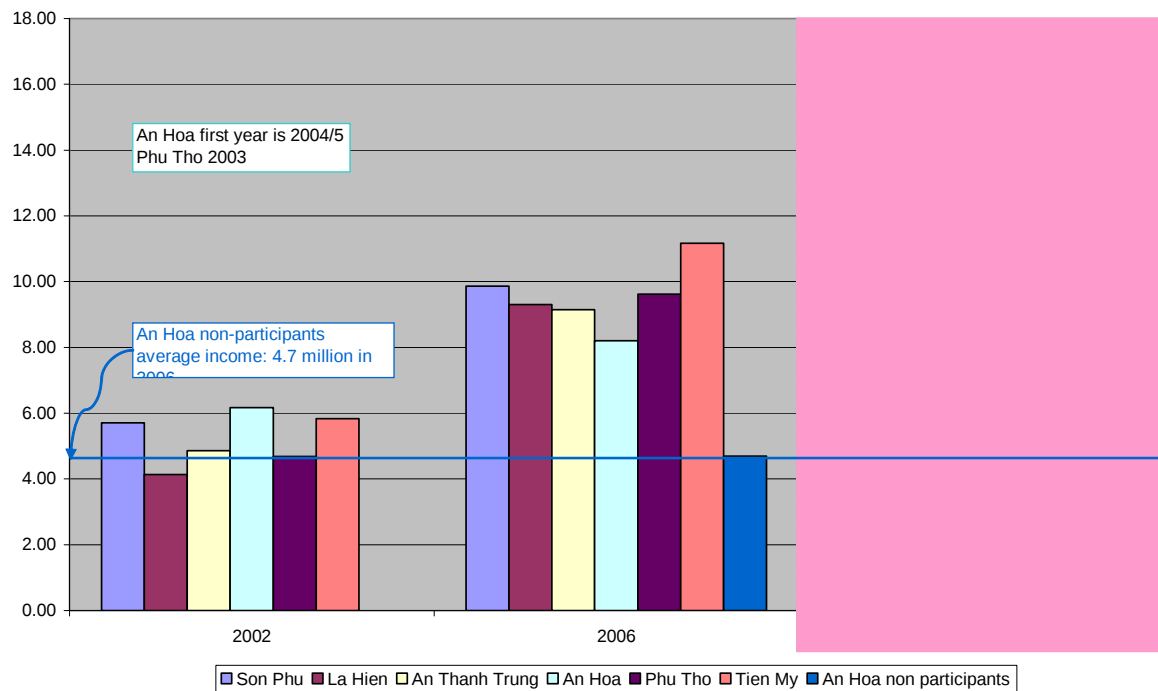
- Did participants' incomes increase compared with before the project started?
- Did participants' incomes increase more in the areas in which they received training compared to those they did not?
- Did the participants change the nature or number of their sources of income during the project?

As the sample was too small, and non-representative, we did not explore questions about the change in income of participants compared to non-participants.

Our findings in each area are noted below.

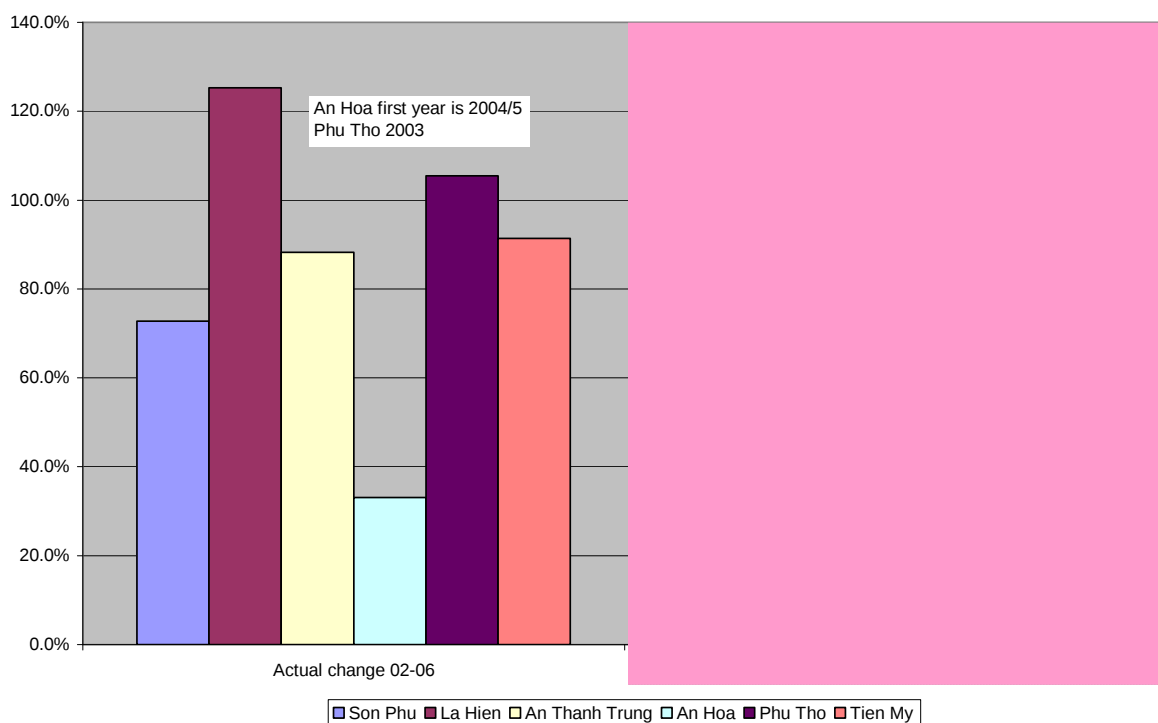
Did incomes increase? Our hypothesis, and a key quantitative question of the project, was that incomes should increase, and to a greater extent than the incomes of non-participants. The sample findings certainly show that based on respondents self-reporting, their incomes increased substantially between 2002 (in some cases a later start date is used) and 2006. The lack of a large comparator group meant we could not determine if the rate of increase was different from non-participants'; the one group of non participants (in An Hoa) had average incomes in 2006 that were lower than that of most of the project beneficiaries in 2002.

Average net annual family income, in millions of VND, from all sources, as reported for 2002 and 2006 and projected for 2010



Further analysis comparing rate of increase between the two periods shows that while respondents expect further increases to their incomes, they do not expect the same high rate of increase over the next four years as in the past. This is different only in An Hoa, where the project has only started recently and many beneficiaries expect the main income impacts to come in the next few years.

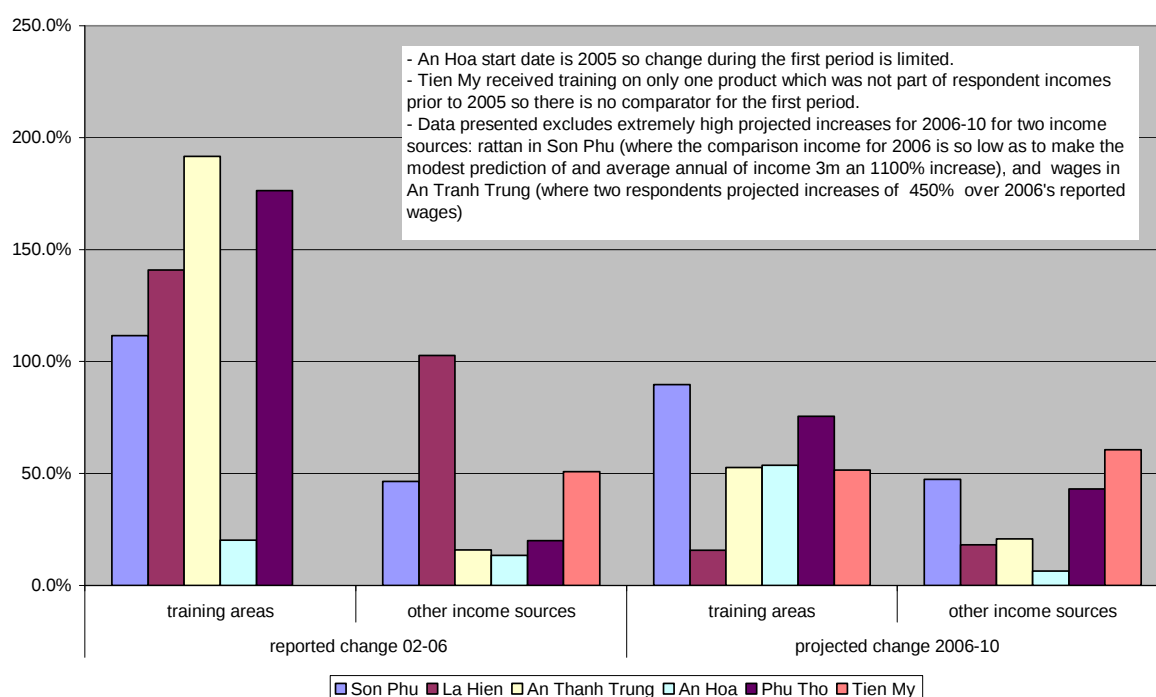
Percentage change in total family income - actual and projected, by commune



For this evaluation, these results suggest that the project has had a positive impact on incomes for poor women and their families. However, in the time remaining to the project, this indicative data should be replaced by more substantive analysis, with a larger and more representative sample of beneficiaries, and good comparative information on the incomes of non-participants. Policy advocacy is most effective when it can include concrete evidence of impact. Vietnam and various donors have policies regarding poverty elimination; approaches which can demonstrate the impact they have on incomes will be attractive.

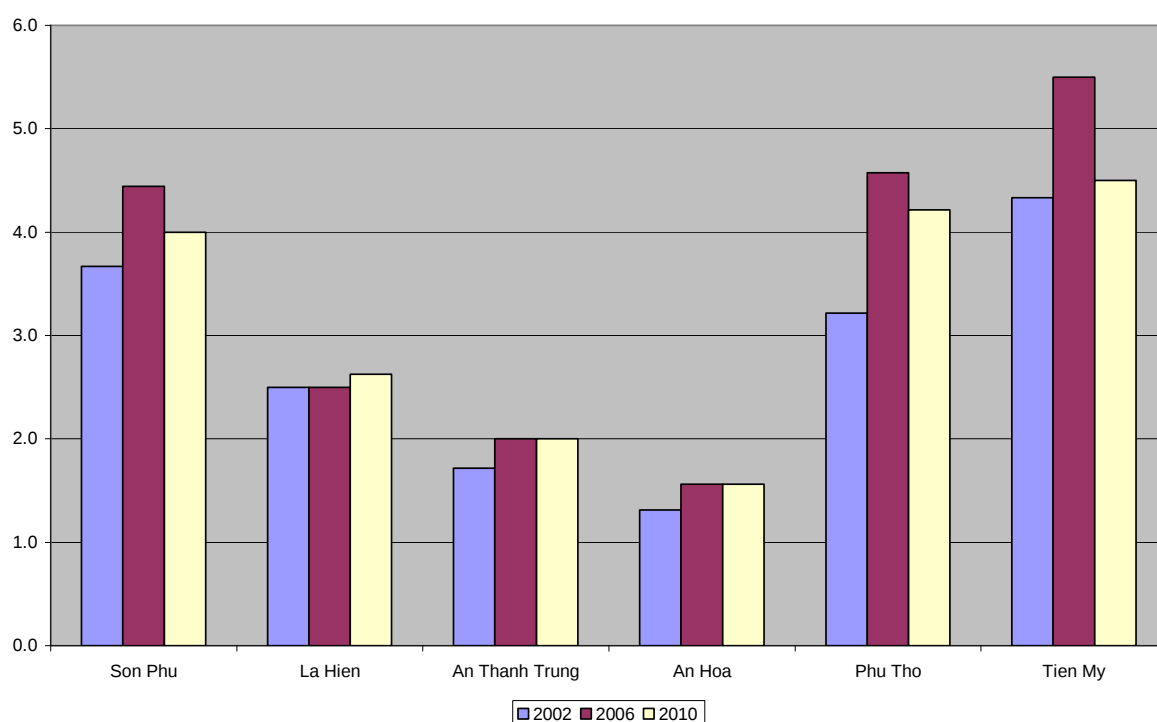
Impact of the training on incomes. Total income figures alone are not sufficient to be persuasive. There are many other factors which could lead to improved incomes – rising prices for a particular product, local opportunities for waged work due to a construction project, and individual family situations such as a son or daughter starting to contribute to the family income. We therefore examined the different income sources for respondents from each commune, grouping the sources of income into those areas which had been the subject of specific technical training by the local Action Programme, and those which had not, and comparing the average of the rate of change for each source in each of the two categories. The small sample means that some of the results can be unduly affected by one or two individual responses; this is noted in the chart. In general however we see that incomes have increased at a greater rate in the areas of training than in other areas. This would tend to indicate that the training provided beneficiaries with the capacity to increase their income from that product. One interesting point is that some of the Action Programmes focused on improving techniques in an area that was already an important income source (such as tea in Son Phu), others on introducing an entirely new product (mushrooms in Tien My) or on a mix of existing and new sources of income (grass, cattle and rattan in Phu Tho). The difference in impact of such approaches deserves further study, with a larger sample. This information would be of great value to those planning training and product introduction interventions.

Comparison of average change for all income sources, for training areas and all other sources, actual for 02-06 and projected 06-10



Number of sources of income. As some of the Action Programmes had set out to introduce new products as a means of improving incomes, we explored the question of whether the number of sources of income for beneficiaries had changed during the project. We also considered whether respondents would reduce or increase the number of sources of income in their projections for 2010. With this small sample it is not possible to establish what respondent's preferences would be – some did reduce their number of sources in their projections for 2010. It is also not clear what the ideal situation would be for number of sources of income: on one hand, it is useful to have a range of sources so that if one fails the others continue. On the other hand, it is clear that many poor women are so busy at so many activities, all of relatively low value, that they have no time to improve their skills or to improve their returns in any one area. It is interesting to note that for 2006 Tien My, Son Phu and Phu Tho (in that order) have both the highest average number of sources of income, and highest average income, while An Hoa scores the lowest on each number of sources and average income. More study is required to determine if this is a firm connection, and the limits. Good data on this would make a compelling basis for policy and programme responses.

Average number of sources of income, per household; change.



The evaluation team observes that collecting the information for the above report was relatively simple, and required no special analytic techniques. Data was entered into a spreadsheet for analysis, and though more advanced techniques could be used, collection is well within the capacity of all of the IP's, as well as simple analysis using a few templates. Comparisons between Action Programmes to draw lessons as a whole could be done by the project team, particularly if the IP's were given templates to work with for data collection, entry and preliminary analysis.

(B) Improved capabilities

Improved social skills

A major intended impact of the project was on the self confidence and participation of women in community and family life. In focus group discussions, beneficiaries and local commune leaders consistently referred to changes they had observed, noting a number of important factors underpinning women's increased participation and confidence:

- Women have recognized their own contribution to the family income, and increased it – they no longer see themselves as passively dependent on their husband's income, but as partners in supporting their household
- Women have gained specific knowledge - for example of agricultural techniques – which gives them 'something of value' to contribute to family and community discussions.

Gender equality training helped them and their husbands to change their assumptions about women's and men's public and private roles, so that men can be responsible for some work of the home and family, women for some of the community.

"After participating in the training course on gender equality, my husband had changed significantly. He pays more attention to help me in all works including housework. Especially, the awareness of community people is increased which support for changing in my husband's perception. He may be criticized by people if he shows gender discrimination. On the other hand, husbands can do anything for their wife without a fear of losing "male characteristic" as often seen in the past".

A participant woman in La Hien, Thai Nguyen.

"And we can make better decisions if discussed by two people".

A quote from a husband.

From their participation in project activities, especially in clubs and training on gender and life skills, women gained confidence in dealing with more situations in the community. Before the project, village meetings were considered as men's responsibility and participants were almost men. Now project participants report that the situation is different – men and women discuss and decide which of them will attend a meeting.

"They are now very confident, they even talk more than men. They contribute actively in our decisions, and some of our decisions were really made by women. We also pay more attention to the leadership role of women in villages as well as mass organizations including veteran association which was traditionally only for men".

Commune leaders in La Hien.

New organizations and roles for women

Women beneficiaries are enthusiastic about the changes in their lives that they associate with the impact of the project. They spoke of a number of ways they intend to continue activities and practices started by the project activities:

- They expected to continue to be aware of and act on their understanding of gender equality in their work and family life.
- They have developed new skills for planning and evaluation which they will continue to use.
- They have gained knowledge of new agriculture techniques that helps them improve their productivity and be more confident in general.

- They have developed an understanding of basic budgeting, assessment of investment risks, and experience dealing with lenders.
- They have participated in training, group and public meetings and have developed experience with these new roles.
- They have supported the development and operation of Women's Clubs, including making payments towards their operation and using them to aid in savings, so they have some capacity to decide if they wish to continue these organizations using their own resources.

Women beneficiaries have taken on new roles as educators and trainers of others, a point that was made often. Women routinely reported sharing their knowledge with their husbands and immediate family members, many actively reached out to neighbours and friends to share their new ideas and techniques, and virtually all agreed that they had acted as models to neighbours who observed their new activities carefully and in many cases tried to emulate them.

"I have learned to raise pigs and earn an increasing income during the last two years. My neighbors observed changes in our raising practice so that they had come to consult me about how to raise pigs effectively. I have provided what I know for around 20 other women in my village. Some of them have invested to start raising pigs with more confidence. However, we are also concerned about risks from the market and diseases"

Beneficiary in La Hien, Thai Nguyen.

The Women's clubs established by the project are important new forums for women to share and learn from each other and develop their skills. Many focus group women said that before participating in the project they were quite passive and did not participate in groups or organizations. Most had not attended any training. Through their involvement in the clubs they said they had learned a lot from sharing with each other: on ways to improve their daily life; their agriculture techniques; or family matters. They said they helped each other to solve problems in their families, and in case of accidents or illness. Some quite literally 'found their voice' – being able for the first time to talk or sing in public. "Tan did not know how to sing even a short song before joining our club. She did not participate in big events, or meetings since she was ashamed in front of many people. But things are quite different now, she has learned many songs in our club meetings, and she can sing very well. Tan even composed words for songs and we sing together. If you want, she can sing right now". Beneficiary in La Hien, describing her friend. Another woman beneficiary, in An Hoa, described the impact gender equality training had on her by saying "I know the local government and the international community stand behind me. I don't feel useless anymore".

Experience gained in participating in women's clubs has helped women to participate in other public and community activities, from the Women's Union (for example, the number of women participating in the women's union in La Hien increased from 423 before the project to 697 in 2006, now involving 51% of all women aged 18 to 50 in the commune) to other mass organizations, to local People's Committee and village leadership positions. This in turn provides a model and example for other women, who no longer see these organizations and functions as 'men only'.

After the project ends Women's Clubs will no longer have dedicated external resources for operation. However, there have already been extensions of the model into non-project villages. In some areas (such as Tien My) existing women's savings groups became the women's club for the project and there is every expectation that the club will continue, with new skills and capacities. The Women's Union has sponsored a number of single-issue women's clubs on different topics – for example, family planning – and now supports the

Clubs established under the project. The concern raised by a number of IP's and local leaders was that one of the important services offered by the Clubs during the project has been expert training – without some resources to support such services the women's clubs may not be as effective in improving the skills of participating members.

(C) Evidence of empowerment

Active participation in community governance

Local leaders reported to the evaluation team that women in project communes participate more actively in community and village activities, saying that before the project, most participants were men. Very few women attended these meetings and there were almost no women in leadership position even at village level. They said the situation is very different now; many women come to meetings, making up almost half (in one case more than half) of the participants. The leaders said the women are confident, as one said "they can speak out and express their ideas. They also know to claim for their rights in special cases". The number of women who were promoted to be in leadership position at commune and village level is increasing, such as in mass organizations, people's council and people's committee. For example, in Phu Tho the percentage of women as members in commune people's council increased from 9% before the project to 15% in 2006. In many cases, women were encouraged to express their ideas and provide inputs for planning.

Local leaders said that gender training had helped them to see things in a new way. "I was invited to attend gender training courses several times, but I did not participate. I thought there was not any new thing in this kind of training, gender mean men and women, I knew everything already. Finally, the organizers managed to involve me in a gender training course. I was surprised and learned a lot. I realized many new things, including the role of women. They are contributing a lot, and they can do much better if they are empowered. I have now integrated gender issues to promote gender equality in our regular meetings at village and commune level. In my opinion, we should provide training on gender equality for both men and women". Leader of people's committee, La Hien, Thai Nguyen.

Other commune leaders saw it as their task to promote gender equality because:

- They understand better about women's contribution in families and communities
- They realized potential of women in participating in social activities
- They realized their responsibilities as community leader to implement women's rights
- Women themselves have demanded their rights and access to social equality.

Better family relationships

Gender equality training was explicitly intended to assist women to be more confident and take more part in the life of their communities. However, one of the most common remarks from women and men, beneficiaries and community leaders during the focus groups was the impact this training in particular had had on family life. People consistently noted 'happier families' as one of the main impacts of the project in their communities and for themselves personally. As one man described it "she knows how to communicate softly with me and this helps me to change". Many women and men stated that they now had a way to understand each other's roles and perceptions, and that they could communicate better. Men frequently said that previously they would make all the important decisions, now they would discuss with their wives and make the decision together; "we discuss with each other to make the decision so we accept risks and no more arguments. Before the project I often made decision by myself, for example to buy a cow, but when it died, my wife criticized me

all day. If we made decision together, there is no reason for her to complain". – Husband of beneficiary in An Thanh Trung, An Giang.

Happiness is one measure, another that was mentioned by community leaders in particular was family violence, which they mentioned being noticeably reduced in the villages where there were beneficiaries in the project. One woman interviewed in-depth in Tien My described how the women's club formed for the project had observed a man beating his wife and decided to take action – "we went to the house and confronted the man and told him he had no right to treat his wife like an animal – she is a human like him. He was so frightened he ran away from us and now he is very good with his wife and no more problems".

Beneficiaries' husbands' perceptions of the project impacts on women and on families included the following points from two discussions with men in Son Phu (Thai Nguyen) and Tien My (Quang Nam):

Son Phu	Tien My
▪ Families are happier with shared work between men and women ▪ Husbands are more comfortable in doing housework ▪ Wives are more confident in dealing with market and community ▪ Women participate more actively and contribute better for their villages and communes ▪ When husband is out, his wife can deal with making right decisions especially in economic matters which were only made by man before ▪ Husband and wife discuss to decide if they need to have more children; boy or girl are not an important issues as in the past ▪ Boys or girls are fine, they do not try to have boy in case they have only girls.	▪ Better family relation and atmosphere ▪ Husband and wife make decisions together (not done before project) ▪ Increasing income for families due to new income source, mushroom planting ▪ Number of women who plant mushroom is increasing including women who do not participate in the project activities directly ▪ Women participate more actively and contribute better for their villages and communes. They come to meetings more often ▪ Reduce number of family conflicts and violence, especially due to alcohol ▪ Women and men learned marketing, other income generation activities together and women often play the technical role, guiding their husbands to "implement" ▪ Boys or girls are fine, they do not try to have boy in case they have only girls.

Husbands' perceptions of the project were to some extent affected by whether or not they participated in gender equality training. Some men, and their wives, described themselves as 'totally different', some women and their husbands stated that they had already shared household responsibilities and decision making, and some husbands, particularly those who had not participated in training, continued to dominate in their family relationships. Most husbands in the focus groups recommended that the project should provide training on gender equality for both men and women including those who are not participating in the project activities.

A final comment was the impact of changed family roles on drinking. In An Giang couples explained that husbands choosing to spend more time on home activities and with their children reduced their free time for drinking parties. The extra time spent with their children was also seen as a plus, and women commented on their husbands' improved behaviour: "speaks softly", "dresses better to pay respect to wife".

Changing social values

Along with changes in public life and family relations that individuals, couples and village leaders reported, there were also reports of changing community attitudes. Husbands in the focus group in Son Phu said that they wanted to help their wife, but they were often afraid of other people who would see and laugh at them. Washing clothes, cleaning houses, cooking, even raising children were traditionally considered as responsibilities of women. They said "it is different now that men are feeling comfortable in helping their wife, and they aren't worried".

Valuing gender equality and having this be one element in the criteria they use for making decision within the commune was mentioned as the greatest impact of the project for a number of commune leaders. Another significant change is the number of women participating in and being elected to leadership positions at the local level. This has significantly changed the atmosphere of communities – no one can now think that the village meeting is 'men's business', when (as in Tien My) the Vice-Chair of the People's Committee is a woman, or the head of a village is a female veteran, as reported in La Hien, and women hold other significant posts.

Role of beneficiaries in project design, implementation and monitoring

The project took steps to ensure the participation of women at all stages of development. Individual implementing partners interpreted and applied this in different ways. Beneficiaries interviewed in the evaluation tended to state that they did not know why they had been selected, and to describe the project as being 'about' the particular topic for training: "I was invited to join the project on mushroom growing". Some respondents in individual interviews said they recalled participating in meetings at the beginning of the project, but it was clear that most respondent's interest and attention was on the subject matter of the income related training and on the gender equality training, and few described or focused on how topics had been chosen. Individual women also mentioned participating in later workshops for monitoring but this did not come up spontaneously. The views of the implementing partners are discussed in the section on Objective 2.

(D) Other issues

There were a number of other impacts, not necessarily intended. The small size of the project meant that typically fewer than 20% of the women in a village would be selected as participants. Because the Action Programmes have been successful, and beneficiaries' incomes have increased, this has created some tension in project communities. Focus group women said non-participants might be 'disappointed', and they often expressed a wish to expand the project so that more women could be included.

A number of Implementing Partners stated that it was difficult to recruit the poorest of the poor, as these women were both more 'timid' and hesitant about participation, and were also concerned that they could not afford to forgo work and earnings to participate in meetings and training. Consequently, many women's clubs included a significant proportion of women from families who did not meet the criteria for the official list of poor households. The local leaders in An Hoa stated that of the 120 project beneficiaries there, 40 were

members of the officially recognized poor households in the commune (out of a total of 400); of these, 30 households have now increased their income and no longer qualify as poor families. Selection criteria differed between communities (as was discussed in the mid-term evaluation) and as this evaluation found, were often unknown to the individual participants, many of whom said they did not know why they had been selected. Women participants were generally selected by the commune women's union in cooperation with the commune people's committee and related mass organizations with the key criteria as "poor or near poor women". The women's union and the commune people's committee explained that the project targeted officially registered poor women as well as near-poor with potential for development for the purpose of creating a successful model to encourage and help other women to escape poverty. Therefore, the selection of the participants was strategic and suitable considering the project objectives and duration.

Objective 2: Strengthening capacity of Vietnamese organizations

Implementing Partners were provided with training, support and backstopping to improve their capacity to design, delivery and monitor the Action Programmes effectively, and to ensure their staff and trainers were able to deliver training and support required. The evaluation looked at the degree to which there had been impact in terms of the institutions':

- Ability to understand and apply gender sensitive and participatory approaches to analyzing needs, planning and carrying out programmes, and the degree to which this was likely to become institutionalized
- Approach to the design and delivery of training to clients
- Collaboration with other agencies and organizations.

(A) Understanding and applying gender sensitive and participatory approaches

Gender Mainstreaming

Changes in awareness of gender are one of the most impressive achievements of this project. All people interviewed expressed their enthusiasm for having more training on the issue in the future, and for extending the training to other groups.

It is probably not surprising that it was the IP's that are not traditionally responsible for 'women's issues' – the Farmers' Union and the VCA - and the local leaders who appeared to have experienced the greatest shifts in understanding. The project staff for the Farmers Union in Thai Nguyen, for example, stressed their (new) perspective that "gender inequality is a social problem that needs to be addressed through all policies and programmes" of the Farmers Union – that they were now concerned with who attended their ordinary programmes and wanted to ensure that women did as well as men.

During the visits to provinces, the team observed high awareness of the importance of gender equality among local leaders, DOLISA and IP managers. All interviewed staff in the various institutions expressed their commitment to integrate their new awareness of gender and participatory planning in their own operations. The following are some of the examples they gave:

- Being a good role model of gender equity, at home and at work;
- Organizing training on gender equity for staff in their system;
- Integrating gender issues in their own training programme, including training organized by their own sources or funded by others; (FU Thai Nguyen, DOLISA An Giang)

- Talking about this issue in all meetings where they are the speakers (WU Quang Nam and An Giang).

Almost all local leaders were trained on gender equality and many of them were trained to be communicators for advancing gender in their communes. They also participated in implementing and managing project activities in their communes. Many local leaders showed evidence of a good understanding of gender equality and its implications for local planning and programmes. There are some reasons to believe that the project has already elements for sustainability, although continuing support from the government is important.

Vietnamese society is in rapid transformation. People now have much more diversified sources of information, and gender issues are part of the new information that is reaching formerly isolated and traditional communities. Some commune leaders were initially quite resistant to training, but became extremely positive following it. For example, the interests of women and children were explicitly taken into consideration when local leaders in La Hien commune discussed the communal infrastructure development plan. The dissemination of gender equality and income generation for poor women was included in the Decision of the commune People's Council in Tien My, Quang Nam. These are positive indications for sustainability and project impact.

"It is great that we have been equipped with knowledge on gender equality which I feel very different to what I imagined before. I am now a gender educator and I have integrated gender issues into our regular activities. In any chances possible, such as village meetings; meetings of mass organizations (farmer's union, Fatherland front) we talk about the role of women in families and in our village. Changes could be seen obviously in awareness and behavior of community people as well as leaders. Realizing the potential of women, I am sure that women would be promoted, selected for key positions in the coming time".

Said by a village leader in La Hien commune, Thai Nguyen.

Use of participatory means

This is considered by all partners, and also by beneficiaries, to be a big difference to the traditional top-down planning approach that is often used to within the traditional vocational training and poverty reduction programmes, where the number of people to be trained is defined by the higher level, and the subjects are identified by responsible department without any consultation. The participatory approach has been intensively used in all project stages and activities, including needs assessment, planning, monitoring and evaluation.

At the national level, MOLISA and the PAC were involved from the beginning with the selection of project sites, target groups and project interventions. A field survey was carried out in each selected province to identify the needs for employment and gender equality promotion, and also to select the most appropriate IPs based on their managerial and technical capacities. The awareness of the government will indeed increase, given the growing openness of the society. Poverty reduction issues and decent work for poor women are now in the agenda of many different state agencies, ministries, mass organizations, international organizations and donors, and NGOs.

At the provincial level, DOLISA was actively involved in this survey and saw it as a good way to introduce bottom up planning (DOLISA An Giang, FU Thai Nguyen, WU Quang Nam). Furthermore, the annual process of developing the Action Programme provided more opportunities to involve stakeholders in project planning and implementation. Participatory methods were intensively applied in all training and workshops and are highly appreciated, and are seen as valid for application in other projects and programmes. In addition,

mainstreaming gender in poverty reduction programmes is also helping IPs to improve their programmes. Three to four core trainers on gender from DOLISA and IPs in each province were trained in participatory training methods and M&E methods, and in turn they become the trainers for stakeholders at the commune level. Interviews with IPs showed a high level of confidence in applying this method on their own, for example, they were invited by other government departments in different sectors to conduct workshops and training using the participatory approach (VCA Quang Nam). “What I have learned the most from this project is the way of doing the participatory approach. If we start with a participatory needs assessment, the vocational training programme we design responds better to the needs of people and to the local context” (FU Thai Nguyen).

At grassroots level, beneficiaries can voice their opinions and express their wishes for advanced training in their monthly meetings as well as in the annual meeting. Their comments and requests are then considered by the IPs for preparation of the Action Programme for the following year.

Integration within their ongoing programmes

DOLISA

DOLISA, especially in An Giang expressed a great appreciation toward the project's contribution to capacity building of their staff. All DOLISA people confirmed that different resources DOLISA is responsible for could be used for the purpose of providing opportunities for poor women, among which the vocational training programme for poor farmers and the loan for poverty reduction are seen to have high potential. In order to institutionalize gender mainstreaming in the poverty reduction system, staff from technical departments and concerned bodies of the MOLISA were required to participate in the designing and implementation of the project. The Vocational Training and Social Protection departments have the most interest in the issues explored by the project.

HEPR guidelines on gender issues have recently been developed and included in the training package for those working in poverty reduction. DOLISA is conducting training for staff at all levels, from provincial down to commune level and this is a good opportunity to put the expertise learned from the EOW project into practice. For instance, DOLISA An Giang had just finished training for people in charge of poverty reduction at the grassroots level in 154 communes, with the EOW-project trained gender trainer actively involved. He included the gender and participatory training methods of EOW in this training. According to him, the participatory methods of the project can also be used in the poverty reduction monitoring system of the HEPR.

In addition, the involvement of the Bank of Social Policy provided opportunity for poor women to apply the new techniques they have learned to increase their family income. The trust collateral was built up based on the improved capacity of women, economically and socially, gained from their participation in the project activities. The Women's Union in La Hien commune, with support from the Commune People's Committee, succeeded in mobilizing 748 million VN dong to give loans for 189 poor women for pig raising, tea planting and production. More than 500 million dong from the Bank of Social Policy was provided to women's group in Phu Tho commune, Quang Nam for grass planting and cow raising.

WU, FU, VCA

As mentioned below, each organization has its own capacity building programme. They have been proactive in using their own opportunities and resources to integrate gender and employment promotion for poor women in their programmes and services.

Market Assessment

Key to the success of income generating activities is a good understanding of the potential market, including market access issues. Each IP made progress in this area, but it is clear that this was one issue where existing capacity was weak and strong, sustained improvement will be challenging. There are significant environmental barriers to improvement – for example, the project in Phu Tho, Quang Nam is focusing on cattle raising. This is consistent with a recent provincial decree on economic development which calls for each family to have a cow, and has made loans available for this purpose. However, this is already having unintended consequences as the price of cattle is falling, and there is very limited fodder available in Phu Tho due to water shortages. IP's have been effective in identifying new market opportunities, for example in Thai Nguyen they have focused on increasing the value of the main income crops, to good effect; and in An Giang they have identified a number of potential sources of additional income, but there is still weak understanding of concepts such as marketing to identify more opportunities for income generation, and value chain analysis to identify areas for improved competitiveness and efficiency.

Issues in planning, design, monitoring and evaluation

IP's were expected to develop high quality plans for their Action Programmes conforming to best international practice. Training was provided to IPs to improve their capacities in these areas, including proposal development. A training workshop on Gender Mainstreaming and Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) in July 2004 helped to improve the quality of participatory monitoring and evaluation. Following this training, the Action Programmes for year 2 in all provinces included a log frame and M&E indicators. IP's stated that they hold an annual review meeting with women beneficiaries to review changes in their income and other changes regarding their social status in family and community environment. This annual review workshop is also a good opportunity for them to express views and opinions about the programme so that it can be adjusted for the coming year.

A number of IPs stated that they had perceived the annual cycle of Action Programmes as limiting their ability to make longer term plans, and that they felt constrained to select outcomes and beneficiaries that they were sure would be able to show impact within a single year. They would prefer Action Programmes with milestones and monitoring plans for several years with an annual workplan and budget. While some IP staff indicated during the field visit that they preferred to work with the same beneficiaries because of the EEOW annual project cycles, analysis of planned and actual beneficiary numbers, provided by EEOW staff based on EEOW Action Programme documents, progress and final reports showed that:

- Four of the five IPs provided agricultural vocational training to the same core group of beneficiaries and expanded other types of training (gender, business and life skills) to additional beneficiaries
- One IP provided technical training on sewing skills and the other types of training to new beneficiaries every year while providing refresher training to beneficiaries from previous years (unless these had migrated to work in garment factories in urban areas). See Appendix 7.

One of the specific capacities the project sought to develop was the use of logical frameworks to plan for impacts, monitoring and evaluation. Following training for the IP's each was able to produce good quality log frame documents in the second year of the project. Several IP's noted that their improved capacity in this area had helped them

successfully research and propose projects to donors or as part of internal budget processes, clear evidence that they have integrated these new capacities into their ongoing work. The evaluation team appreciated the effort put into the log frames and the presence of detailed indicators. They were concerned that while some indicators were practical and easy to follow, others seemed too elaborate for practical use, and many action programmes had a very large number of indicators. An IP's officer asked how he monitors the indicators said that he relied on his own observation of changes in beneficiary income, confidence and participation in the public activities. This suggests a need for a simpler set of indicators and an easier process for involving beneficiaries in monitoring. For example, a model checklist could be developed with some simple economic and social change indicators and guidelines on how to collect it in a practical manner so that the local government and mass organization can easily apply and disseminate the results in their regular activities. This could be developed and tested in the final period of the project.

(B) Impacts on training and trainers

There are already a significant number of training funds, providers and activities in every province and commune. Mass organizations have training funds, trainers and institutions, there are provincial funds for training and for the training of local officials, and in poor districts there are HEPR funds, to mention only a few. Other institutions such as the Bank for Social Policy and the fund for employment promotion include training elements. The project's Action Programmes used many of the existing training resources, such as district trainers and the Agricultural Extension services and trainers, but they used a different approach to training from the more commonly used group lecture style. Project training in agricultural techniques was longer, involved hands-on demonstration and practice as well as explanation, and extended over time including follow up. The beneficiaries in La Hien described how the trainer would hold a session at each stage of the growing cycle, so they could immediately apply their new skills to their own crops.

All the IP's were already involved in training and have extensive training infrastructure from trainers to materials. The Women's Union has done training on gender issues and gender mainstreaming for over a decade, and the Farmer's Union has a large national budget for agricultural skills upgrading through the Agriculture Extension programme. However, the project did provide them with new capacities and experience to be integrated into their ongoing activities in training.

The provincial Farmer's Union and VCA IP's in the project found the participatory approach to training needs assessment and the inclusion of gender equality considerations in training to be relevant and useful. As noted already, one Farmer's Union staff member indicated that while the participatory approach to assessing needs before drawing up a training plan took more time, he believed it made training more effective. The VCA had had relatively little experience working directly with women's groups at the commune level and valued the link with the Women's Union to enter into this new area. And the Women's Union, at provincial and national levels, was very appreciative of the new materials for gender equality training. As a national staff member said "We have many materials on gender equality, but most are for trainers or are at a very theoretical level – the ILO materials especially GET Ahead are very practical for use with grassroots women and communities".

DOLISA in Thai Nguyen noted that while there were considerable funds available within communities for training, there needed to be much better communication and coordination to ensure that the best approaches were used and that training from different providers was complementary and well sequenced – through some sort of global training schedule, for example.

Through training of trainers in the project, there are now officials and trainers in a range of local and provincial organizations with experience and capacity to train in a more participatory and hands-on style, are familiar with various ILO materials (gender equality, fundamental rights, life skills, GET Ahead and OSH) and who are able to integrate gender equality issues into their training. Many of them have stated that they intend to use some of these new skills and approaches in their other work – for example, using ILO materials. However, there is a constraint if their 'regular' training work does not allow sufficient time to apply the new techniques because of rules or practices requiring (for example) a fixed unit price for training based on short, lecture-style training; or a fixed curriculum to which gender issues could not be added. The project should examine and provide technical assistance so that EEOW materials can be used within the framework of the national programmes.

(C) Coordination – working with and through others

One of the strengths of this project was to be able to mobilize concerned stakeholders in the design, implementation and M&E of the project. This positive aspect is appreciated by almost all respondents (WU Quang Nam, VCA Quang Nam, DOLISA An Giang, and WU Thai Nguyen). Decision-makers, local government and mass organization officials have improved their awareness of how gender issues are involved in their decisions about training and economic development.

The project's key partner is MOLISA at the national level and therefore DOLISA at the provincial level. Overall, DOLISA in three provinces have shown great interest in supporting project model and replicating to other communes. DOLISA in three communes have allocated fund (for vocational training for rural poor or 120 programme; and the Bank for social policy) in project communes as "contribution" to enable trained women accessing to loan. The cooperation between DOLISA and related organizations, especially IPs, have been improved significantly during the project life since they have got to know each other better in training courses, and other activities. In all interviews with responsible persons from DOLISA side, the role of DOLISA as a key government body responsible for the employment and vocational training for the poor was clearly defined and emphasized. The coordination and collaboration between DOLISA and other IPs was reported positively. WU, FU and VCA reported a good relationship with DOLISA. In addition, the project worked closely with DOLISA and IPs to ensure that DOLISA are involved in EEOW activities. The role and responsibilities of different bodies can be seen as follows

- DOLISA: provide the linkage to the national strategy, maximize the resources
- IPs: organize activities at grassroots level, providing guarantee to poor women to access to the loans without collateral;
- Local leaders: provide opportunities such as space, local policy targeting poor women
- Bank: providing loans and capital for the business.

HEPR has incorporated a requirement for coordination for many years and there are valuable lessons from this project about effective ways to realize this coordination in practice.

Objective 3: Identifying policy concerns and policy advocacy

The project objective was to identify policy concerns and formulate policy recommendations concerning women's employment promotion and empowerment, for advocacy at the national level. The intended audiences for this advocacy were national policy makers in the areas of employment promotion and poverty alleviation, and mass organizations delivering employment related services to local people.

The evaluation sought to determine the extent to which the project had identified recommendations, targeted audiences and established an advocacy strategy, and the results of the strategy. The evaluation team worked from the perspective that effective policy advocacy should provide information which meets the needs and interests of key stakeholders so that their own policies, programmes and resource decisions are influenced. They therefore looked for evidence that the major planning cycles and policy concerns of national socio-economic plans and large programmes such as HEPR were being taken into account in the development of policy recommendations and supporting evidence, and for indications that key decision making individuals and bodies were aware of and actively interested in the good practices being piloted in the project. The evaluation would have been assisted if measurable success indicators for this objective had been provided in the original document, or developed over the course of the project.

The mid-term evaluation in 2004 had made a number of recommendations to improve the project's effectiveness in the area of policy. The project responded (details are provided in Annex 6), and has developed information materials and taken steps to improve its contacts with decision makers.

Policy recommendations

From our initial materials reviews and interviews with the Action Programme IP's and beneficiaries, we understand that the main policy ideas this project had developed were:

- That it is more effective to develop poverty – reducing economic strategies through community based, participatory approaches that include both women and men and take a gender-sensitive approach, even if this takes more time in the beginning and requires new skills among officials.
- That economic analysis and planning and training needs assessments at all levels will be more effective if gender needs are taken into account and gender equality results included in the objectives.
- That gender equality training for officials at all levels can assist them to develop practical and achievable goals for gender mainstreaming (as they are required to do under NCFAW).
- That gender equality training for local women and men is a significant contributing factor to improved family economic status and happiness.
- That participatory, practice-based and more in-depth training targeted to women as well as to men, with follow up support in agricultural and other income generating activities for poor people has a greater impact than lower cost lecture based approaches and represents a more effective investment of existing public training funds.

The project experience also suggests a high rate of onward transmission of knowledge and technique when women are trained, this deserves further exploration to see if this is unique to women or common to both sexes when trained in a participatory approach. If it is also sex related, this has implications for use of training funds.

For successful policy advocacy, a clear product – a set of ideas to be adopted – is needed. The undoubted success of individual Action Programme activities may not be clearly understood as strategies to be adopted or integrated within a broader programme of government or agencies. Project Advisory Committee members expressed their willingness to follow-up and to replicate project activities within their structure and in their implementation sites. Provincial partners have changed their approach in targeting the poor with inputs

gained from the project. The Vice-Minister of MOLISA has expressed enthusiasm to expand the models of the project to other locations within the authority of the Ministry. However, the evaluation team found that when Implementing Partners were asked about replication and extension, they tended to respond exclusively in terms of the particular Action Programme developed for their location. In Tien My, for example, the Women's Union and local beneficiaries wanted to see extension of training in mushroom growing to all 9 communes from the original 4. They did not have the perspective that it was the approach they followed to identify opportunities and develop local capacity was the 'model' to be replicated; rather they focused on their unique solution. In the view of evaluators, a clear 'higher level' summing up of the intended policy lessons of this project, as the basis for effective advocacy to national level decision makers would be helpful.

Two such higher level policy lessons may be:

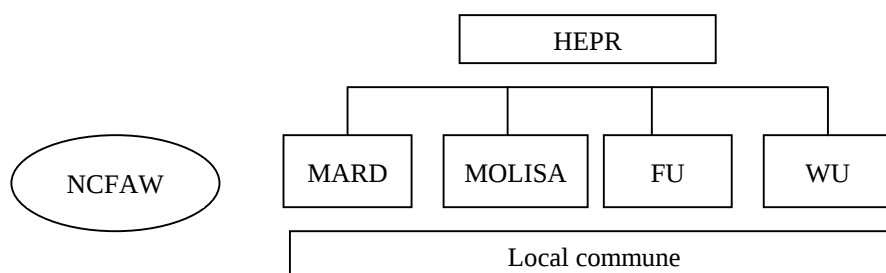
- Incorporating gender equality issues, approaches, and considerations in all economic development planning, training, etc. is possible and practical, and has positive impacts on the quality of the programme. A number of ILO tools are useful for this and should be more widely available and known, and can be useful to officials at all levels who are obliged to meet commitments under NCFAW.
- Participatory approaches to assessing training needs and to delivering training, require new skills and additional time but are more effective and efficient – less money is spent on training for un-needed skills, and the method of teaching ensures that there is a higher retention rate, and that trainees are able to pass along their skills to others.

Evidence for this and some indication of costs and benefits in terms that are relevant to policy makers would constitute materials for policy recommendations.

Target audiences

A number of respondents (including the two women's union officials who have since been promoted to higher regional level posts after being with IPs in two provinces) stated that wider adoption of policy recommendations, such as those noted above is practically possible only if there is explicit support at very senior levels of government, party and organizations.

In addition, there are a number of national programmes and strategies specifically aimed at poverty reduction and gender equality that are the natural audience for recommendations from this project. The following sketch illustrates this: the HEPR brings together relevant government policy and ministries along with international donors. Ministries and mass organizations are responsible for implementation, through local communes. Additional funds for job creation and employment promotion are also managed through these line agencies. The NCFAW holds all levels of government accountable for results rating to improving women's equality.



Following the mid-term evaluation and its recommendations the project has taken steps to improve its understanding of and links to senior levels of government and other programmes, but the evaluation team would suggest that a detailed stakeholder analysis and advocacy/marketing plan would be useful for the final stage of the project, if one has not been done.

Timing for policy advocacy

The third element in effective policy advocacy is timing. There have been a number of potential windows of opportunity when good ideas and recommendations would find a receptive audience – for example, preparation for the socio-economic development plan for the period 2006 – 2010 took place in late 2004 and in 2005. It is great that the project has started to consolidate lessons learned to develop messages for policy advocacy. The project could, in its extension period, identify such opportunities and ensure that materials targeted to the particular interests and concerns of the process are developed and used at a strategic time. This can post-date the project, if the project's Implementing Partners take on responsibility for such advocacy.

Context: knowledge of existing programmes and policies

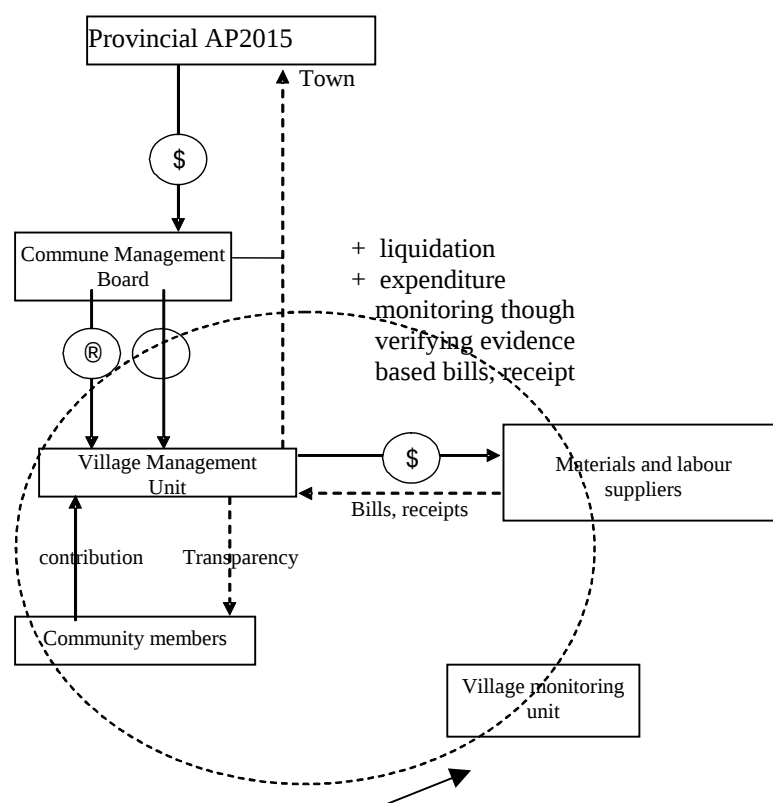
A fourth element of effective policy advocacy is good understanding of the context within which the target audience is already working. In line with the recommendations of the mid term evaluation, MOLISA was commissioned in April 2006 to prepare a report on existing national policies on employment promotion and poverty reduction, and policies and services provided by the provincial and local levels where the project operates. The study is expected to be completed in December 2006, so was not available for review in this evaluation. With the extension phase, the study will help establish the context for advocacy.

The evaluation team noted the existence of a number of other projects by government and development partners which have aims related to those of the EEOW project. For example, GTZ cooperated with the government to implement a training programme and manual to support village level planning. UNDP has supported the NCFAW in mainstreaming gender equality into the government planning structure since 2001. Many projects implemented by international NGOs also focused on poverty reduction and sustainable livelihood. Compiling all lessons learned and experience from related agencies could give more weight to the policy recommendations of the project at the national level.

In developing advocacy and 'lessons learned' materials, it will be important to take note of the existing requirements and contexts of the intended audiences. For example, one of the potentially helpful lessons of the project is approaches that helped local leaders overcome barriers they had faced to realizing the existing requirements for participation and gender equality in Village Development Plans (VDP). These requirements are not new, so the project's main value was not in introducing the concept, but in demonstrating effective means of realizing them and the benefits of doing so.

The following chart illustrates how funds for poverty alleviation under the AP 2015 programme flow and are managed through the province and commune. This is one of the contexts within which the project operated and which project recommendations could address.

Financial management model of AP 2015 Programme



Source: Training package on poverty reduction, MoLISA, 2006

GOOD PRACTICES

1. Gender mainstreaming

Gender equality was mainstreamed into all process of the project cycle including planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This approach moved out of the traditional focus of women in development to a new one focusing on gender equality, illustrated by the involvement of male participants in gender training and active participation of women in technical training and community events. As a result of the project activities, women are playing a growing role in their families and communities with their increased economic and social skills. They are also active in disseminating new techniques to others in their neighbourhood. The women's clubs play an important role in helping women share life experience and to make plans for improved income generation. The gender equality training for IPs, DOLISAs and local leaders made a significant change their perception toward the promotion of gender equality. Institutions have paid more attention to gender equality in the implementation of their regular tasks.

Helping others in pig raising in An Thanh Trung commune

Women group we met with in the group discussion in An Thanh Trung commune were happy to share with us what they perceived as big changes in their family life, socially and economically, after joining the women's group supported by the ILO project. They said that they like the training on gender and gender equality the most. In the first training, only women participated but from the second one, their husband also joined. A significant change in the relationship between the wife and husband was recognized. Their husbands are now sharing the housework with them, even encourage them to go to meeting. The change can be seen not only in their husband but also in themselves, in terms of interpersonal communication skills and the level of confidence in attending village meetings.

Half of the women groups participate in the technical training course on pig raising in early 2004. They said that they learned a lot from the training, and know how to feed the pigs in a most economic way so they can save some money for the capital. Secondly, they know when the pigs are sick so they can treat them in time or they know to whom they can ask for support. They also know how to take care of the pig during her birth delivery that they had to hire someone to do it before. With the new techniques, the income cycle in selling pig has been reduced from 6-7 months to only 3 months and therefore the income from this business has increased. With the extra income, they bought more nutritious food for children, support children to go to school and buy new family facilities. One of them was able to buy a new motorbike that was just in her dream before. They have shared with others in their neighborhood who want to invest in pig raising like them. From 20 women beneficiaries in the village applying new technology in 2004, nowadays there are about 60 households in their village have more than two pigs in their husbandry. Although the price decreased due to the disease "Foot and Mouth disease" happened last year, they believe that it will be over soon and their products could be sold with a good price.

T. T. P, a 23 years old lady in La Hien commune is one of the members participating in the tea planting club. She has no land for rice planting, but tea only. She was recommended by leader of village women's union and selected by commune women's union as member of tea planting club since 2004. She participated in most of project activities including training on gender equality, new technology in tea planting. Her husband and herself have tried to apply new knowledge and skills learned to improved the production of tea planting. However, due to geographical reasons, their income from tea

planting is not getting better as expected. Attending a training course on business development supported by the project, she initiated an idea to open a small "business" to sell sticky rice for students in the morning (breakfast). She often wakes up at 4 am, cooking and preparing for the service which starts from 6 am and finish at 7:30 am. With knowledge learned, she managed to maintain the services to increase income gradually from less than 10,000 VND per day in September 2006 to around 20,000 VND per day in November 2006. This work has enabled her to be more confident and the income is increasing positively. She is satisfied and happy with this new income source "My sticky rice is now the best one in the area", she said confidently.

However, her husband does not support her to participate in training courses and club activities. Sometimes she has to "escape" from him to attend project activities. She had tried to apply knowledge from gender training to improve her husband's perception and shared with him what she learned from the project, but the improvement is slow. He showed improvement in supporting her to open the sticky rice selling service, and helping her in housework, but he is not happy with her participating in project activities. Her husband did not attend gender training even though he was invited several times. It would take longer time to change this practice. In addition, with a new business, T has to work harder to have better income.

(Summary an in-depth interview in La Hien commune, Thai Nguyen)

2. Progressive participatory approach

The participatory approach was used in all project stages and activities, including needs assessment, project design, planning, monitoring and evaluation by IPs and DOLISAs. This practice has brought interventions closer to beneficiary's needs and capability. Improved capacity in participatory proposal development and M&E of DOLISAs' staff has helped them in their responsibility of coordinating different resources for poverty reduction in each province. Using the participatory approach was considered one of the key capacities built through the programme, according to MOLISA and DOLISA representatives.

Application of the participatory planning within the poverty reduction programme, DOLISA An Giang

Mr. Son was the project focal point at DOLISA An Giang from the beginning of the project in 2004. He moved to work in the Social Protection Section at the end of 2005. He shared with us what he learned from the project about the participatory approach and how much he appreciates its application. This is the first project that DOLISA directly involved in the implementation. He likes the needs assessment at the beginning of the project because it helped to develop interventions appropriate to beneficiaries' capacity and conditions. The methods of working together with intended groups in planning, implementation and M&E are cited as useful. Currently he is involved in the poverty reduction programme so he can use these methods in the monitoring and evaluation system for poverty reduction. His expertise has been reinforced by the training on the gender mainstreaming participatory training methods. So far, he has been using lessons learnt and expertise gained from ILO project to conduct training courses on poverty reduction for all 154 district/cities in An Giang. The most interesting thing he shared with us about the change in himself was that he stopped smoking after a quite long time engaging with cigarettes and minimized the out-door dinners with friends to have more time with his family and his wife.

Mr. Hoa, project coordinator of the Farmer's Union in Thai Nguyen. He stressed the contribution that the project brought up to the poor women in Son Phu in terms of changes in social and economic situation. Through the training on gender, they are able to convince their husbands and sons to share the housework and support their participation in the women's group. According to him, this is a big change in the area where more than

70% of population is ethnic minorities and the gender inequality is considered normal and common. Furthermore, they are able to learn the technical issues and to apply what they learned in their family and agricultural activities. What impressed him the most is the participatory approach used in training and development of the Action Programme. He acknowledged that this approach if applied properly would bring the projects closer to people's needs and demands. This was warmly accepted and supported by the Farmer Union in Thai Nguyen, and consequently it has been integrated into their own training system. The close cooperation with the agriculture sector such as the district Agricultural Extension Unit and Pesticide Control Centre as well as with the Bank of Social Policy, Bank for Agricultural Development, Agriculture service centre, Fund for farmers, etc. has seen as a key element for success and a potential sustainability.

3. New approaches to training

The participatory training methods of the project were highly appreciated. Training subjects and methods were developed based on Training Needs Assessment (TNAs) conducted before the delivery of training itself. In addition, training in smaller groups, encouraging small group discussions, and using teaching aids were new approaches to training that proved highly successful. Post training supervision and technical assistance to support the application of acquired knowledge and trained skills right after the training were seen as a key factor in the effectiveness of training activities.

Women's Union in Thai Nguyen

The Women's Union felt that they had significantly improved their expertise in analyzing needs and preparing effective proposals. As evidence, they noted that following their training and practice with the EEOW Action Programme, they had successfully secured project funding from Canada for a new project and were awaiting results on another proposal for HIV. Furthermore, one staff member described how she had made a proposal to the Agricultural Extension service for them to deliver a five day training programme, in an area where the normal training period was one day. She said that she was able to use her skills and the experience of the project to defend the need for in depth training and the longer period, and was successful in getting the support she requested.

Women's Union in An Giang

Through the project we identified a need for mobile vocational training. Many of our project participants, and their neighbours, were interested in developing new skills but because of their family responsibilities and their other work they could not travel to the provincial training centres. Through the project we piloted mobile training, in tailoring, and worked with DOLISA to establish this. DOLISA has adopted the approach we developed for the project and is now offering mobile services in 11 locations covering over 150 communes.

Village leaders in An Hoa

Although the project was able to conduct only two training sessions in GET Ahead the commune leaders have decided that this training is valuable and have successfully applied for funding from World Vision to conduct four training sessions in 2007 for 100 villagers who are not beneficiaries of the EEOW project.

4. Decent work package

Providing an integrated package comprising both technical training and business skills for income generation was seen as a new approach by community people. The integrated

approach helped participants improve the production of their main products through technical training, and also improve their marketing through training in this area. The introduction of GET Ahead, a training manual on business skills for women entrepreneurs was welcomed by women beneficiaries and IPs.

Mrs. Huyen, a villager of Son Phu commune, is a shy and timid woman. She didn't know why she was chosen for the project but knew that there was a meeting among members of the village women's union in which voting was used for selection. Our interview with her was interrupted several times because she had to take care of her second child who was sick; therefore we had to interview her husband. He acknowledged the change in his wife, especially her capacity in learning technical and business issues and the confidence in talking about them. After attending the technical training on the tea planting and processing and business skills (GET Ahead), she discussed with her husband and they decided to borrow 3 million to buy a set of procession equipment. This debt was cleared up after two years. Beginning this year, they bought a processing machine, firstly to serve their family's needs for pig raising and alcohol production. The machine costs of 10 million in which they had to borrow about 4 million. He is confident that they can repay this debt in 2 two years time. When we invited her and her husband to have a picture in front of their house, Huyen still stepped behind her husband but they both looked happy.

5. Coordination

"Working together" was perceived as a strong point from all IPs and DOLISA. The recommendations of the mid-term evaluation were carefully taken into consideration by the project staff. Better collaboration among all stakeholders: beneficiaries, people's committee, extension officers, bank of social policies, and especially DOLISA, has contributed to better achieving the project objectives. The involvement of the Bank of Social Policy improved the range of services and support available to project beneficiaries. The Bank recognized as collateral the improved capacity of women, economically and socially, gained from their participation in the project activities. These practices were endorsed by DOLISA as the Government coordination body.

DOLISA in Thai Nguyen

They report that they are applying the lessons learned from the project in their own work. They described that in a recent infrastructure construction project villagers had been closely involved at every stage, from initial proposal through implementation. Another example was that they had encouraged agricultural extension and bank credit officers to jointly assess applicants for loans – this had led to much better performance on the loans. They also saw the potential to link project-sponsored activities, such as rattan, into their overall economic planning for the area.

Vietnam Cooperative Alliance, Quang Nam

In this project we have to work very closely with the Farmers Union and Women's Union because we don't have a network at the community level. But in Phu Tho we have established a regular coop for the rattan [production part of the project] – and now it is a properly establish coop that we as the VCA will provide ongoing assistance to, with support for their management training, vocational funds, and assistance with securing markets for their products.

CONCLUSIONS

Relevance and strategic fit of project strategies

In terms of the first and second objectives of the project the strategies appear to have been appropriate and successful. Particularly noteworthy elements included:

- Working with local level leadership and community structures and fully involving them in the process of design, monitoring and evaluation, and providing training. This has had a real impact on a number of local leaders and has led them to changing some expectations and practices in their daily work – for example, actively seeking to involve women in community meetings, and intervening in family violence incidents.
- Using a range of implementing partners, particularly those other than the Women's Union, and exposing them to gender equality training and the responsibility of providing their services to women has helped these organizations to understand both new potential clients and new ways of working.
- The early decision (following consultations) not to include a micro finance element within the projects and to use available capital sources (Bank of Social Policy, etc.) has been very positive as it has built participant's understanding of these sources and, through the involvement of Banks in the projects, raised the awareness of the Banks and other local organizations such as the Women's Union to this resource.
- The involvement of DOLISA has to some extent assisted in better situating the project within existing planning and budgeting for training, employment creation and poverty alleviation programmes in each province.

Work has started on developing a strategy for Objective three, focusing on promoting the lessons learned from the project activities.

Effectiveness and outcomes

The project has had definite positive impacts in terms of the first two objectives. It has reached a large number of women³ through training and group formation and contributed directly to improved income and status for poor women and their families in project communes. Additional women and families are benefiting indirectly from the project activities through the transmission of techniques and gender equality concepts from beneficiaries to their families and neighbours.

Information reported for each Action Programme is confirmed by the focus group and individual interviews of the evaluation: there has been an increase in 'empowerment' for women as measured by their improved assets, capacity and action. IP's have developed new capacities in project planning, design monitoring and evaluation, and report some success in applying this capacity to other work – such as making successful project proposals. They have expanded their service provision – in the case of non-Women's Union organizations, by beginning to include more women in their services, and for the Women's Union, expanding the scope of services they provide.

The project has been to date less effective in establishing the policy recommendations it seeks to make, the factual basis for them, and the intended audiences. The positive results from individual Action Programmes have not yet been analyzed and aggregated to produce

³ See Appendix 7

more general policy lessons as the basis for advocacy at the national level. At the moment, results are specific to individual projects and locations, and in the experience of those involved, the general policy lesson is often unclear. Many IP and local respondents report that the purpose or main benefit of the project has been the specific technical training they have received, and when they request support for expansion, it is expansion of that particular training.

As with any project, there have been a number of unintended consequences from the project's activities which need to be factored in to any assessment of the policies to be advocated. For example, while pig raising has been a successful strategy to increase one family's income in La Hien, their neighbours have complained that the additional animal waste is causing an environmental and health problem for them. This problem was discussed and acknowledged during the evaluation workshop in December 2006 and will be addressed by the project stakeholders.

Efficiency

Efficiency concerns exist at two levels in this project. On one level, the project itself should demonstrate that it has used resources well to complete its intended results. On the other, as this project is intended to produce policy recommendations, it should be producing and analyzing information about the cost of implementing the policy recommendations it proposes.

This evaluation did not undertake a detailed review of the efficiency of project operations. We did not observe any issues which raised concerns about the use of resources to achieve results, and we noted with approval that the project had worked to incorporate resources from other projects and activities (such as OSH training) to supplement its own resources.

We did however consider a more general point with regard to project design. Many of the people and organizations interviewed stressed the point that this was a very small project, and while its contributions were appreciated by all, it demanded considerable time and resources for implementing partners, project staff and administrative and finance staff at all levels to manage. In some respects it operated like a large programme, without having the resources to justify the demands it made on partner organizations. The evaluators would suggest different options for project structure could be considered for future projects of this type – for example, making the PAC of the project a sub-committee of an existing coordination body (such as the HEPR Board) or working with existing UN projects to test specific innovations within the context of larger development projects. Such approaches in the future might lower the cost of administration and thus improve project efficiency.

For the second level, we cannot conclude that the project has to date generated adequate information regarding the costs and benefits of its policy recommendations. There is, fortunately, time to address this during the extension period.

Management

There were different views about the management of the project in terms of the one-year cycle of Action Programmes. Some IP's said they felt constrained in their identification of activities and beneficiaries by the time frame, and evaluators were told that uncertainty about annual programme renewal tended to limit the scope of their objectives. Other views were that the annual cycle did not inhibit longer term planning, and that Action Programmes had included extensions and replication and recruitment of new beneficiaries. In practice, four of the five IPs continued agricultural vocational training for the same core group but extended other types of training (gender, business and life skills) to increasing numbers of

beneficiaries through the system of village gender educators while one IP took on new groups of beneficiaries every year. Working with the same groups had the positive benefit of reinforcing vocational agricultural skills and building cohesion for the women's clubs, but limited extension or replication to other groups.

There is good evidence of some mutual awareness and collaboration between ILO projects. For example, consultations with the microfinance project at the outset helped the project to decide not to establish a separate microfinance scheme but to work with existing institutions, and there has been good collaboration with the OSH programme. Project officers from other ILO projects are aware of products of EEOW, chiefly GET Ahead, and have used or considered using them in their own projects. A barrier to deeper collaboration is that ILO projects are often geographically specific. In terms of wider UN collaboration, the ILO Office Director has made efforts to promote the project in her discussions with her counterparts and in UN presentations on issues of poverty reduction, gender equality and the like, but there have been few opportunities for staff level collaboration.

Finally, we found the financial/administrative requirements placed on IP's and project staff to be disproportionate to the amounts involved. Less than 1/3 of total funds are advanced at the beginning, and all IP's were required to use other funds to meet project needs while awaiting payment after completing activities & submitting reports. Up to four months processing time, and numerous corrections and resubmissions, for a \$2,500 payment on a \$10,000 service contract make any consideration of efficiency irrelevant – the staff time involved surely outweighs any possible benefit of the additional processes. We understand that ILO rules as interpreted by the Bangkok regional office and the Hanoi office appear to differ and this causes some of the delays and additional work, and we would urge that this be addressed.

Sustainability, replication and institutionalization of good practices

The project intends to impact on the policies and strategies adopted by national authorities so that results in terms of improved income for women and improved gender equality are realized in economic development and poverty reduction programmes. To be influenced by good practices, people responsible for implementing relevant policies must be aware of them, and must be motivated to adopt them. As we were advised by some senior officials, one of the key factors motivating officials at lower levels is the assurance that high levels support and endorse specific approaches. Consequently, replication of good practices requires a number of elements:

- The good practices must be clearly defined, including the implementation issues (costs, conditions)
- They must address problems that individuals are currently facing (such as how to be more successful in achieving poverty reduction goals with their commune)
- They must be at minimum acceptable to and ideally actively endorsed by more senior levels.

The evaluation team recognized great potential to apply lessons learned from the project activities, and concluded that more attention needed to be paid to the context within which the project was intending to develop and test good practices, especially in the next extension period.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A: For the project in its final period

1. The project should immediately secure the services of a consultant or partner who can assist in developing an effective strategy to address Objective 3.
2. This strategy should include:
 - a. A rapid assessment of the current national poverty reduction and gender equality policies and strategies at the national level (if required to address any gaps in the forthcoming MOLISA study)
 - b. Identification of the major national and international stakeholders in the above and their interests
 - c. Liaison with the major UN agencies and INGOs and NGOs involved in the above
 - d. Identification of the 'key policy messages' that would have impact on the above, including tailoring the project approach to fit to the big national programmes such as HEPR, NEP and vocational training for poor farmers, etc. within its existing structure and available resources
 - e. Development of necessary materials and information to document and explain the key policy recommendations as verified through the project
 - f. Consequential work with the IP's and modification of AP's to ensure the development of needed materials and data
 - g. Development of success indicators for the extension phase to facilitate the result-oriented approach in implementing the advocacy strategy. One example could be that MOLISA issues a policy and guideline on gender mainstreaming making it compulsory that it is applied in all programmes/projects within MOLISA sector.
3. The relevance of the recommended policies to very poorest women should be documented. Documentation should include analysis of the number of project participants (rather than participants in each training session) with some analysis of the different elements each participant took part in, and evidence of impacts (change in family status for example, no longer qualifying as a poor family).
4. The recommended policies should be relevant to the existing commune level requirements for VDP and CDP, addressing gaps in the practical implementation of the (already existing) requirements for gender mainstreaming and participatory approaches.
5. The project could support the IPs who are able and willing to develop plans for maintaining and expanding project activities using their own resources.

B: General recommendation regarding ILO's approach to technical cooperation

1. The ILO should consider how to improve the quality of projects that seek to influence national policies. Suggestions for this include:
 - a. Guidelines for project design should ensure that the context within which such recommendations will be made (national strategies, major donor programmes) is well understood, that the essential stakeholders and their interests have been identified, and that a good strategy for developing and delivering information that will meet the needs of stakeholder is included from the outset.
 - b. Where funds are limited, consideration should be given to approaches which explicitly add value to existing programmes and projects whether of the national constituents or of other UN agencies or donors, thus maximizing the potential impact.

Appendix 1: Evaluation Terms of Reference

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

Terms of Reference Project Independent Final Evaluation

October 2006

1. Introduction

The ILO/Japan Regional Programme on Expansion of Employment Opportunities for Women (EEOW) Vietnam chapter is a technical cooperation project implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), Vietnam. It started in 2002 and is scheduled to be completed at the end of 2006. An independent final evaluation will be carried out to assess the progress in achieving the project's objectives and to identify good practices and lessons learned for sustainability and replication.

2. Background

Following the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, the ILO has further strengthened its efforts to mainstream gender concerns at all levels within the work of the organization. Within this context, a number of gender-specific programmes and projects were launched including the ILO/Japan Asian Regional Programme on Expansion of Employment Opportunities for Women (EEOW). This project was launched in Indonesia and Nepal in 1997, in Thailand in 2000 and it was expanded to Cambodia and Vietnam in 2002.

EEOW Vietnam has been officially operational since February 2002. The project aims to contribute to the national efforts to alleviate poverty and promote opportunities and a 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, 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 EEOW's strategies are:

1. Direct assistance to poor women and their families for demonstration purposes

Six Implementing Partners (IPs) were selected to implement community-based Action Programmes in Thai Nguyen, Quang Nam and An Giang. The IPs were:

Thai Nguyen: Women's Union and Farmer's Union

Quang Nam: Women's Union and Cooperative Alliance

An Giang: Women's Union and Farmer's Union

In December 2003, the IPs started their Action Programmes (APs) which included various activities such as raising gender awareness, carrying out training on agricultural extension and processing techniques, and vocational and business skills, and establishing and maintaining women's groups in selected villages.

2. Institutional strengthening and capacity building of partner organizations

The project carried out training materials development, training workshops and technical backstopping missions to strengthen IP capacities in implementing their Action Programmes effectively. The training topics included participatory training of trainers, gender awareness raising, gender equality promotion through gender mainstreaming, gender and life skills and fundamental rights at work and in life, gender and enterprise development, participatory project design, monitoring and evaluation, and safe work.

3. Policy advocacy and development

It was planned that experiences from the EEOW's community-based Action Programmes would be the basis for developing policy recommendations and replicating good practices. Studies were carried out by MOLISA in the 3 provinces at the start of the project and another study is currently being carried out by MOLISA in these provinces to assess the gender dimension of existing policies/programmes on employment promotion and poverty alleviation with a view to inform policy makers on removing structural constraints faced by women and men and improving their access to quality employment opportunities. Upon the request of MOLISA, the project also recently supported dialogue among labour institutions and gender networks to review employment and labour issues in a draft new Gender Equality Law.

At the end of 2004, the project carried out a mid-term evaluation to assess the project's progress and achievements. The mid-term evaluation identified many positive impacts among poor women and officials of the Implementing Partners and identified good practices as well as some areas for improving the project's sustainability. These included increased involvement of the Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (DOLISA) in AP management, increased application of the participatory approach, further strengthening local capacities on gender mainstreaming and participatory project design, monitoring and evaluation, and enhancing the training capacity among the IPs' staff through refresher courses. The project work plan for 2005 addressed these recommendations, and in 2006, upon the request of various stakeholders, the project started to further extend successful strategies, for example it is now working with the national Vietnam Women's Union to replicate EEOW good practices in Nam Dinh, Thai Binh, and Lam Dong on a pilot basis.

3. Objectives of evaluation

The main objectives of the final evaluation are to:

- Assess the project's progress towards achieving its objectives

- Identify and document project's good practices which brought positive impacts on the lives of women and other key stakeholders
- Identify lessons learned and key strategies on women economic and social empowerment for future use by the project's partner organizations and possible other actors

The project's mid-term evaluation focused on design and delivery factors while this independent final evaluation will focus on project outcomes, in other words the effects of the project's results (outputs) on the project's intended beneficiaries and institutional partners over the past four years. The evaluation will be forward looking and develop recommendations on the EOW exit strategy and means of institutionalizing good practices. The core evaluation concerns for assessing project performance are:

- Relevance and strategic fit of project strategies
- Effectiveness and outcomes
- Efficiency
- Sustainability, replication and institutionalization of good practices

An example ILO analytical framework and suggested outline for the evaluation report are attached as Annexes 1 and 2 for reference by the evaluation team.

4. Scope of evaluation

The project final evaluation will cover the whole duration of the EOW Vietnam project from its inception up to October 2006. Key questions for assessing the effects of project results among beneficiaries and institutional stakeholders are:

Intended beneficiaries: Village women and their families

- Gender needs, concerns and perspectives: To what extent did the project address practical and strategic needs of women and men?
- Economic status and empowerment: To what extent did the project contribute to the increased economic status of women?
- Social status and empowerment: To what extent did the project contribute to the increased social status of women?
- Gender relations: To what extent did the project contribute to improved relationship between the women beneficiaries and their family members? Any changes in terms of distribution of workload, income, and decision-making in the family/community?
- Capacity: To what extent did the training activities contribute to improved livelihood of women and men?
- Involvement in the project cycle: To what extent did the women and their husbands involve in the project design, monitoring and evaluation?
- Impacts: What are the project's intended/unintended impacts (both positive/negative)? Were there any impacts made indirectly to non-targeted women in communities?
- Sustainability: What are the activities that women want to continue after the project's completion? What do they need for sustainability?

Local officials: Commune People's Committee

- Gender mainstreaming: To what extent did local officials learn about gender equality promotion and how did they use this in their work?

- Participatory project management skills: To what extent did they apply the participatory approach?
- Impacts: What are the positive/negative and intended/unintended impacts of the project?
- Sustainability: What are the EEW project models that they would like to continue after the project's termination? How would they sustain EEW activities?
- Replication: Has there been replication of EEW activities in non-EEW targeted areas? Has there been a change in policies and programmes reflecting the EEW good practices?

Implementing Partners, DOLISAs, and MOLISA:

- Gender mainstreaming: To what extent did officials learn about gender equality promotion and how did they use this in their work and in their organization?
- Participatory project management skills: To what extent did they apply the participatory approach?
- Information sharing and networking: To what extent were good practices and lessons learned shared with other institutions at provincial and national levels?
- Impacts: What are the positive/negative and intended/unintended impacts of the project?
- Sustainability: What are the EEW project models that they would like to continue after the project's termination? How would they sustain these activities?
- Replication: Has there been replication of EEW activities in non-EEW targeted areas? Has there been a change in policies and programmes reflecting the EEW good practices?

ILO staff:

- Technical assistance and project management. Was the ILO support adequate in terms of quality, quantity and timeliness?
- Cooperation between projects: To what extent did the EEW project cooperate with other projects? To what extent did the gender-specific EEW project facilitate the mainstreaming of gender concerns in other projects?
- Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP): To what extent did the project contribute to the overall work of the ILO in Vietnam?
- Knowledge sharing: To what extent were the good practices and lessons learned shared with other ILO officials

5. Main outputs

- Participatory tools and methods for project final evaluation (national evaluation team members);
- The draft Project evaluation report in English (an electronic file via e-mail or diskette and one hard copy of final report)
- The final Project evaluation report in both English and Vietnamese (an electronic file via e-mail or diskette and one hard copy of final report)

Note: The content of the evaluation report is the joint responsibility of the national evaluation team. They will divide duties and responsibilities among them as they see fit at the

start of the mission in line with the time table in the workplan. Should any of the project stakeholders disagree with (parts of) the report, they can submit their views in writing and this record will be attached to the final evaluation report.

6. Methodology

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

- a) Secondary data - review the project documents and reports
- b) Interviews - conduct interviews, using an open-ended framework and questionnaire
- c) Site visit – discussions and observations at the EEOW project sites

7. Evaluation team, work plan and timeframe

The evaluation team will consist of the following persons:

1. External National Consultant 1
2. External National Consultant 2
3. Independent ILO official

Resource persons:

1. Ms. Aya Matsuura, Gender Expert and Project Coordinator, EEOW Cambodia and Vietnam
2. Ms. Nguyen Kim Lan, National Project Coordinator
3. Ms. Nguyen Thi Kim Thanh, Administrative Assistant of the EEOW Vietnam will act as resource persons in this evaluation exercise.

Work plan

Dates in 2006	Tasks	Responsible persons
10 Nov	1. Design participatory tools and methods for the final evaluation	External National Consultants
13 Nov	2. Prepare the tentative Project Evaluation programme and schedule.	EEOW NPC
11-15 Nov	3. Desk review of all relevant project documents, progress reports, annual reports prepared by the ILO/Japan EEOW; pilot action programme proposals, pilot action programme progress reports and final reports; mid-term evaluation report; and final products of all EEOW parallel supporting activities.	Evaluation team members
13 Nov	4. Prepare a list of the additional secondary information required, if any, and send it to the NPC for further action.	Evaluation team members
Afternoon, 20 Nov	5. 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.	Evaluation team members

21 Nov – 1 Dec	6. Interact with EEOW's counterpart and EEOW's constituents regarding the implementation of the Project.	Evaluation team members
	7. Participate in field visits to action programme 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 and impacts.	
By 15 Dec	8. Document and analyze all of the information gathered; prepare the draft Project Evaluation report in English and send it to the ILO/Japan CTA in Bangkok through EEOW country office and the Director of the ILO Hanoi for comments and suggestions.	Evaluation team members
By 21 Dec	9. Finalize the draft Project Evaluation report in English incorporating the comments/suggestions from the ILO and submit the Project Final Evaluation Report in both English and Vietnamese to the CTA in Bangkok through EEOW country office and the Director of the ILO Hanoi.	Evaluation team members
26 Dec	10. Participate and present findings and recommendations to the ILO/Japan EEOW Evaluation Outcome Workshop in December 2006.	Evaluation team members
29 Dec	11. Finalize the report incorporating the suggestions/comments from the ILO/Japan EEOW Evaluation Outcome Workshop in English and Vietnamese, and then submit to the CTA in Bangkok through EEOW country office and the Director of the ILO Hanoi.	Evaluation team members

Sample Analytical Framework⁴

The following questions serve as a guide not a blue print. The evaluation team should feel free to assess any other subject as they consider appropriate

Relevance and strategic fit of project strategies

- Does the project address relevant needs of the target groups and institutional partners? Was a needs analysis carried out at the beginning of project reflecting the various needs of different stakeholders? Are these needs still relevant? Have new, more relevant needs emerged that the project should address?
- Have the stakeholders taken ownership of the project concept and approach since the design phase?
- How does the project align with and support national development plans, the national poverty reduction strategy (PRS), national decent work plans, national plans of action on relevant issues(e.g. on employment creation, poverty reduction, gender equality promotion, migration, child labour, anti-trafficking),as well as programmes and priorities of the national social partners?
- How does the project align with and support the ILO's Decent Work Country Programmes and its gender mainstreaming strategy? Has the gender-specific EEOW project served as a guide or catalyst for other ILO projects in the country? How well does the project complement and fit with other ILO projects/programmes in the Country or countries of intervention and in the region?
- How well does the project complement and link to activities of other donors at local level? How well does the project fit within the broader local donor context (UN and non-UN, making reference to UNDAF and donor consultative groups where applicable)?

Effectiveness and outcomes

- Is the project making sufficient progress towards its planned objectives? Will the project be likely to achieve its planned objectives upon completion?
- Have the quantity and quality of the outputs produced so far been satisfactory? Do the benefits accrue equally to men and women?
- Are the project partners using the outputs? Have the outputs been transformed by project partners into expected outcomes?
 - How do the outputs and outcomes contribute to the ILO's global objectives?
 - How do they contribute to gender equality?
 - How do they contribute to the strengthening of the social partners and social dialogue?
 - How do they contribute to poverty reduction?
 - How do they contribute to strengthening the application of labour standards?
- How have stakeholders been involved in project implementation? How effective has the project been in establishing ownership among the target groups and the institutional partners at the community, district, provincial and national levels?

⁴ Adapted from ILO Evaluation Guidance on Planning and Managing Project Evaluation, DRAFT April 2006.

- Is the project management and implementation participatory and to what extent is this participation contributing towards the achievement of the project objectives? Has the project been appropriately responsive to the needs of the national constituents and changing partner priorities?
- Has the project been appropriately responsive to political, legal, economic, institutional etc. changes in the project environment?
- Has the project produced demonstrated successes, lessons, good practices, failures?
- In which areas (geographic, sectoral, issue) does the project have the greatest achievements? Why this and what has been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements?
- In which areas does the project have the least achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why? How can they be overcome?
- What, if any, alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving its objectives?

Efficiency of resource use

- Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes?
- Have resources been used efficiently? Have activities supporting the strategy been cost effective? In general, do the results achieved justify the costs? Could the same results have been attained with fewer resources and/or with other partners?
- Have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?

Effectiveness of management arrangements

- Are management capacities adequate?
- Does project governance facilitate good results and efficient delivery? Is there a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities by all parties involved?
- Does the project receive adequate political, technical and administrative support from its institutional partners? Do implementing partners provide for effective project implementation?
- What is the role of the National Project Advisory Committee? Do the members have a good grasp of the project strategies and its outcomes? How do they contribute to the success of the project?
- How effective is communication between the project team, ILO Hanoi, the Sub-regional Office and the Regional Office in Bangkok, the responsible technical department at headquarters, CODEV and the donor? How effective is communication between the project team and the national implementing partners?
- Does the project receive adequate administrative, technical and -if needed -political support from the ILO office in the field, field technical specialists and the responsible technical unit in headquarters?
- How effectively does the project management monitor project performance and results?
 - Is a monitoring and evaluation system in place and how effective is it?
 - Is the information needed for the measurement of the indicators available? How are the indicators measured?

- Is relevant information and data systematically being collected and collated? Is data disaggregated by sex (and by other relevant characteristics if relevant)?
- Is information being regularly analyzed to feed into management decisions?
- Has cooperation with project partners been efficient?
- Has relevant gender expertise been sought? Have available gender mainstreaming tools been adapted and utilized?
- Has the project made strategic use of coordination and collaboration with other ILO projects and with other donors in the country/region to increase its effectiveness and impact?

Impact orientation and sustainability

- Can observed changes (in attitudes, capacities, institutions etc.) be linked to the project's interventions?
- In how far is the project making a significant contribution to broader and longer-term development impact? Or how likely is it that it will eventually make one? Is the project strategy and project management steering towards impact?
- What are the realistic long-term effects of the project on the poverty level and decent work condition of the people?
- Can the project be scaled up during the project period? If so, how do project objectives, strategies and/or timetable have to be adjusted? Is there a need to scale down the project (e.g. if the project duration is shorter than planned)?
- How effective and realistic is the exit strategy of the project? Is the project gradually being handed over to the national partners? Once external funding ends, will national institutions and implementing partners be likely to continue the project or carry forward its results?
- Are national partners willing and committed to continue with the project? How effectively has the project built national ownership?
- Are national partners able to continue with the project? How effectively has the project built necessary capacity of people and institutions (of national partners and implementing partners)?
- Has the project successfully built or strengthened an enabling environment (laws, policies, people's attitudes etc.)?
- Are the project results, achievements and benefits likely to be durable? Are results anchored in national institutions and can the partners maintain them financially at end of project?
- Can the project approach or results be replicated or scaled up by national partners or other actors? Is this likely to happen? What would support their replication and scaling up?
- Can any unintended or unexpected positive or negative effects be observed as a consequence of the project's interventions? If so, how has the project strategy been adjusted? Have positive effects been integrated into the project strategy? Has the strategy been adjusted to minimize negative effects?
- Should there be a second phase of the project to consolidate achievements?

Suggested Outline for the Evaluation Report⁵

Title page with key project and evaluation data:

- Project title
 - Project code
 - Type of evaluation (independent)
 - Timing of evaluation (final)
 - Names of the evaluation team
 - Timing of the mission
1. Brief background on the project and its design logic
 2. Purpose, scope and clients of evaluation
 3. Methodology
 4. Review of implementation if needed
 5. Project performance
 - Relevance and strategic fit of project strategies
 - Effectiveness and outcomes
 - Efficiency
 - Impact orientation and sustainability
 6. Conclusions and Recommendations
 7. Lessons learned, including short stories featuring voices of the beneficiaries and stakeholders

Annexes

- TOR
- Programme of the evaluation mission
- List of persons met
- Documents reviewed

⁵ Adapted from ILO Evaluation Guidance on Planning and Managing Project Evaluation, DRAFT April 2006.

Appendix 2: Field Evaluation Schedule

Time	Descriptions	Participants	Remark
THAI NGUYEN PROVINCE			
Tuesday, 21 November 2006			
6:30-9:00	Hanoi to La Hien commune		
9:00-10:30	Focus group discussion 1 with women beneficiaries	One group of 8 women	Whole team
10:30-11:30	Focus group discussion 2 with women beneficiaries	One group of 8 women	Whole team
11:30-13:30	Two in-depth Interviews with two women beneficiaries (during lunch)	One woman evaluated as the “best” and the other evaluated as the “least” successful beneficiaries by IPs	Whole team
13:30-14:30	Focus group discussion with commune stakeholders	Officers of people’s committee, women’s union, and farmer’s union... at commune level	Whole team
14:30-15:00	In-depth interview with commune Women’s Union leader (optional – in case commune stakeholders don’t provide sufficient information)	Commune Women’s Union leader (commune project officer)	Evaluators
15:00-15:30	Return to Thai Nguyen city		
15:30-16:30	Meet with DOLISA	Officers in charge	Whole team
16:30-17:30	Focus group discussion with TNWU	Action Programme manager, officer and accountant	Whole team
17:30-18:00	In-depth interview with TNWU focal point	Provincial Action Programme officer	Evaluators
Wednesday, 22 November 2006			
6:00-8:00	Travel to Son Phu commune		
8:00-9:30	Focus group discussion 1 with women beneficiaries	One group of 8 women	Group 1
	Focus group discussion 2 with local men (husbands of women beneficiaries)	One group of 8 men	Group 2

9:30-10:30	Two in-depth Interviews with two women beneficiaries and household visit/observation	▪ One woman evaluated as the “best” and the other evaluated as the “least” successful beneficiaries by IPs	Groups 1 & 2
10:30-11:30	Focus group discussion with commune stakeholders	▪ Officers of people’s committee, women’s union, and farmer’s union... at commune level	Whole team
11:30-12:00	In-depth interview with commune Farmer’s Union leader (optional – in case commune stakeholders don’t provide sufficient information)	▪ Commune Farmer’s Union leader (commune project officer)	Evaluators
12:00-15:00	Return to Thai Nguyen city and lunch		
15:00-16:00	Focus group discussion with TNFU	▪ Action Programme manager, officer and accountant	Whole team
16:00-16:30	In-depth interview with TNFU focal points	▪ Provincial Action Programme officer	Evaluators
16:30-19:00	Return Hanoi		

AN GIANG PROVINCE

Thursday, 23 November 2006

8:00-10:00-18:00 Travel from Hanoi – Ho Chi Minh city – Long Xuyen city (An Giang province)

Friday, 24 November 2006

7:30-8:00	Travel to An Thanh Trung commune		
8:00-9:30	Focus group discussion 1 with women beneficiaries	▪ One group of 8 women	Group 1
	Focus group discussion 2 with local men (husbands of women beneficiaries)	▪ One group of 8 men	Group 2
9:30-10:30	Two in-depth Interviews with two women beneficiaries and household visit/observation	▪ One woman evaluated as the “best” and the other evaluated as the “least” successful beneficiaries by IPs	Groups 1 & 2
10:30-11:30	Focus group discussion with commune stakeholders	▪ Officers of people’s committee, women’s union, and farmer’s union... at commune level	Whole team
11:30-12:00	In-depth interview with commune Women’s Union leader (optional – in case commune stakeholders don’t provide sufficient information)	▪ Commune Women’s Union leader (commune project officer)	Whole team

12:30-15:00	Lunch in the commune and then return to Long Xuyen city		
15:00-16:30	Meet with DOLISA Focus group discussion with AGWU In-depth interview with AGWU focal points	- Officers in charge - Action Programme manager, officer and accountant - Provincial Action Programme officer	Group 1 Group 2 Evaluators
Saturday, 25 November 2006			
7:30-8:00	Travel to An Hoa commune		
8:00-9:30	Focus group discussion 1 with women beneficiaries	One group of 8 women	Group 1
9:30-10:30	Focus group discussion 2 with women beneficiaries Two in-depth Interviews with two women beneficiaries and household visit/observation	- One group of 8 women - One woman evaluated as the “best” and the other evaluated as the “least” successful beneficiaries by IPs	Group 2 Groups 1 & 2
10:30-11:30	Focus group discussion with commune stakeholders	Officers of people’s committee, women’s union, and farmer’s union... at commune level	Whole team
11:30-12:00	In-depth interview with commune Women’s Union leader (optional – in case commune stakeholders don’t provide sufficient information)	Commune Women’s Union leader (commune project officer)	Whole team
12:00-14:00	Return to Long Xuyen city and lunch		Whole team
14:00-20:00	Return HCMC		
QUANG NAM PROVINCE			
Sunday, 26 November 2006			
14:55-16:05-18:00: Travel from Ho Chi Minh city – Da Nang – Tam Ky city (Quang Nam)			
Monday, 27 November 2006			
7:00-8:00	Travel to Phu Tho commune		
8:00-9:30	Focus group discussion 1 with women beneficiaries	One group of 8 women	Group 1

9:30-10:30	Focus group discussion 2 with women beneficiaries	One group of 8 women	Group 2
10:30-11:30	Two in-depth Interviews with two women beneficiaries and household visit/observation	One woman evaluated as the “best” and the other evaluated as the “least” successful beneficiaries by IPs	Groups 1 & 2
11:30-12:00	Focus group discussion with commune stakeholders	Officers of people’s committee, women’s union, and farmer’s union... at commune level	Whole team
12:00-14:30	In-depth interview with commune Women’s Union leader (optional – in case commune stakeholders don’t provide sufficient information)	Commune Women’s Union leader (commune project officer)	Whole team
14:30-16:00	Return to Tam Ky city and lunch		
	Focus group discussion 1 with QNVCA	Action Programme manager, officer and accountant	Group 1
	In-depth interview with QNVCA focal points	Provincial Action Programme officer	Evaluators
	Focus group discussion 2 with DOLISA	Officers in charge	Group 2
Tuesday, 28 November 2006			
7:30-8:00	Travel to Tien My commune		
8:00-9:30	Focus group discussion 1 with women beneficiaries	One group of 8 women	Group 1
	Focus group discussion 2 with local men (husbands of women beneficiaries)	One group of 8 men	Group 2
9:30-10:30	Two in-depth Interviews with two women beneficiaries and household visit/observation	One woman evaluated as the “best” and the other evaluated as the “least” successful beneficiaries by IPs	Groups 1 & 2
10:30-11:30	Focus group discussion with commune stakeholders	Officers of people’s committee, women’s union, and farmer’s union... at commune level	Whole team
11:30-12:00	In-depth interview with commune Women’s Union leader (optional – in case commune stakeholders don’t provide sufficient information)	Commune Women’s Union leader (commune project officer)	Whole team
12:00-14:30	Return to Tam Ky city and lunch		

14:30-16:30	Focus group discussion with QNWU In-depth interview with QNWU focal points	▪ Action Programme manager, officer and accountant	Whole team Evaluators
16:30-19:30	Travel from Quang Nam to Da Nang	▪ Provincial Action Programme officer	
19:30-20:30	Field visit review		Whole team
Wednesday, 29 November 2006:			
8:50-10:00	Danang-Hanoi		
HA NOI			
Thursday, 30 November 2006			
8:00-9:30	Meet with Department of Labour and Employment - MOLISA		Evaluators
9:30-11.45	Focus group discussion with PAC		
14:00-15:30	Meet with Viet Nam Women's Union	Action programme's management unit	
Friday, 1 December 2006			
8:30-10:00	Interview Ms. RoseMarie Greve	Director of ILO Office in Hanoi	Evaluators
10:00-11:00	Meet with other ILO projects (OSH, PRISED, TICW, Microfinance)	NPCs, PO and CTA	
13:30-15:00	Interview Ms. Nguyen Kim Lan	NPC of EEOW Vietnam	
15:00-16:30	Interview Aya Matsuura - Gender Specialist & Project Coordinator	Project Coordinator of EEOW Vietnam and Cambodia	

Appendix 3: Question Guide

These focus questions were developed based on the initial two days of interviewing and discussion of the evaluation team. The initial key issues listed in the TOR and a first set of extensive questions developed by the evaluators were used as the initial guide. This simpler framework approach was developed to ensure consistency in the issues covered, however in all cases the interviewers used follow up questions to address specific issues, and the initial list was used as the basis for analysis of the responses.

Women participants

1. (History chart) Recall each of the activities of the project and place them in time on this chart.
2. Why were these subjects picked for training? How were you picked to participate?
3. What did this training help you to do? (go through each subject, probe for issues like 'changes in you, in your family, in your community, among community leaders')
4. Have you taught anyone else the skills you have learned?

Men participants

1. What do you know about the project and its activities (write on chart)
2. What changes have you noticed in your family, community, among local leaders?
3. What changes have been the best/worst for you?
4. What elements of the project activities did you participate in?

Community leaders

1. What do you know about the project activities and objectives
2. You had a big role in selecting participant, how did you choose?
3. What changes have you noticed since the project started (a) in your community (b) as you do your work as a leader?
4. What have been the good changes?
5. When the project ends what could you do to sustain the good changes (what are the constraints?)

Implementing Partner

1. What was different about planning for the AP than for your other programmes?
2. What was different about managing it?
3. Is there anything you have or want to apply in your other work? (check re gender, participatory approach if they don't come up)
4. What is your general impression of the project?
5. In the future, after the project ends, what do you think your organization will continue to do?

DOLISA

1. What project activities did you/your staff take part in? (check re gender, participatory approach if they don't come up)
2. What have you/your staff used from that?
3. What has you/DOLISA's role been for the project in general?

4. What is your overall impression of the project?
5. In the future, what can you see as roles for DOLISA

ILO EEOW Project staff

1. Imagine that it is 2010 and the project has been a big success. Three different people in Vietnam are looking back and saying “the reason we are doing this now is because of that project.” Who are these three people (can be anyone – don’t need to know a specific name), and what is it that they are doing?
2. What are the three most important things this project has achieved, from your point of view?
3. In the 20 months extension, what are 2 things that should be done differently from what has happened already? What 2 things should be the same?
4. What have been the main ‘products’ produced by this project? (meaning – the ideas or examples developed in this project that we will advocate for the adoption of?)
5. What has been the biggest barrier (constraint, difficulty) to this project’s success?
6. Please comment on ILO’s role:
 - Adequacy of technical assistance?
 - Management?
 - How did EEOW contribute to and learn from other ILO projects?
 - What is the role of EEOW in the DWCP for Vietnam?

VNWU, MOLISA

1. What are the main ‘products’ of this project?
2. Which programmes, strategies or objectives of your organization might benefit from the ideas of this project? In what way?
3. How would you describe your role in this project, and that of ILO?
4. What is the most important challenge facing your organization at the moment?

ILO other project staff

1. What are the main ‘products’ of this project?
2. What are the three most important things this project has achieved, from your point of view?
3. How has this project contributed to your project’s success? What have you contributed to EEOW?
4. What would you advise the project to focus on for its final 20 months?

ILO Hanoi Director

1. What are the main ‘products’ of this project?
2. What are the three most important things this project has achieved, from your point of view?
3. In the 20 months extension, what are 2 things that should be done differently from what has happened already? What 2 things should be the same?

PAC

1. What are the main ‘products’ of this project?
2. What is the role of the PAC in this project?
3. What would you advise the project to focus on for its final 20 months?

Appendix 4: List of Interviewees

MOLISA and PAC

Mr. Nguyen Dai Dong, Director of the Policy and Employment Department

Mr. Le Quang Trung, Vice-Director of the Policy and Employment Department

Mrs. Tran Thi Thang, Project Coordinator, specialist of the Policy and Employment Department

Mr. Pham Do Nhat Thang, Researching Centre of Gender and Female Labour - Research Institute on Labour and Social Affairs

Mr. Lieu Vu Dieu, Vietnam Farmer's Union

Project personnel

Ms. Aya Matsuura, Gender Expert and Project Coordinator, EEOW Cambodia and Vietnam

Ms. Nguyen Kim Lan, National Project Coordinator

ILO Hanoi office

Mrs. Rose Marie Greve, Director of ILO Office in Viet Nam

Ms. Valerie Breda, ILO Hanoi Programme Unit

Ms. Nguyen Thi Bich Van, NPC of the Micro-Finance project

Ms. Nguyen Thi Cam Tu, PO of the PRICED project

Mr. Nguyen Van Dao, NPC of the TICW project

Mr. Nguyen Van Theu, NPC of the OSH project

Thai Nguyen province

WU

Mrs. Ma Thi Nguyet, Chairwoman of the Provincial Women's Union

Mrs. Cao Thi Ky, Director of the Employment Services Centre 20/10

Mrs. Nguyen Thi Quynh Huong, Project Coordinator

Mrs. Duong Thi Phuong, Project Accountant

Mrs. Bui Thi Minh Tam, former Project Coordinator

Farmer Union

Mr. Nguyen Xuan Sang, Chairman of the Provincial Farmer's Union

Mr. Vu Duc Hoa, Project Coordinator

Mrs. Nguyen Thi Thai, Project Accountant

DOLISA

Mr. Le Ngoc Lien, Head of the Social Protection Section – Project Focal Point

Mr. Mong Quoc Dung, Vice-Head of the Social Protection Section

La Hien commune

Mr Ma Van Lai, Chairman of the Commune People's Committee

Mrs. Hac Thi Tinh, Chairwoman of the Commune Women's Union

Mr. Lang Van Phong, Chairman of the Commune Farmer's Union

Mr. Nguyen Doan Xuat, Chairman of the Commune Veteran Association

18 women beneficiaries

Son Phu commune

Mr. Hoang Van Nghanh, Chairman of the Commune People's Committee

Mrs. Nguyen Thi Tuoi, Vice-Chairwoman of the Commune Women's Union

Mr. Au Van Nghia, Chairman of the Commune Farmer's Union

Mrs. Hau Thi Binh, Vice-Chairwoman of Dinh Hoa district Farmer's Union

Mr. Ma Tien Moong, Chairman of the Commune Fatherland Front

Mr. Pham Van Dan, Village Headman

Mr. Bui Van Ha, Village Headman

Mr. Nguyen Van De, Village Headman

8 women beneficiaries and 8 husbands

An Giang province***WU***

Mrs. Nguyen Thi Lien, Chairwoman of the Provincial Women's Union

Mrs. Mai Thi Thanh Thuy, former Director of the Employment Services Centre 20/10

Mrs. Nguyen Thi Liem, Director of the Employment Services Centre 20/10-Project Coordinator

Mrs. Phan Thi Dam, Deputy Director of the Employment Services Centre 20/10

DOLISA

Mr. Dinh Cong Minh, Director

Mrs. Nguyen Kim Huong, Head of Vocational Training section - Project Focal Point

Mrs. Le Thanh Son, Vice-Head of Social Protection section (former Project Focal Point)

Mrs. Vo Thi Cam Huong, Specialist of Vocational Training section

An Thanh Trung commune

Mr. Lam Buu Son, Secretary of the Commune Communist Party

Mr. Nguyen Nghia Hiep, Deputy Secretary of the Commune Communist Party

Mr. Ngo Quoc Dat, Vice-Chairman of the Commune People's Committee

Mr. Tran Cong Tao, Chairman of the Commune Fartherland Front

Mrs. Dang Thi Ven, Chairwoman of the Commune Women's Union

Mrs. Phan Thi Nga, Vice-Chairwoman of the Commune Women's Union

Mr. Vo Thanh Tai, HEPR commune focal point

9 women beneficiaries and 9 husbands

An Hoa commune

Mr. Tran Van Minh, Secretary of the Commune Communist Party

Mr. Duong Vu Tong, Chairman of the Commune People's Committee

Mr. Nguyen Nhat Thao, Chairman of the Commune Farmer's Union

Mrs. Nguyen Thi Ngoc Em, Chairwoman of the Commune Women's Union

18 women beneficiaries

5 non-target women beneficiaries

Quang Nam province***VCA***

Mr. Nguyen Do Chien, Vice-Chairman of the Quang Nam Cooperative – Medium & Small Enterprise Alliance

Mr. Nguyen Huu Ngo, Director of the Vocational Training Center - Project Coordinator

Mr. Le Huu Khanh, Director of the Cooperative and SMES Promotion and Consultation Center

WU

Mrs. Nguyen Thi Mot, Chairwoman of the Provincial Women's Union

Mrs. Tran Thi Bich Thu, Administrator of the Provincial Women's Union - Project Coordinator

Mrs. Nguyen Thi Phuong, Project Accountant

DOLISA

Mr. Vo Duy Thong, Vice-Director

Ms. Truong Thi Thu Hien, specialist of the Social Protection Section

Phu Tho commune

Mr. Vo Van Thanh, Secretary of the Commune Communist Party

Mr. Tran Ngoc Lap, Chairman of the Commune People's Committee

Mr. Dang Ngoc Dung, Chairman of the Commune Farmer's Union

Mrs. Nguyen Thi Le Thu, Chairwoman of the Commune Women's Union

Ms. Ngo Thi Hoang Oanh, Vice-chairwoman of the Commune Women's Union

16 women beneficiaries

Tien My commune

Mrs. Nguyen Thi Tuong, Vice-Chairwoman of the Commune People's Committee

Mr. Ngo Trong Kham, Chairman of the Commune Farmer's Union

Mrs. Nguyen Thi Tong, Chairwoman of the Commune Women's Union

Mrs. Vo Thi Chut, Vice-Chairwoman of the Commune Women's Union

Mr. Ngo Minh Hoa, Vice-Chairman of the Commune Fatherland Front

Mrs. Ho Thi Loan, Population Worker

9 women beneficiaries and 6 husbands

Appendix 5: Incomes Data

Average income by source.

2002																			
Province	Commune	Income in training areas												Other agricultural			Earnings		
		Tea	Rice	Pigs	Rattan	Cows	Crochet	Tailoring	Eels	Grass for cowws	Ginger	Mushroom	Water hyacinth	Crops	Lives tock	Micro - small enterprise	Salaries	Day wage	Other (allowances etc)
TN	Son Phu	2.02	1.11	1.76		1.00												2.00	0.79
TN	La Hien	1.71	1.09	1.08										1.38		1.67	7.00	2.27	
AG	An Thach Trung		4.40	1.60														2.00	
AG	An Hoa			4.00				4.00								3.40		6.40	6.50
QN	Phu Tho		0.63	1.31		1.13								0.50		2.67	8.50	2.42	
QN	Tien My		1.17	1.20		1.67								1.00	1.00			2.00	
	Average	1.87	1.68	1.82										0.96		2.58	7.75	2.85	3.65
2006																			
		Income in training areas												Other agricultural			Earnings		
		Tea	Rice	Pigs	Rattan	Cows	Crochet	Tailoring	Eels	Grass for cowws	Ginger	Mushroom	Water hyacinth	Crops	Lives tock	Micro - small enterprise	Salaries	Day wage	Other (allowances etc)
TN	Son Phu	4.28	1.31	2.31	0.25	2.00											1.50	3.33	0.92
TN	La Hien	3.16	1.94	3.89										4.50	1.50	2.50	11.00	4.00	
AG	An Thach Trung		5.80	4.67					6.00		7.00		2.00					2.00	
AG	An Hoa			3.78				5.84								3.50		8.80	6.50
QN	Phu Tho		0.83	1.91	2.02	3.11				0.20				0.58		2.73	7.33	3.30	
QN	Tien My		1.75	2.17		2.00						1.58		2.20	1.00			2.67	4.00
	Average	3.72	2.33	3.12	1.14	2.37		5.84	6.00	0.20	7.00	1.58	2.00	2.43	1.25	2.91	6.61	4.02	3.81
2010																			
		Income in training areas												Other agricultural			Earnings		
		Tea	Rice	Pigs	Rattan	Cows	Crochet	Tailoring	Eels	Grass for cowws	Ginger	Mushroom	Water hyacinth	Crops	Livestock	Micro - small enterprise	Salaries	Day wage	Other (allowances etc)
TN	Son Phu	8.11	3.11	3.56	3.00	3.00												3.00	2.33
TN	La Hien	3.86	2.14	4.44										5.20	1.00	5.20	11.00	4.00	
AG	An Thach Trung		7.00	9.67				11.00	9.00		9.00		2.50					11.00	
AG	An Hoa		6.00	6.56				7.80								3.67		9.40	7.00
QN	Phu Tho		0.86	3.25	3.64	5.31				0.35				1.30		3.20	9.00	4.00	
QN	Tien My		1.60	3.60		3.00						2.40		5.60	2.00			7.00	
	Average	3.86	3.25	5.50	3.64	4.15		9.40	9.00	0.35	9.00		2.50	4.03	1.50	4.02	10.00	7.08	7.00

Appendix 6: Summary of Recommendations Made by the Mid-term Review, and Steps Taken to Address Them

The mid term evaluation made recommendations in 4 areas: (1) overall project management, (2) APs, (3) capacity building for IPs, and (4) policy advocacy, arising from the report's section on Areas for Improvement. This table sets out the recommendations and the action taken by the project staff, as provided by project staff.

Recommendation	Action taken
9.1 Overall project management	
1. Communication between ILO and MOLISA should be improved.	(See policy advocacy section below)
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.	✓ Project is documenting EEOW good practices and lessons learned for dissemination as an on-going activity.
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.	✓ Acknowledging the roles and responsibilities of provincial DOLISAs in project sustainability and policy integration at provincial level, we have intentionally empowered them as EEOW focal point in province: (1) On going the capacity building programme for DoLISA's officials, (2) Coordinating, organizing and facilitating training courses on gender mainstreaming & PDME for other provincial officials (3) Preside review & sharing workshops for provincial institutions in the province (4) Preside regular monitoring & evaluation meeting among (international sometimes), national and local stakeholders in province, (5) Participate in review & planning meeting in target communes.
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.	✓ Project has applied participatory approach in project implementation and training.
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.	(see 3 above)

9.2 Action Programmes (APs)	
9.2.1 Capacity building for women beneficiaries	✓ Recommended training topics included: Action Programmes (APs) included training courses on business-related topics (GET Ahead), life skills & fundamental rights. All technical training courses had follow-up support after training. Some technical training courses had refresher training courses (tea/rice planting techniques, pig raising techniques, bamboo & rattan weaving, tailoring skills, etc). APs also included training courses on facilitation skills and group management skills for group leaders. Gender training courses for local men were included.
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	✓ Recommended training topics included: Commune and hamlet leaders and mass organizations were provided with training courses on Participatory Design, Monitoring and Evaluation (PDME) in 2005 – 2006 in all APs. They also had refresher training courses on gender mainstreaming. Some of them also attended training courses on business development (GET Ahead). Others attended Training of Trainers (TOT) workshops on gender to become commune gender educators. They included gender equality as a topic for discussion at the meetings of the commune, hamlet, Women's Union, Farmers' Union, and Cooperative Alliance.
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.	✓ Local men and officials were trained on gender topics.
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.	✓ The relationship with district Bank of Policy and Social and other projects/programmes having loan component has been strengthened. Officials of these institutions were participants of the community planning workshops and the training workshops on EEOW's good practices, gender mainstreaming and participatory project design. During 2003-2006, nearly 3 billion Vietnamese dong has been disbursed to 671 women beneficiaries in APs. <table><tr><th>Action Programme</th><th>Loan disbursement amount (VND)</th><th>No. beneficiaries getting loan</th><th>Total no. of women beneficiaries</th></tr><tr><td>1.AGWU 1</td><td>487,000,000</td><td>102</td><td>322</td></tr><tr><td>2.AGWU2</td><td>180,000,000</td><td>60</td><td>120</td></tr><tr><td>3.QNWU</td><td>367,000,000</td><td>100</td><td>200</td></tr><tr><td>4.QNVCA</td><td>500,000,000</td><td>100</td><td>200</td></tr><tr><td>5.TNFU</td><td>517,000,000</td><td>120</td><td>200</td></tr><tr><td>6.TNWU</td><td>748,000,000</td><td>189</td><td>300</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>2,799,000,000</td><td>671</td><td>1,342</td></tr></table>	Action Programme	Loan disbursement amount (VND)	No. beneficiaries getting loan	Total no. of women beneficiaries	1.AGWU 1	487,000,000	102	322	2.AGWU2	180,000,000	60	120	3.QNWU	367,000,000	100	200	4.QNVCA	500,000,000	100	200	5.TNFU	517,000,000	120	200	6.TNWU	748,000,000	189	300	Total	2,799,000,000	671	1,342
Action Programme	Loan disbursement amount (VND)	No. beneficiaries getting loan	Total no. of women beneficiaries																														
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3.QNWU	367,000,000	100	200																														
4.QNVCA	500,000,000	100	200																														
5.TNFU	517,000,000	120	200																														
6.TNWU	748,000,000	189	300																														
Total	2,799,000,000	671	1,342																														
16. Improve commune staff's capacity on policy analysis especially the Poverty Reduction policy.	✓ See above																																
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.	Gender equality topic included in the agenda of women's clubs besides learnt technical topics 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.	✓ Some women's club meetings have included non-member women in the commune (TNWU, TNFU, AGWU, QNVCA) and included credit and saving activities. Other clubs included husbands in regular meeting (QNWU). Social activities such as competitions on gender & some technical topics have been organized in the commune including non-members in the community (TNWU, QNWU).																																
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.	✓ Remind and concentrate IPs on selection of beneficiaries reaching poor 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.	✓ APs have used qualified district trainers to provide training (tea planting, pig raising, cow raising, ginger planting, ell raising) and coaching for women beneficiaries for easier communicate with them compared with provincial one and it is more likely that district trainers will continue to provide training and coaching for women because it is part of their existing responsibilities (TNWU, TNFU, AGWU, QNVCA).
22. Strengthen the cooperation with other projects in the same areas.	APs have strengthened the cooperation with other projects in the same areas: Loan component from Project F67, Misserior, NFW and KFW (TNWU, TNFU) and Project on cow raising “bank” (QNWU, QNVCA).
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.	✓ A refresher TOT on gender & participatory training skills was conducted for IPs’ officials in June 2005. It consolidated their knowledge of gender equality as gender trainers. It also improved their capacity as trainers and training coordinators as it focus on participatory methods and skills with training needs assessment, training design, and training evaluation. After that, EEW project office provided IPs coaching for IPs when they organized training courses in the target communes.
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.	✓ A validation TOT on GET Ahead was organized in November 2005 for 25 Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) master trainers on business development service (BDS) so that they could validate the final draft of adapted GET Ahead and use other BDS material with a gender perspective as well.
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.	✓ A refresher TOT on GET Ahead for IPs’ officials using the final publication was conducted in May 2006. They can work as confident trainers in this topic. After that, EEW project office provided IPs coaching for IPs when they organized training courses in the target communes.
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.	✓ Semi-annually, EEW project office developed the participatory technical backstopping & monitoring plan for IPs from each province. ✓ IPs integrated their learnt knowledge and skills on gender mainstreaming and PDME in their internal organizations’ meetings and workshops.
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.	✓ Improve capacity for the cooperation partner: TNWU & TNFU organized TOT on participatory training method & skills for their external training collaborators in agricultural field.
9.4 Policy advocacy	✓ 5 documentary films about the achievements and impacts of 5 respective AP were produced for provincial and national wide dissemination. ✓ As we want participatory design, monitoring and evaluation (DME) applied in the provinces, we involved the provincial DOLISAs and build their capacities in providing this type of support to mass organizations during July to November 2005 (total 6 training courses in 3 provinces for total about 140 officials). DOLISAs are in charge of processing and approving project proposals by local organizations for the Hunger Eradication and Poverty Reduction (HEPR) and National Employment Promotion (NEP), so this is a strategic intervention which we hope to get upscale as 'good practice' in 2007-08. ✓ EEOW supported the MOLISA request for a policy dialogue on the new draft gender equality law in September 2006. ✓ In end 2004 and early 2005, with technical support from EEOW project office, IPs conducted the participatory planning with a new focus on developing a participatory monitoring and evaluation framework. And since then, stakeholders can take part in identifying project successes and limitations from the framework. As a new tool for provincial IPs, especially for commune officials & women, it has not yet been used perfectly yet. The greatest values of the log frame were to enhance the active participation of local stakeholders in project management and increase their ownership to the project.
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.	✓ Institutionalization of popular project strategies with the project partner organizations: Viet Nam Women Union (VWU) has been the most enthusiastic to replicate and build capacity on gender equality, life skills and entrepreneurship in all provinces in Viet Nam. In order to stimulate this development which needs to be done with non-ILO resources we added the 3 project provinces with a small AP with the VWU in 2006. In this AP, we took use of the resource of the national & provincial implementing partners who had already participated and been trained in the ILO Youth Employment Project before.

	✓ Institutionalization of popular project intervention of gender mainstreaming with the project partner organizations: Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) has also been interested in replicating gender mainstreaming practices and building capacity on gender equality and business development together. In cooperation with ILO/ PRISED Project and VCCI, we have been introducing gender equality promotion and business development into their programmes.
31. ILO and MOLISA should develop a plan to increase role of the Project Advisory Committee in policy advocacy.	✓ The first round of bottom-up 'good practice' learning started during the workshops on the 2nd round of Participatory DME and Gender Mainstreaming which took place in July and August 2006 in the provinces for officials of DoLISAs, People Committee Office and mass organizations at all levels (total 3 training courses in 3 provinces for 70 officials). ✓ The 2nd round of Good Practice learning at the provincial level will take place through a series of workshops on this subject for other provincial partners in December 2006 and January 2007 (total 3 workshops for total 180 officials). The EEOW's good practices will be documented by the DOLISAs for further dissemination and replication purposes. ✓ In 2005 and 2006 in regular field monitoring trips, ILO/EEOW & MoLISA intentionally called the participation of key PAC members. Some PAC members spent their time to attend EEOW monitoring trips: Viet Nam Women's Union and Viet Nam Farmers' Union to Quang Nam and Thai Nguyen respectively for witness APs' achievement & difficulties and calling their support, linkages and coordination from the central level. ✓ Upon MOLISA request, the Vice Minister in charge of DLE has just (October 2006) visited some EEOW project site as he was interested to see how it worked in practice. ILO also wants the Vice Minister in charge of the MOLISA Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women and in charge of the DSP-HEPR to visit EEOW project sites.
32. ILO and MOLISA should consider a Policy Research on the current policies on women employment in the project area (three provinces).	✓ ILO and MOLISA are conducting a policy research on the current policies/programmes on employment promotion and poverty reduction for rural women and men in the project area (three provinces). The 1st report will be available in December 2006.
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.	✓ In regular meetings of the Gender Task Force among UN agencies in Viet Nam, ILO's gender focal point and EEOW staff took chance to share about EEOW's good models & practices for joint effort of policy advocacy. ✓ In regular meetings of Head of UN Agencies in Viet Nam, in Consultative Group meetings of international donors, and in meeting with Vietnamese constituents, ILO Viet Nam Director took chance to mention EEOW's strategies, objective & achievements which are within millennium development goals for joint effort of policy advocacy.

Appendix 7: Action Programme Beneficiaries; Planned and Actual

Table 1. Evidence of Expansion of Target Beneficiaries: as planned in Action Programme (AP) documents 1- 3

	An Giang Women's Union		Quang Nam Women's Union	Quang Nam Cooperative Alliance	Thai Nguyen Farmers Union	Thai Nguyen Women's Union	An Giang Farmers Union	Total
1 st AP	- 102 W on Bus Tra and Voc Tra - 200 (100 W, 20 S, and 80 L on GA		- 50 L on GA - 100 W on GA and Agri - 100 M on GA	- 100 W on Bus Tra - 100 W on Agri and receive bank loan - 100 W&M on GA	- 100 W on Agri - 160 (100 W and 60 L) on GA	- 240 W on Bus Tra and Agri - 150 (60 Land 90 W & M) on GA	- 114 W, 26 M, and 20 S on GA - 114 W on Voc Tra and cooperative and 24 W receive bank loans	1,800
2 nd AP	- 220 W on Bus Tra and Voc Tra - 392 W&M on GA	AGWU (2 nd contract) - 120 W on Voc Tra and Bus Tra - 240 W&M&L on GA	- 25 GE on GA - 50 L on GA - 200 W&M on GA - 200 W on Bus Tra and GA	- 200 W on Agri and Bus Tra - 25 GE on GA and at least 200 W&M on GA	- 150 W on Agri - 50 W on Voc Tra - 300 (100 W and 200 M) on GA - 10 S on TS - 20 W on Gr - other poor families benefit from info sharing	- 240 W on Bus Tra and Agri - 160 L and W&M on GA - 20 S on TS	Programme Discontinued	2,462
3 rd AP	- 210 W on Voc Tra and Bus Tra - 250 (210 W and 40 GE) on GA and Life and at least 700 (200 M and 500 W) on GA and Life	- 25 GE on GA and 250 W&M on GA and Life	- 200 W on Voc Tra and Bus Tra - 200 M on GA - 50 W&M on GA and at least 400 W7M on GA - 30 L on GMPDME	- 200 W on Voc Tra and Bus Tra - 200 W on GA and Life - 50 GE on Life Skills and at least 500 W&M on GA on Life - 25 L on GMPDME	- 150 W on Agri - 50 W on Voc Tra - 200 W on GA and Life - 50 W&M on Life - 125 W&M on Bus Tra - 15 S on TS - 25 L on GMPDME - Other poor families benefit from info sharing	- 300 W on Bus and GA - 40 GE on Life - 50 L on GMPDME - 15 S on TS	Programme Discontinued	4,670

Abbreviations:

AP = Action Programmes W = women M = men L = leaders S = local staff GE = Gender educators Voc Tra = Vocational Training
 Agri – Agriculture Training Bus Tra = Business Training Life = Life Skills Training GA = Gender Awareness Training GMPDME = Gender
 Mainstreaming and Participatory M & E Training TS = Training Skills training Gr = Group management training

Table 2. Actual Number of AP beneficiaries up to 2005 in Vietnam

Intended Beneficiaries ⁶		Women	Men	Total	
	Gender training	996	775	1771	More to be reported for 2006
	GET Ahead	673		673	Same as above
	Life Skill				Same as above
	Occupational Safety and Health	60	30	90	Same as above
	Training on access to loan	452		452	Same as above
	Other capacity building activities	184		184	Same as above
	Agricultural and husbandry training	1560		1560	Same as above
	Vocational training	415		415	Same as above
	Annual Review Workshops	350	100	450	Same as above
	Gender and Participatory skills for local trainers	135	37	172	Same as above
	Cooperative training	284		284	Same as above
	Group formation	1464		1464	Same as above
Total		6573	942	7515	

⁶ These numbers do not include the participants from May-October 2006 as they are being reported.

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