



## Policy Brief

# GENDER EQUALITY IN CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN VIET NAM

### Main messages

- Women in Viet Nam are dynamic actors in climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR). Their gender-defined roles, concerns and contributions in households, communities and the workplace should be recognized and reflected in related policies and actions.
- There is an urgent need for awareness raising and capacity building on gender equality and women's empowerment aspects of CCA and DRR in the country.
- This awareness should be translated into political commitment and financing for suitable actions that ensure gender sensitive CCA and DRR.
- Policy and programme planning, financing, implementation and monitoring procedures should allow for the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment principles in DRR and CCA across sectors and at all levels. A multi-stakeholder approach that involves gender expertise, women and men, other groups often marginalized, as well as representatives from government, civil society, the private sector and the broader development community is essential.
- There are valuable lessons to learn from experiences and practices at the local level, which need to be shared and communicated at national and sub-national levels, and with other countries facing similar challenges.

### Introduction

The Government and people of Viet Nam have long recognized the risk and severity posed by natural hazards to the country. These include flooding, unpredictable rainfall, typhoons, extended droughts, heat waves and cold fronts, sea level rise and saline water intrusion.

Viet Nam is particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. Over the period 1958-2007, annual average temperatures increased by about 0.7°C. The annual average temperature for the four decades from 1961 to 2000 was higher than that of the three previous decades (1931- 1960)<sup>1</sup>. The first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century was also the warmest ever recorded in the country, setting new record high temperatures<sup>2</sup>. These climatic changes have an impact on the lives and livelihoods of the people of Viet Nam, particularly the poor and other vulnerable groups.

A large percentage of the population will be affected by climatic changes and related hazards. For example, with around 70 percent of the population living in low-lying lands, within deltas or along the coastline, without any further actions a sea level rise will affect a significant number of people<sup>3</sup>. The northern mountains are particularly susceptible to drought and cold waves. According to the IDRC/CRDI Climate Change Vulnerability in Southeast Asia study (2009)<sup>4</sup>, out of the ten most vulnerable provinces (of a total of 63 provinces), eight are in the Mekong Delta. The other two are Lai Chau (including Dien Bien) and Thai Binh, both in the north, ranking respectively (1) and (10). The other northern provinces Son La and Lao Cai rank 15 and 17 respectively.

The awareness about these major challenges are reflected, to differing extents, in the National Target Programme to Respond to Climate Change<sup>5</sup>, the National Strategy on Climate Change<sup>6</sup> and the Community

<sup>1</sup> MoNRE, 2011

<sup>2</sup> MoNRE, 2011

<sup>3</sup> MoNRE, 2011

<sup>4</sup> Yusuf, A. and Francisco, H., *Climate Change Vulnerability Mapping for Southeast Asia IDRC/CRDI*, 2009

<sup>5</sup> December 2008

<sup>6</sup> December 2011

Based Disaster Risk Management programme<sup>7</sup>, as well as in the activities of the Disaster Management Working Group (DMWG)<sup>8</sup>, the Climate Change Working Group (CCWG), the Viet Nam Women's Union (VWU), UN organizations and others.

This policy brief will show that **climate change and its impacts are not gender neutral and nor are its policies and actions**. Due to their gender-defined roles in society and traditional patterns of marginalization, women are amongst those that are likely to carry the heaviest burdens from these changes and benefit less from the policies and programmes that address these.

The policy brief also shows that women should not be seen as 'victims'. They are also crucial actors in CCA and DRR and their needs and knowledge should be used to inform the design, implementation, and monitoring of climate change and DRR policies.

## Objectives

This policy brief aims to raise awareness and highlight how to integrate gender equality and women empowerment principles into CCA and DRR policies and actions in Viet Nam. It aims to inspire and promote gender mainstreaming in those areas, and to stimulate adjustments to existing and new legal and policy documents and practices.

The brief is meant for policy makers at national and provincial levels, legislative authorities, the Viet Nam Women's Union and other mass organizations, the UN, the private sector, donors, INGOs and Vietnamese NGOs.

The development of the brief was a joint initiative of UNDP, UN Women and Oxfam in Viet Nam with the UNISDR Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok. It reflects the main outcomes of a *Workshop on Good Practices in Gender Mainstreaming in Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction* and a subsequent policy dialogue held in Hanoi in December 2011.

### Box I Four arguments for gender mainstreaming in climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction

CCA/DRR policies and action can gain a lot from gender mainstreaming, as it will:

1. Capitalize on the talents, capacities and contributions of both women and men, so that policies will be more **inclusive, successful, efficient** and **effective**.
2. **Avoid potential, unintended effects of CCA/DRR** policies and actions that may increase gender inequalities and poverty.
3. **Be mutually benefiting**: CCA and DRR programmes and actions can empower women and improve living conditions and livelihoods of women, their families and whole communities; gender equality programmes and actions can contribute to DRR, CCA and climate change mitigation.
4. Ensure **more policy coherence** with existing social/gender policies and gender and human rights commitments, thereby contributing to gender equality and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and related sustainable human development objectives<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> July, 2009

<sup>8</sup> With Oxfam, Plan, Care, IFRC a.o.

<sup>9</sup> Based primarily on The World Bank, 2011, Viet Nam Country Gender Assessment

<sup>9</sup> See also: Millennium Development Goals Progress Report for Viet Nam, 2011

## Box II Some important definitions<sup>10</sup>

**Gender:** Refers to socially ascribed roles, responsibilities, rights and opportunities associated with men and women. Gender relations are dynamic, change over time, and are context-specific – just as societies can change over time, so too can the different gender-defined roles of women and men in households, communities, the work place, and other formal and informal decision-making institutions and structures.

**Gender differentiation:** Men and women can have different socially-defined roles, responsibilities, functions, levels of participation, access to and control over resources and assets, levels of education, actual rights and opportunities. In many societies, women and girls in particular can face traditional patterns of marginalization and discrimination because of these gender defined roles, rights and opportunities.

**Gender equality:** Similar rights, potentials, assets and chances for women and men (in all their diversity). Often women face specific obstacles to attain their full development potential, such as lack of decision-making power, poverty, limited access to and control over resources (natural, financial, credit, education and training). Despite the disadvantages they often face, women are also crucial actors, particularly at the community level with knowledge, experience, expertise and skills and vision.

**Gender mainstreaming:** *“...is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, [financing,] implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes (in all political, economic and societal spheres), so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality”.*

**Gender analysis:** Gives us an understanding of how the social-defined roles of women and men determine different vulnerabilities and capacities to deal with climate change. Gender analysis is essential to better informed, and more equitable, efficient and sustainable climate change and DRR responses.

**Vulnerability:** The characteristics and circumstances of [an individual], community, system or asset that make it susceptible to the damaging effects of a hazard.

**Resilience:** The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions.

**Capacity:** The combination of all the strengths, attributes and resources available within a community, society or organization that can be used to achieve agreed goals.

## Gender equality and women’s empowerment in Viet Nam: some facts<sup>11</sup>

Women play a crucial role in Viet Nam. Not only do they comprise almost half of its population, but they also play important roles at household level, in the rural and urban economies and in society as a whole.

Almost 14 million women – from the central to the grassroots level – are organized in Viet Nam’s Women’s Union, that has branches in every province and village of Viet Nam and a wide range programmes for the advancement of women.

Although remarkable progress has been made in Viet Nam to close gender gaps over the past years, particularly in the areas of poverty eradication, education and health, important gender differences still remain. These differences are reflected in women’s and men’s contributions to productive and reproductive work, formal and informal employment and salaries, poverty levels, literacy rates, their access to and control over natural

<sup>10</sup> ECOSOC, *Agreed Conclusions, 1997/2*; Momsen, J.H., 2004. *Gender and Development*. Routledge, London; Moser, C., 1993. *Gender Planning and Development: Theory, Practice and Training*. Routledge, London; Sen, A., 1999. *Development as Freedom*. Oxford University Press, Oxford; UNISDR *Terminologies (2009)* see <http://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/terminology>.

<sup>11</sup> Based primarily on *The World Bank, 2011, Viet Nam Country Gender Assessment*

resources, migration patterns, and women's participation and representation in decision-making at different levels.

One major concern is the rise in imbalanced sex ratios at birth (SRB), from 106 male births for every 100 female births in 1999 to 111 in 2009. Imbalanced SRBs are highest for higher income groups with better access to ultrasound techniques and sex selected abortions. This is clearly linked to a culturally based preference for boys. In addition, although the improvement of health indicators for women has been remarkable, problems of HIV/AIDS and gender based violence are still significant.

As poverty is measured at household – and not at individual – level, only a small gender gap in poverty is visible in official assessments. Older women, however, especially widows living in rural areas, are overrepresented among the poor. Control over assets and resources, including land, is one very important factor. Women have made major gains in educational enrolment but are still highly segregated into particular disciplines and sectors. This is connected to significant segregation in terms of occupation and employment. The only gender education gap that still exists is among certain ethnic minority groups. However, some educational materials still promote gender stereotypes.

According to the 2009 Labour Force Survey, women's wages are about 75 percent of men's, not taking into account differences in education or job experience. Data from the 2008 Viet Nam Household Living Standards Survey (VHLSS) suggests that agriculture accounts for 64 percent of working women in rural areas compared to 53 percent of working men. Overall, a trend of feminization of agriculture is visible. Similar patterns of segregation between men and women are found in urban areas. Women are overrepresented in the informal sector in more vulnerable jobs, such as self-employment and unpaid family labour. Lower wages and worse working conditions prevail in small, informal family-run enterprises. Another aspect that has not changed over time is the gender distribution of unpaid work. Data from the 2008 VHLSS suggests that men continue to contribute significantly less to housework than women, leaving women with the 'double burden' of household activities and income generation. These gender differences that remain in work, employment and wages may put women at risk of further marginalisation.

Political participation is another important area where gender differences exist. Even though representation of women in the National Assembly is high by regional standards and there is a woman member of the Politburo, there are signs that women do not have an equal voice in the public sphere. In fact, there are some indications that women's political representation in some areas has worsened slightly. For example, women's representation in the National Assembly decreased from 27.3 percent in 2002-2007 to 24.4 percent for the 2011-2016 session. Participatory poverty monitoring points out that many of the barriers that women face higher up in participation and decision-making in the public sphere are also encountered at grassroots level.

Gender inequalities contribute to different vulnerabilities and thereby also to differentiated impacts of disasters and climatic change. On the other hand, women and men have diverse capacities – knowledge, experience, skills and visions – in dealing with these challenges and impacts.

And not all women are the same; they do not form one large homogenous group. There are important differences according to social and economic differentiators such as age (women and girls), social status (rich vs. poor) livelihood and ethnicity (majority vs. minority women).

## Legislative frameworks

Viet Nam has a solid legislative basis with regard to gender equality. The Law on Gender Equality (2007) and the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011-2020 oblige all sectors and ministries to mainstream gender in their work. According to the National Strategy on Gender Equality, ministries and provinces are responsible for building and issuing action plans on gender equality to implement the strategy. To date, out of 63 provinces 37 provinces and ten ministries have adopted such action plans<sup>12</sup>.

In the area of climate change the National Target Programme to Respond to Climate Change (NTP-RCC 2008) underlines the importance of gender equality as a guiding principle, along with sustainable development. The NTP-RCC also stresses the need to conduct vulnerability assessments at sectoral, regional and community levels. It underlines that potential climate change impacts on women can undo the achievement of the MDGs. In

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<sup>12</sup> MoLISA, December 2011

addition, the National Strategy on Climate Change (December 2011) mentions gender equality as one of its specific objectives.

**However, the action plans for the NTP-RCC developed by line ministries and provinces are, as yet, not specifically mandated to address gender equality in CCA/DRR.**

The National Strategy for Natural Disaster Prevention, Response and Mitigation to 2020 (2007) identifies that: *“Natural disasters cause negative impacts on vulnerable groups such as the old, disabled people, women and children.”* It outlines the following approaches: promotion of community awareness raising and information dissemination; building resilience to disasters and promotion of the tradition of mutual support in disaster situations; organization of self-response forces in communities for active emergency search and rescue; and promoting the role of social organizations and associations in disaster response and recovery.

**These approaches are considered to be an important basis for mainstreaming gender in DRR.**

The implementation guidelines of the National Programme on Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) mention that: *“Gender equality, gender mainstreaming and promoting women's participation/women's empowerment in the activities of disaster risk management and adaptation to climate change will bring greater efficiency to the community.”* The programme proposes the following actions to do so:

- Training materials should integrate gender issues into CBDRM;
- Training methods should be participatory and encourage women's participation; and
- The percentage of women's participation in training courses should be at least 30 percent.

**In November 2011, the third draft of a Law on Disaster Risk Management was published for public consultation. A gender analysis was undertaken by specialists to ensure that gender equality and mainstreaming issues were more unequivocal.**

## Challenges remain

Although there is an increasing interest in the issue of gender mainstreaming in CCA/DRR, major challenges remain:<sup>13</sup>

- The implementation of existing legal frameworks and the development of new legal documents and related action plans tend to have little or no reference to gender equality.
- Understanding of gender roles in the context of climate change and DRR is still limited. There is an urgent need for awareness-raising and requirements for capacity building at different levels.
- Stereotypes regarding women's and men's roles in CCA/DRR still prevail, meaning that women are often only seen as 'victims' and not as crucial actors and that recovery and adaptation efforts, for example in agriculture, address mainly male members of households, despite the increased feminization of agriculture in Viet Nam.
- To date, research, analysis and evaluation of gender equality and mainstreaming in CCA/DRR from which appropriate solutions can be formulated, is limited.
- Collection and collation of sex-disaggregated data relevant for CCA/DRR is still a shortcoming. Although in some instances sex-disaggregated data exists at the local level, this is not available at higher provincial and national levels.
- Practical solutions and specific criteria to integrate gender mainstreaming into policies, strategies and plans are needed.
- Roles in decision-making in CCA/DRR are gendered, with women participating less in decision-making and leadership.
- There is some local variation but women are clearly under-represented in local and sub-regional formal decision-making structures, such as in the Committee for Flood and Storm Control (CFSC) or in Search and Rescue Committees<sup>14</sup> at different administrative levels.

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<sup>13</sup> These challenges were identified by participants during the 'Workshop on Good Practices in Gender Mainstreaming in Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction', held in Ha Noi from 5<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> December 2011, and were based on their practical experiences and on an analysis of relevant policy documents.

<sup>14</sup> Widely seen as men's work because of the physical strength required, also by women, and because men far more than women sail bigger boats and off shore boats.

- In general, the CCA/DRR sectors have a male dominated culture, which female participants may find intimidating, especially as they are represented in fewer numbers and generally have less access to relevant decision-making information.
- In practice, women may perform all CCA/DRR tasks, especially when men migrate for additional work and women's valuable role in providing support to those affected by disasters, for example, is not recognized officially.
- At the same time, women generally and female-headed households in particular have less access to livelihood assets, which would enable them to cope with and adapt to major shocks and stresses.

## Gender-differentiated aspects of climatic changes<sup>15</sup>

As not everybody is affected in the same way, we can see gender specific effects and aspects of climatic change and in CCA/DRR. Some groups are:

- More vulnerable and affected than others: *gender differentiated effects*
- Better prepared and/or more resilient than others: *gendered resilience*
- More involved than others: *gender specific capacities*

The social constructions that shape gender and manifest themselves in society, contribute to these gender specific effects and capacities. These are reflected in women's and men's different productive and reproductive roles and opportunities in households and families, communities, the workplace and decision-making processes and institutions, including:

- Productive roles in formal and informal labour (agriculture, forestry, fisheries, etc.)
- Access to and control over information and resources (land, water, etc.)
- Domestic roles (reproduction, taking care of the family, etc.)
- Power in the household and community decision-making.

Gender-differentiated aspects are reflected in:

### a. Women's risk of losing income and productive sources

- In rural areas, 64 percent of women vs. 53 percent of men are engaged in agricultural production and face high risks of loss from drought and uncertain rainfall.
- Climate change adds to water insecurity, which increases the work load of women involved in small scale farming, as they spend more time and effort on land preparation, fetching water, watering and protecting crops from disease.

***A high dependency on land and natural resources for livelihood generation makes some women more vulnerable.***

### b. Women's and men's work

- Women contribute significantly to local and national markets and economies. More women than men work in household, micro- and small-enterprises<sup>16</sup>.
- Women's work, however, is often worst hit and women are least able to recover as a result of disasters.
- Disasters cause both men and women to lose jobs. However, the conditions of women's work may deteriorate more than those of men, as many poor women – in both rural and urban areas – work more in the insecure informal sector, under worse working conditions and generally with less pay.

***Concentration in the informal sector makes women more vulnerable.***

<sup>15</sup> Partly based on presentation by MoNRE, during the 'Workshop on Good Practices in Gender Mainstreaming in Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction', held in Ha Noi from 5<sup>th</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup> December 2011; also based on: UN Viet Nam, Oxfam, 2009. *Responding to Climate Change in Viet Nam: Opportunities for improving gender equality. A Policy Discussion Paper.* UN and Oxfam, Ha Noi and Irene Dankelman (ed.) (2010) *Gender and Climate Change: An Introduction.* Earthscan, London.

<sup>16</sup> See: The World Bank, 2011. *Viet Nam Country Gender Assessment*

### **c. Caring responsibilities**

- Women carry a wide range of caring responsibilities in the household, for children, spouses and other relatives, but also for neighbours, elderly and sick people in their communities.
- Women often face more difficulties in feeding and caring for others when resources are scarce.
- More time and effort may, for example, be spent on collecting biomass fuel<sup>17</sup> and water.

***As a result, women's and girls' tasks and responsibilities often reduce their opportunities to enroll in education and to engage in income generating activities and decision-making processes at the community level.***

### **d. Access to land and services**

- Women hold title on 20 percent of Land Tenure Certificates versus 62 percent of men and 18 percent for joint land holders. (VHLSS 2008)
- The rate of female only land holders has fallen in urban areas since 2004, whereas the proportion of joint holdings remained steady. (VHLSS 2008)
- Having less land rights limits women's access to credit for diversifying income sources and for recovery from loss.

***Less access to resources, credit, markets and extension services seriously disadvantages poor women and men and limits their coping strategies.***

### **e. Coping strategies**

- Because of their different socially-defined roles in households, communities and the market, different strategies are adopted by women and men in response to disasters. Women are more likely to use income diversification and community support, while men are more likely to seek financial support as an adaptation strategy.
- Migration is emerging as an important coping strategy for people facing hardship and environmental changes. Male migration often worsens the situation for women and children left behind. Women migrants often earn less and are often in more vulnerable positions than men.

***Pre-existing vulnerability to disasters and the slow onset of environmental problems mean that women are among the most at risk and least able to cope.***

### **f. Decision-making in the household**

- In general, many poor women living in rural and urban areas have less decision-making power regarding family businesses and the way that household income is spent.
- Attending village, ward or commune meetings is commonly considered a man's task.

***Women tend to go only to public meetings regarding CCA/DRR when men are busy or absent.***

### **g. Decision-making in the community**

- Women's participation in local People's Committee Councils is significant but still limited: 23.8 percent at provincial, 23.2 percent at district and 20 percent at commune level. (World Bank 2011)
- Women's involvement in local Committees for Flood and Storm Control is limited to child-care and food distribution; women tend not to be involved in decision-making.

***The needs and views of women need to be integrated much more into CCA plans and DRR.***

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<sup>17</sup> According to Nguyen Minh Boa from the Institute of Energy (personal communication), approximately 90% of domestic energy in rural areas comes from biomass sources, including fuel wood, agricultural residues and charcoal. This is mainly used for household cooking and small-scale industries, sectors in which women prevail. Although gender differentiated time/budget studies are scarce from Viet Nam, similar studies from e.g. China, S. Asia and Africa show such gender differentiations (see also FAO, 2006, Energy and Gender).

### Box III Opportunities for improving gender equality in climate change responses

In the 2009 UN Viet Nam and Oxfam study: *'Responding to Climate Change in Viet Nam: opportunities for improving gender equality. A policy discussion paper'* several recommendations were developed to enhance gender equality in the context of CCA and mitigation. The study states that because of prevailing gender inequalities women are likely to be more affected than men. Sensitivity to climate change varies and is particularly strong amongst poorer, rural women, including those from ethnic minorities, who tend to rely on natural resources and climate-sensitive livelihood activities. Specific efforts are needed to ensure that climate change responses are gender sensitive and improve gender equality. Based on the outcomes of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Raise awareness on both climate change and gender equality and promote women's education and education for all with specific attention paid to curricula on gender equality and climate change action
2. Improve the research base on gender and climate change links and ensure gender sensitive data is collected and analysed to inform decision-making
3. Ensure that gender-climate change links are mainstreamed in policy and programmes, and ensure women's participation in policy making and decision making at all levels
4. Protect women's rights in particular during and after disasters that are enhanced by climate change
5. Create livelihood opportunities for women and female headed households, including rural livelihood diversification, as a primary response to climate change stresses
6. Promote gender equality in international climate change policy, including financing

All the arguments mentioned above illustrate the gender-specific aspects of climate change, CCA and DRR.

- *Gender analysis gives us an understanding of how the identities of women and men determine different vulnerabilities and capacities to deal with climate change and disasters.*
- *There is an urgent need to address gender differentiated needs, roles and priorities through gender mainstreaming in CCA/DRR.*

### Box IV Basic principles for gender mainstreaming in CCA/DRR <sup>18</sup>

#### Policies

- In the future, gender assessments should be undertaken of all drafts of climate change and disaster risk related policies, strategies and legislation – including the final draft DRM Law and accompanying Decrees. All such documentation ought to have objectives specifically referring to gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Existing CCA/DRR strategies and action plans should be reviewed in order to reflect adequately gender equality considerations.
- Apply and promote the use of existing sex disaggregated data and related gender equality information at all administrative levels.
- CCA/DRR planning and financing need to be attuned to the various needs and interests of both women and men.

#### Practices

- Include gender analysis in all planning and design of CCA/DRR initiatives at all levels.
- Generate sex-disaggregated data and research regarding gender equality and women's empowerment aspects of CCA/DRR.

<sup>18</sup> Based on: Irene Dankelman (ed.) (2010), *Gender and Climate Change: An Introduction*. Earthscan, London.

- Encourage and ensure the participation of women and of the Viet Nam Women's Union in CCA/DRR at all levels within relevant government ministries, departments, institutes and civil society organizations.
- Enhance the role of women and men in communities in CCA/DRR and enable their participation in planning and implementation of CCA/DRR actions.

#### **Capacity building and awareness raising**

- Build a core team of advocates and facilitators on gender and CCA/DRR.
- Include knowledge about gender and climate change/disaster risk in educational systems and curricula at all levels.

*At the local level, some of these practices are already visible, as shown in the case studies described below.*

### **Box V Some inspiring examples**<sup>19</sup>

#### ***“Enhancing the capacity of women to cope with climate change: Empowering grassroots women at site level to cope with natural disasters”***

*Undertaken by the Viet Nam Women's Union (VWU) and supported by UN Women in 2010/2011 in the flood prone province of Phu Yen.*

The project benefited women and men in 40 communes in nine districts. It focused on enhancing the role of women in the context of climate change through training events to improve the technical skills of women's groups at the commune level and that of leaders at provincial, district and commune levels.

The focus was on gender sensitive risk evaluation, planning and management, enhancing the participation of women in decision-making, capacity building and prevention of violence against women after disasters. Climate information and early warning messages were communicated through the multiple broadcasting of a specifically developed radio programme and through information materials, such as posters and leaflets. Dialogue was held at commune level and with local authorities.

The result has been that the level of gender awareness in DRR and disaster preparedness, and the leadership of women in this area and of the VWU in CCA/DRR have increased significantly. The VWU, even though not officially a member of the Provincial Committee for Flood and Storm Control and Search and Rescue, is now regularly invited to meetings related to the management and mitigation of disaster risk in the area. As a follow-up, scaling up the project to other disaster-prone provinces in Viet Nam in the coming years is planned.

#### ***“Women's empowerment in coastal community livelihood development, natural resources management and climate change adaption”***

*This project in Xuan Thuy National Park, Nam Dinh province, was carried out by the Centre for Marinelife Conservation and Community Development, and supported by the European Union, Oxfam and the McKnight Foundation.*

About 10,000 people live in the Giao Xuan commune of the Xuan Thuy National Park – an area that is affected regularly by typhoons and flooding, and depends heavily on agriculture and fishery. Through a participatory rural appraisal process and gender analysis the specific positions of women and men in the commune were examined. The women in the commune face several problems, including the traditional gender stereotypes, less access and control over resources (capital, land and technology), and under-representation in leadership positions. They also have a strong dependency on coastal resources. These aspects contribute to their vulnerability to climatic change.

In an effort to diversify income, a community-based ecotourism (CBET) project started in 2006, providing supplementary income for local people and contributing to wetland conservation. Much emphasis is placed on

<sup>19</sup> These examples are selected from the 10 case studies presented during the Workshop on Good Practices in Gender Mainstreaming in Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Ha Noi, from 5-6 December 2011.

gender-mainstreaming and enhancing the livelihoods of women in the commune. The project succeeded in providing supplementary income for the women and the households, and overall in empowering women. This is reflected in the fact that 75 percent of CBET cooperative members are women and that 70 percent of women participated in CBET skills training and capacity building. Important challenges remain, such as balancing the double work burdens of women in the household and in income generation, and the need for enhanced institutional capacity and policies. As follow-up, further improvement of women's leadership and capacities, as well as scaling-up and advocacy are planned.

**“Gender champions Son and Tuyen and the VANGOCA (Viet Nam-Australia NGO Cooperation Agreement) project, Thanh Binh commune, Dong Thap province”**

*A project supported by Oxfam.*

Son and Tuyen started out as communication volunteers in the VANGOCA project in 2006. Through their work they gained awareness and knowledge about the importance of disaster preparation and mitigation, as well as about gender equality. Son, the husband, wanted to take action to really break the traditional norms in his village and decided to publicly show the villagers in his commune that he does the laundry in his family. At first this action was met with many questions and resistance in his village, but gradually people accepted it.

Although the project has ended, Son and Tuyen now have a powerful voice in their community. Son is now village head and Tuyen is a member of the “Living with Flood” club as well as a core member of the local VWU. They play an active and important role in disseminating knowledge and skills on disaster preparedness and mitigation, along with knowledge on gender equality. Son and Tuyen are an example of how a husband and wife can change gender roles and can work together to catalyze changes in their community.

## Recommendations<sup>20</sup>

### Government agencies and legal authorities

- The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE), Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) and Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MoLISA) should ensure that their activities on CCA/DRR as well as the current development of the DRM Law explicitly integrate gender equality aspects and indicators.
- All government agencies should ensure that DRR/CCA is a priority area in the national Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP).
- MARD, MoNRE, MoET and MoLISA should cooperate closely – from the local to central level – in order to ensure gender sensitive CCA/DRR. This needs enhanced capacity and technical knowledge. The mandate of MoLISA on gender mainstreaming across ministries and sectors should be effectuated and enabled and regular consultations with the VWU and other women's organizations and institutions<sup>21</sup> should support this process.
- Develop gender capacity of women and men and of national institutions dealing with climate change and related disasters, allocate enough financial and human resources and ensure gender-sensitive budgeting in CCA/DRR programmes and plans.
- CCA/DRR actions at all levels should be developed in a participatory way, involving both men and women of all age groups and different backgrounds, using the CBDRM approach.
- Promote communication and awareness-raising on gender equality and the national policy frameworks in DRR/CCA for authorities at different levels, including through training programmes.
- Increase the number of female members in the Committees for Flood and Storm Control at all levels to a minimum of 30 percent and ensure their active decision-making in these committees.
- Ensure that the collection and collation of sex-disaggregated data and related gender information from the local level, specifically damage and needs assessments post climate or weather related disasters, reaches

<sup>20</sup> Based on the outcomes of the Workshop on Good Practices in Gender Mainstreaming in Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Hanoi, from the 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> December 2011. A drafting group, consisting of representatives of UNDP, UN Women, UNISDR and Oxfam developed and agreed to this policy brief.

<sup>21</sup> E.g. local groups, UN Women, academia, INGOs

the national level, is disseminated widely and is publicly accessible, and is used to inform, monitor and evaluate new policies and programmes.

- The Government is encouraged to ensure multi-stakeholder engagement in the National Platform on DRR and CCA that should adopt the enhancement of gender equality as one of its objectives and reflect equal representation of women and men.

### **Viet Nam Women's Union, the Viet Nam Red Cross Society, youth and other mass organizations**

- Female members of the VWU and Viet Nam Red Cross Society (VNRC) should be engaged actively in decision-making at all levels of the C/CFSC (Central/Committee on Flood and Storm Control) and the coordination mechanisms for the National Climate Change Strategy and the NTP-RCC. They should also participate in search and rescue teams in order to promote equality in DRR/CCA.
- The capacity of trained trainers on knowledge and methodology for gender mainstreaming in DRR/CCA should be promoted and full implementation of this objective in Government programmes should be ensured.
- Ensure that VWU members are part of the joint assessments teams in the aftermath of disasters.
- The VWU and VNRC should advocate and efficiently communicate the main messages on roles, tasks and responsibilities of women before, during and after disasters and in CCA/DRR.
- The VWU and VNRC should be encouraged to implement the National Programme on CBDRM at the local level, with a focus on ensuring and enhancing gender equality and women's empowerment.

### **INGOs and Vietnamese NGOs**

- Good practices and experiences of promoting gender equality in DRR/CCA should be used as evidence-based information to inform policy/decision-makers in their own organizations and for the Government at national and sub-national levels.
- Ensure that existing and future technical materials and tool-sets on DRR/CCA are harmonized and include gender equality aspects.
- Ensure that projects and programmes on CCA/DRR involve advocacy around the need for gender equality/gender mainstreaming, addressing local, provincial and national stakeholders.
- All NGOs should utilize existing networks (CCWG, DMWG and the National Platform on DRR and CCA) to have one voice and have synergies on gender mainstreaming in CCA/DRR. They should promote a common approach and cooperation to enhance gender mainstreaming in CCA/DRR initiatives.
- Support vulnerable groups in 'making their voices heard' in DRR/CAA actions.
- Build national expertise on gender mainstreaming and gender equality, through support to the VWU, national NGOs, educational and research institutes and others.

### **UN agencies and the donor community**

- Continue to provide technical assistance to the Government and other stakeholders to promote gender mainstreaming in DRR/CCA related policies and programmes.
- Be engaged actively in ensuring gender equality in DRR/CCA legislation, policies, strategies and plans, through providing opportunities and coherent engagement for policy dialogue on DRR/CCA.
- UN agencies and donors should make gender equality a criterion in their own projects and initiatives and those they support; and ensure that gender equality is a part of the criteria for CCA/DRR funding. UN agencies, Vietnamese NGOs and INGOs should engage with the media by bringing environmental and gender journalist networks together.

## Private sector<sup>22</sup>

- The large private sector in Viet Nam should ensure that women's rights – including their labour rights and right to equal payment – are respected, and that their access to assets and capabilities to deal with climate change is improved.
- Climate change mitigation, adaptation and DRR initiatives in which the private sector is involved should include a thorough gender analysis, ensure women's participation and benefit both women and men of all backgrounds.
- The private sector and financial institutions should support women's entrepreneurship in climate change mitigation, adaptation and DRR initiatives.

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<sup>22</sup> Recommendations addressing the private sector were not explicitly discussed during the Workshop on Good Practices in Gender Mainstreaming in Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction, Hanoi, 5<sup>th</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup> December 2011