

## A proactive and sustainable approach for drought and salinity adaptation in Ben Tre 2016 – Quick report from MCNV microfinance project in Ben Tre, Vietnam.

Ms. Van, a 51 year old woman in Vang Quoi Dong commune, Binh Dai district, is more than happy because her family is going to build two big concrete water containers to retain more rain water from the timely loans by MCNV microfinance project in the district.

“My family had 2 small containers already (1.6m<sup>3</sup> capacity each), but during the serious salinity intrusion time in early 2016, we only have just enough for human drinking and cooking needs. We do not have fresh water for our cows and pigs so they have a lot of health troubles and could not grow fast as usual”, Van said.



Picture 2: Ms. Van prepares foundation for new big water containers

In August 2016, Ms. Van received a new loan of 5,000,000VND (~220Euro) which allows her family to hire local constructors to build two big concrete containers which has capacity of nearly 3m<sup>3</sup> each. Her husband and she already built the foundation for the two new containers in order to prepare for the coming dry season with high possibility of drought and salinity in 2017. She wishes that she could build more water retaining facilities in her garden so that their valuable pigs and cows will be safe in the dry time and could bring back stable income for her family. She plans to build total 6 containers so she will borrow again to build more containers after paying back this loan.

containers from project loan and now I feel secured in the coming dry seasons”.

Her family has 5 people, her mother in law, the couple and two small children. Her old water jars could provide rain water for their family consumption only from December to February in 2016. From March to May, their family has to buy bottled water for cooking and drinking and it costs them more than 5 Euro/month. With better rain water retention capacity, she plans to raise a sow, which could generate income for her family.

Ms. Van and Ms. Cuong as well as thousands of poor women live in Binh Dai district, a coastal area where they totally depend on water supply from rivers and rains. There is no underground water in that area so in the drought and salinity disaster in early 2016, their livelihoods have seriously affected.



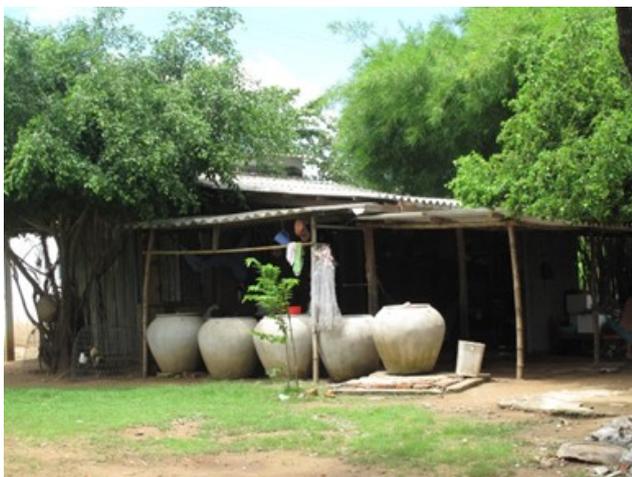
Picture 1: Ms. Van and her old small rain water containers



Picture 3: Ms. Cuong and her new water containers from project loan

MCNV microfinance project had been running in eight communes in Binh Dai district since 2009, and up to now the project has disbursed micro loans to more than 2,500 poor women to improve their production and income generation activities. The poor women are grouped into credit groups where they could support each other and learn new knowledge and skills.

To quickly respond to the rain water retention needs of the poor in drought salinity time, the project has introduced new loan product, which provide women a small credit of 2,500,000VND or 5,000,000VND to build concrete high capacity water containers respectively in May 2016. Poor



**Picture 4: Low rain water retention capacity with jars in a normal household**

women will pay back this loan monthly in 12 or 18 months term and they can borrow again after paying back the previous loans. By September 2016, there are 160 poor women borrowed from project to build 296 high capacity water containers which could retain approximately 829 cubic meter of rain water. This number will increase as the loans will be available continuously in the coming years to satisfy need for fresh water retention.

Total amount of money disbursed as loans for water containers is 32,692 Euro. Thanks to quick responds from MCNV donors who donate to Ben Tre project total amount of 20,000Euro for this purpose and the rest came from the project re-

volving capital.

MCNV private donors had contributed 15,000Euro in a special campaign to help Ben Tre and in addition to that, Hulza Foundation had donated 5,000 Euro for this work.

Ben Tre microfinance project plans to extend to more commune to make its service available and accessible to more poor women in the coming time.

Hulza funded 15,000Euro which helps the project to expand to Thoi Lai commune in Sep 2016.

The loans for water containers and other loans to support poor women in production will be provided continuously in coming years to satisfy the needs for better livelihoods from the poor people in a sustainable and effective way.

Creating new cooperative models for poor women in rural areas is a new intervention approach by MCNV in Ben Tre. The cooperatives have strengths on economy of scale to win the market competition and allow poor women to make use of their free time at home to work and generate income.

In 2016, MCNV together with provincial Women's Union will establish 4 pilot models of new cooperatives. If this approach is successful, it will become another tool for livelihood improvement for poor women in rural areas.



**Picture 5: A credit group where poor women could access to microfinance service and support each other for better lives**