

YEAR-END PROJECT REPORT

Project: Ethnic Minority Community Development (EMCD)

Duration: January – December 2020

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I. Objective of project: To support poor communities in Huong Hoa sustain their bamboo livelihood initiatives through processing products better and growing bamboo for material.

II. Expected outcomes:

- Three groups of ethnic minority young people in Huong Lap, Huong Phung and Huong Viet communes of Huong Hoa district get vocational training and have stable jobs from producing bamboo products.
- These ethnic minority young people and their families (30 households) improve income and living conditions through the production of bamboo products.

III. Budget expenditures: As of late December 2020, total spent amount is EUR 10,000, occupying 100% of the total budget allocated.

IV. Achievements:

1. Improved management and production capabilities:

- A clear organizational structure developed and put into operation.
- Number of group members increased up to 34.
- Almost sufficient facilities and tools for production activities provided.
- Basic and advanced vocational trainings for newly-recruited and existing members provided.
- Various strategies of developing bamboo material areas applied, including bamboo exploitation, plantation and exchange among the production groups.
- Drying systems diversified to shorten the process of bamboo treatment and adapt to the changeable weather, including traditional drying method (sun drying), drying house (in case of rain), and drying machine (taking 10 hours instead of 10 – 15 days if applying sun drying).
- Production plan with detailed task allocation among group members developed and followed.

2. Enhanced Research & Development for diversification of bamboo products:

- An exposure visit to a company producing bamboo products in Phu Yen province in early October 2020 made, resulting in lessons learnt withdrawn and business linkage created.
- A technical manual for the production groups developed and applied, in combination with the local knowledge and scientific researches (in bamboo treatment and processing).
- New designs of potentially commercialized products developed and produced by the group members.

3. Strengthened marketing and networking to promote market outreach:

- Branding promoted with a logo, Facebook fan-page (<https://www.facebook.com/krongaho>), and development of a brochure.
- Different sales channels developed, including online transactions.
- Took part in events and trade fairs to advertise and sell the products.
- Enhanced participation in bamboo-related networks inside Vietnam.

The project in the year 2020 has brought an extra income for the group members of around 14% (in comparison with 30% as set in the project target) due to the negative impact of the Covid 19 pandemic, historical floods and storms.

V. Challenges and recommendations:

- High percentage of membership rotation affected the production activities. Indigenous culture, customs, living conditions and the requirements of such skilled jobs are among the identified reasons. It is therefore required to apply a vast of innovative strategies and methods in membership recruitment.
- The coronavirus epidemic that was widespread in early and middle of the year, together with continual occurrence of deadliest floods and storms, seriously halted the production. Dozens of contracts had to be cancelled, and the production activities totally blocked since late July 2020. A proposed solutions to deal with these are to optimize sales channels, preferably online sales; and diversify products and services such as supplying bamboo materials, semi-finished products, and finished products.
- Durability of bamboo products still needs further research to cope with high humidity and attack by insect pests and diseases. This can be done by consulting experts in the existing networks and searching for evidence-based scientific sources.

VI. Direction in 2021

In continuity to the strategies that have been identified and implemented in the previous years, the project in the year 2021 will be geared into three major pillars for development: (i) Strengthening the production capabilities in ways that the products made by the production groups will meet the market requirements, including the improvement of durability and competition; (ii) completion of operation and supporting services; and (iii) synchronization of marketing mix strategies.

Targets set in this period consist of:

- Creating jobs for 40 members of the production groups;
- Increasing income of the group members up to 40%;
- Supporting three cooperative groups to operate effectively;
- Developing diversified sales channels; and
- Sustainably development bamboo material areas.

In order to reach the set targets, the project will carry out the following activities:

- Membership growth and provision of further vocational trainings;
- Standardization of technical guideline/manual;

- Improvement of production facilities and management system;
- Promotion of research & development; and
- Development of business and cooperation linkages.

VII. Images of activities carried out in the year 2020:



Development of bamboo material areas



Diversifying drying systems



Improving technical process



Membership growth and vocational training provision



Product design research and development



Marketing promotion