

Update of EMCD project In the period of July - August, 2021

In late July – early August 2021, MCNV had exerted numerous efforts to implement exit strategies for the Krong Aho bamboo production groups in Huong Hoa district, focusing on four key interventions: promoting marketing, strengthening the production capacity of the groups, networking, and linking the business with eco-tourism initiatives in the area.

Marketing promotion

MCNV has supported the sales representative of the production groups to develop a market plan. As part of it, during this period Krong Aho bamboo products were just kept on shelves at mini-marts, shops and cafés with an aim to improve customer outreach.



Depositing Krong Aho at a handicrafts shop in Dong Ha city



Bamboo products available at a café in central Huong Phung commune

Production capacity strengthening

From the 21st to 24th of July 2021, a second internal learning exchange was organized among the existing and newly-formulated groups. At this event, a key member of Ta Puong village in Huong

Viet commune was invited to take part as a local facilitator. Participants were all the members of six production groups in neighboring communes of Huong Phung and Huong Son. The event was held in four days, in which three first day the local facilitator came to work directly with two production groups, strengthening the relationships, making sample products and sharing technical and management experience.



Learning moment with Ma Lai Pun production group

A wrap-up session on the last day was facilitated by MCNV with the participation of the local facilitator and all the group members. The purpose of this meeting were to consolidate lessons learnt among the groups in the first three days, develop upcoming learning exchanges, and update of cooperative opportunities for expanding the groups' business.



Wrap-up meeting with production group members

A local enterprise, named Pun Coffee, has been well-known for their high quality coffee and expression of corporate social responsibility. In April 2021, they won the 1st prize at the Coffee Amazing Cup held in Central Highlands of Vietnam. It was the first time Khe Sanh coffee had affirmed its position as one of the coffee hubs in Vietnam that could be capable of producing high quality coffee. The company was also committed to supporting community development initiatives and organic cultivation. Recently, Pun Coffee paid a special interest to the activities of the bamboo production groups. They realized the potentialities of bamboo and the importance of linking the producing activities of Krong Aho group with their business plans.

After several field trips to work with relevant parties, MCNV organized a joint meeting among Pun Coffee, representative of local authority, and production groups in communes of Huong Viet, Huong Son and Huong Phung. The aims were to discuss about how to expand the producing and trading of Krong Aho products, and promote the cooperation between Pun Coffee and the production groups.



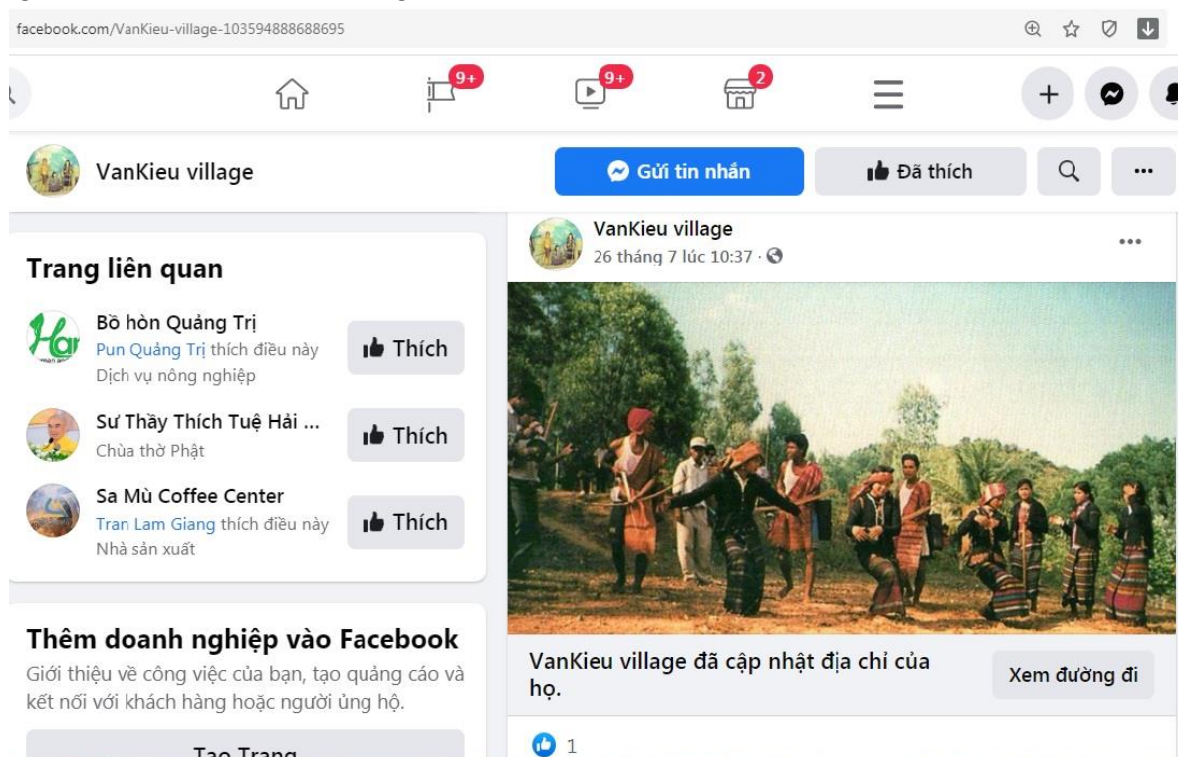
Joint meeting for linking and expanding Krong Aho business

Result of the meeting was a draft business contract between Pun Coffee and Krong Aho groups. Via negotiations, the production groups agreed to supply existing and new designs of products upon request while the enterprise would take charge of consuming the bamboo handicrafts. Profit gained would be paid back to the groups for the purposes of organizing vocational training, re-investment, maintenance of equipment and so. Both sides started taking actions by producing a new design of bamboo coffee boxes and cups in response to a potential order of 500 – 700 items from Quang Tri Provincial People's Committee as gifts for their delegates at an upcoming event.



New design of giftset consisting of bamboo coffee box and cup with Pun Specialty Coffee

The production groups would be able to expand their business as long as they obtain a legal entity. As such, relevant parties came up with an initiative of establishing a Van Kieu¹ Bamboo Cooperative – an umbrella organization with the representation of Pun Coffee and production groups with equal responsibilities and benefits. The general objectives of this initiative are to contribute to sustainable forest management and development through the exploitation of non-timber forest products and promoting eco-tourism models, and generate income for the members of ethnic communities.



New initiative gradually taking shape with Van Kieu Village Facebook fanpage

¹ Bru-Van Kieu as the name of an ethnic community in the northern district

Once established, the Cooperative would enable the production groups favorable conditions in transactions, cooperation and networking, help improve the image of the culturally-enriched communities, professionalize their production and trading activities, mobilize all required resources for business development, and add value to the Krong Aho products.

The business of Van Kieu Bamboo Cooperative would focus on not only producing and trading Krong Aho products but also eco-tourism development. The whole district has recently been an attractive destination to tourists with farmstay and homestay models, bungalows, and waterfalls, etc. Located in the same commune with the Chenh Venh Eco-Tourism Village that is being built, the Cooperative would take advantage of this opportunity to expand its business and design community eco-tours. Once completed in late 2021, the Chenh Venh Eco-Tourism Village would put into operation with numerous services: check-in and photographing at landscapes, homestay with traditional food and drinks, *gong* festive (combined with campfire, folklore performance, BBQ), outdoor activities (trekking, swimming, exposure visits to Krong Aho producing facilities, coffee harvesting tours), and a mini-market with traditional products (fish, bamboo shoot, Krong Aho products with on-site laser engraving service, etc.).



Entry to Chenh Venh Eco-Tourism Village (not yet completed)



Whole landscape of Chenh Venh Eco-Tourism Village under construction



Site clearance for improving whole landscape with grass and stream rocks and stones



Landscape being recovered with bamboo trees, grass and rocks



General ground for drying agricultural products in Chenh Venh Village (completed)