



Vietnam Union of Friendship
Organization – NGO Resources Centre

Critical issues in achieving sustainable development of ethnic minorities in Vietnam

By: Ethnic Minorities Working Group (EMWG)

Presenter: Hoang Van Tu

Member of EMWG core groups

What is EMWVG?

- A network of development agencies and professionals working on ethnic minorities issues
- Under Vietnam Union of Friendship Organization – NGO Resources Centre

Poverty reduction - highlights

- Poverty rate drop from 59.3% in 1993 down to 14% in 2008
- Ethnic minorities make up less than 15% population but account for 47% poor and 68% extreme poor population
- Poverty pockets in ethnic minority condensed provinces (e.g. Ha Giang, Lai Chau, Dien Bien, Dak Nong, Kon Tum, etc.) poverty rates in these provinces still remain at around 35%


Main presentation contents?

- 6 critical issues
- Recommendations to address each critical issues

Critical issue 1: Lack of presentation of ethnic minority in policy framework for ethnic minority development

- Development strategies, policies, plans and investment:
 - Focus more on growth engines
 - Ignore diversity, different needs and vulnerabilities within ethnic minority groups
 - Local and ethnic minority situations and needs are seldom presented or taken into consideration

Critical issue 1: Lack of presentation of ethnic minority in policy framework for ethnic minority development

- Ethnic minority policies often designed with little real presentation of EM, EM women in:
 - Identification of needs
 - Formulation of support
 - Defining mechanism for empowerment in decision making, management and monitoring
-  EMs become reactive receivers rather than active players in measures to benefit and contribute to poverty reduction

Critical issue 1: Lack of presentation of ethnic minority in policy framework for ethnic minority development

- Lack of belief and institutionalization of good EM practices on poverty reduction

Research evidences show that Livelihoods strategies of households which are based on endogenous strengths as well as taking advantages of external opportunities has created poverty reduction models/practices. However, these positive deviances are not fully mobilized

Critical issue1: Recommendations - at policy design level

- Revisit and make sure SEDP planning processes at national and local levels to make sure ethnic minority, gender and rights sensitive elements are included in all aspects
- Intensify discussion at National Steering Committee for Poverty Reduction to factor required actions of mainstreaming ethnic minority issues in national, sectoral and local action plans
- Introduce and apply anthropological/cultural approaches
- Apply community-centered approach of which specific characteristic of each community are systematically analysed when designing poverty reduction interventions

Critical issue 1: Recommendations - policy implementation level

- Identify measures/ mechanisms for community and woman empowerment to respect diversity and community needs thus enhance efficiency of service delivery
- Formulate and implement a coherence MDGs acceleration plan for ethnic minority groups and communities taking into consideration of gender and vulnerability
- Seek pioneer factors and identify channels for dissemination of best practices in order to determine appropriate poverty reduction solutions for ethnic minority groups

Critical issue 2: Fragmented policy framework and lack of capacity and coordination

There are:

- More than 30 poverty reduction policies and programmes with over 120 components
- 187 different decrees, resolutions on EM poverty reduction support

But:

- Fragmented, overlapping and thinly resourced
 - Resolution 30a budgeted for 3,000 billion for each of the 61 poorest districts but actual mobilization in 2009 was only 25 billion VND and even less in 2010 (20 billion VND)

Critical issue 2: Fragmented policy framework and lack of capacity and coordination

- CEMA is mandated to provide policy and technical advice to the GOV's line ministries and local governments on EM affairs but has limited institutional capacity; weak support mechanism; and real power
- Large number of targeted EM poverty reduction policies and programmes managed and implemented by different line ministries/agencies create high but unmanageable demand for coordination
- Lack of capacity in social service delivery e.g. education, health, extension, etc.
- Ineffective decentralization mechanism and plan with specific target and measures as well as resource allocation

Critical issue 2: Recommendations

- Setting clearer mandates for the lead agency
- Enhance the roles and capacity of CEMA and National Assembly (Ethnic Minority Council)
- Review ethnic minority policies to reduce fragmentation, enhance coherence, inclusiveness for the most vulnerable groups thus increase efficiency of poverty reduction policy and NTP implementation
- Mobilize and allocate adequate resources
- Develop organizational capacity, tools and resources for implementation of result-based, gender sensitive and participatory monitoring and ensure accountability

Critical issue 3: Discrimination and stigma

- Public perception of ethnic minorities are often prejudicial and contribute to inequity of opportunity (ISEE, 2012)
- Prevalence of gender bias and stereotypes
- Lack of comprehensive legislative framework to guarantee non-discrimination (WB, 2009)

Critical issue 3: Recommendations

- Policy dialogues to seek practical measures to encourage voice and participation of ethnic minorities in policy design, implementation and monitoring
- Empower and engagement of ethnic minority and women in decision making processes
- Mobilize experience and network of NGOs/CSOs/CBOs in capacity development and empowerment of ethnic minorities, women and other vulnerable groups
- Identify practical measures to ensure real participation of women in leadership and decision making at both community level and government systems

Critical issue 4: Education

FACT:

- 30% of ethnic minority households have at least one child drop out of school before completion of a grade. That of the Kinh is 16% (WB survey in 2010)
- Net enrolment rate of ethnic minority in 2006 was 89%. That of the Kinh was 98%
- Ethnic minority girls experience the lowest enrolment rate of any group, highest repetition and drop out rates, lowest school completion, lowest transition rate from primary to lower secondary school

Critical issue 4: Education

REASON

- Language barrier
- Limited teacher capacity and awareness
- Irrelevant teaching methods and materials
- Low awareness of children, parents and communities about child rights (to education)
- Lack of accountability mechanism
- Poor infrastructure and lack of teaching and learning facilities

Critical issue 4: Recommendations

- Intensify overall investment in pre-school and primary school education (i.e. teachers, facilities, infrastructure, methodology and promotion, etc.)
- Focus promotion agenda on rights to education approach
- Intensify active learning/child centered approach in school and curriculum planning with gender and minority sensitivity

Critical issue 5: Livelihoods

- Agriculture/livelihoods models introduced often inappropriate to the poor and ethnic minority due to the lack of comprehensive and in-depth analysis:
 - Comparative advantages
 - Cultures
 - Available resources/capitals
 - Market linkages/value chain
- Limited access to public assets
- Neglect to provide support to poorest households/communities
- Neglect to provide “software” supports

Critical issue 5: Recommendations

- Intensify community ownership and engagement in planning and decision making
- Intensify investment in “software” components (i.e. capacity building, participation and empowerment)
- Design interventions based on in-depth analysis of comparative advantages, culture, assets and market – value chain approach
- Harmonize community-based and household-based approaches to address chronic poverty

Critical issue 6: Land rights

- Obstacles on access to forest land and resources
- Obstacle in establishment and implementation of benefit sharing mechanisms of forest benefits
- Unstable land ownership, title and rights
- Lack of policies, guidelines and mechanism as well as capacity for land law reinforcement

Critical issue 6: Recommendations

- Reallocate agriculture/forest land inefficiently used by state enterprises/cooperatives to communities and households
- Formalization of community land ownership
- Improving legal framework to ensure effective investment in forest economy (particularly sustainable forest management and benefit sharing)
- Promote development of household, community and cooperative forestry models that benefit ethnic minorities and poor communities

Thank you for your listening!

For any concern/question, please contact EMWG at:

E-mail: emwg@ngocentre.org.vn

Website: <http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/emwg>

Tel: +84 4 38328570