

# VIETNAM



**THANH VAN,  
CHO MOI,  
BAC KAN  
PROVINCE**

**CLIMATE JUSTICE  
FEMINIST  
PARTICIPATORY  
ACTION RESEARCH  
2017-18**

## COUNTRY PROFILE

Vietnam is one of the countries which are most affected by climate change in the world. Erratic fluctuations in temperatures, rainfall and humidity have led to an increase in natural disasters and diseases in crops, animals and humans. Seasonal changes have also adversely impacted food production; studies in the Southeast Asian region show that climate change could lower agricultural productivity by 2–15 percent in Vietnam in the next 40 years.<sup>1</sup>

Vietnam has several national laws, strategies, policies, and programmes on climate change response, such as the Law on Natural Disaster Risk Prevention and Reduction (NDRPR), and the National Target Program to Respond to Climate Change (NTPRCC). The NTPRCC engages with stakeholders with a focus on local communities and proposes to contribute to climate mitigation by increasing forest cover. The policy, however, also emphasises Vietnam's ambition to become a fully industrial nation.<sup>2</sup>

These policies are not fully implemented, especially at the sub-national level. Measures to cope with climate change focus on the

## Increasing Tay ethnic women's capacities to understand impacts of climate change and influence local adaptation strategies

Agriculture and Forestry Research & Development Center for Mountainous Region (ADC) conducted this Climate Justice FPAR in Thanh Van in the Cho Moi district of BacKan province. The community is located in the northern mountainous region of Vietnam. 93% of the population are indigenous peoples with the Tay people as a majority.

technical rather than the social aspects. Poor and indigenous women, who are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, have almost no opportunity to voice their opinions in strategies or policies related to climate change.



Informants' age (mean)	Family Members (mean)	Main source of income (%)		Families in debt (%)		Women who do housework (%)		Woman is the main working member (%)	
		Agriculture	Others	Yes	No	50%	100%	Yes	No
41	5	100	0	33	67	60	40	87	13

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for the Tay people who also depend on natural resources for sustenance. In recent years, the community has witnessed sudden heavy rainfall, extreme temperatures, long dry spells, and landslides. This, in turn, has drastically increased their vulnerability, especially of the women, to climate change.



The indigenous Tay women live in scattered locations. They make their living through agriculture. The upland location, combined with bad road connectivity, severely reduce Tay women's access to information and social services. In addition, traditional patriarchal views and practices limit their opportunity, and increase their burden and vulnerability.

The Tay women do all the housework, care for the family, and work to earn money to support the family's economy. Being directly engaged in income generation activities

and managing the family, the women understand what is needed for the family's welfare.

However, they rarely get to make decisions about the family's economic development activities. In the decision-making processes of the community, it is said that everyone has the right to give opinions or suggestions. However, women rarely speak in these processes because they feel they lack adequate information and confidence to do so.

## IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The research team, in collaboration with the Tay women, worked to mobilise the women, build their capacities and support them in formulating adaptation strategies. Through regular meetings, trainings, and discussions with multiple stakeholders, the women worked to understand the impacts of climate change and recognise their traditional knowledge of sustainable agriculture for adaptation strategies.

**Hazards** such as droughts, landslide, storm, disease and flood have been affecting the community for the last 10 years. Many households have been facing **decreased**





**crop production** due to diseases, landslides, land degradation and the lack of irrigation.

**Decreasing traditional knowledge applicability:**

Traditionally, the Tay people use their indigenous knowledge to predict rainfall and sunshine, and accordingly plant different crops. With erratic climate conditions, it is becoming harder to predict the weather to cultivate crops and raise domestic animals. Tay people's knowledge of weather prediction for cultivation has become inapplicable due to the changes in climate.

**'Some of us are still using indigenous knowledge and practices in agricultural production like planting local varieties, using our own knowledge in forecasting the weather. However, the climate is changing, and the number of people using indigenous knowledge is decreasing. The number of people using chemical products in farming is increasing, because they want to get more from their land.'** said Mrs. Hon (50) in an interview.

**Reducing livelihood opportunities for women:** The findings from the Climate Justice FPAR show that the Tay people have very few livelihoods options. Traditionally, they plant only rice, corn, timber and banana due to their location on the high hills and raise pigs, chickens, ducks and buffaloes. However, crops failure and diseases in livestock is taking away their traditional livelihoods. In May 2017, bird flu caused the death of almost all chickens in the hamlet. After that, women in the community, who mainly undertake this activity, stopped raising chicken for a long time.



Due to the loss of traditional livelihoods, men have been finding new work like working in construction or opening of small shop. These new livelihood options depend on their physical and financial resources. These changes are mostly made by the men, because women do not get to decide on finance allocation and have to remain at home to look after the family.







## WOMEN-LED ACTIONS

ADC along with the Tay women used the Climate Justice FPAR process to build the communities' understanding on climate change, analyse gender roles in decision-making, and mobilised women to participate in governance processes.

**Reviving indigenous practices collectively:** The Tay women have formed a community collective for organic farming. The collective has been planting bananas using organic compost they learnt to make. The women plan to reduce and ultimately stop using pesticides and revive their traditional practices to address climate change. Furthermore, the banana plants help protecting the soil from erosion. These women plan to use their initiative as a model to motivate other communities to shift to organic farming and stop using pesticides.

**Taking part in public meeting and decision-making processes:** Earlier the women used to shy away from public meetings and governance processes. During the Climate Justice FPAR discussions, the women learnt that to tackle with the impacts of climate change and address the crisis facing their community it is important for them to participate in governance processes. The women have started attending meetings where development plans are discussed and they are putting forward their suggestions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE ACTIONS

**Increase women's participation and include their suggestions in local governance process:** ADC and the Tay community women plan to use the findings from their Climate Justice FPAR to advocate for women's participation in local governance and include their suggestions in the commune development plan. They will focus on developing local plans that include adaptation plans based on the knowledge and needs of the community's women.

**Promote organic banana plantation through commune development plan:** The Tay women will advocate with the commune leaders to promote organic banana plantations in the communities.

**Influence implementation of the national adaptation plan:** Through participation in the Commune Socio-Economic Plan, the Tay women will be able to contribute towards the national adaptation plan that promises to protect biodiversity.

<sup>1</sup> World Bank Study on Climate Change and Rice Production: (Dasgupta et al., 2007)

<sup>2</sup> Retrieved from <https://adaptation-undp.org/building-capacity-advance-national-adaptation-plan-viet-nam>



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