



Working with Schools to Tackle Climate Change

Nam Dinh Province in Northern Vietnam is one of many provinces in the country facing increased challenges from climate change. These range from changes affecting landscapes and farming to increased risks of natural disasters. The USAID-funded Vietnam Forests and Deltas (VFD) Program is working in four provinces to ensure people are aware of these challenges, and local planning takes the changing environment into account.

One aspect of the VFD Program is working with schools to raise awareness of climate change. These school events not only give pupils awareness of the issues, they also equip them with practical skills. It is important for children to be aware of the hazards and risks so they will know what to do to reduce the negative impact of disasters and be confident of overcoming adversity. Most importantly, children can also be educated about climate change and what they can do to help stop environmental destruction and global warming. By doing this and also attracting the wider community, these events serve as an important way to communicate to local authorities and

communities about disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

One of VFD's most successful school events was at Giao Xuan Primary School, Giao Thuy district, Nam Dinh Province, that took place in January 2016. This Disaster Risk Reduction/Climate Change Adaptation (DRR/CCA) event was one of a number designed to expand children's knowledge of climate change. The underlying principle of the events is 'learn to play, play to learn'.

In all, 772 children took part in play-based activities, performances and role-plays to put into practice the lessons they were learning about disaster preparedness and adapting to climate change. They even practiced a whole school evacuation. Children from Grades 4 and 5 who had been learning about some of the topics as part of their curriculum, displayed excellent knowledge relative to DRR/CCA, skills and actions to be taken in the event of disasters.



A leader from the education and training section of Giao Thuy district said that: “Many topics of safe transportation, environmental protection, etc are being integrated into the official curriculum of primary education. However, not many chances are created for children to test their knowledge and have some actual experience. This type of activity should be replicated to other existing district schools”

The event also spread its influence to the wider community with over 500 parents, officials and community members in attendance. As Grade 7 student, Nguyen Thi Thuy Chi, commented: “It is my sister’s school event, but it is like an event for my whole family. At home she talked about the event at the school and asked all the family to take part in her home exercise about climate change. I took her to school twice a week to practice her performance. My parents help prepare soil for her plantation. She is very excited about the event.”

Mr. Tran Van Tung, chairman of Giao Xuan People’s Committee shared his thoughts: “If local people have as good knowledge on DRR/CCA as school children do, disaster management at Giao Xuan Commune will become easier and more feasible to prevent possible damages caused by disasters.”

VFD has carried out events in 20 schools in Nam Dinh province including training teachers and board members. In 2016, the project will also provide technical assistance to the Provincial Department of Education and Training so that they can expand the safe school model to other schools so that this essential education can be carried out beyond the scope of the project.

