Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.

Enable the poor families from ethnic minority group in Vietnam become entrepreneurs in providing herbal medicine for health care of society. Reduce threat of resource exhaustion due to over exploitation and natural disasters and help in protecting biodiversity for us and for our future generation. The WHO estimates that up to 80% of Asian and African people rely on traditional medicines for primary health care. However, 70% of plant collections involve destructive harvesting.

Preserve valuable remedy of the ethnic minority groups

Not only traditional health care system, but non-traditional health service need to consider to use of modern medicines as well as traditional medicine when appropriate.
Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?

Da Bac district of Hoa Binh province is mountainous areas, in the North West and 4 hours by car from Hanoi, capital of Vietnam. The total natural area of Da Bac is 81,000 ha, which is mainly hilly land, forest with high slope and rough terrain, as so it is difficult for transportation. The population of Da Bac is 48,800, being Tay, Muong, Kinh, Dao and Thai ethnic minority groups, who are living in 164 villages. Da Bac is a district with various difficulties. This district is the most affected by Hoa Binh Hydro-Power Plant project, i.e. resettlement of local people, who were dwelling in the big water reservoir of Da river. Moreover, it is one of the 62 poorest districts in the whole country. As district survey in 2009 the poverty rate of the district is 30% (USD 384/year/person)... The local people here live mainly on agricultural and forestry productions and they are often facing many difficulties as food shortage, poverty, poor infrastructures, low educational level, poor production facilities and exhausted natural resources because of over exploitations... The proposed project site is four communes namely Tan Pheo, Dong Ruong, Dong Chum and Doan Ket of Da Bac district, Hoa Binh province. Those communes are really poor communes. The poverty rates are 33.8% for Tan Pheo, 36.22% for Dong Ruong, 39.77% for Dong Chum, and 58.08% for Doan Ket. These communes are located in the area of Phu Canh Nature Reserve and its buffer area, where there is a plentiful medicinal herb source, favourable for the implementation of the proposed project.

Solution: What is the proposed solution? Please be specific!

Medicinal plants not only have immediate value to medical treatment and health care, but can be a good source of income for households. If natural medicinal plants is exploited in sustainable way and cultivated more for herbal medicine industry, it can contribute to country economic growth also. In Vietnam, traditional medicine system by government and by private have been in existence for long time providing good health care service to people. Nevertheless, poor or medium families processing medicinal plants for their own and for sale are very few. Most of herbal medicine entrepreneurs are from more advantaged groups. This initiative will help the poor ethnic minority people to generate income from medicinal plants in sustainable way. They will be trained for proper exploitation, preservation of natural medicinal plants, growing in their garden medicinal plants with high values but in exhausted situation, initial processing medicinal plants and marketing and selling initial products. After this pilot phase, we plan to continue supporting the communities to expand their business both in product quantity and product diversification and access to more markets. The follow up phase will help the villagers in producing more sophisticated products like instant powder tea and or sirup, etc. Poor villagers from ethnic minority groups can become herbal medicine entrepreneurs like others from more advantaged groups. This project will also contribute to reducing threat of over exploitation of natural resource while protecting biodiversity for our future generation.

Impact: How does it Work

Example: Walk us through a specific example(s) of how this solution makes a difference; include its primary activities.

1. Baseline survey to assess the current quantity of each medicinal plants and identify more kinds of medicinal plants in further areas of Phu Canh Nature Reserve in Da Bac district (areas not yet included in the survey in 2010). 2. Pilot models of planting medicinal herbs which are collected from the nature a. Set up groups with villagers interested in medicinal herbs production (medicinal herbs interest groups) b. Training of Trainers (TOT) on planting and tending medicinal herbs for key staff of district traditional medicine and district forestry department. c. Training for members of medicinal herbs interest groups in planting and tending medicinal herbs d. Grow medicinal herbs in the gardens of members (small scale). 3. Training in draft processing (drying) for medicinal herbs 4. Supports to produce ready made remedies (dry herbs packed in plastic bags) 5. Marketing activities a. training on marketing skills for Medicinal Herb Production Group b. setting up marketing groups c. training on Medicinal Herb Production Group on handling and management d. Market survey on medicinal herb products e. Contact with pharmaceutical companies (eg. Tue Linh, Traphaco) to provide them draft-processed medicinal herbs for sale. 6. Compile and publish a book on: a. medicinal herbs in Phu Canh Nature Reserve and Remedies of the ethnic minority people in the area for improved awareness on the need of preservation and sustainable utilization. b. Handbook ‘herbal remedies for common diseases for local people to use at home’ 7. Publishing leaflet for medicinal herbs in their area. 8. Consolidate the local traditional health network for better services; 9. Produce leaflet for promoting traditional health practices.
More than 5 years

Is the project that you are entering related to this organization?

Yes

The information you provide here will be used to fill in any parts of your profile that have been left blank, such as interests, organization information, and website. No contact information will be made public. Please uncheck here if you do not want this to happen.

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Innovation

What stage is your project in?

Idea phase

Share the story of the founder and what inspired the founder to start this project

CSED is a Vietnamese NGO, established in January 2006. CSED was formed by the staff of Community Development Department of an International NGO-CIDSE Vietnam (Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité) as a part of the planned empowerment and management role hand-over to a local NGO after CIDSE’s 27 years working in Vietnam. CSED target groups are poor people including poor ethnic minority people, people with disability living in vulnerable and disadvantaged communities. Currently, CSED is working in four mountainous provinces and one coastal province in Northern region. CSED’s mission includes supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged communities to develop and manage their development programmes, piloting development initiatives, conducting operation research and advocating on policies at both national and regional levels. Our current programme focuses on supporting livelihoods and environmental programme for disadvantaged communities. Project “Preservation and promotion of medicinal plants for sustainable utilizations to improve incomes for the disadvantaged Ethnic Minority groups in Da Bac district, Hoa Binh” is in line with our mission and program focus. Our initial survey in 2009 led us to a more technical study March 2010 ie. feasibility study on medicinal plants. Proposed project has been designed based on result of the feasibility study for supporting the poor ethnic minority groups to improve their livelihoods in environment friendly way.

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Social Impact

Please describe how your project has been successful and how that success is measured

Our projects have been assessed as successful ones for its sustainability and innovation level. Besides helping poor communities improving their living conditions, our project always ensure requirement of environment protection by using available resource wisely, local capacity building so that the communities and local partner can continue managing development process and proactive in finding new initiatives to overcome constraints. For example, in our livelihoods projects, besides improving agriculture production which is currently main source of income, we have assisted in identifying other alternatives for additional income as agriculture land in the communities is so small. So far, CSED has piloted a number of alternatives including Do paper (handmade paper) production, bamboo processing, medicinal plants preservation and cultivation for producing herbal medicine. These initiatives have addressed the problem of lacking of work, making best use of local material in the communities to generate income and protecting natural resources for future use. Approach in implementing these alternatives include technical training for producing new products, training on bussiness management or conducting marketing activities has helped poor households develop new skills in these alternatives. Results of piloting have been appreciated by communities and government, therefore, local government and other donors have seriously suggested to continue and expand our initiatives, for example, initiative of Do paper (hand made paper) in Suoi Co village, Hop Hao commune, Luong Son district, Hoa Binh province to larger scale. Our project results are measured against project indicators set up at project planning stage. These indicators related to various aspects including households’ increased income directly from project interventions, increased income alternatives, improved capacity of project partner and villagers reflected by number of requests to work as consultants for projects managed by other organisations, etc.

How many people have been impacted by your project?

1,001-10,000

How many people could be impacted by your project in the next three years?

More than 10,000

How will your project evolve over the next three years?

Although Vietnam has entered Middle Income Country category in 2010, our country is just at the lowest level of this category. In addition, the country still have about ten million of people living under poverty line. Moreover, environment issues ie. pollution, exhaustion of natural resources, climate change will remain problem not only for Vietnam but problem at global level. Therefore, our present focus programme ie. supporting livelihoods for the poor and environmental programme will be still neccessary over the next three years. However, we plan to work more intensively in these two aspects for example supporting communities in further steps in value chain and dealing with environmental issues at regional/global level also.

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Sustainability

What barriers might hinder the success of your project and how do you plan to overcome them?

Intensive marketing activities of Western medicine companies and fast effect of Western medicine (non herbal medicine) in disease treatment place big challenge in changing preference/practice of some group of people, for example the young people.

The pilot phase will produce small quantity and not many kind of products including not having high quality products which can be constraint to enter in sale contract with pharmacy shop or companies. Therefore, group members might get into worry and get less interested in herbal medicine production.

To overcome the above difficulties:
- Information, education and communication people in project sites as well as for other people through workshops at national level on values of
medicinal herb will be conducted. o exposure visits will be organised for both Project Management Board and herbal medicine production groups to herbal medicine cooperatives/enterprises who started before, had difficulties but success now.. o a thorough survey on market demand will be done before products from medicinal herbs are produced

Tell us about your partnerships

So far, while taking overall management for projects and accountable to donors, CSEED has been working in partnership with different partners in implementing projects:
Our local project partners normally consisting District People’s Committee (DPC) and technical organisations to support in implementing project activities. DPC is to take coordinating role and technical organisations are to do implementing role. Depending on subjects of project, technical agency can be Agriculture and Rural Development Department, Plant Protection Department, Preventive Health Centre, etc.
Besides the technical agents at the project sites, CSEED has also hired experts to implement specific tasks in projects, for example, in handmade paper production, we worked with Vietnam Handicraft Research and Promotion Centre, in Medicinal plant cultivation CSEED work with Vietnam Pharmacy Institute.
For one big programme relating to empowering vulnerable women headed households which is still pipeline project, CSEED will work in partnership with 4 other local NGOs
For proposed project (Medicinal Plants and Improved income for the poor), our local project will be Traditional Medicine Association and Forest Department at district level. In addition, Traditional Medicine Faculty of Hanoi Medical University, Vietnam Pharmacy Institute. Tue Linh Pharmacy Company will work with CSEED as technical experts for technical training and survey.

Explain your selections

CSEED has relationship with International NGOs from Europe since years ago when staff worked with them. These donors continue supporting our projects after CSEED set up in 2006. About 90% of project budget was funded by INGOs, 10% was contributed by CSEED staff and our project partner at project site (district, communes level) (contribution in kind and or in labour, for example delivering training)

How do you plan to strengthen your project in the next three years?

After this pilot phase, extension phase will be required to support herbal medicine producers expand their production in terms of quantity and in terms of quality (eg. final products with instant or tablets form).
Given very few interventions from pilot phase, extension phase project should support members of herbal medicine production groups who will be still poor after pilot phase, to develop skills in producing higher quality products, participating in more steps in value chain and to access to more markets. At the end of the extension phase, the members of herbal medicine producers will become self-financed with their own capital built from business profit.
In addition, other soft skills for enterprise financial management to be improved
The herbal medicine producers will need be developed into more formal form for example cooperative in order to work more effectively.
Network and advocate for appropriate use of herbal medicine by non-traditional medicine health care system.

Challenges

Which barriers to employment does your innovation address?
Please select up to three in order of relevancy to your project.

PRIMARY
Restricted access to new markets
SECONDARY
Lack of skills/training
TERTIARY
Lack of visibility and investment

Please describe how your innovation specifically tackles the barriers listed above.

Marketing activities include:
a. training on marketing skills for Medicinal Herb Production Group
b. setting up marketing groups
c. training on Medicinal Herb Production Group on handling and management
d. Market survey on medicinal herb products
e. Contact with pharmaceutical companies (eg. Tue Linh, Traphaco) to provide them draft-processed medicinal herbs for sale.

Training for members of medicinal herbs interest groups in planting and tending medicinal herbs
Piloting cultivating before supporting members of herbal medicine groups grow medicinal herbs in the gardens of members (small scale).
Training in draft processing (drying) for medicinal herbs

Are you trying to scale your organization or initiative?
If yes, please check up to three potential pathways in order of relevancy to you.

PRIMARY
SECONDARY
Enhanced existing impact through addition of complementary services
TERTIARY
Leveraged technology
Please describe which of your growth activities are current or planned for the immediate future.

The first growth activity is growing geographic reach. CSEED has piloted bamboo processing and bamboo furniture production in one project in Cho Moi district, Bac Kan province and then piloted another project in Chi Lang district, Lang Son province. CSEED has also piloted similar activities in the two provinces. Similarly, medicinal plant “seven leaf ginseng” have being cultivated in one Lac Son district, Hoa Binh province and the proposed project “Medicinal Plants and Improved Income for the Poor” will pilot different types of medicinal plants in another Da Bac district, Hoa Binh province.

Enhance existing impact through addition of complementary services several initiatives in specific project and Leverage technology will be our planned activities in coming years.

Do you collaborate with any of the following: (Check all that apply)

Technology providers, NGOs/Nonprofits, For profit companies, Academia/universities.

If yes, how have these collaborations helped your innovation to succeed?

Source URL: https://www.changemakers.com/economicopportunity/entries/preservation-and-promotion-medicinal-plants-sustainable#comment-0