



## Evaluation Report

Final evaluation of the Climate Smart  
Community Based Risk Reduction Project in  
Vietnam

June 2015

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The evaluation was supported through the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

The evaluation would not have been possible without the involvement and assistance of many people. Firstly, I would like to thank all those who participated in designing and carrying out the evaluation. Thank you Becky-Jay Harrington, Nguyen Huong, Dzung Nguyen, Van Huyen Hoa Jenny, Nguyen Thi Hien, Vo Minh Dzung, Trinh Huynh, and Vu Thi Hong Nhung, and all the volunteer enumerators for your dedication, professionalism and good humour - this evaluation is a result of your hard work. I would also like to thank all the participants who took part in the validation workshop from the following organisations: Australian Red Cross, German Red Cross, Vietnam Red Cross, American Red Cross, Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, CARE, Oxfam, Plan International, SNV and Save the Children. Your feedback on the preliminary findings has helped shape the overall evaluation report. Thanks also to the evaluation reference group members – Jerome Faucet, Thorsten Klose and Knud Falk – who helped finalise the evaluation methodology, and provided input into the final report.

The evaluation would not have been possible without the tremendous assistance and support of Becky-Jay Harrington, Nguyen Huong, and Janette Abingtagaan who made the evaluation process not only effective, but enjoyable.

The findings of the evaluation are based on a household survey conducted with 532 people (329 female, 203 male), and conversations with 135 people (56 female, 79 male).<sup>1</sup> Their willing participation in the evaluation is gratefully acknowledged, as is their hospitality in accepting us into their communities and homes.

Much learning has taken place throughout the process of developing and conducting the evaluation. It is this process that should be valued equally to the report itself.

Charlotte L. Sterrett  
June 2015

**Author details:**

Charlotte L. Sterrett  
Climate Concern

[www.climateconcern.net](http://www.climateconcern.net)



Disclaimer: The views in this report are those of the author alone and do not necessarily represent those of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Project.

Cover page photo: A lady from the Mekong Delta carries grass from the fields to feed her cows.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>2</b>
	<b>ACRONYMS</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>10</b>
	1.1 Evaluation Overview	
	1.2 Evaluation Methodology	
<b>2</b>	<b>COUNTRY CONTEXT AND PROJECT OVERVIEW</b>	<b>16</b>
	2.1 Country Context	
	2.2 Project Overview	
<b>3</b>	<b>FINDINGS</b>	<b>18</b>
	3.1 Relevance	
	3.2 Impact	
	3.3 Effectiveness	
	3.4 Integration	
	3.5 Sustainability	
<b>4</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>LESSONS LEARNED</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>46</b>

## ACRONYMS

ARC	Australian Red Cross
CBDRR	Community based disaster risk reduction
CCA	Climate change adaptation
CCAG	Climate Change Action Grants
CCFSC	Commune Committee of Flood and Storm Control
CHAST	Child Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DoET	Department of Education and Training
DMC	Disaster Management Centre
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
ERT	Emergency Response Team
EWS	Early warning system
FGD	Focus group discussion
GRC	German Red Cross
HCA	Hazard and coping strategy analysis
IDI	In-depth interview
IEC	Information, education and communication
JANI	Joint Advocacy Network Initiative
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PHAST	Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation
PWD	People with disability
SEDP	Socio-economic development plan
VCA	Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis
VNRC	Vietnam National Red Cross

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document is a report based on an independent evaluation of the Climate Smart Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction project in Vietnam. The evaluation and report was commissioned by the Australian Red Cross, and supported by the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

The program, which took place between 1 December 2012 and 31 May 2015 was jointly managed and implemented by the Vietnam National Red Cross Society, the Australian Red Cross, and the German Red Cross. Building on the Vietnam National Red Cross' existing Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction model, and lessons learnt from the broader Red Cross Red Crescent Movement experience in Vietnam; the project aimed to increase the resilience of the most vulnerable men, women and children to current and projected climate change impacts through a number of initiatives including disaster risk reduction, climate resilient and adaptive livelihoods, participatory climate and disaster risk analysis and adaptation planning, capacity building, awareness raising, and small scale mitigation works.

### Key Findings

The evaluation finds that overall, the project has achieved an adequate level of success across the five key areas of relevance, impact, effectiveness, integration and sustainability.

#### Relevance

- At an **international level**, the project is highly relevant, aligning strongly with the Strategic Outcome 1 of DFAT's Climate Change Strategy 2011-16, which focuses on building the resilience of vulnerable communities through sustainable livelihoods and disaster risk reduction.
- At a **national level**, the project is also highly relevant, aligning strongly to government priorities on disasters and climate change. The project is being used as pilot for the government to increase its capacity to implement community-based, participatory processes. By making disaster risk reduction more climate-smart, and by pioneering community-based adaptation in livelihoods, the project also marks new territory for the Vietnam National Red Cross.
- At a **project level**, working through the Vietnam National Red Cross as a key national actor for disaster risk reduction is a key point of relevance. Extending this role to include climate change is an innovative move, and much needed. However, the project design, has not necessarily lead to an in-depth situation analysis of local contexts and a clear rationale for why project locations were chosen over others. A broader issue to relevance also exists: while the project is strong on disaster preparedness and reduction, many of the interventions can still be considered traditional disaster management, lacking explicit links to climate change.
- At a **community level**, the project is viewed as relevant because it deals with issues that are central to community life, and through the project design process, vulnerability and capacity assessments, and community planning processes, communities were largely able to select the interventions they wanted to prioritise through the project.

#### Impact

Despite delays in finalising the project design and the resulting delays in project implementation, the project has been able to achieve a measurable level of success across each of the project objectives and outcomes.

- To achieve objective one and associated outcomes, the project worked with two key target groups - schools and target communities - to enhance skills and knowledge in order to build

community capacity to deal with weather related disasters. This has been largely achieved through the provision of training, disaster supplies, scenario planning and support to emergency response teams to enable these groups to develop the skills and confidence to assist their community in disaster situations. While the balance of training and activities has been on disaster preparedness and reduction rather than longer term climate change adaptation, this is understandable given the entry point of for the project has been disaster risk reduction, and the benefits of using this approach to build capacity to extreme weather events exacerbated by climate change. As a result, **school communities now have improved skills and knowledge, and capacity to deal with disasters** through the use of Safe Schools, a disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation training program, and extra-curricular activities designed to support learning. **Target communes now have better access to information on disaster preparedness and risk reduction** through the provision of early warning systems, community preparedness and response groups, participation in emergency drills, and awareness and training in disaster preparedness.

- To achieve objective two and associated outcomes, the project supported communities to identify their own vulnerabilities and priorities through Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments and participatory hygiene and sanitation processes. Using the information gathered from both these processes, communities developed their own action plans (with input from agricultural extension workers, health department, Vietnam National Red Cross staff and other German Red Cross technical staff) and used these to carry out information campaigns to create support to carry out priority actions. As a result, **community members have increased their understanding and practice of hygiene and sanitation. Communities now have a number of different small-scale mitigation measures, and climate-smart livelihood models** have been developed and implemented, increasing their resilience. Of these models, the majority have been successful, creating additional and much needed income for beneficiaries. However, the generic application of adaptation measures across all project sites may not have been the most appropriate use of project funds. This includes the blind testing of new ‘adaptive’ interventions, a lack of a value chain analysis to link the beneficiaries with markets for livelihood measures, and insurance/risk mitigation measures. The late implementation of some of the measures (latrines, water tanks, and livelihood models) also means that their viability has not yet been full established, and while there are plans to continue providing support for some of the measures (for example, the livelihood models), this is not ideal in terms of monitoring the quality of the measures and ensuring their replication, and long term sustainability.
- To achieve objective three and associated outcomes, the project actively worked with the Vietnam National Red Cross to build staff and volunteer capacity to understand weather related disasters and the impacts of climate change to not only deliver the project, but to build a greater understanding of the connection between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in the sector. As a result, Vietnam National Red Cross staff and volunteers have participated in a variety of activities to increase their understanding of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. However, while **Vietnam National Red Cross capacity in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation has increased significantly** through training, mentorship and on-the-job experience, and the government has begun to receive stronger, more coherent messages about the need to integrate disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into disaster risk management and longer term development goals, this has not yet led to measurable changes in planning at the national and provincial levels. Due to the mainly local focus of the project, changes that have occurred are still mostly located at the local level, and even these changes still require more time to be institutionalised.

## Effectiveness

- The project is based on **good program logic**, working with key stakeholders at a community level (and to some extent provincial and national levels) to increase the resilience of communities to the current and projected impacts of climate change.
- The **project strategy has been important in supporting the achievement of objectives** and outcomes. The overall strengths based and participatory approach to community development, which recognises existing expertise in the community on disaster preparedness and response, including addressing the needs of the most vulnerable, is a recognised approach in community development, and one which has worked in building resilience. Within this, scaling up the Vietnam National Red Cross' community based disaster risk reduction model has provided a key entry point for working on climate change issues at a community level, by first working on climate-related hazards, and then introducing approaches for adapting to longer term climate change through climate-smart livelihoods.
- The **project management structure** designed for the project is in line with that of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners operating in Vietnam, with the Vietnam National Red Cross as the implementing agency, and partners Australian Red Cross and German Red Cross providing funding, monitoring and technical support. Working in a consortium, however, has had its share of issues. Agreeing on key decisions took time, impacting on the implementation schedule. Financial processes were also complicated, and difficult for some Vietnam National Red Cross staff to follow (especially at the local level where education levels and computer literacy of some staff were low).
- A range of tools have been used in the project to facilitate its design and implementation. **Feedback from community members on the tools has been overwhelmingly positive**, with the majority of people finding them very useful and informative. These include: the Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment; Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation for adults and children; and disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation training. However, while some tools have integrated climate change, others have not, which is a missed opportunity.
- **The Red Cross structure of volunteer- and member-led auxiliary national societies has been used to share achievements and learning.** Internally, awareness of the project is quite high, with most awareness located at commune and district levels where the project is taking place. However, awareness of the project and its achievements and learning requires improvement so that those not directly involved in the project internally, as well as external stakeholders, are aware of its achievements, learnings and how to replicate and scale up successes.

### Integration

- The project has been explicit in the **inclusion of vulnerable groups in the design and implementation** of the project. However, the mid-term review identified a number of challenges with the engagement of vulnerable groups. Of major concern was the perception by local leadership structures - the majority of which are able-bodied, Vietnamese speaking adult men – that the work of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation is that of adult men and government officials. As a result a number of strategies were developed and implemented to improve the active participation of vulnerable groups, which have been effective in increasing the participation of vulnerable groups in the project resulting in a number positive changes in their lives related to hygiene and sanitation, knowledge and understanding of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, and access to climate-smart livelihoods.
- However, ongoing contextual constraints remain for vulnerable groups. They tend to live in more remote parts of communes that are far away from commune centres. Sometimes they lack adequate transportation to attend meetings and activities, and cannot afford to pay someone else to take them. Mobility for people with physical disability or the elderly is particularly difficult and interventions (such as the livelihood interventions) require good design and implementation to ensure they do not exclude or worsen the situation of people with disability or the elderly.

Language and communication remain difficult for non-Vietnamese speakers, especially Khmer people in the project area. Women's duties as primary carers can also be considered a constraint, however the project has worked well to change times of meetings and activities to match the priorities of women.

- The project team has been highly conscious of the challenges of promoting gender equality within this project. Despite initial challenges, the project has implemented measures to increase gender equality. These include: encouragement and favourable conditions for women to participate in social activities; paying attention to woman-headed households and disabled women; coordination and empowerment of women's role via the Women's Union; awareness raising on gender equality; and a set quota for female participation in events and trainings. Although the introduction of quotas was not a favoured strategy, it has been highly successful.

### Sustainability

In general, the **project has provided a good foundation for the continuation of project gains** through different measures, including: enhanced capacities of community members, the VNRC and local government staff; improved governance structures at a commune level; increased local ownership of project interventions; and tools and resources to support learning and action to date. Challenges remain however, and for project gains to be sustained and improved upon requires communities, the VNRC, government and NGOs to continue working together to build community resilience over the long term.

- The sustainability of objective one (improved systems, resources and skills) is found to be medium to high. Actions related to this objective – the provision of disaster supplies, community-based teams, scenario planning, simulation drills, early warning systems, the Safe School module, and to some extent, the disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation training program for students – are likely to continue beyond the life of the program.
- The sustainability of objective two is found to be medium. Hygiene and sanitation interventions have been very successful and are set to continue post-project. While the content of the promotion will be scaled back (due to time and budget constraints) the message around safe hygiene practices will remain and be embedded within the government. Bio-matress pig raising is also scheduled to continue to be supported by government. Discussions held with government by project staff indicate that while budget allocations still need to be finalised, that there is a general consensus across all project sites that this activity should not only continue, but be scaled up to other districts.
- The sustainability of objective three is found to be low to medium. Despite the continuation of many of the project activities post-project, issues remain around the capacity of the Vietnam National Red Cross and government departments to maintain and scale up many of the activities. Vietnam National Red Cross understanding of climate change adaptation is still relatively low given its relative newness and its traditional emphasis on disaster preparedness.

### Priority Recommendations

For future projects, the Vietnam National Red Cross and other organisations involved in building resilience to disasters and climate change should prioritise the following five strategies and activities:

- 1. Awareness raising on climate change and resilience issues at the community level (and within the Vietnam National Red Cross Society and other stakeholders) needs to be ongoing** and develop as new information, research and learning occurs. This is important if projects and programs are to be flexible and responsive to changing environments and needs. And, while the project has made in-roads in people's understandings of climate change, more work needs to be done to link people's understandings of the causes and impacts of climate change with adaptation options, especially those related to long term risk reduction (not just disaster preparedness).

- 2. Increased linkages between communities (particularly women and other vulnerable groups) and government and other service providers should be further investigated and supported.** While the project has made some initial advancements in community linkages with government, there is still much work to be done to better understand the barriers and enablers. This includes supporting governance structures at different levels, but particularly those at local and provincial levels that link to the national level. This should be a priority for any new program.
- 3. The Vietnam National Red Cross, as a critical organisation in Vietnam for understanding and addressing multiple drivers of risk, requires continued capacity building to improve institutional understanding of climate-smart disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.** In particular, it needs to develop a strategic plan linking disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and long term development, focusing on its role in supporting vulnerable communities to: manage and diversify risk (for example, through climate-smart disaster risk reduction and livelihoods); and linking communities with government and other service providers at multiple levels.
- 4. Structural issues that maintain inequality and keep people in poverty need to be addressed as part of overall program design and implementation.** The impact of disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and resilience programs will be limited without considering structural issues, which need to be addressed over longer timeframes and through linking communities and their experiences with other organisations/duty bearers at multiple levels/scales.
- 5. Analysis, strategies and projects should address different timescales** (current, identified risks and likely future scenarios). Preparing for the occurrence of known hazards should not be neglected in favour of building capacities to adapt to medium- and long-term effects of climate change, and other, potentially unknown shocks or stresses. Resource allocation and activities should be planned accordingly.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This section provides an overview of the evaluation including: its purpose, goals and objectives; evaluation key questions; and the methodology used to conduct the evaluation.

### 1.1 Evaluation Overview

This is an external end of project evaluation undertaken to assess the Red Cross Climate Smart Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction Project in Vietnam.

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide evidence of the outcomes and collect lessons from the project, to be submitted to the donor, and to guide the design of future projects. The process of the evaluation has been used to increase learning and reflection among consortium staff and stakeholders. In addition, it is an opportunity to inform future community based adaptation project design, practice and coordination among stakeholders through lessons and recommendations on approaches.

The evaluation has been commissioned and managed by the Australian Red Cross and supported by the Australian Government’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

#### Evaluation objectives

The objectives of the evaluation are to:

1. Examine if and how the project and its partnerships have achieved the intended objectives and outcomes, and contributing to building the resilience of target communities; and
2. Identify lessons and provide recommendations for future consortiums / individual agency climate- smart resilience projects in Vietnam.

#### Evaluation key questions

The evaluation is designed around five key questions related to the areas of relevance, impact, effectiveness, integration, and sustainability.

**Table 1: Evaluation key questions**

Area	Primary Questions	Sub-questions
<b>Relevance</b>	How relevant was the project to the communities and other stakeholders it sought to support?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To what extent are the project deliverables relevant in addressing the challenges identified in the participatory assessments?</li> <li>2. Which project approaches / tools are appropriate for scaling up / replication? What are the critical factors for enabling this?</li> </ol>
<b>Impact</b>	What contribution has the project made to increasing women’s, men’s and children’s resilience to the impacts of climate change of the target communities?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Did the project achieve the intended objectives and outcomes that it set out to achieve?</li> <li>4. Were the outcomes and objectives of the project realistic?</li> </ol>
<b>Effectiveness</b>	How effectively and efficiently were resources used?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Have beneficiaries been sufficiently engaged and given access to the required resources to achieve the intended outcomes?</li> <li>6. To what extent was the project able to capitalize on the large VNRC network (both internal and external) and share achievements and learnings?</li> </ol>

Area	Primary Questions	Sub-questions
	To what extent has the project design and management mechanisms supported implementation?	<p>7. To what extent is the project management structure and system effective and meets the needs and expectations of each partner?</p> <p>8. How has the monitoring and evaluation contributed to (or failed to contribute to) improving the progress toward expect outcomes and objectives.</p> <p>9. To what extent have the project tools: Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis (VCA), Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation (PHAST) and Child Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation (CHAST) and disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) training been used effectively and have been relevant for the target beneficiaries?</p> <p>10. Have field facilitators (staff and/or volunteers) been adequately trained in adding the climate change aspects to the "classical" participatory tools (VCA, PHAST and CHAST)?</p> <p>11. How and to what extent was climate and weather information used in community planning processes?</p> <p>12. What relationships, if any, have been developed with private sector organisations and how have they impacted on project outcomes? Are there any relationships that should be explored in the future?</p>
<b>Integration</b>	To what extent has the project meaningfully integrated women, children, the elderly, people with disabilities and ethnic minorities into the project design and implementation?	<p>13. How has the project contributed to achieving equitable outcomes for women and men, boys and girls, and in particular, outcomes related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved safety and livelihood security of women; and</li> <li>- Equal participation of women in decision – making and leadership.</li> </ul> <p>14. What are the contextual constraints and opportunities for women, children, elderly, ethnic minorities and those with disabilities participating in the project?</p>
<b>Sustainability</b>	Have the project initiatives integrated strategies for local ownership to increase sustainability of project outcomes.	<p>15. Over the coming years, what benefits / activities can be expected to continue as a result of the project?</p> <p>16. What measures have been put in place or evolved through the life of the project that will contribute to this sustainability.</p> <p>17. To what extent has the project influenced the planning process at local / district and provincial levels of government and Vietnam National Red Cross (VNRC)?</p>

In addition to the key questions, the project has also been assessed against indicators from the *Red Cross Minimum Standards for Climate Smart Disaster Risk Reduction*.<sup>2</sup>

## 1.2 Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation was a combination of desk based review and field based evaluation. The evaluation approach was gender-sensitive and participatory. This includes disaggregation of views of women and men both in consultation and in data analysis. The evaluation made use of female evaluation team members to speak

with female community members and to analyse how gendered power relations have been impacted by the project.

The evaluation methodology employed a mixed-methods approach to data collection, triangulating of qualitative and quantitative data from key stakeholders: women, men, children, people with disability, and ethnic minority groups participating in the project, staff from consortium agencies, provincial, district and local government staff, and other stakeholders through the household survey and other data collection tools.<sup>3</sup>

### Sampling approach

#### **Quantitative data collection**

A multi-stage cluster sampling method was used in the endline household survey, repeating the sampling method used in the baseline survey. Enumerators visited households in each of the 15 project communes in An Giang and Kien Giang to conduct the survey. In each commune two villages were selected; one near the commune centre, and another located remotely. In each commune between 32 and 40 households took part in the survey to ensure a balance of responses across project sites.

532 households were visited; of these 329 women and 203 men took part in the household survey. Other demographics included:

- 35% of respondents were project beneficiaries; 65% were non-beneficiaries
- 64% of respondents were of Kinh ethnicity ; 35.5% Khmer; and less than 1% either Hoa or Cham
- 71% of households were male-headed and 29% female-headed
- 34% of respondents were elderly; and 6% had a disability
- 35% of respondents were between the ages of 46-60; 31% between the ages of 31-45; 17% between the ages of 61-75; 13% under the age of 30; and 4% over the age of 76
- 44% of respondents were primary school educated; 24% did not attend school; 20% were secondary school educated; 11% were high school educated; and 1% were university educated
- The average household size was four persons, with two household members engaged in livelihood/income generation
- 58% of households were considered 'average' or 'better off'; 25% 'poor'; 16% 'near-poor'; and 2% unknown.

#### **Qualitative data collection**

Four of the 15 target communities (two from An Giang; two from Kien Giang) were selected for visits by the evaluation team to conduct the qualitative component of the evaluation. A stratified purposive sampling approach was chosen: two locations which have seen good progress towards project goals (Tan Tuyen and Van Khanh Tay) and two locations which have been more challenging (Van Giao and Phu Loi). Other criteria used to select communities included a representative sample of: Khmer speakers; project activities; different poverty levels; and livelihood activities.

In each of the selected data collection sites, the evaluation team used various data collection tools in an inclusive manner, ensuring that there was participation from different groups at community, commune, district, provincial and national levels (including different genders, ages, ethnicity, and those most vulnerable). A total of 135 people (108 commune, 11 district, seven provincial, nine national) took part in the evaluation across the following groups:

- *Village/commune level:* Commune Committee of Flood and Storm Control (CCCSFC), Commune People's Committee (CPC), Emergency Response Team (ERT), teachers, students, vulnerable groups, agricultural extension workers, PHAST/CHAST facilitators, VNRC

## Final Evaluation of the Climate Smart Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction Project

- *District level:* CCCSFC, CPC, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), Department of Education and Training (DoET), VNRC
- *Provincial level:* CCSFC, DARD, VNRC
- *National level:* CCSFC, DARD, GRC, ARC, VNRC, Climate Change Action Grants (CCAG) consortium, Disaster Management Committee (DMC)

**Table 2: Evaluation participants (qualitative)**

Level	# women	# men	# girls	# boys	Total
<b>Commune</b>	49	59	14	16	<b>108</b>
<b>District</b>	0	11	0	0	<b>11</b>
<b>Provincial</b>	3	4	0	0	<b>7</b>
<b>National</b>	4	5	0	0	<b>9</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>135</b>

Of these participants, 17 (10 female, seven male) were ethnic minorities, 10 (two female, five male) were elderly, and two (one female, one male) were people with disability (PWD).

### Data collection tools

A range of tools were used to collect data from key informants and stakeholders. Each of the tools was tailored to different group needs.

**Table 3: Data collection tools**

Data collection tools	Description
Desk review	A desk review was conducted of key documents related to the project - both internal (design documents, implementation plans, and reports) and external (government plans, policies and strategies, etc.)
Endline Survey/Household survey	The survey was used to quantitatively measure: (1) Preparedness for weather-related disasters and climate change risks of schools and communities in the fifteen project communes, and (2) Climate change adaptation measures in these fifteen project communities and households. Additional questions were added to the survey to gather information to support the qualitative data collection.
Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guides	Various FGDs were used to identify overall domains of change as perceived by different groups.
Hazard and Coping Strategy Analysis (HCA)	In small groups, hazard and coping strategies over the duration of the project were discussed to assess if the project had helped community members become more resilient.
School Activity Guide	A guided activity including drawing and a focus group discussion was used with primary school students to enable their active participation in the evaluation.
In-depth Interview (IDI) Guides	Tailored in-depth interview guides were used to focus and probe specific issues relevant to the project implementation. This enabled the study to focus on the issues referred to in the evaluation objectives, and key questions, as well as those in the project design document.
Personal Testimony Guide	To bring to life the experience of those participating in the project, personal stories of change were gathered and used to inform the evaluation.
Site visit/observation	Project site visits were used to gain an overall sense of each community and the context in which the project operated, as well as view activities/interventions where possible.

Overall, 18 focus group discussions (FGD), 67 in-depth interviews (IDI), nine hazard and coping strategy analyses (HCA) were conducted, 13 drawings (D) completed, and nine personal testimonies (PT) collected.

**Table 4: Data collection disaggregated by group**

Group	FGD	IDI	HCA	PT	D
Vulnerable Group (elderly, PWD, ethnic minority)	5	9	1	9	-
Teachers	3	8	-	-	-
Students	4	-	-	-	13
CCSFC/CPC/ERT	6	13	8	-	-
Village leaders	-	3	-	-	-
Agricultural extension workers	-	4	-	-	-
DARD	-	3	-	-	-
DOET	-	3	-	-	-
PHAST	-	2	-	-	-
VNRC	-	16	-	-	-
ARC	-	3	-	-	-
GRC	-	3	-	-	-
TOTAL	18	67	9	9	13

FGD = Focus Group Discussion; IDI = In-depth Interview; HCA = Hazard and Coping Analysis; PT = Personal testimony; D = Drawing

### Evaluation team

#### **Quantitative data collection**

The team included was split into two gender-balance teams; one for each province. In Kien Giang a team of 10 enumerators and one project staff member conducted the household survey, while in An Giang a team of eight enumerators and one project member conducted the household survey.

#### **Qualitative data collection**

The evaluation team included seven members (six female, 1 male): one external consultant (evaluation team leader); four other data collectors (one from the GRC, one from the ARC, and two from Vietnam Red Cross); and two translators. The evaluation team was supported by the Evaluation Reference Group<sup>4</sup> who provided advice and guidance on the planning, implementation and documentation of the project evaluation.

### Evaluation timetable

The evaluation took place from 29 March to 8 June

- Evaluation preparation: 29 March to 17 April
- Training and endline survey: 20 to 25 April
- Briefing, workshop and all other qualitative data collection components: 4 to 15 May
- Analysis, report write up and finalisation: 18 May to 8 June.

### Evaluation process constraints

The evaluation was constrained by several factors which need to be considered alongside the findings and analysis presented in this report. Constraints include:

## Final Evaluation of the Climate Smart Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction Project

- The lead evaluator did not speak Vietnamese, which limited the amount of information gathered during interviews, informal discussions and conversations throughout the evaluation process. This was mitigated by the use of a professional translator who worked alongside the leader evaluator, and by the inclusion of other evaluation team who were fluent in Vietnamese and who conducted the majority of focus groups discussions and individual interviews.
- Several members of the evaluation team members were Red Cross staff who provide management oversight and direct support to communities. While there were strategies in place to avoid bias in the data collected – for example, partner staff did not conduct key informant interviews where they thought their presence would skew the data – this cannot be ruled out completely.
- It was very difficult to assess issues of equity and participation given the different and complex governance structures at a community level, and the lack of time to study these during the data collection component of the evaluation.
- While the evaluation team were able to visit 26% of the communities involved in the project, providing conclusive findings across all key questions was not always possible. This was partly a result of the complex nature of the project, but also a result of the innate difficulty of assessing climate change adaptation in general.
- An up-to-date activity schedule listing all activities and participants disaggregated by sex was not available in time for the evaluation, which made it difficult to assess the equal participation of different genders in project activities.
- In addition to the evaluation key questions, the project has also been assessed against indicators from the *Red Cross Minimum Standards for Climate Smart Disaster Risk Reduction*.<sup>5</sup> These standards, however, were not used to inform the design of the project, and were not part of its logic or monitoring and evaluation indicators, which limits their use as an evaluation tool.

## 2. COUNTRY CONTEXT AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

This section provides information about the country context and the project.

### 2.1 Country Context

Vietnam has reached lower Middle Income Country status, yet more than 33 million people still live on less than two dollars a day. Many of them live in rural and remote communities with few services and limited livelihood options. It is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world with around 70 per cent of its population at risk of typhoons, torrential storms and flooding. Furthermore, the communities settled along the Mekong Delta, a low-lying coastal region, are at greater risk of natural disasters. The Mekong Delta has been identified as one of the global climate change hot spots.

Vietnam's economic growth and achievements made in human development are under serious threat due to climate change impacts; that is, wetter wet seasons, dryer dry seasons, higher intensity rainfall, flash flooding and increased frequency of tropical cyclones. According to scenarios which forecast a 100cm rise in sea levels by the 2050, the Mekong River Delta region will become the worst affected area which would account for 90 percent of the national flooded zone.

The project's targeted provinces of Kien Giang and An Giang are among those which have experienced and will continue to be affected by adversities that may be further exacerbated by climate change. Current challenges – some of which will be exacerbated by climate change – experienced by local communities include but are not limited to: the reduction of agricultural productivity, destruction of natural resources, depletion of biodiversity, increased migration from rural to urban areas, higher risk to endemic/pandemic diseases, and greater damage to shelters and other structures.

### 2.2 The Project

The CSDRR project was officially launched in December 2012 and is jointly managed and implemented by the VNRC, GRC, and ARC. The project is funded by DFAT's Community Based Climate Change Action Grants (CCAG). Project implementation was to be initially completed by December 2014, however a no cost extension was granted by DFAT until 31 May 2015.

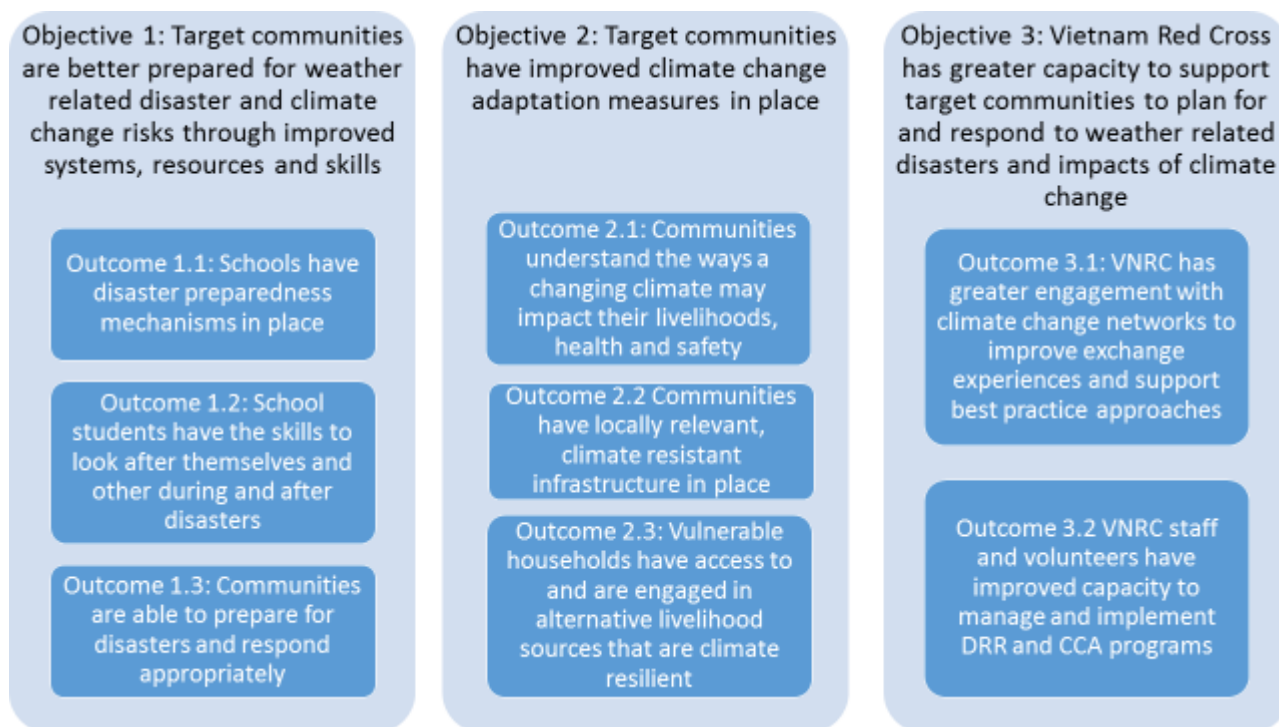
The overall goal of the project, in partnership with local government and VNRC, is to increase the resilience of the most vulnerable men, women and children to current and projected climate change impacts through a number of initiatives including: DRR, climate resilient and adaptive livelihoods, participatory climate and disaster risk analysis and adaptation planning, capacity building, awareness raising, and small scale mitigation works.

The project aimed to reach approximately 23,000 direct beneficiaries<sup>6</sup> and 73,000 indirect beneficiaries across the 15 targeted communes in An Giang and Kien Giang Provinces, focusing on vulnerable groups including women, children, the elderly, ethnic minorities and people with disability.

## Project objectives and outcomes

The project has three main objectives and eight key outcomes:

**Diagram 1: Project objectives and outcomes**



## Project strategy

The project builds on VNRC's existing Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR) model, and lessons learnt from the broader Red Cross Red Crescent Movement experience in Vietnam; most notably, a DRR project evaluation conducted by GRC in 2011, which pointed to the need to strengthen the integration of CCA in VNRC's DRR programming.<sup>7</sup> Its other strategies include:

- *Community-based approach:* Initiatives and activities have been developed in response to priorities and community needs identified through community participation, consultation and engagement.
- *Capitalising and building on volunteer networks:* VNRC's strength is its wide and strong volunteer network, which ensures community ownership. The project aimed to further develop the network of community volunteers active in raising awareness; building their capacity to work in their own communities to address priority issues and advocate for community action.
- *Community action planning:* The project aimed to undertake assessment in each community to identify their specific needs and gaps, taking into consideration gender equity and inclusive development needs. Once developed, these were prioritised and a plan of action developed, with livelihoods, health and infrastructure components of the project elaborated as a result.
- *Coordination with government, Climate Change Action Grant (CCAG) Program initiatives and stakeholders:* Participation of provincial and local government and relevant community based organisations in training and workshops on climate change, as well as DRR and response allowed for the creation and strengthening of local networks for climate smart risk management.

### 3. FINDINGS

This section assesses the key project outcomes in terms of relevance, impact, effectiveness, integration, and sustainability.

Each section includes an overview of key learning, a discussion of project achievements, including gaps, as well as an overall rating of success/achievement. Ratings have been determined based on an overall assessment of the project against each of these five key areas.<sup>8</sup>

#### 3.1 Relevance

##### Rating 5: Good level of achievement

Working on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in Vietnam is highly relevant. Vietnam is located in Southeast Asia's tropical monsoon belt, and is ranked among the region's most hazard-prone areas; commonly experiences floods, droughts and typhoons, as well as occasional forest fires, landslides, and earthquakes.<sup>9</sup> Given its high exposure to floods and storms, and the fact that two of its most important economic sectors – industry and agriculture – are located in coastal lowlands and deltas; Vietnam has been listed as one of the five countries that will be worst-affected by climate change.<sup>10</sup>

##### International/National level

From an Australian government perspective, the project is highly relevant, aligning strongly with the Strategic Outcome 1 of DFAT's Climate Change Strategy 2011-16, which focuses on building the resilience of vulnerable communities through sustainable livelihoods and disaster risk reduction.<sup>11</sup>

At a national level, the project is also highly relevant, aligning strongly to government priorities on disasters and climate change. The project is the first of its kind to provide on-the-ground implementation of the government's *Community Based Disaster Risk Management* program, and is being used as pilot for the government to increase its capacity to implement community-based, participatory processes. By making DRR more climate-smart, and by pioneering community-based adaptation in livelihoods, the project also marks new territory for VNRC.

---

*“The project is highly relevant for the government as it helps us to implement our disaster risk reduction priorities.”* Disaster Management Centre staff member

---

##### Project level

At a project level, working through the VNRC as a key national actor for DRR is a key point of relevance. Extending this role to include climate change – both for climate-related disasters and long term impacts of climate change, for example, on livelihoods – is an innovative move, and much needed. However, the project design, has not necessarily lead to an in-depth situation analysis of local contexts and a clear rationale for why project locations were chosen over others. Even though An Giang and Kien Giang are distinct areas with different issues, the project has applied interventions uniformly across the 15 project sites, rather than adjusting the project based on different contexts due to stipulations from the VNRC. For example, in An Giang, where in 2011 flooding caused injury and death of a larger percentage of children than adults, swimming lessons for children would have been a logical intervention, yet were not included in the project. A broader issue to relevance also exists: while the project is strong on disaster preparedness and reduction,

many of the interventions can still be considered traditional disaster management, lacking explicit links to climate change.

### Community level

At a community level, beneficiaries of the project view the project as relevant because it deals with issues that are central to their lives, and through the project design process, vulnerability and capacity assessments, and community planning processes, communities were largely able to select the interventions they wanted to prioritise through the project. Reasons stated by community members include:

- *Income generation:* The climate-smart livelihood models, in particular the bio-matress pig raising, have provided opportunities for vulnerable groups (people with disability, elderly, ethnic minorities, and women). For vulnerable groups, this type of activity is well suited because it allows them to work from home, requires much less physical effort than working in the fields, and is not technically difficult to implement.
- *Capacity building:* Community members feel that they have a better understanding of how to prepare and respond to disasters, and the causes, effects and impacts of climate change. While the ways in which community members are adapting is still limited, they feel more confident in being involved in community activities, and are more positive about their children's future.
- *Improved hygiene practices:* Community members feel that they have a better understanding of how to apply hygiene practices at home, at school and more generally in the community. This includes understanding of how to improve the general cleanliness of their communities.
- *Safe schools module:* Students who participated in the safe schools module, in particular those selected to take part in first aid training, have found it to be very useful at school and at home. While students are only 11 years of age, the large majority said that they feel confident applying first aid techniques, knowing where to go in case of an emergency, and how to help others respond; with many already applying this knowledge at home.

---

*“Learning about first aid is useful for me and my family. I practiced what I learnt at home. Now if someone has an accident I can help them.”* Female student from Phu Loi Elementary school.

---

However, some community members stated that the project could have been more relevant if it had been able to provide material benefits to a larger percentage of the community. For example, while community members recognised that the project was able to provide DRR and CCA training, PHAST training and promotion, and disaster simulation drills to a large number of people in the community; the provision of material benefits such as latrines, livelihood models and water tanks to individuals – while done in a fair and transparent manner - was perceived to be too low. This is the result of the project design, which emphasised breadth over depth; a feature of the project that communities may have been unaware of.

VNRC staff at the commune level also stated that the training in DRR and CCA, while very welcome, was too theory based. For it to be more relevant, they said that it should have been more practical so that the knowledge could be applied in their own local contexts. In particular, while there was an overall good level of awareness of the environment and their interaction with it; they found concepts related to climate change to be too abstract and difficult to apply in local contexts. There was also the belief within the VNRC (at commune, district and provincial levels) that the project would have benefitted from more input and involvement of certain government departments, for example, the health department for PHAST/CHAST promotion, as well as mass organisations (Women's Union, Farmer's Union, Youth Union) to increase the uptake of learning and increase replication outside of project sites. However, it was also recognised that enacting this in practice would have added to the complexity of project implementation, and required additional resources and time.

## 3.2 Impact

#### Rating 4: Adequate level of achievement

##### Realism of project objectives and outcomes

While being able to reach the stated number of project beneficiaries and complete all project activities may appear, at first glance, to make the project objectives and outcomes realistic; upon further reflection it can be argued that elements of the project were unrealistic given some of the key issues experienced.<sup>12</sup>

- *Project time frame:* The initial project was designed to be completed in 2.5 years (including time for the design). The design process took much longer than anticipated with multiple iterations of the design impacting on the time available for implementation. A no-cost extension of six months was needed in order to finalise key activities (livelihoods and small scale mitigation), also a result of issues connected to the project management structure.  

---

*‘The project has too many activities spread out across a wide area. Our project plan was too ambitious.’*  
VNRC staff member
- *The project management structure:* Working in a consortium, whereby the ARC managed the contract, GRC managed the budget and provided technical support, and VNRC undertook implementation of the project took a lot of time to set up and manage, in particular financial and accountability processes.
- *Working on climate change and livelihoods:* This project was the first time the VNRC has worked on climate change, adaptation and livelihoods. Despite limited knowledge and capacity within the VNRC on these issues, the project set a very ambitious agenda, and may have benefitted from less activities, a simpler management structure, and greater emphasis on capacity building.

##### Achievement of intended objectives and outcomes

Despite issues with project design and the resulting delays in project implementation, the project has been able to achieve a measurable level of success across each of the project objectives and outcomes.

##### **Objective 1: Target communities are better prepared for weather related disaster and climate change risks through improved systems, resources and skills.**

To achieve objective one and associated outcomes, the project worked with two key target groups - schools and target communities - to enhance skills and knowledge in order to build community capacity to deal with weather related disasters. This has been largely achieved through the provision of training, disaster supplies, scenario planning and support to emergency response teams to enable these groups to develop the skills and confidence to assist their community in disaster situations. While the balance of training and activities has been on disaster preparedness and reduction rather than longer term climate change adaptation, this is understandable given the entry point of for the project has been DRR, and the benefits of using this approach to build capacity to extreme weather events exacerbated by climate change.

*School based interventions*

As a result of the project, school communities now have improved skills and knowledge, and capacity to deal with disasters through the use of Safe Schools, a module developed by VNRC and GRC focused on supporting school management to develop disaster management plans for schools. Schools (teachers and students) have also taken part in a 12 step DRR and CCA training program, which included information on hazards, disaster preparedness and response, health considerations in disaster situations and in everyday life, climate change trends and risks, and first aid. Using games, role play, drawing, songs and other interactive activities, students are better able to identify the main causes of climate-related disasters and climate change, and have

---

*'I used what I learned about first aid in school at home. I even practiced bandaging on my brother.'*  
 Male school student, Van Khanh Tay commune

---

preparedness and response, health considerations in disaster situations and in everyday life, climate change trends and risks, and first aid. Using games, role play, drawing, songs and other interactive activities, students are better able to identify the main causes of climate-related disasters and climate change, and have

strategies in place to prepare and respond in school and at home. The resulting skills and knowledge, which have been reinforced through school drills and community simulations, has helped teachers increase their capacity to protect student well-being in an emergency situation, and students are better able to look after themselves and others during times of disasters.

Multiple activities took place within schools to support learning and achievement of the objective one. As well as training provided to both teachers and students on disaster preparedness, first aid, CCA, CHAST and safe schools; the project also provided other material support. This included: information, education and communication (IEC) materials for use in training and around school to reinforce key messages, and first aid kits for use in schools. Culminating in the Safe School module, all 15 schools used VCA tools to develop school-based disaster management plans.

**Table 5: Objective 1 school based activities**

Activities	# of participants
Disaster preparedness	
- Training of Trainers (ToT) for teachers	42
- Disaster preparedness for students	2,347
- Information, education and communication (IEC) material	Yes
First Aid	
- ToT for teachers	105
- First Aid for students	450
- First Aid toolkit provision	1 per school
CHAST promotion	
- Training	45
- IEC materials	Yes
Safe School module	
- ToT for teachers	92
- VCA	1 per school
- School action plan	1 per school

Teachers who took part in the evaluation across all of the data collection sites expressed their support for the project, stating that they thought the project had been able to achieve a lot in its relatively short timeframe.

**Table 6: Perceived ‘usefulness’ of project interventions<sup>13</sup>**

Interventions	‘Very useful’	‘Somewhat useful’	‘Not useful’	‘Don’t know’
Disaster preparedness training	75%	25%	-	-
First Aid training	100%	-	-	-
CHAST promotion	88%	-	-	12%
Safe Schools module	75%	-	-	25%

Reasons given to support perceived ‘usefulness include:

- *Disaster preparedness training* helped teachers and students understand the whole cycle of disasters, not just response. However, some found the training too theory based.
- *First Aid training* provided teachers and students with practical skills to help themselves and others; especially helpful not just in times of emergency but in everyday lives where accidents occur frequently.
- *CHAST promotion* helped students practice personal hygiene and sanitation; changing poor behaviours. However, no infrastructure was provided (hand-basins), and some teachers thought that this prevented schools from demonstrating best practice.
- *Safe School module* gave schools practical experience of simulating emergencies and developing plans for the school community, not just for disasters but longer term climate change.

Students who took part in the evaluation also found the project to be effective. During the evaluation, students were asked to list all the activities they were involved in and were able to list every activity the project implemented. They were also able to recall essential elements of the activities including key learning about disaster preparedness, risk reduction and climate change. When asked to recall the activities they enjoyed the most, it was those that were highly practical that were mentioned most frequently. This included: first aid training, which they found fun, interesting and something they could use at home; and extra-curricular activities such as singing, role-plays drawing and quizzes. It appears that the extra-curricular activities provided students with the opportunity to demonstrate their learning to other school students and this has helped cement their learning.

**Diagram 2: Pictures drawn by students during the evaluation demonstrating how they prepare and respond to disasters, and practice good hygiene**





*Community based interventions*

As a result of the project, target communes now have tools and equipment to fix existing early warning systems, or have been recipients of newly installed systems. With these systems (loudspeakers and servers) community members now have better access to information on disaster preparedness and risk reduction. While there are some issues with their ongoing maintenance (maintenance is required from outside the community due to the complex technical nature of systems), they are being widely used. Commune ERTs have received training and resources to support communities in disaster preparedness and response; many for the first time. They have also been able to participate in community emergency simulations, which previously were only desk-based. ERTs have become an integral, and now resourced, support to communities through the training they have received in disaster preparedness, First Aid, and Search and Rescue, and now have relevant equipment and First Aid kits to carry out their work.

Community members have also received training in trained in disaster preparedness, response, reduction and climate change adaptation. In particular, hamlet leaders and members of the CCSFCs have been beneficiaries of this training, and have in turn been responsible for providing information to the broader community. Selected members of the community have also been trained as to help strengthen information sharing mechanisms, community interest and support ongoing project activities.

**Table 7: Objective 1 community-based activities**

Activities	# of participants
Community-based Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR)	375
- ToT for CCSFC	Yes
- IEC materials	
CADRE for ERT	
- Commune level participants	375
- Hamlet level participants	375
- First Aid and Search and Rescue Equipment	Yes
Disaster preparedness	
- Training of Facilitators	90
- Disaster preparedness for households	
- IEC materials	Yes

ERT and CCSFC members who took part in the evaluation stated that they found activities under this objective to be largely effective. Those that were deemed most effective include:

- *CBDRR*: This activity has helped community members identify disaster and climate change risks directly affecting them, and as a result have been able to discuss and develop strategies to minimise their impact. Given the relevance of these topics to local communities, this activity was one that community members were extremely interested in learning more about.

- *Early Warning Systems (EWS)*: The use of loudspeakers to communicate disaster preparedness messages and to inform community members about disasters and climate change more generally was found to be of high importance to community members, in particular those from the ERT and CCSFC as they see the EWS as an essential tool for disaster preparedness. While loudspeakers are not able to reach all remote populations, people’s awareness of their existence and their role in the community is seen as important and useful.
- ‘I use the knowledge and skills learned in the project to educate other local people.’ Female CFSC member, Tan Tuyen commune*
- *CCSFC plans*: The project has facilitated the development of more in-depth CCSFC plans that not only include details for flood and storm control preparedness and response, but for the first time (in many cases) allocate specific roles and responsibilities to members. Coupled with the provision of equipment needed to carry out their roles, CCSFC’s appear to be functioning at a higher level than prior to the project.

Findings from the household survey also indicate that project beneficiaries have changed some of their behaviours as a result of their involvement in the project. More beneficiaries than non-beneficiaries are concerned about disasters, and a larger percentage of beneficiaries undertook disaster preparedness measures, for example, strengthening their homes and preparing important documents, and helped with disaster response compared to non-beneficiaries. They were also more aware of the EWS and its role in warning of a possible disaster event, as well as being aware of its usage by the community for disaster risk management purposes.

**Table 8: Awareness and action related to disasters<sup>14</sup>**

	Non-beneficiary %	Beneficiary %	Difference %
Concerned about disasters in local area	66%	77%	11%
Undertook disaster preparedness actions	31%	51%	20%
Undertook disaster response actions	17%	37%	20%
Aware of EWS and its role in DRM	76%	89%	13%
EWS used by community for DRM	85%	93%	8%

In terms of climate change, the household survey results indicate that beneficiaries are more aware of recent changes in the weather, the concept of climate change, including its effects and impacts.

**Table 9: Awareness and action related to climate change<sup>15</sup>**

	Non-beneficiary %	Beneficiary %	Difference %
Awareness of changes in weather in recent years	72%	88%	16%
Awareness of climate change	38%	56%	18%
Knowledge of climate change effects and impacts	71%	83%	12%

**Objective 2: Target communities have improved climate change adaptation measures in place**

To achieve objective two and associated outcomes, the project supported communities to identify their own vulnerabilities and priorities through VCA and PHAST processes. Using the information gathered from both these processes, communities developed their own action plans (with input from agricultural extension workers, health department, VNRC staff and other GRC technical staff) and used these to carry out information campaigns to create support to carry out priority actions. Included in the plans were: hygiene and sanitation training and promotion activities; a number of different small scale mitigation measures; climate-smart livelihood research (to inform livelihood models); livelihood model training for households and local staff; and the implementation of climate-smart livelihood models.

As a result of the project, community members have increased their understanding of PHAST and have used this at home and in their community to reduce water-borne diseases, which may become more prevalent with changing water regimes (rains, floods, etc.). Some participants of the PHAST training (those identified as most vulnerable through the beneficiary selection criteria process) also received household latrines, which has helped them not only increase hygiene practices, but reduced environmental pollution and provided a private place for ablutions. In terms of small-scale mitigation measures, community members identified a number of different measures for their specific communities including: three bridges to provide safe evacuation and transportation routes (for children going to school), which were co-funded by communities themselves; 350 one-thousand litre household water tanks to provide safe drinking water to households unable to access clean water; and an anti-salinity gate to reduce saline water entering rice paddies, which will be needed even with a small sea level rise.

Of the 10 climate-smart livelihood models developed, four were chosen to be implemented by project beneficiaries – bio-mattress pig raising, eel raising, shrimp and vetiver grass, and growing clean vegetables using shade netting. Of these models, the majority have been successful - with the exception of eel raising<sup>16</sup> – creating additional and much needed income for beneficiaries.<sup>17</sup>

**Box 1: Criteria for selection of livelihood models**

The criteria used to select livelihood options were based on:

- Resilience to existing and future climate change and impacts;
- Non-depletion of natural resources;
- Provision of economic benefit;
- Nil or minimal impact on environment;
- Sufficient access to local resources including credit, training and other resources;
- Suitable to local social and economic development plans;
- Diversified agriculture and non-agriculture options;
- Based on local knowledge and up to date technology;
- Connected sustainably to local market;
- At least one option feasible to landless;
- At least one option feasible to women;
- At least one option feasible to people with disability.

The involvement of Can Tho University, extension services, community leaders, farmers, and VNRC in the development of climate-smart livelihood models can also be considered a success in itself as it is an unique example of collaboration between several diverse stakeholders to develop climate change adaptation strategies adapted to the most vulnerable members of communities (land poor, land-less, poor, near-poor, single-headed households; the elderly and PWD).

**Table 10: Objective 2 activities**

Measures	# of beneficiaries
PHAST promotion	
- Training of facilitators	60
- Household PHAST promotion	5,550
- IEC materials	Yes
Small scale mitigation	
- Household latrines	286
- Bridge	3
- Anti-salinity gate	1
- 1000 litre household water tank	350
Climate-smart livelihoods	
- Bio-mattress pig raising (training and implementation)	210

- Shrimp and vetiver grass (training and implementation)	2
- Eel raising (training and implementation)	10
- Clean vegetable growing (training and implementation)	1

Feedback from project beneficiaries, VNRC, government staff, community members and other stakeholders on the measures taken in the project under objective 2 have been largely positive.

- *PHAST*: This process has raised the awareness and practice of hygiene and sanitation within communities and households. People are now more aware of the relationship between a clean environment (no rubbish, using toilets, washing hands) and reducing diseases and environmental pollution. However, the duration of the training (once a week over five weeks) was found by some participants to take too long and they were unable to attend all sessions.
- *Small-scale mitigation*: Across a range of different measures, communities feel better protected and able to respond to disasters. Of the three bridges built, communities have been involved in the choice of location and have contributed their own funds to enable them to be built. Household latrines built for vulnerable communities have reduced environmental pollution, provided children (in particular adolescent girls) with privacy, and increase hygiene and sanitation practice. Household water tanks, however, have only recently been installed and project beneficiaries, while happy about receiving them, are not yet able to use them as the rainy season has not yet arrived to fill up the tanks.
- *Climate-smart livelihoods*: Given the income generating potential of the livelihood activities, they are widely supported by all key informant groups. In particular, the bio-matress pig raising model has garnered widespread support as it is easy to implement for vulnerable groups (elderly, PWD, ethnic minorities and people at home find that the labour demands are much less than working in the field), is relatively cheap to implement (once the pen is built and pigs are bought); and provides a modest income.

---

*‘This type of pig raising is much easier and cleaner than the traditional way. I don’t need to use water to clean out the pig pen and there is very little smell due to the bio-matress. I can also work from home, which means I can look after my children and the household at the same time. This saves me lots of time.’* Female livelihood beneficiary, Phu Loi commune

---

Where there have been issues with the measures listed above, these have related mostly to the limited number of beneficiaries. Almost all key informants, while recognising that beneficiaries were selected in a fair and transparent manner, stated that the percentage of participants/beneficiaries within each community was too low to have a significant impact at a community level (impact seen more at an individual/household level), and that the project would have been more successful if more people had been involved. While this was not possible due to the limited budget of the project, and the intent to use the project as a pilot (and therefore trial different measures in as many places as possible), the small number of participants/beneficiaries may have reduced the replication of some of the activities across communes and districts, although this is difficult to measure without additional research.

In addition, the generic application of adaptation measures across all project sites may not have been the most appropriate use of project funds. This includes: the blind testing of new ‘adaptive’ interventions; a lack of a value chain analysis to link the beneficiaries with markets for livelihood measures; and a lack of insurance/risk mitigation measures. For example, a small number of households involved in the pig-raising model had fatalities with piglets and were unable to re-stock due to lack of savings and inability to access additional funding or bank loans. In these cases, beneficiaries with pig pens built as part of the project, did not have pigs or a way to generate income.

The late implementation of some of the measures (latrines, water tanks, and livelihood models) also means that their viability has not yet been full established, and while there are plans to continue providing support

for some of the measures (for example, the livelihood models), this is not ideal in terms of monitoring the quality of the measures and ensuring their replication, and long term sustainability.

Findings from the household survey indicate that while beneficiaries are more aware of the need to adapt to climate change, and of community climate change action plans, as well as having their own longer terms plans to adapt; they are not yet implementing these plans. This demonstrates that more time and work is required by the project (and future projects) to ensure that communities are able to access information and support so that they can continue planning, have plans are climate-resilient to local contexts, and put these plans into action.

**Table 11: Actions taken to adapt to climate change<sup>18</sup>**

	Non-beneficiary %	Beneficiary %	Difference %
Aware of need to adapt	27%	39%	12%
Community has climate change action plan	6%	25%	19%
Household has a long term plan to adapt	10%	22%	12%
Adaptation action taken (changing crop, planting times, livelihood, move from flood-prone area)	14%	12%	-2%



**Case study: Increased income through raising pigs**

Diep is 63 years of age and lives in Tan Tuyen Commune, An Giang province with his wife. His family moved to Tan Tuyen in 1981 as the government offered them the opportunity to buy land at a low cost. ‘We moved here so we could grow rice and earn a good living, but the land was not suitable for growing rice and we had to spend a lot of money renovating it. This cost us a lot of money and time. Working in the fields is also very hard and now that I am old I cannot do it. My wife is also sick with a heart condition so is unable to work either.’

‘When I found about the Red Cross Project I was so happy. Never before, has anything like this happened to me. Since a child my life has always been difficult.’ As part of the project, Diep received training on how to raise pigs using a technique that requires little water and is more environmentally friendly. While a pig pen similar to other pig pens is built, the bedding on which

the pigs sleep is made from locally available sawdust, rice husks and an enzyme that when mixed with pig dung is converted into fertiliser.

Bio-mattress pig-raising was identified through comprehensive livelihood research as a climate smart livelihood model. It requires minimal use of water for cleaning pigs and their pens; there is no discharge of pig waste in the environment; the fermentation process in the mattress reduces odour; the biological

mattress is used for the whole growing cycle; reduces the risk of diseases; requires a small investment to set up; and it is suitable for landless, the elderly and women.<sup>19</sup>

The strategy used to implement the pig-raising model included training on the model, and the provision of a conditional cash grants in two parts: one for materials and labour to build the pig pen; and the second to purchase pigs (upon successful completion of pig pen through strict monitoring). This strategy, which was purposely chosen over the direct provision of materials and livestock, resulted in a more empowering and logistically easier model that is considered easy to replicate by community members, VNRC and extension services. Not only has this strategy led to increased ownership of the model by beneficiaries, but it has also increased collaboration between Red Cross, extension services and beneficiaries, making it more sustainable in the long term.

Diep explains, ‘The pigs are much easier to look after than working in the fields. I only need to provide them with food and water daily, and check [along with a local veterinarian and agricultural extension officer] that they are healthy. This is good for me as I also need to look after my wife.’

Diep explains ‘After four months, the pigs grow from about 10kgs to 90-100kg and I sell them. After providing food for my pigs [sweet potato collected from leftovers in farmer’s fields, and kitchen scraps] I made a profit of seven million Dong (USD 350). With this money, I reinvested into buying more pigs.’

‘I am so proud of achieving support from the Red Cross. I framed the letter from them to say that I was receiving the money to build the pig pen and buy pigs on my wall.’

### **Objective 3: VNRC has greater capacity to support target communities to plan for and respond to weather related disasters and the impacts of climate change**

To achieve objective three and associated outcomes, the project actively worked with the VNRC to build staff and volunteer capacity to understand in weather related disasters and the impacts of climate change to not only deliver the project, but to build a greater understanding of the connection between DRR and CCA in the sector.

As a result of the project, VNRC staff and volunteers have participated in a variety of activities to increase their understanding of DRR and CCA. While limited to a relatively small number of staff, the VNRC has also been able to participate in local and national forums and workshops, and joint activities, creating opportunities for sharing and learning. VNRC staff and volunteers have also increased their capacity in DRR and CCA through working in partnership with the ARC and GRC who have been able to bring substantial technical knowledge and project management support that has helped the VNRC manage the program more effectively.

However, while VNRC capacity in DRR and CCA has increased significantly through training, mentorship and on-the-job experience, and the government has begun to receive stronger, more coherent messages about

---

*‘Climate change is still very new for us and I am worried that when we scale up that we won’t have the right skills.’ VNRC staff member, An Giang province*

---

the need to integrate DRR and CCA into disaster risk management and longer term development goals, this has not yet led to measurable changes in planning at the national and provincial levels. Due to the mainly local focus of the project, changes that have occurred are still mostly located at this level, and even these changes still

require more time to be institutionalised. And while the ARC and GRC have linked the project to the national level through disaster management and climate change working groups, and the VNRC headquarters is involved in national level work, such as the newly produced case studies and guidebooks targeting the VNRC; linking bottom-up and top-down processes is not occurring to any significant degree.

Recognition must be made of the complex relationships and partnerships that the Red Cross is working in. The challenges presented in terms of negotiating agendas among multiple organisations and government, and capacity issues cannot be understated. Good progress has been made but given the relatively low starting point for the VNRC in climate change and livelihood issues it should come as no surprise that the short timeframe and small budget of the project has not been enough to build capacity at multiple levels, within such a large organisation as the VNRC.

As a result of the Mid Term Review conducted by DFAT, which noted the lack of tracking of capacity building outcomes, since the second half of 2014, the project has tracked the outcomes of capacity building activities for project staff using a modified (retrospective) outcome mapping method. Working with a sample of 18 Vietnam Red Cross project staff from An Giang province, who were invited to reflect on what they did before the project, what they are currently doing, and what they believed contributed to those changes; the outcome mapping found:

- 100% of staff reported changes in knowledge and skills including in: DRR, CCA, VCA, PHAST/CHAST, communication, and project management. Significant changes were reported (ranked 4 or 5 on a scale from 0 to 5) in relationships with local People's Committee and other stakeholders, communication skills, monitoring skills, and CCA knowledge. Staff primarily attributed these changes to the opportunity to build their capacity through their role in the implementation of the project, and additionally to the formal training received.
- The Tinh Bien district Red Cross branch in An Giang commune has allocated their own budget and resources to provide training on DRR and CCA similar to those delivered by the project, for all other communes not supported by the project, starting in 2013 and continuing into 2015.
- Positive changes were also reported in the People's Committee in communes, in relation to stronger planning and response mechanisms for climate-related disasters. The establishment of ERTs (not previously in place) under the CCSFC, with clear responsibilities and tasks in all 15 project communes is an example.

At a community level, a survey conducted with 424 people in three project communes made up of two groups - attendees and non-attendees of disaster preparedness, climate change, and water and sanitation awareness raising sessions - found:

- *Awareness of disaster preparedness and climate change.* More than 70% of attendees reported an increase in knowledge of disaster and climate change. 20% of attendees reported that they had not heard of climate change compared to 58% of non-attendees. 96% of attendees could name at least one action they could take to adapt to climate change, compared with 70% non-attendees.
- *Awareness of water, sanitation and hygiene.* 96% of PHAST participants reported that they learnt improved hygiene practices. Of these people, 88% reported that they had changed their behaviours. However, of those who attended PHAST sessions, only a very small number had either changed their water sources or built a hygienic latrine. This demonstrates the challenge in moving from increased knowledge to behaviour change. 12% of PHAST participants did not know the causes of diarrhoea or what to do to prevent it, compared with 23% non-participants.

These figures indicate some modest positive outcomes as a result of the capacity building components of the project, but some gaps and barriers between knowledge and practice are still evident. This requires ongoing capacity building measures and monitoring to ensure key messages are updated as new evidence becomes available and/or disaster and climate change contexts change over time.



#### Case study: Building the capacity of VNRC staff<sup>20</sup>

Mr. Dung has been working for Vietnam Red Cross since 1976, and for the Climate Smart Community Based Disaster Risk project from the beginning.

‘The Climate-Smart project has been a very important one for the An Giang branch of Vietnam Red Cross. It is the first medium-term project that our branch has done - before that we mostly only did emergency response projects.’

‘Since I have been working for the Climate-Smart Project, one of the biggest areas that I feel stronger in is planning. Before the project, I had received training in planning skills but I didn't get the chance

to practice. Now I get a lot of chances to practice by doing quarterly project plans and I do more detailed planning than before, which helps with better implementation. I think I'm better at office work, project balancing and planning, and time management.’

‘Another area I have learnt a lot in is monitoring and reporting. In terms of monitoring skills, before we used to just take a look at what was happening generally, but now we look at specific things, and use the checklists, templates, summary reports, and interviews. This was because of the training sessions and also the new templates.’

Other areas of learning are disaster preparedness, conducting VCAs, PHAST, and CHAST. I also learnt a lot about livelihoods, especially how to do participant selection. The points system was really transparent and fair. We can hopefully use the points ranking for other participant selection processes too.’

‘Before this project, most of our work was focused on humanitarian work, but with the project we are doing much more; meeting and working with other groups like the Education and the Agricultural departments. In future I need to keep networking better - it will be helpful for other Vietnam Red Cross activities too.’

#### Extent to which project has contribute to climate-smart disaster risk reduction

In addition to the key questions, the project has also been assessed against indicators from the *Red Cross Minimum Standards for Climate Smart Disaster Risk Reduction*.<sup>21</sup> These standards, first developed in 2012 and updated in 2013, were not used to inform the design of the project, and were not part of its logic or monitoring and evaluation indicators, however. It is also difficult to evaluate the ‘climate-smartness’ of the livelihood models given: the relatively small amount of time they have been implemented; the longer term and uncertain impacts of climate change; and the focus of the climate-smart indicators, which is more on disaster risk reduction than longer term adaptation. Despite these issues, it is still a useful exercise to evaluate the project against the climate-smart indicators, recognising the limitations of doing so.

While the project's overall goal is to increase the resilience of vulnerable communities to the current and project impacts of climate change, project activities have tended to focus more on disaster response and preparedness. While disaster risk management is a clear strength and well within the institutional competence of ARC, VNRC and GRC, limitations in defining the relationship between climate change and disasters, and how this manifests within

---

*‘While the project has tried hard to be more climate-smart, we still have a long way to go to change the mindset and capacity of the VNRC. But we have made a great start.’ VNRC staff member*

---

specific project activities, has limited some impacts of the project. However, taking into consideration the starting point of the VNRC, government and other stakeholders, achievements made are commendable and highly promising, and have helped communities on the journey towards resilience. This includes: increasing understanding of hazards and climate change within communities and the VNRC; strengthening the participation of, and action by, the population at risk; fostering synergy between multiple levels through collaboration with multiple stakeholders; and the consideration of climate change within broader development issues such as poverty, equality, and underlying issues of vulnerability.

**Table 12: Progress towards climate smart disaster risk reduction**

Indicator		Assessment of project progress	
Community indicators	Achievement	Comment	
CO1: Community is aware of changes in weather patterns, and recognizes that some weather-related risks in the future are likely to be different from the past	4 (adequate level of achievement)	While communities are aware of changes in weather patterns, there is still some uncertainty within communities about how this will affect changes in the future, and if this will be different from the past	
CO2: Community receives and understands locally available <i>weather</i> information, and households know appropriate actions to take when inclement weather is approaching	5 (high level of achievement)	Communities receive and mostly understand local weather information, and know how to prepare when inclement weather is approaching. This is due to training, awareness campaigns, EWS and information received from local groups such as the VNRC, CCCSFC and commune/hamlet leaders	
CO3: In places where credible seasonal forecasts are available, the community has a reliable relationship with an organisation that can help access and make use of the forecast	3 (less than adequate level of achievement)	It is unclear from the evaluation how communities access seasonal forecasts. Most information appears to come via the Commune People's Committee, but there doesn't appear to be a system for communicating seasonal forecast information, except via loudspeaker.	
CO4: Community carries out 'vulnerability and risk assessments' that note observed changes in weather, seasonality and hazard patterns and uses the information to develop local action plans	4 (adequate level of achievement)	Communities have carried out VCAs as part of the project but the level of detail or accuracy of assessments in relation to climate change needs to be further reviewed. It is also unclear how often VCAs (or a similar process) will be carried out in the future.	
CO5: Community monitors and evaluates approaches to disaster risk reduction and learns from experience in order to adjust plans to adapt to climate variability and change	2 (poor level of achievement)	Due to delays in the implementation of some activities, monitoring of activities and approaches by communities has not taken place.	
CO6: Community advocates for its adaptation needs towards appropriate climate-related authorities and stakeholders	3 (less than adequate level of achievement)	While the project has worked at a local level with a range of community members and government stakeholders, it is not clear from the evaluation the degree to which communities are able to advocate for adaptation needs. This is mainly due to a lack of adaptation action in the project (limited mainly to small scale mitigation and livelihoods) and delays in their implementation	

Red Cross Indicators <sup>22</sup>	Achievement	Comment
RC1: Within the Red Cross, knowledge on changing climate risks is used to adjust work plans and strategies	3 (less than adequate level of achievement)	Key informants interviewed stated that no VNRC strategies and plans (outside of the project) have incorporated changing climate change risks, but that there are future plans to do so.
RC2: A core group of staff and volunteers can facilitate dialogue on how natural climate variability and climate change affects the RC's work – and can explain the basic causes, trends, projections and impacts to communities	3 (less than adequate level of achievement)	VNRC does not have any dedicated staff or volunteers with responsibility for climate change. Climate change sits within the disaster management department but it is unclear how much time is dedicated to climate change adaptation.  Some VNRC staff trained as part of the project are capable of facilitating dialogue on climate change, but outside of the project there appears to be little scope for this occurring
RC3: Red Cross can guide communities on how to consider seasonal forecast and climate risk information in their community action plans and on how to define 'Early Actions' to be triggered by 'Early Warning' signals	Unable to evaluate	Not enough data was collected to assess this indicator
RC4: Red Cross is able to document community- level climate- smart interventions to influence policy and practice, where appropriate	3 (less than adequate level of achievement)	As part of the project, documentation on climate-smart livelihoods and other aspects of the project as being undertaken, but these were not available at the time of the evaluation.
RC5: Red Cross makes use of dialogue opportunities to raise awareness of local adaptation needs, to shape local and national policies, and to ensure resource allocation reaches the most vulnerable people	3 (less than adequate level of achievement)	The VNRC regularly uses dialogue opportunities to discuss DRR, but these do not appear to focus on CCA as yet.

### 3.3 Effectiveness

#### Rating 4: Adequate level of achievement

##### Extent to which project design has supported achievement of objectives and outcomes

The project design took more time than anticipated, which delayed the implementation phase of the project. Delays resulted from a number of issues including: difficulties conceptualising the project with the VNRC; multiple revisions of the project proposal and design due to more detail being required by DFAT than was provided by the consortium; revision of the implementation plan with each re-design and re-submission; difficulties agreeing on key activities between consortium members due to the unique working modality of ARC, GRC and VNRC requiring lengthy negotiation and due process with VNRC senior management and leadership; and issues with VNRC salary increases that ate significantly into other costs associated with key activities in the budget. The end result of these difficulties was a project that was rather large and ambitious given the relatively small budget, with little time to implement.

Despite these issues, the project is based on good program logic, working with key stakeholders at a community level (and to some extent provincial and national levels) to increase the resilience of communities to the current and projected impacts of climate change. If any improvements could have been made, these relate to strengthening the links between CCA, DRR and livelihood components.

The project strategy has been important in supporting the achievement of objectives and outcomes. The overall strengths based and participatory approach to community development, which recognises existing expertise in the community on disaster preparedness and response, including addressing the needs of the most vulnerable, is a recognised approach in community development, and one which has worked in building resilience. Within this, scaling up the VNRC's community based disaster risk reduction model has been a key strategy of the project. It recognises that CBDRR is a key entry point for working on climate change issues at a community level, by first working on climate-related hazards, and then introducing approaches for adapting to longer term climate change through climate-smart livelihoods. By increasing the climate change content of the VCA tool, for example, through the inclusion of information on increased weather variability, long-term change in seasonality, rainfall and sea level rise, and using the tool to frame community interventions, the project has been better able to link climate change into its DRR work, and to some extent the livelihood components. However, the use of the VCA tool, in some cases has had less impact than originally planned in the project. This is a result of the project design itself, where DFAT required a detailed proposal to be submitted prior to the commencement of VCAs. This has meant that some issues identified in community VCAs and planning processes have not been able to be considered in the project. For example, access to clean water was identified as a major issue in the majority of communities, yet the project did not have a major focus on this. While it provided household water tanks to 350 families, this is a small portion of the overall funding and project effort.

### Extent to which management mechanisms have supported implementation

The project management structure designed for the project is in line with that of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners operating in Vietnam, with VNRC as the implementing agency, and partners ARC and GRC providing funding, monitoring and technical support. As part of the project design, a Project Consortium Committee was established with oversight for the project. Its members included representatives from the three partners, and met in Hanoi on a regular basis (at least once per month) to discuss project progress and coordinate implementation. At a provincial level, project staff were posted to work closely with provincial VNRC staff and worked together on a daily basis. Working in a consortium, however, has had its share of issues. As mentioned previously, agreeing on key decisions took time, impacting on the implementation schedule. Financial processes were also complicated, and difficult for some VNRC staff to follow (especially at the local level where education levels and computer literacy of some staff were low).

The project has a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan and has also invested in bringing M&E technical support to the program, which has been an important mechanism for monitoring progress

---

*'The management structure worked for the most part, but it took time to agree on some issues. This delayed our decisions and the implementation of some activities.'* GRC staff member

---

and addressing issues throughout project implementation. As a plan, it has functioned well but is focused mostly at the output/activity level. This means that while activities and outputs have been monitored through the plan on a regular basis that higher level outcomes have not. This has been largely mitigated by quarterly, six-monthly and annual reports, and annual

reflections, but the inclusion of outcome level indicators in the M&E plan would have provided a more systematic mechanism to record progress and learning. Baseline and endline data was also collected from over 530 people to measure process against objectives and outcomes. Feedback on the M&E indicates that consortium staff were able to follow the plan and carry out monitoring, however, there were comments that at times the monitoring was not coordinated enough. For example, monitoring of livelihood activities were done by VNRC at local and provincial levels, as well as undertaken by GRC and ARC staff, which was perceived as a waste of human and financial resources that could have been used elsewhere.

## Effectiveness of project tools and their inclusion of climate change

A range of tools have been used in the project to facilitate its design and implementation. Feedback from community members on the tools has been overwhelmingly positive, with the majority of people finding them very useful and informative. While some issues with the tools remain, these relate to the need for: simpler language to describe concepts; more practical components so that participants can visualize and then practice what they have learned; and better timing of training and promotion to fit in with people's schedules (especially women).

---

*'As a result of PHAST promotion people now collect rubbish, cover their food to prevent flies, and wash their hands before eating or preparing food.'* PHAST facilitator, Van Giao commune

---

The VCA, as previously mentioned, is a tool used with communities to help them identify risks and resources available to cope with the impacts of disaster and climate change. The tool's emphasis is on empowering communities to identify disaster and climate change considerations and risks, and measures to address them. Throughout the project the VCA has worked with communities to identify vulnerable groups - ethnic minorities, female headed households, elderly, PWD and landless – and to develop strategies and activities to increase their resilience to disaster and climate change. Community action plans were developed in all 15 communes, based upon the VCA results. These plans have provided a practical, customized and holistic set of actions for each community, based upon the challenges identified by residents themselves. The many priority areas identified by communities included: strengthening infrastructure, raising awareness on disaster preparedness, enhancing access to clean water and sanitation and diversifying income sources. Information on weather and climate change is also included in the plans. However, while VNRC staff have used these plans to advocate to local commune leaders to incorporate prioritised actions into their socio-economic development plans as well as the community flood and storm control work plans, it remains unclear how many of the actions have been taken forward into the Socio-economic Development Plans (SEDP) or CCSFC work plans, as no record has been kept of this through project monitoring.

The inclusion of climate change in the VCA has been thoroughly considered. It is integrated throughout the manual, including guidance for facilitators and in each of the VCA tools (secondary data, risk map, seasonal

---

*'While developing the risk map, ask people to describe not only the current situation, but also how it may be changing. Try to ensure the map includes features of major environmental changes such as deforested zones, flood plains, erosion, etc.'* VCA guidelines annex on climate change

---

calendar, historical profile, livelihood analysis, Venn diagram, transect walk, direct observation and semi-structured interview). This includes guidance on how to include climate change information, and to use this information (as well as observations) to think into the future. There is also guidance on how to present climate change issues within the VCA report, including the provision of information on the climate context, livelihood-climate linkages,

changing disaster risks, institutional context related to climate change, and underlying causes of vulnerability.

PHAST and CHAST - methods by which health, hygiene and sanitation information is disseminated in communities and in schools – have encompassed a range of participatory activities and exercises that have promoted better health and hygiene practices in communities. However, the tools remain standardised, without the inclusion of additional information on climate change. This is a missed opportunity, given community interest (as identified in the VCA process). The inclusion of an activity linking climate change with water, sanitation and health, and how PHAST/CHAST can help reduce the impacts of climate change, would have been a relatively easy task.

Findings from the household survey indicate that awareness and practice of safe health and sanitation practices are higher amongst beneficiaries than non-beneficiaries. This could be the result of their involvement in the program, as well as involvement in the development of community health plans.

**Table 13: Health and sanitation awareness and action<sup>23</sup>**

	Non-beneficiary %	Beneficiary %	Difference %
Hand washing with soap	43%	63%	20%
Disposal of rubbish in river	23%	14%	-9%
Awareness of common local diseases	46%	54%	8%
Awareness of causes of common local diseases	64%	79%	15%
Awareness of community health plan	36%	52%	16%
Involvement in health plan development	23%	39%	16%

The third is a set of tools to be used – DRR and CCA training – were based on the established DRR training module already used by the VNRC. The training, however, only includes information on climate change as it relates to disasters, not long term impacts of climate change on livelihoods, which is a major omission given the overall goal of the project. It is also offered as a separate module rather than integrated throughout the training. This omission may help explain some of the issues identified in the project related to limited understanding of VNRC staff and volunteers on climate-smart livelihoods.

### Private sector relationships

A sub-question of the evaluation on evidence of private sector relationships developed as a result of the project, and their impact on outcomes yielded very little information. Across conversations with communities, Red Cross staff at different levels, government and other stakeholders, no major private sector organisations were identified as partners of the project. This does not mean that the private sector were not involved in the project. Indeed private businesses have been contracted to provide loudspeaker systems, latrines, water tanks, pigs and construct bridges; yet none of these businesses were identified as having longer term relationship potential, except for the loudspeaker provider and some businesses where pigs were bought and sold. This demonstrates that the project and its staff are not yet thinking about the private sector in terms of the project and how they could work with communities, the VNRC or government to support its replication and scale up, or to increase project efficiencies.

### Effectiveness of VNRC network to share achievements and learning

The Red Cross structure of volunteer- and member-led auxiliary national societies has many built-in efficiencies. It enables development funding to be invested in a local organisation led by local leaders, with a statutory role in each country’s disaster response mechanism. The use of members and volunteers enables a reserve of trained and committed first responders who can be mobilised in an emergency, at low cost. Each national Red Cross Society, including the VNRC, has a network of working from headquarters to hamlet level. Governance structures include elected branch and chapter officials to ensure that ‘grassroots’ members’ interests are represented.

In the project, this structure has been used to share achievements and learning (internally and externally). Internally, awareness of the project is quite high, with most awareness located at commune and district levels where the project is taking place. In the provinces where the project is implemented, awareness and knowledge of the project is also high, which is logical given the roles and responsibilities of the VNRC at this level. At a national level, the VNRC is also aware of the project; it is managed from Hanoi and has dedicated staff in charge of the project’s implementation. However, awareness of the project and its achievements and learning requires improvement so that those not directly involved in the project are aware of its achievements, learnings and how to replicate and scale up successes.

Externally, the VNRC has participated in the Climate Change Working group, the Disaster Management Working Group, and attended meetings of the Joint Advocacy Network Initiative (JANI) to share lessons about the project. However, attendance at these meetings has been inconsistent, partly due to ongoing disaster

response activities and other commitments. In consultation with JANI, the Disaster Management Centre (part of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development) and the Ministry of Education and Training and the GRC, the VNRC worked to review the Safe School Manual and the handbook for Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments. Other products designed to increase learning and influence externally are still under development, however. These include: case studies documenting learning from climate-smart livelihoods, cash transfers and beneficiary selection criteria; a video about climate change in the Mekong; a document outlining the process of how to integrate livelihoods work within the VNRC; and other educational advocacy materials through CCAG partners, such as tools and guides for developing high quality IEC materials.

Through the CCAG partnership, the project has also recognised the added value of joint advocacy in relation to the Vietnamese government at all levels. The Joint Advocacy Plan, has been a major contribution of the Australian-Mekong NGO Engagement Platform's support for the CCAG partnership. The process of arriving at the plan, however, has been challenging for all partners. It took considerable time to agree advocacy priorities, and the narrowing of priorities has excluded some of the original ideas brought forward by partners. There is a sense that the impetus for this plan was driven by DFAT, and more specifically the wider regional agenda of seeking to bring the experience of non-governmental organisation (NGO) programs to wider bilateral and multilateral policy dialogue. As such, while partners engaged in the development of the plan, they have not observed a tangible sense of ownership to drive collective advocacy efforts forwards. In many senses the plan is viewed as an output of the partnership with the donor rather than an outcome of a collective partnership with other NGOs. The plan has also been criticised for being more of an information sharing plan than an advocacy plan.

---

*'While efforts on the joint advocacy plan are commendable, the plan is more a joint information sharing and learning plan than an actual advocacy strategy.'* CCAG partner

---

### 3.4 Integration

#### Rating 4: Adequate level of achievement

##### Integration of vulnerable groups in project design and implementation

The project has explicitly aimed to include vulnerable groups in its design and implementation. The vulnerability and capacity assessment process actively encouraged the involvement of women and other vulnerable groups. Of the 5,898 participants across the project, 3,356 were women, 1,345 were ethnic minorities, 509 were children, 250 were elderly, and 40 were PWD. However, the Mid-Term Review identified a number of challenges with the engagement of vulnerable groups. Of major concern was the perception by local leadership structures – the majority of which are able-bodied, Vietnamese speaking adult men – that the work of DRR and CCA is that of adult men and government officials. As a result a number of strategies were developed and implemented to improve the active participation of vulnerable groups. These included:

- The establishment of compulsory targets for the engagement of women in training workshops;
- Specific targeting of livelihoods projects toward the most vulnerable female-headed households and those with a disabled family member;
- Increased engagement with disabled people's organisations in An Giang and Kien Giang, and the local Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs; and
- Translation of training materials into Khmer.

These strategies have helped increase the participation of vulnerable groups in the project resulting positive changes related to hygiene and sanitation, knowledge and understanding of DRR and CCA, and access to climate-smart livelihoods.



#### Case study: Latrines for hygiene and safety

Chan Thi, a 43 year old Khmer women, lives in Van Giao Commune, An Giang province with her five children (four girls and one boy). Her husband works in an industrial zone of Ho Chi Minh in a furniture factory about six hours drive from her home. Chan earns a living from looking after cows for her neighbours, a task which she shares with her 12 year old daughter.

Chan was chosen to be part of the project due to her vulnerability as a poor household and ethnic minority. As part of the project she has been involved in the PHAST training, where she was trained on sanitation and hygiene practices such as hand washing. In April this year she was also the recipient of a new toilet, something her family has never had before.

Chan says ‘No one in my street used to have toilets before, but since the project many of us have them. We really needed the toilet so that my children could go in privacy. This is important

because it is dangerous for my children to go across the road in the rice fields. Although the rice fields are near, it is not safe for them. They might be bitten by a snake or at night someone may harm them’. Chan explains that her daughter has now reached puberty and the new toilet is providing the privacy she needs. ‘Now that my daughter is a woman it is important that she has somewhere private to go.’

‘Because of the project, we know that we need to wash our hands after using the toilet and before preparing food. We use soap to wash our hands and make sure there is enough water.’ While Chan and her family already knew about safe hygiene and sanitation practices before being involved in the project, the training she received has reinforced her understanding and increased the practice amongst her family.

While the Red Cross provided the materials and labour to build the toilet, it is the responsibility of the beneficiary household to complete the bathroom by building walls and a roof. This increases the participation of beneficiaries in the process of building the toilet, but does require that they purchase materials and sometimes labour to complete the building. Chan borrowed 8 million Dong (USD400) from money lenders to complete the bathroom. ‘I pay back 1 million Dong per month. It is a lot of money but we hope to be able to pay back all the money within the year. I think it is worth it.’

Feedback from vulnerable groups that took part in the evaluation indicate that the majority found it easy to attend project activities and meetings, as they were invited by the project to attend. Most were also happy with the livelihood beneficiary selection criteria as they found it transparent and fair. Even so, some were worried that they were not ‘the right type of beneficiary’ and that someone else may have been more worthy to receive support. They also stated that community members and hamlet leaders were generally aware of who in the community was vulnerable, and that there was genuine interest in helping them. This made it much easier for the project to identify vulnerable community members and to work with them.

However, ongoing contextual constraints remain for vulnerable groups. They tend to live in more remote parts of communes that are far away from commune centres. Sometimes they lack adequate transportation to attend meetings and activities, and cannot afford to pay someone else to take them. Some vulnerable people walked long distances to take part in the project, demonstrating that they thought it was of benefit to them despite these difficulties. Mobility for people with physical disability or the elderly is particularly difficult and interventions (such as the livelihood interventions) require good design and implementation to ensure they do not exclude or worsen the situation of PWD or the elderly. Language and communication remain difficult for non-Vietnamese speakers, especially Khmer people in the project area. While strategies to increase access to Khmer language instruction in training and language appropriate materials have been used in the project, non-Vietnamese speakers still remain more disadvantaged as it has not been possible to ensure that all instruction and materials are in multiple languages. Women's duties as primary carers can also be considered a constraint, however the project has worked well to change times of meetings and activities to match the priorities of women.

There are opportunities, however. Vulnerable groups who participated in the evaluation were highly motivated to be involved in the project, as for many this was seen as a tremendous opportunity to improve

---

*'In the school we are able to involve both girls and boys in activities so there is equal participation.'* Male teacher, Van Khanh Tay commune

---

their lives. This means that if provided with the right knowledge and skills, and interventions suited to their needs, vulnerable groups can become powerful change agents in their communities, and by helping these groups, the wider society also benefits. Working in schools also provides

opportunities to work directly with children through both curricular and non-curricular activities. Both children and teachers are avid learners and have been greater supporters and advocates for the project, taking what they have learned in the school, to their homes and wider community.

### Involvement of women in decision-making processes

The project team has been highly conscious of the challenges of promoting gender equality within this project. In line with the program's goal of sustainable capacity building through supporting existing structures, there were no new staff recruited for this project at the province and commune level. Instead, the project seconded staff of the Red Cross chapters and branches and People's Committee for the duration of the project. Unfortunately, as a result of the existing gender imbalance within these organisations, men have formed the largest number of project officers in the provinces and communes.

This has led to challenges in implementation; despite headquarters strongly encouraging the participation of women, at the beginning this did not lead to equal numbers in workshops and training. Beyond the project, this systemic gender imbalance was also persistent; for example, when inviting teachers to the safer schools training, the Department of Education and Training sent mostly male teachers. When working with the committees for flood and storm control, these 25-person committees already comprised a larger proportion of men, usually with a single representative from the women's union.

---

*'It was hard at first to ensure equal participation of women- so any people making the decisions were men!'* Anonymous

---

However, despite large challenges, the project has implemented measures to increase gender equality. These include: encouragement and favourable conditions for women to participate in social activities; paying attention to woman-headed households and disabled women; coordination and empowerment of women's role via the Women's Union; awareness raising on gender equality; and a set quota for female participation

in events and trainings. Although the introduction of quotas was not a favoured strategy, it has been highly successful.

Findings from the household survey echo those from the qualitative evaluation. While beneficiaries perceived a slightly higher percentage of women involved in decision making in the home, and that this was partly as a result of their involvement in the project; these changes are not yet present in community decision-making processes.

**Table 14: Women and decision-making at home<sup>24</sup>**

	Non-beneficiary %	Beneficiary %	Difference %
Changes in roles that women and men play in the home (in last two years)			
- Men play a greater role	1%	2%	1%
- Women play a greater role	3%	8%	5%
- No change	93%	85%	-8%
- Don't know	3%	5%	2%
Reason for changes			
- Red Cross project	13%	47%	34%
- Other factors	73%	21%	-52%
- Don't know	14%	32%	18%

In fact, beneficiaries stated that many more men participated in village meetings than non-beneficiaries, and that that men influenced community decision-making more than non-beneficiaries. While this may be the result of changes in beneficiary awareness of decision-making, it may also indicate that there is long journey ahead for increasing gender equality.

**Table 15: Women and decision-making in the community<sup>25</sup>**

	Non-beneficiary %	Beneficiary %	Difference %
Participation in village meetings			
- Men mostly	21%	64%	43%
- Men and women equally	50%	31%	-19%
- Women mostly	18%	2%	-16%
- Don't know	11%	3%	-8%
Who influences community decision making			
- Men mostly	44%	52%	8%
- Men and women equally	22%	23%	1%
- Women mostly	8%	11%	3%
- Don't know	26%	14%	-12%

Despite these findings, beneficiary perception of a change in roles between men and women was much higher than non-beneficiaries. Beneficiaries attributed these changes to the Red Cross project. This may indicate that as a result of the project, beneficiaries feel much more hopeful about gender equality than those not part of the project.

**Table 16: Perceived changes in roles between men and women in last two years and reason for changes<sup>26</sup>**

	Non-beneficiary %	Beneficiary %	Difference %
Changes in roles			
- Men play a larger role	0%	10%	10%
- Women play a larger role	3%	77%	74%
- No change	77%	13%	-64%
- Don't know	20%	0%	-20%
Reason for changes			
- Red Cross project	42%	74%	32%

- Other factors	50%	21%	-29%
- Don't know	8%	5%	-3%

In summary, the issue of gender equality remains complex. Given the different and complex nature of gender relations at household and community levels, improving gender equality is long term process, beyond the timeframe of this project.

### 3.5 Sustainability

#### Rating 4: Good level of achievement

In general, the project has provided a good foundation for the continuation of project gains through different measures, including: enhanced capacities of community members, the VNRC and local government staff; improved governance structures at a commune level; increased local ownership of project interventions; and tools and resources to support learning and action to date. Challenges remain however, and for project gains to be sustained and improved upon requires communities, the VNRC, government and NGOs to continue working together to build community resilience over the long term.

#### Sustainability measures

Supporting communities and government to reduce disaster risk and adapt to climate change is a long term process; something which takes more time to achieve than is possible within the three year timeframe of the project. Recognising this, the project has adopted several strategies to sustain the project into the longer term.

- *Capacity strengthening:* Strengthening the capacity of communities, the VNRC, and other stakeholders is a central component of the project and much time and effort has been invested in this measure. Despite the progress made, particularly in DRR, gaps still exist in people's knowledge and understanding of CCA, especially how it can be practiced in a context specific and appropriate way.
- *Improved governance structures:* Working through the VNRC to design and deliver the program has increased the project's chances of sustaining activities and gains. As an established and central part of Vietnam society and governance structure, the VNRC is critical to the continuation of project gains. The project's work with the CCSFC, ERT and Commune People's Committee is also evidence of improved governance at the local level to implement the project.
- *Increased local ownership:* The use of participatory processes in the project design and implementation has yield good results, especially at the local level. VNRC commune staff and volunteers, members of the ERT and CCSFC, school teachers and children, and the commune People's Committee are more aware and active in disaster preparedness and reduction than ever before, and see their involvement in the project as a key factor in increasing their ability to reduce risk at a local level.
- *Tools and approached to support learning and action to date:* The project's tools – the CBDRR model, the VCA, PHAST/CHAST, DRR and CCA training, and Safe Schools module – have all been widely used as part of the program and are considered by different informant groups as key learning tools and approaches that can be used in the future.

#### Continuation of project activities and benefits

Results from the household survey indicate that a large majority of those involved in the project are applying all or most of what they have learned in their everyday lives. Women feel marginally more able to apply learning than men. Amongst those who do not currently apply what they learn, the lack of resources is seen as the major factor, listed by 33% of respondents.

Table 17: Current application of learning from project<sup>27</sup>

Statement	Female	Male	Total
-----------	--------	------	-------

‘I apply everything I have learned from the project’	19%	21%	20%
‘I apply most of what I have learned from the project’	72%	61%	68%
‘I do not yet apply what I have learned from the project, but plan to do so in the future’	5%	12%	8%
‘I do not apply anything I have learned in the project/I don’t know’	4%	6%	4%

In the future, almost all of those involved in the project think they will be able to apply the learning that is most important/useful to them. As above, women feel marginally more likely than men to continue applying learning into the future.

**Table 18: Ability to sustain learning from project<sup>28</sup>**

Statement	Female	Male	Total
‘I will be able to apply what I have learned from the project in the future’	99%	93%	
‘I will not be able to apply what I have learned from the project in the future’	1%	7%	

**Objective 1 (improved systems, resources and skills)**

The sustainability of objective one is found to be medium to high. Actions related to this objective – the provision of disaster supplies, CCSFC and ERT teams, scenario planning, simulation drills, early warning systems, the Safe School module, and to some extent, the DRR and CCA training program for students – are

---

*‘As a result of the project we now hold practical, not just desk-based, simulations in the community. We have budgeted for this to continue after the project is finished.’ CPC member, Kien Giang Province*

---

likely to continue beyond the life of the program. For example, the Safe School module has been taken up by the Ministry of Education and Training and approved for use country-wide. This means that while the exact contents of the module may differ from that offered by the project, the overall objective of creating safe schools remains, and will be funded and implemented by the

government. While some issues remain, for example, with the maintenance and upkeep of loudspeaker systems, government is committed to their ongoing use not only in early warning but in the education of communities about climate change.

**Objective 2 (climate change adaptation measures)**

The sustainability of objective two is found to be medium. PHAST/CHAST interventions have been very successful and are set to continue post-project. While the content of the promotion will be scaled back (due to time and budget constraints) the message around safe hygiene practices will remain and be embedded within the government. Bio-matress pig raising is also scheduled to continue to be supported by government. Discussions held with government by project staff indicate that while budget allocations still need to be finalised, that there is a general consensus across all project sites that this activity should not only continue, but be scaled up to other districts.

However, while the consistent use of the VCA across the project and the development of community based action plans, has helped communities identify priority needs, only those included in the project design have been implemented. For other issues, the project has worked with local government to input in disaster management and socio-economic development plans, but it is unclear how these have influenced or been included systematically across government plans.

**Objective 3 (VNRC capacity)**

The sustainability of objective three is found to be low to medium. Despite the continuation of many of the project activities post-project, issues remain around the capacity of the VNRC and government departments to maintain and scale up many of the activities. VNRC understanding of climate change adaptation is still relatively low given its novelty and the VNRC's traditional emphasis on disaster preparedness. While many

---

*“The capacity of VNRC staff at a commune level is still quite low. In order for them to understand climate change concepts, the training needs to be more locally appropriate and practical.” CSDRR project staff member*

---

efforts have been made to build knowledge and skills in climate change and adaptation, many VNRC staff and volunteers require a mindset shift from disaster preparedness to disaster risk reduction, and a further leap to incorporate climate change issues outside of those related to disasters. The inclusion of climate-smart livelihoods in the project is seen as a welcome move to start building knowledge and skills, but given the delays in

implementing the livelihood models (and the limited uptake of models other than the bio-mattress pig-raising), more time is needed to familiarise the VNRC with the concepts and practice of climate-smart disaster risk reduction and longer term CCA. In addition to limited human capacity, financial capacity of the VNRC and local government to support the continuation of some activities is still limited, and in many cases uncertain. While there is great enthusiasm at all levels of government (in particular commune and provincial) to support and scale up activities, there are not necessarily dedicated financial resources to do this, leaving a question mark over the long term viability of activities.

### Efforts to influence government planning processes

While the reach of the project remains quite small, and more locally focused, it has been able to influence government planning processes to some extent. This includes: changing the way in which simulation exercises are carried out; encouraging the use of participatory, bottom-up approaches within government activities at a commune and district level; government interest in the inclusion of climate-smart livelihood interventions within government programs and budgets; and the provision of regular training for CCSFC and ERT teams by government.

---

*“Never before have we worked in such a participatory way with communities. The results are evidence that this approach works and we need to consider using it more in our work.” VNRC headquarters staff member*

---

- *Simulations exercises:* Prior to the project, government simulation exercises were desk-based without any practical component. As a result of the project, simulation exercises in all project sites are now practice-based with simulations carried out in communities with the involvement of a large range of stakeholders.
- *Participatory, bottom-up approaches:* The use of participatory, bottom-up approaches has been a success for not only the project itself, but the VNRC headquarters see it as having potential for replication in its other work. One example of the success of this approach is the use of project based beneficiary selection criteria, in conjunction with government selection criteria, in order to decide who would be involved in the livelihood activities of the project. Not only did the beneficiaries themselves see the criteria as fair and transparent, but the VNRC and government is considering using it in projects going forward. One key factor behind the success of this selection process was the early consultation with community members and local authorities on the selection criteria. While this is a seemingly obvious step, in a fast-moving project cycle, this very early consultation can sometimes be missed. Involving community members from the beginning of the process in determining how the eligibility for the grants would be determined, partly contributed to their understanding and agreement throughout the remainder of the selection process.
- *Replication of climate-smart livelihoods:*<sup>29</sup> Of all the activities implemented in the project, the bio-mattress pig-raising model has perhaps garnered the most interest from the VNRC and government.

Both see the potential for this model to be replicated and scaled up with relatively little cost and technical input, compared to other activities. While still being trialled, early successes have demonstrated the efficacy of the model, which coupled with interest from communities themselves makes it an attractive option for income generation for those most vulnerable to hazards and the impacts of climate change.

- *Training for CCSFC and ERT:* The project has demonstrated the benefits of training and resources to support communities prepare and respond to disasters, and the VNRC and government appears committed to continuing these efforts not only in existing project locations, but expanding them to other districts with An Giang and Kien Giang provinces.

## 4. CONCLUSION

The evaluation finds that overall, the project has achieved an adequate level of success across the five key areas of relevance, impact, effectiveness, integration and sustainability.

The project is relevant at all levels – community, project, national and international – aligning with community, VNRC, government and donor priorities on disasters and climate change. It has achieved a measurable level of impact, despite delays in finalising the project design and the resulting delays in project implementation.

As a result of the project, school communities have improved skills and knowledge, and capacity to deal with disasters through the use of Safe Schools, a disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation training program, and extra-curricular activities. Target communes have better access to information on disaster preparedness and risk reduction through the provision of early warning systems, community preparedness and response groups, participation in emergency drills, and awareness and training in disaster preparedness. They have also increased their understanding and practice of hygiene and sanitation; are less exposed to hazards and stresses as a result of small-scale mitigation measures; and are able to employ climate-smart livelihood models to increase their income. However, the generic application of adaptation measures across all project sites, the blind testing of new ‘adaptive’ interventions, a lack of a value chain analysis to link the beneficiaries with markets for livelihood measures, and delays in implementing the models may reduce their potential efficacy.

The project has measurably increased VNRC staff and volunteer capacity to understand weather related disasters and the impacts of climate change to not only deliver the project, but to build a greater understanding of the connection between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in the sector. However, while VNRC capacity in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation has increased, and the government has begun to receive stronger, more coherent messages about the need to integrate disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into disaster risk management and longer term development goals; this has not yet led to measurable changes in planning at the national and provincial levels due to mainly local focus of the project.

The project’s logic of working with key stakeholders at a community level (and to some extent provincial and national levels) to increase the resilience of communities to the current and projected impacts of climate change has supported the achievement of objectives, as has the strategy of using a strengths based and participatory approach to community development. Working in a consortium, however, has had its share of issues: agreeing on key decisions took time, and financial processes were complicated, and difficult for some VNRC staff to follow.

The project has worked hard to ensure integration of vulnerable groups, in particular women and ethnic minorities, in the design and implementation of the project. Strategies developed during the project have been effective in increasing the participation of vulnerable groups in the project resulting in a number positive changes related to hygiene and sanitation, knowledge and understanding of DRR and CCA, and access to climate-smart livelihoods. However, ongoing contextual constraints remain for vulnerable groups, requiring ongoing support beyond the life of the project.

The project has provided a good foundation for the continuation of project gains and longer term sustainability through different measures, including: enhanced capacities of community members, the VNRC and local government staff; improved governance structures at a commune level; increased local ownership of project interventions; and tools and resources to support learning and action to date. Challenges remain however, and for project gains to be sustained and improved upon requires communities, the VNRC, government and NGOs to continue working together to build community resilience over the long term.

## 5. LESSONS LEARNED

As a result of the project, the following key lessons have been learned:

- 1. The emphasis of the project has been at a community level, resulting in good outcomes for vulnerable groups.** In particular, livelihood activities such as pig-raising has provided people with disability, the elderly, women and ethnic minorities the opportunity to work from home to achieve a small but promising form of income generation.
- 2. Increasing the capacity of the Vietnam National Red Cross Society is critical to the sustainability of project gains,** (especially at the commune level), which requires ongoing support from the Red Cross/Red crescent Movement partners to improve VNRC understanding of climate-smart DRR and longer term CCA.
- 3. Working with primary school students is an effective model for behaviour change.** The project has been able to work effectively with teachers and school students to increase their knowledge and practice of disaster preparedness and risk reduction. It has also been able to increase understanding of climate change, and to some extent CCA. Knowledge learned in the school environment is already being transferred into their homes and communities demonstrating that children can become agents of change.
- 4. A focus on gender leads to concrete benefits for women and the broader community.** Despite a range of cultural constraints placed on women in many of the communities in which the project operates, focusing on vulnerable groups, in particular women, has led to their greater involvement in community activities and decision making.
- 5. Community perceptions of vulnerability highlight the multiple drivers and inhibitors for resilience, in particular structural issues.** The impact of DRR, CCA and resilience programs will be limited without considering structural issues, which need to be addressed over longer timeframes and through linking communities and their experiences with other organisations/duty bearers at multiple levels/scales.
- 6. A well-developed and utilised monitoring, evaluation and learning system is essential to track progress and continually improve project outcomes,** but project experience indicates that this takes commitment by all partners, in particular the VNRC to achieve. It is essential to have robust monitoring systems in place, but this means staff need to be regularly trained on the use and importance of these systems and given adequate time during and post project activities to record and write up both qualitative and quantitative data.
- 7. Working in a consortium can be an effective and efficient approach to programming.** However, while consortium arrangements can allow for the efficient sharing of resources and expertise and greater impact through joint activities, this has not always been the reality of the project. Greater coordination between ARC, GRC and the VNRC to define agency roles and responsibilities may have yielded better outcomes and more learning from the project.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

For future projects, VNRC and other organisations involved in building resilience to disasters and climate change should consider the following strategies and activities:

- 1. Awareness raising on climate change and resilience issues at the community level (and within the Vietnam National Red Cross Society and other stakeholders) needs to be ongoing** and develop as new information, research and learning occurs. This is important if projects and programs are to be flexible and responsive to changing environments and needs. And, while the project has made in-roads in people's understandings of climate change, more work needs to be done to link people's understandings of the causes and impacts of climate change with adaptation options, especially those related to long term risk reduction (not just disaster preparedness).
- 2. Increased linkages between communities (particularly women and other vulnerable groups) and government and other service providers should be further investigated and supported.** While the project has made some initial advancements in community linkages with government, there is still much work to be done to better understand the barriers and enablers. This includes supporting governance structures at different levels, but particularly those at local and provincial levels that link to the national level. This should be a priority for any new program.
- 3. The Vietnam National Red Cross as a critical organisation in Vietnam for understanding and addressing multiple drivers of risk requires continued capacity building to improve VNRC understanding of climate-smart disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.** In particular, the VNRC needs to develop a strategic plan linking DRR, CCA and long term development, focusing on its role in supporting vulnerable communities to: manage and diversify risk (for example, through climate-smart DRR and livelihoods); and linking communities with government and other service providers at multiple levels.
- 4. Structural issues that maintain inequality and keep people in poverty need to be addressed as part of overall program design and implementation.** The impact of DRR, CCA and resilience programs will be limited without considering structural issues, which need to be addressed over longer timeframes and through linking communities and their experiences with other organisations/duty bearers at multiple levels/scales.
- 5. Analysis, strategies and projects should address different timescales** (current, identified risks and likely future scenarios).<sup>30</sup> Preparing for the occurrence of known hazards should not be neglected in favour of building capacities to adapt to medium- and long-term effects of climate change, and other, potentially unknown shocks or stresses. Resource allocation and activities should be planned accordingly.
- 6. A wider range of climate-smart models need to be better promoted and incentivised in future programs** to ensure that a wider range of models are trialled. In the project only four of the 10 models were implemented in the project, and while this was partly the result of beneficiaries self-selecting models to implement, the project may have been able to implement strategies to increase the uptake or a wider range of options. To increase awareness and knowledge of the less popular models with communities, government, NGOs and other stakeholders, follow-up research documenting the successes and challenges of the models, and how to replicate them, should be undertaken.
- 7. Pig-raising as a climate smart livelihood model has been very successful for vulnerable groups** but requires ongoing support to ensure that participants follow the model correctly. Due to delays in the implementation of the livelihood models, beneficiaries require additional support to ensure that their pigs stay healthy so that they are able to sell them for a profit and reinvest. Where there are fatalities, beneficiaries require technical support to identify issues leading to fatalities (to prevent future occurrences), and financial support to re-stock (loans or insurance).
- 8. New programs should be explicitly evaluated against their ability to support resilience.** It is not enough for interventions to support adaptation to the *impacts* of climate change, they should also support *adaptive capacity*, and/or help *transform* structures where resilience is not enough.

9. **Effective monitoring, evaluation and learning should be central to project design and implementation.** It is essential to have robust monitoring systems in place, but this means staff need to be regularly trained on the use and importance of these systems and given adequate time during project design and implementation to use them effectively and share results more widely.
10. **Training for commune level staff involved in projects and programs should be tailored to educational levels and capacities,** and have practical components to explain conceptual issues (in particular climate change). Refresher training and an induction program for new staff is also a necessity.
11. **The use of participatory methodologies should be continued in future projects,** but this should be better linked with government processes so that outcomes can be fed into local planning, increasing uptake of community priorities. The sustainability of resilience-building strategies depends on their ownership and agency. This requires both the participation of right-holders and duty-bearers in decisions affecting at-risk communities. The role of other stakeholders, including NGOs, should be complementary to, and enabling of, the relationship between duty-bearers and rights-holders.<sup>31</sup>
12. **Specific tools should be developed to better assess the sustained impact of project training and capacity building activities** to ensure that the project is progressing towards its desired outcomes. This will help the project be more flexible and responsive to beneficiary and stakeholder needs and to base decisions on evidence of what works/doesn't work.
13. **A scoping study into private sector relationships should be conducted** to better understand the barriers and opportunities for private sector investment in climate change adaptation in Vietnam. Findings from the evaluation indicate that the current project has not considered the possible benefits private sector involvement could provide, and this should be done so in the future to ensure that replication and efficiency gains can be utilised were possible and appropriate.
14. **Program designs should be more flexible** to ensure the results from detailed community assessments undertaken early in the program are used to further tailor interventions. This requires donors to recognise that program designs may need to be adapted during the program inception phase, and their support to facilitate changes.
15. **Program design should include a full assessment of the value of including a wider range of partners** in program implementation to increase the sustainability of program gains through replication and scale up by NGOs, government, mass organisations, private sector, and others.
16. **A value chain analysis should be undertaken along with a broader market approach** (including insurance/risk mitigation measures) **to ensure that climate-smart livelihood models are more sustainable.** This will increase the effectiveness, replicability and scale up of different climate-smart livelihood models.
17. **Working in a consortium is an effective and efficient approach to programming but requires additional support from donors to implement.** Consortium arrangements allow for the efficient sharing of resources and expertise and greater impact through joint activities but require time for essential relationship management and coordination. This time needs to be accounted for in project planning as the success of a consortium can be affected by lack of an agency's inputs or donor support.
18. **More resources should be allocated to support communities put adaptation plans into practice,** and to ensure that their plans are climate-resilient to local contexts. This requires investment in the provision of technical support and advisory services that are accessible and easily understandable for communities that lack high levels of education. This is important given the uncertainty of climate change and the need for up-to-date and context specific information to inform adaptation strategies and activities.

---

<sup>1</sup> 108 key informants from four project sites; 27 district, provincial and national stakeholder interviews; and 15 participants who attended the validation workshop.

<sup>2</sup> Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre (2013) *Minimum Standards for Local Climate-Smart Disaster Risk Reduction*. Version 2, November 2013. The Hague: Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre.

<sup>3</sup> The endline survey took place prior to the evaluation, with additional questions added to gather information to inform the findings and recommendations of the overall evaluation.

<sup>4</sup> Members of the evaluation reference group included: Vu Thi Phuong (VNRC), Jerome Faucet (GRC), Thorsten Klose (GRC), Dymphna Kenny (ARC), Knud Falk (Red Cross Climate Centre), and Donna Mitzi Lagdameo (Red Cross Climate Centre).

<sup>5</sup> Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre (2013) *Minimum Standards for Local Climate-Smart Disaster Risk Reduction*. Version 2, November 2013. The Hague: Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre.

<sup>6</sup> See Annex 6 for a full profile of target communities.

<sup>7</sup> VNRC & GRC (2011) *Reinforcing Resilience: Evaluation of German Red Cross support to DRR projects in Vietnam* implemented by VNRC. July 2011.

<sup>8</sup>

Rating scale	
6	Very high
5	Good
4	Adequate
3	Less than adequate
2	Poor
1	Very poor

<sup>9</sup> The World Bank (2011) *Vietnam Climate Risk and Adaptation Country Profile*. [online] Available at: [http://sdwebx.worldbank.org/climateportalb/doc/GFDRRCountryProfiles/wb\\_gfdr climate change country\\_profile\\_for\\_VNM.pdf](http://sdwebx.worldbank.org/climateportalb/doc/GFDRRCountryProfiles/wb_gfdr climate change country_profile_for_VNM.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> The World Bank (2011).

<sup>11</sup> AusAID (2011) *Australia-Vietnam Climate Change delivery Strategy 2011-2016*, p.4. [online] Available at: <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/vietnam-climate-change-strategy-2011-16.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> For more information on the project management structure and implications for implementation, see section 3.3 on effectiveness.

<sup>13</sup> Results from the household survey conducted with beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the project.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Eel raising, which was identified as a high risk/high profit model, was chosen by only 10 households.

<sup>17</sup> The mushroom production model, which was not selected by the beneficiaries as part of this project, has nevertheless been implemented later on as part of another ARC project, which benefited from the technical and logistic learnings from the CSDRR project.

<sup>18</sup> Results from the household survey conducted with beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the project.

<sup>19</sup> Australian Red Cross (n.d.) *Livelihood assessment and proposed livelihood option in target communities in An Giang and Kien Giang*.

---

<sup>20</sup> Case study sourced from *Climate Smart Disaster Risk Reduction Six-Monthly Progress Report, April-September 2014*. Submitted 26 November 2014.

<sup>21</sup> Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre (2013) *Minimum Standards for Local Climate-Smart Disaster Risk Reduction*. Version 2, November 2013. The Hague: Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre.

<sup>22</sup> Indicators apply to the Vietnam National Red Cross only, not the ARC or GRC.

<sup>23</sup> Results from the household survey conducted with beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the project.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> This model has the potential to be considered climate-smart because it better able to withstand the effects and impacts of climate change. It uses less water than traditional methods; requires very little space or land; uses an environmentally friendly, biological mix that converts pig faeces into fertiliser; and reduces environmental pollution (pig faeces converted into fertiliser rather than ending up in canals and rivers).

<sup>30</sup> Turnbull, M., Sterrett, C. L. & Hilleboe, A. (2013) *Toward Resilience: A Guide to Disaster Risk reduction and Climate Change Adaptation*. Catholic Relief Service – United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, p.13.

<sup>31</sup> Turnbull, Sterrett & Hilleboe (2013), p.12.