Buletin SEADPRI, Vol. 18, June 2019, ISSN 2180-1142

Article

Case Study of Building Coastal Community Resilience in Vietnam

Nguyen The Manh

Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Thailand

[Email: nguyenthemanh4@gmail.com]

Abstract: Low-income communities living in coastal regions of Vietnam are negatively impacted by frequent natural disasters. Coastal mangrove forests are serving as a vital buffer against storms, sea surges and salt-water intrusion, highlighting the importance of ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction. The involvement of coastal communities in restoration initiatives promote disaster resilience.

Keywords: Coastal hazards, community resilience, Thanh Hoa Province, Vietnam.

INTRODUCTION

Communities in the Thanh Hoa Province, Vietnam are often exposed to coastal hazards. Between 1990 to 2012, the coastal region suffered annual average disaster losses of 457 lives and 1.3% of GDP (CARE, 2014). In 2005, tidal waves and upstream floods from Typhoon Damrey damaged about 100 houses. The event also caused inundation of more than 500 hectares of paddy fields and shrimp farms as well as degradation of soil by saltwater. Low-income communities are negatively impacted by frequent natural disasters. Coastal ecosystems such as coastal mangrove forests are assets that provide a vital buffer against storms, sea surges and salt-water intrusion.

APPROACH

Ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction (Eco-DRR) involves sustainable management and restoration of ecosystems to reduce disaster risk and promote resilient development. Eco-DRR also reduces physical exposure to many hazards and increases socio-economic resilience of communities. CARE International applied the Eco-DRR concept to build coastal resilience of vulnerable communities in the Thanh Hoa Province of Vietnam. The project was implemented from 2006 to 2014. The focus was on the Da Loc and Nga Thuy Communes, to help in coping with disasters, promoting sustainable livelihood development and supporting the poor. The aim was to restore existing systems and establish new institutions for community-based management of mangrove forests, whilst building capacity for disaster risk reduction and stimulating resilient livelihood strategies. A critical component was to enhance understanding and promote local support for the integrated approach.

KEY FINDINGS

The project was successful in advancing the community-based ecosystem approach and enhancing livelihood strategies for sustainable coastal community development. Since 2007, more than 277 and 181 hectares of mangrove forest have been planted in the Da Loc and Nga Thuy Communes, respectively. This was done exclusively by local villagers, who were involved in planting, maintaining, and protecting the young forests. About 700 local people contributed their labor and assets to mangrove planting. More than 90% of the young mangrove trees survived, making the mangrove forest planting very successful compared to earlier projects in the same area (CARE, reported, 2014).

The use of local labor and local expertise was also more cost effective and promoted strong community buy-in for forest protection. Local community mobilisation and engagement was also supported by local officials. People realised that if they protected the mangroves, they would be protecting their future livelihoods by reducing exposure to natural disasters. The Eco-DRR concept played a crucial role for sustainable development by reducing the impacts of natural disasters in these two coastal communities.

REFERENCES

CARE 2014. Building coastal resilience in Vietnam: An integrated, community-based approach to mangrove management, disaster risk reduction, and climate change adaptation-Experiences from CARE in Da Loc and Nga Thuy Communes, Thanh Hoa Province, 2006-2014.