



BEST PRACTICE IN ADULT EDUCATION FOR A JUST TRANSITION

Le Gret, Pu Luong
Improving Living Conditions and
Economic Empowerment of Women

JULY 2024



Co-funded by
the European Union

Le Gret, Pu Luong

– Improving Living Conditions and Economic Empowerment of Women

Context and Initiative Details

Name of the initiative	Le Gret - <u>Pu Luong</u>
Geographical scope	Local : Pu Luong natural reserve in Vietnam
Sources of funding	Foundation : Audemars Piguet, Fondation RAJA-Danièle Marcovici, Alstom Foundation
Duration of the initiative	3 years, 01/01/2021-30/09/2024
Target audience	Women from Thai and Muong ethnic minorities.
Social justice focus area	Gender equality, sustainable natural resource management
Goals of the initiative	To achieve Sustainable Development Goal 15 of the 2030 Agenda and promote greater social justice and empowerment for the most vulnerable, GRET is implementing a project to inclusively protect and manage the Pu Luong Nature Reserve. The aim is to improve the living conditions and economic empowerment of women from the Thai and Muong ethnic minorities, and to ensure inclusive and sustainable forest management in the protected areas and buffer zones of the Pu Luong Nature Reserve.

Good Practices Description

Stakeholder engagement in the process

Le Gret NGO and the Quan Hoa rural development cooperative (DRC) manage the project supported by the Audemars Piguet and RAJA - Danièle Macovici Foundations.

Methodology used (if available)

The overarching concept of the project is to promote community activities linked to tourism and equitable benefit-sharing while preserving the forests. This initiative is based on an action-research approach, focusing on social innovations around protected areas using a commons-based approach. The goal is to foster a virtuous cycle between humans and nature. The project integrates ecosystem conservation with the development of value chains that enable local people, particularly women, to sustainably live in, with, and through their environment:

- Support the establishment of a consultation framework, a governance body that includes local authorities, nature reserve management authorities, and women from local communities. This legal framework enables women to participate in decisions regarding the nature reserve, ensuring they receive a fair share of tourism revenues.
- Concurrently, community groups of ethnic minority women have been formed to develop a range of sustainable tourism services within the reserve, such as accommodation, catering, motorcycle taxi transport, and craft and agricultural activities (including duck breeding and vegetable growing). This diversification of income sources reduces their dependence on forest resources and mitigates the overexploitation of these resources. These women receive support in structuring their production and institutional organization.
- Finally, a comprehensive communication and awareness-raising program on gender equality, environmental preservation, and responsible “zero waste” tourism is being implemented in the villages to strengthen the role of ethnic minority women in the community.

Teaching approaches (if available)

Not specified

Challenges and outcomes

Key factors contributing to success

Offer women training in professional activities that consume fewer natural resources, without forcing them to leave their local area.

Encountered difficulties and challenges

Vietnamese women, especially those from ethnic minorities, still experience discriminatory attitudes and obstacles in their daily lives, such as poverty and restricted access to higher education and career opportunities, despite recent positive legislative changes. The shift from community-managed access to natural areas to government-mandated control increases the impoverished people's vulnerability and marginalization. Local communities make up to 60–80% of their income from cattle and forest products; they own little to no agricultural land.

Cultural norms and gender bias further limit women's access to and control over natural resources. In Vietnam, approximately 38% of women and 62% of men hold land-use certificates, resulting in women rarely being fully involved in resource management decisions.

Recommendations

- Macro level: Convince the State to reassign, at least in part, the management of common resources to local communities.
- Meso level: increase women's access to higher education to enable the development of professional activities outside the agricultural sector.

Impact

- 6,770 women from the Thai and Muong minorities (51% of the population) living in the 31 villages located in the reserve and surrounding buffer zones will be accompanied.
- 70 people representing the reserve's local and management authorities will also be involved.
- 20,000 people visiting the reserve will be sensitized.

(Source: <https://gret.org/projet/promouvoir-la-place-de-femmes-issues-de-minorites-ethniques-dans-la-gestion-durable-des-ressources-naturelles-et-la-creation-dactivites-ecotouristiques/>).