
FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

“LEGAL AID TO THE RURAL POPULATION, PHASE II”



The legal club in Kim Boi – Hoa Binh receiving the first prize certificate in the legal contest in 2013

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We hope that the proposed recommendations will contribute to the further development of similar initiatives both within and outside Viet Nam.

Disclaimer:

This report is the work of an independent evaluation team and does not necessarily represent the views of ADDA and of the VLA.

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

ADDA	Agricultural Development Denmark Asia
CBO	Community Based Organisations
CEMMA	Committee for Ethnic Minorities & Mountainous Areas
CPC	Commune People Committee
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
Danida	Danish International Development Aid
DKK	Danish Kroner
DOJ	Department of Justice
DPC	District People Committee
FU	Farmers Union
GDLA	General Department of Land Administration
LAC	Legal Aid Centre
LCC	Legal Consulting Centre
LURC	Land Use Rights Certificates
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MoNRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NLAA	National Legal Aid Agency
ONA	Office of National Assembly
PFU	Provincial farmer Union
PPC	Provincial People Committee
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
SPP	Supreme People Procuracy
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USD	US Dollar
VLA	Vietnam Lawyers Association
VND	Vietnamese Dong
VNFU	Vietnam Farmer Union

Executive summary.

Since 2008, ADDA Vietnam has cooperated with the Viet Nam Lawyers Association (VLA) to implement the project “Legal Aid for the Rural Population”. This report is the final evaluation of the second phase of the project, started in the beginning of 2011 and which is due to end by December 2014.

The project seeks to support ethnic minorities in the Northwest Mountains by increasing their awareness on legal issues, the provision of legal assistance and their participation in policy development. The main activities include: a) training of local facilitators at the commune level, village heads and heads of Community-based Organizations (CBOs); b) provision of legal education to individuals and organizations living in remote villages through mobile legal clinics; c) establishment of legal clubs and legal libraries and d) provision of legal advice and free representation to poor households. The program is implemented through the Legal Consulting Centres (LCC) in the provinces of Dien Bien, Hoa Binh and Son La and coordinated through the equivalent LCC in Hanoi.

The main objective of the evaluation is to collect evidence about the results of the project in order to advocate to the Government and to other donors to continue the support to legal aid to poor people in the targeted provinces through similar projects of the VLA. The commissioning agency for this evaluation, ADDA, also seeks to learn about what worked well and what needs to be improved for future similar interventions.

The evaluation sought to assess the relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the project. To collect information on these evaluation criteria, the consultancy team combined quantitative and qualitative methods. In particular, three different tools were used: a) desk review of key project and external documents; b) Survey for mobile legal aid clinics participants; c) in-depth interviews with a selected number of stakeholders.

Conclusions

- The project is highly relevant for the rural population in the three provinces. The project responds to well identified needs of legal information and assistance among a number of stakeholders living in remote locations in Vietnam. Furthermore, the project is aligned and contributes to the implementation of several national policies, particularly the policy on legal aid and the legal and policy framework on land and resettlement.
- The design of the program is coherent. Activities, outputs and outcome follow results chain logic and are, in general terms, well articulated. In few cases, the planned activities were not sufficiently well explained in the project proposal and some activities proposed were duplicated.
- The three legal consulting centers strove to achieve the expected progress and complete all project activities in the plan. The LCC in Hanoi played an important role in the management of the project and in motivating the LCCs to work in remote locations.
- The project has strengthened the VLA’s capacities to support the rural population. This effect may bring additional benefits after the project comes to an end while they perform their regular duties at the central and provincial level.
- The project contributed to build up the legal knowledge of the rural population in the three provinces, including village heads, CBO leaders and community people. All of them feel empowered and better prepared to discuss issues that affect their lives with the authorities. Nevertheless, the low education level and the reduced number of activities carried out in each location hampered the development of a more solid knowledge.

- The project facilitated the dialogue between the authorities and the rural population. This contribution is highly appreciated by both parts as an opportunity for information sharing. The effect of the dialogue on policy changes is still limited due to, among others, limited understanding of advocacy among VLA staff.
- The change in knowledge of the regulatory and policy framework and the increase in dialogue between authorities and citizens contributed according to project participants to reduce the conflictivity in the targeted locations.
- In summary, the project shows that non-governmental actors such as VLA can play an important role in building poor people's awareness about their rights and supporting them to claim those rights (i.e to fair compensation in case of land recovery). Their contribution is also significant in strengthening the dialogue between the authorities and the rural population.

Recommendations

- More emphasis should be given to the formulation of a well-articulated and detailed project proposal in order to ensure a good understanding of both parties of the content of each activity and the results expected.
- A solid monitoring and evaluation system, including a baseline survey and few key indicators would have encouraged a more effective implementation of all the project dimensions (legal education, legal support and advocacy). Furthermore, it would have contributed to build stronger evidence to advocate for the continuation of the project activities upon the finalization of the project.
- ADDA should provide closer guidance to VLA on certain areas where VLA's capacities are weaker, in particular advocacy and progress reporting. In addition to that it is advisable that ADDA reviews all training materials prior to the trainings as a quality control mechanism.
- VLA at local and central level and ADDA should improve the records of the activities implemented. Information such as the agenda, training material or the number of participants should be collected for each activity.
- A deeper understanding of the reasons behind the low number of court cases resolved should be developed before the definition of future proposals. Bottlenecks in both demand and supply side should be analysed.
- Efforts to contribute to improve the sustainability of the project should be carried out from the beginning of the project. Active engagement with higher level authorities, dissemination of the project activities among other donors and support to VLA in the design of project proposals are some of the activities that could have been implemented.

Lessons learned

- Coverage vs depth. The intervention reached 673 villages. In most cases mobile legal aid clinics were conducted only once. Building legal knowledge and support communities in solving legal issues requires longer-term commitment. Supporting materials such as handbooks are considered by village heads and CBO effective tools to support the continuation of their learning. For the community people direct legal support seems more efficient.
- Demand driven selection of topics increases the relevance of the learning activities. This participatory approach is therefore a good practice to be continued for future trainings.
- Legal contests resulted in effective ways of building legal knowledge and communication skills as well as a suitable activity to encourage the legal clubs.

- Legal education and legal advice should target not only the rural population but also local authorities. The capacity building of and legal support given by the project to the duty bearers contributed to solve issues at the community level and increased their support to the project activities.
- Careful selection of local facilitators. Due to the important role they will play between the communities and the LCCs it proved very important to select facilitators with adequate knowledge and skills.
- Literacy levels and language skills should be carefully taken into account in the design of training or communication activities. Other strategies should be explored such as the collaboration with young people from the community who have a higher level of Vietnamese and who can support in explaining the legal content to other people in the communities.
- A good understanding of the LCC's roles among the local authorities and community people can help to pave the way for an effective programme implementation.

1. Introduction

The project “Legal Aid to the Rural Population, Phase II” builds on a previous project formulated by ADDA under the DANIDA initiative “Good Governance”. Both projects have been implemented by the Vietnam Lawyers Association in rural provinces in the North of the country. The project phase II has been carried out in Dien Bien and Hoa Binh since 2011 and in Son La since May 2012.

Three months before the project comes to an end, ADDA has commissioned this evaluation with the main purpose of collecting evidence to support advocacy on the provision of such participatory legal aid services to poor rural population in general and ethnic minorities in particular. It is envisaged that the results will be used to support the sustainability of the activities upon the finalization of the project.

The evaluation report is structured in five sections. After the introduction, Section 2 describes the intervention including the beneficiaries and the problems the project sought to address. It also explains the results framework and implementation strategies, the main stakeholders and the financial and resources. Finally, it briefly describes the context of the intervention. Section 3 contains information about the evaluation scope, objectives, criteria and questions. It also describes the selected methodological approaches and methods used for the evaluation. Section 4 explains the findings from the desk review, the survey and the interviews conducted for this evaluation. Finally, Section 5 offers conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations.

Box 1. Legal services in Vietnam¹

In accordance with the Law on Lawyers, there are four forms of legal services in Vietnam:

(a) *legal consulting*: It means services which include providing legal information and advice on solutions, rendering opinions, and drafting legal related documents for those who request such services. These services can be provided via phone, mobile legal service, legal topic discussions, etc.

¹ This box is included to help external readers of the evaluation understand the concepts used in the report and some important elements regarding the context of legal services in Vietnam.

(b) *litigation services*: In case anyone is prosecuted or has a case taken to the Court, he/she can seek the support of a legal service provider. The legal service provider, subject to his competence stipulated by the laws, may act as defender in the whole litigation process or legal representative of its client at the Court.

(c) *off-procedural representation*: The legal service provider can act as legal representative by a power of attorney issued by the client in any matters and transactions required. Being as such legal representative, the service provider can meet, contact, discuss with people and organizations, including Government authorities, and make decisions and sign any documents on behalf of the client subject to its competence stated in the issued power of attorney. The laws, however, provide for certain matters whereby such representation service is excluded, e.g. marriage and criminal matters

(d) *other legal services*. The Law on Lawyer and Law on Legal Aid specify various matters on which one can request for support of a lawyer or other legal service providers. Such support can include handling of administrative procedures, document certification and translation services

- In addition to the services identified by the Law on Lawyers and Law on Legal Aid, *legal awareness and dissemination of legal information* (also called legal education or legal popularization and propaganda) is a regular legal activity closely related to the ones mentioned above. The objective is to inform target groups about the content of relevant laws, their rights and responsibilities as well as about legal procedures and contacts for legal support. These services are provided by State agencies, the legal professionals and also by civil society organizations, staff or individuals with specific competence, ability and practical experience in law.
- Legal aid in Vietnam can be exercised via such forms as mobile legal aid which is increasingly popular especially in rural and remote areas. Mobile legal aid combines legal consulting and dissemination. One useful form of mobile aid involves talks on legal subjects of local people's interest. Through such talks, people understand better about their rights, recognize violations of their rights and demand legal aid
- The legal framework has been expanded which allows some other entities besides lawyers to provide legal services. Registered and certified legal counsellors are allowed to provide legal consultation.
- Under the laws, except for lawyers who are entitled to individual legal practice, legal services must be registered to be provided by an organization such as law firm, Provincial Legal Aid Centers and Legal Consulting Centers under a so-called "social - political organization, a social — political — professional organization, a social — professional organization" or an educational or research institution in law.
- Legal aid clubs at communal level are "community-based organizations providing legal aid for communal people through disseminating legal knowledge, legal consultation and resolving conflicts." These are voluntary organizations, consisting of knowledgeable and respected people in the commune.

2. Description of the intervention:

The project "Legal Aid for the Rural Population" was designed under the framework of the special DANIDA initiative on the involvement of NGOs in "Good Governance" in the public

sector. Consisting of two phases (2007-2010, 2011-2014), the project seeks to improve rural populations' access to legal services and participation in policy development.

The second phase was formulated with the participation of the VLA (central and provincial level) and local authorities (district people's committees and members of the Department of Justice at the provincial level) and building upon the findings and lessons learnt from phase I.

During phase I, according to ADDA sources, local communities improved their access to legal information through the mobile legal aid clinics and the establishment of a network of locally based facilitators. These strategies proved to be particularly adequate in a context of remote groups with very limited access to information and services. In addition to those activities, the first phase also included legal support within the Legal Consulting Centres (LCC) in the three provinces and the facilitation of dialogue between local authorities and the rural population in relation to the development of the socio-economic development plans.

Box 2. Main conclusions from phase I²

- There is a strongly expressed need for legal information and assistance in the remote area inhabited by ethnic minorities.
- The mobile legal aid clinics are effective means of communication with the remote living population.
- The mobile legal aid clinics are very popular with the target group and with the local authorities.
- The Legal Consultation Centers (LCCs) in the provinces are getting more and more known and are thus being used more and more.
- It has been difficult to encourage the population to raise their ideas on local planning without any specific introduction of the opportunities.
- There is still a big need for advocacy towards local authorities for the people's participation in the development of local planning and in preparation of local regulations or policies. To the possible extend the project should support the local population and already existing FGs in getting into dialogue with the local authorities.
- The support to CBOs is very efficient and more sophisticated than the assistance to the individuals in the villages. The CBOs are more interested in getting assistance to their business programmes.
- The involvement of the mass-organisation has proven to be efficient. Therefore there is a need to further involve the mass-organisations in dissemination of the legal information and in organising training events for CBOs and village heads.

The project is implemented in three Northern mountainous provinces: Dien Bien, Son La and Hoa Binh. Within each province 3 districts, not beneficiaries of the first phase of the project, were selected, namely: a) Muong Ang, Dien Bien Dong and Tua Chua (Dien Bien); b) Muong La, Thuan Chau and Quynh Nhai (Son La); c) Kim Boi, Cao Phong and Da Bac (Hoa Binh)

Out of the 9 districts 5 are classified as belonging to the very poorest parts of Vietnam. Within the 9 districts the project sought to assist 400 villages with approximately 20.000 people.

² Legal aid to the rural population. Phase II. Project document

The project main focus lies at the community level with a few activities at the provincial and district level. The primary target is the poor and disadvantaged population in the rural area of these three provinces, with particular attention to ethnic minorities. In the 3 provinces, the percentage of ethnic people in the total population is above 60 per cent.

Table 1: Data on ethnic population in the three provinces

Province	Total population	No. of ethnic groups	Ethnic % of total population
Dien Bien	491,046	21	78%
Son La	1,080,641	12	75%
Hoa Binh	786,964	7	65%

Box 3. Findings from baseline survey on local people’s knowledge in local planning, conducted for phase I in Dien Bien, Lao Cai and Lai Chau³

- Villagers consider village heads as the main source of information on local policies. Officers of local government authorities, mass organizations and mass media are other important sources of information.
- Villagers express their interest on getting information about policies that affect their daily lives and demand more participation in local planning. They are also interested in participating in inspection, supervision of cadres and civil servants.
- The Ordinance on Grassroots Democracy has brought some benefits in people’s participation. However, participation should be further encouraged.
- The methods authorities use to share information on legal and policy issues are often not adequate.



Road to reach project targeted areas

Living in isolated and remote locations and with limited ability in speaking Vietnamese, ethnic minority people in the targeted locations had very limited access to legal information and consequently low awareness of their rights. They also have poor knowledge about relevant policies.

Furthermore, the legal and policy framework is rapidly changing. In particular the legal and policy provisions on access to land, land use and land tenure have gone through a major change in the last years.

Land being land a critical issue for the rural people, and for ethnic minorities in particular, the need to access

³ Project phase I was implemented in Dien Bien, Lao Cai and Lai Chau. Phase II targets Dien Bien (different districts to the ones included in phase I), Son La and Hoa Binh. In the absence of baseline information on the locations targeted in phase II, data on the situation of provinces which share similar characteristics are considered as an indirect reference to understand better the situation regarding the local people’s knowledge on the local planning.

comprehensive and updated information about regulations and policies on land and legal assistance to support ethnic minorities to protect their rights was identified as the issue to be addressed by the intervention in the three provinces.

For each province the project document identifies the following most important specific problems:

- Dien Bien: land use and allocation of land; difficulties in obtaining land certificates; sanctions related to drug addiction; HIV/AIDS.
- Son La: construction of Hydropower dams and resettlement. Shortage of arable land to compensate those affected and lack of services in resettlement areas.
- Hoa Binh: same as Son La.

In the 3 provinces, there are Provincial Legal Aid Centers (LACs) established under the Ministry of Justice. These centers are the main responsible government services for providing pro bono service to the vulnerable people. However, the financial resources they receive are not sufficient to cover the legal demands from the vulnerable groups.

The project “Legal Aid to the Rural Population, Phase II” is designed to respond to the needs of these populations living in the socio-economic context briefly described.

The project seeks to create an enabling environment for marginalized people to have increased access to legal information and assistance. The project strategy consists of the combination of a series of elements to support the creation of this enabling environment, including:

- **Legal education to people:** Through mobile legal aid clinics and training workshops, beneficiaries will improve their level of information on their legal rights and the opportunities given to them within the policy framework. Being more aware of their rights, they will be better prepared to protect themselves or to look for legal support.
- **Training to VLA, local facilitators and CBOs** so there are more people who are also better equipped to serve the target population.

The training covered the following contents: Legal consulting methodologies; Communication and operation in the villages; civil law; land administration laws; administrative laws, grass root democracy opportunities; business opportunities and establishment of cooperatives, Participatory methodologies, organisational management.

With their knowledge and skills strengthened the project expected that the CBOs would better support the village members in legal matters and communicate the needs of the community to local authorities.

- **Legal consulting, representation or litigation:** direct legal support to be offered free of charge so people are not deterred of looking for legal redress due to financial constraints.
- Fostering **policy dialogue** between local communities and authorities.

The following table summarizes the defined objectives and outputs as well as the indicators that were selected to measure their progress and achievement and the planned activities per output.

Table 2. Objectives, outputs, indicators and planned activities.

Development objective: Local authorities and legal entities in Dien Bien, Hoa Binh, and Son La are incorporating the special concerns and difficulties of land laws, the legal rights and opportunities in general of the ethnic minorities in their implementation strategies.

Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Specific new initiatives within the legal sector regarding clarifications on access to land issued by the Government for the benefit of the ethnic minorities in the rural area are being implemented. ▪ Frequent dialogue between decision making authorities and the population in concern takes place ▪ Successes from initiatives on legal assistance to the ethnic minorities and poor rural population are communicated to the national level for policy development
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Immediate objective: By 2014 the poor people of ethnic minorities in the selected 9 target districts of Hoa Binh, Son La, and Dien Bien are making use of their legal rights and they are able to approach the relevant authorities when conflicts/disputes occur

Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CBOs are actively approaching either the legal aid centre or the Department of Justice for assistance on legal matters related to business opportunities ▪ The legal consulting centres in the province and the network of facilitators are frequently being used by people in need of legal assistance related to land rights ▪ The legal consulting centres in the province and the network of facilitators are equipped/trained to assist the peoples requirement on legal aspects in general ▪ The target population express satisfaction with the possibilities for getting legal assistance on land laws issues, laws on marriage and heritage, civil laws and laws on cooperatives and businesses, and other legal issues.
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Output 1. VLA and 15 other relevant organization (6 mass organisations and 9 legal entities) is working with the legal rights for the civil society have increased capacity in mobilisation of the local communities and awareness raising on legal aspects in general and on land laws in particular.

Indicators	Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff at the VLA have specialised as legal consultants within certain areas of the legal aspects ▪ The legal consulting centres in the province and the network of facilitators are equipped/trained to assist the peoples requirements on legal aspects ▪ 15 other organisations (6 mass organisations and 9 legal entities) are able to cooperate with VLA in legal aspects at local level ▪ Booklets and handbooks on targeted legal issues have been prepared for layman to read ▪ VLA is being consulted by other organisations or authorities on law strategies and policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set up network of 75 community facilitators who will work at commune level ▪ Provide community facilitators with skills on how to provide legal consulting and dissemination, PRA and accessing the communities ▪ Train the 75 community facilitators in land laws and land administrative issues, administrative laws incl. Democracy at grass root level, civil laws, incl. Marriage, heritage, divorce etc. And on establishment of cooperatives and business units ▪ Provide 135 VLA staff and staff from 15 collaborating organizations with skills on how to perform legal consulting and dissemination, on civil laws, incl. Marriage, heritage, divorce etc, in land laws and land administrative issues, on administrative laws incl. Democracy at grass root level and on establishment of cooperatives and business units ▪ Prepare 2000 legal handbooks for VLA departments and other relevant organisations working with communities ▪ Train organization leaders in organizational management

Output 2. Marginalised and poor people from rural areas have received relevant information on their legal rights in general and land law in particular.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ By January 2012 one consulting law centre is operating free of charge for users in each target provinces. ▪ The target population is able to distinguish between village regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify the 75 target communes and districts of project provinces ▪ Establish 400 mobile legal aid clinics to provide legal assistance to villagers in need ▪ Provide individual legal consultancies in 80 cases ▪ Conduct 3 legal right information campaigns in mass media
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<p>and official law and regulations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The target population is familiar with the official laws on issues of land use, marriage and family, civil relationship, criminal subjects and democracy at grassroots level, and other legal issues. ▪ Local people, who have legal concerns, are aware of legal procedures for bringing their case to competent agencies and to court. ▪ Updated legal information is available for interested people in the target provinces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Edit and re-publish 15,000 legal handbooks for the partners, facilitators and village heads ▪ Edit and re-publish 15,000 legal handbooks for households in simple language ▪ Support the operation of 3 “legal consulting centres” in targeted provinces ▪ Support the operation of “legal consulting centres” in LCC premises in Hanoi ▪ Provide legal assistance to local people in the office of the legal consulting centres ▪ Organise 12 contests on legal knowledge among local people ▪ Organise 9 workshop on the roles of Lawyers and Attorneys at law in protecting legal right for ethnic minorities esp. Poor people
<p>Output 3. Locally established CBOs have received support in legal aspects in general and on plantations and access to land in particular</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The local groups, especially ethnic communities are frequently in dialogue with local authorities on conflict resolutions and other legal matters ▪ The local authorities are making use of the community based groups for advise on local development planning ▪ An overview of the mechanism of the plantation problem is in place and related information available ▪ The CBOs are actively approaching the legal centres for assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct training courses for 1215 “Village heads” on legal aspects ▪ Provide an overview of existing CBO in the 3 provinces ▪ Set up 45 Law Clubs in selected villages ▪ Provide support to the operation of the 45 law clubs ▪ Support to law clubs for establishment of 75 legal aspects libraries ▪ Conduct training courses for 405 managers of CBOs and law clubs on legal aspects ▪ Conduct 120 mobile legal aids for CBOs with focus on access to land⁴ ▪ Assessment on legal aspect of the industrial plantation problems in the areas to protect legal rights and benefits for local people ▪ Recommend proposals to local authorities through 3 workshops ▪ Provide legal consultation by themes for 50 CBOs at law clubs ▪ Provide the 50 CBOs with legal information on land laws and business opportunities/procedures
<p>Output 4. People, or CBOs, that explicitly have experienced injustice in legal issues, have been assisted by mediation or by assistance in court by VLA</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide legal aid free of charge for 400 people in need at centres in target provinces and LCC ▪ On behalf of the ethnic minorities to represent these in mediation/negotiation and other dispute resolution services with individuals and organizations ▪ On behalf of the ethnic minorities to represent these in at least 60 cases and bring selected cases to competent authorities for resolution ▪ Defend and protect the legal rights for minimum 60 people of ethnic minorities, poor people and other disadvantaged people in criminal procedure authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide legal aid free of charge for 400 people in need at centres in target provinces and LCC ▪ On behalf of the ethnic minorities to represent these in mediation/negotiation and other dispute resolution services with individuals and organizations ▪ On behalf of the ethnic minorities to represent these in at least 60 cases and bring selected cases to competent authorities for resolution ▪ Defend and protect the legal rights for minimum 60 people of ethnic minorities, poor people and other disadvantaged people in criminal procedure authorities

⁴ These Mobile legal aid clinics target CBOs set up during phase I. They are conducted in different locations than the Mobile legal aid clinics mentioned in output 2.

Output 5. Authorities have been approached by VLA, the local population or CBOs for improved legislation and policies concerning the ethnic minority, the poor and the marginalised population

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minutes of meetings between VLA and various decision makers ▪ The content of the proposed strategies presented by VLA towards various decisionmakers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advocate, through 9 workshops, towards local decision-makers in project provinces to make use of people’s ideas in the land law administration ▪ Encourage and organize 150 meetings between the rural population in project provinces and local authorities to discuss opportunities on certain aspects within the existing laws⁵. ▪ Organize 150 meetings between local authorities and local people to get ideas/comments from the population on the new development strategies ▪ Organize 150 meetings between local authorities and local people to encourage the population to formulate proposals to the local government ▪ Promote the respect for rights and the rule of law in project provinces through 3 Campaigns ▪ Gather information on the need and requirements of the rural poor population in project provinces through 1 survey ▪ Conduct 9 workshop to contribute idea on legal documents relating to ethnic minorities
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Several stakeholders were involved in the implementation of the project with the following roles:

Table 3. Roles of project’ stakeholders

Stakeholders	Roles
1 Project manager (part time, LCC Hanoi)	General coordination of the project activities
1 Project director (part time, LCC Hanoi)	Responsible for the achievement of the expected results
3 Lawyers and 5 jurists	Provide legal aid to poor citizens (legal advice, representation, defense) and disseminate legal knowledge through training workshops and mobile legal aid events.
3 LCC office managers (one in each province)	Overall coordination of the project in each province.
3 attorneys (one in each province)	Lawyers from the Bar Association in each province. They support MLAC and provide legal advice at the office or via the phone. They also coordinate the legal activities in each province
Legal consultants	Qualified lawyers recruited ad hoc for specific activities (i.e. training on the new Land Law)
Local facilitators	Support in the organisation of the activities, especially the “mobile legal aid clinics”, the dissemination of information and conducting the surveys
Leaders and members of CBOs	Beneficiaries of trainings and mobile legal aid clinics

⁵ This activity and the following two are formulated as different activities but in fact they are the same activity.

Village heads	Beneficiaries of trainings and mobile legal aid clinics
Rural populations	Beneficiaries of mobile legal aid clinics
Local authorities	Participants in workshops on key legal and policy issues for the rural population Subjects of advocacy by VLA and CBO regarding the reform of the design of implementation of policies

The budget for this project amounts a total of USD 999.196, distributed in the following budget lines:

Table 4. Project budget

Budget line	Amount in DKK	Amount in USD
Activities	3.880.950	646.825
Investments	140.000	23.333
Local employee	661.900	110.317
Local administration	286.000	47.667
Project monitoring	171.000	28.500
Project evaluation	84.500	14.083
Information in Denmark	68.000	11.333
Contingencies	264.618	44.103
Auditing	46.000	7.667
Administration in Denmark	392.208	65.368
Total	5.995.175	999.196

The Danida funding covered: means for arranging village support and meetings; surveys; training of group representatives and facilitators, translation, information material and campaigns, monitoring and evaluation, audits, participation in workshops, operational costs of Legal Consulting Centres, electronic equipment, project staff, project adviser.

During the implementation the following changes were made:

- Meetings between local people and local authorities. As the logic framework was not sufficiently clear (150 meetings were mentioned three times) it was agreed that the total number of meetings between local authorities and the communities supported by the project would be 180.
- Modification of transportation costs. The project targeted villages located in remote locations. The estimation of the distance and costs to access those locations was miscalculated in the design of the project so VLA had difficulties to cover the expenses incurred in reaching those locations. In 2012 ADDA and VLA agreed on increasing transportation costs.

- Extension of the project area beyond the already selected 75 communes.
- Increased numbers of legal handbooks for village heads and households to cover the entire project area.
- Reduce from 60 to 40 the number of cases of litigation to be solved with the legal assistance from the project due to the difficulty in identifying the cases.
- Merge the content from activity '3.09 Recommend proposals to local authorities through workshops' with activity '5.07 Conduct workshops to contribute idea on legal documents relating to ethnic minorities' as the participants are the same and the content related. The budget surplus from this merging of activities was then invested in activity 5.01 "Advocate towards local decision-makers in project provinces to make use of people's ideas in the land law administration".

3. Evaluation scope, objectives, approach and methods

This evaluation aims to collect objective information about the results and impact of the project "Legal aid for the rural population, phase II" with the purpose of using it to advocate to the Government and other stakeholders to increase the provision of legal assistance and legal education to the poor people and ethnic minorities living in remote locations through a more participatory approach.

The consultancy team and ADDA team agreed to focus on 4 evaluation criteria (relevance, efficiency, impact and sustainability) and a few questions for each of those criteria. Those questions defined the information that the evaluation sought to generate. The following evaluation matrix shows each of the criteria, the evaluation questions per criteria, as well as the indicators, sources and data collection methods. This matrix was used as a general guide for the evaluation. It provided directions for the evaluation; particularly the collect of relevant data. It was also used as a basis for interviewing people and reviewing programme documents.

Table 5. Evaluation matrix

Evaluation criteria: Relevance- How does the project relate to the needs of the targets groups?				
Evaluation component	Sub-question	Indicators	Sources	Data method collection
Does the project contribute to the national or local policies?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does the project support national or local policies? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree of coherence between the project and national or local policies or strategies Appreciation from local authorities with respect to adequacy of the project design to the implementation of policies 	National and local policy documents. Local authorities	Document analysis Interviews
Is the project addressing the needs of target beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does the project address the needs of target beneficiaries? Were the local beneficiaries and stakeholders adequately involved in the project design and implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appreciation from target beneficiaries with respect to adequacy of the project design to their existing needs. Coherence between the evidence available on the needs of target population (i.e . external reports) and the project intervention. 	Beneficiaries Literature available	Interviews and survey Document analysis
Evaluation criteria: Effectiveness- To what extent are the expected outcomes of the project being achieved?				
Evaluation	Sub-question	Indicators	Sources	Data

component				method collection
<p>How is the project effective in achieving its expected outcomes?</p>	<p>Is the project being effective in achieving its expected outcomes? Do outputs produced meet the required quality?</p> <p>1. Increased capacity in VLA and 15 other relevant organizations on mobilization of the local communities and awareness raising in general and on land laws in particular.</p> <p>2. Increased access by marginalised and poor people from rural areas to relevant information on their legal rights in general and land law in particular.</p> <p>3. Improved dialogue between CBOS and local authorities in general and on plantations and access to land in particular.</p> <p>4. Improved access to justice among people, particularly EM, or CBOs who have experience violations of their rights.</p> <p>5. Improved dialogue among VLA, the local populations, CBOs and the authorities on legal and policy issues regarding ethnic</p>	<p>1.a Change in the VLA's level of specialization on certain legal aspects 1.b Change in the knowledge and skills of the provincial LCC staff and local facilitators to assist rural people on legal aspects. 1.c Change in the level of collaboration between VLA and 15 other organizations to address legal issues at the local level.</p> <p>2.a Change in the level of knowledge of the target population with the official laws on issues of land use, marriage and family, other legal issues. 2.b. Change in the beneficiaries' accessibility to reader friendly legal information on relevant legal issues. 2.c Change in the level of knowledge of the target population with the legal procedures for bringing their cases to competent agencies and to court.</p> <p>3.1 Change in the knowledge and skills of CBOs' staff and village heads in various legal subjects to mediate/moderate conflicts within their community. 3.2 Change in the level of engagement of CBOs on local planning development. 3.3 Change in the frequency and quality of dialogue between ethnic communities and local authorities on legal issues.</p> <p>4.1 No. of people/CBOs who received free legal aid in the target provinces and LCC 4.2 No. of ethnic minorities or poor people who were represented by LCC staff in mediation/negotiation or other dispute resolution services. 4.3 No. of ethnic minorities or poor people whose rights were protected by the LCC staff through criminal procedures authorities.</p> <p>5.1 Change in the frequency and quality of the dialogue between VLA, the local populations, CBOs and the authorities on legal and policy issues. - No. of meetings. - No. of concrete legal and policy proposal brought by the VLA, local populations and CBOs - No of changes conducted on local policies following advice by VLA, local populations or CBOs.</p>	<p>Project documents Project staff Beneficiaries</p>	<p>Document analysis Survey Interviews</p>

	minorities, the poor and the marginalized populations.			
Evaluation criteria: Impacts- What are the realized and potential impacts of activities carried out in the context of the project?				
How was the project effective in achieving its objectives?	<p>To what extent will the project achieve its objectives?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Local authorities and legal entities in Dien Bien, Hoa Binh, and Son La are in cooperating the special concerns and difficulties of land laws, the legal rights and opportunities in general of the ethnic minorities in their implementation strategies.</i> ▪ <i>By 2014 the poor people of ethnic minorities in the selected 9 target districts of Hoa Binh, Son La, and Dien Bien are making use of their legal rights and they are able to approach the relevant authorities when conflicts/disputes occur</i> 	<p>Examples of changes in policy implementation practices by local authorities that incorporate the concerns of ethnic minority groups.</p> <p>Examples of poor people from ethnic minority groups who fulfilled their rights with the support from their project and/or who approached the relevant authorities when conflicts/dispute occur.</p>	Project documents Project staff Beneficiaries	Document analysis Survey Interviews
Evaluation criteria: Sustainability- What are the probabilities that the project achievements will continue in the long run?				
Are project achievements sustainable?	Are the necessary preconditions being created to ensure the sustainability of impacts of the project?	Degree to which project activities have been taken over by VLA or CBOs. Evidence of commitments from government or other stakeholders to sustain project achievements in the long run. Mechanisms in place to sustain achievements.	Project staff	Interviews
Are project achievements financially sustainable	<p>Does the project adequately address financial sustainability issues?</p> <p>Are the recurrent costs after project completion sustainable?</p>	Level and source of financial support to be provided to activities after the project ends. Evidence of commitment from government or other stakeholders to financially support relevant sectors of activity after programme ends.	Project staff	Interviews

To collect the above information the designed methodology encompassed different data collection tools:

a) Desk review of all relevant information: The documentary analysis included the review of project proposal; technical monitoring reports, data on the LCC's activity (database, solved cases after the establishment, etc.); training and communication materials.

b) Survey for mobile legal aid clinics participants: A survey was selected as an appropriate tool for this project assessment taking into account the high number of mobile legal aid participants and the limited budget and time for this consultancy. It allowed collecting homogenous information from a broader range of participants whom the consultant would not have been able to meet for individual interviews.

A questionnaire and a short and clear set of instructions was designed by the consultancy team and distributed to local facilitators in the three provinces. 2 local supporters with knowledge about the project were selected in each province to distribute and collect the questionnaire among training activities participants. The questionnaire was anonymous, short and simple (see Annex).

Table 6. Number of questionnaires distributed and collected per province

	Number of questionnaires distributed	Number of questionnaires collected
Hoa Binh	60	29
Son La	45	15
Dien Bien	25	25

During the field visit the consultant met with the local facilitators and explained their role and the content of the questionnaire. 69 questionnaires returned by post were collected and analysed by the consultants. A key factor behind the difference in the number of questionnaire distributed and collected was the difficult access to the rural communities.

c) In-depth interviews with 73 representatives from the different groups of stakeholders (LCC, legal club members, trainees, etc). A sample of key informants was selected in collaboration with the VLA manager and director. The consultant, following a semi-structure guide, interviewed them. (See field visit agenda and sample of questionnaire in annex)



Local facilitator (on the right) is translating questions of consultancy team.

During the evaluation, the consultants faced the following difficulties:

- Absence of external documents and studies on provision and usage of legal services as well assessment on access to legal services in the targeted locations so no alternative and additional sources of information could be used to complement the information obtained from the project.

- Lack of baseline: A baseline survey was conducted under phase I, targeting the provinces of Dien Bien, Lao Cai and Lai Chau and focusing exclusively on people’s knowledge on local planning. There was no baseline data collected before the phase II started.
- Lack of systematic results monitoring: During the implementation of the project the technical assistance from ADDA office in Viet Nam was limited. Reporting was carried out quarterly but it was mostly activity based with very limited information about the results obtained.
- Language barriers prevented the consultancy team to communicate directly with some participants. VLA staff and local facilitators supported the work of the consultants whenever it was needed. However, this may have had an impact on people’s responses.
- Low level of legal literacy by village heads and CBO leaders. During the interviews the consultant realized that the level of knowledge on legal issues and terminology was less than expected so he had to adapt the questionnaire and use some of the questions that had been formulated in a simpler form in the questionnaire for rural population.
- Limited time available to conduct the evaluation in the three provinces. For this reason the consultancy team selected few locations targeted by the project and planned the collaboration of local facilitators for the collection of information through a small survey. Field study was conducted in 2 districts out of 3 for each province, 6 districts in total. In each district the consultancy team conducted in-depth interview and distributed questionnaires in 2-3 different villages.

4. Findings

Relevance

- *Degree of coherence between the project and national or local policies or strategies*
- *Appreciation from local authorities with respect to adequacy of the project design to the implementation of policies*
- *Appreciation from target beneficiaries with respect to adequacy of the project design to their existing needs.*
- *Coherence between the evidence available on the needs of target population (i.e . external reports) and the project intervention.*
- *What lessons have been learnt and what changes could have been made to the project in order to strengthen the alignment between the project and national/local policies and/or between the project and beneficiaries needs?*

The project is consistent with the priorities and guidance established by the national and policy framework. Prioritization of free legal aid for poor people and ethnic minority people in disadvantaged areas is included, among others, in the following documents:

i) Law No. 69/2006/QH11 on Legal Aid (Art.10) and its implementing Decree no.77/2008/NĐ-CP issued on 16/7/2008 by the Government on legal consultancy.

ii) Resolution No. 80 on sustainable poverty reduction 2011-2020; Decision No. 59/2012/QĐ-TTg on legal aid policy for poors, ethnic minorities in poor communes in the period 2013 – 2020 and

iii) Recently, the Prime Minister promulgated Decision 1133/QĐ-TTg which empowers VLA to conduct the program on “Socialization of legal teaching and legal aid: period 2013-2016”. The program’s mainstream is to provide an alternative mechanism (based on local entities) to deliver the legal information at grass roots level. This, as the Director of LCC in Dien Bien said, is “*in line with the legal clubs which are currently operated by VLA with the support of ADDA*”.

In addition, there are numerous legal documents about the legal aid to EM such as:

iv) Decision 52/QĐ-UBND on propaganda about laws on EM areas specifically prescribes legal education on important issues for EM such as land, forest, domestic violence prevention and control, grassroots democracy, etc.

v) Joint Circular No. 01/2012/TTLT-BTP-UBND of the Ministry of Justice and the Committee for Ethnic Minorities guiding legal aid for ethnic minority people, which requires that EM people are given legal aid in “their own language upon request or in case that they can not speak Vietnamese” or to “simplify administrative procedures and manners of implementing legal aid in order to support ethnic minorities in accessing and using legal aid” (art. 3).

During the interviews local authorities pointed out other contributions from the project to the implementation of national or local policies:

- a) Grassroots Democracy Ordinance: According to Article 10 and 11 of Ordinance No.34/2007/PL-UBTVQH11 on exercise of democracy in communes, wards and townships, people have the right to discuss and decide on the issues relating to construction of public facilities which are financially contributed by them, wholly or partially. The project supports this policy by operating numerous dialogues between rural population and the local authority. The field visit has shown that 100% of people interviewed at targeted areas think that they have more chance to meet and discuss with local authority about local issues than before.
- b) Other laws and policies such as the land law, resettlement policy, program 135, 30A, etc. By disseminating and providing a clear understanding of their content the project contributes to the effective implementation.

Regarding the coherence between the project intervention and the target population needs, the interviews showed that the project design is aligned to the different needs of several targeted groups:

a) Rural population’s needs:

The survey and interviews conducted during the evaluation showed that prior to the implementation of ADDA/VLA project the targeted population had limited information about the legal and policy framework. Out of 87 people, 67 answered that they have no or limited knowledge.

The main source of legal information for the rural population is the local authorities. They often do not provide updated, comprehensive and easy to understand information. The intervention provides an alternative source of legal and policy information in the targeted locations to the local authorities. Beneficiaries highlighted the importance of receiving information from different informed stakeholders so they can better understand their rights and not exclusively rely on the information provided by the authorities. As explained in Dien Bien, “*people tend to trust lawyers from LCC rather than the explanation from the authority*”

Table 7. Results from survey and interviews about rural population level of knowledge on law and policy prior to the trainings

Level of knowledge on law/policy before the trainings	Hoa Binh	Dien Bien	Son La
Have no access to law/policy	3	4	4

Limited information	19	20	17
Some information	13	7	0
A lot of information	0	0	0

b) *CBOs and village heads's needs.* At the community level small conflicts are usually solved by the conciliation team of each village before being brought to the local authority. Members of CBOs and village heads are usually part of the conciliation team. Before the ADDA/VLA project was implemented, their knowledge about the legal and policy framework was low so they often faced difficulties in advising people on how to solve the conflicts.

Results from interviews with CBOs and village heads show that 38 out of 39 considered that their knowledge on legal and policy issues was deficient before the project started.

Table 8. Results from interviews with CBO and village heads on level of legal knowledge

Level of knowledge on law/policy before the trainings	Hoa Binh	Son La	Dien Bien
Have no access to law/policy	0	0	1
Limited information	19	10	9
Some information	0	0	0
A lot of information	0	0	0

The project counted on the participation of local facilitators from the target communities who played a critical role in supporting the LCCs at the community level. They were usually members of CBOs. Their knowledge on law and policies was also low (5 out of 7 people answered that they had limited knowledge before the project activities were implemented).

Table 9. Results from interviews with local facilitators about their level of knowledge

		Hoa Binh	Son La	Dien Bien
Level of knowledge on law/policy before the trainings	Have no access to law/policy	0	0	0
	Limited information	2	2	1
	Some information	1	1	0
	A lot of information	0	0	0

b) *Local authorities' needs:* Local authorities face difficulties in explaining policies and laws to the population. The rationales for this come from the low education and legal knowledge of the majority of rural people. In addition, the authorities themselves have limited knowledge on the legal and policy framework. In the interviews participants pointed out to the important role that the LCC plays in supporting the authorities on educating the people about legal issues and consequently in supporting the effective implementation of laws and policies.

c) *LCC's needs:* the VLA legal consulting centers face financial, human resources and capacities constraints (updated legal knowledge, skills). The project sought to address those constraints. For example, in Son La, the lawyer conducting mobile legal aid clinics had never been trained on consulting skills or participatory training methods.

During the desk review the consultants have not found independent reports with evidence on the needs and real access, usage and impact of legal assistance by the groups targeted.

Effectiveness

The project aimed to achieve a number of changes in people's knowledge, skills and participation in policy dialogue. This sub-section reports the extent to which the project was successful in achieving those changes.

Before describing the changes, the next table shows the actual figures reached by the project for each of the activities:

Output 1. VLA and 15 other relevant organization (6 mass organisations and 9 legal entities) is working with the legal rights for the civil society have increased capacity in mobilisation of the local communities and awareness raising on legal aspects in general and on land laws in particular.	
Indicators	Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff at the VLA have specialised as legal consultants within certain areas of the legal aspects ▪ The legal consulting centres in the province and the network of facilitators are equipped/trained to assist the peoples requirements on legal aspects ▪ 15 other organisations (6 mass organisations and 9 legal entities) are able to cooperate with VLA in legal aspects at local level ▪ Booklets and handbooks on targeted legal issues have been prepared for layman to read ▪ VLA is being consulted by other organisations or authorities on law strategies and policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set up a network of 75 community facilitators who will work at commune level ▪ Provided 70 community facilitators with skills on how to provide legal consulting and dissemination, PRA and accessing the communities ▪ Trained 136 community facilitators in land laws and land administrative issues, administrative laws incl. Democracy at grass root level, civil laws, incl. Marriage, heritage, divorce etc. And on establishment of cooperatives and business units ▪ Provided VLA staff and staff from 10 collaborating organizations with skills on how to perform legal consulting and dissemination, on civil laws, incl. Marriage, heritage, divorce etc, in land laws and land administrative issues, on administrative laws incl. Democracy at grass root level and on establishment of cooperatives and business units ▪ Prepared 5,000 legal handbooks for VLA departments and other relevant organisations working with communities ▪ Trained leaders of 6 organizations in organizational management
Output 2. Marginalised and poor people from rural areas have received relevant information on their legal rights in general and land law in particular.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ By January 2012 one consulting law centre is operating free of charge for users in each target provinces. ▪ The target population is able to distinguish between village regulations and official law and regulations. ▪ The target population is familiar with the official laws on issues of land use, marriage and family, civil relationship, criminal subjects and democracy at grassroots level, and other legal issues. ▪ Local people, who have legal concerns, are aware of legal procedures for bringing their case to competent agencies and to court. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify the 75 target communes and districts of project provinces ▪ Establish 673 mobile legal aid clinics to provide legal assistance to villagers in need ▪ Provide individual legal consultancies in 66 cases ▪ Conduct 3 legal right information campaigns in mass media ▪ Edit and re-publish 10,000 legal handbooks for the partners, facilitators and village heads ▪ Edit and re-publish 27,500 legal handbooks for households in simple language ▪ Support the operation of 3 "legal consulting centres" in targeted provinces ▪ Support the operation of "legal consulting centres" in LCC premises in Hanoi ▪ Provide legal assistance to local people in the office of the legal consulting centres ▪ Organise 9 contests on legal knowledge among local people

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Updated legal information is available for interested people in the target provinces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organise 12 workshops on the roles of Lawyers and Attorneys at law in protecting legal right for ethnic minorities esp. Poor people
Output 3. Locally established CBOs have received support in legal aspects in general and on plantations and access to land in particular	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The local groups, especially ethnic communities are frequently in dialogue with local authorities on conflict resolutions and other legal matters ▪ The local authorities are making use of the community based groups for advise on local development planning ▪ An overview of the mechanism of the plantation problem is in place and related information available ▪ The CBOs are actively approaching the legal centres for assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct training courses for 1112“Village heads” on legal aspects ▪ Provide an overview of existing CBO in the 3 provinces ▪ Set up 45 Law Clubs in selected villages ▪ Provide support to the operation of the 45 law clubs ▪ Support to law clubs for establishment of 75 legal aspects libraries ▪ Conduct training courses for 369 managers of CBOs and law clubs on legal aspects ▪ Conduct 93 mobile legal aids for CBOs with focus on access to land⁶ ▪ Assessment on legal aspect of the industrial plantation problems in the areas to protect legal rights and benefits for local people ▪ Recommend proposals to local authorities through 3 workshops ▪ Provide legal consultation by themes for 85 CBOs at law clubs ▪ Provide the 50 CBOs with legal information on land laws and business opportunities/procedures
Output 4. People, or CBOs, that explicitly have experienced injustice in legal issues, have been assisted by mediation or by assistance in court by VLA	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide legal aid free of charge for 400 people in need at centres in target provinces and LCC ▪ On behalf of the ethnic minorities to represent these in mediation/negotiation and other dispute resolution services with individuals and organizations ▪ On behalf of the ethnic minorities to represent these in at least 60 cases and bring selected cases to competent authorities for resolution ▪ Defend and protect the legal rights for minimum 60 people of ethnic minorities, poor people and other disadvantaged people in criminal procedure authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide legal aid free of charge for 1637 people in need at centres in target provinces and LCC ▪ On behalf of the ethnic minorities to represent these in mediation/negotiation and other dispute resolution services with individuals and organizations ▪ On behalf of the ethnic minorities to represent these in at least 29 cases and bring selected cases to competent authorities for resolution ▪ Defend and protect the legal rights for minimum 29 people of ethnic minorities, poor people and other disadvantaged people in criminal procedure authorities
Output 5. Authorities have been approached by VLA, the local population or CBOs for improved legislation and policies concerning the ethnic minority, the poor and the marginalised population	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minutes of meetings between VLA and various decision makers ▪ The content of the proposed strategies presented by VLA towards various decisionmakers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advocate, through 9 workshops, towards local decision-makers in project provinces to make use of people’s ideas in the land law administration ▪ Encourage and organize 193 meetings between the rural population in project provinces and local authorities to discuss opportunities on certain aspects within the existing laws⁷. ▪ Organize 193 meetings between local authorities and local

⁶ These Mobile legal aid clinics target CBOs set up during phase I. They are conducted in different locations than the Mobile legal aid clinics mentioned in output 2.

⁷ This activity and the following two are formulated as different activities but in fact they are the same activity.

	<p>people to get ideas/comments from the population on the new development strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organize 193 meetings between local authorities and local people to encourage the population to formulate proposals to the local government ▪ Promote the respect for rights and the rule of law in project provinces through 3 Campaigns ▪ Gather information on the need and requirements of the rural poor population in project provinces through 1 survey ▪ Conduct 9 workshop to contribute idea on legal documents relating to ethnic minorities
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1.a and 1.b Change in the VLA's level of specialization on certain legal aspects and change in the knowledge and skills of the provincial LCC staff and local facilitators to assist rural people on legal aspects.

The project aimed at increasing the capacities of LCC staff and local facilitators (around 70 people) to address legal issues at the community level. In order to equip VLA staff with further knowledge, several training courses were organized:

Table 10. Summary of training activities targeting VLA and local facilitators

Objective	Date	Location/s	Training Content	Participants
<i>Strengthen the knowledge and skills of the provincial LCC staff and local facilitators to assist rural people on legal aspects</i>	24-29 April 2011	Dien Bien City	Skills in participatory methodologies	34 VLA staffs
	7-12 May 2011	Dien Bien City	Skills on PRA and accessing the communities	24 DB facilitators
	24-28 May 2011	Hoa Binh City	Skills on PRA and accessing the communities	23 HB facilitators
	11-13 June 2011	Hoa Binh City	Skills on how to provide legal consulting and dissemination	23 HB facilitators
	13-15 June 2011	Dien Bien City	Skills on how to provide legal consulting and dissemination	22 DB facilitators
	25-29 July 2011	Son La city	Skills on PRA and accessing the communities	24 SLA facilitators
	15-18 May 2012	Son La city	Skills on how to provide legal consulting and dissemination	25 SLA facilitators
	22-24 July 2012	Hoa Binh City	Updated law such as Law on Administrative Procedure, Complaint and Denunciations	27 VLA staffs
	18-21 June 2013	Hoa Binh City	Training in selected legal aspects (land issues, democratization etc.)	25 HB facilitators
	21-24 June 2013	Son La city	Training in selected legal aspects (land issues, democratization etc.)	23 SLA facilitators
	24-27 June 2013	Dien Bien City	Training in selected legal aspects (land issues, democratization etc.)	20 DB facilitators
	17-19 August 2013	Muong La District	New legal developments (land law, labour law, Conditions, regime and procedure to receive beneficiary from government	36 LCC staffs

			policies for wounded soldiers, families of martyrs, people with meritorious to the former revolution, victims of agent orange, invalids, et) and policies on legal aid	
	16-17 May 2014	Sapa	Land laws, civil codes, regulation on forest protection & development, married & family law, appeal & denounce law.	68 local facilitators in 3 provinces
	20-22 July 2014	Hanoi	Updated new land law & sharing working experiences	26 VLA staffs

The training content included updated and comprehensive information on key legal and policy documents for the rural population as well as skills development. The trainings included the participation of legal experts on the subjects from the Government or from other Lawyers Associations as well as with international experts on participatory capacity building methods.

During the interviews, LCC staff in the three provinces identified that, through the project, their training and communication skills have improved and they feel better equipped to train local facilitators, CBOs and village heads. Furthermore, they assessed that they are better prepared to provide legal advice with the updated legal information received from VLA.

The important role of the local facilitators in connecting LCC with rural population, CBOs and village heads was highlighted during interviews. During the field visit, consultants observed significant difference in the level of legal knowledge and understanding about the situation in their communes among local facilitators. During the interviews, most local facilitators assessed that they have an average knowledge on land law, family law, civil law and others. The knowledge on criminal law was still limited (but was not a focus legal area of the project)

Table 11. Self-assessment of level of legal knowledge of local facilitators after being trained

Level of knowledge after the training	Land Law	Family law	Civil Law	Criminal law	Other
[1] No, I do not understand anything about law or policies after the activities	0	0	0	0	0
[2] A little, I collect some useful information but I do not understand it clearly	3	0	1	5	2
[3] Average, the information is not too difficult. I can understand basic knowledge in various fields	4	7	6	2	5
[4] Totally clear about the knowledge of legal aspects	0	0	0	0	0

A local facilitator from Son La interviewed by the consultant highlighted the connection between the building of the legal knowledge of facilitators and the reduction of conflicts at the community level.

"I have participated in the project activities since the beginning. Until now, I have gained much knowledge on basic laws such as land law and law on complaints. I have provided advice to the rural population and witnessed the decrease of conflicts in my community"
(Local facilitator in Son La)

1.c Change in the level of collaboration between VLA and 15 other organizations to address legal issues at the local level.

The following table lists the organizations who have participated in the project.

Table 12. Organizations collaborating with the project

Dien Bien	Hoa Binh	Son La
Farmer Union	Farmer Union	Farmer Union
Women Union	Women Union	Women Union
Youth Union	Youth Union	Youth Union
Veterans Union	Veterans Union	Veterans Union
Father Land Front	Father Land Front	Fatherland Front
Cooperative Alliance	Cooperative Alliance	Cooperative Alliance
Red Cross Society	Red Cross Society	Red Cross Society
Association of the elderly	Association of the elderly	Association of the elderly
Confederation of Labours	Confederation of Labours	Confederation of Labours
Study Promotion Society of Việt Nam	Study Promotion Society of Việt Nam	Study Promotion Society of Việt Nam
Union of Former Volunteer Vietnamese Army	The association for the handicapped and orphans	Union of Former Volunteer Vietnamese Army
Associa. of Literature & Arts	Science & Technology Assoc.	Science & Technology Asso.
Journalist Association		

Prior to the start of the project, the LCC barely collaborated with these local organizations. During the interviews, both LCC and CBO representatives recognised a change in the level of collaboration between LCC and local organizations and valued it positively. In particular, the role of CBO in raising the attention of the LCC upon legal issues affecting the rural communities was highlighted.

2.a Change in the level of knowledge of the target population with the official laws on issues of land use, marriage and family, other legal issues.

Strengthening the legal knowledge of the target population is at the core of the project. Several activities were designed for that purpose:

- Information campaigns in the mass media were launched in Son La, Điện Biên and Hòa Bình. For example, in Son La the campaign was run in both Provincial Television for 4 days (on 8,10,11,12 of December 2013) and District Television in Mường La, Thuận Châu, Quỳnh Nhai for 3 days (on 8,10,12 of December).
- 9 contests on legal knowledge among local people were successfully organized in 9 districts Cao Phong, Kim Bôi, Đà Bắc (Hoa Binh), Mường La, Quỳnh Nhai, Thuận Châu (Son La) and Điện Biên Đông, Mường Ảng, Tủa Chùa (Dien Bien) with the participation of 45 legal clubs members.

Legal club members participated in a competition on legal knowledge on issues prioritized by the project (i.e. family law) and on skills on legal dissemination. 5 prizes were awarded (1st, 2nd, 3rd, consolation prize and prizes for the best solution and best aptitude).

- Mobile legal aid clinics: Two types of mobile legal aid clinics were organized: a) Mobile legal aid clinics for villagers. A total of 673 sessions were organized in the three provinces with the participation of approximately 28.000 people from 2011 to September 2014⁸; b) Mobile legal aid clinics for CBOs. A total of 193 sessions were organized in the three provinces with the participation of CBOs staff and farmers in Farmers group set up by ADDA from 2011 to September 2014.⁹

Prior to the mobile legal aid clinics, the legal consultants conducted small surveys to identify the most urgent legal concerns in the area and they prepared themselves on those issues. The sessions started with questions and answers from the rural population. After all questions were answered, and based on the issues raised, the lawyers provided additional legal information on the related regulations.

Interviews carried out during the evaluation showed the high appreciation from the rural population to the mobile legal aid clinics. The survey and in-depth interviews show a significant improvement in the level of knowledge of participants attending the mobile legal aid clinics. 51 people out of 77 people assessed that they are able to understand basic information.

Table 13. Results on the level of knowledge of rural population after mobile legal aid clinics

Level of knowledge on law/policy after the MLAC	Hoa Binh	Son La	Dien Bien
Gain nothing	0	0	0
Collect some information but not clearly	9	8	9
Understand basic information	26	13	22
Totally clear about the legal content explained through project activities	0	0	0

A woman in Cao Phong Hoa Binh described the importance of the knowledge acquired to offer suitable advice to other members of the community.

“I learn a lot in the mobile legal aid clinic. Before participating in the MLAC I had no ideas about laws, so I often provided wrong information to others. Once my neighbors have a piece of agricultural land allocated by the State and they asked me if they could build a house on this land, and I said yes. When the local authority prohibited them to build, I told them to ignore the prohibition for the reason that “this piece of land is yours, you can do everything you want with it, if the authority prohibits it, just fight against them”. The neighbors did as my advice, and the conflict between them and the local authority lasted for months. After participating in the MLAC and being provided information in land law, I realized was wrong. Therefore I admitted to the neighbors and informed them that they should have followed the transfer of land use procedure before using it as non-agricultural land. The conflict between the neighbors and the authority was solved. Now the neighbor already finished the transfer land use purpose and successfully built a house on that land” (women in Cao Phong, Hoa Binh)

⁸ Disaggregated data of the number of the people participating in the mobile legal clinics is not available

⁹ As conductors (legal consultants) in the MBLAC for CBOs, they did not count or make the list like MBLAC for villagers, they worked with FGs as the local FU suggested.

The evaluation shows that no participant felt fully confident about the knowledge acquired. For each targeted village, one or two mobile legal aid clinics sessions were planned. This limited number did not allow LCC to ensure the building good knowledge and understanding of legal provisions or to update information if there was a major legal or policy change that affects the communities (Marriage and Family Law passed in 2014, Land Law in 2013). Rather than expanding the number of locations reached as agreed in the review of the project after 2012, additional sessions with the same populations would have been beneficial to ensure target communities receive updated information and build sufficient knowledge.

During the mobile legal aid clinics LCC experienced some problems with the rural population due to the lack of clarity about their roles. Some participants expected LCC members to solve the issues and felt disappointed when they were not given an immediate solution. LCC staff therefore had to spend more time than expected in explaining their role.

Furthermore, the field visit has shown that all people were very excited when mentioning about the legal contests. All of them consider this activity very effective and interesting. They gained much knowledge while preparing for the contests.

The target population perceives the change in knowledge as a benefit for their daily lives. 18 people interviewed and 69 surveyed people (100% of the sample) agreed that the legal information they received from the project activities have helped people to improve their lives through: a) reducing violations of laws; b) helping them to solve conflicts in the community and c) helping them to engage in dialogue with the authorities.

Table 14. Results on the effect of legal information on people’s lives

Acquiring legal information helps to improve your life	Hoa Binh	Son La	Dien Bien
Yes	6+29	6+15	6+25
No	0	0	0
I do not know	0	0	0

2.b. Change in the beneficiaries’ accessibility to reader friendly legal information on relevant legal issues.

Beneficiaries have gained access to reader friendly legal information through legal handbooks and posters. At the end of 2013 legal handbooks were printed and distributed to project beneficiaries (10,000 legal handbooks for facilitators and village heads, 27,500 copies for households and 5,000 copies for VLA departments and other relevant organizations working with communities). 3,000 posters were distributed to communes & legal clubs.

In addition to these materials 45 legal libraries were set up for 45 law clubs in target areas. The libraries contain legal information on the most relevant legislation and policies for the rural population such as law on land, marriage and family law, law on complaint, law on criminal procedure, criminal code, civil code, law on civil procedure, etc.

During the interviews all respondents from the target populations reported having used the library to look for relevant legal and policy information whenever they encounter one legal or policy problem (18/18 agreed that they looked at least once for some legal information from the library). However, the level of usefulness varies according to the groups. For the rural population, only few (3/18) found the necessary information to solve the issue. The others explained that they had difficulties in understanding the legal terms used in the documents.

CBO leaders, village heads and local facilitators (46/46) said that they understand all information provided in the handbooks and that they feel capable of giving advice to others if the issues are mentioned in the handbooks.

During the interviews, participants expressed the need to expand the number of legal clubs. The legal club is only operated in one village in each commune whereas every commune there are around 5-10 villages.

The result from the questionnaires collected show that the target population are aware of different ways to obtain legal information when needed. They mentioned the handbooks but also newspaper, radio, etc. Nevertheless, they still consider that it is more convenient for them to get information through CBO leaders or village heads.

Table 15. Method to access legal information by the rural population

Methods to get access to legal information when needed	Hoa Binh	Son La	Dien Bien
No. I do not know who I should meet or what I should do when I need information on various legal issues	0	0	0
Yes but not much. I know some ways to have more legal information but sometimes it does not help or cannot access.	23	15	25
Yes. Now I know how to access to the necessary information/support when needed.	6	0	0

2.c Change in the level of knowledge of the target population with the legal procedures for bringing their cases to competent agencies and to court.

In order to help local people to understand the role and work of solicitors and lawyers during the process of providing legal assistance the following activities were organized:

- 2012 - 6 workshops with 177 participants / representatives from PC at commune level, mass organizations and village heads in Muong La district (Son La province), Cao Phong, Da Bac and Kim Bôi district (Hòa Bình), Muong Ang and Tua Chùa district (Dien Bien province).
- 2013 - 3 workshops with 91 participants representative from PC, Justice Department, Farther Land Front, FU, WU, YU at commune level, facilitators and village heads in Quynh Nhai (26-27/01/2013) and Thuan Châu (20-21/03/2013) district (Son La province), Dien Bien Dong district (Dien Bien province) from 23-24/01/2013.

The field visit has shown that 100% respondents recognised their increase in knowledge about the procedures of complaint and civil procedures. Most people mentioned that cases should be subject to conciliation procedures in villages before submission to the local authority or file to the court. The local organizations leaders stated that this is a very good sign, and that the project activities have contributed to the decrease of complaints excess of jurisdiction.

The data from the questionnaires collected shows that 74% rural population clearly know and 22% has some basic knowledge on the legal procedures; meanwhile there are still 4% of people consider that they still do not know how to bring a case to competent agency or to court. The proportion is considerably high and very similar with the result from the field visit.

Table 16. Rural population's knowledge on legal procedure after project implementation

Knowledge on procedure to bring a case to competent agency or to court	Hoa Binh	Son La	Dien Bien
Know nothing	0	0	3
Some basic knowledge	4	3	8
Clearly know	25	12	14

During the field visit, the rural population show that they rely on advice from LCC to provide them with information about the legal procedures.

3.1 Change in the knowledge and skills of CBO's staff and village heads in various legal subjects to mediate/moderate conflicts within their community.

The project targeted CBO's leaders and village heads and aimed to improve their legal knowledge and capacities to mediate in their communities. According to reports available, several activities were implemented towards this aim:

Table 17. Summary of training activities for CBO's leaders and village heads.

Year	No. training/ location	Training Content	Participants
Up to the end of Q3.2012	3: 1 in Dien Bien, 1 in Son La & 1 in Hoa Binh	Provide legal information to cooperating organizations	10 organizations and 84 participants who are members of Youth Union, Farmer Union, Woman Union, Father Land front, Labour Union, Union of Former Volunteer Vietnamese Army and 4 other legal entities.
	18: 8 in Hoa Binh- Cao Phong, Đà Bắc, Kim Bôi district), 1 in Son la (Quynh Nhai district) and 9 in Dien Bien (Tua Chua, Muong Ang and Dien Bien Đông district).	Land law, Regulation on forest protection & development, family & marriage law.	737 village heads
	4: 2 in Hoa Binh, 1 in Son La & 1 in Dien Bien	Training courses for managers of CBOs and law clubs on legal aspects	174 Heads or deputy heads of FG & Managers of legal clubs
Up to the end of Q3 2013	3: 1 in Hoa Binh, 1 in Son La and 1 Dien Bien	Provide legal information to cooperating organizations	84 CBO representatives in Hoa Binh Son La, and Dien Bien.
	3: 1 in Hoa Binh, 1 in Son La and 1 Dien Bien	Training courses for organizations leaders on organizational management. Representative from Provincial Domestic Affairs Department and lecturers from VLA were invited to give lectures on the basic contents of government management activities, civil codes, land law, and regulation on appeal and denounce.	126 participants who are members of Youth Union, Farmer Union, Woman Union, Father Land front, Labour Union, Union of Former Volunteer Vietnamese Army and 4 other legal entities.
	7 trainings: 3 in Son La	Land law, Regulation on forest	279 village heads

	(Thuan Chau, Muong La & Quynh Nhai district) and 4 in Dien Bien (Tua Chua, Muong Ang and Dien Bien Dong district).	protection & development, family & marriage law...	
	2: 1 in Son La and 1 Dien Bien	Training courses for managers of CBOs and law clubs on legal aspects	80 Heads or deputy heads of FG & Managers of legal clubs
Up to the end of Q3 2014	3: 2 in Hoa Binh, 1 in Son La	Land law, Regulation on forest protection & development, family & marriage law...	127 village heads
	3: 1 in Hoa Binh, 1 in Son La and 1 Dien Bien	Training courses for managers of CBOs and law clubs on legal aspects	115 Heads or deputy heads of FG & Managers of legal clubs

All CBO leaders, managers of legal clubs and village heads consider that the trainings improved their knowledge on legal and policy provisions and that this knowledge helps them to fulfil their role of mediation in conflicts in the village.

Table 18. Legal knowledge of CBO leaders, legal club managers and village head after the trainings

Legal knowledge after the trainings	Hoa Binh	Son La	Dien Bien
Gain nothing	0	0	0
Collect some information but not clearly	8	4	6
Understand basic information	12	9	4
Totally clear about the knowledge delivered through project activities	2	0	1

Table 19. Utility of the training for improving village head's mediation capacity .

Improvement of their capacity to mediate in conflicts	Hoa Binh	Son La	Dien Bien
Yes	5	4	4
No	0	0	0
I do not know	0	0	0

However, in some cases they were still not fully confident in using this legal knowledge to perform their role as their understanding of the issues was considered not good enough to provide legal advice to others. In the interviews CBO and village heads explained that their education and awareness about laws was very low so they need additional trainings to build their knowledge. They mentioned that the handbooks and legal documents in the legal libraries are useful sources of additional information after the trainings and that after consulting the material they feel better prepared to mediate in conflicts within their communities.

Three CBO leaders interviewed by the evaluation team agreed on the contribution of the project activities to build their legal knowledge and improve their advisory and mediation practices.

“Trainings are very helpful. Before I just conducted the mediation based on my feelings and understanding, but after being trained, I mediated using my legal knowledge and skills. Mostly the mediation I conduct relates to family violence” (A leader of the Women’s Union)

“Before I only knew about laws through TV or newspaper, but after being trained and participated in mobile legal aid clinics, now I am confident to provide advices to the young people in his village. One of the most necessary laws to the young is marriage and family law” (A leader of Youth Union)

In Huoi Cam, Dien Bien Province, there was a land conflict between two families. The land belongs two ancestor of family A. However, family A did not use the land for more than 5 years. During that time, family B settled in the land and started planting and farming on that land without any opposition from family A. Later on, A asked B to return the land, however, B did not agree. For some time the conflict was unsuccessfully mediated by the Farmer Union and village heads. During the MLAC, leader of Farmer Union collected information from the LCC representative on how to solve such a case. After the MLAC, the case was conciliated successfully by the Farmer Union and the village head. Two families together share the products and after the crop, B will pay a small amount of money to rent the land.

3.2 Change in the level of engagement of CBOs on local planning development.

Before the project operated in the targeted location, CBO leaders had regular meetings with the local authority at commune level every 3 months to discuss the plans on implementation of local policies in their community. Very often the meetings were a one-way communication event, where the local authority gave the information, and the CBO leaders merely received it. The CBO leaders were usually afraid to suggest any plan, even if it related to their daily life.

After the project, CBO leaders recognized a change in the level of participation in local planning. Through the project activities, CBO leaders are encouraged to ask, to be the representative of rural population to deliver the local issues to the authority and to LCC.

An example mentioned during the interviews conducted for this evaluation is the following:

A ditch in Quynh Nhai (Son La) was broken in the beginning of 2012 (at this time the project has not come to Son La). No solution was pursued by the CBO until 2013, after being trained and actively participated in the MLAC. During one meeting with local authority, the leader of Farmer Union together with village heads ask the Chairman of the People’s Committee at commune level to fix the ditch. The problem then was solved.

3.3 Change in the frequency and quality of dialogue between ethnic communities and local authorities on legal issues.

During the field visit, the rural population interviewed by the consultant confirmed that their opportunities to talk and discuss with the local authority about their issues or participate in local planning development were previously very scarce. They observed that, at the moment, due to the support from the project, in particular regarding the training on the Grassroot

Democracy Ordinance, together with the CBO leaders, rural population are able to ask, and know how to actively participate in local planning development . Example: (See in 3.2)

4.1 No. of people/CBOs who received free legal aid in the target provinces and LCC

Within three years, 1637 people have approached the centres and a total of 769 people received legal information and advice directly by the Legal Consulting Centers.)

The majority of legal concerns brought to the office were related to land disputes, administrative procedure and social policies.

Table 20. Number of people who sought LCC’s assistance per project and legal area.

Province	No. people approach LCC up to now	Land law & civil code	Social Policies	Criminal code	Family law
Dien Bien	442	155	143	53	109
Hoa Binh	441	180	128	22	99
Hanoi	355	162	59	36	45
Son La	408	145	156	74	79

4.2 and 4.3 No. of ethnic minorities or poor people who were represented by LCC staff in mediation/ negotiation, other dispute resolution services or supported in criminal procedures

The LCCs supported disadvantaged people to bring their cases to competent authorities for resolution, represent them in mediation/negotiation and protect their legal rights in criminal procedures. For this purpose, during 2012 VLA prepared methodology to bring cases to court and issued instruction to the LCCs.

Up to end of October 2014 there were 36 requests to bring their cases to competence agencies and to court. 29 were successfully resolved and 7 cases are left unsolved or still in legal procedures.

Table 21. Number of cases attended and resolved per province and topic

Province	No. of request	Source of information	Topic	No. of case solved
Dien Bien	15	LCC Dien Bien	Divorce & Drug	14

Hoa Binh	19	LCC Hoa Binh	Drug, theft, children sexual intercourse & children rape	15
Son La	2	LCC Son La	Inheritance & Divorce	0

5.1 Change in the frequency and quality of the dialogue between VLA, the local populations, CBOs and the authorities on legal and policy issues.

- No. of meetings.
- No. of concrete legal and policy proposal brought by the VLA, local populations and CBOs
- No of changes conducted on local policies following advice by VLA, local populations or CBOs.

VLA supported the rural population to bring the attention of the authorities to important issues through thematic workshop and meetings.

One highlighted example by VLA was that two workshops were organized on industrial plantations in Hoa Binh (25/10/2013) & Son La (28/10/2013). These included the participation of leaders of local authorities, representative from relevant departments such as natural resource & environment, planning & investment, FU, FLF, industrial plantation companies, cooperatives & farms. In order to understand the legal aspect of the industrial plantation situation in the project areas, legal consultants from Hanoi cooperated with provincial legal consultants to conduct a survey in July about the issue.

VLA also organized meetings where local authorities (Chairman/Vice Chairman of People's Committee at Commune level and/or officer from Justice Department) were invited to discuss the concerns of the rural population in the area. The meetings offered local people the opportunity to communicate directly with the relevant authority and expressed their concerns and demands. They were also opportunities for the authorities to explain their work and provide important information to the people in their localities.

The LCC coordinated the session and provided additional information on legal and policy documents if needed.

Table 22. Number of meetings and number of people who attended

Location	2012		2013		2014		Total	
	No.of meetings	No. of people						
Dien Bien	27	1092	30	1358	18	736	75	3186
Hoa Binh	27	1393	21	951	18	690	66	3034
Son La	12	570	21	809	19	774	52	2153
TOTAL	66	3055	72	3118	55	2200	193	8373

The main contents of the meetings are: a) Construction of local infrastructure, especially in relation to the expropriation of and compensation for land; b) Conflict among the rural population about the possession of land, possession of cattle; c) Policy of resettlement and compensation for the construction of hydropower dam; d) Policy of land certificate issuance.

LCC Director in Son La explained the benefits of the meetings between local authorities and rural population:

“The meetings with authorities in Son La helped the local people to receive information about the resettlement and compensation policy. Before these meetings, the information was poor and this often led to misunderstandings among the people” (LCC Director in Son La).

Neither policy proposals from VLA nor changes in policies have been identified from the project activities organized by VLA with the authorities. Progress reports mentioned the discussion between the PMU and ADDA about the purpose of the output. ADDA understood that these activities have an “advocacy nature” whereas VLA conceives them more as another activity for legal education or dissemination. Based on the observations from the meetings, it seems that the advocacy dimension of those activities was neglected.

Impact

Examples of changes in policy implementation practices by local authorities that incorporate the concerns of ethnic minority groups.

The Decision on resettlement and compensation for the construction of the hydropower dam in Son La was promulgated first in 2004, and then amended in 2009. The decision provides the Provincial People’s Committee the right to decide about the compensation so the Committee regulated the compensation cost for each area in the province. When delivering the information about the compensation policy of the Provincial Committee to the rural population in the targeted areas, some local authorities at commune level omitted the information about the money that people should receive. Furthermore, affected populations had not received compensation.

With the support from the project in Son La, the LCC came to those areas and delivered information about the compensation policy of the Provincial Committee. LCC organized a meeting with the local authority to ask for clarification on this issue. After the meeting, the local authority issued an official apology and some people received their compensation as the policy regulated. Some others have not received the compensation yet because the money has not come to the local authority. For such cases, the local authority promised on the time the people would receive money as the planning of the government.

Examples of poor people from ethnic minority groups who fulfilled their rights with the support from their project and/or who approached the relevant authorities when conflicts/dispute occur.

The following case related to the contract between a coffee plantation company and the rural population. The company signed a contract to rent agricultural land from people in a small village in Muong Ang, Dien Bien. The contract regulated the proportion of profits that people would receive and the rights and obligations of each party. Then, the company negotiated with the people to be their representative to acquire the land registration. After acquiring the land

registration of numerous people, the company mortgaged the land to borrow money from various banks. After finding out, the people during MLAC and meetings with local authority asked for legal aid to take the land back. LCC provided information to the people about how to conduct a negotiation with the company and the procedure to file this case to the court. Subsequently LCC mentioned about this case to the District's People's Committee and emphasized the obligation of the committee in such a serious case. The people later on received promise from the district authority to solve the issue. A decision of the District's Committee was then promulgated and now the company is negotiating with those poor people to amend the contract and return the profit to them.

Sustainability

Degree to which project activities have been taken over by VLA or CBOs.

Evidence of commitments from government or other stakeholders to sustain project achievements in the long run. Mechanisms in place to sustain achievements.

During the design of the project an exit strategy was defined including the following elements:

- The local authorities need to be fully involved during the implementation period. The advantage of having a well-informed population needed to be clear for the local authorities, and these needed to be able to further initiate activities that are taking up the tasks. The advocacy carried out through the project will help in this direction.
- The enhanced capacity of the local branches of the VLA and other actors should reach a level where they can continue the operation without external support.
- Policy makers in Hanoi need to be aware of the opportunities, so they can incorporate similar activities in the coming policies and strategies.
- The VLA staff needs to be able to formulate and submit project proposals on further funding for activities to various authorities and/or other external donors.

Hoa Binh and Dien Bien do not receive support from government under the Program 1133 on "Socialization of legal teaching and legal aid: Period 2013-2016" (please see above). LCC in Son La has been chosen as one of the 17 provinces in the North to conduct the Program.

When asked about their assessment of their financial situation Hoa Bien and Dien Bien answered that without the project support they would be able to implement few activities. Son La showed more financial capacity due to having a more diversified resources.

The consultants have identified a few limitations regarding the sustainability of the intervention. On the one hand, the capacity of the local organizations to formulate and submit project proposals has been enhanced during their collaboration with ADDA. However, it is still limited. On the other hand, the work with authorities has not rendered results in terms of their support to encourage these working modalities. It is expected that the dissemination of the evaluation will contribute to encourage Provincial Governments to allocate funds to these activities.

As enabling factors, the consultants recognize that the legal handbooks and the capacities built for CBOs, village heads, legal clubs will allow people to continue their own legal education activities or legal advice. However, taking into consideration the rapid change in the Vietnamese legal environment, the knowledge may be outdated after few years if there are not initiatives to continue improving the legal knowledge of the target population.

5. Conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned.

Conclusions

- The project is highly relevant for the rural population in the three provinces. The project responds to well identified needs of legal information and assistance among a number of stakeholders living in remote locations in Vietnam.
- The project is aligned to and contributes to the implementation of several national policies, particularly the policy on legal aid (Decision 1133/2013/QD-TTg on Socialization of legal education and legal aid programme, among others). Through building the legal knowledge of the rural population, it also contributes to the implementation of the Grassroot Democracy Ordinance, the policy on resettlement after the construction of hydropower dams (under Decision 801/2010/QD-TTg signed on June 6, 2010) and the policy on land compensation (Decision 02/2007/QD-TTg signed on January 9, 2007, Ordinance 69/2009/ND-CP signed on August 13, 2014).
- The design of the program is coherent. Activities, outputs and outcome follow results chain logic and are, in general terms, well articulated. In few cases, the planned activities were not sufficiently well explained in the project proposal and some activities were duplicated.
- The three legal consulting centers of Dien Bien, Hoa Binh and Son La province have striven to achieve the expected progress and complete all project activities in the plan. The LCC in Hanoi has played an important role in the management of the project to supervise and ensure the efficient and successful implementation of the project activities. It has also encouraged the LCCs to work in remote locations despite the difficulties encountered.
- The project has strengthened the VLA's capacities to support the rural population. This effect may bring additional benefits after the project comes to an end.
- The project has contributed to build up the legal knowledge of the rural population in the three provinces, including village heads, CBO leaders and community people. All of them feel empowered and better prepared to discuss issues that affect their lives with the authorities.
- Nevertheless, the low education level and the limited number of activities carried out in each location have hampered the development of a more solid knowledge base. Therefore, legal education activities continue to be necessary for the targeted populations in order to ensure people feel confident about their understanding of the laws and policies.
- The project has facilitated the dialogue between the authorities and the rural population. This contribution is highly appreciated by both parts as an opportunity for information sharing. The effect of the dialogue on policy changes is still limited due to, among others, limited understanding of advocacy among VLA staff.
- The change in knowledge of the regulatory and policy framework and the increase in dialogue between authorities and citizens according to project participants have contributed to reduce the conflictivity in the targeted locations.
- The actions to contribute to the sustainability of the project were scarce and there is a risk that some actors will not be able to continue the types of efforts supported by the project.
- In summary, the project shows that non-governmental actors such as VLA can play an important role in building poor people's awareness about their rights and supporting them to claim those rights (i.e. to fair compensation in case of land recovery). It also exemplifies the

important contribution in terms of strengthening the dialogue between the local authorities and the rural population.

Recommendations

- More emphasis should be given to the formulation of a well-articulated and detailed project proposal. This will contribute to decrease the number of changes to be carried out during the implementation of the intervention and to ensure a good understanding of both parties of the content of each activity and the results expected.
- A solid monitoring and evaluation system, including a baseline survey and few key indicators would have encouraged a more effective implementation of all the project dimensions (legal education, legal support and advocacy). Furthermore, it would have contributed to build stronger evidence to advocate for the continuation of the project activities upon the finalization of the project.
- ADDA should provide closer guidance to VLA on certain areas where VLA's capacities are weaker, in particular advocacy and progress reporting. While some adjustments were made during the implementation of the project, these areas are still weak. Support should be given for the development of advocacy action plans and to improve the quality of data reporting to make sure it is sound, disaggregated and consistent.

In addition to that it is advisable that ADDA reviews all training materials prior to the trainings as a quality control mechanism.

- VLA at local and central level and ADDA should improve the records of the activities implemented. Information such as the agenda, training material or the number of participants should be standardly collected from each activity.
- A deeper understanding of the reasons behind the low number of cases of litigation resolved should be developed before the definition of future proposals. Bottlenecks in both demand and supply side should be analysed.
- More emphasis should have been given to the sustainability of the project from the beginning. Active engagement with higher-level authorities, dissemination of the project activities among other donors and support VLA in the design of project proposals are some of the activities that could have been implemented.

Lessons learned

- Coverage vs depth. The intervention reached 673 villages. In most cases mobile legal aid clinics were conducted only once. Building legal knowledge and support communities in their legal issues requires more time. Supporting materials such as handbooks are considered by village heads and CBO effective tools to support the continuation of their learning. For the community people additional support is needed to help people understand the legal terms and apply the new knowledge to resolve the legal issues they confront.
- Demand driven selection of topics increases the relevance of the learning activities: The issues to be taught and discussed were based on the requests and demands expressed by local people to local facilitators or CBOs. This participatory approach is therefore a good practice to be continued for future trainings.
- Legal contests were effective ways of building legal knowledge and communication skills as well as a suitable activity to encourage the legal clubs.

- Legal education and legal advice should target not only rural population but also local authorities. The capacity building of and legal support given by the project to the duty bearers contributed to solve issues at the community level and increased their support to the project activities.
- Careful selection of local facilitators. Due to the important role they will play between the communities and the LCCs it proved very important to select facilitators with adequate knowledge and skills. During the interviews, the facilitators with higher level of education showed more confidence on their legal knowledge and skills to support people in the community.
- Literacy levels and language skills should be carefully taken into account in the design of training or communication activities. Despite the efforts to adapt the mobile legal aid clinice methodologies to the level of knowledge of the targeted populations (i.e. simplify messages) some participants still faced problems to understand the content of the trainings. Other strategies should be explored such as the collaboration with young people from the community who have a higher level of Vietnamese and who can support in explaining the legal content to other people in the communities.
- A good understanding of the LCC's roles among the local authorities and community people can help to pave the way for an effective programme implementation. It is necessary to invest time to clarify the roles and project activities in order to avoid conflicts due to the creation of expectations that are not fulfilled.
- Working in remote locations requires higher transport expenses and highly committed people. Project proposals should carefully consider both issues to facilitate the implementation of the project.

Report annexes:

- ToR for the evaluation
- Field visit agenda
- List of individuals interviewed.
- Interview guide

Annexes

Annex 1. Terms of Reference for Assessment / Evaluation of the Project “Legal Aid for the Rural Population, Phase II”

Introduction

ADDA, Vietnam, has been cooperating with the Vietnam Lawyers’ Association since 2007 under successive phase of the Project entitled “Legal Aid for the Rural Population”. The second phase of the Project began at the beginning of 2011 and is due to end on December 31, 2014. The Project seeks to support ethnic minorities in the Northwest Mountains by increasing their awareness of the legal issues relating to land rights, although the range of issues dealt with also includes social welfare matters. Activities include training of Local Facilitators at the commune level, village heads and heads of Community-based Organizations (CBOs), conduct of Legal Aid Clinics for isolated villages and CBOs, establishing Legal Clubs and Legal Libraries at commune level and offering advice and free representation to poor households with court cases. The program is implemented through the Legal Consulting Centres in the respective provinces and coordinated through the equivalent LCC in Hanoi. ADDA has supported staff salaries for the LCC in Hanoi, for the Head and duty solicitors of the Legal Consulting Centres in the provinces, as well as offering allowances for legal consultants and local facilitators. The provinces involved in Phase II of the Project are Dien Bien, Hoa Binh and Son La.

Interviews with the Project staff suggest that the interventions under the Project have been welcomed by the rural population, most of which has had no previous chance to obtain such free services. Observations of training courses and Legal Aid Clinics suggest that these are being conducted in an open and participatory manner and indeed that they serve some vital needs. Monitoring visits from ADDA staff from Denmark have also been positive. However, there has been no attempt to collect systematic information about the impact of the activities, partly in the absence of dedicated project technical staff in the ADDA office. With under 5 months to go before Project closure, it seems important to correct this situation, especially with a view to offering harder information which can be presented to policy makers to persuade them that such activities should be supported by funds from Government or through application to other donors. The following Terms of Reference are set out as the basis for a qualitative assessment by local consultants to conduct such a study.

Terms of Reference

Target Population

The Assessment should focus on the following key actors in the Project: Service Providers; Members of the Legal Consulting Centers in Hanoi and the three project provinces, including the Project Director, the Project Manager, the Provincial Project Directors, Duty Solicitors seconded to the LCC; Key Trainers, including Legal Consultants and Local Facilitators; Beneficiary Groups, namely Village Heads, Leaders and Members of Community-based Organizations, Attendees at Mobile Legal Aid Clinics

The Table below indicates the total number of persons in each of the categories of respondent mentioned above, by province. It is expected that the study will include respondents from all three of the target provinces.

Number of target groups

	Hanoi	Dien Bien	Hoa Binh	Son La
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Project Director	1			
Project manager	1			
Provincial PD		1	1	1
Solicitors attached to LCC	2	1	1	1
Project legal consultants				
Local facilitators		25	25	25
Village heads		483	335	253
Leaders/managers of CBOs		98	116	155
Member of LCC	20	8	5	9
Member of Local Authorities involved in training & workshop		413		124

It is expected that for most of the above groups, investigation will be in the form of individual (key informant) interviews. The exception will be the members of the LAC meetings, who will be interviewed as a group.

Scope of Enquiry

The study should investigate the impact of the Project through interviewees / meetings with the above groups, focusing on

- For the Service Providers

- o Their roles in the project and the amount of time spent on Project activities
- o In the case that they themselves received training under the Project (such as in the case of Training of Trainers for the Local Facilitators): The content of that training; The appropriateness of the training content and methodology; Their ability to pass on the content of the training to local people; Problems experienced in the TOT and the forward training
- o How the Project has changed their work / widened their experience
- o Their views of how the Project differs from other sources of legal assistance to the rural population
- o Their views on the key positive / negative characteristics of the Project
- o Their views on the most effective / less effective parts of the Project
- o Suggestions for improvements in the Project

- For the Project Primary Beneficiaries

- o Their involvement in the Project
- o The perceived benefits they derived from the Project
- o Their views on the content of training received, the appropriateness of the training content and methods
- o Ideas about other content or training methods
- o Their ability to act on the learning received from the training and, if not, why not
- o Criticisms about the operation of the Project
- o Suggestions for improvement

The Assessment Team should initially consult secondary materials in the ADDA office to understand the background of the Project, but the bulk of the assignment should be spent in field visits to the provinces concerned.

The Assessment Team should, wherever applicable, supplement the interviews by photographs and video clips illustrating the conduct of the field activities and recording the replies of the respondents.

Schedule of the Assignment

The Assignment should begin as soon as possible and be completed within a period of two months, by the end of October 2014 at the latest. The Proposal for the study should be delivered to the ADDA Office at R407-408, Block A2, Van Phuc Diplomatic Compound, 298 Kim Ma, Ba Dinh, Ha Noi by 4 p.m. on September 12, 2014 at the latest so that the selection of the Consultant may be completed by the end of the fourth week of September (September 26th).¹

It is expected that a total of 25 working days will be adequate for the assignment, comprising 3 days of desk study for preparation of the Inception report and field arrangements, 15 days of field investigations and travel between the sites, 4 days for preparation of the draft report, 3 days completion of the final report

Composition of the Team

The Assessment team should comprise two persons, the Team leader who is expected to have some familiarity with the legal issues relating to land facing the rural population of the Northern Mountains of Vietnam. If a Vietnamese national, she/he should have a good command of spoken/written English. The second member of the team should be a photo-journalist.

Reporting

Prior to the start of field data collection, the Assessment Team should draw up a brief Inception Report, setting out their plan for field activities, for discussion and agreement with the ADDA Program Management. This Inception Report will include further details of the costs of the field activities.

The Assessment Team should present a draft final report to ADDA Project Management ten days before the end of the assignment (i.e. by October 31 at the latest). Following comments by the Management, the Final Report will be presented by November 7, 2014

Expected outputs:

The following outputs are expected: Final impact evaluation report in both Vietnamese and English and 3 video clips, one for each province, with subtitles in both Vietnamese and English

Provisional Budget

A total of VND 115 million (+/- DKK30,000/USD5,500) is available for the study, including the professional fees of the Assessment Team, costs of data collection, including travel and per diem and costs of report preparation

Annex 2. Field visit agenda

Province	District	Villages
Hoa Binh (2-3 October)	Kim Boi	- Mu Village - Khoang Village - Yen Village
	Cao Phong	- Bac Son Village - Ma 1 Village
Son La (4-6 October)	Thuan Chau	- Co Cai Village - Pom Me Village - Xe Ngoai Village - Phe Xe Village
	Quynh Nhai	- Nang Cau Village - Mua Muong Village
Dien Bien (10-12 October)	Tua Chua	- Na Xa Village - Dun Village
	Muong Ang	- Na Lau Village - Mung 1 Village

Annex 3. List of people interviewed

Initial clarifications:

- *Frequently the village heads are also the legal club leaders/managers or the CBO leaders are also the local facilitators. That person is only counted once.*
- *The number of in-depth interviews varies among the 3 provinces since the field visit was conducted during the harvesting period and some stakeholders were not available.*

LCC	Hoa Binh	- Director - Lawyer in charge of providing legal advice at the LCC (face to face and mostly via hotline), - Lawyer in charge of the mobile legal aid clinic (Duty solicitor), - Chairman of Hoa Binh Bar Association
	Son La	- Director - 2 Lawyer in charge of the mobile legal aid clinic (one being duty solicitor),
	Dien Bien	- Director (Duty Solicitor) - 2 Lawyers in charge of the mobile legal aid clinic
CBO	Hoa Binh	- Vice Secretary of Youth Union (Khoang Village)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leader of Women Union (Khoang Village) - Leader of Veterans Union (Khoang Village) - Manager of the legal library (Khoang Village) - Leader of Farmers Union (Mu Village) - Leader of Veterans Union (Mu Village) - Leader of Women Union (Mu Village) - Leader of Zone 3 – Farmers Union (Coc Lam Village) - Leader of Fatherland Front (Coc Lam Village) - Secretary of Youth Union (Yen Village) - Leader of Women Union (Kim Truy Commune) - Leader of Women Union (Bac Son Village) - Leader of Fatherland Front (Bac Son Village) - Vice Chairman of Fatherland Front (Bac Phong Commune)
	Son La	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leader of Farmer Union established by ADDA in Phe Xe Village - Leader of legal club (Co Cai Village) - Leader of Fatherland Front (Co Cai Village) - Leader of Women Union (Muong E Commune) - Leader of Conciliation Team (Xe Ngoai Village) - Secretary of Mua Muong Village
	Dien Bien	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leader of Women Union (Na Xa Village) - Leader of Youth Union and Fatherland Front (Na Xa Village) - Vice Secretary of Na Xa Village - Secretary of legal club (Dun Village) - Leader of Fatherland Front (Na Lau Village) - Leader of Women Union (Mung 1 Village)
Local Facilitator	Hoa Binh	- 03 Local Facilitator (each commune 01 local facilitator)
	Son La	- 03 Local Facilitator
	Dien Bien	- 01 Local Facilitator
Village heads	Hoa Binh	- 05 Village heads
	Son La	- 04 Village heads
	Dien Bien	- 04 Village heads
Rural population	Hoa Binh	- 06 project beneficiaries
	Son La	- 06 project beneficiaries
	Dien Bien	- 06 project beneficiaries

Annex 4. Interview guide for LCCs

Interview introduction.

1. We are/I am the consultant/s hired by ADDA and the VLA to conduct a final assessment of the project Legal Aid for the Rural Population, phase II", implemented from the beginning of 2011 to the end of 2014.
2. I will use an interview guide prepared in advance for this interview. I may adjust/expand on some of the questions based on the need for additional information.
3. All your answers are confidential. The report will not include names.
4. We approach this evaluation as a learning process. So we highly appreciate your opinions on what the project has achieved as well as on the lessons learned and suggestions for improvement.
5. Finally, we would like to ask you to be as precise as possible with concrete examples whenever is possible.

1. Evaluation criteria: Relevance- How does the project relate to the needs of the targets groups?

- 1.1. How does the project address the needs of LCC staff?
- 1.2. How does the project address the needs of rural population in the targeted province?
- 1.3. How does the project support national or local policies?

Lessons learned

- 1.4. What lessons have been learnt and what changes could have been made to the project in order to strengthen the alignment between the project and national/local policies?
- 1.5. What lessons have been learnt and what changes could have been made to the project in order to strengthen the alignment between the project activities and your needs?

2. Evaluation criteria: Effectiveness- To what extent are the expected outcomes of the project being achieved?

2.1. In your opinion, after the participation of VLA in this project, are you better prepared to assist rural populations?.

- If yes, could you please give us an example of skills or knowledge that you have developed through the participation in this project? (Whenever possible collect information about the difference between the situation before the project and at the moment)

2.2 How VLA collaborates with other local organizations to address legal issues at the local level?

2.3 How has the project contributed to strengthen the collaboration between VLA and other local organizations to address legal issues at the local level?

2.4 Can you please provide us figures about the following:***

- No. of people/CBOs who received free legal aid in the target provinces and LCC

- No. of ethnic minorities or poor people who were represented by LCC staff in mediation/negotiation or other dispute resolution services.

- No. of ethnic minorities or poor people whose rights were protected by the LCC staff through criminal procedures authorities.

***** Ensure there are figures that represent different individuals, no same individuals coming twice. Clarify ways of collecting data as needed.**

2.5 How the project has supported the dialogue between VLA, the local populations, CBOs and the authorities on legal and policy issues? Please provide examples.

2. 6 How many meetings have you organized with local authorities on legal issues?. Who participated in those meetings?. What did you discuss about?.

2.7. Can you please let me know about the legal and policy proposals brought by VLA, local populations and CBOs at the provincial or national level?

2.8 Has there been any change in the local policies following advice by VLA, local populations or CBOs participating in the project?

Lessons learned

2.9 What changes could have been made (if any) to the design of the project?

2. 10. How could the project be more effective in achieving its results?

Evaluation criteria: Impacts- What are the realized and potential impacts of activities carried out in the context of the project?

3.1 Could you please provide us with one example/examples of changes in policy implementation practices by local authorities that incorporate the concerns of ethnic minority groups following the recommendations made through the LCC?

3.2 Could you please provide us with one example/examples of rural populations who fulfilled their rights through the support from the LCC?

Lessons learned

3.3. How could the project have improved its impact?

Evaluation criteria: Sustainability- What are the probabilities that the project achievements will continue in the long run?

4.1. To what extent do you think the LCC has taken over the project activities?

0 – 20%: totally dependent on the support of ADDA and VLA, without the support, no activities would be conducted

20 – 40%: a little bit independent on a few aspects. LCC may implement by themselves a few activities with limited support.

40-60%: moderately independent from ADDA and VLA in operating activities, for example mobile legal aid clinics are conducted sometimes with limited support

60-80%: considerably independent from ADDA and VLA. The support is only necessary when operating big events such as workshops/training. LCC may conduct most of the activities by themselves.

80%-100%: totally independent. When the project ends, LCC themselves may still operate activities by themselves.

4.2. Has the LCC received any commitment from the government or other stakeholders to sustain the project achievements in the long run?

4.3. Has the LCC the mechanism to sustain the achievements by itself?

4.4. When the project ends, do you have any other sources to support the activities? If yes, what is the level of the support?

Lessons learned

4.5. What are the key challenges regarding sustainability of the project? What does it need to be done to be in a better situation by the end of the project?