



LEDER

The reason for continuous Danish aid for development

By Søren Thorndal Jørgensen, chairman, PhD-student, KU-LIFE

Having been the chairman of ADDA for 12 years, Niels Dumas-Johansen chose to resign in the spring of 2008. Dear Niels, thank you so much for your invaluable work during successes as well as during difficult times. Fortunately for our organization, Niels has chosen to carry on as a board member, enabling us to draw on his invaluable knowledge of history. Many thanks also to Knud Schmidt, resigning member of the board, for all his work done. In Karin Pirhofer-Walzl ADDA has had new blood added, and the board now consists of three strong women and three men, resulting in an evenly divided board showing the spread that, so far, has been ADDA's strength.

I am the newly elected chairman, but having been working actively in ADDA for about ten years, I am no youngster in the organization. However, this is my first leading article in News and Views

and I will make an attempt to make it interesting to all of ADDA's members and to other readers. ADDA is being gauged on its public support and your membership ensures continued activities in countries where development has not yet reached the level we are at.

Some Danish researchers have made a point of examining the use of aid for development. I do not see any problems in this, in fact, from time to time, this kind of focus is a good thing. The problem arises when there is an almost categorical attempt to cut down any valuable work with rigorist conclusions which ALWAYS are: it is of no use at all. My first appeal to these analyses is, which are the countries used as references? As far as I know, there is not a single country in Africa that has not received aid for development. It would have been possible to have used countries like North Korea or Argentina as examples of countries not having received Danish aid for development. The recipe for success is not necessarily being beyond

aid! The example presented is meant to be equally indiscriminate as the criticism we often are met with.

Furthermore, a number of the developing countries have experienced a large growth in population, which, obviously to some extent, slows down an economic development. A large number of children in a family is often connected to poverty and to ignorance, and runs in a vicious circle. However, if we do not make an attempt to educate people and to help them out of their poverty, the growth in population will explode and sooner or later this problem will reach us, to become ours. Not that developmental aid should be given with the aim of helping ourselves, but there might be a diverted effect. First and foremost we are offering aid in order to help other people, not ourselves. In a globalized world, social needs as well as economic needs must be covered globally. Initially, we met the demands of the family, then those of the parish, then the area, the country and finally those of Europe.



Chairman, Søren Thorndal Jørgensen. Photo: Anne-Marie Foged

Now and in the future, the demands of the whole world must be met, because as time passes by, we will see ourselves as good citizens of the world. Denmark, as an independent country, cut off from the development of the world is both an illusion and a daydream. Development, in the form of further globalizing, does not move backwards, it may, at the most, be delayed.

The agricultural products are usually very competitive in the developing countries. Paradoxically, in Ghana a barrel of rice costs less than it costs the local farmers to produce it. Fortunately, the export subvention etc. of the EU has ceased, but for many years it caused poverty for millions of people. In order to achieve competition on equal terms we need to do away with the remaining agricultural subsidies. This is in the interests of everyone, including the Danish farmers. The main aim for ADDA is to support sustainable development in rural districts in the countries in which we find it possible to make a difference.

We have already completed two large projects with long term sustainable results. In Cambodia we have assisted in building an agricultural college (Prek Leap), which by now is a national landmark for agricultural education. No, we have not built buildings and such, we have monitored the personal and the professional proficiency. A successful result depends on this, in the long run. By now the agricultural college is the biggest in Cambodia with no comparison professionally to times gone by. Some thousands of small holders in Vietnam have already been trained in reducing the use of ancillary materials and pesticides in an integrated vegetable production, and in Hanoi around one hundred groups, concerned with sales and marketing, as well as financing new activities, have been formed. As a result there has been a vast improvement in income for the participants. For both farmers and consumers health conditions have improved, and there have been ecologic gains in nature and an improvement of professional

capacity for all our cooperating partners. In the long run, the projects insure a sustainable development being an improvement for the participants, as well as for the countries in general.

Anyone doubting the above mentioned results will be welcomed at a visit to the areas of the projects. From where the data of the critics hail is beyond my comprehension. Surely, the ADDA projects are not included in the analyses, as the conclusions in that case would have been different, would they not? But I have neither the time nor the inclination to go through the negative and destructive criticisms. Being creative is much more rewarding. And along with many others, ADDA creates useful results in the third world.

Therefore Denmark should continue to offer aid for development. I do hope that the ADDA members and Danida will continue to support us in this important matter.

Pictures from the Adda-day - find more pictures at www.adda.dk



Ms. Nhung and the group observing brassica plants in the field



Ms. Kimhian and Ms. Visal appeared in news of the world



Ms. Nhung telling about growing organic brassicas

The ADDA-day, on May 17, was a festive day!

On this sunny day, more than 50 people accepted ADDA's offer of experimenting a farmer field school at the Kalø Organic Agricultural College. Right from the beginning, the atmosphere was elated, and there was a big interest in listening to the exciting explanations given by Ms. Nhung, Ms Hang, Ms Kimhian, Ms Visal and Mr. Thuong.

With all five instructors being used to teaching daily in their work at educating farmers and farmer field school teachers, they were making both competent and inspiring accounts of their work, and simultaneously they put a perspective onto third world aid on a practical level, when including cases from real life in both of their countries. In the four workshops, the participants gained knowledge on practical, as well as on theoretical aspects of the work in the farmer field schools, this being the model ADDA employs for their projects. The participants visited the field to look for pests, they produced flower pots using banana leaves, and they learnt about the methods improving the conditions of life for many Cambodian and Vietnamese farmers through ADDA's projects. The conditions for the many Cambodian women were described in order to illustrate, just how much the self help groups can influence the lives of women, - and through the games 'Monk, girl, ghost' and others, everyone learned something about how much one gains from being part of a group.

In the kitchen the participants had competent instructions in how to cook the most delicious dishes using recipes from the two countries, and on seeing the colourful and deliciously scented meals, everyone had a feeling of being situated in a hotter climate. If not before, then it really became apparent during the dinner, when people were talking across the table and the food was fully enjoyed, that the participants were thrilled with the arrangement.

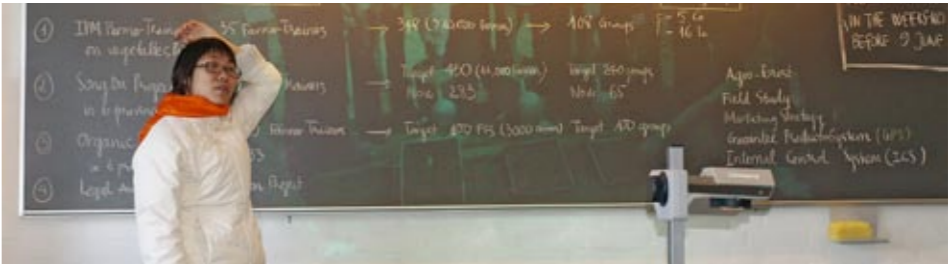


Marc explaining the menu

It is ADDA's first time at organizing an arrangement of this kind for its members and others being interested in their work, but certainly, it will not be the last time. It can be difficult to explain what ADDA's agricultural projects are all about, but things become so much easier to comprehend in a direct meeting with competent local co-operators. Or, like one long term ADDA member enthusiastically exclaimed: "When reading about it, it is difficult to understand what ADDA actually does, but now I understand it so much better - and on a practical level. "



Mr. Thuong presenting the lunch



Ms. Hang going through the Vietnamese projects



Raising our hats for Adda

A new report of ADDA's first farmer field school of agro-forestry

By Hanne Hübertz, agro-forestry consultant for The Danish Forest Growers Association (DFE)

Sometime during the spring, just over 50 ADDA members had the chance of trying out the farmer field school concept for themselves at the Organic Agricultural School in Rønne (Denmark). Although it was only for a single day, and not a complete growing season, I do believe that the participants had a good impression of just how efficient this method of working is, and of how it combines new knowledge and personal experiments with unity and inspiration to cooperate and to develop within other fields as well.

Some readers may remember that in an earlier issue of this magazine (News & Views) I wrote that in cooperation with DFE, ADDA is attempting to use the same concept to further agro-forestry and to combat erosion in villages with fields on very steep slopes in the northern part of Vietnam. These farmer field schools are running over three years, though, in stead of over three months, - as ever, when working with trees and woody plants, it takes longer before results show up. In turn, we do hope they will achieve long lasting results, enabling them to still be growing maize on the steep slopes in 20 years.



The project coordinator from the farmers union checking new hedges in the maize field
Photo: Hanne Hübertz

The farmer field school for agro-forestry in Thu Phong in the Hoa Binh Province has now been running for just over a year and the first tangible result are beginning to show up. The group is well established, and they have begun their work with trees in a wider sense, still focussing on establishing permanent hedge rows along the contour lines on the field, as a soil improving means in order to hold on to the soil. But where there was only one field to start with, there are now four fields, and there are more on their way. The soil improving effects are beginning to show up in the first field: the soil near the hedges is darker and

has a greater content of organic matter. After a recent heavy shower, the participants of the farmer field school were capable of measuring four times as much eroded soil having been washed down under the neighbouring field, as that under the test field.

In the first test field there has been a harvest of maize three times, and the yield has gone up at each harvesting. This year in August, the yield of maize in the test field with the hedges, was the same as that of the field next to, with no hedges, in spite of the hedges taking up 10 p.c. of the area. Everything indicates that the yield will still be improving for each harvest. It is necessary to achieve a higher yield because, much as the hedges are efficient, they are also labour consuming. During the establishing phases they have to be sown and weeded, and after this they have to be trimmed three times per year. On asking the people in the field schools why they have not established more fields with contour hedges, the answer is lack of labour.

There is no doubt that the hedges work - the question is, if and when the ratio between the increase of labour and the improvement of the soil/ greater yield, balances out in favour of the hedges on the scales used by the farmers.



Enthusiastic work in the farmer field school of agro-forestry. Photo: Hanne Hübertz

News from ADDA's projects in Cambodia

By Helge Brunse, project coordinator, and Bodil Pallesen, Project manager

ADDA has two agricultural projects in Cambodia. One is the IWEP (Integrated Women Empowerment Project/ Improvement of the standard of living for farm women), - this is terminating its initial phase. The project has improved the standard of living for more than 20.000 small holders in the project area, and it has been beneficial especially in terms of increasing vegetable production, so that imports have been reduced and the self-sufficiency rate has improved. Cambodia imports 75 p.c. of its vegetable consumption. Through the self-aid groups attended by more than 1000 women, the project has, at the same time, contributed to the empowerment of women and of their roles in the family.

At present, we have placed a sizable application with Danida, wanting to continue the IWEP project as an IWEP II. We have big hopes that Danida is willing to prolong the project at the end of the year. The project has already run for more than three years. In order to achieve sustainable changes/ improvements within the agricultural production and the micro credit, it is important to be able to prolong the project for some years to come. This is also what was recommended



ADDA-ESO has developed a plan for a 'cattle bank'. On easy terms, pregnant heifers are handed over to groups of trained farmers (erfa-groups), who in turn agree to hand over the off-spring to other groups. Here, the village chairman hands over heifers from the 'bank' to two groups. The group to the right is a women's group. The 'bank system' also comprises pigs and chicken.



Seedlings of elephant grass are handed over to an erfa-group. Elephant grass is used as fodder for cattle.



The project sells subsidised and improved rice seed to the pilot farmers, who then in turn grow seed sold to other farmers in the area. Pictures above: fighting weeds manually, and counting plants in a pilot-farm.



by an independent mission of evaluation in 2008. The project is implemented in cooperation with the organisation Srer Khmer, a Cambodian NGO working mainly on developing the agricultural sector.

The other project, ADDA-ESO, is financed by the EU, and has been run-

ning smoothly for almost a year. There are several goals with this project. Apart from improving the standard of living for poor farmers in the affected areas, the project has provided labour for people with some form of agricultural training. As opposed to the IWEP, the ADDA-ESO works on improving the productivity when growing rice,

and when raising cattle and fish. Mainly, the means of the project are spent on providing know-how in the three poorest provinces of Cambodia.

The following pictures illustrate our working methods in the project, and the benefits achieved by the participating farmers.



Planting mulberries for testing fodder production. Young mulberry leaves has a high content of protein.



Pilot farmers on a course in the Kra Lanh district.



Here the spawn is put into a pond, from where the water is also taken when watering vegetables.



Increasing production of freshwater fish locally is an important issue in ADDA-ESO. Here the water in the plastic bags, used for transporting fish spawn to the farmer's own little fish ponds, is being oxidized.



Monthly meeting in ADDA's office in Siem Reap for the district consultants

ADDA's office in Hanoi

By now, there are ten permanent members of staff at the ADDA office in Hanoi. These ten have their daily work in the office in Hanoi. Furthermore, ADDA has made contracts with 102 facilitators living and working in the provinces. In all, we are in charge of implementing 4 projects:

1. Development of a framework for organic production and marketing
2. Community Development among Ethnic Minorities (the Song Da project)
3. Legal Aid to the rural population (the VLA-project) VLA= Vietnamese Lawyers Association

4. Organic vegetables production for poverty alleviation and environment protection in Soc Son district, Hanoi (the AFC project)

Bjørn is in charge of the office and he is chief responsible for all projects, and all employees report to Bjørn. Bjørn is the ADDA representative in relation to the Vietnamese partners, and it is Bjørn's responsibility that all projects are complying with ADDA's objectives, as well as with agreements made with Danida and other donators. A part of Bjørn's time is spent developing new projects. Finally Bjørn operates as technical advisor on the Song Da project and on the VLA project. Bjørn has been an ADDA employee since 1998.

Hang is our chief administrator. Hang also sees to the communication with

the Vietnamese authorities, including keeping us updated on laws and regulations concerning ADDA, and making sure that our work complies with these. Hang keeps check on the economy for the ADDA office, goes through all contracts for ADDA, and concerning accountancy, she is a colleague on the Song Da project as well as on the VLA project. Hang has been an ADDA employee since 1999.

Koen, our Dutch colleague, is the coordinator and the technical advisor on the organic project. Koen is responsible for the part of the organic project implemented by VNFU (farmers union). Koen is also an important sparing partner concerning training methods aimed at the participants, as well as on other new initiatives. Koen is also ensuring quality in ADDA's part

of the AFC project. Koen has been an ADDA employee since 2004.

Nhung is a technical advisor on the organic project and on the AFC project. Nhung is responsible for those activities in the organic project that are implemented by partners other than VFNU. Furthermore Nhung is a technical advisor on the AFC project. Nhung has been an ADDA employee since 1999.

Le is a secretary and a translator on the VLA project. The VLA project is to a large extent implemented by our partner, causing Le to be an important go-between for both ADDA and VLA. Le is working half time at the ADDA office and half time at our partner's. Le was employed at the ADDA office in 2008.

Loan is employed as an accountant on the organic project. When the organic project went from being one partner to being 8, of which 7 are serviced directly by ADDA, it became apparent, that we needed someone working solely with the accounts of the project. Loan was employed at the ADDA office in 2008.

Thuong is the driver for the Song Da project, as well as being ADDA's jack-of- all- trades.



Hang



Nhung



Khanh



Koen



Le



Bjørn



Nghi



Loan



Thoun



Thang

All photographs taken by Thoun.

Furthermore Thoun is in charge of the documentation of projects, partly in the form of photographs and video presentations, and partly through collecting FFS reports and getting these put onto our database.

Thang, Khanh, and Nghi are Song Da project assistants. They are all three of them former trainers at the IPM project, and as such they have been



The Staff outside the office in Hanoi.

Photo: Thoun.

employees of ADDA's since 1999. From 2007 they have worked being assistants, and as such they have been supervising the 70 facilitators at the Song Da project, in implementing the farmer field schools and in organizing farmers in groups. They spend a lot of their time travelling in the six provinces, and with ensuring that the Song Da project meets the expectations resting on it.

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Short news

ADDA's local members of staff

At the ADDA day in May, it became clear to many ADDA members and their friends, that ADDA has had good luck at finding not only professionally competent and clever employees, but also people who were both keen and ambitious. However, unfortunately this does imply that, from time to time, we have to say goodbye to a cherished member of staff, who has had the opportunity to go into further education. This also goes for Kimhian, agronomist and vegetable consultant at the IWEP project in Cambodia, who has been given a scholarship in New Zealand. Prior to this, she is going to study the language and the culture of New Zealand for nine months in Phnom Penh in preparation for her studies in New Zealand.

For a number of years, Kimhian has had attended evening classes, with a clear aim of improving her English knowledge, and she has obtained very good results. We wish her all the best in the future, with a frugal hope of having the opportunity to make use of her expertise in time to come.



Ms. Kimhian at Kalø, May 2008

Did you realize?

- That you can find the previous issues of News & Views on ADDA's homepage www.adda.dk, by looking under Info Materials.
- Here you will be able to follow what, so far, has been happening in the different projects.

ADDA participates at the Agromek

Do come and visit the ADDA stall at Agromek, the biggest agricultural trade fair in Northern Europe, in Herning (Denmark) from the 25th till the 29th of November 2008, opening hours from 9.00 till 17.00

Come and have a chat with us over a cup of green tea in hall F, stall no. 5204. You will be able to see an exhibition of ADDA's projects and broaden your knowledge on ADDA's work.

Voluntary worker in an ADDA project?

Inspired by Kirsten's exiting experiences in Vietnam? Then remember, you have the possibility of getting an unpaid job as a voluntary worker in an ADDA project, provided that it fits in with existing projects in Vietnam or in Cambodia. ADDA has good experiences in accommodating voluntary workers and students writing their final thesis for a master's degree, etc., furthering the knowledge of the work in a third world country, and of the agricultural projects. Read more about ADDA's policy and regulations concerning voluntary work on ADDA's homepage www.adda.dk



How did it go then? – now 3 years after the end of the IPM project

By Bjørn Jensen. Leader of the ADDA office in Hanoi and chief responsible for all projects in Vietnam.

An important question frequently asked, when talking about third world aid, is “does it help”, i.e. are the achieved results truly sustainable. It is now possible for ADDA to suggest an answer to this question through the experiences of our own projects, as ADDA’s first Vietnamese project, the IPM project (Integrated Pest Management), finished 3 years ago. This project included training farmers from 16 communes in the Hanoi region, in improved vegetable growing. For this reason ADDA has been in contact with our previous collaborators, i.e. the Hanoi Farmers Union and some of the groups established during the project, to find out how things have gone since ADDA retired from the collaboration.

When in 2005, we stopped the project - after cooperating in the project for 7 years, the conclusions were as follows:



“The standard of living has improved considerably for the roughly 11 000 vegetable growers that have been trained in the project. This can be measured on a higher income due to a higher yield, and on reduced costs for pesticides and for artificial fertilizers, as well as on improved health conditions due to improved methods of spraying and to reduced amounts of pesticides. Out of the roughly 11 000 farmers trained, about 2 800 have organized themselves in 112 groups concentrating on improving sales possibilities for the IPM vegetables. Concerning our partner’s capacity building, the evaluation was not quite as positive. On a provincial level it was found that our host organization (HNFU) had barely changed, while it was possible to trace a clear difference in the communes, where they were particularly involved in the groups of producers.”

Now 3 years later, it is possible to state that, after all, the HNFU (Hanoi Farmer’s Union) has

continued some of the activities, if not directly, then it has made use of parts of some of the many elements from the program, i.e. methods aimed at the participants; the trained trainees, and the established groups. One example is, that cooperation has been started between HNFU and the agricultural advice bureau, as they have been presented with budgets from the advice bureau, and, through trainers educated by the project, they have offered a number of courses. These courses are mainly aimed at producers that have lost their farm land in due course of the urbanization, and they are focusing on changing to a more intensive production, especially producing herbs. We find it pleasing, that through these roughly 25 trainers being capable of implementing various training modules fitted to the participants, the HNFU has improved their capacity within the areas they are responsible for.

The project trained about 11 000 farmers in IPM vegetable growing. A cautious assessment indicates, that about 75 p.c. of these are still actively producing vegetables. The urbanization around Hanoi has developed considerably faster than anticipated, and thus caused the expropriation of vast areas of farm land, which is an important reason for the drop in numbers of

IPM vegetable growers. The compensation to the farmers, that have had their land expropriated, has been relatively large, and several of them have had the possibility of starting up their own business, or they have in some way or other been able to change their means of earning a living. Those still producing in the Hanoi area, are enjoying an ever greater demand for IPM grown vegetables as well as for the more intensively grown herbs.

Establishing groups of vegetable growing farmers was the most important issue for the sustainability of the project. In all, 112 groups of about 25 farmers were formed through the IPM project. Today, there are still 58 active groups. When the basis for doing business together as a group has disappeared, the group has typically dissolved. This could have been caused by the loss of farm land due to the urbanization, as is the case in the Thanh Tri district, or because of a contract drawn up between a group and a customer running out, or it has in some form or other been replaced by, for instance, individual agreements. But there are still 58 active groups. In Soc Son, for instance, the district furthest away from the city, there are still 22 active groups. The activities still being vegetable growing, planning the production, and the marketing of the vegetables. Several of the initiatives taken in Soc Son, for in-



stance, are still active, like the stalls at the local markets, where the farmers are selling their IPM vegetables.

Most of the groups still active have been transformed into actual cooperatives or into cooperative societies functioning as sales promoting organisations for individual farmers. The cooperative societies are responsible for sales, contract negotiation and pricing. On top of the market price of the vegetables, the members of a cooperative society obtain a bonus paid at the end of the year. Typically, the cooperative societies and the groups get 25 to 30 p.c. over the ordinary market price for their goods. This is possible, because they can guarantee a

steady delivery of vegetables living up to the promised level of quality.

Thus it can be stated that the local HNFU has carried on the work for as long as it has been of any relevance. In Thanh Tri it became irrelevant when the local HNFU closed down because there was no more actual farm land left; in Dong Anh and in Gia Lam most of the groups have taken on the responsibility themselves and formed small cooperative societies with their own leadership, and in Soc Son the HNFU is still taking responsibility for organizing the work in the groups that have not, as yet, been changed into independent cooperative societies.



Great experiences being a volunteer in Vietnam

By Kirsten Stevens

In due course of a lifetime, chance may fall on having big dreams come true. This summer it happened to me, when, suddenly, the possibility of teaching English in Xuan Mai, Vietnam, at the North Vietnam College of Agriculture and Rural Development arose. This chance left absolutely no room for doubt. There were only a couple of weeks to sort out all formalities, and to work out both what kind of expectations there were to the teaching and what level of English the students had. The latter did not present a clear picture. Obviously, there were many News & Views pictures of farmer field schools passing my inner eye, but when the college asked what I needed in the way of IT-related teaching facilities, I let go of those pictures. Spoken English, English pronunciation and English conversation was the



picture I had on departure. In the last hour, Anne-Marie Foged came rushing with Lillian Werdelin's book for Vietnamese, on learning English. On leaving, this book and a few general communication exercises was what I brought with me, along with a long teaching life's experiences in the ways and the pitfalls of improvising. And what was there for be found in Vietnam? Very soon a feeling arose, of having arrived in a country full of friends I didn't know, yet. All over I was met by smiling, and friendly, and forthcoming, and helpful people, - and in me I had a remembrance of it being like this in Denmark, at one time!

At the North Vietnam College of Agriculture and Rural Development I met well prepared and very motivated students who all found that in their professional life they lacked being able to understand English as well as making themselves understood. For me, personally, it was a great joy being able to teach up to 22 positive teachers, all with a background of studying economy, agriculture, forestry..... for 4 or 5 years at the university. Everything they were presented to, was received with an inquisitive openness and they thrust themselves into pulling as much out

of the teaching situation as possible. They were keen, when working with phonetics, and laughed a lot over the tongue twisting exercises they were gradually presented with. They were rocking the rhythm in the words and the sentences, when this was requested, and we all hooted with laughter when they were acting the roll plays used for exercising the art of conversation. When singing English songs, they were singing their hearts out, missing many notes; after all, the tunes were not necessarily a part of their musical language. What more is, they were all willing to go into all this with high spirits, and with all the repetition that is necessary for changing habits of pronunciation. Side running; they all had the surplus to relate to the methods of teaching, to question them, and to express a wish to learn more. On a modest level, this was also included in the lessons; - after all, it is o.k. to perform on a slack rope, when everyone knows that this is what is happening.

Before leaving, I considered what to talk about to convey an experience of being able to understand a narrative account in English. As it was, the students were so inquisitive, that all my ideas were used up much sooner than expected. Over time, the accounts developed into true meetings of cultural exchange, when I told about my experiences of being in Vietnam and asked my students questions about topics, of which I wanted to have a more profound knowledge. As a consequence, today, I have good knowledge of the pricing of snake meat, as well as of the habitat and the poison degree of the different types of snakes, - after all, this was part of the working domain for my students. In these explanations it was necessary for them to transform their expertise to practical English in order to get the message through. When a natural urge to convey a message is present, the persistence to speak an understandable



language is at its peak, all students get keen and all tricks of the trade are being used. Before going, I had been promised the use of a bicycle to be able to get around. When they saw me, they withdrew the bike; they didn't think it safe to let me loose in the traffic! They were probably right. It is difficult to see, that in Vietnam they are actually supposed to be driving on the right hand side of the road, and then the Danish patterns of reacting become pretty useless. In return there was always one person or more with a motorbike readily driving me here or there every day. During long lasting power cuts, the group would initiate transforming the lessons into teaching outings to places of interests in the Xuan Mai area. During such outings, it often turned out, that the pupils being timid in class work were the more knowledgeable, and therefore also the ones making the hardest attempts at conveying their knowledge in English.

In the week-ends there were trips arranged for me. The school bus drove off with me and a small group of people to Hanoi and nearest surroundings, or to Thai villages in the mountains, to ADDA's test farm in Thu Phong, the power station in Hoa Binh, to the building site of what, in time, will be the biggest pagoda in



Vietnam, to the cathedral in Kim Son, the home of the parents of the HR-chief, driving along a part of the Ho Chi Minh path,..... Not to mention the trip to Halong Bay arranged by Ms Hang, daily leader of the ADDA office in Hanoi. On a daily basis I lived in the best room at the college hostel and I ate in the kitchen belonging to the college. I benefited from helping hands and friendly smiles from the caretaker and his wife, from healthy and tasty food cooked by the cook, and all the by-passing college students' happy smiles and keen attempts to talk to me, at the same time as they were marvelling openly over my average Danish height



and width. In the evenings, I was pleased to receive unexpected visits of my students, proudly presenting their young children. Following this, there is now a little pretty girl walking round in Xuan Mai singing a Danish children's song about the fingers, in Danish, mind! At this time of writing, it is two months ago, that I put foot on Danish ground again, and I still have a longing to be fetched on a motorbike early in the morning to be driven down into Xuan Mai to eat lovely pho, Vietnamese soup, for breakfast. Ask, if I am going out there again. The answer is yes, only not in the heat and the moisture of the tropical summer.

Update on the organic project in vietnam

In the last News and Views we wrote that we had started our first Training-of-Trainers (TOT) course on organic agriculture in early March this year. This TOT finished in July and the people trained in this TOT are now starting FFS in their own province. There will be a total of 26 FFS this first season, with a total of 645 farmers growing vegetables, tea or citrus (pomelo). After their training in the FFS, the farmers will start with organic production on their own farms. This means that in 10 - 12 months from now there will be much larger volume of organic products available in the local market.



Taking care of the pigs in the second TOT.

Photo: Koen

The project has also opened a second TOT, this time with 35 participants. The topics of this TOT are very similar to the first TOT but this time the main crops are vegetables (tomato, cabbage, beans), litchee and pomelo. As in the first TOT there is also a small-scale demonstration on organic pig farming. This TOT will run until January 2009. Together with the TOT, five FFS are organized for the TOT participants to practice their technical and training skills and at the same time offering around 125 farmers near the TOT center a training in organic agriculture.

Interestingly, the Luong Son district near the TOT center is all of a sudden becoming a major area for organic production near Hanoi. They will have had 10 FFS as part of the two TOTs, plus another five FFS this season. This means that by the end of this year some 400 farmers will be starting organic production, offering much more options for consumers in Hanoi to buy organic products.

Besides the training of trainers and farmers, the project also made good progress in the last few months with the development of a Participatory

Guarantee System (PGS). Consumers in Vietnam are willing to pay a higher price for organic products but want to have some guarantee that a product is really organic. Instead of focusing on supporting the government or a company to set up a organic certification system in Vietnam, the project decided to develop a PGS based on an active involvement from farmers, traders, consumers and local organizations such as NGOs and the Farmer Union. Now after three workshops we have together decided on the PGS structure and drafted most procedures and forms. Farmer group leaders will now go back to their groups to formally ask if they want to join. The next step will then be to train farmers and inspectors and to field test the PGS procedures.

Finally, there is some good news from the Ministry of Agriculture. They prepared a first plan of activities for the development of an Action Plan for Organic Agriculture. We are now discussing the details of this plan and hope to start the activities soon. The first step in the plan will be a survey of the Vietnamese organic sector.

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Participants and trainers of the first TOT bringing back a harvest of organic tomatoes.
Photo: Koen



Consultant Chris May with TOT participants preparing a worm composting bin. Photo: Koen



Ms. Nhung and Mr. Thoung on an outing in Mols (Denmark) in connection with the ADDA-day. Photograph by: Anne-Marie Foged

