



Agricultural
Development
Denmark
Asia

NEWS & VIEWS

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Anniversary Edition
on the occasion of ADDA's
25 years work



THE GLOBAL GOALS
For Sustainable Development

Ongoing ADDA projects

ADDA works continuously every year to find funding for new projects - especially at Danida, the Danish CISU, the EU and other public donors. Furthermore, we have increased efforts to get private funds as donors to support ADDA's projects.

The overview below shows ongoing projects, as well as funding source. In most projects, the budget includes approx. 5-10% self-financing covered by ADDA itself and partners in the SOUTH.

In 2019 we finish CISOM II March 2019 after a three years project period. And we finish VN-organic in Vietnam to promote organic farming in July 2019. It has been around since April 2016.

We have been allocated money from CISU for two new projects starting in 2019. VOF - an eco-project in Vietnam and a new project called ACSO in Cambodia, which is a continuation of our initiatives in the Oddar Meanshey province making capacity building of cooperatives – in fact a follow up un CISOM II project.

Ongoing ADDA projects

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Project title	Project period	Location	Budget, ca. in DKK, and source of finance
EASY Empowering Agricultural Cooperatives and Civil Society Development in Siem Riep	06.2017 – 05.2020	Cambodia	3.500.000 DKK. CISU
AMDT. Linking small-scale farmers to the international market for organic Sunflower	01.2018-12.2020	Tanzania	11.375.000 DKK. AMDT
VOF Strengthening the Voice and Capacity of Vulnerable Ethnic Minority Farmers in Climate Resilience in Northwest Vietnam	01.2019 – 12.2021	Vietnam	4.000.000 DKK. CISU
ACSO: Empowering Agricultural Cooperatives and Civil Society in Oddar Meanshey	03.2019 – 07.2020	Cambodia	2.000.000 DKK. CISU

Kilde: Adda

News & Views is sent to ADDA's members twice yearly. Previous editions can be read on ADDA's home page.

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Povl Nørgaard



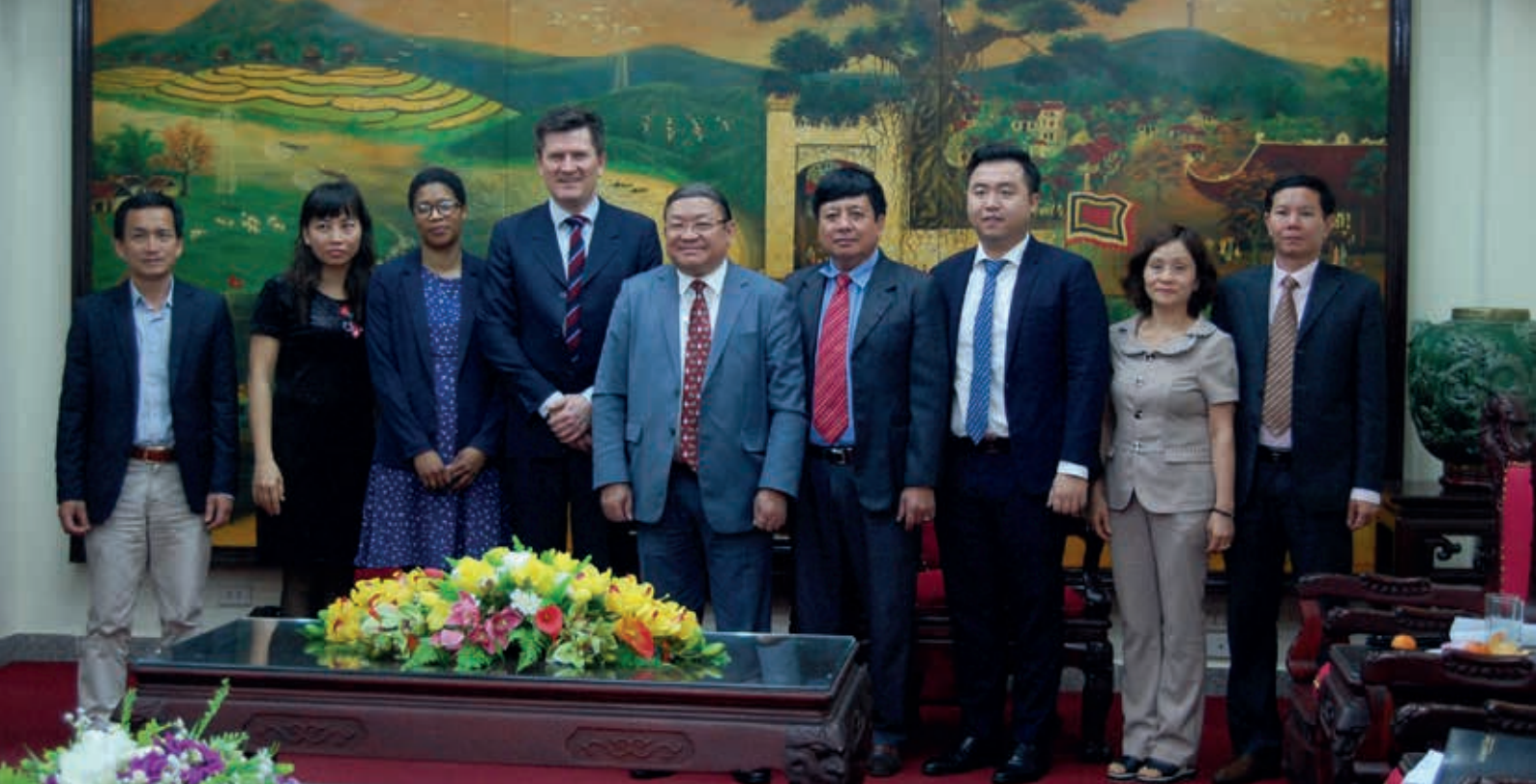
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Cover photo: Empowered Cambodian Country Womens who have significantly improved living conditions and have been strengthened mentally. Photo: Bodil E Pallesen.

Tryk: Kolind Bogtrykkeri I/S



▲ Chairman Søren T Jørgensen is seen together with key staff in VNFU - a main partner for ADDA in Vietnam over 20 years

The long haul

CHAIRMAN'S WORD

By Søren Thorndal Jørgensen,
Chairman of ADDA

In May, ADDA can celebrate its 25th anniversary and it is a huge achievement in itself that a small NGO reaches that far. But it is even more impressive, when we delve into the many robust improvements, that our activities have contributed to in developing countries in the SOUTH

In this magazine we will give an overview of several of the great footprints we have made with our efforts - knowing that there is only room for part of the story about ADDA and the collaboration with our important partners in the SOUTH.

In general, in retrospect, we can observe that the results that give lasting effect - they come from the long haul. This simple point actually makes good sense, since poor people most often themselves are able to cope with „here and now“ problems. But when we talk about solving tasks that it takes 10 years to achieve, then it requires a „calm hand“ and a “cool overview”. We can be proud of that ADDA has been able to deliver both.

The start of ADDA was like that of many

other NGOs characterized by pioneer spirit and enthusiasts, who struggled with great challenges to be recognized and respected by various donors. But slowly and surely, ADDA built up a backdrop of successful projects and related visible results, which relied on respect and support for further activities. Along the way, the most difficult issues have often been internal disagreements between people in the relatively narrow circle of ADDA people. But with openness and systematics in decision-making, we have been able to find the way forward in a unified common track.

After the start-up years, a long period of stability came in the projects in Vietnam and Cambodia and we initiated projects also in Tanzania in Africa. Here our organization's competencies were tested to the limit of its capacity, but we also overcome the challenges.

In recent years, we have been through a longer difficult period of financing various activities, due to the fact, that the politicians in Denmark did not give high priority to developing countries. ADDA's flexible organizational structure has proved to be quite smart, as we are many volunteers who can

and will continue the work - even when it is difficult.

We use our 25th anniversary as an opportunity to focus on ADDA's share of Denmark's development assistance to the people of the SOUTH, as well as our contribution to the realization of the UN 17 world goals. Because with 25 years on the bag, then in optics of the world's goals, we can draw a picture of what can be created by development with a long-term effort in mind. The 1 June – we invite all interested to a anniversary conference at Kalø Organic College at Rønde. Look for detailed program at our website.

And with that contribution to informing Danes about development assistance, I hope that politicians will look more favorably at developing countries, as a solution to the global challenges, such as poverty and the climate agenda.

We can confirm that this type of development work requires a long haul and requires great patience. And when that succeeds, we see that many people get a much better life. And we have shown the way so that others can do something similar.

ADDA's first project in Cambodia

Helge Brunse, ADDA board member, agro-nomist, country-coordinator Cambodia 2004 – 2010..

Capacity development at Agricultural Engineering School Prek Leap National College of Agriculture (PNCA), Cambodia - ADDA's first development project.

ADDA's first project was carried by ADDA pioneers Niels Dumas Johansen and Bodil Engberg Pallesen via the Cambodian architect Outey Mea and the NGO Becha (Bureau d'Etude de la construction et de l'Habitat). Outey Mey was a war refugee because of the Khmer Rouge's bloody regime in the 1970s, where 2 million people died

In 1994 the three visited the ailing farm school PNCA north of the capital Phnom Penh. They found a not very well functioning agricultural school (actual agricultural engineering school), despite the fact that many aid organizations had already contributed in different ways to the school's development. The Chinese (China Agrion) had built new big, good looking buildings containing classrooms and student rooms in 1997 and 1998. Valuable assistance had also come from Asian Development Bank, World Bank, Japan Aid, and many other organizations in the years following the re-ope-

ning of the school in mid-1980. The school was originally established in 1948, but had been closed under the Khmer Rouge regime from 1975-79, when it was used as a military facility and prison.

So the school had received massive support until 1994, but it was nevertheless ADDA's capacity building project from 1996 to 2004, which actually made the difference in building up the school's teaching facilities, teacher training, and the production of up-to-date teaching materials.

History and development

The school is located 5 kilometers northeast of Phnom Penh on Highway 6A towards Kompong Cham. It has a great location on the banks of the huge Mekong River. The school has the status of a separate institution under the Ministry of Agriculture.

The school was established in 1948 under the French colonial rule as a Red Corn Genetic Research Station and in 1951 it became an agricultural engineering school,

which until 1975 offered a two-year certificate training and a three-year diploma. The students worked after graduation as „Agricultural Agents“ and „Controllers“ in agriculture and similar industries. At that time, the school had about 50 teachers.

The school's situation when the project started

It was a worn-out school with out-of-date training that took place at school after reopening in the mid-eighties. The teaching was mostly in the form of lectures, where the teacher or the interpreter read the text aloud and the students took notes. Practical teaching and exercises were almost unknown. Most of the teachers, who were external, were part-time employees and there was a great need for continuing training. The teaching material was written in other languages and of poor technical quality, it was „outdated“. The school's administration was weak, as was the financial management.

In short, the school had a great need to be transformed in almost every area. However, before ADDA started, this process was already initiated by other organizations, including not least Gatton College from Australia, who provided assistance in developing teaching materials for the Diploma II. A development plan for the school for 1995 -1999 was also produced. It was based on the 6 identified problem areas. The problems were within legislation and structure, academic programs, access and graduation, language, resources and institutional management. They formed the basis for ADDA's project application to Danida.

ADDA started the project in 1996

ADDA's project was provided in two phases each of about 4 years' duration. The first started on September 1, 1996, and with extensions - it ended per December 31 1999. However, a bridging period was granted



◀ The new buildings were built by Chinese China Agrion in 1997-98



▲ *The school's trainers in 2004 in front of the old part of the school*



▲ *PNCA arranges many tailor-made courses. Here a team of monks who learn to grow vegetables*



▲ *At the closing ceremony for ADDA on the PNCA in 2004 became very memorable. The head of department of the Ministry of Agriculture cuts the tape and reveals a beautiful stone (in the foreground) in memory of the project. Representatives from the Danish Embassy also participated*

with start-up of 1 January 2000 until 1 July 2000 and then the start of phase 2, which then continued until the end of 2004. The total project assistance was just over DKK 13 million. kr.

Over the years, a thorough curriculum reform for the one-year Diploma I and for the 3-year Diploma II education was undertaken to adapt to Cambodia's new market economy and to become practically oriented. The new Diploma II degree program is 3-year-old and consists of a 2-year general agricultural section and a 1-year specialization in one of the following subject areas: agrobusiness, crop production, livestock farming agricultural consulting, fishing, forestry and horticulture. In the new curriculum, unlike previously, great emphasis was placed on the development of the students' practical skills.

The curriculum development within the disciplines of agrobusiness, agricultural consulting, fishing, forestry, horticulture and horticulture for the Diploma Level II programs was largely completed during the project 4 years.

The core areas of the project were continuing training of the teachers, including English training, as well as building an information center / library and a training center. In the final phase, a great deal of effort was made with upgrading the research and laboratory facilities in collaboration with the Agricultural University. The project also provided advice within school-management development including the development of a usable accounting system.

The first project led to great results

In conclusion, ADDA's first project was a success. This led to a transformation / upgrading of the school to become an 'Agricultural College' with partial autonomy, as well as new education and specializations, more than a 4-fold increase in the number of students and, above all, a massive strengthening of the teachers' competencies and the school's management and administration. Overall, we achieved the following results:

- Strengthening of the school's organizational structure, administration and management capacity at all levels
- Establishment of a training center that conducts short training courses for people who were employees of the Ministry of Agriculture and other ordinary applicants
- Establishment of a methodological and professional training of PNCA's teachers in crop production, livestock farming, agro business and agricultural consultancy
- Development of training material within crop production, livestock farming, agro business and agricultural consulting was implemented

We could well have wished that the grants had been extended a few years more after 2004. But Danida's assessment after a visit at that time was, that the school was in good process and that PNCA could continue even without further assistance. So the project was closed and all values transferred to the school.

ADDA continues its relationship with the school

Since 2004, ADDA has continued its good contacts with the school, both through the fact that students from PNCA have written theses on topics that dealt with ADDA's other projects in Cambodia. But not least because Pich Sophin - Associate Professor at the School of Fisheries Ministry has been part-time coordinator of the 3 projects, that ADDA has provided in Siem Reap and Odar Meanchay provinces.

About Helge Brunse

Employed in development assistance in Asia since 1989, including as chief consultant for Danida projects in Thailand and India, as well as coordinator at ADDA's PNCA project from 2002 to the end of 2004. From 2012 chief consultant on various projects in Myanmar and Cambodia.

Empowered women create agricultural cooperatives

By Bodil E. Pallesen, cofounder of ADDA, member of the board since the start, country manager for Cambodia.

ADDA has put a fingerprint on the basis of development projects with a focus on sustainability, empowerment, gender equality, land rights, safeguarding the food supply and building strong institutions. It has been ADDA's overall goal through 25 years of work aimed at improving the living conditions and democratic rights of the rural population of SYD.

In Cambodia we can now see the results of a long effort - thousands of peasants are lifted out of the very poor (ID poor 1) group and come across the poverty line (Medium). Their incomes have increased several times, they grow new crops and they establish small business activities. ADDA's method has largely been considered „help to self-help“. Therefore, in practice we have done a lot of training peasants - not least female peasants (more than 75% are women in the projects) - through longer courses. A course is typically started with field

schools and then we organize the farmers in self-help groups. The formed groups are further trained in collaboration and management - that is a capacity building which enables the participants to translate theory into practice. And when the groups have become self-directed, they begin to form small cooperative societies.

Since 2005 we have been able to complete this type of training in more than 250 villages located in the two provinces: Siem Reap - centrally located in Cambodia, as well as Oddar Meanchey - bordering on Thailand.

What creates development

Seen from the outside, the projects have acted as a kind of catalyst for development. After an initial training, we can see that the peasants, through their own operations and cooperation, achieve good results and become skilled farmers. At the same time, the members of the groups have learned about democratic principles, as well as they have learned to save resources, so that they can afford the purchase of seeds, seeds, aids, chickens, piglets, etc.

At local community level, our efforts have included training in advocacy – ie. building a competence to enable them to prioritize desired improvements in their own community. And the ability to communicate their wishes and needs to authorities and other stakeholders in the community. It has e.g. dealt with desires for improving roads, water supply, school conditions etc., as well as initiatives to help many poor people to secure their land rights. Specifically, we see that many of the very poor people over time have become active in their communities and, for example, have been elected as country leaders.

From self-help group to cooperative associations

In recent years, we see that the small cooperative associations formed by self-help groups, today are well on their way to becoming significant players in Cambodia with commodity and credit granting. In the two provinces, we have reached 21 associations with several thousand members. In the Siem Reap province alone, there are 4,600 members, of which 75% are women.



▲ The 181 members gathered in Kouk Thlok Kroam Municipality pledge to participate in a union for cooperative associations – called the Siem Reap Meanchey Union of Agricultural Cooperative



◀ *Rice is weighed off and lent to a member of the rice bank cooperative*

It is well-functioning associations that are in leading positions in Cambodia. They are driven by elected boards and large membership influence - and most of them with increasing profits.

The associations typically offer credit facilitation, purchase of fertilizer, feed etc. to the members. Credit for agricultural production is both difficult to obtain and expensive in Cambodia, and it is challenging to provide good quality seed and auxiliaries for the member group of poor farmers. For these farmers, the associations meet their basic needs for agricultural service.

In the coming years, the focus will be on ensuring a more direct supply of members with fertilizers, feed and auxiliary substances - even though the established distribution system is a bit against. At the same time, there will be focus on helping members to sell their production on better terms. Under the theme: „Contract farming“, several initiatives will be taken in collaboration with,

among others, „AMRU Rice“ - a recognized rice mill in Cambodia. Together they must seek to influence the framework conditions in Cambodia in order to reduce costs and increase the access for poor farmers to credits, seed, auxiliary substances, etc. - and not least - improve market access and pricing of production.

Findings in the perspective of UN world goals

Looking back on ADDA's results over 25 years, it is interesting that many of the UN's 17 world goals have really been our guiding star in all the projects over the years. We can point out several of the world goals as guidelines for the initiatives we have implemented. For example: abolish poverty and stop hunger, quality education, gender equality, less inequality, peace justice and strong institutions, climate action, responsible consumption and production, sustainable cities and communities. In this perspec-

tive, ADDA's projects can give an idea of what can be the impact when, for many years, using the UN's universal goals as an optic for the relief efforts in SYD. Seen from the Danish point of view, our results can also be seen in a different and more concrete perspective. One can say that the peasants involved in ADDA's projects have been on a similar journey as farmers in Denmark have been on since they began to organize in associations and cooperatives in the mid-1800s - just a journey of much shorter duration. One of the reasons for this is, that the peasants in Cambodia have been supported far more intensively with capacity building and money for development than the Danish ones.

Today, the peasants in Cambodia are still far from a Danish farmers level, but at the present stage, it is impressive to see the dynamics and change that I observe each year during my visits to the projects. It is particularly impressive to see the effect achieved, when peasants join forces in self-help groups and later form cooperative associations. And not least to see how skilled they have become and how their new competence has led to improvements in their income and living standards. Also their dedication and pride of what they themselves have created - even for their communities - is very impressive.

With such results, the projects have contributed to creating sustainable development. For the results not only help those involved and their families. Their children and grandchildren and their surroundings will continue to benefit from the lasting changes.

All this has been possible because we have had - and still have - talented and dedicated employees, local as well as expatriates and partners. But also, because ADDA has managed to obtain financial support from DANIDA, CISU, the EU, private funds, and received support from ADDA members and many others who have all helped to make this possible. We say thank you so much for the support.



Interview with Lok Sothea, director of READA, Cambodia

Pich Sophin, project manager ADDA, Cambodia.

READA has been a local partner for ADDA in Cambodia since 2008. In connection with Kjeld Vodder's visit in February, he got a talk with director Mr. Lok Sokthea from READA about his views on the collaboration with ADDA and the results that the partners have jointly created through 10 years of cooperation in Cambodia.

READA and ADDA have collaborated on implementing „Farmer Field Schools“ (training courses in vegetable cultivation and animal husbandry) for the poor - mainly women - in the provinces of Siem Reap and Oddar Meanchey. And subsequently, the partners organized the establishment of nearly 300 democratic self-help groups, which were formed by interested participants in the final phase of the field school training. The participants' experiences from the self-help groups have since led to the establishment and operation of small cooperative associations that service the members with

credit, joint purchasing of fertilizers, feed etc. Since 2012, 21 cooperative associations have thus been formed. Most recently a joint organization for the Siem Reap cooperatives called SMUAC - Siem Reap Meanchey Agricultural Cooperative Union. Lok Sokthea says: "Together with ADDA, we have achieved many concrete results. The peasants have increased their income significantly by growing vegetables, raising chickens. Purchase of seed, feed and other input to the operation has become cheaper, and the members of the cooperative associations have the opportunity to obtain credit with lower interest rates". An example from Oddar Meanchey shows that an average family's income has increased by 17% per year from 2013 to 2017 - from just under DKK 5,300 to DKK 11,900. It is a change that really counts.

Larger earnings, cultivation of a larger vegetable assortment, and poultry / livestock farming have meant that the vast majority of poor families now have sufficient food supply throughout the rainy season, when the shortage - and hunger - has traditionally been most widespread. The poor fami-

About READA

The Rural Economic and Agricultural Development Agent (READA) is an NGO in Siem Reap Province, established in 2005. READA was created to improve the living conditions of the poor in rural areas, to promote gender equality and to conserve natural resources.

READA has built a strong network of local authorities and NGOs working in Siem Reap and Oddar Meanchey provinces. READA has approx. 20 employees with great experience regarding cultivation of crops, livestock production (especially hens and eggs), organizing self-help groups and small cooperative associations, developing micro-enterprises and facilitating advocacy among the poor.



▲ Lok Sothea, director of the Cambodian organization READA (Rural Economic and Agricultural Development Agent), which ADDA has had as a partner since 2008. Lok sitting in the middle in blue shirt

lies have achieved a more versatile nutrition and higher quality food. Furthermore, we see that the women have achieved greater equality in homes - because they have become better farmers with more resources (savings and knowledge) and have been renewed faith in their own abilities from the communities in both self-help groups and cooperative associations. And thus, the women have had greater influence on the family's dispositions.

The number of families starving for more than 3 months a year has fallen from 82% to 12% in Oddar Meanchey province. It's a great improvement that can really be seen and felt in the province.

Thanks for ADDA and the Danish people who have supported READA and the Cambodian people. Without your support, we would not have been able to reduce poverty in Cambodia so dramatically from 47% to today 13%."



▲ Mrs. Sar Rene, giving her remark speech in AC annual assembly

Interview with Mrs. Sar Rene, Siem Riep Department of Agriculture

Yun Sinang, project manager, ADDA Cambodia

In February, Kjeld Vodder Nielsen, ADDA project coordinator for Cambodia - met Mrs. Sar Rene, Deputy Director of the Siem Riep Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (PD AFF) for a talk on the Ministry's view of the developments that have taken place in the province over the past 15 years, where ADDA / READA and other NGOs have had activities.

Mrs. Sar Rene says: „The peasants' main challenge in 2005 was that they had low income and their production covered just their consumption food. Hunger was a real problem during periods when production was low. There was no infrastructure to help them sell agricultural products so they could make extra money selling products. For example, in Siem Reap province, in 2005-2006, there was only one cooperative (AC).

ADDA / READA's great efforts to train peasants and establish agricultural cooperatives (ACs) have promoted the peasants' opportunities. In 2019, 50 AC's were established in the province. So now farmers have the opportunity to produce far more agricultural products, not just for their own consumption, but also for delivery to the markets. Such an improvement greatly helps their opportunities for increased income. And the families can get better living standards and also support their children to go to school and get better education.

Which effort have given an impact?

Furthermore, Mrs. Sar Rene says: „ADDA has helped overcome the peasants' lack of basic knowledge. In training them at field or animal husbandry schools, they have given them technical knowledge, market information, insight into laws and human rights and, not least, supported the development of women through their participation in strong and well-functioning self-help groups and ACs. These groups and organizations also

help and support the peasants, because they make them aware of how to produce on time and to the right market. Participation in those groups has created strong mutual relationships and united the peasants with greater hope for their future lives.

I am especially impressed to observe the empowerment we see in women after they have participated in the many training activities and self-help groups. Now they know their value well, they are no longer the quiet part in the home. They are active and have the opportunity to make money because they have higher incomes through agriculture and other small businesses. We now see women who dare to speak in large forums and participate in decision-making on development initiatives - not just in their families but also in their communities.

I can mark at least 10 of the 17 UN world goals when we use them as the optics to describe the many achievements and improvements, we have seen here in the province over the past 15 years. It's impressive", concludes Mrs. Sar Rene.

Organic food in Vietnam - from idea to solid success

By Søren Thorndal Jørgensen, chairman of ADDA and country manager for Vietnam.

With inspiration from Danish ecology, ADDA formulated in the year 2000 a vision for what became the starting point for ecology in Vietnam. At that time, it took 4 years to approve our eco-project in Danida, but since the first project quickly showed solid results, the road opened for the development of organic production and the associated market.

ADDA began its involvement in Vietnam in 1998 by training peasants in the area around the capital Hanoi in integrated plant protection, also called IPM. They learned to spray and fertilize more optimally. And the results of our efforts were impressive - farmers got higher yields even with less input. With the

results in mind, the idea arose in the ADDA to try to completely do without artificial input to the production. At that time, organic production was developing in Denmark, but completely unknown in Vietnam, at least as a certified ecology. In practice, however, there was organic farming among the peasants in the mountains, having small with the use of fertilizers and pesticides. In fact, there were larger areas in the country having organic production „by default“.

Success with the first ecological project

The first ecological project was launched in 2004. The first years passed on to get the technical in place, and to train some peasants in this cultivation technique. We were well aware that not all participating peasants would end up being ecologists,

but everyone got a knowledge of agro-ecology, which they could also use in traditional operations. The farmers involved achieved net yields at virtually the same level as conventionally grown crops. Some farmers were, of course, better than others to grow optimally, but on average, it was actually possible to maintain or even increase the yield, without input costs.

This result was impressive - not just for ourselves: The fact that organic farming together with training in cultivation principles did not increase the farmer's economic risk, almost the opposite, even if the product was not delivered as organic. The result became the key to make the project being able to continue. And without knowing that market demand would come later than we ever imagined.

▼ *Vietnamese peasants growing organic vegetables*





◀ Prime Minister Nguyễn Xuân Phúc, in his speech in 2018 to provincial representatives, says that Vietnam will invest more in organic farming to meet growing domestic and export demand

Establishment of the self-monitoring scheme - PGS

The collaboration with our partner Vietnam's National Agricultural Union (VNFU) was cumbersome and slow progressing. We had a lot of meetings and stood somewhat far apart and reached only small steps forward, although in a market for organic products in the cities began to emerge. The first milestone was the establishment of a self-control system, called the „PGS - Participatory Guarantee System“ - a kind of Danish Ø-mark, without any public control. Instead, the scheme is based on mutual trust and little control from an independent person who perform a control function. Despite the simple structure of this system, there have over the years been surprisingly few violations of the organic rules and violations have more often been due to misunderstandings than to deliberate cheating. We had a number of challenges, but it was actually relatively easy for farmers to increase production. And the market evolved. A smaller „vegetable box system“ was even established, where consumers could subscribe to the delivery of a weekly box of fruit and vegetables. The media in Vietnam also began to show interest and with them followed the large supermarkets, buying increasing volumes. And then came the first bottleneck - for the farmers promised more than they could produce. We had to strengthen our efforts with training in making business plans and emphasizing compliance with delivery contracts. The experi-

ence shows the importance of every link in the chain having to „deliver“ when starting up something new.

The important milestone - the creation of the VOAA

After 8 years of project effort, we ended in 2012 by formulating the framework for organic production in Vietnam. We reached our biggest victory with the establishment of the „Vietnam Organic Agricultural Organization (VOAA)“ in 2012. The organization achieved independence and approval in Vietnam according to all the rules of art. The approval also includes the fact that the international ecology organization „IFOAM“ was on a control visit and approved VOAA as a member in 2013.

At the time, however, we were somewhat excited about whether the organization was just a mayfly, or whether it was the very beginning of a new reality. In 2012, the certified organic area was still extremely limited - about 25 hectares and 100 peasants were involved in one way or another. At that time, in the ADDA, we decided, after mature consideration, to await further projects to see the direction of organic in Vietnam. After a couple of years, we did start talking to VOAA again about a follow-up project to deal with the still many unsolved issues.

After three failed applications, in April 2016 we finally continued the track with a new era that included training, group formation and marketing. At that time, the



governments of Vietnam's many provinces had seen “the light” and established larger zones for organic operation. Interested farmers got the right to use an area freely, as well as a lot of infrastructure. So now there was suddenly a huge support for the whole idea, also financially - and the development is taking off.

Organic food in Vietnam anno 2019

Consumer demand for organic food has increased dramatically and lots of products are exported to Europe and the United States. VOAA is consolidated as an organization and in 2018 the country has adopted a completely national set of rules for organic food production, which is largely made by employees with ADDA experience. Such a result makes me incredibly proud - that ADDA has managed to set the standard for an entire country.

Vietnam's total agricultural area grown organic is now 118,755 hectares (0.5% of agricultural area) and there are 8,365 organic farms. VOAA members consist of 130 organizations, 800 individual members (including 50 private organic farms), and nearly 500 PGS farms. 7 provinces have in 2018 functioning PGS systems and a total of 554 farmers are PGS certified in 2018 with a total area of 83 ha and a total production of 720 t.

ADDA - 20 years of sustainable collaboration with Vietnam Farmers Union (VNFU)

By Arafa Khatib, ADDA, coordinator for Vietnam.

VNFU has been a main partner for ADDA throughout the 20 years. And in February 2019 during the annual visit to the projects, Søren Thorndal Jørgensen, chairman of ADDA board was given the opportunity to meet Thao Xuan Sung, president of the Vietnam Farmers Union for a talk about cooperation during 20 years and its importance for Vietnam's peasants.

ADDA started its first project preparation in Vietnam in the mid-90s and in 1999, the first project „Integrated Pest Management Farmer Training“ - completed with support from Danida of almost six million DKK. Since then, it has been a steady state process and this year we can celebrate the 20th

anniversary of ADDA's work in Vietnam. ADDA and partners in Vietnam have over the years contributed to a positive agricultural development in Vietnam. Today the country to a level is no longer categorized as one of Danida's main aid recipient countries. However, there are still ethnic minorities in the northern provinces of the country, which are among the poorest populations. And they have been and remain an important target group for ADDA. ADDA and partners have over the years focused on supporting subsistence farming by passing on simple and usable knowledge that can help farmers to optimize agricultural production.

The meeting with the chairman of the VNFU

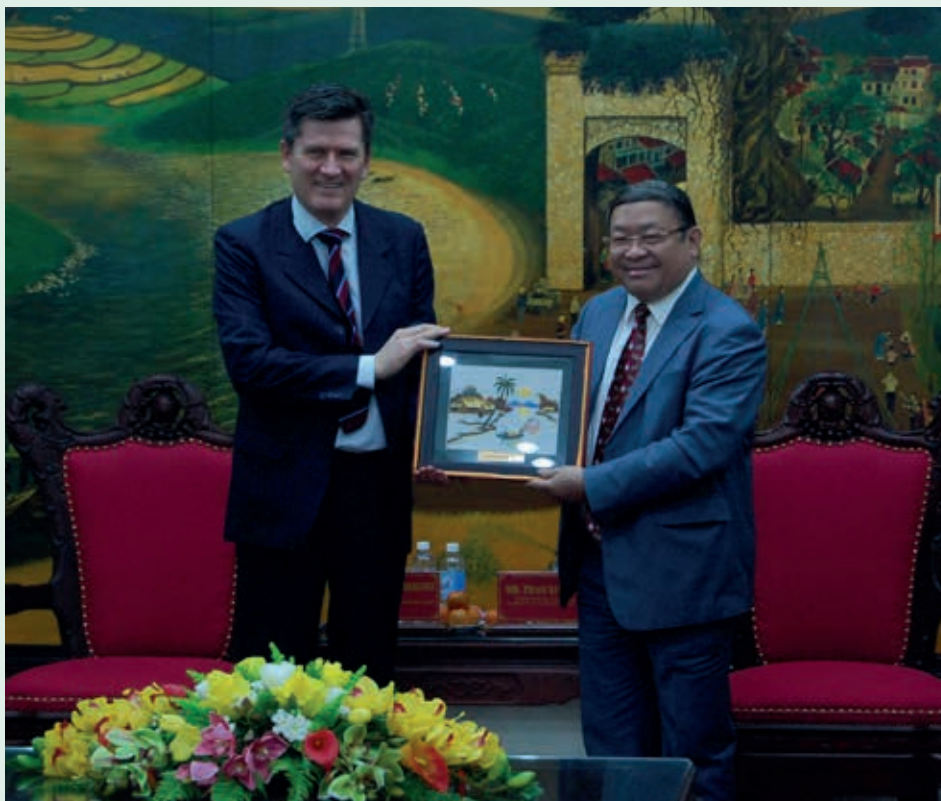
Thao Xuan Sung says: “We see that many peasants have increased their income by 20

- 40% after participating in the projects. In particular, efforts to improve the cultivation of organic vegetables have improved the peasants' living conditions. Another very important contribution from ADDA has been their particular focus on ethnic minorities and on capacity building.”

„As an organization, VNFU plays a central role in poverty reduction and the VNFU works specifically to increase peasants' benefits, improve the quality of agricultural products and also the processing. This effort can help them get higher incomes and thereby raise their living standards. The challenge of Vietnamese peasants is that they lack knowledge of value chains and suffer from lack of infrastructure - water, electricity etc. Another challenge for the peasants is that there is a lack of skilled technical staff at VNFU to assist them with knowledge and support to improve their production.

“These challenges have just been something ADDA has worked on in their many projects. The main results we now see of the effort are: Improved food quality; a significant reduction in pesticide consumption; an improvement in socio-economic conditions and that many participants, especially the contributing trainers, have now become important facilitators of their communities. So many results that also future generations of peasants can benefit from.

▼ *Søren Jørgensen met Thao Xuan Sung, president of Vietnam Farmers Union during his visit to Vietnam in February 2019*



ABOUT VNFU

Vietnam Farmers' Union (VNFU) was founded in 1930 and represents today more than 10 million members within agriculture, forestry, fishing and crafts. The organization is divided into four levels; national, provincial, district, municipal level. In the municipalities there is further organization in villages.



▲ Søren T Jørgensen met Ha Phuc Mich, chairman of VOAA (middle right) and his staff in the organization in February 2019

Ecology - a success story for peasants in Vietnam

Arafa Khatib, ADDA, coordinator for Vietnam

Søren T Jørgensen, ADDA, in connection with his annual visit in the country in February 2019, talked with President Ha Phuc Mich Vietnamese Organic Agriculture Association (VOAA) about the collaboration with ADDA over the years.

ADDA has been working on the development of organic farming in Vietnam for almost 15 years, but the start was not easy. It was difficult to convince peasants of the benefits of ecology. But after thorough practical training in the ecological principles which also proved concrete results from changed cultivation practices, the peasants were convinced.

Today when visiting organic peasants in Vietnam, they happily tell about good harvest yields and about increasing interest among consumers for organic products. And they are pleased that the demand for organic products has gone up particularly in recent years. But a particularly important result is also the improved health of the

peasants and their families. Many people we have talked to, tell that their health has improved markedly after they have stopped spraying with pesticides.

Meeting with the chairman of the VOAA

Ha Phuc Mich says: “There are several challenges for the peasants in organic production. One is that they have limited opportunities to get technical advice. Another challenge for them is the framework conditions for organic farming. And a third issue is the implementation of the policies. He is pleased that our current project Strengthening the Framework Conditions for Production and Marketing of Organic Agricultural Products in Northern Vietnam is precisely working to “advocate better framework conditions, train organic farming trainers and show practical examples of implementation”.

Ha Phuc Mich continues: „ADDA has contributed to and played a central role in the formation of VOAA, which is now the unifying body for all stakeholders in organic farming in Vietnam. And ADDA can conti-

nue to contribute positively by assisting the organization in its work. ADDA can do this by continuing to focus on sustainable development and organic farming. For it has turned out that the organic production method can play an important role in poverty reduction among ethnic minorities - those living in remote areas of Vietnam. I see that the most important achievement that ADDA has contributed to, has been the work on organic farming. This work has motivated farmers and stakeholders to such an extent, that the work has continued and even continues beyond the scope of projects. And that is precisely the rings in the water that a project should ideally set in motion”.



▲ Today's harvest of clementines. After sorting, the clementines are labeled and packaged and sent to the southern part of Vietnam

Farmer Fields School (FFS) - a basic method used by ADDA in peasants training

Bjørn Jensen, Niras, former project manager for ADDA in Vietnam 2005 - 13.

The concept Farmer Field School is a great success worldwide. The method is based on the fact that research-based knowledge of improving cultivation methods typically has to go through one or more transformations, before it becomes useful knowledge for non-formally educated peasants..

Farmer Field School is a group-based learning process. Under FFS, farmers carry out experiential learning activities that help them understand the ecology of crop cultivation. These activities include simple experiments, regular field observations, and group analysis. Knowledge from these activities allows participants to make their own locally specific crop-growing decisions. This approach represents a radical change from previous agricultural development programs, where farmers were expected to be able to apply the general recommendations for cultivation formulated by specialists without experience from the local area.

FFS and The Danish model for agricultural advisory services

The Danish model for advising farmers is in

its basic understanding founded on the same principles as FFS. And this model has been recognized in many countries - not only for its impressive ability to bring Danish agriculture to such a high level, but also for the organization of the advisory service in the field between research and practical farming. In this way it contributes to getting research results faster to farmers, because the structure ensures that knowledge from the research undergoes several transformation processes before it is presented to the farmers. Furthermore the Danish model is based on a corresponding formal education of farmers, which makes them active users of new knowledge.

There are several similarities between the general principles for FFS and the Danish model for agricultural advisory services. Common to them is that the peasants are trained by specially trained coaches (advisors or trainers). And that the training is dialogue-based with respect of the individual's opportunities to use their own experiences in the learning process. It ensures that the training comes about cultural and linguistic barriers, and supports a learning process in which knowledge sharing is going to „bridge“ between people and create strong group formations that later can take respon-

sibility for local development in the villages.

An FFS course in an ADDA project

A typical FFS course is structured in the following phases

- 1) Selection of the trainers to become trainers
- 2) Trainers training (ToT)
- 3) Training of the Peasants (FFS)
- 4) Group formation
- 5) The commercial phase of developed groups
- 6) The groups' broader commitment to village development

Trainers Training (ToT)

It is crucial from the beginning to find the best persons to become trainers. This is done by interviews of potential candidates. At the ToT, typically 35 participants during an 18-week training will learn about a particular crop; how to practically organize and implement a FFS, as well as how to facilitate a training process.

As an integral part of the ToT, 5 real FFS are implemented in the neighborhood. Here, a team consisting of 7 future trainers under the guidance of a Master Trainer, will plan and implement a real FFS with 30 peasants.

▼ A local trainer in the Dien Bien Province has taken the peasants of the FFS team into the rice field to show them the current growth stage of the rice



▼ Farmers learn to use a specific system SRI method to identify the extent of the disease on the rice plants before assessing the need for pesticide





◀ *At the Lai Chau Ground Field School, the peasants learn about inter-cropping, with alternating corn and soybeans in the rows. This is to reduce the risk of soil erosion*

In the training, books or other printed material are never used. Thus, no „completed knowledge“ is presented about eg. fertilizer quantities, best varieties, optimal plant distance or other. All teaching is planned so that the practical exercises with subsequent discussions will generate knowledge among the participants. This means that all conclusions are based on concrete real observations and discussion among the participants and, to a lesser extent, on the master trainers knowledge.

Training the Peasants (FFS)

It is crucial that a trainer does not begin to „teach from the board“. Instead, the peasants must see with their own eyes and try out the various things in practice. It is the peasants' own curiosity that is the motivating factor for learning.

In practice, this is done by the fact that there are 3 fields associated with an FFS. Field 1 is dedicated to various experiments and various practical experiments. This field does not count towards the final calculation of the economic difference. Field 2 is managed by the FFS participants, and it must be operated on the basis of what the class agrees with. Field 3 is driven in a traditional way by a neighboring peasant.

Participants at an FFS meet early in the morning once a week throughout the growing season. They work in teams and each team goes to the field and observes after a specific schedule. The observations then form the basis for an analysis of the con-

ditions in the field. This analysis leads to a discussion of what actions should actually be taken in the field. For it is the peasants themselves who, after taking a decision together, have to go to the field and do what they just agreed. There are often discussions when choosing between several different interventions in the field. Here it is crucial that the trainer is not tempted to jump to „dosing“ the right answer - instead the coach must facilitate the discussion so that all ideas are properly discussed.

This metoder makes it easier for the participants to remember what happened during the training. And they get the opportunity to try out some new ideas on a crop that is not directly their own and without any personal risk by experimenting. And in the next growing season, they can establish their own fields in the best way according to their experiences.

Effect evaluation of FFS in Song Da Province

From 2007 to 2009, ADDA, in collaboration with the VNFU, has implemented 512 corn field schools in the northern poor parts of Vietnam. During that period, a total of

15,412 farmers of different ethnic origin than Vietnamese were trained throughout a growing season. The effect of the training is illustrated by interviews of a total of 300 randomly selected peasants. It shows that their harvest yield has increased by 40% in average, and that income from maize production has increased by 40%. For the individual farmer, this means an extra income of approx. 500, - DKK per season as an average of the entire project area. However, there are big differences between the different provinces.

The most common changes in cultivation practices on own fields are: Greater plant spacing between plants and rows; use of other varieties; increased use of manure, NPK, urea and potash. The increased supply of fertilizer is also associated with a more efficient allocation of fertilizer, especially with regard to the time of application. The use of phosphorus and pesticides is virtually zero, both before and after FFS. All in all, approx. 77% more input in the field, but this extra input yields a factor of 2.27 on average.

The interviewed peasants also report a spreading effect to other peasants in the neighborhood.

In addition to the direct economic impact of field schools, participants from these field schools will also be better equipped to join a stakeholder group or cooperative. Through the field schools, they learn to cooperate, and realize the benefits of such cooperation. During the course of the project, 293 producer groups have thus been established, all on a commercial basis.



Invitation to General Assembly 2019

**ADDA's AGM will be held on
Wednesday May 22. 2019 at 19:30**

at Kalø Organic Agricultural School, Skovridervej 1, 8410 Rønne, Denmark

Agenda according to the statutes:

1. Election of meeting leader and note taker
2. The Board's annual review
3. Presentation of annual accounts for approval
4. Presentation of the current year's budgets
5. Proposals received from the Board and members
6. Determination of subscriptions for the following calendar year
7. Elections to the Board:
 - On election: Søren T. Jørgensen and Povl Nørgaard and alternates
8. Approval of state authorized accountants proposed by the Board
9. Any other business

After the general meeting, the board appoints an honorary member on the occasion of the 25th anniversary, and offers a small glass.

Subjects and proposals to be discussed at the AGM must be sent to the Board by mail to adda@adda.dk by the latest on 15. May 2019.

Motivated proposals can be read on ADDA's home page at the latest 5 days before the AGM.

Notes made during the AGM will be published as minutes of the meeting on ADDA's home page www.adda.dk.

Best Regards
ADDA Board

INVITATION

ADDA's 25th Anniversary Conference

Saturday, June 1, 2019 at 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

at Kalø Ecological Agricultural School, Skovridervej 1, 8410 Rønne

Registration at www.adda.dk or send an email to adda@adda.dk no later than May 25th