



Agricultural  
Development  
Denmark  
Asia

# NEWS & VIEWS

No. 40 · November 2020



# Ongoing ADDA projects

ADDA works continuously every year to get funding for new projects - especially from DANIDA, Danish CISU, the EU and other public donors. Furthermore, we have increased our efforts to get private funds as donors to support ADDA's projects - most recently with a donation from the Holkegaard Foundation.

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.

## News about projects in 2020

In 2020, we completed the EASY project (Empowering Agricultural Cooperatives and Civil Society Development in Siem Riep) and the ASCO project (Empowering Agricultural Cooperatives and Civil Society in Oddar Meanchey).

In the middle of the summer, the new EAC project started in Cambodia, which is a continuation of the work in Siem Reap and Oddar Meanchey provinces building capacity in cooperatives. Furthermore, we have initiated a new project in Myanmar - a new project country for ADDA. See the article about the new project in the magazine.

ADDA's ongoing projects	Project periode	Country	Budget, in DKK, and source of finance
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
EAC: Empowering Agricultural Cooperatives and Civil Society in Siem Reap and Odder Meanchey	06.2020 – 06.2022	Cambodia	4.500.000 DKK CISU
Organic Agriculture for Livelihood - improvement for the Pa-O Ethnic Group in Myanmar	05.2020 – 09.2021	Myanmar	1.490.000 DKK Holkegaard Foundation

Kilde: Adda

News & Views is sent to ADDA's members twice yearly. Previous editions can be found at ADDA homepage.

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# We are the changes we seek

## LEDER

By Søren Thorndal Jørgensen,  
Chairman of ADDA

As a society we are in the midst of a time of upheaval that challenges our basic understandings of a modern safe society. The outcome, on the other hand, is far from getting clear to us, but one thing is for sure - nothing will be as it was before. We know that both Covid-19 and climate change require rapid action that will lead to fundamental changes in our way of life. But it puts us all into a dilemma: Should we wait for our fate until someone decides something for us or should we take action through our own behavior and promote common development?

Our dilemma reflects, that we have an excessive belief that to-days society fixes things for us. We forget that we ARE society and that fundamental change must come from below. Therefore, we must find within ourselves the changes that are sought. Although the communication of the political system should be a mirror of society's debate, it has unfortunately become a "charade dressing" That is why we cannot just wait for someone to do something.

To create change, we as a society cannot do with investing only the extra funds created by the general growth of society. This is otherwise what mostly happens, because politicians are bad at planning and prioritizing between the many interests. That is in fact one of the reasons why economic growth is always imperative for politicians.

### Our aid for developing countries is gradually diminishing

In our society it is almost unthinkable to take funds/budgets from one area and spend it on another one – except for the support to developing countries. Our social contribution to the developing country area has over time become more and more thin-legged. We fear that the funding for develop-

ing countries by time will be included in the defense budget - a development we see as a rather tasteless disguise of good will. Little Red Hood has not lived in vain; the wolf has arrived and is extremely hungry.

In the world's poor rural areas, a social worker does not arrive to help making a personal comprehensive plan for the person who, for various reasons, has slipped out of a work system. It is up to each individual to take care of themselves - even though the challenge as a poor farmer is somewhat greater than those we know in our society. Those people in rural areas are the ones that ADDA focuses on using our simple, but strongly locally based projects to promote change. And we have done it successfully.

It is worth noting, that the development of modern farming in Denmark was initiated locally. It did not start based on a state law, but through initiatives from proud people - farmers who wanted the change and dared standing together to solve difficult agendas.

This story from the past reminds us that ADDA, providing smaller but targeted projects, makes a huge difference every day for many poor people - most often for people who are marginalized socially or live isolated in remote areas of a country.

As a result, ADDA's reputation has grown enormously over time, both in Vietnam and Cambodia - and by time also in Tanzania and Myanmar. However, being known is not a goal in itself. But by having a good reputation, ADDA's efforts to reduce poverty, disease and hunger in a sustainable way for the poor rural population are recognized. The change has not come by waiting for others to take the lead. We have actively sought it.

You can make your contribution actively to make a change for the poor rural population by giving a donation to ADDA's Annual Collection 2020.







# Development aid - small is good

By Ole Lønsmann Poulsen

In 1973 the German-English economist E.F. Schumacher published the book: „Small is beautiful“. His message in relation to developing countries was that development should be village oriented. Or to put it another way; should be directly and not indirectly - poverty-oriented

At the same time, Schumacher acknowledged that developing countries need a modern sector, but raises the question of whether the development of the modern sector manages to involve the entire population within a reasonable time horizon. Al-

though Schumacher does not enter into a debate about the trickle-down effect, it is in fact the one he is challenging.

In my opinion, Schumacher is only partially right. It does not make much sense that private capital transferred to developing countries should be village focused. If this were a requirement, then the private transfers would be much smaller than they are today. And developing countries clearly need private capital transfers to e.g. to expand infrastructure and to develop the private sector, including export-oriented companies.

## Assistance from many actors

The question of which strategy to follow in relation to developing countries thus depends on which actors are involved. Is it transfers from the private sector in the western countries? Are these transfers from the major international financial institutions (e.g. the World Bank and the regional development banks)? Is it state development aid? Or is it assistance from NGO's like ADDA? Everyone has an important role to play in the development of a fairer world. But it is not necessarily the same role. As will be known, Danish state development assistance consists of multilateral as-

◀ *Rice is weighed out on loan to a member of the rice bank in Cambodia - example of a cooperative.*

assistance, which is provided through Danish contributions to the multilateral institutions such as United Nations and the development banks and bilateral assistance, which is provided directly or through Danish voluntary organizations (NGO's).

The overall global multilateral transfers (from, for example, the development banks) are of an order of magnitude where it is natural to involve and seek to influence the macroeconomic policies of each countries (both economically and socially) in an appropriate direction.

### **Bilateral assistance**

The same is not necessarily the case concerning Danish bilateral development assistance. It is too small for that. And developing countries would hardly benefit, if all bilateral donor countries made different - and possibly conflicting - demands on each country's overall policy.

The strategy for Danish bilateral development assistance has undergone a number of changes over the years. Initially, the assistance was predominantly project-oriented and in line with Schumacher's philosophy. Subsequently, it was characterized by changing trends, with keywords such as ownership, conditionality, program support, sector support, budget support, good governance, etc.

Good arguments can be made for all these shifting focus points. But the fundamental question is whether we have not become too ambitious in our overall objectives for bilateral aid. Or if, in other words, we have moved too far away from „small is beautiful“.

### **Aid focus on poverty**

For many years, the principle was that with state aid we should provide aid to poor peo-

ple in the poor countries. This is a principle that I think is important to adhere to. This does not mean that power plants, highways and airports should not be built in developing countries. Or that overarching national strategies for agriculture, health and education should not be developed. It has to be there. But that should probably not be our job.

In recent years, significant progress has been made globally in efforts to reduce absolute poverty. The trickle-down theory has certainly contributed to this. But that does not change the fact that there are still millions of people living in completely obscene conditions. And they cannot all wait for the trickle down to reach them.

The implication for Danish state bilateral aid - regardless of whether it has an international reputation for being a good and effective aid - should be focused even more on aid to „poor people in the poor countries“ and at the same time abandoned some of the great overall ambitions, regardless of whether these (e.g. good governance) in fact make good sense.

### **The strength of the small efforts**

There are many good examples of „small is beautiful“. And many options, such as well drilling projects, primary health clinics, village schools, secondary roads and microfinance. Direct assistance to the directly targeted target group. And all the time have in mind, that we cannot do all that is needed and all we would like to be able to do.

Development aid might not have to be much complicated or sophisticated. Probably there has been a tendency that we within the individual activities have sought to take into account a large number of different and clearly commendable considerations (environment, working environment, gender equality, etc.) having the effect that the main purpose of the specific effort in a certain extent has been weakened. Mean-

while, one should consider lowering the ambitions and, having the clear main purpose in focus, simply making sure that there were no unacceptable negative consequences in other important areas.

Assistance to the poorest in the poorest areas requires, almost without exception, good local partners. It will often be local voluntary organizations and for sure, Danish voluntary organizations will often have good conditions for identifying and assisting such partners.

### **The role of voluntary organizations**

Initially, the most important role of voluntary organizations was considered to be that they should help to anchor popular support for development aid and increase information and awareness of the conditions in developing countries. It remains a valuable role, but so is the operational role. I believe that the voluntary organizations can make a special effort to develop or further develop the contact with and cooperation with local actors in the very poor areas in the developing countries. And especially in common make the planning and implementation of the kind of projects, having the purpose to improve the living conditions of the - also relatively speaking - the most disadvantaged. Either with state funds, funds raised or with a combination of the two.

It is clear that the requirements for voluntary organizations go beyond empathy and goodwill. For sure, voluntary organizations can play an important role in developing countries. And many voluntary organizations certainly do the same with a very large commitment and with an effort that really makes a difference for the poor people - the goal of the effort.

Ole Lønsmann Poulsen - former ambassador in a number of countries and head of DANIDA - a very central figure in Danish development policy.





# New project on Organic Agriculture targeted the Pa-O Ethnic Group in Myanmar

By Luca Nichetti, Project Manager

The Organic Agriculture for Livelihood Improvement for the Pa-O Ethnic Group project, implemented by Agricultural Development Denmark Asia (ADDA) in partnership with Myanmar Institute for Integrated Development (MIID) and Parami Development Network (PDN) takes place in the townships of Hsihseng and Hopong, in southern Shan State

The project area is a hilly plateau on the east side of the famous Inlay lake. Together

with Pinalung, the townships form the Pa-O Self-Administered Zone (SAZ). Established under the 2008 constitution, and in power since 2011, the Pa-O SAZ operates at the same level as states and regions and its elected leading body maintains executive and legislative power of which the PDN is the development branch. The population is about 425,000 inhabitants, with 88% living in rural areas. The Pa-O ethnic group is the majority along with minority groups including Bamar, Shan, Intha, Danu, Lisu and Taungyoe.

## Good agricultural conditions in the area

Agriculture is the main livelihood of the area thanks to good soil, consistent rainfalls and a cool tropical climate which allows for a significant variety of crops to grow. The most remunerative crops are ginger and turmeric, that recently have increased its part of the internal and export market. However, the most cultivated crops remain rice and maize which are used respectively for own consumption and animal fodder (or sometimes sold at a low price to the board market with China).

◀ *Pa-O women on the market in their distinctive indigo blue clothes and colorful headscarves.*

Despite the favorable set-up for agriculture development, the area still holds a status of poverty. The inhabitants of the villages of Htam Ae, Ho Yway, Chan Hti, Loi Mon and Thu Kha Loi Ti, where the project is being implemented, survive on around 100\$ a month which covers expenses for a family of an average of 5 members – often enlarged to incorporate the elders.

### **The challenges of the small farmers**

Firstly, reasons can be found in the lack of access to knowledge and training on agriculture practices. The present methods rely on traditional and common understanding

and is influenced by malpractices promoted by retailers for (mostly) Chinese market. The application of low-quality chemical inputs has been large and sloppy and giving damaging effect on soil and production is already harming the smallholders. Secondly, the market system is underdeveloped and the valorization of a quality product represents a hurdle.

The Organic Agriculture for Livelihood Improvement for the Pa-O Ethnic Group project, has been shaped to timely respond to the needs of the communities. The objective of “improving the livelihoods of small-scale farmers through sustainable agriculture and

in particular organic farming by using locally available resources to improve the soil, yield and farmers standards of living” is fully consistent with Myanmar’s call for support in agriculture development, exacerbated by the COVID-19 situation.

### **Covid-19 has worsened the farmers situation**

The pandemic is having an impact on the agriculture of Myanmar on the already fragile components of access to inputs and on the marketization of the production. In a recent study by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) it has been highlighted that “the immediate economic threat



▲ *Market stall. Woman and child with Thanaka bark paste on face a distinctive feature of Myanmar’s culture.*



to rural areas posed by COVID-19 is the disruption of rural labor markets” and the most effective way to measure the effects is “to increase the ability and motivation of farmers to invest in their farm production activities in the coming monsoon season”.

The project aims at setting up a sustainable system of value chain for the main income crops by working on knowledge and practices (Farmer Field Schools for organic production), organizing a stable and reliable market system and by guaranteeing sustainable and long-term access to quality inputs.

Among the elements for a proactive response to COVID-19’s market disruption, IFPRI lists the improvement of the “the availability and affordability of agricultural input” as pivotal.

### The project activities

The ADDA initiative aligns with the strategy by putting a strong focus on the creation of farming groups with seedbanks system in place and ability to produce organic fertilizer (i.e. compost, fish amino acid). The groups will also be inserted in a network of retailers and market actor to guarantee the full development of the value chain, up the

sale of a high-quality production, cultivated with organic approach.

The management team of the project is conducting meetings and studies to opt for the best solution in terms of training methodology and choice of organic certification (PGS and/or third party). It is expected to finalize the project with 150 farmers trained in organic agriculture, members of farmers groups and connected to potential high-end market.

The participants, selected through scoping missions in the early stages of the intervention, showed a 100% positive feedback in the project activities and are eager to pilot innovative solutions to improve their well-being. The beneficiaries have been chosen by prioritizing marginalized and poor households and aiming at maintaining gender and youth inclusion. The trainings for the adoption of the organic approach in agriculture will be conducted through Farmer Field Schools (FFS) a methodology that ADDA uses in other part of South East Asia and which is familiar to both the farmers, MIID and PDN who have long lasting experience in the agricultural field of development

With the scope of being able to properly design the activities around to the context, the project team prepared and conducted a baseline study in September. Among the information collected the research gave a clear view of villages and households’ profiles, cropping calendar with typical cultivation scenarios, situation of market and inputs, economic analysis of the income generation activities related to each household and each crop.

### The start heavily affected by Covid-19

The activities will already be affecting the upcoming planting season, starting in February 2021. By then the groups will be organized, the training designed and the network of market actors, retailers and certifiers started. Despite the second wave of COVID-19 is affecting Myanmar harshly and the government has adopted semi-lockdown measures, the project has been able to go through the induction phase and set the base for the coming activities. The field personnel managed to visit the villages with regular frequency and conducted one-on-one meetings to explain the project and conduct surveys. Phone contacts have been established with the main stakeholders and virtual trainings could be explored. The coordination among the project management unit, although remote, has been fundamental to draw and adapt the plans to the ever-changing situation and to maintain the effectiveness and relevance against the restrictions.



◀ The village of Loi Mon in Hsehing “Township” - one of the villages participating in the project.



# Strong communities in villages in Vietnam

By Arafa Khatib, Project Coordinator, ADDA

Despite Corona - it has been possible for ADDA's employees in Vietnam to keep the project VOF project - Strengthening the Voice and Capacity of Vulnerable Ethnic Minority Farmers in Climate Resilience in Northwest Vietnam going. With an autumn temperature in the provinces of Lai Chau and Son La of about 20-25 degrees, it more or less keeps the spread of Coronavirus at bay.

## Community development together

The project has built in a special activity called "Small-scale community development projects". These are smaller development projects that people of villages carry out together. It is based on the principles of transparency, participation, accountability and thus improving local capacity to work together.

It is based on experience showing that smaller local communities, primarily

through their own resources, can improve their ability to jointly identify and solve local problems in an effective way. They only need help to organize themselves and have rules and guidelines to carry out transparent decision-making processes, as well as access to information and appropriate technical and financial support to realize the efforts themselves. We see that communities with this simple help can solve local problems such as infrastructure of smaller scale e.g. establishment of water tanks for clean water and irrigation canals etc.

And such improvements are important for poverty reduction and capacity building. In the VOF project, the local groups, Farmer Responsive Groups (FRG), are the managers of the local projects. In Lai Chau and Son La, ADDA and PanNature provided a course on how to develop green projects. The courses also include thorough training in financial management and the design of project proposals.

## On a study trip in the rice field

In the village of Hop I in the Phong Tho district in Lau Chau, the people received a distinguished visit the other day from a delegation with several decision-making authority representatives, among others from the district agricultural authorities. They came to see how people in the village through the project work with SRI rice cultivation. It is a new method to increase the yield by using less water, using younger seedlings, as well as improving weeding etc. At the same time, it is also more sustainable because significantly smaller amounts of pesticides are used. On the field trip, the delegation visited a 5-hectare rice field. Village representatives told they expected to harvest as much as 8.5 tons with the new cultivation methods compared to 1.5 tons with the old method. The visit was instructive for the authorities and the expressed interests to spread the method and also to assist other villages in incorporating the new method where better economy can be achieved, as well as environmental benefits for the community.



▲ Officials from the district Department of Agriculture visit the village of Hop I in the Phong Tho district of Lau Chau to study the village's SRI rice cultivation.





▲ *The peasants of a village hold a meeting.*

# Status of the Tanzania project - shortly before completion

By Ove Gejl and Bjarne Christensen, ADDA project coordinators

The 3-year project in Tanzania is approaching completion, but we hope for an extension after 1 January 2021, to compensate for the temporary suspension of 6 months in 2020, when the AMDT Foundation stopped all its projects to investigate them for misuse of funds

Actually, a few months before the end of the project, we can look back on a number of positive results of ADDA initiatives, despite a number of challenges in both 2019 and 2020 in having funds released from the AMDT fund. But we must also recognize that there are areas where the project's challenges and lack of results are directly linked to the terms of the development concept, M4P - (Make the Market work For the Poor), on which funding from the AMDT Foundation rests. And here we can find some reasons why in some areas it has been difficult for us to reach the goals with good results.

## About the M4P development concept

The M4P Development Concept has a number of strengths when it comes to strengthening the development of existing value chains - from the production of a product over the sales stage to the end customer. In this project, ADDA was to facilitate the conversion of a value chain for sunflower to organic with a focus on helping poor farmers into the value chain. The four focus areas were:

- Training of poor farmers in organic sunflower cultivation
- Implement the use of improved seed varieties in the production of sunflower
- Certify the actors in the value chain to organic - i.e. farmers, oil mills and the sales link
- Build capacity among market actors to be able to bring organically produced sunflower to the international market

In an M4P development concept, development agencies such as ADDA must play a facilitator role. As an external player, they must try to catalyze actors in the market system, but they must not become part of the system themselves. This means that ADDA has not been responsible for the training of the farmers, but has let existing organizations in the market perform these tasks. That relationship to the project has proven to be a key challenge for us.

## The first results

In fact – not until the middle of 2020 we have been able to see the result of our various efforts to develop the value chain since the beginning, namely that organically grown sunflower has arrived on the market. The two previous years widespread drought has hindered farmers' cultivation of the crop.

There were positive weather conditions earlier in this year, but we were unfortunate-



ly too optimistic in our forecasts. When the harvest really got underway in June-July, the actual sunflower harvest was only between 30% to 50% of what was expected. The reason was too much rain in February/March. In fact, this meant that 700 small farmers, which we expected would harvest approx. 700 tons of sunflower, only harvested approx. 500 tons. The positive seen from the farmers point of view is that supply and demand seem to work, as prices have risen from approx. TZS 700/kg until now approx. TZS 900/kg (DKK 2.45/kg) and even more positive that many of our farmers can afford to store parts of the harvest in anticipation of better prices in November/December.

### Parts of the training have been effectful

We see the above-mentioned development to be achieved as an effect of the Post-Harvest training conducted by ADDA. This result has been promoted by a very positive collaboration with our new partner in the project Agro Company Pyxus Agricultural Ltd. ADDA and Pyxus have in collaboration been responsible for the organic training and certification of the farmers, as well as the sunflower mill that processes the sunflower seed. The last inspection visit was from 7 to 16 October, and we expect that both US- and EU Organic certificates will be issued by December, so that the crop can be exported.

Additionally, in September, ADDA received an official request from Pyxus for assistance in certifying 5000+ farmers for the 2020-21 season. This should form the basis for an upgrade of Pyxus' organic sunflower mill for 3-400,000 USD.

### Better seed

22 of the project's farmers have become certified seed growers from TOSCI (Tanzania Official Seed Certification Institute) and have produced Quality Declared Seed. During the inspection visits this autumn, we have been very excited about whether these farmers also stored their harvested seed under reassuring conditions, so that it

can be used for sowing in November / January. With a few exceptions, the seed is still stored by the farmers. We see this situation as a big step forward and a positive sign for the coming season.

### Unclear effect of the training of farmers

The training of the project's target group - the poor farmers - ADDA delegated to two existing organizations - Tanzania Organic Agricultural Movement (TOAM) and Genesis Agrocomplex Co., Ltd. ADDA's role as facilitator was to ensure that the two organizations provided the training for the farmers in an agreed number of villages. ADDA was only responsible for organizing the training of the trainers - (TOT) in the Farmer Field School concept, which was to be used for the farmers in the individual villages.

Unfortunately, it has turned out that the training has not been performed as planned, despite ADDA's initial inspection. Now that ADDA has been given increased funding to be more active in the field instead of outsourcing to local organizations, we have gained a much better knowledge of the status of the organic small farmers. The farmers have told us, that the training and capacity building ADDA paid subcontractors for in 2018-19, unfortunately has not always been "value for money". We must acknowledge that at times we have paid for something, that has not been done.

This discrepancy also appears in official reports from an independent accounting firm in May-June. AMDT now demands that ADDA terminate the business partnership with the 2 partners and claim the detected misused funds to be repaid.

We have gained some very expensive experience from that process. And we have learned that monitoring of outsourced tasks needs to be improved and controlled much better in order for us to perform the facilitating role that lies in this development concept.

Now that ADDA itself is in charge of the training of farmers instead of outsourcing it, we also note that our employees are given an extra responsibility, which they greatly appreciate. It is an important experience for us. And that the farmers will get that training so they can practice "farming as a business".

As something new, good training material has been distributed to all small farmers via Community Facilitators.

### Complicated collaboration with Vantage Organic Food

The Indian feed company - Vantage Organic Food Ltd (VOF) was from the beginning a key partner in the project. They had to participate in the certification, be responsible for buying the sunflower and make sure that the sunflower slant - the residual product after the oil pressing - was shipped out of the country to the international market as organic and thus at a somewhat higher price.

Unfortunately, the collaboration with VOF has not developed favorably. Until now, VOF has not bought any kg of sunflower seeds, so they do not at all fulfill their part of the signed agreement between VOF and ADDA.

ADDA is still working with VOF for an organic re-certification of 5000+ sunflower small farmers in the hope that they will solve the agreed tasks.



▲ Harvested sunflower seeds are air-dried at a farmer in Kibaigwe in central Tanzania.

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*The families and the self-help groups have great need of smaller development projects such as wells, rice banks, bridges, water channels and roads. See [www.adda.dk](http://www.adda.dk)*

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