

PROJECT PROPOSAL

Community House in Ta Phin: responsibility, education and conservation

Board team: Viviana Lopes, Linh Ngo, Ly May Chan and collaborators

Location: Ta Phin (Sa Pa - Lao Cai), Vietnam

Initiation: January 2011

Abstract

Ta Phin is a northeast village of Sapa, a mountainous district of Lao Cai province, Vietnam. The livelihood of local people, mostly ethnic minority groups, is underprivileged. Development of tourism in the village has caused an unfair difference among neighborhoods, bad conducts with tourists and local people, and loss of ethnic traditions. This project aims to address these issues by building a community house in a poor neighborhood of the village and raising awareness of local people as well as tourists. The ultimate goal is sustainable development of the local region with respect of cultural diversity and natural environment, and the emphasis on conservation of indigenous plants. Training programs for local people are proposed to improve their skills in sustainable agriculture, responsible tourism and project management in long term.

The project is put into practice by a team board (Ly May Chan – local leader, Linh Ngo – technician, and Viviana – manager), collaborators and local people themselves. The original idea is proposed by Ly May Chan based on the real needs of the community. After the establishment phase, the project will be responsibly managed and reported by Ly May Pham, an educated local woman. It is therefore a community-based project. Major activities include the construction of a community house with conservation garden, showroom, training programs, and propaganda programs. All activities are implemented with the official approval from governmental office of Ta Phin, the encouragement of local people, and the collaboration with related agencies. The total project budget is \$10.000.

A. Context

Natural and social backgrounds

Ta Phin is a northeast village of Sapa, a mountainous district of Lao Cai province situated in the eastern side of Hoang Lien Son range. The district is distributed on latitude from 22°07' to 22°28'46" North and longitude from 103°43'28" to 104°04'15" East, covers on an area of 67,864 hectares, ranges on an average altitude of 1,500 m above sea level (from 200 to 3,143m). With diverse elevations, climate patterns of Sapa also range from subtropical to temperate. Average annual precipitation is 1.63 billion m³. Generally, the district could be divided into 5 ecological zones: high-mountain zone, upper wind-sheltered zone, upper wind-receiving zone, lower wind-sheltered zone, and lower wind-receiving zone. Ta Phin belongs to the upper wind-sheltered zone.

Ta Phin locates in a mountainous sloppy region with a complex topography. The central area of Ta Phin (Sa Xeng, Suoi Thau, Can Ngai) is relatively flat and large. The village is divided into three sub-topographical areas:

Table 1: Sub-topographical areas of Ta Phin

| Area | Location | Average altitude | Slope |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------|
| Sa Xeng spring - valley | Centre | 1200m | < 25° |
| Y Hang spring | North – Northeast | 1500m | > 30° |
| Suoi Thau | West | 1600m | > 35° |

(data provided by Ta Phin governmental office, 2010)

Ta Phin is characterized by a diverse climate type, ranging from sub-tropical to temperate, depending on the particular altitude and season. Summer is marked by cool and rainy weather, while winter is cold and frosty, occasionally snowy. Average climatic data is as below:

Table 2: Climatic data of Ta Phin

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Temperature | 16.8 °C |
| Annual precipitation | 2700 mm |
| Relative humidity | 86 - 90% |
| Evaporation | 20 – 30% |
| Days with cloudy and rainy weather | 120 days/year |
| Wind direction | Southeast - Northwest |

(data provided by Ta Phin governmental office, 2010)

With low average temperature and high precipitation, Ta Phin is suitable for growing temperate and sub-tropical crops such as apricot, plum, pear, peaches, various flower and medicinal plants. However, frost in winter and

fire in dry season also damage cropping systems as well as forests, and result in loss of plant resources. Residence of ethnic groups like Dao and H'mong, furthermore, makes this village become an attractive site for tourism and research.

Ta Phin is a six-community village which covers an area of 2718 hectares. Five communities are: Sa Xeng, Ta Chai, Lu Khau, Suoi Thau, Giang Cha and Can Ngai. Its population in 2010 is 2766 (female: 1329) with four ethnic groups (Figure 1).

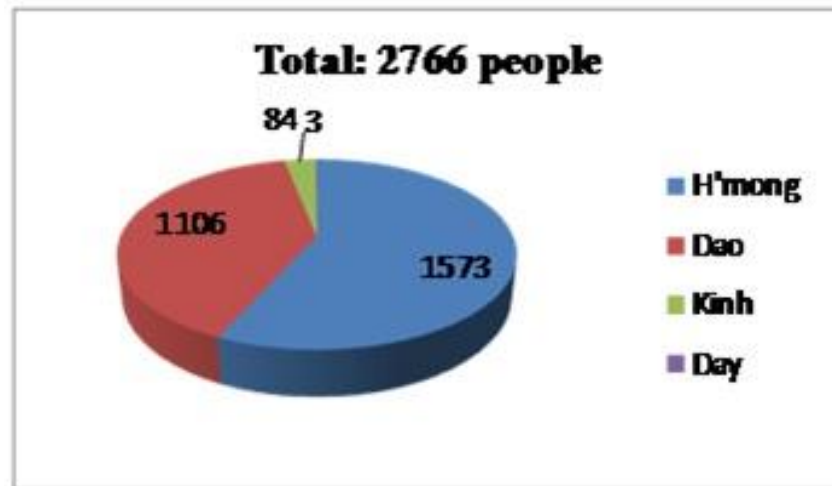


Figure 1: Population statistics of Ta Phin village, 2010

(data provided by Ta Phin governmental office, 2010)

Major income activities of residents in Ta Phin are agriculture, forestry and tourism. Agriculture is mostly subsistent, cultivating local varieties with low productivity. Major crops are rice and temperate vegetables. However, rotation and cultivation technologies have not been applied. Forestry profits rely on few plants such as cardamom, orchids, and medicinal plants. Tourism activities, though provide a good source of income, are seasonal. Available services and products for tourists are the herbal bath, medicinal plants, traditional handicrafts and brocades, and home-stay.

Tourism is a major economic activity of the region. A record of 450,000 tourists visiting Sa Pa in 2010 has demonstrated the attraction of this district (Sa Pa Governmental Office, 2011). Ta Phin locates in a close distance with unique natural and cultural features and therefore is an enchanting place for visitors. This village draws 37,100 turns of tourists in 2010. Accordingly, the potential of this project to directly promote responsible tourism is apparent.

B. Project justification

1. Problem statement

Ta Phin locates in a mountainous area within one of the poorest province of Vietnam (Laocai). Local population is mostly ethnic minority groups whose living conditions are underprivileged. With the development of tourism in recent years, the living standard of this village is increasing. However, this development only concentrates at a very central area, thus results in a significant difference between this area and other neighborhoods within the village.

Tourism also provokes a bad routine of local people: chasing tourists to persuade them to buy local products. This routine creates an unattractive image of the local people, and reduces the interest of tourists in the village.

Along with the recent modernization and life improvement in certain areas, an inadequate awareness and respect of ethnic minority groups could be recognized. This issue is expressed by several signs: (i) Dao, H'mong and ethnic people imitate the lifestyle of Kinh people¹, (ii) young generations of ethnic people are not well aware of their unique traditions, and (iii) the indigenous knowledge of ethnic groups is being lost. To quickly escape from poverty, local people are adversely modifying their customs and living environment. Deforestation and over-exploitation of high-value plants are instant examples. In Ta Phin, these negative modifications are significant since they are tightly connected to cultural and biological resource conservation.

2. Proposed interventions

Educational intervention: local people are educated to raise their awareness of traditional values and to develop their skills. The acquired knowledge and skills would improve the manners and behaviors of local people with their own cultures, tourists, and environment.

Economic intervention: extra income sources are provided from exhibition activities, selling products without chasing tourists, and sustainable cultivation and harvest of plants.

Social intervention: propaganda and discussions are organized to raise the understanding of local people about values of cultural and natural resources.

¹Kinh people: the majority group in Vietnam (90% of Vietnamese population), who newly immigrate to Ta Phin.

3. Implementing organization

This project is proposed by a board team, collaborators and local people in Ta Phin:

Board team:

- **Ly May Chan:** She is the leader of Red Dao community in Ta Phin, a former governmental officer, and a well-known activist in community development. She understands clearly the current issues of Ta Phin and proposes the major ideas of this project. Her knowledge about the village and its people is essential to develop practical strategies. Her credibility with local people is crucial to facilitate the implementation of the project. Her experience with previous community projects is necessary to establish an appropriate activity plan.
- **Viviana Lopes:** She holds a master degree in Finance and is currently working as a volunteer in Vietnam. In this project, she is responsible for donation raising and financial management. She programs and supervises the activities to ensure this project runs effectively and efficiently.
- **Linh Ngo:** She is a student in crop science who has spent two years studying in Ta Phin. She understands the biological resources and crop cultivation in this village. She is responsible for training programs.

Collaborators:

- Ha Tran and Huong Le: house designers
- Vania Lopes: landscape designer
- Huong Nguyen and Ly May Pham: functional managers
- Tuyet Ta: project adviser

Local people:

The local people in Ta Phin will construct the community house, discuss and set code of conduct, participate into training programs and propaganda programs, and participate into the responsible tourism conduct (stop chasing tourists). **Ly May Pham**, a young, educated local woman will be responsible to manage the project afterward, including activity maintenance and report.

C. Project aims

1. Project overall goal

The ultimate goal of this project is to improve the livelihood of local people in Ta Phin and conserve the indigenous plants of the area.

2. Project objectives

- Reduce the difference among neighborhoods in Ta Phin by providing an extra source of income for people living in a poor neighborhood.
- Change the routine of chasing tourists by raising the awareness of local people.
- Improve the understanding and respect of local people and tourists toward the ethnic traditions, cultural diversity and natural environment.
- Improve the skills of local people in tourism conduct, resource management and plant cultivation.
- Contribute to sustainable biodiversity management through *in situ* conservation of indigenous plants in the garden, raising awareness of local people, and improving their skills in harvesting and growing plants.

3. Expected results

- A community house with an exhibition garden is built in a poor neighborhood in Ta Phin (Sa Xeng community - Ta Phin).
- Participators are aware of their own traditions with dignity and propagandize to other people.
- Participators are willing not to chase tourists and propagandize this conduct to other local people.
- Participators gain the knowledge and skills on tourism conduct, resource management and plant cultivation.
- An extra source of income is provided for participators: (i) directly from selling products at the community house, and (ii) indirectly from the gained knowledge and skills.
- Participant gain awareness of environment conservation and actively help on this issue.

D. Target groups

Beneficiaries of the project are the local population in Ta Phin, tourists who are interested in the village, tourism agencies, and other related groups of people

- a. **Local people:** The local population of 2766 people directly gains from extra sources of income, training programs, and other social welfare provided by the project. As a vast majority of the local population is ethnic minority groups, the improving awareness, respect, and protection of ethnic cultures also benefit them (refer to Context). Through training programs, young generations of the ethnic minorities gain: (i) knowledge and respect of their own cultures, (ii) skills of management and cultivation, and (iii) sustainable availability of resources for their use.
- b. **Tourists and tourism agencies:** Since local people understand that chasing tourists is a bad routine, this practice will be less frequent. Therefore, tourists are not disturbed and annoyed while traveling to the village. They involve and benefit from the promotion of responsible tourism in the region. They also have a new place to explore about the local cultures and products: the community house.
- c. **Other related groups of people:** Local livelihood, including the knowledge and skills local people, the management of natural resources, and the awareness of outsiders, will be sustainably improved. This improvement is beneficial for people whose activities are related to Ta Phin, for example, governmental officers, drivers, vendors, and researchers.

E. Project implementation

1. Activity plan

| No. | Activity | Task | Implementation time | Responsible personnel | Note |
|-----|---------------------------|--|-----------------------|---|---|
| 1 | Community house | House design | Jan 2011 – Feb 2011 | Hoang Ha, Huong Le | House is constructed from local and ecological materials. Except for necessary experts should be contracted, other contributors are volunteers. |
| | | House construction | Feb 2011 – Mar 2011 | Ly May Chan, Ly Lao Su, Ly Lao San | Local labor resource is employed |
| | | Garden design | Mar 2011 – Apr 2011 | Vania Lopes | Native plants and traditional medicinal plants are grown in exhibition garden. |
| | | Garden construction | Apr 2011 | Linh Ngo, Ly May Chan, LP* | |
| | | Activity management | Mar 2011 – June 2011 | Viviana Lopes, Ly May Chan, Linh Ngo, Ly May Pham, LP | Ly May Pham is responsible to manage the project afterward |
| 2 | Exhibition program | Exhibition and selling of local products | Mar 2011 - permanence | Local people, Ly May Chan, Ly May Pham | Local products: brocades, handicrafts, medicinal plants |

| | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|--|---------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 3 | Re-investment | Management of benefits | Dec 2011 | Ly May Chan, Viviana Lopes, Linh Ngo | New investments will be carefully analyzed by the board team based on real needs of the community. |
| 4 | Training program | Ethnic tradition | May 2011 | Ly May Chan | Training programs are provided every two months with strong emphases on realistic needs, proposed by local people. |
| | | Plant cultivation | Apr 2011 – May 2011 | Linh Ngo | Local people participate into the program. |
| | | Tourism conduct | Apr 2011 – May 2011 | Viviana Lopes, Linh Ngo, Ly May Chan | Local people participate into the program. |
| 5 | Propaganda campaign | Collaborative planning with governmental office and tourism agencies | Feb 2011 – Mar 2011 | Viviana Lopes, Ly May Chan, Linh Ngo | Propaganda campaign is organized to raise awareness of local people and tourists about ethnic traditions and tourism conduct. The campaign is implemented in collaboration with governmental office and tourism agencies |
| | | Propaganda toward tourists and local people | Mar 2011 – Apr 2011 | Ly May Chan, Linh Ngo, Viviana Lopes | Responsible tourism is emphasized. |

**LP: local participators*

2. Objectives and proposed approaches

| Number | Objective | Activities |
|--------|--|--|
| 1 | Develop balanced, sustainable livelihoods | Construction of a community house where people can work there, made their products and sell them. This community house will be constructed respecting the environment and with ecological materials. In this house it will be a product and garden exhibition. |
| 2 | Improve their skills | Training of sustainable harvest and cultivation of plants, responsible tourism, and marketing and managing skills. |
| 3 | Increase awareness and respect for culture | Implement consciousness tourism. Educate tourists and tourism institution of Sapa to show in a different way the culture of this ethnic people. Going to this community house they can see how they live, produce the products, they can also see and learn about medicinal plants and other specimens of the region. Develop Networking with tourism office from Sapa, seminars and meetings. Implement marketing campaigns to promote this sustainable and dignified model |

3. Schematic timetable

| Step | Description | Duration |
|------|---|----------------------------|
| 1 | Problem/Need/Opportunity identification | Done (Nov 2010 – Dec 2010) |
| 2 | Planning | Done (Dec 2010 – Jan 2011) |
| 3 | Project initiation | Jan 2011 – Feb 2011 |
| 4 | Programming | Jan 2011 – Feb 2011 |
| 5 | Construction | Feb 2011 – Mar 2011 |
| 6 | Implementation of activities | Mar 2011 – Jun 2011 |
| 7 | Project assessment | End of Jun 2011 |
| 8 | Project maintenance | Jun 2011 - permanence |

F. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are based on:

- Registration/Number of participators monthly.
- Surveys on knowledge-attitude-practice of participators every 3 months.
- Surveys on tourist feedback every 3 months.
- Discussions of participators and project's board team
- Financial records every 3 months.
- Activity reports every 3 months.

The monitoring and evaluation are implemented by project's board team and local people

G. Budget

| No | Item | Sub-item | Cost | Note |
|----|--|--|-------------------------|---|
| 1 | House construction | Materials Labor | \$5603.5 \$2400 | All materials and labor are local resources |
| 2 | Garden | Plants Fertilizers Maintenance | \$150 \$150 \$100 | |
| 3 | Furniture | Doors Tables and chairs | \$200 \$200 | |
| 4 | Materials for training and propaganda programs | Posters Documents | \$50 \$50 | |
| 5 | Staff | Train and bus tickets Stay, food Airfare (Viviana Lopes) | \$410 \$100 \$500 | 10 trips |
| 6 | Miscellany | | \$76.5 | |
| | Total | | \$10000 | |

(Refer to Annex for details)

H. Reporting

Activity reports, financial records and survey reviews are summarized, documented and sent to donators and partners every three months.

I. Annexes

1. Budget plan

| No | Items | Sub-items | Unit | Quantity | Cost per unit (*1000 VND) | Total cost (*1000 VND) | Equivalent cost (US\$)* |
|----|-------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|----------|------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | House construction | Brick | Piece | 6200 | 2.6 | 16120 | 806 |
| | | Rock | M ³ | 80 | 250 | 20000 | 1000 |
| | | Sand | M ³ | 50 | 230 | 11500 | 575 |
| | | Cement | ton | 25 | 1400 | 35000 | 1750 |
| | | Roof | Piece | 150 | 50 | 7500 | 375 |
| | | Bamboo | Stem | 15 | 30 | 450 | 22.5 |
| | | Soil | M ³ | 100 | 65 | 6500 | 325 |
| | | WC | Room | 1 | 15000 | 15000 | 750 |
| | | Labor (construction) | M ² | 80 | 350 | 28000 | 1400 |
| | | Labor (rock building) | M ³ | 80 | 250 | 20000 | 1000 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|---------------|----------------|------|-----|------|--------------|
| 2 | Furniture | Door | M ² | 14 | 300 | 4200 | 210 |
| | | Table | Item | 4 | 700 | 2800 | 140 |
| | | Chair | Item | 12 | 100 | 1200 | 60 |
| 3 | Garden | Plant | Stem | 200 | 15 | 3000 | 150 |
| | | Fertilizers | Kilogram | 150 | 20 | 3000 | 150 |
| | | Maintenance | Month | 10 | 200 | 2000 | 100 |
| 4 | Documents | Poster | Item | 1000 | 1 | 1000 | 50 |
| | | Documents | Item | 100 | 10 | 1000 | 50 |
| 5 | Staff | Train ticket | Round trip | 10 | 760 | 7600 | 380 |
| | | Bus ticket | Round trip | 10 | 60 | 600 | 30 |
| | | Stay and food | Trip | 10 | 200 | 2000 | 100 |
| | | Air fare | Trip | 1 | | | 500 |
| 6 | Miscellany | | | | | | 76.5 |
| | Total | | | | | | 10000 |

* Exchange rate: 1US\$ = 20 000 VND

2. Funding source plan

| Possible sources | Amount |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Private donors | \$3,000 |
| Institutions/NGOs | \$2,000 |
| Local government | Land |
| Charity Event Hanoi | \$5,000 |
| Total | \$10,000 |

3. Applicant contacts

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