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A VIEW OF CURRENT STATUS OF CONSERVATION EDUCATION IN VIETNAM

In recent years, conservation education activities have been organised nationwide. Target groups for these activities vary including students and local people in buffer zones of national parks (NPs) and other protected areas (PAs), tourists, staff of NPs and other PAs, the general public, students in nationwide schools and leaders at all levels. Although the response from each target group differs, conservation education programmes play an importance role in the life of many communities throughout Vietnam.

Most active are conservation programmes for students and local people in
buffer zones of NPs and PAs. Notably, the Club Programme in schools and the Village Programme in the buffer zone of Cuc Phuong National Park were developed at the end of 1996 under the framework of the Cuc Phuong Conservation Project implemented by the Fauna and Flora International (FFI). Following the experience and success of these programmes, other programmes for students in the buffer zone of Ba Be NP and Na Hang Nature Reserve (in the project PARC implemented from 2000 to 2004, and the project on the Tonkin Snub-nosed Langur conservation) were also carried out. Conservation awareness programmes for students and local people in the buffer zone of Bach Ma NP under the Tiger Conservation Project in Thua Thien-Hue Province have also been implemented by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), and project SGP/VN/99/020 (UNDP) and supported by the publication "Trees are our friend" (co-implemented by Bach Ma NP and Nord Pas de Calais from France). Conservation education aiming at students and local communities in buffer zones was also organised at Cat Tien NP under the Cat Tien Conservation Project (1998-2003), funded by the Netherlands and Vietnam, and implemented by WWF, at Cat Ba NP (WWF's project on environmental education in Cat Ba NP), in Yokdon NP (project on environmental education and conservation awareness under Project PARC-Yokdon). Other projects have been undertaken at in Con Dao NP (WWF's Programme on Environmental Education and Conservation Awareness), in Pu Mat Nature Reserve (Project on Social Forestry and Nature Conservation (SFNC) funded by the EU and Vietnam), in Vu Quang Nature Reserve (WWF's Environmental Education Programmes in Schools and Communities), in Phong Nha - Ke Bang Nature Reserve (Environmental Education Programme in the parallel conservation project Phong Nha - Kẻ Bàng - Hin Namno implemented by WWF), in Xuan Thuy RAMSAR site (Project of Capacity Building for Xuan Thuy Nature Reserve funded by Netherlands, 1998 - 1999), in Sapa (Sa Pa Integrated Environmental Education Programme implemented by Frontier-Vietnam from 2001), and in Che Tao Commune, Mu Cang Chai, Yen Bai (Protected Area for Gibbons and Langurs in Northern Vietnam implemented by FFI).

Conservation education is typically organised in the form of a "Green Club," "Conservation Club," or "Nature and Environment Club." To date, these clubs have involved tens of thousands of students with an active response. Although the contents and forms of these activities are different and changed in order to suit different regions, each meeting of clubs generally focuses on a topic and integrates many other activities such as drawing, telling stories, playing games, and discussing issues that relate to the topic. Apart from ordinary activities, there are many other conservation-oriented ones such as puppet shows, tree-planting, visits to PAs, drawing contests, quizzes, speeches, posters, teachers' seminars, children's communication networks, and so forth. A lot of conservation materials have been designed and used such as posters, notebooks, name cards, T-shirts, hats with conservation messages, video tapes, short films, etc. Besides, some areas have developed their education programmes for their clubs that are suitable for regional natural resources and conservation. However, these programmes need further complement to mention detailed issues of their regions.

Parallel to conservation education programmes for school children in buffer zone are programmes for buffer zone communities, typically village programmes, programmes on economic development in buffer zones (Ba Be NP, Cuc Phuong NP, Cat Ba NP, Bach Ma NP, Yokdon NP, Cat Tien NP, Con Dao NP, Na Hang Nature Reserve, Pu Mat Nature Reserve, Vu Quang Nature Reserve, Ke Go Nature Reserve, etc.) These programmes are implemented right in communities with coordination between projects and local unions (e.g., Youth Union, Women's Union) and have such activities as slide shows or short films about the value of regional natural resources, short play performances with conservation messages, audio performances in village centres, among others. In addition, there are many projects on economic development in buffer zones in order to improve people's living standards and reduce the dependence on forest resources resulting in enhancing the efficiency of conservation activities. These involve technical advise and guidance in the fields of new agricultural methods, planting fruit trees, agro-forestry, apiculture, cattle raising, forest allocation, participation of local people in tourism, upgrading and building of infrastructure. These programmes in buffer zones of Pu Mat Nature Reserve, Ba Vi NP, Bach Ma NP, Cat Tien NP and some other areas assist conservation education actively.

In addition to conservation education programmes for students and people in buffer zones, other programmes for visitors are highly emphasized. The first visitor centre in Vietnam was built in Cuc Phuong National Park under the Visitor Programme of the Cuc Phuong Conservation Project in 1999 and officially opened to receive more than 2000 visitors. Since then many visitor centres/environmental education centres have been established such as the Environmental Education Centre in Cat Ba National Park, the Visitor Centres in Bach Ma and Con Dao National Parks. Some centres will be built in the near future in Tam Dao, Ba Vi, and Ba Be NPs, and Na Hang Nature Reserve. These centres display objects, and specimens helping visitors to understand
In national parks and other protected areas as well as in buffer zones, authorities play a significant role in conservation, so they are also a very important target groups. Conservation education activities for hundreds of staff in NPs and other PAs have been conducted in some regions such as Ba Vi and Tam Dao NPs (in the Training Courses on Environmental Education and Ecotourism 2000-2001 by Vietnam National Parks and Protected Areas Association (VNPPA) funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)); Cat Tien NP (Programme on Environmental Education in Cat Tien Conservation Project by WWF); and Con Dao National Park (Programme on Environmental Education and Conservation Awareness by WWF). In Ba Be National Park, local staff of seven buffer zone communes took part in the training course on conservation education in the project "Training on Nature Conservation and Sustainable Development for commune staff in Be Be District, Bac Kan Province" funded by SIDA and implemented by Vietnam Forestry Science and Technology Association (VIFA).

For the past few years, conservation activities for the general public have been given much attention. Central and local mass media always broadcast news and articles on conservation to let the public know about conservation problems that human beings are facing. These kinds of activities were also organised by WWF through the Environment Fair on the occasion of World Environment Day on 2 June 2001. This activity was in the project on "Conservation Awareness and Biodiversity Conservation in Zoos" by WWF and Hanoi Zoo with funding from the Netherlands's Local Environment Fund. There were organised music and play performances, drawing contests (for children) and slide shows on habitats of endangered species.

Aside from those above activities, conservation education for students throughout Vietnam has been put into practice. Typical is the activity of the project on Environmental Education in Schools of Vietnam VIE/98/018 of the Ministry of Education and Training. The project has developed a supervisory network for environmental education in Teacher Training Schools and Departments of Science, Technology and Environment in 61 provinces and cities. All supervisors are those who have to guide and put environmental education activities for teachers and students in operation at the local level. Recently the project has made public school books focusing on environmental protection/ nature conservation, which have been applied in some related subjects at schools such as biology, geography, ethics, etc.

In conclusion, up to now conservation education in Vietnam has made great progress. Regarding contents, conservation education activities are more and more diverse with many local issues and effective materials. Implementation methods have undergone many rational steps. Learner-centred methods in interactive training courses have been applied requiring learners to look for solutions and make decisions by themselves, making them really active and dynamic. Regarding target groups, nationwide conservation education activities targeted different groups although the methods and responses from learners vary.

The matter here is how to exchange conservation education experience among different organisations for better results. It can be said that the establishment of the Conservation Education Network (CEN) in June 2000 has partly satisfied this demand.

Apart from challenges in conservation such as difficult living conditions, low public knowledge, language barriers, customs, and small budgets, educators have to cope with two other challenges. These are: How to maintain conservation activities when projects are over and How to assess environmental education activities? Is it possible to conduct conservation education when projects are over? As a result, projects should consider the possibility of future continuation before they are finished and concurrently, relevant agencies should also seek financial and human resources for that eventually in the future.

Moreover, the evaluation of conservation education is a matter that has not been completely addressed. Being asked about the efficiency of conservation education programmes most interviewees (i.e., programme coordinators, staff) have stated that their programmes contributed towards changing public awareness and attitude about conservation, however the public's real behavior has not changed much or at least it has changed very little. Answers are always quantitative, predicted and subjective from conservation staff. However, the evaluation of conservation education has not been conducted in large scale partly because of data shortage, inconsistency and more importantly lack of adequate and precise evaluation methods. In the current conditions of Vietnam, it is very difficult to identify exactly what changes are caused by conservation education.

In the coming time, it is necessary not only to maintain and conduct better conservation education but also to deal
with these two challenges: how to maintain conservation education sustainably and how to evaluate conservation education programmes for better future performance.

The Board of Editors

BAI TU LONG - THE TWELFTH NATIONAL PARK OF VIETNAM

Vo Tri Chung - Environment and Sustainable Development Institute

The Editorial Board: According to announcement No33/VPCP-TB from the Governmental Office dated 15 May 2001, Vice Prime Minister Nguyen Cong Tan agreed with the People's Committee of Quang Ninh Province and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development on converting Ba Mun Nature Reserve into Bai Tu Long National Park. On June 4, 2001, Bai Tu Long National Park was established based on the Decision N0 85/2001/QS-Ttg of the Prime Minister. Bai Tu Long National Park surely plays an important role in scientific research and biodiversity conservation of forest and marine ecosystems, protection of cultural and historical value that contribute to diversifying and beautifying Ha Long Bay and creating favourable conditions for tourism development in the North East of Vietnam.

Bai Tu Long National Park, is the twelfth national park of Vietnam. This park is set-up based on the development and conversion of Ba Mun Nature Reserve, a large island in Bai Tu Long Bay (located next to Ha Long Bay in the north) in Van Don District, Quang Ninh Province. The area of island and tidal land is more than 2300 ha. The island has a shape of a giant French bean 20km in length, 1.5 km in width, and without residents inside the park.

The Government recognised natural forests in Ba Mun Island as "National Restricted Forest" in 1977. The forested area of the island covers 95%, which mainly includes evergreen broad-leaved forest, habitat for various species of wildlife including large mammals. From 1979 to 1986, deforestation and wildlife hunting caused negative effects on forests on the island. Since 1987, forest resources on Ba Mun Island as well as on nearby islands (such as Tra Ngo, and Sau Nam) have been well protected. In 1999, the People's Committee of Quang Ninh Province recognised Ba Mun as a Nature Reserve.

In the same year, the Oceanography Institute in Hai Phong under the National Centre for Natural Science and Technology together with the Department of Science, Technology and Environment conducted investigations on marine resources around the island in order to develop a suggestion on marine protection of Ba Mun Island. In the second half of 2000, a project on establishing a National Park on the basis of Ba Mun Nature Reserve was implemented. The National Park was proposed to take on the name Bai Tu Long, the twelfth national park of Vietnam in the chronological list of Vietnam's national parks.

Bai Tu Long National Park has a total area of 15.783 ha including 6.125 ha of island area, and 9.658 ha of tidal land and protected marine area. The park has large islands such as Ba Mun, Large Tra Ngo, Small Trụ Ngã, Sau Nam, Sau Dong, Dong Ma, and more than 20 other small islands.

Different from Cat Ba National Park, Bai Tu Long National Park mostly includes "soil mountain" islands integrated with some limestone islands, noticeably Large Tra Ngo has a special geology forming soil mountains and limestone mountains on the same island. The park has a high diversity of landscape: 8 types of landscape on the islands and 7 others in the offshore bench. Natural forests on islands cover 4,161 ha with over 494 floral species of which 11 species are recorded in the Vietnam Red Data Book; 170 offshore vertebrates of which 9 are recorded in the Red Data Book. Marine resources in the park include 132 zoobenthos species, 79 coral species, and 25 rare fish; of large marine species, there are 17 rare species including the Dugong.

In Luon Cai De Cave 2km in depth on Large Tra Ngo, tides running in and out creates an underground river to tidal areas in a limestone valley with a mangrove forest covering nearly 200ha. Soi Nhu Cave on Soi Nhu Island in the park contains a relic of pre-history people, who lived here twenty thousand years ago.

Since becoming national restricted forest and Ba Mun Nature Reserve, environmental education has been conducted in close collaboration between forest protection agencies, the nature reserve management board, and local communities in Minh Chau Commune. Forest and marine protection has been recorded in local regulations in communes and schools of nearby islands. With the decision on the establishment of Bai Tu Long National Park as the twelfth national park of Vietnam, forest and marine resources are protected more strictly.
Comparison of some National Parks (NP) of Vietnam in South China Sea

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical information</th>
<th>Cat Ba National Park - Tonkin Bay</th>
<th>Con Dao NP, South of South China Sea</th>
<th>Bai Tu Long NP, North of Tonkin Bay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>178</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aquatic species</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Offshore higher plants</td>
<td>745</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>494</td>
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<td>Plants recorded in the Red Book</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mammals</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td>Birds</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>96</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amphibians</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reptiles</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offshore animals recorded in the Red Book</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoobenthos</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>(deficient)</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coral</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoobenthos recorded in the Red Book</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>(deficient)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land area on islands</td>
<td>9800 ha</td>
<td>6043 ha</td>
<td>6125 ha</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protected marine area</td>
<td>5400 ha</td>
<td>9000 ha</td>
<td>9658 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents inside the park</td>
<td>Villages</td>
<td>Villages</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CERTIFICATE COURSE IN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Joe Peters

The Center for Environment Education, India conducts an international Certificate Course in Environmental Education every year. Till date 5 such programmes have been conducted. The sixth Course in this series is scheduled for 11 September-7 December 2001. 65 professionals from 17 countries have been trained under the Regional Capacity Building initiative of the Centre.

The Course aims to provide an opportunity for persons who have entered the profession of EE to acquire, in a relatively short time, the multidisciplinary perspective that is necessary for environmental educators.

The Course attempts to provide an overview of environmental issues in the region, and stresses how education and communication strategies and techniques can be designed and implemented to help in effective environmental management. The Course helps participants in acquiring knowledge and skills in conceptualizing, planning, implementing and evaluating EE proposals and projects.

Course content

The Course content is dealt with in five modules:

- Basics of Ecology and Global/Regional Environmental Issues
- Education for Sustainable Development
- Environmental Education and Communication: Methods and Strategies
- Resources for EE
- Project Management and Capacity Building
Course - end Project

Each participant, before coming to attend the course, is required to submit a project proposal, which s/he would like to implement within six months of return to the parent organization. To ensure that the project objectives are in line with the larger goals of the parent organization and that the candidate is provided the necessary support to implement the project by the parent organization, the project needs to be decided in consultation with the head of the organization. During the three months of Course duration, each participant refines her/his project proposal under the guidance of a CEE faculty having experience in a related field. Submission of a satisfactory project report in time is necessary for successful completion of the Course.

Teaching-learning Methodologies

The teaching-learning methodologies range from interactive classroom sessions, games and activities, lectures, case discussions, group discussions etc. to media workshops and field visits. Group work, short-term assignments and projects also form an integral part of the Course.

Certification

At the end of the three months, all participants of the Course are awarded a Certificate of Participation. On submitting a satisfactory course-end project report in time, participants are awarded a Certificate of Completion.

Who can apply?

The Course is open to in-service professionals working in the field of environmental education. Professionals from government, non-governmental agencies, educational institutions, media organizations etc. working to create awareness about environment and sustainable development, and who feel the need to upgrade their knowledge and skills in environmental education and communication methodologies to more effectively achieve their objectives, will find the Course useful. The Course medium is English and the number of participants is limited to 15 per course. Experience of at least two years in an environment/education related organization and sponsorship of the participants by their parent organizations are essential.

Course Fee

Sponsoring organizations will have to bear the travel cost and the Course fee of USD 3000 (there is a 10 per cent waiver for IUCN and WWF recommended candidates). The Course fee includes all course related expenses, like resource material, field visits as well as accommodation and food cost.

During the Course, a nominal monthly stipend is given to all participants. Arrangements are made by CEE for modest accommodation on double occupancy basis. Participants must get their medical insurance done in their home countries. Fees can be paid through Demand Drafts made in favour of Center for Environment Education, India, payable at Ahmedabad.

For more information and application forms, write to:

SASEANEE Secretariat
Centre for Environment Education
Thaltej Tekra, Ahmedabad 380 054, India
Phone: 91 79 6858002 to 9
Fax: 91 79 6858010
E-mail: ceeindia@vsnl.com

Website: www.ceeindia.org

www.saseanee.org

Support Agencies

Major agencies which have supported the programme from time to time, include IUCN-Commission on Education and Communication; WWF International; WWF Nepal; WWF Indonesia; GTZ; Commonwealth Secretariat; Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies; Centre for Natural Resource Management, Bangladesh; Conservation Melanesia Inc.; Mlup Baitong, Cambodia.
About CEE

Centre for Environment Education is a national institution established in 1984 supported by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India and associated with the Nehru Foundation for Development. The main objective of CEE is to create environmental awareness among children, youth, decision-makers and the general community.

CEE's programmes aim at increasing awareness and knowledge among the public about all aspects of the environment leading to the promotion of conservation of nature and natural resources. CEE's major thrust areas include Education, Training Media, Interpretation, Eco-development, Urban Issues, Information Servicing and Networking.

Over the years, CEE has developed national and international linkages with numerous agencies, both governmental and non-governmental, that are working in related fields. These linkages are in the form of collaborative projects, exchange programmes, mail contact, symposia and seminars.

On 22nd June 2001 SNV, WWF, CARE, IUCN, and Birdlife International organised a workshop on ICDP constraints and enabling factors in La Thanh Hotel to analyse strong and weak points of integrated conservation and development projects in Vietnam. The workshop was financial supported by SNV and CARE. This was a follow-up to the workshop on experiences from integrated conservation and development projects held on 12 and 13 June 2000.

Present at the workshop were more than 30 participants. Most participants were from national and international non-governmental organisations. Participants listened to reports from such organisations as CARE, IUCN, and FFI on advantages and disadvantages of integrated conservation and development projects, and experience from the integrated conservation and development project at Cat Ba National Park. At present, 16 integrated conservation and development projects are underway in Vietnam. At the workshop Dr. Nguyen Cu gave a speech on necessary factors that need considering when designing integrated conservation and development projects. Participants worked in small groups in the afternoon.

ENVIRONMENTAL DAY FAIR IN 2001

Nguyen My Hanh, WWF

Within the framework of the project “Zoo Education and Public Awareness of Biodiversity Conservation” jointly implemented by WWF and Hanoi Zoo with funding assistance from the Netherlands Local Environment Fund, a World Environment Day Festival was organized in Hanoi in early June 2001. The Festival aimed to provide the general public with an interactive, aesthetic, and fun way to appreciate the world and their role in it, developing attitudes, values, and commitment to solve current environmental problems and prevent new ones.

The Festival took place at Hanoi Zoo, with various public outreach activities, including:

- Award Ceremony of the Children's Painting Contest on the theme "The Earth is ours. Let's protect it" for children aged 6-15 was organised. More than 3,000 school students in Hanoi and neighbouring provinces
participated in this activity. 19 prizes were presented to the participating schools and students. 50 best paintings were also exhibited for the public at the Zoo.

- Puppets show named “Treasure of the Forest” talking about the interaction and interdependence of humans and other species in nature was performed by the National Puppet Theater.
- Short dramas on the theme of nature protection were performed by a group of educators from the EU-funded SFNC Project in Nghe An.
- Interactive information booths from 15 leading conservation organizations in Vietnam were set up. At these booths, the public enjoyed various educational games, animal face painting, exhibitions, diverse educational materials, as well as opportunities to meet and talk with professional conservationists and environmentalists.

This was the first educational and awareness event of this type organized in Hanoi for the general public. Under this particular project, several public outreach activities are also planned, including an art performance and a slide show on species habitat loss in coming months. As Hanoi Zoo is an excellent venue to reach a large audience with informal environmental education activities, a series of such events would greatly influence the environmental stewardship among a large sector of society in Vietnam.
The Viet Nam Red Book of Endangered Species is being revised and published at the end of this year, says Professor Dang Ngoc Thanh from the National Centre of Natural Sciences and Technology, vice-chairman of the Viet Nam Red Book compilation council and head of the book’s revision team.

The new version will have an altered classification and criteria system. “We (the council) agreed that the current edition’s qualitative method for classifying fauna species was not precise,” Professor Thanh said. “This time, we are using a quantitative method, which seems to be more logical because it requires us to have specific figures, such as exact distribution areas, recorded changes in species over time, and numbers of species in certain areas.

The fauna component of the Red Book, covering 359 species, was published in 1992, while the flora component, covering 356 species, was published in 1996. The book divides both fauna and flora into five levels: endangered (facing extinction), vulnerable, rare, threatened and data deficient…

(The revised edition has been expanded to ten levels which take into account the World Conversation Union (IUCN)’s standards. These are extinct, extinct in the wild, critically endangered, endangered, vulnerable, lower risk, threatened, conservation dependent, data deficient and not evaluated.

Professor Thanh anticipated that the new method would decrease the number of species in the new book to 250 fauna species and 300 flora species. “The issue of domestic raising of rare species will change the number of endangered species,” Thanh said. “With the quantitative method, the endangered level of some species will also change”. He cited the tortoise-shell and spotted deer as examples. These two species were listed as facing extinction in the original Red Book. However, this was only partly true because both species are extinct in the wild, yet bred on farms. Under the new definitions these species will be explicitly classified as extinct in the wild.

Thanh said that the original Red Book was geared towards environmentalists, researchers and scientific institutions. The revised edition should be regarded as an official legal document for ordinary people and authorities, and should be consulted for issues surrounding wildlife farming and trafficking.

UNESCO’s International Directory of Environmental Education Institutions

This Directory is one of UNESCO’s efforts to develop an international information network to facilitate exchange of information, knowledge and materials on environmental education. It offers a large list of environmental education training and research institutions around the world. It gives information on the names, addresses, geological coverages, working languages, types of institution, functions, target groups, services and publications of about 500 institutions. An up-dated version is now available on the internet at:

http://www.unesco.org/education/educprog/environment/index.html/

For more information and comments, please contact:

Educating for Sustainable Future EPD, UNESCO
7, Place de Fontenoy
75352 Paris 07 SP, France
Tel: (33-1) 45681036
Fax: (33-1) 45685637
Email: j.heiss@unesco.org

Do Huyen

The 22-pages brochure entitled “A guide to ecosystem-friendly travel in Vietnam” is a guidebook on tourism that shows visitors how to gain an interesting tour while playing a part in helping to protect Vietnam from negative impacts of tourism. By treading softly on the country’s environment and respecting its people, visitors can minimise their impacts.
while gaining the maximum enjoyment from their traveling experience, and take home an abundance of happy memories.

This book was published in Vietnamese, English and Chinese in 2001 by IUCN Vietnam in collaboration with the Institute for Tourism Development Research (ITDR) of the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT). This is the achievement of the cooperation between the IUCN Vietnam and FUNDESCO (Sustained Development Foundation of Spain) under the “Biodiversity Awareness Programme for Vietnam” which is financially supported by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation.

For further information, please contact to:

IUCN Vietnam
13A Tran Hung Dao, Hanoi, Vietnam
Tel: (844) 8265 172; 9 330 012/13
Email: tourism@iucn.org.vn
Fax: (844) 8 258 794

Or

Institute for Tourism Development Research (ITDR)
of the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT)
30A Ly Thuong Kiet, Hanoi, Vietnam
Tel: (844) 8257 730
Fax: (844) 8 240 407
Email: itdr@fpt.vn

Do Huyen

INTRODUCTION OF THE PARC

The Creating Protected Areas for Resources Conservation Using Landscape Ecology (PARC) Project is a joint initiative of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the United Nations System. The PARC Project is co-financed by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and UNDP/TRAC.

The PARC Project seeks to pilot a demonstration model for conserving Vietnam’s biological diversity and natural heritage. Specifically, a landscape ecology approach aims to define strict protection, buffer and forest rehabilitation zones within and around protected areas based on local administrative, ecological and local resource use patterns.

PARC is an Integrated Conservation and Development Project (ICDP) which uses a mixture of activities to link conservation management objectives with the welfare goals of local communities. At the same time the implementation of these activities is used as a way of building local community skills, links between protected areas and residents, and technical and management capacity of protected area staff. Major project components include community development, biological and social monitoring, protected area infrastructure, ecotourism development, agriculture development, alternative income generation, forestry, and environmental awareness.

The PARC Project is being implemented in two locations. The first is Yok Don National Park, in Dak Lak Province of the south-central highlands (PARC Yok Don). The second consists of Ba Be National Park in Bac Kan Province, and Na Hang Nature Reserve in Tuyen Quang Province (PARC Ba Be / Na Hang). PARC Ba Be / Na Hang began in November 1999 and will run until the end of 2003.

WHAT ARE BA BE AND NA HANG?

At their closest point, Ba Be National Park and Na Hang Nature Reserve are only a few kilometres apart. They are similar ecologically, and contain similar forest types and biodiversity assemblages.

The area includes some of the only remaining examples of tropical limestone forest in northern Vietnam, and homes a number of endemic plant and animal species. One – the critically endangered Tonkin Snub-nosed Langur (see picture) – is almost entirely restricted to the PARC Project area, and has an estimated global population of no more than two hundred. Other rare animals for which the PARC area represents a valuable refuge include Owston’s Palm Civet and
Francois’ Langur. The forest of Ba Be and Na Hang also protects a large area of water catchment on the Gam river, which drains into the Red River and supplies water to thousands of people downstream.

The Ba Be/Na Hang region is populated by a mixture of peoples, with the largest group being of the Tay ethnic group. Thai, Dao, H’mong and Kinh are also represented. These people are predominantly subsistence farmers, and are heavily dependent on natural resources and ecosystem services for their livelihoods. As a result, the main threats to natural resources within the Ba Be/Na Hang site include agricultural encroachment into the protected areas, particularly through forest clearance, timber exploitation, hunting of wildlife and the unsustainable exploitation of forest products.

But forest degradation in Ba Be/Na Hang threatens more than the loss of biological diversity. It also threatens the depletion of natural resources of great importance to local communities, and is damaging the ability of the environment to provide important ecological services such as the maintenance of water quality and soil protection. Human socio-economic development and conservation are therefore very closely interlinked in Na Hang and Ba Be. Reconciling these two management objectives is the main challenge being tackled by the PARC Project.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PARC CONSERVATION AWARENESS TEAM

The PARC Ba Be / Na Hang Conservation Awareness Team (CAT) has been implementing conservation awareness activities since December 2000. Our aims are:

1. to reduce pressures on natural resources which are partly due to a lack of awareness, and;
2. to promote the purpose and values of both protected areas to local communities and the wider public.

Meeting both of these aims should help achieve better conservation directly, whilst also increasing support for conservation activities in general.

Focus activities

In order to meet the above aims, conservation awareness activities are focussed on the following groups and activity areas:

Residents of local communities

- targeting particular behaviours, e.g. hunting
- targeting particular information needs, e.g. agroforestry

Local government officials and bodies

- supporting local mass organisations in conservation awareness
- advocating for conservation amongst officials

The wider public
developing visitor education opportunities
developing an environmental curriculum for local schools
publicising conservation activities locally and more widely
building relations between schools, local communities and protected areas

In working in these activity areas there is a strong emphasis on participatory planning, joint implementation, discussion and sharing experiences with other projects and protected areas, and on piloting innovative new environmental communication methods.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The PARC Project Conservation Awareness Team (CAT) chose school students as their first audience. It was felt that implementing school-based education might be the most time-consuming activity, but one which would also lead to many opportunities for improving community linkages. For these reasons the CAT’s first step was to visit Na Hang and Be Be district Departments of Education and Training (DETs) and discuss ideas about environmental education.

During these initial meetings it became clear that all parties agreed that environmental education was a real need in Na Hang and Ba Be. It was also agreed that combining the DETs’ teaching capacity with the CAT’s environmental capacity would be the best way to bring environmental education into the schools of both districts. Since then the DETs, local teachers and CAT staff have begun introducing environmental education in to two target communes in each district.

Until the beginning of the summer break in June, CAT staff and local teachers conducted demonstration lessons in schools under the title “Conservation Club” (see picture), involving around 2000 students in all. CAT staff has also conducted interviews with protected area management and local residents about the environmental subjects they feel are most important. Two workshops at both sites have allowed teachers, the DETs and CAT staff to discuss environmental education. More importantly, they have allowed participants to collectively define a new environmental curriculum for each site.

Because the curricula have been produced to meet local needs the subjects covered in Na Hang and Ba Be are different (see the Ba Be subject list as an example). However, at both sites it was felt that each class should receive one lesson each month for the nine-month school year, and that grades three to nine should be included. This means there are a total of 63 lessons in each curriculum.

The CAT staff has been busy writing drafts of these lessons during the summer. They have now been put together in teacher handbook format for discussion and trial. Together, the 63 lessons cover all the major environmental awareness issues identified by local teachers, forest protection departments and local residents. More information about the curricula and their introduction in schools in Ba Be and Na Hang will follow in the next CEN newsletter.

Demonstration lessons in Ba Be

Between February and June 2001 a group of 15 teachers from Khang Ninh and Nam Mau communes within Ba Be National Park collaborated with the PARC CAT to conduct three environmental lessons with students. Lessons about the park and rare animals found locally were introduced to students, educating them about the importance of their National Park using games and activities as well as talking and writing. Although this was also new for teachers, with only a little preparation they were able to teach the lessons well, and everyone has enjoyed the experience. Some of the teachers were so good that the entire group selected them to give a presentation lesson during a recent study tour to meet teachers on the environmental education programme of Sa Pa DET and Frontier-Vietnam in Lao Cai district (see Study Tour box). So well done to Ms. Duong Thi Lanh, Mr. Le Xuan Thao, Ms. Nguyen Thi Ha and Ms. Nguyen Hong Van!

NA HANG TREE PLANTING

One of the more interesting outdoor activities that was included within the demonstration period in Na Hang was the joining of the CAT and local teachers during the traditional Tet Tree Planting festival. Na Hang schools do this activity
every year, where students plant trees to improve their school environment. CAT felt that this presented a perfect opportunity to provide students with some information about tree planting techniques, which they could then take home to their parents. So with the teachers of Thanh Tuong and Vinh Yen communes CAT staff arranged for each class to plant three trees which they will now care for during their first year. Students were given a little instruction about trees’ needs and were supervised during the planting. After watering the newly planted saplings each class placed a sign in the ground next to it, identifying it as theirs. All of the trees are still doing fine, and the teachers still keep an eye on them, although we have to say that the best ones are those belonging to the Grade 9 in Thanh Tuong Secondary School, Grade 7 in Vinh Yen Secondary School, and Grade 4 in Vinh Yen Primary School.

Curricula development teams

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*(More information about the PARC project can be found in the following CEN's newsletter)*