



Lives Changed Communities Transformed

Tien Lu, Vietnam



Background

Tien Lu is located in the Red River Delta in northern Vietnam. It is the lowest lying part of Hung Yen province, about 85 km south of Hanoi.

The district is the poorest of 10 districts in Hung Yen province. Common problems among community children were malnutrition, limited access to quality education, injuries and sickness, lack of life skills and high rate of school dropouts.

Difficult terrain and weather conditions contribute directly to economic difficulties. While agriculture (rice, maize and vegetables) accounted for most of the population's income, productivity was low due to flooding (which occurs four to six months a year), poor soil conditions, sub-par irrigation systems, difficulty in transportation and lack of knowledge.



TIEN LU AREA PROGRAMME

Total Population: 33,683

Number of Families: 9,227

Girls:	Boys:	Women:	Men:
3,727	4,115	12,353	13,488

Project start:	Project end:
October 2009	30 September 2020

How the Journey Began

World Vision's work in Tien Lu began in 2009 as part of efforts to alleviate poverty and improve the well-being of children in the area, especially the most vulnerable.

After detailed assessments on the key needs of the community, World Vision identified four target communes in the district and launched its community development activities by partnering with local stakeholders, including the local government. After the first implementation phase ended in 2015, the Area Programme expanded into two other communes with great needs for wider development, while phasing out of two communes.



Health & Nutrition

Malnutrition rates of children under age 5 were high at the beginning of the Area Programme. Children were vulnerable to bacteria diseases, mainly respiratory inflammation and diarrhea. 80% of women suffered from gynaecological diseases. These issues were mainly due to limited access to quality healthcare, lack of knowledge by parents/caregivers to care for children, and low awareness on proper environmental sanitation.

World Vision worked to build the capacity of local partners and parents/caregivers. Different behavior change communication on nutrition and disease prevention were conducted regularly in the villages. This included education sessions, campaigns, and Timed and Targeted Counselling. Nutrition clubs were set up in every village to serve as a platform for mothers and caregivers to learn and share best practices in child care.

Training of Trainers sessions were conducted to build capacity of the health network, including health workers at the district, commune and village levels. Together with support from the Government, healthcare facilities were properly equipped and renovated. With the quality of healthcare service improved, almost 80% of locals sought health consultations at these facilities compared to just 23% before.

As a result of all the above-mentioned improvements, malnutrition rates and the prevalence of bacteria diseases among children were also significantly reduced.

As Tien Lu Area Programme phases out, the village health workers will continue to facilitate meetings and nutrition communication to local mothers and caregivers of the villages. All 13 nutrition clubs will continue to function and be self-sustained with funds from members' contribution.

Stunted Children*



2011: 29.3%

2019: 13.2%

Underweight Children*



2011: 19.8%

2019: 6.2%

*All the current nutrition indicators are within the WHO recommended threshold

Toilets, before: old, dirty, potentially hazardous and after (right): clean and hygienic.



Water, Sanitation & Hygiene

Previously, there was little knowledge of environmental sanitation in the community. The locals did not know how to treat waste, especially after floods. Many households were still using night-soil as fertilizers for padi fields, maize and plants. Pesticides were widely used, which heavily contaminated the environment. Majority of households used unhygienic latrines that was in the same area as their animal pens. Only 31.8% of households had access to the safe water. In schools, there was a lack of clean water and proper toilets.

World Vision educated the locals and government organisations through water, sanitation & hygiene (WASH) related campaigns and contests. All villages in the target communes established WASH self-management groups.



In schools, children were taught on proper hygiene and sanitation practices. New water and sanitation systems were also set up, enabling students to have access to clean water. Thanks to community-led total sanitation training implemented in the villages, there was significant mindset change among the locals as families prioritised building new hygienic toilets.

"Before, we used an open toilet at home and used water directly from the drill well. We thought it was normal because other families did the same. But after attending different communication events, I realised it was harmful. We changed to a new toilet and had our water system renovated with the addition of a filtration system. Now, many families in our village have also changed their way of using toilets and clean water," shared Ms Nguyen, a member of An Trang nutrition club.

Target
Population using
hygienic latrines

2011: 19.8% 
2019: 90.0% 

Target
Population
using improved
water sources

2011: 31.8% 
2019: 94.6% 



Rice farmers practising integrated crop management for increased productivity.



Economic Livelihood

Before World Vision started work, 32.9% of households in the target communes were poor/near poor (average monthly income of less than S\$42/S\$60). Agriculture production was the main livelihood but income was limited due to low crop productivity, poor livestock breeding, and lack of market knowledge and access.

World Vision worked together with local authorities to introduce low-cost, high-yielding farming techniques such as System of Rice Intensification (SRI) and use of homemade organic fertilisers from rice straw. Irrigation systems were also improved.

86.3% of rice farmers who applied the SRI technique increased their annual income by 400%. The decrease in use of chemical fertilisers and burning of rice straw helped reduce environmental pollution and increase soil fertility.

Alternative livelihood options were provided to struggling families to diversify income – such as potato planting, mushroom farming, cow and chicken raising. They were provided with relevant training, tools, materials and livestock to start. With the additional income, families were able to afford education, food and other necessary expenses for their children.



800 Children
benefitted from
potato-planting



150 Children
benefitted from
mushroom farming



2,050 Children
benefitted from
chicken-raising



450 Children
benefitted from
cow-raising

"We were poor and struggling in our village. Then in 2009, World Vision supported my family with a female cow and training. Now, I am raising 3 breeding cows. I sold 8 calves previously and earned around 100 million VND (\$\$6,050) to pay for food, clear debts, cover my daughter's education, buy an electric bicycle for her to go to school, and support my son's work and his marriage," shared Mrs Ngau, a single mother raising two children.



A poor household supported with a cow which birthed a calf.



Mushroom farmer supported by World Vision.

World Vision also operated integrated microfinance services to provide capital and financial literacy and management skills to interest groups and poor households, particularly female clients. While different bank and government loan schemes are available in the district, locals had difficulties accessing funds when needed due to complicated loan application procedures and long delay in loan approvals.

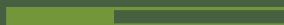
With all these interventions, the rate of poor and near poor families has significantly dropped to just **6.7%**!

"Because of the microloans, my chicken-raising business has grown which helps me not only to earn more money, but also improve nutrition for my kids and pay for their school fees. I'm very grateful and want to thank World Vision for providing access to the loans and helping me budget to repay them and expand my business," shared Mrs Hue (right), mother from a near poor family with 3 daughters.



Rate of Poor and Near Poor Families

Before Area Programme: 32.9%



After Area Programme: 6.7%





Child-centered teaching methodology is applied in all lessons to actively engage children.



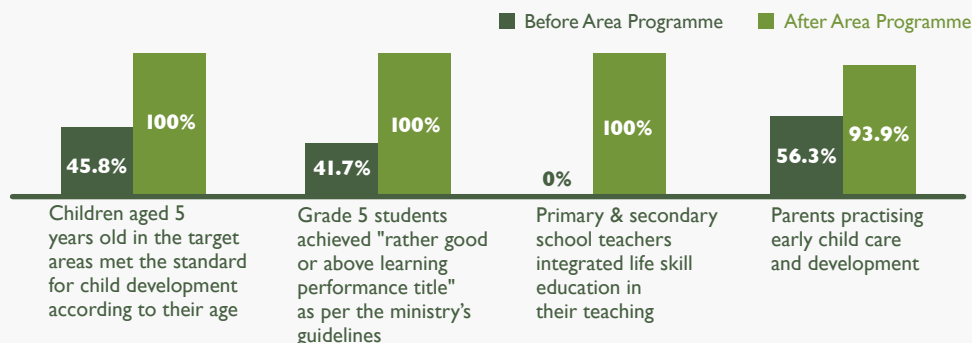
Education & Child Protection

The quality of education in Tien Lu was low. All preschool facilities were below national standard and less than 27% of young children were enrolled in preschool. Primary and secondary schools lacked sufficient and proper classrooms, function rooms and facilities for learning. According to the Education Department, about 30% of teachers were below standard and lacked professional knowledge and skills.

With the help of WorldVision, 1 new primary school was constructed, 12 existing schools across different levels were upgraded and equipped, 1 community learning centre was built and 4 new kindergartens were established. All preschools, primary and secondary schools in the target communes now meet the 'safe school' requirement. Over 200 school teachers were also trained to improve their knowledge and teaching methods.

"The quality of lessons improved tremendously. Teachers are more creative in designing lessons. Children are more excited about learning. This year we also saw the increase in children who have regular school attendance. The implementation of child-centered learning model improved the learning environment," recounted Ms Nhan, Principal of Trung Dung kindergarten.

The Department of Education and Training of District will continue to build capacity of teachers and monitor after World Vision phases out.



Previously, education was also not prioritised by parents, and children who dropped out of school were involved in child labour to help support the family. Parents and caretakers were unaware of how to properly care for and nurture their children at home.

Through participation in child care sessions, advocacy events and school improvement projects, parents and caretakers learnt how to better care for their children and value education. There are now 12 Parent-Teacher Committees functioning well in schools.

Together with local partners, World Vision also worked to enable children to contribute to their own communities.

Children were taught life skills and values, involved in planning processes, and empowered to propose and facilitate initiatives. As a result, around 74 small initiatives and 1,215 communications/trainings were implemented by children. This included setting up of learning corners at home for 99 children from very poor families, and 20 fencing projects to protect children from drowning.

“I am a facilitator at my village and school children clubs and I have participated in trainings supported by World Vision. I learnt about abuse prevention, HIV/AIDS, life skills, home safety... After the training, I taught the others at my clubs. I also consulted with my parents on how to keep our house safe such as covering our water tank, fencing the pond, keeping hot water in safe holder.... The village facilitators also made house visits to improve home safety. I feel that my surrounding is really safe now and I can concentrate on my studies,” revealed Hong, a child from a children club in Canh Hoach village.



Teaching of life skills and values being integrated into the curriculum at primary schools.



Capacity Building of Local Community

To ensure that progress is sustained and will be continued after phasing out, World Vision supported the community to establish Village Development Boards (VDBs), where village leaders and locals were trained to work together to discuss, participate and contribute their strengths in village development works.

There are currently 127 members in VDBs operating effectively, and 75 initiatives have been proposed and implemented by VDBs and Community-Based Organisations in the past 10 years to meet urgent needs of the people.

"The process of carrying out initiatives is very clear and open to all local people and VDB members are responsible and passionate about tasks assigned. With the trust of local people, it is easy for us to call for participation to support initiatives in the village. It was different before when there was not much local support," said Mr Kien, head of VDB in Giai Le village, Le Xa commune.



VDBs in discussion over community improvement initiatives.



Trust in the village leadership and unity in the community has increased. The percentage of local contribution to community development activities has also gone up from 22.4% in 2016 to 74% in 2019.

As Tien Lu district is susceptible to disasters, World Vision also sought to improve disaster preparedness of the local community. Over 1,500 households were trained on disaster preparedness, mitigation and climate change adaption. All target communes now have Community Disaster Preparedness Plans implemented and functioning rapid response teams in the event of emergencies.

A new, safe school for a better future

“My son had to study in a small, dark makeshift structure that was not safe and suitable for children. When it rained, the place became wet because the roof leaked. Whenever this happens, the children would stay home instead and skip school. I did not want to send my son to this kindergarten but I had no choice because there was no one to take care of him while I work in the field,”

recounted Ms Huong, a mother of a then 3-year-old son in Minh Phuong commune in Tien Lu.

With support from World Vision, a new kindergarten centre was later built in the commune, complete with safe and child-friendly facilities and furniture. Having separate classrooms enabled different age groups of children to be segregated and cared for accordingly. Teachers were also supported with training in child-centred methodologies. Enrollment rates at the kindergarten increased and the school now has close to 170 children enrolled.



Completion of the new kindergarten.

“Many other parents, including myself, are happy to send our children to this school now. We like seeing them play with friends and toys, study in a good environment and eat nutritious meals there. I feel much more assured and can concentrate on going to work,” shares Ms Huong with a smile.



Happy parents sending their children to the new school on the first day.

**We couldn't have done it
without you.**

Thank you!

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