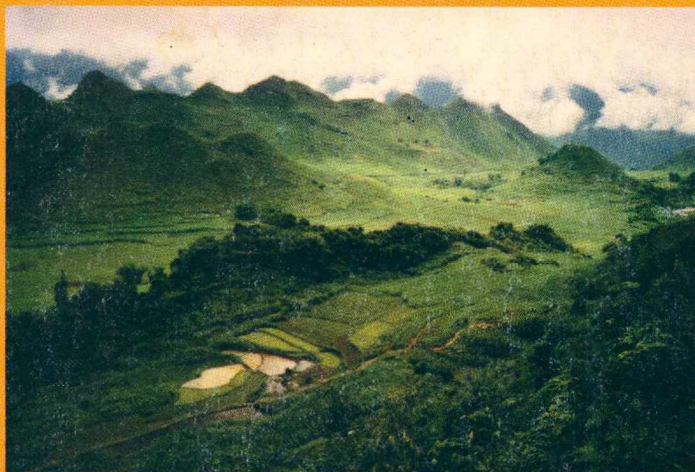


Localized Poverty Reduction in Viet Nam:

IMPROVING THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR LIVELIHOOD ENHANCEMENT IN RURAL AREAS

Edited by Geoffrey B. Hainsworth



Centre for Southeast Asia Research
University of British Columbia
Vancouver • BC • Canada

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for Rural Livelihood Enhancement**

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**This book is dedicated to
Professor Pham Xuan Nam
and to the memory of
Dr. Be Viet Dang
self-less friends and wise mentors
to foreigners seeking to understand
the wonders and complexities
of the history, cultures, and values of
a resilient and rapidly changing society,
and, without whose help and guidance,
this project
would have been unthinkable.**

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Introduction

The research on which the chapters in this book are based was made possible by a UBC Hampton Fund Research Grant, 1996-98, awarded to the Centre for Southeast Asia Research (CSEAR). (An outline of the goals and activities of CSEAR can be found on the back cover, and a list of previous publications inside the back cover.) The Hampton proposal was co-sponsored by four UBC faculty, Geoffrey Hainsworth (Department of Economics, and Director of CSEAR), Richard Barichello (Department of Agricultural Economics), William Rees (Director, School of Community and Regional Planning, SCARP), and Peter Boothroyd (Social Planner in the Centre for Human Settlements at SCARP, and Director of a CIDA-funded collaborative research and technical assistance project with the Viet Nam National Centre for Social Sciences and Humanities, NCSSH).

The UBC Centre for Human Settlements, in association with CSEAR, has been the executing agency for two five-year CIDA projects in Viet Nam. The first, 1991-96, was mainly a capacity-building project with NCSSH, to help them upgrade language skills and to be able to assess the relevance of perspectives and methodologies drawn from open market-oriented economies, to analyze the dynamics of the rapidly changing 'household economy' in Viet Nam, and to evaluate rural development and poverty alleviation strategies in light of other-country experience (including those of other Southeast Asia). The second project, 1998-2003, is entitled "Localized Poverty Reduction in Viet Nam: Building Capacity for Policy Assessment and Project Planning." This extends the network of collaboration to include colleagues from Université Laval, Québec, and at five Universities in Viet Nam, at Thai Nguyen, Vinh, Hue, Dalat, and Ho Chi Minh City. The main purpose is to provide technical assistance in setting up Poverty Reduction Research Centres at these five universities so they can assist 3 communes each (15 communes in total) to improve capacity for participatory research assessment of the main causes of persistent poverty and to devise appropriately localized means to alleviate these problems.

The CIDA projects as such do not provide research funding for Canadian faculty and students to pursue their own research interests in Viet Nam, but the linkages built under the long-term working relationships between UBC and NCSSH do provide a unique opportunity to launch collaborative research initiatives funded from other sources. Thus, under the first CIDA project, a parallel five-year UBC-NCSSH collaborative research effort was funded by IDRC, to analyze the "Socio-Economic Impacts of Renovation in Viet Nam," and similar parallel funding is being sought by CSEAR to facilitate collaborative field research under the broader network of cooperation.

The main purpose behind the Hampton Grant proposal was to build on these close working relationships to enable six graduate students from a range of disciplines to undertake fieldwork and individual but related inter-disciplinary thesis research in Viet Nam. The proposal involved the students taking a year of preparatory seminars and workshops, and basic Vietnamese language training, at CSEAR during the 1996-97 academic year, an extensive two month 'group study tour' to some of the poorest regions and communes in Viet Nam, May-June 1997, a further

Map of Viet Nam: Provincial Boundaries and Administrative Centres

