



VOICE and RIGHTS for ETHNIC MINORITY WOMEN PROJECT

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

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ABBREVIATIONS

CEMA	Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs
DEMA	(Provincial) Department for Ethnic Minority Affairs
DOET	Department of Education and Training
EM	Ethnic Minority
EMW	Ethnic Minority Women
EMWG	Ethnic Minority Working Group
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
iSEE	Institute for Studies of Society, Economics and Environment
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
NA	National Assembly
NRD	New Rural Development
NRED	Natural Resources and Environment Department
PC	People Committee
PCC	People Council
P4EM	Partnership for Development of Ethnic Minorities
ET	Education and Training
OO	Overall Objective
R&V	Voice and Rights for Ethnic Minority Women
SED	Socio-Economic Development
SSI	Semi Structured Interview
SEDP	Socio-Economic Development Plan
VWU	Vietnam Women's Union

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CARE and iSEE partner have been implemented a project titled “Voice and Rights for Ethnic Minority Women” in Banh Trach and Phuc Loc Commune, Ba Be District, Bac Can Province since April 2015 with duration of 36 months. In designing, the project aims to archive three results: (1): An effective approach to co-research has been implemented in Bac Kan Province; (2): Ethnic Minority women have presented their co-research findings to civil society and policy-makers, demonstrating the value of enhanced participation to stakeholders; (3) The Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs has incorporated outcomes from participatory research into rights-related policy-making and, along with civil society organizations, has increased capacity to implement participatory consultations. The project deploys the model of co-research in an integrated cycle of research, advocacy and capacity building for change.

The project final evaluation is conducted in June 2018 and based on the instruments: (i) desk review; (ii) semi-structured interviews (SSI) with project key stakeholders and project team at CARE and iSEE; (iii) Structured interviews with co-researchers (co-researcher survey, June 2018); and (iv) selected case studies. Vietnam Women Union from national to commune levels, local authority at district and commune level, village leaders, 63 EM community researchers, male family members of co-researcher, CARE and iSEE project staffs are the key informants of the participatory evaluation.

The focus of the evaluation is placed on assessment of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project and its approach of co-research model.

Relevance: The co-research approach application in the R&V project is found highly relevant as this approach allows the EMW to participate more in the process of local social and economic development (SED) planning and legislative development process via electorate meetings which are a key mechanism ensuring the right to participate of citizens....

Effectiveness: By June 2018, the overall objective and specific objectives have been fully achieved at the end of the Action. All targets which are set in the Logic Frame to measure the objectives and expected results are delivered with satisfaction, some target has exceeded the desired level. Specifically:

There are strong evidences to affirm that the Expected Result 1 has been fully achieved. By the end of the Action, “an effective approach to co-research has been implemented in Bac Kan Province.” By June 2018, the R&V project has been built up capacity on research skills, advocacy and presentation skills for 65 EM women, from 13 research groups in 16 villages of Phuc Loc and Banh Trach Communes, 25 EM women from 5 research groups in five newly participating communes (one in Ba Be District and four in other districts), Bac Kan Province. The combination between intensive training and coaching/technical support proved to be an effective capacity building method for the community researchers. Significant changes in the level of confidence of the EM women co-researchers in applying research skills are found in all areas of capacity comparing the baseline and end-line data. The involvement of the community researchers of the R&V project in others researches that CARE/iSEE implements which are out of the project’s scope is an effective way to develop the capacity for the community researchers further.

The Expected Result 2 was remarked by the success in development of capacity (including research skills, advocacy and presentation skills) for 21 co-research teams (18 research groups in Bac Kan Province, 3 groups in Tra Vinh Province). 21 research projects have been completed with the core topics focusing on livelihood development, education for EM children, EM cultural heritage and rural environmental protection. The findings and recommendations of these researches were shared widely to community people to get the common consents and then were presented to local state administrative agencies and advocacy events at different levels to advocate for improvements in development practice and resource allocation for REMW's issues, and strengthen their role in grassroots democracy. At the end of the action, the outcomes of co-research projects have been presented at the commune level (17 times), district level (3 times), provincial level (9 presentations) or even national level (3 at CEMA and 1 at EMWG).

With regard to the expected result 3, the project takes advantage of specific windows of opportunity to influence various partners including Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs' (CEMA), VWU and EMWG in their practices of policies development and or monitoring. Since year two, the partnership between CARE/iSEE and central VWU has been developed in order to open for windows for incorporation of the outcomes from community researches into rights-related policy-making. The mandate of the VWU is fully in line with the objectives of the R&V project and the cooperation with VWU within the R&V project and resulted in very significant outcomes, such as: (i) the central VWU had trained VWU staff in 45 communes in the "Going with Border Women Program" in Quang Ninh, 6/2018; (2) The pilot so-research projects have been successfully in Tra Vinh Province. Those research projects are implemented within the VWU's program to support women in livelihood development. The VWU plans to introduce co-research approaches in all provinces, with the purpose not only for monitoring policies but also for implementing policies and programs that aim for enhancing the socio-economic status of the women, particularly enhancing their rights to voice and to participate. The strategic movement in partnership that the R&V project has made since year 2 where the central VWU has been selected as a key partner besides CEMA has contributed significantly to the delivery of the Expected Result 3 and ensure the possibility of replication of the co-research method nationwide in the near future.

In addition to the expected results, the local state agencies and Bac Kan Provincial VWU acknowledged the R&V project has generated another (unexpected) positive change that is to contribute to the development of local human resources.

Efficiency: The high efficiency of the co-research model is well illustrated by the dimensions of cost consciousness, experimentation and innovation, and equity. The observations at field support to the conclusion that taking reasonable opportunities to reduce costs are embedded in many aspects of R&V project management and delivery, including utilization of the local human resources, utilization of the local facilities and mobilizations of the local's state budget for implementation. Besides the capacity building for EM women (training in participatory research methods, advocacy and presentation skills) and providing technical supports for the research team to identify their central research question and to adequately document their findings and recommendations, apart from participation of CARE and iSEE researchers as resource person, the participation from WU's staff as trainers and/or technical resources

is a success factor to ensure the most effective delivery of the project intervention and the sustainability of the action. The whole project is experimental and innovative because it allows EMW to do the work they never thought they could do. The ultimate outcomes of raising the voice and enhance the right to participate of EM women through co-research projects have been confirmed an innovative approach by the local authorities. At the beginning, the project identified a more vulnerable group than the other, which is Hmong and Dao groups. Hence, the selection criteria for selection of co-research group members were indicated that the Hmong and Dao women must be involved in the co-research group.

Sustainability: the sustainability of the project is discussed at community, provincial and central levels. The sustainability of the Action can be identified as technically high at community level, mainly because of the capacity-building activities delivered in the R&V project and the willingness of the EM women to continue the current research and initiate new ones. Financially, the feasibility is a lower as perceived by the surveyed co-researchers as they are concerned of limited resources to finance the implementation of their future research projects' solutions although the co-researchers have no reluctance to do the data collection at their own cost. At provincial level, the sustainability of the project is expected to be high and largely thank to the effort of the Provincial Women's Union to replicate the model in other sites. Actions that Bac Kan Provincial Women's Union has done to continue and to replicate the co-research approaches to a larger site include: (1) Revising and finalizing training materials with the necessary adjustments made to the original version introduced by iSEE and CARE; (2) developing the human resource in the areas of co-research capacity; (3) cooperating closely with district and commune authorities in the expanded areas to gain support for the research team; (4) and finally, it is very important to mobilize local budgets to implement proposed solutions from 05 studies in 5 communes with large scale (besides support from the project). The sustainability of the project at the central level has exceeded expectations. CEMA, the main government agency for ethnic minorities, recognizes that CARE and iSEE, among may VNGOs and representative organizations of ethnic minorities are central players and partners in finding sustainable solutions for ethnic minority inclusion and development. Taking this as an opportunity, CARE plans to continue promotion of the co-research methodology in the Partnership for Development of Ethnic Minority (P4EM) Project which is collectively implemented by CEMA at central level and DEMA at provincial level after the conclusion of the R&V Project. P4EM aims at enhancement of the EMW's participation in the production development component project within the National Target Program for Poverty Reduction 2016-2020. In addition, a strong partnership with the Women's Union of Vietnam built up since the project year 2 (2016) has created a great opportunity for sustaining many activities in the short-run, middle-run and long-run.

The Report concludes by suggesting recommendations for: enhancement of the advocacy at district level; enhancement of the participation of EM Women in electorate meetings at provincial and national assembly level; utilization of the outcomes of co-research project for provincial/national advocacy and enhancement of the sustainability of the action.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

CARE and iSEE partner have been implemented a project titled “Voice and Rights for Ethnic Minority Women” in Banh Trach and Phuc Loc Commune, Ba Be District, Bac Can Province since April 2015 with duration of 36 months. This project is funded by the EU Delegation to Vietnam (EU) and is designed to counteract top-down decision-making practices in Vietnam by empowering remote ethnic minority women (REMW) at the grassroots to define and advocate for their own development agenda. The project has specific objectives: 1): Ethnic minority women have enhanced capacity to identify, articulate and to advocate on issues that affect them to government and civil society; and 2): The Ethnic Minority Working Group (EMWG) and The Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA) have increased respect for and sensitivity to the rights of ethnic minority women and enhanced capacity to recognize and respond to their needs. In designing, the project aims to archive three results:

Result 1: An effective approach to co-research has been implemented in Bac Kan Province;

Result 2: Ethnic Minority women have presented their co-research findings to civil society and policy-makers, demonstrating the value of enhanced participation to stakeholders;

Result 3: The Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs has incorporated outcomes from participatory research into rights-related policy-making and, along with civil society organizations, has increased capacity to implement participatory consultations.

Taken together, these results and specific objectives support achieving the overall objective of the action, to “Contribute to securing the rights of ethnic minority women in Vietnam by enhancing their voice and ensuring that government agencies and civil society value, respect and respond to it.”

The project deploys the model of co-research in an integrated cycle of research, advocacy and capacity building for change. It will also take advantage of specific windows of opportunity to influence Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs’ (CEMA) policies and practices that will have a lasting impact on REMW’s lives, particularly in gender and poverty reduction. To date, the Voice and Right for REMW Project has built up capacity on research skills, advocacy and presentation skills for 21 co-research teams (18 research groups in Bac Kan Province, 3 groups in Tra Vinh Province). Finally, 21 research projects have been completed with the core topics focusing on livelihood development, education for EM children, EM cultural heritage and rural environmental protection. The findings and recommendations of these researches were shared widely to community people to get the common consents and then were presented to local state administrative agencies and advocacy events at different levels to advocate for improvements in development practice and resource allocation for REMW’s issues, and strengthen their role in grassroots democracy.

1.2 The Evaluation Purposes

A Team of external Vietnamese evaluators was commissioned by CARE International Vietnam to undertake the project final evaluation with purposes of:

Analyzing the relevance of project strategies/approaches;
 Assessing effectiveness the project (the achievements of the three areas of results)
 Assessing the efficiency of the project;
 Evaluating the sustainability of the project results and approaches; and
 Drawing lessons and recommendations for sustaining the project achievements with focused on how to scale up co-research model.

II. EVALUATION METHODS

The methodology is based on the following instruments: (i) desk review; (ii) semi-structured interviews (SSI) with project key stakeholders and project team at CARE and iSEE; (iii) Structured interviews with co-researchers (co-researcher survey, June 2018); and (iv) selected case studies. The desk-study reviews the relevant project documents such as project reports, data from the system of projects' monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) data, local report, relevant policy and the Project Baseline Study Report.

The project final evaluation is conducted in participatory manner, incorporating a cross section of key stakeholders, including Women Union from national to commune levels, local authority at district and commune level, village leaders, 63 EM community researchers, male family members of co-researcher, CARE and iSEE project staffs. The Table 1 presents the key informants participating in the evaluation that took place in June 2018.

Table 1: The informants

Informant	Number			Data collection method
	Total	Female	Male	
Co-researcher (in Banh Trach and Phuc Loc Commune)	63	63	0	Survey
Representatives of Co-researcher Teams (in Banh Trach and Phuc Loc Commune)	17	17	0	FGD
Husbands of Co-researcher (in Banh Trach and Phuc Loc Commune)	12	0	12	FGD
Representatives of district division of Education and Training and district division of Environment and Natural Resources (Ba Be District)	2	2	0	SSI
Representative of Ba Be District People Committee	1	0	1	SSI
Representatives of Ba Be District VWU	2	2	0	SSI
Representatives of Bac Kan Provincial VWU	2	2	0	SSI
Representatives of Central VWU	4	4	0	SSI
CARE researcher	1	1	0	SSI
CARE and iSEE Project Team	3	1	2	SSI
Total	107	92	15	

Source Authors' calculation based on database of Co-researcher survey (June 2018)

The Evaluation Team’s plan is to conduct a survey using structured questionnaire with all 65 co-researchers in Banh Trach and Phuc Loc Communes. Two co-researchers were not able to participate in the survey of which the sample was 63 observations. The Table 2 infra shows that majority of the co-researcher (almost 62%) has not completed their lower secondary school. Only 1.6 percent of co-researchers is the member of commune people council, 23.3 percent is holding the positions of village (vice) leader or village women’s union (vice) leader or village Communist Party chairwoman while 75 percent is not holding any commune/village leader position. 94.6 percent of co-researchers are **not** the head of their household.

Table 2: The Sample of structured interviews with all 63 co-researchers¹

Total sample: 63		Number	Percentage
Commune	Banh Trach	34	54
	Phuc Loc	29	46
Ethnic group	Tay	36	58.1
	Dao	16	25.8
	Nung	7	11.3
	H'Mong	2	3.2
	Kinh	1	1.6
Household (HH) Head (<i>seven missing</i>)	No	53	94.6
	Yes	3	5.4
Holding positions at commune/village	Commune	1	1.6
	Villages	14	23.3
	Not holding any positions	45	75
Education	Not completed primary school	5	9.1
	Completed primary school	13	23.6
	Completed lower secondary school	16	29.1
	Completed higher secondary school	21	38.2

Source Authors' calculation based on database of Co-researcher survey (June 2018)

¹ There were two missing observations, as two co-researchers did not attend the interview.

III. FINDINGS

This section analyzes the secondary data and primary data and facts collected in the field study in Binh Trach and Phuc Loc Commune, Ba Be District, Bac Kan Province in June 2018 and then provides evidence for evaluation of the R&V project. The section is organized as follows: section 3.1 evaluates the how relevant the project strategies and approaches is; section 3.2 provides evidence to see the extent to which the project’s objectives/expected results were achieved; section 3.3 evaluates the efficiency of the co-research model and the last section 3.4 analyses the sustainability of the project.

3.1 Project relevance

This section evaluates the relevance of the R&V project by providing evidence to answer the following research questions:

- (1) How relevant are the project strategies to the policy and legislative context of Vietnam?
- (2) What is the relevance and value added of the project strategy and methodology to archive the project results?

3.1.1 Co-research method

The R&V project deploys the model of co-research in an integrated cycle of research, advocacy and capacity building for change. According to CARE’s ‘Co-Research Manual’ (CARE, 2017), Co-research is a research method based on Participatory Action Research, which places an emphasis on the equal collaboration of researchers and community members, actively engaging communities in the research process. Unlike traditional research methods, members of the community determine the topics for research and take a lead role in data collection, analysis, and the dissemination of findings. Therefore, decision-making is in the hands of the community. Rather than being the subject of research, community members drive the process, deciding on the issues that are of concern to the community, and generating solutions to improve conditions and inform the policy-making process. As a result, the community owns the research, which generates high levels of community participation. Difference between traditional research method and the co-research one is described in the Table 3 (below).

Table 3: Co-research vs. Traditional research method

	Traditional research	Co-research
Research agenda	Mainly decided by researchers	Mainly decided by community members
Roles of the community	Mainly informants	Participate in all steps: Identify research topics, collect data, analyze data, report findings, generate solutions
Roles of researchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Decide on research topics– Collect data– Analyze data– Report findings– Recommend solutions	Transfer skills and tools to community members

Capacity building for the community	No capacity building goal	Capacity building in conducting research
Use of knowledge	May include or exclude actions to solve community issues	Action for social change to improve community conditions

Source: CARE (2017)

The co-research model was designed to be implemented by a sequence of ten steps as follows:

1. Identifying community researchers and local focal people who can support them in the implementation of Co-research.
2. Understanding community's concerns.
3. Identifying research topics
4. Designing research tools
5. Developing research plan
6. Developing report structure and conducting research activities
7. Analyzing data
8. Writing and finalizing the research report
9. Reporting research findings
10. Subsequence action to tackle community's problem and advocacy for social and policy changes

According to CARE (2017) there are several reasons for implementation of the co-research instead of traditional research approach. First, the most striking features of Vietnam's transition were the steady growth of output and remarkable achievement of poverty reduction, ethnic minority communities have been largely unable to enjoy the benefits of economic growth; Second, ethnic minorities are widely portrayed as lazy and backward by the media, hence policies that not only fail to address the needs of ethnic minorities, but often reinforce negative stereotypes; and Third, co-research rejects these negative stereotypes by placing equal value on the knowledge, skills and experiences of ethnic minority people, outsider researchers and policy makers alike and empowers ethnic communities to take ownership in improving their situation, and views their contribution to socio-economic development as vital.

3.1.2 The relevance of the project strategy to the policy and legislative context of Vietnam

The co-research approach application in the R&V project is found highly relevant as this approach allows the EMW to participate more in the process of local social and economic development (SED) planning and legislative development process via electorate meetings which are a key mechanism ensuring the right to participate of citizens.

With regard to local SED planning process: The data collected at the field visit to Bac Kan in June 2018 evidenced that the implementation of co-research methods has strongly promoted the participation of ethnic minority women in socio-economic development. The current regulations on participation of the households into SEDP only specify the required percentage of households (rather than individual women or men) in village meetings which are to formulate the village SEDP. The plan will afterwards be integrated as a part of the commune SEDP. No provisions require representation of women in village meetings,

presuming that households are usually represented by male household heads. But the FGDs conducted with husbands of EMW researchers in Banh Tranh and Phuc Loc Communes showed that their wives who are although not the household heads, are presenting the families in the village meetings more and more. Who attends the village meetings depends on who is available when the meeting is held rather than who is the household lead.

“In my family either my wife or I participate in village meetings to discuss the village’s yearly production plan. It is not a practice any longer that only heads of households present the family in any village meetings or other events. Before, my wife was reluctant to speak her ideas in public and she urged me to attend the meetings. Now, after being a member of the co-research team she is willing to go to village meetings if I am busy. Even if I am not busy, she wants to go as she is very interested in the production plan of the village and she is very eager to ask for the policies of which the households and common-interest production groups are the targeted beneficiaries.”

(FGD with EM men in Banh Tranh Commune)

The Table 4 shows that EM women and men share that they engage evenly to the activities related to community development or socio-economic development. The EM women perceive themselves slightly more active and participating more than their husband nowadays if the activities are organized at village or commune level and men affirm they share the same role and even participation in activities.

Table 4: The engagement of EM men and women

Areas of engagement <i>(5 implies that women engage in the activity greatly higher than men)</i>	Level of engagement	
	Perceived by EM women	Perceived by EM men
Representing family in community activities	3.69	3.5
Representing family in village meetings for commune SEDP planning, poverty reduction or rural development planning	3.56	3
Representing community in communicating with commune authorities	3.19	3

Source: Co-researcher survey (June 2018) and FGD with EM men

In reality, it is easy to witness the malpractices that do not support people’s (including women’s) participation in many localities for some reason: First, the scheduled time for village SEDP is designed for only a few days, which causes the village meetings to not always be “participatory.” (In the expected scenario, locals decide what infrastructure they want to invest in, or decide on the agricultural activities of the village); Second, it is the fact that the commune SEDP is still carried out through a top-down approach, rather than a bottom-up approach that supports people’s (including women’s) participation; Third, when the commune People’s Committee gather to build the commune SEDP (which is still based largely on village SEDP), there are no regulations governing the direct participation of people (both male and female). Thus, it is implicit that, if EM women are not the leaders of mass organizations/ village leaders (something that EM men and government officials also indicated), they will not participate in the meetings. Due to these arrangements, commune SEDP might be regarded as non-inclusive and inappropriately adapted to the locals’ needs. A group discussion conducted with Phuc Loc Commune

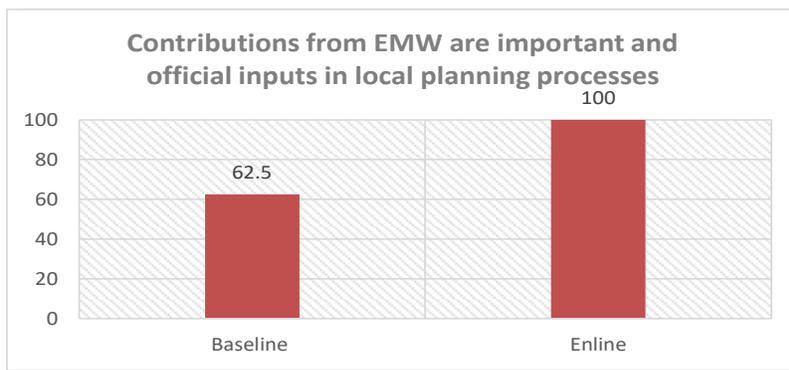
leaders reveals the fact that the district passes down the targets to the commune regardless the consultation from grassroots. As a result, some targets could never be met.

“An example of the inappropriate economic target is the cultivation area of cornfields, which was passed down from district, should be at 150 hectares for the winter. However, in fact, the cultivation areas of cornfields at winter could be 20 hectares at the most.”

(A member of the People Committee of Phuc Loc Commune, male)

The co-research application, to a large extent, helps overcoming these shortages in the commune SED planning process. 100 percent of the commune leaders of Banh Tranh and Phuc Loc Communes where the Project has been implemented since lately 2015 confirmed that they consider the ideas/proposals made by EMW important inputs for their commune planning. Meanwhile only 65 percent of the commune leaders in the baseline affirmed their acknowledge to EMW’s contribution in local planning. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1: Perception of the commune leaders toward the EMW engagement in local planning process



Source: Quick survey conducted with commune leaders (June 2018)

Moreover, they believe that the EMW are more responsible and committed to the implementation of the commune SED Plan. One commune leader remarked:

“Once the commune SED Plan has been approved by the District, we have to organize commune meeting then village meeting to kick off the implementation. Believe, I would prefer to invite the EMW to participate in such meetings, as they have better assessment of the feasibility of the commune economic development plan. Once they agree with the targets related to agricultural production, they are very committed to achievement of the targets. It is not the case with the EM men who are easy to agree with commune’s production targets in the meetings, but the very next day they forget what they have agreed with.”

(SSI, Commune People Committee leader, Phuc Loc Commune)

Community co-researcher co-own research findings and they become more active to take part in making decision on how the research findings will be used for subsequence actions to tackle the community’s issues/problems. In reality, the groups of co-researchers in Phuc Loc and Banh Trach Communes have decided to incorporate their proposed solutions on the implementation of the Government’s New Rural Development Program at their commune.

With regard to participation in electorate meetings – the mechanism for citizens to participate in legislative development process: According to current regulations of electorate meetings, the deputies to the People's Council across all levels (commune, district and province) and National Assembly (NA) deputies have to meet electorates periodically before and after the meetings of the Council and NA. Each year is comprised of 16 electorate meetings. According to the regulations, all electorates have the right to participate in these meetings and express their opinions but in the past, the EMW hardly showed their interest in attending electorate meetings organized even at commune level. There have been changes. The local authorities also agreed that co-research promotes the participation of EM women in the electorate meetings at village and commune levels, at which the rate of EM women participation reached to about 60% and the rate of EM women engaged in discussion was 50%. Collected data from two group discussions with co-researchers in Banh Trach and Phuc Loc Commune shows that these EM women are willing to participate the electorate meetings at village and commune levels and to present their community's issues/problems. These changes, as explained by the commune leaders result from the co-research project implementation.

“The EMW who are members of co-research team have been equipped with better knowledge of community issues and of socio-economic development, hence they were more proactive in dealing with and solving the community problems. They are very active in electorate commune meetings recently, as they know, how to present their community issues and provide the evidence to prove the undesirable situation and seek for the solutions from the authorities.”

(SSI, a leader of Commune People Committee, Banh Trach Commune)

“Before, we (EMW) are not interested in participating in electorate meetings at all. But now, whenever we learn that the village and commune electorate meetings are going to take place, we will prepare ourselves what we will raise in the meetings, how we will persuade the members of People's Council to investigate in our community issues and provide solutions.”

(EM women co-researchers, Phuc Loc Commune, Bac Kan)

This is also the answer to the question why the local authorities and provincial VWU accepted this project, provided supports for this project at the beginning, during and at the end of the project and why the project has chance to replicate in other districts in Bac Kan and other provinces like Tra Vinh..

3.1.3 The relevance and value added of the project strategy and methodology to archive the project results

Overall, the co-research approach is seen to be the main factor that contributes to the achievement of many key performance indicators as outlined in the project Logic Model. For instance: 96.7% of co-researchers agreed or total agreed that co-research is a good way for EM communities to identify their issues/problems (expected result indicator 1.2) and to develop solutions for overcome these issues/problems and to engage EM women in solving these communities' issues/problems (expected result indicator 1.4); When asked on the possibility that Ethnic Minority women have presented their co-research findings to civil society and policy-makers, demonstrating the value of enhanced participation to stakeholders, 93.5% of co-researchers strong agreed that co-research is a good way for EM women to propose their demands/needs to local authorities (expected result indicators 2.3 – 2.7); Regarding to

capacity building effect of the co-research, 96.7% of co-researchers strong agreed that co-research is a good way for EM women to strengthen their skills of persuading (expected result indicator 2.1).

Specifically, the co-research application has enhanced the community solidarity and is seen to be highly relevant to empower the EMW in implementation of the community-based small projects, as described in the Table 5 below.

Table 5: Relevance of co-research method in capacity building for EMW

Relevance of co-research methods at commune level	Level of agreement	Agreed or totally agreed (percentage)
Co-researches help connecting EM communities	4.6	93.5
Co-research is a good way for EM communities to identify their issues/problems	4.6	96.7
Co-research is a good way for EM communities to identify solutions for overcome their issues/problems	4.4	96.7
Co-research is a good way for EM women to engage in solving the community's issues/problems	4.6	96.7
Co-research is a good way for EM women to propose their demands/needs to local authorities	4.6	93.5
Co-research is a good way for EM women to strengthen their skills of persuading	4.6	96.7
In future I will conduct other researches with EM women even without external support	4.0	96.7

Source: Evaluation Team's calculation based on database of Co-researcher survey (June 2018)

Moreover, the co-research method is acknowledged by leaders of the central VWU to be relevant to the implementation of many of their community-based projects to help the vulnerable groups of women in remote and difficult areas.

To conclude this section, the remark made by the Vice Chairwoman of the central VWU can be a good illustration of the relevance of the co-research method both to the national context and to grassroots context.

“Co-research method equips women with powerful and logical tools for identifying local problems, identifying issues related to many areas of policy implemented at grassroots level. EM women are able to lead the process of collecting evidence which the staff of VWU cannot do as well as EM women do because EM women are masters of the local knowledge and they have insight understanding of the local situation. Moreover, EM women are able to lead discussions with other members of the community to find possible solutions which will then be implemented by the community. This process reduces the dependency of the community to the support provided by the government or social-political organizations. In addition, when the step of advocacy is well implemented, it is possible to mobilize state budget and other resources from local authorities and national targeted programs to implement solutions proposed by communities. As observed in Bac Kan and Tra Vinh Provinces, the EM women co-researchers are more and more confident and dare to say what they see, to express clearly in public their opinions. Remarkably, they are able to

present their proposal very convincingly because there have collected good evidences which support strongly their arguments. The Government of Vietnam and the socio-political organizations like VWU are in need for the people's voice and participation in the development and implementation of policies targeting the vulnerable groups including EM women. The co-research method is very appropriate to promote democracy at grassroots level as well."

(FGD, leaders of the central VWU)

3.2 Project Effectiveness

This section discusses the extent to which the development intervention's objectives have been achieved as of the conclusion of the action (June 2018). The discussion focuses on three areas of expected results (ER) as perceived by different stakeholders. The details on the actualization of the performance indicators that measures overall objectives, specific objectives and expected results are outlined in the Logic Model which is annexed to this Report.

3.2.1 Expected Result 1

The Expected Result 1 states that "an effective approach to co-research has been implemented in Bac Kan Province." There are strong evidences to affirm that this result has been fully achieved.

Bac Kan Province is the main site of the R&V project in phase 1 - 2015/2016 (Phuc Loc Commune, Ba Be District), phase 2 - 2016/2017 (Banh Tranh and Phuc Loc Communes, Ba Be District). In the expansion phase (2017/2018) five communes in Bac Kan and Tra Vinh provinces participate in the project. By June 2018, the R&V project has been built up capacity on research skills, advocacy and presentation skills for 65 EM women, from 13 research groups in 16 villages of Phuc Loc and Banh Trach Communes, 25 EM women from 5 research groups in five newly participating communes (one in Ba Be District and four in other districts). All core research issues were implemented by co-research groups thanks to a combination of resources contributed from the communities, local state funds and the project's financial and technical support.

First, contributing to the completion of the co-research projects not only in Bac Kan Province but also in Tra Vinh Province is capacity building interventions that the R&V project delivered for the EM women researchers (also called community researchers).

To deliver the capacity building for EM women co-researchers, the professional researchers at CARE and iSEE have developed the Co-research Training Manual which provide practical guidances on every step of the ten-step process of co-research method application. Once the groups of EM women have been trained, they continued to receive the coaching of either CARE/iSEE researchers and/or the Bac Kan Provincial VWU. The co-research approach, in essence, requires the community researchers work in close cooperation with professional researchers. This implies a complementary relationship between the two, in which professional researchers may be the method masters while community researchers are the local subject masters. The method also emphasizes the important role of community researchers in identifying local issues and deciding which their top priorities to be tackled. The professional researchers from CARE/iSEE keep their roles limited to provide technical supports to the community researchers in identifying the data to be collected and analyzing the data to formulate the findings and to recommend solutions when appropriate and necessary.

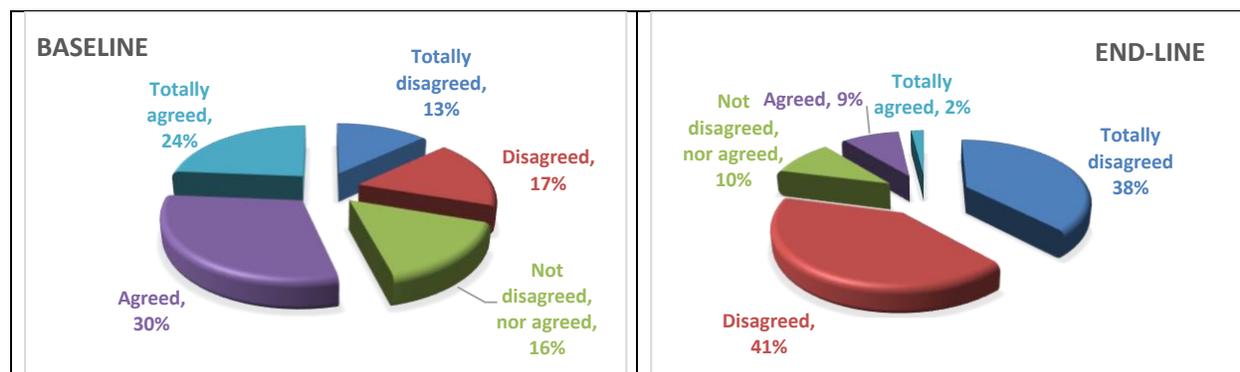
The combination between intensive training and coaching/technical support proved to be an effective capacity building method for the community researchers.

“After training, when our team was conducting the data collection for the identified research topics, we faced the objection of some local people. They were doubtful about the legitimacy of what we were doing and refused to participate in interviews. We were worried then called iSEE researcher. She guided us how to introduce the purpose and the meaning of the co-research and how to explain to the community that the pictures or interviews will be used for the purpose of research which will ultimately support the well-being of the community. Step by step we improved our persuasion skills and were able to mobilize the community members in implementing the solution (building the village culture house).”

(FGD, a member of the co-research group that studied on building villages culture house in Banh Tranh Commune)

The co-researchers who have been trained on co-research method do not think that only high-educated people can conduct researches any longer. The Figure 1 shows a significant change in the attitude of the community researchers. At the outset of the R&V project, 54 percent of the community researchers agreed or totally agreed that only high-educated people are able to do researches and that of end-line is only 11 percent. This change demonstrates the confidence of the community researchers on their research skills. This is the key factor that encourages them in initiating and completion of their research project successfully.

Figure 1: Agreement/disagreement that only high-educated people are able to do research



Source: Authors' calculation based on database of co-researcher survey (June 2018) and baseline report

Feedback from co-researchers is positive with regards to training they participated. The level of confidence of the EM women co-researchers in applying research skills is broken down in the Table 7 below. Significant changes are found in all areas of capacity comparing the baseline and end-line data.

Table 6: EM women's self-assessment of the change in their skills

Skills related to data collection in co-research	Agreed or totally agreed (percentage)		
	Baseline	End-line	Gain
Knowing how to conduct co-research related to community issues	21.1	93.7	72.6
Knowing how to conduct an interview to get the information I need	39.0	98.4	59.4

Skills related to data collection in co-research	Agreed or totally agreed (percentage)		
	Baseline	End-line	Gain
Knowing how to identify the information before meeting an informant (e.g. a civil officer)	47.0	85.5	38.5
Knowing how to facilitate a discussion with only women	23.7	84.2	60.5
Knowing how to facilitate a discussion with only men	21.6	65.1	43.5
Knowing how to facilitate a discussion with both men and women	18.7	75.8	57.1
Knowing how to take a photo as evidence for research	7.9	100	92.1
Knowing how to make a video clip (filming) as evidence for research	1.3	67.2	65.9

Source: Baseline Report (CARE, 2015) and authors' calculation based on database of Co-researcher survey (June 2018)

EM co-researchers are confident in applying data collecting skills as taking photo, filming, interviewing and facilitating skills as organizing group discussions. See the Box 1 for an illustration of the significant changes in the data-collection skills of the community researchers in the R&V Project.

Box 1: A case to demonstrate the co-researchers are skillful in data collection

Case 1: Three co-researchers teamed-up with a professional researcher to conduct a research out of the R&V project scope.

From April 2 to May 7, 2018, CARE implemented a study on “Access to land-based resources and socio-economic development of EM women in Bac Kan.” The sites selected for the survey are five villages where resides the Tay, Dao and Hmong EM groups. A researcher at CARE took lead in this research and three community researchers who participated in the R&V project were invited to participate in and responsible for quantitative data collection. These three community researchers were introduced to the design of the study, the study hypothesis, and the expected outcomes of the study.

Observations by the team leader on the capacity of the community researchers shared below are a strong demonstration of the level of mastering some of the critical research skills of community researchers.

- Community researchers received and quickly understood the quite complex terms used in research such as non-monetary income, social capital, savings classification and debt.
- Community researchers had the ability to build trust from the interviewees, had good skills to encourage households to participate in interviews and thus increase readiness to respond from interviewees.
- While observing community researchers conducting household interviews, I (the team leader) found they had a willingness to accept differences; they had tolerance and patience for collecting information. The data collected was therefore high quality.
- Weekly wrap-up meetings gave chances for each member of the research team to show their progress. In these meetings they drew experience and shared observations collected in a well-structured process. They also shared the way to express a constructive idea as well as useful skills on how to re-evaluate information collected during the interview.

The team-leader was happy with the quality of the data that they collected. She got a nice surprise seeing their progresses as they were never been a researcher. She believes that they have the ability to participate more deeply in the research process. She concludes that these researchers get more

coaching and further capacity building, they can use research skill-set for other activities such as monitoring of implementation of policies in their localities effectively.

(SSI, a researcher at CARE)

Still, community researchers find it challenging to do analysis of the data.

“We are confident now in conducting all steps of a co-research project except the steps of analyzing the collected data to derive findings. We learn that we should have the full autonomy in identifying of research topics and in designing solutions to address the collective issues in collaboration with community members, but we still need the collaboration of the Project researchers particularly in analyzing data and presenting findings.”

(FGDs with EM co-researchers in Banh Trach Commune).

Second, the process of transferring knowledge to the R&V project partner agency – Bac Kan Provincial VWU ensure that the “effective approach to co-research has been implemented in Bac Kan.” The R&V project is jointly implemented by CARE, iSEE and Bac Kan Provincial VWU. And the Bac Kan Provincial VWU plays an important role in all aspects of the project implementation, including engagement of the local authority, mobilization of supports of the line management agencies, conducting planned activities at commune level and technical support provision to the EMW co-researchers. At the outset of the R&V project, Bac Kan Provincial VWU has assigned tasks to its most active and capable staff at both provincial and district levels to participate in the project. These staff not only worked directly with the commune VWU in Banh Trach and Phuc Loc Communes but also worked closely with CARE and iSEE professional researchers in designing and organizing training courses for community researchers. Those key staff at the end of the project have become the master trainers of the co-research methods and been able to deliver capacity building to community research in the phase of expansion to other five communes in Bac Kan addition to Banh Trach and Phuc Loc Communes. Moreover, those key staff of Bac Kan Provincial VWU and Ba Be District VWU reviewed and revised the Training Manual to ensure that the replication of the co-research model in the five new communes was smoothly implemented. Bac Kan Provincial VWU is also responsible for organization of advocacy events at the provincial and so is Ba Be District VWU for district events. At each event, the Bac Kan Provincial VWU invited the representatives from provincial PC, provincial PCC and related state agencies whose administrative mandates are related to the community research teams’ topics. The presence of those key provincial state stakeholders is crucial to increase the impact of co-researches at provincial and district levels. The representative of the commune PCC and PC participated in these events so as to show the local commitment to support the community research groups. The process of organizing these events not only improved the advocacy capacity of the Bac Kan provincial VWU and community research groups but also increased the support of the government at all levels to the co-research application. This explained why local authorities of the five newly participating communes in the expansion phase warmly welcome and provided significant support to the community research groups.

3.2.2 Expected Result 2

The Expected Result 2 states that “Ethnic Minority women have presented their co-research findings to civil society and policy-makers, demonstrating the value of enhanced participation to stakeholders”.

To date, co-research teams in two provinces (Bac Kan and Tra Vinh) have completed 21 research projects. The findings and recommendations of these researches were shared widely with community people to get the common consents. The co-researchers also made their presentation to local (commune) authorities and advocacy event at different levels (including district and provincial level) in order to advocate for improvements in development practice and to allocation resources for EMW's issues, and to strengthen the co-researchers' role in grassroots democracy. At the end of the action, the outcomes of co-research projects have been presented at the commune level (17 times), district level (3 times), provincial level (9 presentations) or even national level (3 at CEMA and 1 at EMWG).

The Table 6 below outlined the structure of the co-research topics by area coverage. The numbers of co-research project completed and number of co-researchers engaging the entire cycle of co-research project exceeds the targets provided in the Logic Model of the project (See Annex 2_Logic Model).

Table 7: Structure of co-research projects by topic and by area coverage

Topic / Area Coverage		Number research team	Share from total (%)
Topic	Livelihood	9	43
	Education	1	5
	Socio-cultural	7	33
	Rural Environmental Protection	4	19
Total		21	100
Area	Banh Trach and Phuc Loc Commune, Bac Kan Province	13	62
	Replicates in other communes, Bac Kan Province	5	24
	Tra Vinh Province	3	14
	Total	21	100

Source: Author's construction based on interviews with representative of Bac Kan's WU and reviewing of the internal documents of the R&V project.²

Box 2 present some outstanding cases that have been advocated successfully at all levels including provincial and central levels. The co-research groups had successfully mobilized the local state funds to implement their solutions.

Box 2: Cases to demonstrate the acknowledgement of local authorities to the co-research projects in the process of commune/district social and economic development, particularly in the implementation of the New Rural Development Program

Case 2: Children dropping out of school in Phuc Loc Commune, Ba Be District:

Having realized that there are many children in the community that drop out of school early, research team in Vang Quan Village, Phuc Loc Commune, Ba Be District wanted to do a study for better understanding about the causes of this phenomenon. The study had been carried out in some villages of Phuc Loc Commune, Ba Be District. Including: Nhật Vẹn, Phia Khao, Khuổi Trả, Phiêng Chỉ, Nà Ma, Cốc Diển, Khuổi Pết and Bản Luộc Village. The Peoples' Council of Phuc Loc Commune has decided to facilitate the implementation of this co-research group's proposed solutions in order to pursuit the

² These project documents are namely: (i) "Community issues in the eyes of ethnic minority women, vol. 1 and 2"; (ii) publication five replicated co-research projects in Back Kan, and (iii) internal report of CARE about three co-research topics in Tra Vinh.

National target of the New Rural Development Program. According to the FGD conducted with members of the Phuc Loc Commune PC and PCC, number of children dropping out of school in Phuc Loc has been reduced to zero since subsequent actions have been implemented by the co-research group members to tackle the problem.

“In Vãng Quan Village (29 households), where a lot of H’Mong people living, most students stop continuing their studies after finishing 9th grade. There were 15% of students dropping out of school. Now there are no students dropping out of school anymore.”

(FGD, a leader of the PCC of Phuc Loc Commune, male)

The research team found that H’Mong and Dao ethnic children are intended for dropping out of school more than in other ethnic. These children left school very erratically, some left in 5th grade, some left in 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th grade, and most students stop continuing their studies after finishing 9th grade. Of 10 students dropping out of secondary school, there are 6 boys and 4 girls.

“I left school after finishing 8th grade, just because I don’t like school”

(A person born in 2001)

Findings from this co-research shows that main reasons of dropping out of school are:

- The school is far from home. Said a girl who was born in 1997 and left school early said, “I have left school for 5 years since 7th grade, my bicycle got broken and my dad didn’t fix it. The school was so far from home, and it was really sunny and hot, then I didn’t go to school anymore.”;
- There are few schools for studying: currently in Phuc Loc Commune, there is one secondary school in center of the commune (approximately 7 to 8 kilometers walking through the forest from the furthest village). Students have to rent houses when they go to secondary school, they receive the support of 1.900.000 VNĐ per semester, and 15 kilograms of rice/ each student/ each month. Besides that, they have to find firewood and cook meals by themselves;
- Parents are worried about the health and safety of their children if they have to go too far to get to school.
- Children have to work for the family which is lacking the workforce in the peak time of farming season;
- Some parents bear the attitude that “girls don’t need to study higher”;
- The children do not have soft-skills to motivate themselves at school and interested in young marriage (particularly in the Hmong group).

The co-research team also identified that despite the above reasons, a lot of children still wish to continue studying. After graduation, they want to work in industrial sectors or doing other jobs different from farming. The parents also wish to send their children to school with hope for better-off lives for their children.

When the reason of children dropping out of school was identified, especially in lower secondary and higher secondary schools, the research team proposed a number of solutions which is mainly as: (i) organize social events on sharing life skills in order to increase children’s awareness of the importance of schooling; (ii) together with the commune authorities, encourage families, where there are children dropping out of school, to send their child back to school; (iii) Using the commune’s state funds, provide material support (books, rice) to families in difficult circumstances.

The indicator on the universalization of education and the reduction of school drop-outs is one of the 19 indicators in the New Rural Development Program. Therefore, by implement their solutions, the co-research team had assisted the local (Phuc Loc commune) to pursuit targets of the New Rural

Development Program. This was a great contribution of the co-research team, as seen by the commune authorities and a representative of Division of Education and Training of the Ba Be District.

Case 2: Domestic pig farming in Phuc Loc (and Banh Trach) Communes, Ba Be District:

Co-research team at Nhà Khao and Bản Luộc Village, noticed that farmers prefer crossbred pigs than domestic pig farming. Many households found that crossbred pigs are sold more quickly, just four months, so they prefer it. So local domestic pigs are at risk of being eroded. The Thiêng Điếm, Nhà Đuẩn, Nhà Hối, Khuổi Tấu Village barely raise any domestic pig. The fact that domestic pigs grow slowly, e.g. a litter of domestic pigs take an 8-month period to fully grown to sell, only 40% of households that are raising domestic pigs, others are raising crossbred pigs. However, the Co-research team found various reasons in favor raising domestic pigs and tabled significant economic benefit from raising domestic pigs over crossbred pigs. After conducting the research and figuring out that domestic pig farming brings high economic value, the team had consulted model of domestic pig farming with local households in Phuc Loc commune. As a consequence, a domestic pig farming model has been setup as a cooperation among local households. The PC of Phuc Loc Commune has incorporated this action into the implementation of the Government's New Rural Development Program at their commune. State Finance support from local authorities has been allocated for the cooperative, firstly to help them to attend training courses for domestic pig farming.

(FGD, pig raising co-research groups in Banh Tranh and Phuc Loc Communes)

Case 3: Domestic waste in Phuc Loc Commune, Ba Be District:

The co-research team found that the problem of environmental pollution is getting more and more serious, especially in the center of Thiêng Điếm, Nhà Hối and Nhà Đuẩn Village. Household waste littering is affecting people's health, farming and cultivation. Children would be likely to catch diarrhea or skin diseases. Too much waste and animal carcasses thrown down on the road, beside the stream will cause water pollution, destroy of scenic beauty of the village. In the old days, the stream is clean, now it is polluted and smell. This topic is getting a lot of attention from villagers. The co-research group found out that the cause of pollution is farming and household waste: people usually throw trash beside the street, the stream, some separate waste, but mostly the others don't. Non-biodegradable waste is often burned or buried (e.g. plastic bag, porcelain pieces, mirrors), biodegradable waste (such as vegetable stems, banana peels, fruit shells, bagasse) are often thrown into the garden, or beside the street. Understanding that most interviewed people hope that there will be a place to gather and collect trash, solution proposed by the co-research group is to build up the waste ovens for burning non-biodegradable waste.

"In our village, there are 7 waste ovens were built, in which four of them were financed from public funds of the New Rural Development Program, others contributed by the local households. However, this amount of waste ovens is far beyond the expected demand of 12 lowland villages, which is 50 ovens. The other 7 upland villages, for the time being, have no requirement for waste ovens."

(a member of the Peoples' Committee of Phuc Loc Commune, male)

Case 4: Traditional costumes of Tay and Dao Tien people in Phuc Loc Commune, Ba Be District:

Co-research teams, after conducting interviews with local people in their commune, noticed that nowadays, the traditional costumes of Tay and Dao Tien people are endangered. In the old days, everyone knew how to make the costumes. Young people do not know how and no longer want to wear it either. Young children do not even have any clues about Tay's traditional dress. The child asked grandma about the traditional outfit "Why do you wear this?". Getting understanding of the Tay and Dao Tien traditional weaving which traditionally used in wedding, funeral rituals, the Co-research team proposed to the local authority organizing festival, where traditional costumes of Tay and Dao Tien

could be presented. Observing that culture preservation is one of the national target of New Rural Development Program, the Peoples' Committee of Phuc Loc Commune has allocated public funds annually for this event.

"We have plans that annually, at the Lunar New Year festival in Khuỷ Trầ Village, there is an event for traditional costumes of Tay and Dao Tien. Funding for the event comes from The Peoples' Council budget."

(a member of the Peoples' Committee of Phuc Loc Commune, male)

The value of enhanced participation of the EM women as the result of the co-research application is highly appreciated by stakeholders, particularly the commune and district authorities. When being asked about EM WOMEN's contribution in local development process, significant high proportion of representatives of Banh Trach and Phuc Loc Commune PCC, PC and Ba Be District PC has positive feedback. The breakdown of their assessment is described in the Table 6 as follows:

Table 8: Recognition of local authorities towards EM women contributions in local development process

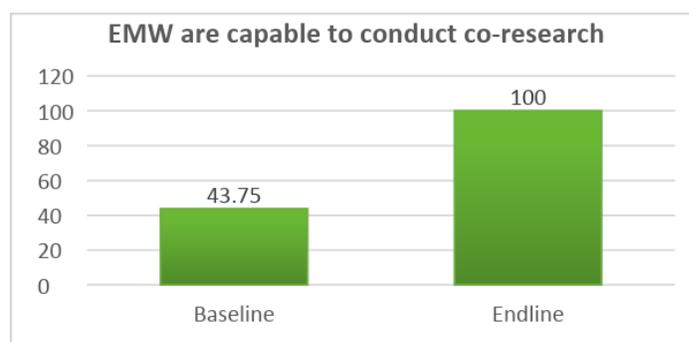
	Agreed or totally agreed (percentage)		
	Baseline	End-line	Change
Contributions from EM women are important and official inputs in local planning processes	62.5	100	37.5
EM women contributions are relevant to the local context	75	80	5
The policy makers can utilize the results of co-research conducted by EM women	81.25	100	18.75
I am willing to use the results of co-research conducted by EM women in my work	87.5	100	12.5

Source: Author's construction based on interviews with representatives of Commune/District People Committee and People Council, June 2018.

Explaining the change in their perception of the participation of ethnic minority women in local development activities, the local government officials believe that the participation of EM women is a success factor of any community-based activities as the EM women have very good understanding of the local issues and their participation is now based on strong evidence thanks to the capacity building they benefited from the R&V project. In an interview, a leader of Phuc Loc Commune PPC said, *"EM women are very committed to local development plans. When they participate in any village or commune meetings to carry out a collective intervention, such as training in agricultural production development, they show strong commitment and will implement the agreed plan strictly."*

Moreover, the local authorities have changed their perception of the EM WOMEN's capacity to conduct research. The Figure 2 shows that 100 percent of the interviewed leader of commune/district PC, PPC have acknowledged that EM women are able to conduct research while at the baseline, there was only 43.75 percent believed they were able to.

Figure 2: Local authorities perception of the EM WOMEN’s capacity to conduct research (%)



Source: Calculation from SSI with representatives of local authorities (June 2018) and Project Baseline Report

In terms of the EM women increased ability to voice priorities and rights in public forums and to present the outcomes of their research proect, CARE’s MEL data provides evidence that 85 percent of total EM co-researchers from 13 groups established in Banh Trach and Phuc Loc Commune said they feel confident speaking up about issues concern their families and communities publicly while the project sets a target of 50 percent. Evidence from the Co-research Survey in June 2018 is also consistent with the MEL data. 88.6 percent of EM co-researchers confirmed they can present their ideas/proposals (about their families’/communities’ issues) clearly in workshops/public forums; 71 percent of EM co-researchers confirmed they can present their ideas clearly to media reporters; and 54 percent confirmed they can present their ideas/proposals to Government/State Agencies at central level. A significant increase in the confidence of the EM co-researchers is observed from baseline to end-line survey as shown in the Table 9 infra.

Table 9: EM women’s self-assessment of the changes in ability to raise their voice

Ability to raise their voice	Agreed or totally agreed (percentage)		
	Baseline	Endline	Gain
I know how to raise my ideas/propose my request to commune authorities	24.7	77.5	52.8
I know how to raise my ideas/propose my request to district authorities	10.7	64.5	53.8
I know how to raise my ideas/propose my request to provincial authorities	4.0	62.9	58.9
I know how to propose my request to central authorities	4.0	54.0	50
I can present my ideas clearly in a workshop where there is a large number of participants	18.2	88.6	70.4
I can present my ideas clearly to television/radio/media reporters	18.4	71.0	52.6

Interviews with local authorities strongly support these survey outcomes.

“Before, the EM women never come to the Commune Office when they were facing difficulties. Participating in co-researches, they are much more active and confident. Now they come directly

to the Office of the Chairman of the Commune Communist Party and ask for a talk to solve their family or village issues. It is a great surprise to me.”

(SSI, the Chairman of the Commune Communist Party in Banh Trach Commune, male)

3.2.3 Expected Result 3

The expected result 3 states, “The Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs has incorporated outcomes from participatory research into rights-related policy-making and, along with civil society organizations, has increased capacity to implement participatory consultations.”

Project takes advantage of specific windows of opportunity to influence various partners including Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs’ (CEMA), VWU and EMWG in their practices of policies development and or monitoring. The ER 3 fulfillment is measured by the following indicators of which the actual achievement is broken down as follows:

Table 10: Actual achievement of performance indicators that measure the ER 3

	ER Indicator	Target value	Actual achievement
3.1	Number of policy briefs formulated by the end of the action	3	1 policy brief formulated by the end of the action (under target)
3.2	Number of consultations conducted with CEMA on gender policy and implementation by the end of the action	2	2 consultations conducted with CEMA on gender policy and implementation by the end of the action.
3.3	CEMA action plan for mainstreaming consultation with EM women into policy formulation and implementation created with support from CARE and iSEE by the end of the action	1	There is a CEMA action plan for mainstreaming consultation with EM women into policy formulation and implementation created with support from CARE and iSEE by the end of the action.
3.4	1 co-research training of trainers conducted for EMWG members by the end of the action.	1	1 co-research training of trainers conducted for EMWG members by the end of the action

Source: Project MEL data

Within this area of results, since year two, the partnership with central VWU has been developed in order to open for windows for incorporation of the outcomes from community researches into rights-related policy-making. The mandate³ of the VWU is fully in line with the objectives of the R&V project, such as: (i) providing communication, education and mobilization of women to implement laws and policies, uphold fine virtues and enhance their capacity and awareness; (ii) Mobilizing and assisting women in economic development, sustainable poverty reduction, and environmental protection; (iii) Advising,

³ VWU’s Report on Women’s Rights (2013)

proposing, participating in the development of laws and policies on gender equality and social counter arguments to such laws, and monitoring enforcement.

Recently, VWU is given by laws the role of participating in development and supervision of law and policy implementation related to gender equality; giving social counter arguments. VWU has been contributing to ensuring gender mainstreaming in the laws, codes, legal normative documents, thereby promoting women's rights.

Taking this into account, CARE and ISEE decided to build the strategic partnership with the central VWU in the project year two.

According to the remarks made by the leaders of the central VWU in a FGD, the central VWU is currently using different methods for data collection for their policy monitoring mission such as collecting policy comments/inputs via various channels as follows: (i) the WU's website (ii) WU's Facebook at different levels (iii) the electronic newspapers; (iv) organizing meetings of VWU staff at grass-root level; (v) conducting monitoring field visits; (vi) conducting research with survey questionnaire; (vii) organizing expert consultation workshops and (viii) organizing consultation meeting with women on women-related policies. The difference of all of these methods from the co-research method is that, in the case of co-research, women take action in collecting information, while in other methods they just informants. Women participate in the research could succeed in identifying their community issues but they are not able to identify other communities' issues or issue of multi-communities. Therefore, the VWU would like to apply the co-research method as complementary to their traditional methods that have been long used for policy monitoring. Not only this, the co-research methodology is relevant for the implementation of the approved policies.

The VWU central saw the great possibility of applying the co-research model in other programs that they are implementing as the method helps the women to identify and analyze their community issues and build up the solutions to address that issues effectively.

The cooperation with CARE and ISEE started in the second year of the R&V project and resulted in very significant outcomes:

- The central VWU had trained VWU staff in 45 communes in the "Going with Border Women Program" in Quang Ninh, 6/2018; -
- The pilot so-research projects have been successfully in Tra Vinh Province. Those research projects are implemented within the VWU's program to support women in livelihood development.

From these activities, the VWU plans to introduce co-research approaches in all provinces, with the purpose not only for monitoring policies but also for implementing policies and programs that aim for enhancing the socio-economic status of the women, particularly enhancing their rights to voice and to participate. If the central VWU successfully performs the above plan, the expected result 3 of the R&V project would likely continue to be generated.

In parallel, CARE and ISEE continue their collaboration with CEMA and strengthen the partnership with CEMA in a broader remote EMW Program. In this program, the sites selected for promoting the integration of EM women right-related issues in policy-making have been expanded to five provinces

including Ha Giang, Hoa Binh, Tra Vinh, Kon Tum and Quang Tri in addition to Bac Kan Province. The provincial focal agencies are DEMA which plays coordinating role in multi-discipline provincial Taskforce engaging many provincial state agencies and provincial VWU. Particularly in R&V Project, CEMA have been engaged at the outset in various activities as the kick-off workshop, reviewing workshops or yearly evaluation workshops. Project results and outcomes have been timely communicated to CEMA who will in turn consider the project's approach and evidence in their policy considerations. For years, CARE and iSEE have promoted for co-research approach as one among methods to gather information from EM perspectives in policy development. One outcome of the collective efforts is that CEMA has also prepared a checklist regarding how to appraise the EM-related policies at each of the ministries. This checklist has been submitted to CEMA leaders in March 2018.

3.2.4 Unexpected Results

In addition to the expected results, the observations and comments from local stakeholders evidenced that the R&V project has generated another (unexpected) positive change that is to contribute to the development of local human resources. A leader of Ba Be District People's Committee remarked:

"Before the projects that CARE and iSEE carried out in the area, I had a plan to introduce the two chairwomen of Banh Trach and Phuc Loc Communes to become the members of the commune People's Councils. But they both refused because they were not confident enough. Now, as I can observe, their performance has been improved significantly. They are much more confident when discussing with District PC leaders about the implementation of policies related to economic development or social issues. If they are assigned to key positions in Commune People's Committee or Commune People's Committee now, I am sure they will not refuse as before. I would express my acknowledgement to the R&V Project for helping us in capacity building for local staff."

(SSI, a leader of Ba Be District PC, male)

A representative of the Bac Kan Provincial VWU also said that the group of five staff who was assigned to work in five communes in the phase of expansion (2017 – 2018), also achieved outstanding results in their performance. At the Bac Kan Provincial VWU, every provincial official is assigned to support a commune women's union in form of on-the job coaching. This is one of regular capacity building activities that the provincial VWU deliver to enhance of competence of VWU at grassroots level. The provincial officials have to work on regular basics with commune and village VWU staff in the planning and reporting cycle and provide assistance as needed. Comparing the performance of the commune VWU in five communes that participated in the Project in the phase of expansion and the remaining commune VWUs (except Banh Trach and Phuc Loc), one can witness a remarkable difference. The VWU staff in the five communes are much more active in identifying activities in their annual work plan and their yearly performance reports are prepared to be more evidenced-based and in better format. This is explained partly by their experience gained when participating in the R&V Project and partly by the support in form of coaching delivered by the five provincial VWU staff.

3.3 Efficiency of the co-research model

This section evaluates the efficiency of the co-research model by considering the dimensions namely cost consciousness, experimentation and innovation, and Equity.

Cost consciousness: The observations at field support to the conclusion that taking reasonable opportunities to reduce costs are embedded in many aspects of R&V project management and delivery. In particular:

In terms of human resources: R&V project has succeeded in utilizing local human resources. Apart from co-researchers who, by designing, were EM women of their communes, the staff of WU at all levels (village, commune, district and province) had actively involved as a facilitator and co-ordinators in R&V project management and delivery. There were 17 times VWU staff successfully facilitated presentations of co-research at the commune level by the end of the action. CARE and ISEE professional researchers have worked closely with staff of Bac Kan Province's VWU staff to transfer the various techniques including ten steps of conducting co-research and facilitation skills as well as advocacy skills. As results, the staff of provincial VWU in Bac Kan have become the method masters who have been able to deliver training to EM co-researchers since project year two and to provide coaching service to their colleagues in Tra Vinh Province in the phase of replication (project year 3).

In terms of utilization of local facilities: Whenever possible and available, all local facilities are used for different kinds of project activities such as village's common houses were used for training delivery for EM co-researchers and for organizing village meetings to get communities' feedback and comments on the findings delivered and recommendation proposed by co-research group.

Remarkably, in addition to provision of seed funding of around USD 1,000 for each co-research group in Bac Kan and about USD 2,000 in Tra Vinh for each co-research team to implement their community-based solutions, the R&V Project always encourages the mobilizations of local's state budget for implementation. This serve two-fold purposes: one is to enhance the sustainability of the co-researchers as discussed further in the Session 3.4, the other is to raise the awareness and to enhance the ackldge of the local authorities toward the contributions of the co-research groups in community development. There is evidence that the a remarkable amount of commune's budget has been committed to implement the solutions proposed by co-researcher groups. Strong evidences are presented with cases of The art of Hat Then-Tinh Music Instrument of the Tay, domestic pig farming, Banana planting domestic waste and water pollution, building the commune cultural hall, and traditional Costume fashion show. The Commune People Committees committed their annual recurrent budgets or from production promotion program's funded by NTP of SPR or from Rural Enviroment Fund from New Rural Program.

In terms of using material for advocacy and knowledge dissemination: Co-research teams had used the only printed documents (large paper boats) thus reduced cost of printing and they can re-use the material in many advocacy events, including presentations at the commune level (17 times), district level (3 times), provincial level (9 presentations) or even national level (3 at CEMA and 1 at EMWG).

Experimentation and innovation: There were inherently risky environments in which the R&V project's expected outcomes were delivered, which can be fostered through the trialling of experimental and innovative mechanisms. Firstly, it is the fact that EM women are lack of skill set for doing research as well as lack of confidence on delivery the expected outcomes of the R&V Project. Regarding with this first risky environmental issue, co-research approach is an innovative mechanism where there are reasonable grounds to expect better overall outcome (see the section on EM women's self-assessment of the changes in their skills).

"I never thought I would be a researcher. I was afraid to be a member of the team. Gradually, having been trained and coached by the Project team, I found doing research is very interesting and more importantly I find myself able to be a researcher. It is a new adventure to me."

(FGD, a member of co-research group in Banh Trach Commune)

It can be said that the whole project is experimental and innovative because it allows EMW to do the work they never thought they could do. And more importantly, the ultimate outcomes of raising the voice and enhance the right to participate of EM women through co-research projects have been delivered with high acknowledgement of the authorities.

"Co-research is very good way to enhance the competence of the EM women in terms of evidencing their issues and persuading the local authorities to support them in solving the identified community problems. I have witnessed the remarkable changes in the EM women since the Project started. Now they become strongly expressive not only in village meetings but in the formal or informal meeting with the leaders of the commune PC or PCC. I did not think that co-research can help improve the confidence and presentation skills of the EM women in such a short time."

(SSI, a leader of Banh Trach Commune PC, male)

Shared this viewpoint, a leader of Bac Kan Provincial VWU said:

"I used to be worried when our organization signed the Agreement to implement this project in Bac Kan as the method is very new to us. Now I see the beauty of the method as in innovative way for us to implement out mandates which are to understand the needs/demand of women at grassroot level and to provide effective measures in promoting their socio-economic status. It is also a very innovative way to enhance capacity for our staff at district and commune levels who have experienced a new way to collect evidence and formulate solutions for community development."

(SSI, a leader of Bac Kan Provincial VWU, female)

With this regard, the FGD with leaders of the central VWU reveals that the co-research methods introduced in by R&V Project can be experimented at grassroot levels in the implementation of VWU's programs particularly the production promotion actions or social-status enhancement actions for women in the most disadvantaged areas.

Equity: This dimension is related to the evidence that the R&V project reach to marginalized groups of EM women. At the beginning, the project identified a more vulnerable group than the other, which is Hmong and Dao groups. Hence, the selection criteria for selection of co-research group member was indicated that the Hmong women must be involved in the co-research group. Hmong and Dao EM women have been participated into the project activities equally with other groups of EM women and have achieved

remarkable results. 29 percent of the co-researchers in Banh Tranh and Phuc Loc Commune are Dao and Hmong EM women.

3.4 Project Sustainability

In this section, the sustainability of the project is discussed at the three levels as follows: (1) community level; (2) provincial level; and (3) central level.

At community level: Sustainability can be identified as technically high, mainly because of the capacity-building activities delivered in the R&V project and the willingness of the EM women to continue the current research and initiate new ones. EM co-researchers confirmed that they had mastered the 10-step process to complete a community-based research and could conduct their own research in the future. 93.9% of the co-researcher in the survey confirmed they know how to conduct a research at community level. The active members and the leaders of co-research teams in both Banh Trach Commune and Phuc Loc Communes shared their ideas of future researches. In terms of willingness levels to initiate co-researches in near future, feedback from EM women has been quite good. EM women have believed that EM men and other members of their communities can be mobilized in their co-researches in the coming time. See Table 12 below. Still, FGD with EM men in Phuc Loc Commune showed their low interest in engaging in co-research. Four out of 6 EM men in the discussion had no idea about the co-research that their wives had been engaged in. This indicates that involving EM men who are located in Phuc Loc Commune in future researches may require great efforts of EM women, particularly in educating them about the benefits that co-research will bring to their communities. On contrast, the EM men in Banh Trach showed better understanding of what was going on in their commune and which co-researches their wives had been doing. Therefore, mobilizing EM men living in Banh Trach Commune in the conduction of co-research might be an easier task.

In terms of resources for implementation of the proposed solutions that may be suggested by future co-researches, the feasibility is a lower as perceived by the surveyed co-researchers. Although the co-researchers have no reluctance to do the data collection at their own cost, their concern mainly related to the resource to finance the implementation of their suggested solutions. The limitation in mobilization of the community's fund for implementing current solutions as discussed in previous sections indicate that this concern is grounded.

Table 11: Possibility that EMW will initiate and conduct co-researches (5 = totally agreed)

EM women to initiate future research projects.	Level of agreement	Percentage of agreed or totally agreed
I know how to conduct a co-research	4.2	93.7
In future I will conduct other researches with EM women even without external support	4.04	80.7
In future I will mobilize men and other members of communities to conduct other researches	4.05	83.8

Our communities can contribute finance/material resources to conduct other researches in future

3.82

69.1

Source: Authors' calculation based on database of Co-researcher survey (June 2018))

At provincial level: the sustainability of the project is expected to be high and largely thank to the effort of the Provincial Women's Union to replicate the model in other sites. In 2017 - 2018, five co-research teams have been established in five replicating communes (four communes in Bach Thong District, Cho Don District, Cho Moi District, Ngan Son District and Yen Duong Commune in Ba Be District). The total number of co-researchers in the newly participating communes is 20 EM women. Five groups have completed their co-research projects in 2018 and the outcomes were presented in June 2018 at an event organized at provincial level. Actions that Bac Kan Provincial Women's Union has done to continue and to replicate the co-research approaches to a larger site include:

(1) Revising and finalizing training materials with the necessary adjustments made to the original version introduced by iSEE and CARE. The lessons learned from the implementation of researches in Phuc Loc and Banh Trach Communes have been included in the revised version of the training materials such as simplifying some terms that are more understandable to EM women or including community consultation in the step of "identifying topics for researches";

(2) Bac Kan Provincial VWU has developed the human resource in the areas of co-research capacity. At least five key staff of the WU of Bac Kan Province have successfully assisted 05 communes in the replicability of the 10-steps co-research process. These five key staff are not only competent to deliver training to EM co-researchers in five communes that involved in the replication phase but also able to deliver coaching to staff from other provincial VWUs. They have provided support to Tra Vinh Provincial VWU recently and shared their experience at a training course that central VWU conducted for representatives of 45 communes in the extremely difficult border area in Quang Ninh, June 2018.

(3) Cooperate closely with district and commune authorities in the expanded areas to gain support for the research team.

(4) and finally, it is very important to mobilize local budgets to implement proposed solutions from 05 studies in 5 communes with large scale (besides support from the project).

In addition, another factor contributing to the sustainability of the project is the possibility to mobilize the (local) state budget to fund the interventions recommended by co-researchers. For example, the budget of New Rural Development (NRD) Program being implemented Ba Be District can be mobilized to fund the solutions of environmental pollution prevention as the Criteria 17 of NRD is related to Improvement of Rural Environment. Interview with the Head of Ba Be District Division of Environment and Natural Resources showed that the model of community-based solid waste management initiated by co-research teams in two project sites, if succeeded, will provide them good inputs for their awareness raising and public education activities. Hence they can provide finance support to implement this piloting model. Similarly, District Division of Education and Training has budgeted to carry out tasks to fulfill the goal of reducing school dropout rates. When being closely connected with the Division, the co-research team

could have received technical and financial support from the Division. This holds true for many research on production promotion. A typical example is Yen Duong Commune, Ba Be District where the research team conducted a study on the cultivation of western banana trees, a local staple. The research team received VND 15 million from the commune production development budget to implement solutions such as organizing technical training courses and connecting products to the market.

After the conclusion of the project, the R&V project funds which are now used for implementation of critical solutions proposed by community research groups will be no longer available, hence, the need to integrate the co-research projects into local SED planning processes or programs organized by the VWU and/or other socio-political organizations become critical. The partners, particularly the Bac Kan Provincial VWU is well prepared for this. In the interview, a leader of Bac Kan Provincial VWU said:

“In the implementation of the project activities we always engage the local leaders of Communist Party, District and Commune PC and PCC in order to get their full supports to co-research teams. And the fact that the EMW co-research team are contributing the local’s objectives of production development or social development such as education, culture and environment is the best measure to persuade the local authorities to provide EMW with full supports including local funding allocation.”

(SSI, a leader of Bac Kan Provincial VWU)

At central level: There is evidence to confirm that the sustainability of the project at the central level has exceeded expectations. The design project expects CEMA to use some of the recommendations of the research group in ethnic minority policy development as an indicator of replication/sustainability of the project. CEMA, the main government agency for ethnic minorities, recognizes that CARE and iSEE, among many VNGOs and representative organizations of ethnic minorities are central players and partners in finding sustainable solutions for ethnic minority inclusion and development (CASI Report, 2017) and “working with CARE and iSEE is considered a strategic activity by CEMA” (said the head of EM Policy Department of CEMA). Taking this as an opportunity, CARE plans to continue promotion of the co-research methodology in the Partnership for Development of Ethnic Minority (P4EM) Project which is collectively implemented by CEMA at central level and DEMA at provincial level after the conclusion of the R&V Project. P4EM aims at enhancement of the EMW’s participation in the production development component project within the National Target Program for Poverty Reduction 2016-2020.

In addition, a strong partnership with the Women's Union of Vietnam built up since the project year 2 (2016) has created a great opportunity for sustaining many activities, specifically:

- (1) In the short-run, as mentioned, the Central WU cooperated effectively with CARE and iSEE to establish 04 co-research team in Tra Vinh with the purpose of livelihood development. This activity was considered by the Central WU before applying to all other localities. Experiences from Bac Kan and Tra Vinh are documented to be developed into training materials for all VWU staff from the central to local levels.
- (2) In the middle run, the Central WU plans to introduce the approach in their three-year Program “Going with the women in border areas.” The 90 extremely difficult border communes in 24 provinces in the middle-run. The Central WU has kicked off the Program since early 2018. This

program will involve borderless provinces to support 90 extremely disadvantaged communes in the following areas: (i) livelihood development (ii) awareness raising and (iii) investment in social security works. Co-research approach is a suitable way to help women in the border communes to utilize technical and financial supports in the most optimal way. The Central Women's Union conducted a training workshop in Quang Ninh Province in June 2018 for representatives of women from the extremely disadvantaged communes in the North.

(3) In the long-run, the central VWU has developed specific plans to apply the co-research approach in all 63 provinces. The VWU is implementing tasks which advance opportunities for application of co-research approach. They are: (i) providing communication, education and mobilization of women to implement laws and policies, uphold fine virtues and enhance their capacity and awareness; (ii) mobilizing and assisting women in economic development, sustainable poverty reduction, and environmental protection; (iii) Advising, proposing, participating in the development of laws and policies on gender equality and social counter arguments to such laws, and monitoring enforcement. Said the Vice Chairwoman of the Central VWU in an interview conducted by the Evaluation Team:

“Co-research approach is perfectly complement to the current research methods employed by the central VWU in implementing programs to assist women in economic development or participation in the development of laws and policies on gender equality. Co-research method not only provides community-based evidence to the necessity and relevance of specific policies related to EMW but also promotes effective implementation of policies. The central VWU does not want the EM women to be passively participating in a specific program supporting EMW. Instead, the EM community needs to be able to identify different topics / areas of community development. They should be able to lead the community action for changes. And co-research approach appears to be a very appropriate method to enhance the stewardship of EMW.”

(SSI, a leader of the central VWU, female)

IV. LESSON LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Lessons learned and discussion points

#1. The strategic movement in partnership that the R&V project has made since year 2 where the central VWU has been selected as a key partner besides CEMA has contributed significantly to the delivery of the Expected Result 3 and ensure the possibility of replication of the co-research method nationwide in the near future.

#2. Besides the capacity building for EM women (training in participatory research methods, advocacy and presentation skills) and providing technical supports for the research team to identify their central research question and to adequately document their findings and recommendations, apart from participation of CARE and iSEE researchers as resource person, the participation from WU's staff as trainers and/or technical resources is a success factor to ensure the most effective delivery of the project

intervention and the sustainability of the action.

#3. The involvement of the community researchers of the R&V project in others researches that CARE/iSEE implements which are out of the project's scope is an effective way to develop the capacity for the community researchers further. (See Box 1.)

#4. The forming of co-research groups from the formal saving groups in the project's area in Bac Kan Province is an efficiency way, as the co-research groups could inherit experiences and skills of their members. However, in Tra Vinh extension area, co-researchers have never been involved in co-research activities such as in the case of Bac Kan. Furthermore, the duration of the training was reduced to two-days. These would not ensure the expected capacity building objectives will be well achieved.

"The replication of the cooperative model in Tra Vinh, was not as effective as compared with Bac Kan. Shortening the steps from the full 10-step process and reducing the number of days for training from 5 to 2 days were reasons for Tra Vinh training objectives were not as highly achieved as. Regarding the EMWs participating in the R&V project in the two communes in Bac Kan, as they had involved to other CARE and iSEE project activities before 2015, they are familiar with the way to work with their community, such as facilitating community group meetings or participating in a common-interest group. But concerned with EM women in Tra Vinh Province, who have not been involved in a similar project involving the participation of ethnic minority women, such a shortened research process is relatively difficult to apply."

(FGD, leaders of the VWU)

#5. Engagement of the state administrative agencies at district level might have helped enhancing the effectiveness of the implementation of co-research projects. Although the implementing agency (the Bac Kan Provincial VWU) puts great efforts in inviting all related local stakeholders particularly in the steps of advocacy and disseminating outcomes of community researches but somehow their interest and attention were not dully drawn. Explained to the Evaluation Team, the representatives of the District Division of Education and Training said they are not fully informed about the project activities. Meanwhile reduction of the school dropping is one of their strategic objectives particularly the Phuc Loc Commune is the one of the two communes that have the highest percentage of school-dropping and they do want to cooperate with the community research groups in implementing measures to solve the problem. On contrary, the representative of Ba Be District VWU said they kept all the district functional divisions informed and invited them to dissemination events at commune and district levels. This discrepancy suggests that a more effective mechanism to engage the functional division/departments should be in place aiming at higher integration of the community research projects into the implementation of related policies.

#6. Many research topics of community research groups should have been synthesized to produce strong evidence for policy changes at the provincial or central level. It is no doubted about that Co-research can create changes in communities for the following reasons: (i) Research topics are demand-oriented: due to community members have insights into their own issues; (ii) Co-research provides an effective channel to disseminate research findings to the community through the collaborative researchers; (iii) When the topics are demand-oriented, community members support the research team

to collect data and (iv) Community members own the research findings, so they are willing to implement solutions. However, it is rational if we could expect that these changes in communities could be multiplied to other communities or to district/provincial level and even national one in terms of a policy change (as stated in the Expected Result 2).

#7. The participation of EM Women at provincial and NA level electorate meetings is somehow not increased compared to the baseline. EM women hardly ever participate in the electorate meetings at district, provincial and the NA levels. Agreed that co-research enhances the confidence of EM women, there were 90 EM women participated and benefited from co-research projects in Bac Kan Province and 25 in Tra Vinh Province. Given majority of EM women who are lack of educational and leadership opportunities and a lack of appreciation for women’s opinions and contributions, the selected representatives to be participating in provincial and NA level electorate meetings are more likely to be heads of villages, heads of village WU, heads of village Farmers' Association, heads of Youth Village, heads of Village Veterans' Association or men. EM women are underrepresented in these groups of regular electorates. Among the EM women co-researchers interviewed, none of them reported that they have ever participated in electorate meetings at provincial and NA levels.

4.2 Recommendations

Recommendation for enhancement of the advocacy at district level: Consultation mechanism with them could be setup, particularly at the first step of identifying research topics. As a result, the co-researchers could select the issues/problems of their community, which match to the existing national/provincial program with being implemented at district level. This could then avoid the fact that the solutions tackling community issues based on their research findings would not be provided with proper funding to initialize (such as in the case of domestic waste in Phuc Loc Commune, Ba Be District or Hat Then Dan Tinh in Banh Trach Commune, Ba Be District).

Recommendation to enhance the participation of EM Women in electorate meetings at provincial and NA level: According to the regulations, all electorates have the right to participate in these meetings and express their opinions. As EM women were called ‘community researchers’ - we consider them effective researchers from the beginning of the project. This builds confidence and emphasizes that the contributions of the community are as valid as those from outside the community. So they should not be considered underrepresented in these groups of professional electorates. This perception changes need to be triggered and implemented at commune and village levels, under the facilitation of the WU (at village, district or provincial if necessary).

Recommendation to utilize of the outcomes of co-research project for provincial/national advocacy. It is high time for the R&V Project to consolidate the outcomes of the co-research projects to table a rich evidence for advocacy at higher levels. As CARE and iSEE have promoted linkage between CEMA and other NGO partners with a new project titled P4EM. This is a project (2017 – 2021) funded by Irish Aid, in which CARE plays the role of “door-opener” for a new cooperation process. P4EM aims to build partnerships between Vietnamese governmental agencies, among which CEMA is the largest partner, community-based organizations and ethnic minorities. The project’s design is based on the outcomes and approaches

developed by CARE's EMW Program, including co-research methods, will provide a forum for open dialogue on EM development among policy makers, civil society organizations and ethnic minorities, giving thorough consideration to EM's needs and their cultural diversification. This Project should be a channel for EMW-led co-research teams to continue to be involved in the provincial/national advocacy activities.

Recommendations to enhance the sustainability of the action:

For community researchers, a continued support of professional researchers might need to be delivered even after the project completed. This support can be delivered by the staff of the VWU at least in Bac Kan and Tra Vinh Province as they EM co-researchers remain not totally confident with skills of analyzing the data and formulating solutions to address the community issues.

As the comments made by the VWU staff about the expansion of co-research activities in Tra Vinh Province in 2017 where the shortened process of co-research conduction appear difficult for the community EM researchers to apply the method confidently. Reduction the duration of capacity-building activity in form of training from five days to two days does not guarantee the capacity of the community researchers. Hence if the Project concludes, the co-research teams in Tra Vinh might not be ready to implement a new cycle of research. The close coaching of Tra Vinh Provincial VWU is critically needed for the sustainability of the action in this locality.

Community researchers, if not introduced by a socio-political organization or get authorization of the local government, cannot use their personal resources to carry out community-driven research as the community members might not welcome their visits for interviews, taking photo, filming or participating in village meetings. The reason behind this is the risk of being exposed on the media or social network against their own wishes. If the head of villages (maybe men) is involved in the first step as member for the team, it will not only gain more trust among community members but also encourage the team in terms of gender perspectives. Or institutional arrangements such as the official introduction of Commune WU, Commune Youth Union might be helpful to ensure the autonomy of community research groups.

In addition, in order to replicate co-research model to the whole country through the partner as the central VWU, CARE/iSEE may consider a longer-term cooperation in: (i) Capacity building to local WU staffs in commune levels, first of all, to border communes involved in the Program "Going with Women in villages that have border line" in 24 border provinces; (ii) Co-ordinate with the central VWU to consolidate the policy issues which were analyzed in the co-research projects for the purpose of WU mission on monitoring policies and contributing to the EMW-related policy development process.

CARE and VWU can consider the collaboration with other local NGOs who are working for the promotion of the ideology of "making a woman an activist to demand for the rights that shape their own life" through institutionalizing 'co-research' as a platform for poor, marginalized villagers, particularly women, to trigger collective power and political participation in shaping decisions regarding (re)distribution of resources that matter for their survival. The areas of topics can be considered for the extension of co-research approaches to different geographical areas nationwide would vary from local NGO partner to partner but should be in line with the priorities of CARE's EMW long term Program and VWU's Strategies in the coming time. The potential areas of topics could be, but not limited to, the sustainability in natural resource management, land-based climate change mitigation, women empowerment in agriculture, rural women leadership, etc.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1: List of the co-research groups by topic and area coverage

No.	Topic	Theme	Area coverage
1	Environment Pollution	Socio-cultural	Na Noc, Banh Trach
2	Village meeting house	Socio-cultural	Khuoi Slang, Banh Trach
3	The art of Hat Then-Dan Tinh of the Tay	Socio-cultural	Hon Village, Banh Trach
4	Harvest festival of the Dao Tien	Socio-cultural	Na Coi, Banh Trach
5	Husbandry of indigenous chickens	Livelihood	Ban Lap, Banh Trach
6	Husbandry of indigenous black pigs	Livelihood	Pac Cham, Banh Trach
7	Cattle husbandry using semi-grazing method	Livelihood	Na Lan, Banh Trach
8	Buffalo husbandry using semi-grazing method	Livelihood	Pac Pin, Banh Trach
9	Children dropping out of school	Education	Phuc Loc, Bac Kan
10	Domestic pig farming	Livelihood	Phuc Loc, Bac Kan
11	Domestic waste and water pollution (team Thien Diem village)	Rural Environment Protection	Phuc Loc, Bac Kan
12	Domestic waste and water pollution (team Na Duon, Na Hoi village)	Rural Environment Protection	Phuc Loc, Bac Kan
13	Waving and traditional costumes of Tay and Dao Tien people	Socio-cultural	Phuc Loc, Bac Kan
14	Domestic waste and water pollution	Rural Environment Protection	Nà Giáo village, Yên Hân commune, Chợ Mới district
15	Waving and traditional costumes of Red Dao	Socio-cultural	Phiêm Kham village, My Thanh commune
16	Green vegetable cultivation	Livelihood	Bó Danh village, Nà Phặc commune, Ngân Sơn district
17	Sustainable market for Burro Banana	Livelihood	Lỏong Lúng village, Yến Dương commune,
18	The art of Lượn Phong Thư of Tay	Socio-cultural	Nà Khe village, Phương Viên commune, Chợ Đồn district
19	Domestic chicken farming	Livelihood	Tra Vinh
20	Green vegetable cultivation	Livelihood	Tra Vinh
21	Domestic waste and water pollution	Rural Environment Protection	Tra Vinh

Annex 2: Logic Model

Intervention logic		Objectively verifiable indicators of achievement and Target	Achievement by June 2018									
Overall objective	Contribute to securing the rights of ethnic minority women in Vietnam by enhancing their voice and ensuring that government agencies and civil society value, respect and respond to it	OO Indicator 1.1: % of targeted EM women indicating an increased ability to voice their priorities and rights in public forums by the end of the action Target Value: 50% EM co-researchers	OO Indicator 1.1: 85% of total members from 13 groups said they feel confident speaking up about issues concern their families and communities. Outcomes of the Survey in June 2018 (sample 63 co-researchers in Banh Tranh and Phuc Loc Commune): - 88.6% of EM co-researchers confirmed they can present their ideas/proposals (about their families'/ communities' issues) clearly in workshops/public forums - 71% of EM co-researchers confirmed they can present their ideas clearly to media reporters - 54% of EM co-researchers confirmed they can present their ideas/proposals to Governmental/State Agencies at central level									
		OO Indicator 1.2: # of CEMA policy documents that reflect specific recommendations from co-research by the end of the action Target Value: 3	Relevant no longer									
Specific objectives	SO1 Ethnic minority women have enhanced capacity to identify, articulate and advocate on issues that effect them to government and civil society	SO1 Indicator 1.1: # of EM women with demonstrated ability to produce research outputs using photos and video by the end of the action Target value: 70	SO1 Indicator 1.1: 79 EM women (31 in Phuc Loc, Bac Kan province; 34 in Banh Trach, Bac Kan province and 14 in Tra Vinh province) + 20 (replicated in BK) Outcomes of the Survey in June 2018: <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Women with demonstrated ability to produce research outputs using photos and video</th> <th>Number (out of 63)</th> <th>Percentage of agreed or totally agreed</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Knowing how to conduct a co-research</td> <td>59</td> <td>93.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Knowing how to identify the information I need to collect before meeting a person (e.g.civil officer)</td> <td>53</td> <td>85.5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Women with demonstrated ability to produce research outputs using photos and video	Number (out of 63)	Percentage of agreed or totally agreed	Knowing how to conduct a co-research	59	93.7	Knowing how to identify the information I need to collect before meeting a person (e.g.civil officer)	53	85.5
Women with demonstrated ability to produce research outputs using photos and video	Number (out of 63)	Percentage of agreed or totally agreed										
Knowing how to conduct a co-research	59	93.7										
Knowing how to identify the information I need to collect before meeting a person (e.g.civil officer)	53	85.5										

			Knowing how to interview a person to collect information I need	62	98.4
			Knowing how to take a photo as evidence for research	63	100
			Knowing how to use a camera (for filming) as evidence for research	41	67.2
		SO1 Indicator 1.2: # of EM women who have shared the findings and recommendations of their co-research in public forums by the end of the action Target value: 70	SO1 Indicator 1.2: 79 + 20 (replicated in BK) = 99 of EM women who have shared the findings and recommendations of their co-research in public forums by the end of the action		
	SO2 The EMWG and CEMA have increased respect for and sensitivity to the rights of ethnic minority women and enhanced capacity to recognise and respond to their needs	SO2 Indicator 2.1: % of targeted CEMA policymakers indicating increased respect for EM women's viewpoints and skills in consulting with EM women during policy formulation and implementation processes by the end of the action Target Value: TBD after baseline assessment	No more relevant		
		SO2 Indicator 2.2: # of specific policy recommendations identified through EM women's research that are presented to CEMA policymakers and other key decision-makers at national level by the end of the action Target value 5	No more relevant		
Expected results	Result 1: An effective approach to co-research has been implemented in	1.1 # of co-research teams successfully formed in each of 10 communities by the end of year 2: 10	1.1 13 co-research teams successfully formed in each of 16 communities by the end of year 2 in Banh Trach and Phuc Loc Commune 5 co-research teams successfully formed in expanded site in Bak Kan Province and 3 in Tra Vinh Province		
		1.2 # of co-research teams that have identified their central research question by the end of year 2: 10	1.2 13 co-research teams that have identified their central research question by the end of year 2		

	Bac Kan Province		5 co-research teams that have identified their central research question by the end of year 2 in expanded site in Bak Kan Province and 3 in Tra Vinh Province
		1.3 # of co-research teams trained in participatory research methods by the end of year 2: 10	1.3 13 co-research teams trained in participatory research methods by the end of year 2 In addition, 5 co-research teams trained in participatory research methods by the end of year 2 in expanded site in Bak Kan Province and 3 in Tra Vinh Province
		1.4 # of co-research teams that have adequately documented their findings and recommendations by the end of year 2: 10	1.4 13 co-research teams that have adequately documented their findings and recommendations by the end of year 2 In addition, 5 co-research teams that have adequately documented their findings and recommendations by the end of year 2 in expanded site in Bak Kan Province and 3 in Tra Vinh Province
		1.5 # of training tools for co-research documented by the end of year 2: 5	1.5 8 of training tools for co-research documented by the end of year 2 (use cameras, design questionnaire, conduct interview, teamwork, design research structure and work plan, analyze collected data, write stories and report, public speaking).
	Result 2: Ethnic Minority women have presented their co-research findings to civil society and policy-makers, demonstrating the value of enhanced participation to stakeholders	2.1 # of co-research teams trained in advocacy and presentation skills by the end of year 2: 10	2.1. 13 co-research teams trained in advocacy and presentation skills by the end of year 2
		2.2 # of times WU successfully facilitates presentations of co-research at commune level by the end of the action: 10	2.2 17 (2 time/year/commune x 2 commune x 3 year + 1time/year/commune x 5 commune (replicate) x 1 year) of times WU successfully facilitates presentations of co-research at commune level by the end of the action: 10
		2.3 Presentations of co-research made at district level by the end of the action: 1	2.3 3 Presentations of co-research made at district level by the end of the action: 1
		2.4 Presentations of co-research made at province level by the end of the action: 1	2.4 9 Presentations of co-research made at province level by the end of the action: 1

		2.5 Presentations of co-research made to CEMA at national level by the end of the action: 1	2.5 3 Presentations of co-research made to CEMA at national level by the end of the action: 1
		2.6 Presentations of co-research made to the EMWG by the end of the action: 1	2.6 1 Presentations of co-research made to the EMWG by the end of the action
		2.7 # of instances of media coverage (newspaper articles, television and radio features) of co-research by the end of the action: 3	2.7 6 of instances of media coverage (newspaper articles, television and radio features) of co-research by the end of the action: 3
Result 3: The Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs has incorporated outcomes from participatory research into rights-related policy-making and, along with civil society organizations, has increased capacity to implement participatory consultations.		3.1 # of policy briefs formulated by the end of the action: 3	3.1 policy briefs formulated by the end of the action: 1
		3.2 # of consultations conducted with CEMA on gender policy and implementation by the end of the action: 2	3.2 # of consultations conducted with CEMA on gender policy and implementation by the end of the action: 2
		3.3 CEMA action plan for mainstreaming consultation with EM women into policy formulation and implementation created with support from CARE and iSEE by the end of the action: Yes	3.3 CEMA action plan for mainstreaming consultation with EM women into policy formulation and implementation created with support from CARE and iSEE by the end of the action: Yes
		3.4 Co-research training of trainers conducted for EMWG member staff by the end of the action: 1	3.4 Co-research training of trainers conducted for EMWG member staff by the end of the action: 1

Source: Project MEL data and the calculation of the Evaluation Team