

NORTH VIETNAM VILLAGES LEAD THE WAY IN THE USE OF BIOCHAR; BUILDING ON AN INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE BASE

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TÓM TẮT:

Despite Vietnam's rapid economic transition over recent years, the vast majority of the country's rural population relies on fuel wood for lighting, heating, and cooking. Minorities in Vietnam make up about 14 percent of the population, but account for 44 percent of the country's poor (CARE project document 2010). The majority of ethnic minorities live in Vietnam's highlands, particularly in the north and many grow rice as their staple crop. Households that have buffalo or cows collect most of the rice straw as animal feed, while others collect the rice straw for use as a fuel. Most of the stubble is burnt in spring although some farmers burn during the winter. The burning emits a large amount of smoke; a small amount of biochar and ash are also produced, which remains in the field.

A group of stove experts and researchers working with CARE Vietnam are looking at how to improve soil health while reducing the amount of indoor and outdoor pollution from smoke. They are working on a project in two mountainous provinces in northern Vietnam, Thai Nguyen and Thanh Hoa—both with high ethnic minority populations. The overall objective of this project is to contribute to sustainable rural development in the upland areas of Vietnam by simultaneously addressing energy, poverty, and soil degradation constraints, contributing to national policies on poverty reduction, deforestation, and rural advancement. Partners in the project include CARE Denmark/Vietnam (assistance with selection of stove test models, project management, and funding); Population, Environment and Development Centre (PED) (production and testing of stoves and baseline survey); Soil Fertilizer Research Institute and the University of Thai Nguyen (biochar production and testing); the women's union and farmers union in Thai Nguyen and Thanh Hoa; Cornell University; and the University of NSW, Australia. Funding is provided by the Energy and Environment Partnership (EEP) for Mekong, Government of Finland, and CARE Denmark.

The project is now looking to increase production of the units to produce enough biochar for field testing. For more information on this project, please contact Morten Fauerby Thomsen or Stephen Joseph.