Editors' message

The Participatory Agricultural Extension Program (PAEX) in Vietnam has so far been operating for three years. This Bulletin will bring to our dear readers our best wishes for the new year of Tiger and fresh events of the last three months and main activities of the second quarter of 2010 (1 April – 30 June/2010). This edition of our Bulletin will inform of lessons learned and best practices in point of view at the management level and of the five provinces in the program area (An Giang, Soc Trang, Hau Giang, Binh Phuoc, and Ba Ria Vung Tau).

International Experience Sharing Workshop of PAEX

Can Tho City – On 19 January, 2010, the PAEX conducted a one-day International Experience Sharing Workshop in Can Tho City. The PAEX coordinators and staff of the Mekong Delta and South-east provinces of Vietnam, together with the PAEX supporting provincial extension workers attended this workshop. All the members shared difficulties and challenges during the Program implementation and sought for practical and feasible solutions to strengthen the work quality in the coming time of the Program. The workshop focused on the following matters: (i) further strengthen participation of the local authorities and mass organizations in the Program activities; (ii) improve effectiveness of experimental activities in the field; (iii) facilitate extension workers to have more effective interactions with extension clubs. Before closing this workshop, Mr. Simon Jeanmart – PAEX coordinator sent a “goodbye” message to the colleagues after his one-year contribution to the PAEX and the best wishes to his successor, Mr. Luu Cong Dinh, who started working for PAEX in January, 2010.

Nguyen Thuy Diem (PAEX).
“Write shop” Workshop for the Mekong Delta and South-east provinces of Vietnam

Ba Ria – Vung Tau province – On 24-26 February, 2010, following a Workshop on the Most Significant Changes in late October, 2009, extension staff of the Mekong Delta and South-east provinces continued to meet in a Write shop Workshop in Long Hai town. The purpose of this workshop was to identify significant changes impacted by the PAEX Program, good examples of farmers with local indigenous knowledge, farmers’ lessons learned after their failures. The “Write shop” participants had active discussions and collected constructive comments to further improve their writing skills.

The PAEX Program developed this “write shop” workshop as an extension method to share knowledge and experiences as well as information in the field of agriculture extension for the Mekong Delta and South-east provinces.

Training workshop “Facilitation and Coaching Skills”

An Giang Province – from 1-3 March, 2010 – To strengthen the capacity of conducting training courses and meetings for extension staff, a training workshop on “Facilitation and Coaching Skills” was conducted by the MDF Indochina Training and Consultancy and T&C consulting and funded by the PAEX Program in Long Xuyen city, An Giang province. There were twenty seven (27) trainees, (including 13 females) from the Mekong Delta Development Research Institute (MDI) of Can Tho University (CTU), the Institute of Agricultural Science of South Vietnam (IAS) in Ho Chi Minh City, and a core trainer team of 5 Program provinces. A three-day training provided trainees with basic knowledge: learning principles for adults, effective learning zones, a learning cycle, training needs assessment, session planning and design, etc. This workshop created a good opportunity for the trainees to self-evaluate their strengths and weaknesses when conducting a training course or facilitating meetings/workshops at local levels.

Nguyễn Thị Diễm (PAEX)
Mekong Delta Region – Image (Improving Agricultural Extension) Program visited PAEX

Brief introduction of the Image Program

The Image Program was implemented in June 2008 in 3 districts of Kandal province, Cambodia. Its overall objective is “Families in selected districts of Cambodia can improve their livelihoods through improved access and use of knowledge, information and technology”. The Image Program focuses on the following activities: (i) Local Agricultural Extension services implement the Gender mainstreaming policy; (ii) Local life skills needs for rural development are identified and linked with the formal teacher training; (iii) The links “farmers – (district) extension – research – service providers” has been strengthened; (iii) Farmers benefit from improved access to extension materials; (iv) Farmers benefit from improved access to extension materials; (v) The agricultural sector, in particular the farmers and extension workers/service, benefit from increased leadership and management skills at the district level, and (vi) Extension workers improve their efficiency and effectiveness through improved methodological and technological skills. It is projected that the Image Program shall be expanded to another 4 districts of Kan dal Province for the period of 2011 – 2013.

First impression of the Image Program during their visit to the PAEX Program

“…The Image Program has quite similar activities as the PAEX Program. We also have extension clubs; however, these clubs are still young. Extension clubs which we visited were very dynamic and better organized. When taking about the Participatory Technology Development (PTD), farmers here seemed very familiar with; meanwhile it was still quite new to our farmers”…..

Positive changes of PAEX Program

…”The PAEX Program has been implemented in three provinces in the Mekong Delta Region and two provinces in Southeast Vietnam. The Program has gone over the past two years and now is the last year of this phase (2008-2010). The Program team is currently working on development of the program operational plan (POP) for the second phase (2011-2013). I think that the PAEX Program has created effective results for farmers in the Program areas. Both farmers and extension workers have been equipped with knowledge, skills, and participatory methods, which enables them to have changes in their thoughts and action. Their views and behaviors are more respected. The farmers are playing more active roles for decisions making. Agricultural activities are more practical and closer to the farmers' needs”…..

(Luu Cong Dinh – PAEX Coordinator)

Quick survey of the Vietnam Agriculture Newspaper Office

A survey to the readers of 14 extension clubs in Hau Giang province from 2-16 March, 2010 indicated that the information of this Newspaper enabled the heads of extension clubs to improve their knowledge and skills in operating their extension clubs. Furthermore, the members of the extension clubs provided farmers with useful information about agriculture production and development activities.

Mekong Delta Development Research Institute (MDI) – Dr. Nguyen Duy Can – was officially awarded an academic title “Associate Professor” in late 2009.

Action plan of the PAEX Program 3-4-5-6/2010

- Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) training Workshop – 24-28 March, 2010 in Ba Ria town, Ba Ria-Vung Tau province
- Complete Program Operational Plan for the period of 2011-2013
- Monitoring trip to the 5 PAEX provinces by the Coordinators
- The second “Write shop” Workshop
- A workshop on gender issues in extension activities
A visit of Improving Agriculture Extension – Image Program in Cambodia to the PAEX Vietnam

Asso Prof. Ph.D Nguyen Duy Can received the Image mission at the headquarter of the Mekong Delta Development Research Institute (MDI) at the Can Tho University (CTU)

A visit to Soc Trang Provincial Center for Agriculture and Fishery

A visit to Hoa Phu 2 extension club, Hoa Phu 2 commune, My Xuyen district, Soc Trang province

A visit to Dong Tam female extension club, Dai Tam commune, My Xuyen district, Soc Trang province

Visits to Hau Giang Provincial Center for Agriculture and Fishery and Phu Tri A extension club, Phu Tan commune, Chau Thanh district, Hau Giang province.

Members of Hoa Phu 2 Club (Soc Trang province)
Mr. Dieu Om said, “Before teaching our children, we should be a good sample first.”

Mr. Dieu Om is a member of Ap Tranh 3 Club, Tan Quan commune, Chon Thanh district, Binh Phuoc province. He often said to us “Before teaching our children, we should be a good sample first.” Even though he is already 87 years old, he actively participates in activities of the extension club Ap Tranh 3 and of Farmers’ Association. He always encourages their children and their neighbors (S’tieng ethnic group) to get involved in the club to learn new knowledge and techniques for improved production activities and living conditions.

(Tran Minh Duc - Chon Thanh Agriculture Extension Section, Binh Phuoc province)

A two-day Experience Sharing Workshop on implementation of experiments of 16 extension clubs of of Binh Phuoc Province

Activities in Jan-Feb-Mar, 2010

15-19/3/2010 - Dong Xoai town
Training on Participatory Technology Development (PTD) for club heads and extension workers

30-31/3/2010 - Dong Xoai town
Experience Sharing Workshop on Implementation of Experiments

New staff at provincial level

Ms. Nguyen Thi Thu Huyen Mr. Mai Hung
(Staff of Binh Phuoc Agriculture Extension Center in charge of the PAEX Activities)

Action plan in April-May-June, 2010

Field conferences:
Pepper, cashew nut, trionychid turtle, coffee, rubber, rabbit, chicken, ...

New experiments:
Fish, chicken, worms, duck, wild boar, rubber, kumquat, fish, snake, pepper, cashew nut, ...

Study tours:
Chicken, fish, duck, pig, rubber, kumquat, fish, snake, pepper, cashew nut, rice, ...

Training:
Club management, PTD training for 11 new extension clubs established by the Dong Phu District Agriculture Extension Station and mass organizations.
A working group meeting on setting up new PTD clubs in Xuyen Moc district.

A reporter of Chau Duc district - at the field conference of the PTD club Phuoc An.

Mr. Nguyen Van Anh - a leader of the PTD club Phuoc An, Da Bac commune, Chau Duc district with his report at the field conference.

Representatives of mass organizations at the field conference of PTD club Phuoc An, Da Bac commune, Chau Duc district.

Activities in Jan-Feb-Mar, 2010

When? What? Where?

27/01/2010 (morning) - A workshop on PAEX action plan 2010

27/01/2010 (afternoon) - A working group meeting on setting up new PTD clubs in Xuyen Moc district

28/01/2010 - The field conference of PTD club Phuoc An, Da Bac commune, Chau Duc district

1-2/2/2010 - A wrap-up workshop on experiments 2010 and preparation of new experiments 2011 of An Nhu PTD club, Thanh An, Tan Chau, Cau Ri

Action plan in April-May-June, 2010

Workshop:
A competition on PTD knowledge among 10 extension clubs of 5 districts
A two-day sharing workshop on implementation of experiments in 2009 of extension clubs

Training:
Training on PTD, club management for heads of new extension clubs (set up in 2010) in Xuyen Moc district
PTD training for commune extensionists of Ba Ria-Vung Tau province

Others:
Development of a "yellow book" for reference of extension clubs
BINH PHUOC PROVINCE:

Advance steps of Bau Lung extension club of Hon Quang district, Binh Phuoc province

...."In the Bau Lung extension club, women actively participated in periodical meetings and field trips. They openly discussed about activities of their clubs, i.e. elaboration of club regulations, fund management, indicators for monitoring and evaluation of experiments, etc. The Bau Lung club is being gradually seen as a reliable agriculture extension address for farmers to share knowledge and experience in production life".

(Ms. Nguyen Thi Hanh – Binh Long Agriculture Extension Section, Binh Phuoc province).

BA RIA-VUNG TAU PROVINCE:

Mr. Muoi Phu – an active member of a PTD club

When visiting Tan Hao hamlet, An Nhut commune, Long Dien district, Ba Ria – Vung Tau province, almost all farmers can tell you about Mr. Muoi Phu – an active member of the PTD club. Mr. Muoi Phu fearlessly applied different techniques and tools in rice cultivation, which is seen as a key activity of Anh Nhut commune. He kept learning from the public media and attended various training programs to get further knowledge and understanding of new techniques. With his success of using a tool for rice cultivation by rows, he has guided other farmers of the PTD club to use this tool to change the traditional practices for a higher income of the family.

(Ms. Nguyen Phung – Long Dien Agriculture Extension Section, Ba Ria – Vung Tau province)
Vinh Hanh extension club, Chau Thanh
Medium-size edible snails are kept in a cool area, normally under a house floor.

Photo: A good corner for a hen’s stay

Vinh Hanh extension club, Chau Thanh
Eel raising in the nylon tank of a club member. The experiment is undertaken for 8 months and expected to be ended in April, 2010

Phu Huu extension club
Mr. Le Van En - An Phu district extension worker together with a farmer check out the norm of cow growth

Photo by Do Van Hoang

Activities in Jan-Feb-Mar, 2010

February 2010
Clips on production steps of groundnuts (Preparation, sowing, harvesting) of Phu Huu extension club with support of Farmers’ Association, which is broadcast on An Giang Television Station

9-14 March 2010 - Long Xuyen
Training on Participatory Rural Appraisal for 24 extension workers of the An Giang Agriculture Extension Center and 11 districts in An Giang Province

Others
Assessment of rice varieties of extension clubs

Action plan in April-May-June, 2010

Wrap-up workshop:
A focus on rice varieties, extension club management

New experiments: rice, tomato, trionychid turtle, ...

Study tours: A focus on rice varieties, extension club management

Training: Club management, training for extension workers on ToT/PTD

An Lai extension club, Tri Ton district
A visit to the rice field experiment (vice-leader of An Lai extension club, district extension worker, PEAX staff)

Tan Thuan extension club, Tri Ton district
Mr. Nguyen Xuan Huy - Tri Ton district extension worker is checking technical problems of the seed classification machine

A periodical meeting of Vinh Trach extension club
Mr. Tran Hoang Minh - the club leader - and members
Regulations of Dong Tam female extension club focus on following points:

- Fully participate in club meetings, training, workshops
- Get a loan, use loan capital effectively, pay interests based on five types of accounting books
- Learn to be an active and creative woman
- Apply advanced techniques for effective production and improved living conditions
- Work and support each other to escape from poverty and backward attitudes

Regulations of Hoa Phu hamlet extension club focus on following points:

- Fully participate in club meetings, training, workshops
- Get a loan, use loan capital effectively, pay interests based on club capital management criteria
- Assign roles and responsibilities for a running club based on regulations of the cooperation agreement
AN GIANG PROVINCE:

Difficulties lead us to smart thoughts
Story of Mr. Nguyen Van Long - a member of the Phu Huu extension club with his initiative of manufacturing a nut harvest machine.

When a breach of the dike appears in Phu Huu, An Phu district, An Giang province, almost all areas in the commune were flooded. A member of the Phu Huu extension club did an experiment of groundnut plantation and got a fruitful harvest on that year. Since then, Phu Huu commune is largely covered by groundnut cultivation on the sandy land area. However, farmers manually harvest nut, meanwhile there is a high increase of nut productivity. Mr. Nguyen Van Long, a member of the Phu Huu extension club, spent his family’s saving money to create a small nut harvest machine. Gradually, he also upgraded the small-size machine to the bigger-size machine, which helps for quick harvest and cleaner products. Mr. Long desires that his initiative shall be helpful for farmers in his living area and expanded beyond Phu Huu commune.

(Mr. Do Van Hoang – PAEX-Mekong Delta Region).

SOC TRANG PROVINCE:

Case study of a female farmer at Tam Soc C1&C2 extension club - Mrs. Ly Hong Son

Mrs. Ly Hong Son, a farmer member of Tam Soc C1&C2 extension club, happily talked with us about the significant changes in her life after joining the PTD club. Mrs. Son had to lead a quite difficult life when her husband was sick. She had to take care of five children. When joining the PTD club, she has learnt new techniques through training courses and other farmers’ experiences. She indicated that thanks to the club, the PAEX Program, lecturers of Can Tho University, her life has changed a lot. She also confirmed that women not only care about the housework, but also like to study and apply new agriculture techniques. Apart from the more improved living conditions of the family, she is now more confident and willing to provide her ideas and share experiences with the other club members. She said “Before joining the club, I only listened and did not know what to say”. Now she recognized that improved knowledge has helped a lot for development of the family economics. The head of Tam Soc C1&C2 extension club commented that Mrs. Son always strictly follows club’s regulations and attends most of the club meetings. When she is so busy, she always asks the club for leave permission. She also promptly informs of important incidents to the club members.

(Ms. Thanh Tam – Soc Trang Soc Trang Provincial Center for Agriculture and Fishery)
Good fortune – given to all families through gourd shaped grapefruits

Mr. Nguyen Trung Thanh who is a member of Phu Tri A Club, Phu Tan commune, Chau Thanh district, Hau Giang province has an new initiative with the gourd shaped grapefruits. When working in the grapefruit garden, he found a grapefruit was shaped by the branches of a tree. Then, he thought of creating gourd shaped grapefruits which he had ever seen in a Chinese film “Ton Ngo Khong – the Monkey King” on a Vietnamese television. The grapefruits with two letters “Good fortune” and weight of around 1-1.4 kg have been known by a number of buyers in Vietnam. The grapefruits’ shape is awarded as a “technical initiative” by Hau Giang province in 2009. For the time being, Mr. Thanh has registered as a sole agent for these gourd shaped grapefruits. As a member of the extension club, he also share technical experiences as well as lessons learnt to other club members.

(Mr. Tran Quoc Nhan - PAEX Mekong Delta Region)

Training course on extension club management for club head

On 10-14 March, 2010, the PAEX program in coordination with the Hau Giang Agricultural Extension Center organized a training course on extension club management for club heads. During this training course, the trainees together worked in a small team, did practical exercises, and played guitar and sang during tea break.
Introduction of the websites, articles, and regulations related to agriculture extension:

Legal documents

On 8 January, 2010 – the Government issued the Decree No. 02/2010/ND-CP on agricultural extension. This Decree has become effective since 1 March, 2010 and will replace the Decree No. 56/2005/ND-CP dated 26 April, 2005 of the Government on agriculture and forestry extension.

Decision No. 20/QĐ-BNN-KHCN dated 6 January, 2010 approved “a list of agriculture and forestry extension programs/projects in 2010”

Vietnam Agriculture Newspaper
http://www.nongnghiep.vn/

Rural Economics Newspaper
A forum of agricultural economics and newly rural development
http://www.kinhtenongthon.com.vn/

Vietnam Farmers’ Association
http://www.hoinongdan.org.vn

Other articles about PAEX Program on the other websites of the Program provinces:

http://www.binhphuoc.org.vn/
http://sonongnghiep.angiang.gov.vn
http://sonongnghiep.ha giang.gov.vn
http://www.nongnghiep.soctrang.gov.vn
http://www.baobaria vungtau.com.vn

Agriculture Extension Publication

Marketing RAU - HOA - QUÁ

Marketing guidance for agriculture extension
No. 5 - Vegetables, flowers, fruits

Don’t speak a lot, start to sell

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