



Spring 2013

# Exploring Relationships between Global, National and Local Actors: A Case Study Approach to INGOs in Post-Reform Vietnam

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# Exploring Relationships between Global, National and Local Actors: A Case Study Approach to INGOs in Post-Reform Vietnam

## **Abstract**

In 1986, the Vietnamese government undertook a series of reforms known as doi moi. These reforms were mainly economic adjustments that encouraged globalization through capitalism, international trade, and foreign investment. They restructured Vietnam's economy from a centrally-planned system to a market economy with a socialist orientation. This study focuses on the political and cultural aspects of globalization after doi moi, and analyzes the development of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) in Vietnam. Specifically, it seeks to address the following research question: How has the INGO sector changed with increasing globalization in Vietnam after the 1986 doi moi reforms, and what are the national and local challenges to INGOs currently operating in Vietnam? As a case study, this study specifically examines an environmental INGO called Project Gaia, Inc. (PGI) that works in the developing world to replace polluting biomass fuels, with clean-burning, sustainable, alcohol fuels and stoves. Using the theoretical concepts of "dis-embedding" and "re-embedding" this study illuminates the challenges that PGI might face in Vietnam, but also highlights the potential for their approach to create positive impact. Overall, the study shows that in Vietnam, a country where the forces of "dis-embedding" and "re-embedding" interact, there are both challenges to operating an INGO, and great opportunities to form collaborative partnerships for change.

## **Keywords**

NGO, INGO, globalization, Vietnam, doi moi

## **Disciplines**

Economic Policy | Economics | International and Area Studies | International Economics | International Relations

## **Comments**

Globalization Studies Senior Thesis

## **Exploring Relationships between Global, National and Local Actors: A Case Study Approach to INGOs in Post-Reform Vietnam**

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Gettysburg College, 2013

### Abstract

In 1986, the Vietnamese government undertook a series of reforms known as *doi moi*. These reforms were mainly economic adjustments that encouraged globalization through capitalism, international trade, and foreign investment. They restructured Vietnam's economy from a centrally-planned system to a market economy with a socialist orientation. This study focuses on the political and cultural aspects of globalization after *doi moi*, and analyzes the development of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) in Vietnam. Specifically, it seeks to address the following research question: How has the INGO sector changed with increasing globalization in Vietnam after the 1986 *doi moi* reforms, and what are the national and local challenges to INGOs currently operating in Vietnam? As a case study, this study specifically examines an environmental INGO called Project Gaia, Inc. (PGI) that works in the developing world to replace polluting biomass fuels, with clean-burning, sustainable, alcohol fuels and stoves. Using the theoretical concepts of "dis-embedding" and "re-embedding" this study illuminates the challenges that PGI might face in Vietnam, but also highlights the potential for their approach to create positive impact. Overall, the study shows that in Vietnam, a country where the forces of "dis-embedding" and "re-embedding" interact, there are both challenges to operating an INGO, and great opportunities to form collaborative partnerships for change.

## Acknowledgements:

Researching and writing this paper has been a great learning experience and an interesting way to meet new people across the world. I am grateful that I had the opportunity to research and write this capstone paper, and very thankful for the assistance of all those who have helped me in the research process.

First, I would like to thank Prof. Monica Ogra, for being so helpful throughout the research process. Thank you for helping me to find an idea for my globalization studies capstone that would fit with my research in environmental studies. Thanks for the hours you spent helping me to edit my surveys and my interviews, and for all of the time you have devoted to helping me throughout the years. I could not have done this project without you!

I would also like to thank the globalization studies department and the GSAC for funding my research and for giving me the opportunity to return to Vietnam. I am so grateful for all of the wonderful opportunities provided to globalization studies majors and hope that other students will also be able to benefit from these opportunities in the future.

I would like to thank my fellow GS capstone students for editing my paper, for supporting me and giving me ideas, and for being wonderful classmates and friends. You have all helped to make this experience fun.

I would also like to thank my interview participants, Dana Doan, Arthur Hanlon, and Anonymous. Thank you so much for taking time out of your busy schedules to Skype with me. I learned a lot from our conversations and really enjoyed meeting all of you.

Also thank you to Harry, Brady, and Gulce from Project Gaia, Inc. for helping to make my research possible. Thank you for the time you spent looking over my surveys, sending me information about clean cooking, participating in interviews, and boxing up the CleanCook stove to prepare me for my research in Vietnam. A special thank you to Giang Linh for being the best translator and friend during my stay in Vietnam. Thank you also to Uyen Le for back translating my questionnaires here in Gettysburg.

I also would like to thank Mr. Phat for participating in an interview and helping to facilitate and organize focus groups with the women from Xeo Tram. Finally, I would like to thank Ms. Nguyen Thi Thanh, the leader of the Xeo Tram Hamlet Women's Union and my study participants in Xeo Tram Hamlet.

Thank you again to everyone who has been a part of this research process. It is because of your help and support that this project has been so interesting, enjoyable, and insightful.

## **1.Introduction**

### 1.1 Background Information and Literature Review

As globalization occurs across the world, it is producing different effects, inspiring different reactions, and contributing to new tensions. Ericksen (2005) aptly describes the process of globalization by explaining the forces of “dis-embedding” (p.15) and “re-embedding” (p.141). Dis-embedding encourages social and economic institutions to become more fluid and influenced by transnational organizations. In addition to encouraging transnational influence, it also moves ideas and exchanges outside of their local contexts to become more abstract and global concepts and interactions. In contrast, re-embedding transforms transnational ideas and processes so that they fit within a local framework. Re-embedding often manifests as an effort to encourage traditional or national identity and solidarity (Ericksen, 2005). As Ericksen (2005) describes, dis-embedding and re-embedding operate simultaneously as a result of globalization and exist together in a relationship of tension.

The tension between dis-embedding and re-embedding is particularly relevant to discussions of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and their operation within national and local arenas. As transnational organizations generally committed to creating positive change, whether social, political, economic, or otherwise (Boli & Thomas, 1997), INGOs encourage the process of dis-embedding by influencing existing national institutions and introducing new, global structures and ideas. INGOs often take on a major role within a country, arguably replacing the national government in some cases (Bond, 2000; Obiyan, 2005). Considering the dominant role that INGOs often play within countries and the dis-embedding that they encourage within national institutions, it follows logically that INGOs have in some cases inspired opposition from state governments and encouraged re-embedding in the form of

nationalism. The tension between dis-embedding and re-embedding is evident when examining the relationship between INGOs, national, and local actors in Vietnam.

Before the 1980s, Vietnam was relatively closed to international influence and experienced few of globalization's effects (Boothroyd & Nam, 2000). However, in 1986, the Vietnamese government undertook a series of reforms known as *doi moi* ("open door" or "renovation") that began to encourage rapid globalization and dis-embedding. *Doi Moi* reforms were mainly economic adjustments that encouraged globalization through capitalism, international trade, and foreign investment. They restructured Vietnam's economy from a centrally-planned system to a market economy with a socialist orientation (Boothroyd & Nam, 2000). However, *doi moi* reforms not only encouraged change in terms of economics, but also promoted cultural and political globalization by opening Vietnam's borders to INGOs, tourists, and researchers. Despite liberal reforms, the Vietnamese Communist government still remains a powerful organizing force in society and the lives of local Vietnamese people (Boothroyd & Nam, 2000). As Nguyen (2011) describes, when reacting to INGOs in particular, the Vietnamese government has practiced re-embedding by exercising increasing dominance and control. Specifically, while the government encourages INGO activity, it maintains power within the INGO sector by requiring INGOs to partner with government organizations and by upholding a strict legal framework that regulates the activities of INGOs (Nguyen, 2011).

While patterns of dis-embedding and re-embedding clearly exist within the INGO sector in Vietnam, there are few scholarly studies dedicated to exploring these patterns. In fact, current scholarly literature reveals both a lack of studies related to INGOs in Vietnam in general, and a particular lack of analysis that is focused on INGOs within the climate of increased globalization after *doi moi* government reforms. As Nguyen notes, most of the current research and writing on

INGOs in Vietnam is “descriptive...rather than analytical” (2011: 4). To illustrate, while there is a general recognition that, after *doi moi*, the number of INGOs in Vietnam greatly increased (Dang, 2009; Nguyen, 2011; Sinh, 2001; Thayer, 2009), the consequences of this increase in INGOs are less clearly and commonly understood.

Scholars that have analyzed INGOs within the post *doi moi* environment seem to debate mainly about the interactions between the Vietnamese state and INGOs and the operational challenges that this creates. For example, Dang (2009) suggests that economic liberalization in Vietnam has widened the gap between rich and poor, leaving the state struggling to meet the demands of the poor. INGOs, Dang (2009) argues, are taking over for the state in addressing social welfare needs. Therefore, the state is willingly and successfully working with INGOs to mobilize their funding and facilitate necessary poverty reduction (Dang, 2009). Sinh (2001) similarly reasons that INGOs are helping the state to meet the needs of its people, and stresses that the Vietnamese state has encouraged the growth of INGOs. However, Sinh (2009) also explains that state controls the activities of INGOs and therefore limits their ability to engage with local people. Nguyen (2011) takes Sinh’s argument a step further, explaining that the state carefully regulates INGOs in order to maintain its own power, ultimately making it difficult for INGOs to operate successfully.

While not specifically stated within the literature, these differing explanations of the challenges faced by INGOs in Vietnam demonstrate national reactions to increasing globalization and international involvement. They also suggest some of the ways that local lives are connected to broader global and political interactions. For example, as Dang (2009) and Sinh (2001) explain, INGOs play a key role in promoting social welfare and poverty reduction for Vietnamese people. The INGOs currently promoting social welfare in Vietnam include

humanitarian organizations like Oxfam, Save the Children, Doctors without Borders, and ActionAid (Dang, 2009). In addition to addressing social issues, INGOs such as the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) are operating in Vietnam to improve local environments. Internationally based religious organizations are also thriving in Vietnam and affecting local religious practices (Dang, 2009). Ultimately, because social and environmental conditions, material wellbeing and religious life are often connected to INGOs, these important aspects of local lives are also linked to processes of globalization and interactions between state and global actors. Unfortunately, few works within the reviewed literature specifically address these connections between globalization, INGOs, and local people. In general, the literature seems to overlook the local level, and the challenges that INGOs might face within local Vietnamese communities.

Analyzing both the local and national challenges experienced by INGOs post *doi moi* would promote further understanding of the ways that dis-embedding and re-embedding play out at multiple scales in Vietnam. By analyzing INGOs in post-reform Vietnam, we can gain valuable insight into the tensions, challenges, and benefits that rapid and increased globalization can produce in other areas. The contradictory and simultaneous phenomenon occurring as a result of globalization in Vietnam are not specific to this regional context, but can be applied to further understand processes occurring across the world. In other words, by comprehending globalization in Vietnam, we can begin to better conceptualize globalization and its effects in general.

## 1.2 Objectives

By analyzing both the local and national challenges experienced by INGOs post *doi moi*, this paper will advance the important but relatively new scholarly conversation about INGOs in Vietnam. It will further explore the nuances of the state/INGO relationship and examine the ways



it is connected to globalization. It will also help to fill existing gaps in literature by addressing the ways that INGOs interact with local communities and influence the everyday lives of the Vietnamese people. More specifically, this paper will use a case-study approach to analyze the development of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) in Vietnam post *doi moi*. It will seek to understand the ways that INGOs are viewed by local and national actors in Vietnam, identify any operational challenges that they face, and outline potential strategies for overcoming these barriers.

As a case study, it will focus on an environmental INGO called Project Gaia, Inc. (PGI) that works in the developing world to replace polluting biomass-based fuels, with clean-burning, sustainable, alcohol-based fuels and stoves. PGI presently operates in Africa and Latin America and is considering entry into Asia. I am currently working with PGI to test the feasibility of their alcohol fuels and stoves in a rural hamlet of Vietnam's Mekong Delta, called Xeo Tram. Ultimately, I realize that if PGI employed their approach in Xeo Tram Hamlet or in Vietnam, they would first need to comprehend the institutional and societal challenges to operating an INGO there, and understand how their international approach might be received by local people.

In order to understand the challenges and cooperative solutions for INGOs in Vietnam in general, my project will be guided by the following main research question:

How has the INGO sector changed with increasing globalization in Vietnam after the 1986 *doi moi* reforms, and what are the national and local challenges to INGOs currently operating in Vietnam?

To understand how challenges to INGOs might impact PGI in particular, I will use a similar sub-question to guide my case study:

If PGI were to expand to Vietnam, what challenges would they face and how might their approach be received by national actors and local people?

After briefly outlining the methodology I used to find answers to these research questions, I will then explain the climate for INGOs in Vietnam using the ideas of re-embedding and dis-embedding as a guiding framework. Specifically, I will address the challenges and benefits that INGOs encounter when operating with government organizations, local civil society groups, and individuals. The case study element of the paper will follow, and will also use the framework of re-embedding and dis-embedding to analyze challenges or advantages that PGI might encounter while working with national and local government, civil society, and individuals in Vietnam. Finally, I will describe the way that re-embedding and dis-embedding forces can lead to beneficial partnerships for positive change. Ultimately I will argue that both INGOs in general and PGI in particular have the potential to work creatively within a framework of tension between dis-embedding and re-embedding forces. They can use this tension productively to inspire what Kania and Kramer call “collective impact” (2011: online) or the collaboration between multiple actors for a common goal. The overall goal of my research is not only to provide valuable insight for PGI, but to illuminate the challenges and pathways towards operation for all INGO’s seeking to work in Vietnam, in the Global South, and in the world at large.

## **2. Methodology**

In order to answer my main research question, I employed a multi-methods approach including literature review and interviews. Because there are few scholarly works specifically related to INGOs in Vietnam, I also explored gray literature to find information that was published by INGOs and Vietnamese government organizations. To further analyze the challenges that INGOs face and to gain a more in-depth understanding of the climate for INGOs in Vietnam, I conducted a series of interviews with experts and scholars. Specifically, I

interviewed an expert on government-INGO relations, an expert on local organizations and partnerships, and a scholar focused on INGOs in Vietnam in general (Appendix 1).

To better understand government-INGO relations, I interviewed Mr. Arthur Hanlon, communications advisor at the NGO Resource Center in Hanoi, Vietnam. The mission of the NGO Resource Center is to facilitate effective partnerships between INGOs, government, and local organizations. It provides information to INGOs seeking to operate in Vietnam and offers services such as web content and mailing lists for its member organizations. The NGO Resource Center also helps its member organizations by organizing working groups on a variety of topics (Hanlon, personal communication) and provides a conduit between government and the INGO sector. While there is no participation on a day-to-day basis by the Vietnamese government, the NGO Resource Center has a government association. For example, the Vietnamese Union of Friendship Organizations (VUFO), a government institution, is a nominal partner in the NGO Resource Center. The NGO Resource Center also has a Vietnamese co-director from the government, and government members sit on its steering committee with INGO representatives (VUFO-NGO, 2012). As communications advisor of the NGO Resource Center, Mr. Hanlon offers in-depth experience and knowledge particularly on government-INGO relationships and the government guidelines for INGOs seeking to operate in Vietnam.

In addition to Mr. Hanlon, I also interviewed Ms. Dana Doan, the Strategic Advisor of the LIN Center for Community Development in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The LIN Center is more representative of the local Vietnamese perspective, as it is a group that works primarily to connect Vietnamese non-profit organizations working on similar causes, and to develop effective organizational management strategies for local non-profits. It encourages networking and capacity building among local non-profits, and also connects local non-profit organizations to

international donors. As Strategic Advisor of the LIN Center, Ms. Doan interacts regularly with staff representing local not-for-profit organizations as well as INGOs. LIN works to develop strategic partnerships with INGOs who share their desire to build the capacity of local non-profits. Ms. Doan's ideas provide insight into some of the needs of local organizations, especially in terms of their partnership with international foundations and organizations.

Finally, I interviewed a scholar originally from Vietnam whose Master's Thesis in communications was focused on the relationship between INGOs and local governmental organizations in Vietnam. Expressing that s/he would like to remain anonymous, I will hereafter refer to this scholar as "Anon". Anon's thoughts are important as they provide an academic perspective on the relationships between INGOs, the government, and local people in Vietnam. Furthermore, because Anon is currently working in Vietnam, s/he has a basic understanding of the scholarly discussions about INGOs in a Vietnamese context that have not yet been published in the literature.

While there are only three interviews in total, each respondent has valuable experience and knowledge that allowed him/her to offer new and important perspectives on INGO activity in Vietnam. Together with scholarly literature, these interviews helped me to gain a better understanding for the current climate for INGOs operating in Vietnam. They also allowed me to compare what is happening on the ground to what is written in the literature.

Along with these interviews, I also conducted two interviews for the case study aspect of my research. First, I interviewed Harry Stokes, executive director of PGI and Gulce Askin, Project Coordinator at PGI. Talking with Stokes and Askin helped me to develop a sense for the conditions that PGI seeks when implementing a project in a particular area, and to gain a better understanding of their experiences in the Global South (Appendix 2). I also conducted an

interview with Mr. Tran Phat, a local organizer in Xeo Tram Hamlet, who would be working closely with PGI if they were to implement their approach in Xeo Tram Hamlet, Vietnam. This interview helped me to better comprehend local perception of PGI and to anticipate any challenges that might prohibit PGI from operating in Xeo Tram Hamlet (Appendix 3).

In addition to interviews, I also analyzed data from focus group discussions (Appendix 4) and a questionnaire (Appendix 5) that I conducted for this project in Vietnam in January, 2013. In the focus groups, I discussed PGI's approach with women in Xeo Tram Hamlet, who currently use biomass and would ideally benefit from alcohol fuels and stoves. These group sessions helped to develop an understanding of the way that PGI's approach and practices might be received within a local Vietnamese community. The questionnaire, also administered to Xeo Tram Hamlet women, was focused mainly on comparing biomass stoves and alcohol fuels, and provided additional insight into how PGI's specific techniques would be received by local Vietnamese. Ultimately, by taking an in-depth look at INGOs in Vietnam and examining PGI in particular, I hope to provide insight into the potential for collaboration and positive change within a globalized world. While I will identify many challenges to operating across national boundaries, I will also offer examples of how transnational collaboration can work. I will seek to reveal the patterns, trends, and ideas that have contributed to INGO project success in Vietnam and around the globe.

### **3. Results and Discussion**

#### **3.1 How has the INGO sector changed with increasing globalization in Vietnam after the 1986 *doi moi* reforms?**

Across the world in the twentieth century, the number and influence of INGOs and NGOs has increased significantly. This phenomenon was especially pronounced in developing regions of the world such as Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Clarke, 1998). Obiyan (2005) explains the

rise in INGOs and NGOs in the global South as a result of several internal and external factors within each country or region. For example, he argues that governments have been increasingly adopting neo-liberal policies and opening their societies to transnational organizations, economics, and institutions (Obiyan, 2005:307). INGOs have also been encouraged within states because of their ability to promote democratization, new forms of development, or provide services to the poor or marginalized citizens. In some cases, it has been argued that INGOs are stepping in to meet the demands of the people that cannot be filled by weakening state governments (Obiyan, 2005). However, as Clarke (1998) explains, more research is necessary to fully understand the relationship between the state and national political actors in the Global South, the reasons why INGOs are increasing their operations in developing countries, and the challenges that they face.

Because Vietnam is a developing country engaging with globalization and neo-liberal ideology, studying the relationship between the state, local people and INGOs in Vietnam can help us to better understand and explore wider trends defining the challenges and the climate for INGOs in the Global South. However, as Dana Doan explains, while exploring the climate for INGOs operating in Vietnam can yield insights that are applicable and valuable for INGOs across the globe, the situation for INGOs in Vietnam is also context-specific (personal communication). INGOs will encounter a different climate and different challenges when working within Vietnam as opposed to other countries, and will even face unique situations within the multiple regions of Vietnam (Doan, personal communication). This section details some of the common trends facing INGOs in Vietnam and across the globe, as well as the specific characteristics defining the situation for INGOs within Vietnam.

In general, the patterns in INGO involvement and influence in Vietnam reflect the larger pattern in the Global South towards increasing INGO participation. The Vietnamese government's 1986 policies of *doi moi* reform and their opening to globalization and foreign influence have inspired an influx of INGOs. Arthur Hanlon describes this increase of INGO activity in Vietnam as follows:

There were virtually no INGOs in Vietnam between 1975 and *doi moi*. They arrived in growing numbers and there are now about 900 INGOs with connections to Vietnam. (personal communication)

Dang (2009) explains that the increase in INGOs in Vietnam was especially rapid in the early 1990s. She attributes this increase in INGO activity not only to wider trends towards globalization and the reform policies of *doi moi*, but also to specific government programs and organizations that are directed towards coordinating and promoting INGO activity. She talks specifically about the People's Aid Coordinating Committee (PACCOM) under VUFO, which acts as a consultation agency for the government, guiding them to establish policies that encourage the proliferation of INGOs within Vietnam. She argues that the efforts of PACCOM have helped to increase the number of INGOs and to effectively increase and distribute their funding across the country (Dang, 2009).

While the recent increase in INGOs across Vietnam follows the pattern of INGO increase within the Global South, Vietnam's historical and political context also create unique circumstances for INGOs operating there today. In some ways, the climate for INGOs in Vietnam can be compared to that of China. Both countries have undergone economic and political reforms and have encouraged increased globalization within the context of a strong national state run by the Communist party (Chan, 2005). In China, the government is generally supportive of INGOs operating within its borders. However, INGOs and local NGOs that accept

foreign funding are monitored closely and come under increasing suspicion at times when China's foreign relations are strained (Chan, 2005).

Like China, the Vietnamese government's current reform policies are framed as efforts to encourage gradual globalization, while maintaining the strong role of the Communist government and the national identity of the Vietnamese people (Seo, 2006). In line with this policy, the state maintains tight control over the development of the non-profit sector and the influence of INGOs in Vietnam (Sidel, 2010). However, Sidel (2010) argues that efforts to control INGOs or NGOs in Vietnam are mainly focused on those organizations that are, "perceived to be potential political challenges or...who might emerge as political challengers in political or policy terms" (Sidel, 2010: 52). Despite the fact that some INGOs with political agendas are closely monitored, it seems that on the ground, many of the INGOs and NGOs in Vietnam are allowed to carry out their daily business without interference from the government or with the support and encouragement of the government (Sidel, 2010).

If the relationship between the Vietnamese government and INGOs is classified using Ericksen's (2005) concepts of "disembedding" and "re-embedding", it would seem that there is certainly some "re-embedding" in the form of strict government control that poses challenges to particular INGOs and local NGOs. However, the Vietnamese government as a whole is encouraging dis-embedding by allowing INGOs to exert influence within the country. As Dang (2009) explains, the state understands that INGOs are vital in helping to close the increasingly large gap between the rich and the poor in Vietnam and to provide social services to the country's citizens. Ultimately, the climate for INGOs in Vietnam fits with Ericksen's (2005) idea of combination and tension between dis-embedding and re-embedding forces. This climate of tension produces both challenges and benefits for INGOs operating within Vietnam.



### 3.2 What are the national and local challenges to INGOs currently operating in Vietnam?

As explained above, INGOs operating in Vietnam face challenges due to re-embedding and government efforts to maintain the power of the nation state and the Communist party. To illustrate, Anon described that the Vietnamese government is generally more receptive to INGO projects that seek to introduce new technology or development. Advocacy efforts, particularly political advocacy efforts, that have less straightforward and measurable objectives and that could potentially pose a challenge to the ruling party, often require more explanation to government authorities (personal communication). The idea of re-embedding in the form of government efforts to protect national identity and power is reflected within the 2012 Decree on the Registration and Operation of Foreign Non-Governmental Organizations in Vietnam.

According to the decree, the following are prohibited:

Organizing and carrying out activities of religious/political nature or being detrimental to the national interests, security, defense and/or the national solidarity of Vietnam...Organizing, carrying out and/or participating in activities detrimental to social morality, fine habits and customs, and national traditions and identity. (The Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2012)

Despite efforts to protect the power of the state, the government is also making significant attempts to encourage INGO involvement and dis-embedding. According to Arthur Hanlon of the NGO Resource Center, government regulations on INGOs are part of a clear regulatory framework and should not be viewed as obstacles. He describes government regulations on INGOs as follows:

There are rules and regulations that new INGOS have to go through to get registration with PACCOM. There are also...renewal regulations and paperwork. However, I don't believe that they are any more onerous than they would be in any other developing country...I don't know of any INGOs that have been turned away or found it too hard to set up here. (personal communication)

In addition, it should be noted that Vietnam has recently changed its policies to make it easier for INGOs to operate within the country. For example, instead of requiring all INGOs to renew their operational permits on a yearly basis, new laws allow INGOs to obtain approvals for up to three years or in some cases five years (VUFO-NGO, 2012).

On the ground, the experience for INGOs is more complex than struggling with forces of re-embedding or benefiting from the movement towards dis-embedding. There is instead a combination of both forces that can be challenging and beneficial at the same time. To illustrate, in Vietnam it is required that all international organizations have local partners, and these local partners sometimes take the form of mass organizations (Doan, personal communication). INGO membership with mass organizations represents a blurred line between re-embedding and dis-embedding because of the dual roles that mass organizations play. Mass organizations, as Nguyen (2011) explains, are political organizations that represent large social categories, such as women, youth and workers. They operate at different levels including central, provincial, district and commune, but are all categorized under an umbrella organization known as the Fatherland Front that is run directly by the state (Nguyen, 2011). In some ways, partnership with mass organizations might be considered a movement towards re-embedding, because it encourages INGOs to work closely with the government. However, Nguyen (2011) also explains that as representatives of mass groups of people, these organizations cannot be separated from the idea of civil society in Vietnam. In other words, they are vital to mobilizing local people and creating social change. In this sense, mass organizations seem to facilitate a direct connection between local Vietnamese and INGOs and can be catalysts of dis-embedding through the introduction and dissemination of new, transnational ideas.

Ultimately, partnership with mass organizations and the government can produce both challenges and advantages for INGOs. As Dana Doan explains, “partnership with the local government is often a good thing because they may already have the necessary buy-in from the local people” (personal communication). When talking specifically about mass organizations, Doan explains that in some areas such as rural provinces, the mass organizations may offer the most effective way to reach the most people as the mass organizations may be the only local group in that community. Or, if a project is intended for duplication throughout Vietnam, mass organizations would appear to be the ideal partner given that they already have a presence in all 58 provinces and 5 municipalities of Vietnam. She explains however, that while she has communicated with INGOs that have excellent experiences working with mass organizations, she has also spoken with INGO representatives who have had less desirable partnerships. As she says it, “depending on how collaborative your partnership is, you can achieve more or less” (Doan, personal communication). She suggests that one of the most important ways to encourage project success is to develop strong partnerships, and to work with multiple partners if possible. As strategic advisor at the LIN Center, Doan is particularly concerned with building connections between INGOs and local not-for-profit organizations (NPOs). She explains that in some cases, when INGOs work only with the Vietnamese government or mass organizations, they are not helping to build local capacity, which can address these challenges after the INGOs leave Vietnam (personal communication).

Sabharwal and Huong (2005) also suggest that INGOs can detract from the development of civil society in Vietnam. While INGOs do encourage poverty reduction through development and social services, they sometimes take projects from local NGOs, reducing the capacity of civil

society organizations to respond to social issues (Sabharwal & Huong, 2005). Thayer similarly claims that INGOs are taking the place of local NGOs in Vietnam:

The Vietnamese mono-organizational state has been in retreat since the 1990s, as many state services have been commercialized. It was in this context that the... Vietnamese NGOs began to emerge to deliver services that were no longer provided by the state. Increasingly, this space has been occupied by INGOs at the expense of local NGOs. (2009: 8)

Although INGOs sometimes replace or compete with local NGOs, this is not always the case. As Sabharwal and Huong (2005) explain, INGOs are increasingly partnering with local NGOs to achieve their objectives.

As is true when INGOs develop partnerships with state-run organizations, working with local NGOs brings both significant challenges and important benefits. In terms of challenges, Sabharwal and Huong (2005) describe that it is often difficult to work with NGOs because they tend to lack capacity and financial resources. On the ground, NGO's lack of capacity and resources sometimes means that they will be less likely to receive support from INGOs. Doan offered an example of this when she described a conference she attended among INGOs and some of their local partners: "The majority of INGOs in the room said that it was better to partner with the mass organizations or government agencies than independent not-for-profit groups" (personal communication). Their reasons related to project efficiency and effectiveness. Meanwhile, she explained that the local civil society groups seemed to underestimate their value, humbly agreeing with the INGO representatives. They expressed their appreciation for the experience of learning from what they described as professionally run organizations and did not recognize the value they offered as local experts.

Doan also suggests that communication between INGOs and NPOs is another challenge affecting collaboration:

When you are working across different cultures, there is a tendency towards misunderstanding. When you are a foreign organization in a foreign country, it is your responsibility to communicate clearly and to be open about what you are doing (personal communication).

She recommends that INGOs working with local NPOs set clear and detailed expectations and objectives from the outset. Once the project has begun, regular and open communication is essential, even if it means taking longer to finish the work. This approach will not only help to avoid misunderstandings that arise through cross-cultural communication, but it also ensures a mutual transfer of knowledge and capacity building. Although some INGOs shared their bad experiences with local NGOs, she cautioned that there are always two sides to every story and there is still great potential for collaboration. If INGOs are looking for a productive local partner, it is advisable to spend the time creating a win-win partnership among equals. For example, an INGO may be able to help the local NPO partner by building its staff capacity in the area of budgeting and accounting; meanwhile, the local NPO partner can help the INGO staff to gain buy-in from the local people. The key is to clarify the value each partner will add and working together to ensure that those expectations are met throughout the pursuit of shared objectives. Collaborative partnerships between INGOs and local NGOs ultimately create several benefits, particularly for the local people of Vietnam. By supporting local NGOs and committing to developing civil society, INGOs can help to ensure the voices of local people are heard within larger government structures and institutions. The collaboration of INGOs and NGOs is already starting to make an impact on peoples' participation in Vietnam. For example, there is a working group of individuals, primarily representatives of INGOs and NPOs, called the People's Participation Working Group, which seeks to advocate for inclusion of marginalized groups of people and non-state actors in the decision-making process (VUFO-NGO, 2012).

Along with encouraging the involvement of local people in large-scale and government organizations, or listening to local people by working with domestic NGOs, INGOs must also consider more micro-level interactions with individuals and examine the challenges that their projects might encounter within specific localities. As Anon described, an INGO that encourages the involvement of local people by promoting democratic and participatory procedures and working with local NGOs, can still face challenges within communities. To illustrate, s/he explained that in some areas, particularly in places where people are very poor and concerned mainly with survival, they may not be willing to take part in regular democratic and participatory meetings. This could take time away from their efforts to feed their family or generate household income. While s/he explained that tension at this stage was inevitable, s/he also argued that if INGOs are patient and make efforts to accommodate the schedules and needs of the local people, local populations will eventually begin to see the benefits of participation in decision-making structures (personal communication). Nguyen (2011) also mentioned that local people and project beneficiaries of INGOs are often used to the Vietnamese culture and socio-political climate that encourages centralized decision-making. Therefore, they are hesitant to speak up during the decision-making process, and it might take some time before they are willing to fully participate. Along with hesitation or resistance to participatory procedures at an individual level, there are also challenges that INGOs might face when implementing projects in different regional contexts. What is accepted and works within the local structure of Northern Vietnamese communities, may be completely different from what works in Central Vietnam, or Southern Vietnam (Doan, personal communication). Doan suggests that in order to accommodate for these regional differences, INGOs would benefit from conducting pilot projects in each region in order

to verify the methods that work best and to identify local partners who can help in their efforts to expand throughout Vietnam (personal communication).

Overall, while there are challenges on the micro-level between individuals and INGOs, and on the macro level, between INGOs and local NGOs or government organizations, most of these challenges are possible to overcome. At the micro-scale, INGOs can support the interests of individuals by adapting to the needs of local people and understanding regional differences. In a sense, by engaging with local actors and changing their transnational approach to meet local needs, INGOs are practicing a productive form of re-embedding that encourages collaboration. At the national level, the Vietnamese government often practices a different kind of re-embedding to protect national identity. However, it is also very open to INGO involvement and partnership. In fact, it seems to be striving to create an environment where INGOs can make the diverse and participatory partnerships and interactions necessary for project success.

Ultimately, by taking advantage of opportunities for partnership between both government and local actors, INGOs can ensure that a diversity of groups is represented within their structures. In this way, they can also avoid creating programs guided entirely by government interests or that ignore certain perspectives. Furthermore, by encouraging equal participation in decision-making, exercising patience, and supporting frequent and transparent communication, INGOs can more successfully develop partnerships that are mutually beneficial. While the tension between dis-embedding and re-embedding forces in Vietnam presents some challenges for INGOs, it can also be used in a productive way to form valuable partnerships and encourage collaborative progress towards social change. This concept of a productive tension between the forces of dis-embedding and re-embedding is not unique to Vietnam. In fact, the

potential for a productive tension between these forces has been recognized by PGI in their operations across the globe.

### 3.3 Case Study: If PGI were to expand to Vietnam, what challenges would they face and how might their approach be received by national actors and local people?

As executive director of PGI, Harry Stokes suggested based on his experience in Africa and Latin America, that it is ideal for an INGO to have a combination of both dis-embedding and re-embedding within a country. Stokes talked specifically about dis-embedding and re-embedding in terms of economics and trade. He explained that it would be best for an INGO to work in a country where there is a free market, because this economic structure often helps to provide local businesses and organizations with access to capital (personal communication). If local businesses have access to capital, they are able to invest in PGI's alcohol stove technology and can begin to develop a similar alcohol stove locally. According to Stokes, "one of PGI's biggest barriers to technology transfer is finding local businesses with enough capacity and finance to import and develop alcohol stove technology" (personal communication). In addition, he explained that import taxes were detrimental to PGI, as they caused the price of alcohol stove to increase greatly. In some cases, a \$50 stove would have a \$20 tax, making it difficult to reduce the stove to a price that local people or businesses could afford.

While free markets can be beneficial in some ways, Stokes also says that countries should have some form of government protection for their national economies and citizens. To illustrate his point he explains that, with free trade and cheap imported foods, local agricultural markets can be destroyed. Part of PGI's mission is to encourage alcohol fuels that are produced on a small scale from local crops. This type of small-scale fuel market provides an incentive for local farmers to produce. However, free trade presents a constant challenge to their efforts to create local markets for food and fuel crops. Stokes also explains the positive side of efforts to protect



national economies from foreign imports. He argues that governments who are concerned with protecting their national economy will also likely encourage small-scale ethanol production, as this offers a domestic source of energy and protection from dependence on foreign fuels (Stokes, personal communication).

While re-embedding in the form of protecting local economies is valuable for PGI, Stokes explains that PGI has faced serious challenges from authoritarian governments, who use re-embedding to establish national control. In addition to authoritarian re-embedding, PGI has also faced challenges from corruption in governments. For example, in one of PGI's project sites, donor funding needed to be transferred through the state government. Before PGI could reach the funds, the state government had stolen one third of the budget to finance the houses and cars of government officials (Stokes, personal communication).

If PGI were to operate in Vietnam, it seems that there is potential for similar challenges from re-embedding and corruption to exist. However, these conditions of operation are not the norm and can be avoided. As previously explained, the government of Vietnam retains significant control over the operation of INGOs. For example, all INGOs are required to have local partners, and as Nguyen notes, the government "explicitly... expects INGOs to work more closely with either governmental or mass organizations than with other types of organizations" (2011:21). The government partner then has the authority to stop a project if they feel it is threatening (Anon, personal communication). Along with requiring INGOs to operate with government partners, the government generally monitors foreign aid and must approve of the way that it is spent (Siar, 2010). With such strong government control in both INGO funding and planning, it seems that the potential for corruption exists.

However, where corruption was a significant problem for PGI in Nigeria and Ethiopia, it seems to be less of a problem in Vietnam. To illustrate, in 2005 Vietnam passed the Law on Anti-Corruption, which is considered by the US State Department to be one of the best policies on ending corruption in Asia. While the effectiveness of the law and its outcomes have yet to be assessed, the Vietnamese government is taking significant steps towards fighting corruption in the country (Martini, 2012). With regards to INGO-government partnerships in particular, it seems that corruption can be also be avoided by carefully selecting trustworthy partners. As Doan explains, if INGOs work to develop trusting relationships with local partners who share the same goals, whether they be government or NPO, beneficial and effective partnerships are possible (personal communications). In PGI's case, working with a government partner might be particularly beneficial, as their goals to promote healthy environments and encourage local entrepreneurship through alcohol fuel and stoves align with the government's current priority areas. As Dang (2009) explains, the Vietnamese government is encouraging sustainable development and welcomes INGOs dedicated to environmental issues, health, and poverty reduction.

It seems that PGI's mission would not only be welcomed by the government at the national level, but by the local government as well. In particular, if PGI were to operate in Xeo Tram Hamlet, the local government would be receptive to their mission. As Phat explained

I don't think there would be any barriers created by the Vietnamese government that would prevent Project Gaia from operating in Xeo Tram Hamlet...I cannot think of any sources of conflict between the local government and Project Gaia. (personal communication)

In fact, in Xeo Tram Hamlet there is an active and influential Women's Union (a mass organization) that eagerly participated in pilot studies of alcohol fuels and stoves. According to Gulce Askin, Project Coordinator at PGI, Gaia has worked very effectively with local

governments in other contexts. In Ethiopia for example, she explains that “Gaia has had great success working with regional and municipal governments...the challenges and failures have been largely with the federal government” (personal communication).

On the individual level in Xeo Tram Hamlet, it seemed that the women who participated in the studies were pleased with the alcohol fuels and stoves promoted by Project Gaia as well. They felt that the stoves would improve their lives by making cooking more convenient, and would contribute to the health and well-being of their families by reducing the air pollution from the wood fires that they currently use for cooking. Their main concerns were that the stove and the fuel might be too expensive if it could not be produced locally. They also wanted to make sure that they could install and operate a distillery, or a factory that turns local crops into alcohol fuel, within their hamlet (Bosold, 2013).

It seems that the key concerns of the hamlet members are also the areas where PGI will face the most significant challenges. If there is a lack of capacity or resources among local businesses in Xeo Tram Hamlet for example, it might be difficult for PGI to find a local partner to invest in their technology or produce it. The operation of a distillery might cause another barrier to PGI’s operation, again due to a lack of capacity within the hamlet. However, PGI has demonstrated commitment to capacity building in other areas. In Ethiopia for example, they are training local people to successfully produce ethanol fuel and stoves. In addition to challenges with capacity building, there might be initial resistance to operating a distillery, especially if it takes people away from their daily work and efforts to survive or if it creates an additional burden for them (Anon, personal communication). If a distillery were created in Xeo Tram, it is possible that recruiting local people may initially be difficult. However, most of my focus group participants agreed that they would be eager to be a part of the distillery operation if they knew it

would provide them with affordable, clean fuel and would improve their lives. Ideally, according to Askin, a distillery's impact would "go beyond the provision of clean fuel for the economy" (personal communication). It would create many local jobs, and integrate agricultural laborers into its processes, providing new opportunities for advancement and income generation (Askin, personal communication). Ultimately, while PGI's approach may face some challenges in Xeo Tram Hamlet, it seems that it will be well received by the local people and governmental structures there.

Overall, by negotiating the framework of dis-embedding and re-embedding and realizing the potential for productive tension between these two forces in Vietnam, PGI can creatively overcome resistance and lack of capacity at the local and individual level, regional differences among communities, and government corruption or nationalism. First, if PGI continues to develop connections with the local people and is committed to building capacity through partnerships, there is great potential for their project to succeed in Xeo Tram Hamlet. Expansion of PGI's alcohol stove and fuel technology to other parts of Vietnam would also require building strong connections to the local people and conducting pilot studies to see if not only PGI's stove and fuel technology, but their approach to social change, would work successfully in the area (Doan, personal communication). From their operation in other parts of the world, PGI has realized the importance of building connections to local people and is committed to re-embedding or adapting their technology and their system to meet the needs of the people with whom they are working. In fact, Harry Stokes suggested that the best way to create widespread change is by involving local people and organizations. Local groups can use their connections and understanding to reach out to people from surrounding areas who may be interested in the project. These trusting partnerships between locals then lay the framework for PGI to introduce

dis-embedding through their transnational ideals of sustainability, as well as their ethanol fuels and stoves, and to build relationships of their own. It is local connections that allow PGI to develop partnerships and work collaboratively to adapt their dis-embedded approach so that it meets the needs of individuals in different contexts and locales. In addition to working with individuals, PGI could also find benefit from the government partnerships that the Vietnamese state requires. While these partnerships are often inspired by re-embedding and nationalism, PGI could still partner with a government organization that shares their goals and could gain additional resources and support for their ideas and projects. Ultimately, by interacting and collaborating with individuals, while simultaneously working effectively and collaboratively with the government to the extent possible, PGI is capable of productively employing both re-embedding and dis-embedding to encourage widespread movement toward environmental sustainability.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Ultimately, examining the situation for PGI within Vietnam and analyzing the climate for INGOs in Vietnam in general, reveals a complex tension and combination between re-embedding and dis-embedding forces that can produce both challenges to operation and successful positive change. One of the main barriers to INGO operation in Vietnam is re-embedding in the form of government control and efforts to protect national identity. For example, Vietnamese laws that place strict regulations on political INGOs in particular, and that require all INGOs to work with a government organization can be burdensome for INGOs. While it often encourages INGOs to enter Vietnam, dis-embedding can also pose significant challenges for INGOs. In PGI's case for example, dis-embedding in the form of free trade could destroy local agricultural communities, making their efforts to create local markets for food and fuel crops even more challenging.

Despite these and other barriers to INGO operation, PGI and INGOs in Vietnam can still successfully achieve positive change by negotiating the tension between re-embedding and dis-embedding and productively using both forces to create valuable partnerships. For example, while the Vietnamese government encourages re-embedding and control by requiring INGOs to partner with government organizations, INGOs can often use these partnerships to gain access to resources and support for their often dis-embedded and global ideas. By also partnering with local organizations, INGOs can gain important links to marginalized groups and benefit from the insight they provide. They can use dis-embedding in the form of transnational funding to support local objectives and goals. Furthermore, if INGOs practice re-embedding to adapt their approach to local needs, they will have a better chance at achieving project success.

Partnerships with national and local actors, that involve both dis-embedding and re-embedding, can ultimately be beneficial for all people. Specifically, they can build the capacity of local people by connecting them with national and international funding resources. They can also encourage participatory structures in the government by empowering local people, connecting them to the state, and backing their ideas with international support. This was the case with the previously described People's Participation Working Group, a coalition of INGOs and Vietnamese NGOs that successfully encouraged the Vietnamese government to allow marginalized local groups to take part in the formation of government policy (VUFO-NGO, 2012). As this example demonstrates, INGOs can successfully partner with local and national actors, and use both dis-embedding and re-embedding to inspire collective impact or collaborative progress towards shared goals (Kania & Kramer, 2011).

The concept of collective impact and cross-sectoral partnership between governments, local people, and international and domestic NGOs, has been proven to be valuable, not only in

Vietnam but across the Asia-Pacific region. It is particularly effective because it targets all levels of the system at once, and encourages collective effort for social change (Tilbury et al., 2003). Expanding beyond Asia-Pacific, Obiyan (2005) explains that collective partnerships incorporating national, international, and local actors would be valuable across the global South. Ultimately, collective strategies can work across the world. They work within conditions of re-embedding by taking advantage of government support, and encourage dis-embedding by disseminating international resources and ideas. Most importantly, they use these combined forces to empower local organizations and individuals, allowing them to participate in decision-making and guide development efforts so that they can effectively inspire the positive change that they desire in their lives and in the world at large.

In this study overall, I have attempted to identify the challenges and benefits for PGI and INGOs operating in Vietnam at the local and national level and to illuminate pathways towards positive impact for INGOs in Vietnam, in the Global South, and in the larger world. Using the framework of re-embedding and dis-embedding to analyze the literature, interviews and case study presented in this paper, I have found that the forces of re-embedding and dis-embedding exist in tension in Vietnam and elsewhere, producing both barriers and pathways to INGO success. While barriers to INGO operation are significant, they can be overcome through multi-sector partnerships that engage local, national, and international actors to negotiate the tension between dis-embedding and re-embedding. Ultimately, it is through these creative partnerships that INGOs are able to encourage positive collective impact in Vietnam and across the globe.

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## Appendix 1: Interview with INGO Leaders

Interviews will take approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour and will be open-ended questions focused on challenges that INGOs face while operating in Vietnam. A tape recorder will be used to record answers.

### Questions for INGO leaders/scholars:

1. What is your involvement with INGOs and/or NGOs in Vietnam?
  - a. What kind of INGO/NGO do you run?
2. How has the climate for INGOs in Vietnam changed since *doi moi* economic reforms?
3. How would you describe the policies of the Vietnamese government towards INGOs?
4. Do you notice any tensions between INGOs and local people? What are these tensions, if any and can you offer specific examples?
5. What do you feel is the largest challenge for INGOs operating in Vietnam?
6. Do you have any suggestions for INGOs looking to operate in Vietnam?
7. What do you feel is the biggest benefit to operating an INGO in Vietnam?
8. Do you see any of the relationships between INGOs in Vietnam and local or national forces as part of larger patterns or trends? (ie; are similar challenges faced by INGOs in other developing nations)
9. In your opinion, how would an INGO, like Project Gaia, (organization that provides alcohol fuel and stoves to the developing world) be received by the people of Vietnam?
10. Do you have any additional thoughts?

Thank you for your time.

### Questions for local organizers:

1. Please describe your involvement with local and international organizations?
  - a. What sorts of organizations do you typically work with?
2. How would you describe partnerships between local organizations and INGOs in Vietnam?
3. Do you see any specific power structures within local/international partnerships in Vietnam?
4. What would you say is the biggest challenge in terms of establishing effective partnerships between local and international organizations in Vietnam?
5. What do you think is the biggest benefit to encouraging partnerships between local organizations and INGOs in Vietnam?
6. Do you notice any tensions between INGOs and local people/organizations in Vietnam? What are these tensions, if any, and can you offer specific examples?
7. Do you see any of the relationships between INGOs in Vietnam and local organizations as part of larger patterns or trends? (ie; are similar challenges faced by INGOs/local organizations in other developing nations)

8. In your opinion, how would an INGO, like Project Gaia, (organization that provides alcohol fuel and stoves to the developing world) be received by the people or organizations of Vietnam?
9. Do you have any additional thoughts?

Thank you for your time.

## Appendix 2: Interview with Project Gaia

Interview will take approximately 30 minutes to 1hour and will be open-ended questions focused on PGI as an organization. A tape recorder will be used to record answers.

1. What would you say are your most significant challenges operating as an INGO?
2. Are there any challenges that you would argue are common across all of the different countries where you work?
3. How does globalization affect your work?
4. What are the conditions that you see as ideal for operating within a country?
5. Is there anything that would stop you from operating within a country?
6. What is your strategy for working across borders and cultures?
7. How effective do you feel your strategies would be within the context of Vietnam's government, which places regulations on INGOs?
8. Would you be open to partnering with a local government organization in Vietnam?
9. Could you imagine PGI operating in Vietnam? Can you think of anything that would have to happen before you would operate there (ie; any logistical obstacles that would need to be overcome)?
10. Do you have any additional thoughts?

Thank you for your time.

### Appendix 3: Interview with Mr. Phat

1. What do you see as the most significant challenge for INGOs attempting to operate in Vietnam or in Xeo Tram Hamlet?
2. What would you think would be the biggest challenge for PGI if they were to operate in Xeo Tram Hamlet?
3. Do you foresee any sources of conflict between the local government, or people and PGI?
4. Do you think there would be any barriers created by the Vietnamese government that would prevent PGI from operating in Xeo Tram Hamlet?
5. What do you think would be the biggest advantage to having PGI operate in Xeo Tram Hamlet?
6. Have the people of Xeo Tram Hamlet worked with INGOs before? If so, what were their perceptions of these INGOs?
7. How do you think that the local people might perceive PGI? What were your thoughts after the Cook stove testing and interviews?
8. Do you have any additional thoughts?

Thank you for your time.

## Appendix 4: Focus Group Questions

Focus Group 1: Meeting of interested Xêo Tram Hamlet Women's Union representatives at Hòa An College of Rural Development on January 2<sup>nd</sup> to introduce project and recruit participants for kitchen performance test

### **Goals: Introduce project and recruit participants**

### **Script and Procedure:**

Thank you for attending. Today we will be discussing your current cooking practices. I will first ask you some questions to learn more about the types of foods that you cook, the kind of pots that you use, and the stoves that are common here. I will also be demonstrating a new stove, showing how it works, and telling you more about the fuel that is used within it.

### General Cooking Questions for Group

1. What kinds of stoves do all of you use? Do you generally use wood? Or is it a combination of wood and LPG? Do you use biogas?
2. Why do you use these particular stoves?
3. Do you use specific stoves for certain cooking tasks?
4. What kinds of pots are usually used for cooking here (e.g. round or flat bottom, metal or ceramic, etc.)?
5. What are the pots made out of?
6. What types of foods/drinks do you usually make? /What is a typical meal?
7. How often do you boil water?
8. How often do you make rice?
9. How many meals do you cook a day?
10. When you cook, what other things are you usually doing? (Do you socialize, watch children, etc.)
11. How would you describe your experience with cooking?
12. Are there any concerns with your particular stoves?
13. Is air quality a problem of concern in your home? In this hamlet?

### Stove Demonstration:

1. Pour ethanol (holding the canister at an angle and touching the top of the ethanol bottle to the canister), make sure to wipe the canister clean after pouring the fuel
2. Light ethanol in canister, and then blow out to demonstrate safety
3. Light stove
4. show simmer and high power functions, boil tea

Statistics on Fuel Safety/Performance: This stove has been tested in the United States and is shown to be safer than LPG fuel. It is made with alcohol fuel, and although you should not drink it, it will not kill you if you do. In addition, alcohol fires can be put out with water, unlike gas fires.

The only safety precautions that go along with this stove are that you are not supposed to pour the fuel into the top of the stove or over an open flame. If you have an empty bottle with a small mouth, the chemistry of ethanol could cause an explosion. You are also not supposed to drink the fuel.

When you are cooking with the stove, the base does not get hot, and it will not burn you. You can easily turn the stove on and off using just this switch.

One liter of the fuel fills the whole canister and is enough to cook three meals a day for a family of five.

#### Explain ethanol fuel:

You might be wondering how you get the fuel for this stove. If there is enough interest in the stove and the fuel, some test stoves could be funded through a development project. If I could find a grant or funding with the assistance of a development organization called Project Gaia, local community members could be helped to build a microdistillery (show picture of floor plan, shed). A microdistillery uses a process similar to the one that is used to make rice wine, but involves extra heat. The extra heat would turn the drinking alcohol into a higher grade that can be used for fuel (show pictures of distillation process).

It doesn't have to be rice that makes the alcohol fuel. It can also be water hyacinths, the fibers around sugarcane, sugarcane itself, cassava, and many other crops. Basically, it is anything that is starch or sugar based, as these are the crops that can be turned into alcohol fuels. It just has to be a material that we can find enough of to supply enough fuel for the needs of the hamlet.

The production of ethanol also produces what are called co-products. These are solid materials that can be used as animal feed, fertilizer or as fuel for the distillery (show integrated process picture).

#### Questions After the Demo and Explanation

1. What do you like about the stove? What do you dislike about it?
2. Do you have any concerns about the stove? What are they?
3. Could you see yourself cooking a meal on it? What would you cook?

#### What Questions do you have for me?

#### Questions that might be asked by Xêo Tram Women:

1. Does this fuel explode?
2. How do I use the stove?
3. How much does it cost to buy the stove? The fuel?
4. How long will the stove last?
5. How long will the fuel last?
6. Will we save money using the stove?
7. Where can I get the fuel?



8. How does a distillery work?
9. What does it look like?
10. How would you install a distillery here?
11. Who would operate the distillery?
12. What crops can be used to make ethanol?

### Volunteers

Over the next ten days, I will be gathering more information about how you feel about this stove. If two biogas users and two wood users would be interested in learning more about the stove, and participating in a study, which would involve cooking on the stove, please stay here and I will give you some more information. Participants will have the opportunity to cook meals with me, to participate in another focus group, and will receive small gifts at the end of the study.

\*\*Responses to each question will be recorded separately in field notebook

### Focus Group 2

Meeting at Hòa An's College of Rural Development with study participants on January 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> at the conclusion of the study. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss general reflections and ideas for the future.

**Goals: To gather women's thoughts about the stove and the study, brainstorm ideas for the future, and distribute gifts**

### **Script/Procedure:**

Thank you all for participating in my study. I would first just like to ask you about your general reactions to the tests and to the stove. What did you like, dislike, etc.?

### Specific Questions About the Stove:

1. Do you think the stove could improve the air in your home? If yes, how?
2. What would you consider to be a low price for the ethanol stove?
3. How high of a price would you pay for the ethanol stove?
4. If micro-credit were available, would you use it to finance the stove?
5. What determines your choice of fuel?
6. What would cause you to make ethanol the fuel that you use most often?
7. Would you buy ethanol if it were available? Why or why not?

### What's Next for Xêo Tram Hamlet?

In general, what would you like to see in the future in terms of cooking in Xêo Tram Hamlet?

### Specific Questions:

1. What do you think about these ethanol stoves compared to the VACB model? Would you like to have one more than the other or both? Do you think one would be easier to implement and to teach?
2. What do you think about the idea of a distillery? Would you be open to having a distillery in your hamlet or in the village?
3. In your current farming practices (if you farm or work on a farm) do you know of anything that gets wasted or dumped or that you do not use (fruit waste, rice husks, etc.)?
4. Are water hyacinths a problem here on the rivers? Do you think they could be harvested for making ethanol fuel?
5. Do you feel that there is any way for you, as women, to get involved with making ethanol fuel? Or teaching people about the ethanol stoves?

### Closing Remarks

Any final questions or thoughts? Thank you all so much for your time and your help. I will share my study with my peers and faculty at Gettysburg College. I may also publish my paper in a journal and will share it with the faculty at the College of Rural Development, so that if you are interested, you can see it there. Finally, I will share my research with Project Gaia, an organization in the US that brings these CleanCook stoves and ethanol fuel to countries across the world. Thank you again for participating. *Distribute gifts.* \*\*Responses to each question will be recorded separately in field notebook.

## Appendix 5: Questionnaires

Questions below are loosely based on procedures outlined by the Aprovecho Laboratory, an organization that designs, tests, and implements improved cookstoves in over 60 countries.

This is a four-part questionnaire and cooking test. Part 1 will take about 20 minutes. Parts 2 and 3 will vary based on the amount of time it takes to cook a meal on the primary stove and CleanCook stove. Part 4 will take about 30-40 minutes.

**HH Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time Start:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Part 1: Pre-test Questions**

#### Preliminary Questions about Household

1. List gender and age of HH members:

1. Boys 0-14:
2. Girls 0-14
3. Men 15-59:
4. Men over 59:
5. Women 15-59:
6. Women over 59:

2. Primary income generating activities (circle one)

1. Farming only—List Crops:
2. Wage labor only
3. Farming and wage labor
4. Shopkeeping
5. Farming and shop-keeping
6. Other - \_\_\_\_\_

#### Questions about primary cookstove, cooking practices, and fuel

3. Primary Stove Type

1. Wood
2. Biogas
3. LPG
4. Other

4. Whose job is it to obtain cooking fuel?

1. The boys (0-14)
2. The girls (0-14)
3. The men (15-59)
4. The men (over 59)
5. The women (15-59)
6. The women (over 59)
7. Anyone who is available
8. Other response:

5. Who does most of the cooking on your primary stove?

1. The boys (0-14)
2. The girls (0-14)
3. The men (15-59)
4. The men (over 59)
5. The women (15-59)
6. The women (over 59)
7. Anyone who is available
8. Other response:

6. Do any other members of your family cook with your primary stove?

1. Never/ Rarely
2. Sometimes
3. Often

7. Are any members of your family near your primary stove when cooking is taking place?

1. Never/Rarely
2. Sometimes
3. Often

8. If answered sometimes or often, which family members are generally near the stove? :

1. The boys (0-14)
2. The girls (0-14)
3. The men (15-59)
4. The men (over 59)
5. The women (15-59)
6. The women (over 59)

9. Is your primary stove used for any purpose other than cooking food for the family (circle as appropriate)?

1. Preparing food for livestock
2. Preparing food/drink for commercial sale
3. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

10. On a scale of 1 to 4 (with 1 being *unsatisfied*, 2 being *somewhat satisfied*, 3 being *satisfied*, and 4 being *very satisfied*) how satisfied are you with the following aspects of your current stove?

A. The smoke emitted from the stove:

1      2      3      4

B. The taste of the food cooked on the stove:

1      2      3      4

C. The time it takes to clean the stove and pots:

1      2      3      4

D. The time it takes to cook food:

1      2      3      4

E. How often you have to repair the stove:

1      2      3      4

F. The safety of the stove

1      2      3      4

G. Controlling the temperature of the stove:

1      2      3      4

H. The stove overall:

1      2      3      4

11. Do you have any of the following problems with your current stoves? (Circle Those That Apply)

- A. The stove causes burns
- B. The pots are not stable
- C. The pots do not fit
- D. Fire turns pots black
- E. Stove makes a lot of smoke
- F. Stove takes long to get hot
- G. Stove is hard to start
- H. Fire goes out easily
- I. Hard to control temperature
- J. It is difficult to cook certain foods (list locally appropriate foods below):

- K. Stove uses too much wood
- L. Stove breaks easily
- M. Stove needs a lot of maintenance
- N. Other :

O. No problems with the stove (circle if none of the above are selected – confirm with respondent)

12. Do you have any of the following problems with your current fuel sources? (Circle Those That Apply)

- A. The fuel is too expensive
- B. The fuel does not last long enough
- C. I feel that the fuel is not safe
- D. The fuel is scarce, hard to find, or unavailable
- E. The fuel emits too much smoke
- F. The fuel emits a smell
- G. The fuel affects the taste of my food
- H. Other:

I. No problems with the fuel (circle if none of the above are selected—confirm with respondent)

13. How would you rate the overall safety of your current stove?

1. Very Unsafe      2. Unsafe      3. Safe      4. Very Safe

Please explain:

14. Have you ever considered changing your stove? (y/n)

15. Have you ever considered changing your fuel type? (y/n)



**Observational Data (Pre Stove Test):**

16. Where is the kitchen? (check the answer that applies)

Inside, but separate from the living room\_\_\_\_\_

Inside, in the main living space\_\_\_\_\_

Outside of the house\_\_\_\_\_

Other:\_\_\_\_\_

17. What other stoves, besides the primary stove, are present? (check the answers that apply)

Wood\_\_\_\_\_

LPG\_\_\_\_\_

Biogas\_\_\_\_\_

Electric cooker \_\_\_\_\_

Other\_\_\_\_\_

18. Are people besides the primary cook entering the room or near the stove?

19. Other Observations:

## **Part 2: Questions Asked During Kitchen Performance Test for Primary Cookstove**

20. Stove Type (check the option that applies):

A. Wood\_\_\_\_\_

B. Biogas\_\_\_\_\_

### Questions about the primary stove as a cultural space

21. In general, when you are cooking a meal on the stove, do you do other things as well? (i.e.; talk with friends, watch children, do other chores)

22. How would you describe your experience with cooking? (i.e.; fun, tedious, etc.)

### Questions about user preference of primary stove

23. What do you like about your primary cookstove?

24. What do you like about the fuel that you currently use?

25. What do you dislike about your primary cookstove?

26. What do you dislike about the fuel that you currently use?

27. What would you change about your primary stove?

28. Taking fuel collection, cooking, and clean-up into consideration, do you feel that operating your current stove is easy?

1. Very Difficult      2. Difficult      3. Easy      4. Very Easy

### **Part 3: Questions Asked During Kitchen Performance Test for CleanCook Ethanol Stove**

#### Questions about user preference of ethanol stove

29. What do you like about the CleanCook Stove?

30. What do you like about the ethanol fuel?

31. What do you dislike about the CleanCook Stove?

32. What do you dislike about the ethanol fuel?

33. What would you change about the CleanCook Stove?

34. Taking fuel collection, cooking, and clean-up into consideration, do you feel that operating the CleanCook stove is easy?

1. Very Difficult

2. Difficult

3. Easy

4. Very Easy

Questions about ethanol stove and alteration of space

35. How do you think using the CleanCook stove would change the way that you cook? In other words, how do you think it might affect the things that you do while cooking or the experiences you have with cooking?

## **Part 4: Questions to Ask After Kitchen Performance Test with CleanCook is Complete**

### Preference Questions

36. What dishes do you think would be best suited to prepare on the CleanCook Stove? Why?

37. What dishes do you think could not be prepared on the CleanCook Stove? Why?

38. Do you think that the ethanol-fueled stove impacts the taste of your food?

1. No                      2. Somewhat                      3. Yes

39. Were you bothered by the smell of the ethanol fuel?

1. No, I did not smell anything                      2. Somewhat                      3. Yes

### Fuel Safety and Health Questions

40. After cooking with ethanol, how safe do you feel that it when compared to biofuels?

1. Very Unsafe                      2. Unsafe                      3. Safe                      4. Very Safe

41. How safe do you feel that ethanol is when compared to wood?

1. Very Unsafe                      2. Unsafe                      3. Safe                      4. Very Safe

42. To what extent is air quality (pollution from smoke) a problem in your home currently?

1. Not an issue                      2. Somewhat of an issue                      3. An important issue

43. Do you think the CleanCook stove could improve the air in your home? Explain.

1. No                      2. Somewhat                      3. Yes

44. Do you think the CleanCook stove could improve your family's health in any way? Explain.

1. No                      2. Somewhat                      3. Yes

Stove Price Questions

45. What would you consider to be a low price for the ethanol stove?

46. How high of a price would you pay for the ethanol stove?

47. If micro-credit were available, would you use it to finance the stove?

1. No                      2. Maybe                      3. Yes

Fuel Questions

48. What determines your choice of fuel?

1. Price of fuel
2. Price of stove
3. Availability
4. Other \_\_\_\_\_

49. If you had a CleanCook Stove, what would cause you to make ethanol the fuel that you use most often?

1. A low cost of ethanol
2. A low cost of ethanol stove
3. Availability of ethanol
4. Healthier
5. Ethanol cooks food faster
6. Availability of stove
7. Safer
8. Other

50. Under what conditions would you be likely to purchase ethanol for cooking (i.e. what would have to happen for you to buy ethanol fuel)?

51. As I explained in our focus-group session, a microdistillery would be used to produce the ethanol. It is basically the same process that is used to make rice wine, but involves a few extra steps and some extra heat. Would you be open to having a distillery in your hamlet or in the village?

1. Yes      2. No      3. Unsure

Why:

#### Questions about Decision-making

52. Who in your family usually decides what fuel to purchase? (i.e.; do you decide? Does your husband decide?) Please explain:

53. Who in your family decided to purchase or install your current stove? Please explain:



54. If you had the chance to buy a CleanCook stove who would you talk to about buying it? (For example, would you discuss it with your family, friends, husband, etc?) Please explain:

Questions about the Future of Ethanol use in Xêo Tram

55. Do you think it is easy to understand how the CleanCook stove works and operate it on your own?

1. Very Difficult      2. Difficult      3. Reasonable      4. Very easy

56. Do you feel that you could teach others how to use the CleanCook stove?

1. No      2. Maybe      3. Yes

57. Do you think there is a chance for women to be involved in sharing CleanCook stove technology with the community?

1. No      2. Maybe      3. Yes

Additional Questions for Biogas Users

58. Do you think that the CleanCook or the VACB model would be easier to teach to others?  
Why?

1. Ethanol
2. VACB

Why:

59. Compare the CleanCook stove to the VACB model. Which one do you think would be better for you and why?

1. Ethanol
2. VACB

Why: