

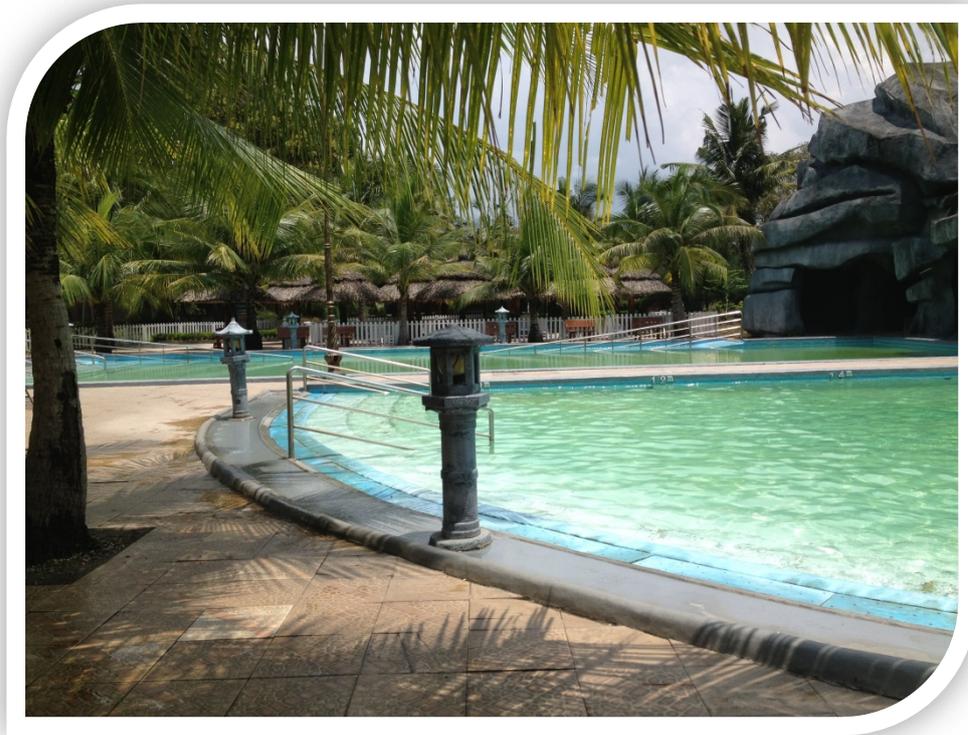


**Vietnam August and November 2014**

**End and a beginning**

Gerd Sävenstedt

In August Jan Dahl and myself went to Vietnam where we met with a group from An Giang. They had booked a hotel somewhere close to the Sea- but as we worked all days we had not seen the pool area until we waited for the car to come and bring us back to Ho Chi Minh



*This is what we missed on the premissis*

For three days we met to prepare the new application. Professor Jan Dahl, I, professor Ha, Mrs Pham Xuan, Ms Kim Vo, Mrs. Dinh Thi Viet Huynh, Ms. Anh and partly Mrs. Xuan from People's Committee.

The project paid for three of them and the rest was on the expenses of An Giang, which for me indicates that they find it to be important.

To meet outside the administrative centers is good, you can fully concentrate on what you are going to do. To meet like this was also a way of talking about the project time and see which parts need to be further developed and match into the overall efforts that are made in the area.

Many things have happened in An Giang during the time for the project. One big change is that no rice husk is any longer dumped into the rivers/canals in the Mekong delta and small private initiative are taken to use rice husk for briquettes and pellets. But these days it was time to look forward.

There is no English version available of the project proposal at ICLD's web, which is hard for us to understand as the application shall be done in close cooperation between partners.

So of course I needed to translate it. The method we used during these days was that we started with discussion in English, then they continues in Vietnamese for ending the discussion in English. They were also the ones who wrote the text which worked as a base for the proposal.

During these days Ms. Anh from the University in Ho Chi Minh joined us. She is the contact person for the Swedish Energy Agency, SEA and a member of the, Center of Excellence, COE team. Her participation strengeneth the group. Mrs. Xuan from People's Committee also participated. She was in Piteå in May this year. It is good that People's Committee have people engaged in this project.

It was really good to have professor Dahl on this trip, besides his contribution in the discussions it also gave the two professors time to continue discussions started in Piteå in May,

The last evening Mr. Nang and his daughter came to eat dinner with us. It was really appreciated that he came 2,5 hours' drive one way to meet with us and join us for dinner.



## November

### Reporting time

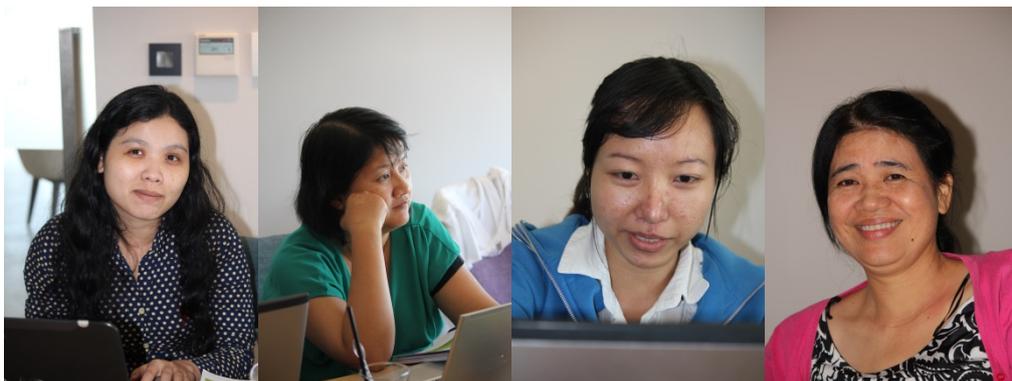
**We didn't know that this would be an adventures journey when we tired checked in at Liberty hotel in the center of Ho Chi Minh.**

For us it was important to both start and to close the project together. To do it in a relaxed way, if possible away from meetings, and people who think that you have more important things to do....

Åsa Wiman, Jan Dahl and I went to Ho Chi Minh a bit earlier than Peter Roslund for some working days together with professor Ha, Miss Kim Vo, Mrs Xuan and Ms Oanh. Ms Anh also joined us for a while. It was to revise at the rice waste to energy plan and to prepare for the reporting to ICLD.

Both Åsa and Jan are very skilled and experienced when it comes to working with strategic plans. It is the first time a document like this is produced in a province in Vietnam so it is also a learning process.

In the process the target groups have been involved. This approach is a bit new for them. We spend one and a half day for revising the plan that will go to PPC for approval.



*Ms Kim Vo*

*Professor Ha*

*Ms Oanh*

*Mrs Xuan*

It is valuable to have time together for preparing for the reporting. The template for the reporting is not translated into English, why I had had to do that. Some of the questions led to a lot of discussions and I think that the most valuable thing was that it gave us time to address things in a very prestige less way.

### What are the benefits?

To work in international projects is to be on a journey together and even if you have planned you don't really know what will happen on the journey and at the stations. We come from different parts of the world living in different contexts and have to learn both from each other, about each other and together.

Mother earth is quite small but to care for it is our common responsibility. It was here we met, in sustainability. The Vietnamese want to turn rice waste to a resource instead of a heavy burden. In Piteå we have the forest and in Vietnam they have the rice. Our development of turning residues to energy is quite well developed and we have had research in the area for decades. We also are experienced by working with strategic plans where we have involved the target groups. For us

working locally it brings new prospective, we have faced issues in a completely different context and we have also become impressed of the knowledge and ambition we have met.

We have met people open to share with us at many different levels and I think that even lasting relations have developed. We have also been able to ask each other more difficult questions.



Åsa Wikman and Jan Dahl

Tuesday evening Mr. Nang invited us for dinner to a quite nice restaurant where he brought both his daughter and niece. His daughter had just got a University degree in Environmental Economy and was going to start her career as manager for a business in the area.

Mr. Nang was very open minded about our cooperation and what stayed in my memory from his reflections was that he appreciated that we took decision together, that we were patient and could wait for the process. He also said that one thing that he brought with him to his new position was transparency in the organization. This was something that would be a part of his management.



*Mr. Nang, Mrs Xuans daughter and Mrs Xuan*

## Straight to Long Xuyen

We picked up Peter early Wednesday morning and went straight the 5 hours drive to Long Xuyen for the final Steering group meeting and a dissemination seminar in Chau Thanh, the district involved in the project.



Dr. Binh participated and presented the evaluation report made by him and Mrs. Carina Ingesson.

The conclusion was due to the objectives that the knowledge and understanding in all the interview groups (target groups) was good and information shared among each other so even people who had not participated in the training know a lot about global sustainability. There was also an increased awareness regarding waste as an energy source and knowledge in environmental management has improved and useful for future development in An Giang

The women's participation has increased and reaches in total almost the target of 30%. The methods by involving target groups have been one of the most important lessons learnt in the project and also that there has been clear strategic targets.

There were also recommendations from the evaluators as

- To start very soon an implementation phase based on the results from the project
- To build a model for turning rice waste into energy, in order to further increase awareness, and encourage people to invest into green energy
- To involve people who have the potential to stay in the project on a long-term base. Change of people would most probably affect the results.



*Dr. Binh from An Giang University presented the evaluation of the project.*



After the Steering group meeting Piteå presented a gift to An Giangs Peoples Committee,

A table set produced in Vietnam and with an text that will remind them about our cooperation even after it is closed. When I look at the picture I am reminded about the pictures from the first meeting in 2011. Then it was quite formal and you can feel the atmosphere of our cooperation in the pictures.

### **The University Library**

In 2013 we visited the Library at the University and they wanted to have a Piteå/LTU corner with books and some information. So this time we brought some books and information material. We thought that we just could pass by and drop it, but we should have known better.

Mr Dahl who represented the University didn't feel well so he went to the hotel to rest.



In the afternoon we visited a very old kingdom not far away where there was a monastery and later on an artist who worked with art on banana leaves.

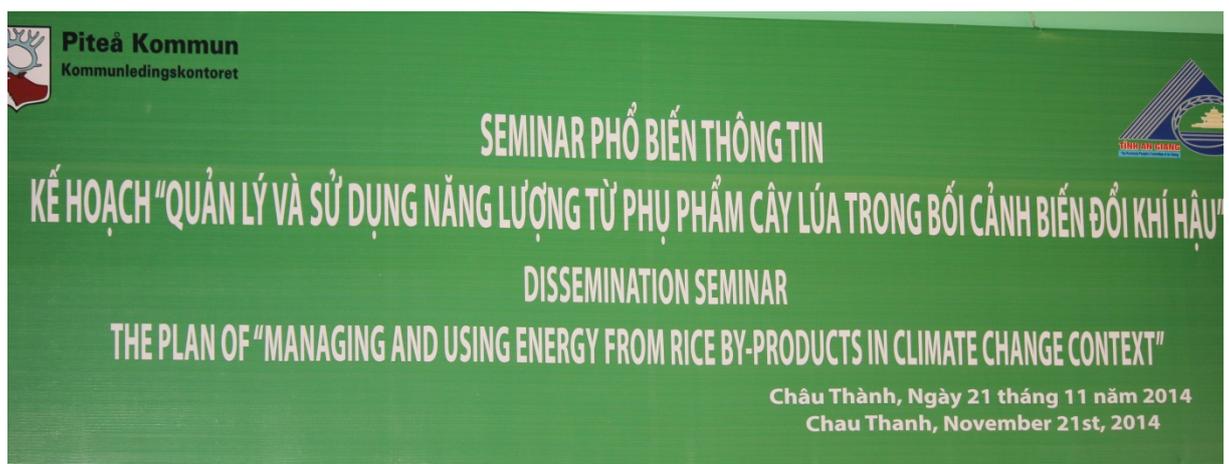
When we came back Mr. Dahl had been hospitalized.

- Are you going to see him was the first question we got from our Vietnamese colleagues when we came back. After talking to Mr. Dahl on the phone we decided it was better to come after the dissemination seminar in Chau Thanh the following day.

The following morning Kim was there in the lobby to pick us up, but it was a tired girl there waiting for us.

- What's wrong I asked and when she started to talk I realized how cultural wrong we had acted. Of course you go to the hospital when you have a relative there. Someone has to care for him. That was what Kim had done the whole night, sitting there to assist him in his needs. We realized we couldn't go there until after the seminar.

#### Dissemination seminar in Chau Thanh



A great number of people had turned up and this time it was a great number of women participating. Mrs. Xuan and Mrs. Ha were the two main presenters of the results from the project and how they wanted to continue. Many of participants had been involved in the project in different capacities. Peter also explained why we were there and why we worked together. Even TV was there to air what was happening.

In the discussion that followed the women were very active where they both supported the ongoing development but also had relevant questions.

- To grow mushrooms- great but how to we deal with the market? - We are only two at our farm so we have no other choice than burning – we can't afford hiring anyone. We need to have access to machines that we can rent.....



When we came back to Long Xuyen we went straight to the hospital where they prepared for sending Mr. Dahl to the biggest governmental hospital in HCMC by ambulance. They wanted a second opinion.

Mrs Ha, Ms Oanh and I went with him. Ambulance in high speed in a Vietnamese context is an average of 65 km an hour. Instead of a five hours' drive it became a three hours' drive.



To see an emergency room at a big hospital in Vietnam was an experience, even if I had seen a number of them in different African countries.

In the emergency room we were in I counted to 60 beds and 63 people in them. There were people from traffic accidents, beaten women, people in great pain and some that I didn't know if they were dead or alive. The doctors examined them , diagnosed them and nowhere was there any privacy. But on the other hand almost everyone had someone there with them. But Mr. Dahl was lucky, he got a small room close by that he only shared with one person.

I don't know if we would have made it without Mrs. Ha who took care of everything and for us the big question was operation or not. Even if the hospital seemed to be well equipped I am sure you feel very far from home.

In the end they had decided that he could go – but to see a doctor as soon as he came home.













