

FOREIGN NON-GOVERNMENTAL AID AND DEVELOPMENT IN PHU THO PROVINCE

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Received: 12 November 2021; Revised: 20 December 2021; Accepted: 24 December 2021

Abstract

The impacts of foreign non-government aid theories will be used to analyze and assess the important effects of those funds on socio-economic provincial development and households' livelihoods. We especially focus on how poor and disadvantaged household groups in Phu Tho can improve their living standard after being benefited was from those supports. In the past, some NGOs have transferred their funds to other provinces that are poorer than Phu Tho, so there was a decrease in this aid. The full assessment of foreign non-governmental aid funds, their impacts on the provincial socio-economic development in general, especially poor households in Phu Tho province, has not yet been fully evaluated. The article proposes some solutions mobilizing foreign non-governmental aid funds in Phu Tho in the future.

Keywords: *Impact, foreign non-government aid funds, development, Phu Tho province.*

1. Introduction

In 1986 Vietnam began its 'Doi Moi process,' which is a process of innovation. Over the past 35 years, the 'Doi Moi process' has transformed Vietnam from one of the poorest countries in the world to a lower-middle-income country. Besides internal factors (such as the Central Communist Party's policy and, Vietnamese laws and other relevant policies, and businesses' capacity, etc.), foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have the support and contribution in the process of developing the country. This improvement has helped Vietnam switch from the category of LDC (Least Developed Countries) into an average-income-level country. Apart from internal energy and resources, external aid has made

a great contribution to building and boosting the Vietnamese economy.

Foreign non-governmental aid is understood as non-refundable aid, not-for-profit purposes, provided by donors to realize developing and humanitarian goals for Vietnam. Foreign non-government aid is provided by NGOs, other foreign organizations and individuals, and overseas Vietnamese who have goodwill to provide non-refundable aid, not for profit, to support the development of Vietnam. These efforts include supporting NGOs, support for humanitarian goals, and support for social, construction, and economic projects in Vietnam towards long-term sustainable development (Government, 2009).

One of the priorities for using foreign non-governmental aid is specified in the Government's Decree No. 93/2009/ND-CP dated October 22, 2009, on promulgating the Regulation on the management and use of foreign non-governmental aid. (currently Decree No. 80/2020/ND-CP of the Government on management and use of the aid not in the form of official development assistance of foreign agencies, organizations, and individuals for Vietnam) including (i) Agricultural and rural development (including agriculture, irrigation, forestry, and fisheries) combined with poverty reduction; (ii) Development of social infrastructure (health, education and training, labor, employment, population); (iii) Environmental protection and management of natural resources, prevention and mitigation of natural disasters and epidemics consequences; (iv) Strengthen institutional, managerial, technical and human resource development capacity; technology transfer, improve research and implementation capacity; (v) Humanitarian activities.

Based on the secondary data on the aid in Phu Tho province from 2013 to 2020, the article proposes solutions to mobilize foreign non-governmental aid funds in the province in the future.

2. Background

Related research in recent years can be classified into three main groups, including:

(i) Research on foreign NGOs and the role of foreign NGOs in mobilizing and deploying aid capital for socio-economic development; (ii) Research on the role and effectiveness of aid capital of foreign NGOs in socio-economic development; (iii) Studies on the experience of managing foreign NGOs and attracting this aid from these organizations for socio-economic development in some countries around the world. Below are some

typical researches abroad according to the three groups mentioned above.

2.1. International researches related to the topic

Michael Edwards and David Hulme (1996), *Too Close for Comfort? NGO, States, and Donors* are research focusing on regional relationships among NGOs, foreign governments with the States, and donors. The author pointed out that in the development process of the world today, non-governmental organizations are showing more and more their roles clearly, especially in relief, poverty alleviation, and development. At the same time, it also highlights the reciprocal interactions of multilateral and bilateral donors with governments around the world [1].

Kendall, J. and Martin, K., (1999) *Evaluation and the Voluntary (Non-profit) Sector: Emerging Issues: Article sees Review assessment of foreign NGOs from the perspective of non-profit and voluntary.* It emphasizes the role of non-profit organizations as necessary and appropriate for the development and meeting the needs of society when the market mechanism cannot meet them.

Mawdsley, E. *et al.*, (2005) *Trust, accountability, and face to face interaction in North-South relations: Authors focused on exploiting the cooperation angle between NGOs of the North and the South through enhancing dialogue and cooperation to improve efficiency and accountability, and at the same time, making the implementation process easier and monitor projects more effectively and meaningfully.* Unlike many scholars who focus a lot on research and recommend the use of quantitative methods, indicators, objectives, and outputs, these authors believed that the effectiveness and impact in the process of cooperation between Northern and Southern NGOs can be greatly improved through direct interaction to

strengthen open dialogue between partners, enhance accountability, and monitoring projects progress will be more effective and meaningful [3].

Morton, B., (2013) *An Overview of International NGOs in Development Cooperation: Through the study of some typical large NGOs in the development field along with a comparison of international NGOs and national civic organizations.* The author showed that international NGOs have a much larger scale of operational resources than the aid budgets of some member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); international organizations with diverse areas of operation and fields of activity from humanitarian aid and disaster emergency to policy advocacy, research at the international level, community development, ...[4].

From the above studies, the great role of NGOs and foreign non-governmental aid funds in the socio-economic development of developing and poor countries. These studies also show that short-term impacts on the lives (livelihoods) of beneficiaries and long-term impacts of projects; evaluate the effectiveness and level of achievement of the foreign non-governmental aid funds project's objectives [1-4]. The approach to the poor is the most important, and the assessment of the effectiveness and level of achievement of the foreign non-governmental aid funds project's objectives; accessibility to the poor; short-term impacts on the lives (livelihoods) of beneficiaries, and long-term impacts of projects.

2.2. Researches in Vietnam related to the topic

Nguyen Kim Ha (2001), *Lessons from 10-year experience: A strategic analysis of the methods and activities of foreign NGOs in Vietnam in 1990-1999 period.* This is a required study of the Foreign NGO data Center, is the first systematic review of the performance of

foreign NGOs in Vietnam during the 1990-1999 period. This study describes the changes in the activities of foreign NGOs in the period after Vietnam implemented the "Doi moi" policy immediately; summarizes the models and approaches of the NGOs.

PACCOM, *Manual for Foreign Non-Governmental Organizations in Vietnam* provides general information on the operation and aid status of foreign NGOs, including the history of relationships with foreign NGOs. Foreign NGOs since 1975, presenting the legal regulations and guiding documents for the operation and aid of foreign NGOs. The study also provides contact information of relevant agencies and localities, the situation and needs of local cooperation, to guide the activities of foreign NGOs in Vietnam. [6]

National Academy of Public Administration (2004), *Textbook of state management for NGOs.* This study gives an overview document on NGOs, foreign NGOs in Vietnam, which refers to the concept of NGOs; formation process, the basis of formation and classification of organizations; tasks, nature, and content of activities and roles of NGOs [7]. Regarding foreign NGOs, the study presents the process of foreign NGOs entering Vietnam operating in different stages (before 1975, from 1975 to 2000).

Dinh Quy Do (2012), *International NGOs: Outstanding issues, fundamental trends and major impacts: A descriptive study of the formation and development of these organizations, referring to the history of these organizations.* The author identified these issues including: The formation and development of international NGOs, conceptual survey and synthesis and classification of international NGOs; A case study on several typically international non-governmental organizations operating in the fields of economy, society, religion, human rights and environment, thereby presenting some outstanding features, impacts of international NGOs on the world economy and politics.

Can Viet Anh (2009), strengthening the state management of foreign NGOs. This study provides some information on the activities and aid of foreign NGOs in Hanoi city. The study affirms the positive and effective aspects to the socio-economic development of the city, but there are some remaining negative aspects, which focus on security, politics, society and cultural issues, and foreign affairs; In addition, highlight the shortcomings in the management of activities and implementation of foreign non-governmental projects in Vietnam [9]. Besides affirming the positive contributions, the activities of foreign NGOs still have some negative aspects.

Studies on NGOs and foreign non-governmental aid in Vietnam focus on analyzing and evaluating the results and effectiveness of state management in aid-receiving activities, assessing the role of NGOs operating in Vietnam in the past [6-10]. In general, foreign non-governmental aid sources have an influence and contribution of aid capital in the socio-economic development of localities. However, there are also some remaining shortcomings in management.

3. Issues of foreign non-governmental aid in Phu Tho province

3.1. Phu Tho overview

Phu Tho is located in the northern midland region, Phu Tho borders Tuyen Quang and Yen Bai provinces to the north, Hanoi to the south, Son La and Hoa Binh provinces to the west, and Vinh Phuc province to the east. Phu Tho is 80 km from the center of Hanoi, 60 km from Noi Bai airport, more than 200 km from Lao Cai border crossing and Thanh Thuy border crossing, 170 km from Hai Phong, and 200 km from Cai Lan port. Phu Tho takes the role of being a bridge for economic - cultural - scientific and technical exchange between the Northern Delta provinces and the Northwest mountainous provinces.

In 2016-2020, Phu Tho's economy continued to grow well, the average economic growth rate of 5 years reached 7,86%. The size of the economy reached VND 41,220 billion (at current prices), ranking top three among the provinces in the Northern midland and mountainous region [11]. The economic structure continues to shift towards progress, in line with the development orientation of Phu Tho. The agriculture, forestry, and fishery sector accounted for 24.15%; industry and construction accounted for 35.66%; the service sector accounted for 40.19%. The program on building a new countryside was vigorously and synchronously implemented, with many models and creative methods.

There are 197 communes, with 2,052 villages and residential gardens in rural areas, 328,563 households, with 1,201,851 people (accounting for 80.98% of the population living in rural areas). There are 18,004 poor households, accounting for 4.34%; the number of near-poor households is 19,020 households, accounting for 4.58% (2020). The structure of occupations of rural households has changed quite quickly from the agricultural, forestry, and fishery sectors to the industrial and service sectors. The average income of rural areas of 35-40 million VND/person/year; per capita income of ethnic minorities was 34.9 million VND.

3.2. Situation of non-governmental aid in Phu Tho province in 2013-2020

* Situation of attracting aid capital from foreign NGOs in Phu Tho province

Phu Tho Department of Foreign Affairs coordinates with the Union of Friendship Organizations of Phu Tho and related units to strengthen exchanges and provide necessary information for NGOs and central agencies to promote the transport of goods and services, source of foreign non-governmental aid for Phu Tho.

Table 1. Foreign non-governmental aid funding in Phu Tho in the period of 2013-2020

Unit: USD

Country \ Year	2013	2015	2017	2019	2020	Average growth (%)
Total	3,054,687	2,703,367	2,395,788	2,961,103	552,897	78.33
The US	37,236	383,354	489,429	506,146	16,882	89.31
Australia	0	112,775	0	42,179	0	-
Germany	4,700	5,100	10,200	1,400	16,000	119.13
Korea	254,285	350,295	168,758	976,867	246,297	99.55
Japan	143,912	103,095	635,462	13,546	28,800	79.47
Sweden	0	12,240	19,558	3,666	9,200	-
Others	2,614,554	1,736,509	1,072,381	1,417,299	235,719	70.91

(Source: Phu Tho Provincial Foreign Affairs Department, 2021)

Compared to other neighboring provinces, in 2013-2017 Vinh Phuc had mobilized 169 programs and projects funded by nearly 100 foreign non-governmental organizations and other donors with a total value of nearly USD 13 million, that number was higher than non-government aid in Phu Tho province [12].

* Attracting aid capital from foreign NGOs in Phu Tho province:

Seeking sponsor partners through coordination with Vietnam Union of Friendship Organizations, Vietnam Fatherland Front, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, foreign diplomatic missions in Vietnam, corporations, and foreign business...

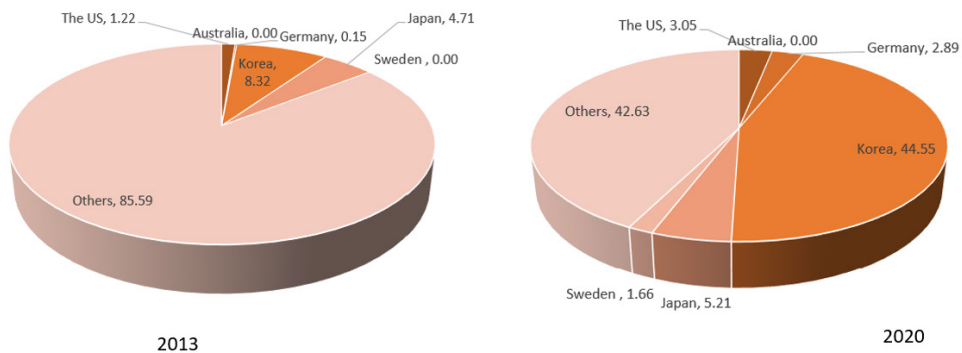


Figure 1. The structures of foreign non-governmental aid funding by countries in Phu Tho 2013 and 2020

(Source: Phu Tho Provincial Foreign Affairs Department, 2021)

In general, aid programs/projects implemented by NGOs have made practical contributions to the implementation of poverty reduction policies, new rural construction, socio-economic development in Phu Tho province. These supports help improving the quality of life for people in remote and disadvantaged areas step by step, capacity training, community awareness to help improve quality of life, and people to escape poverty

sustainably in the past. In addition, the programs and projects also improve the initiative of the province's partners, improve the capacity of local officials to manage and implement projects. Generally, most of the projects are effective, in line with the organization's operational objectives, and the projects have been registered with local authorities. The projects are organized to quickly deploy, the establishment of Management Boards. Project

management is carried out under regulations. All aid sources are made public and transparent. From Figure 1, we can see NGOs' support from Korea gaining to be very important (the percentage of aid value from Korean sponsors has been increasing. In 2013, this contribution was just 8.32 percent, but in 2020 this number was 44.55 percent).

* Actual situation of using aid capital of foreign NGOs in Phu Tho province:

Regarding the number of NGOs and aid value: During 2013-2020, foreign non-governmental organizations, international organizations, foreign representative agencies in Vietnam, foreign companies, and foreign individuals... sponsored about 200 programs, projects, and non-project aid in 13/13 districts, cities, and towns with a total aid value of 552,897 USD in 2020. The average growth was 78.33 percent, compared to the first year of implementing the aid promotion program, the value decreased about 22 percent. Meanwhile, the number of NGOs operating, and the number of programs and projects have not changed remarkably. Although Phu Tho province has paid attention to directing, actively contacted and strengthened cooperation relations with new organizations to mobilize aid, organizations have difficulty in funding, some organizations have changed their sponsoring spots and redirected funding to other more difficult areas; several organizations with inappropriate operation content or in violation of State regulations (LCMS organization – the USA) have been stopped from operating in Phu Tho.

*Monitoring and efficiency of using aid capital of foreign NGOs in Phu Tho:

Phu Tho province had developed and concretized the foreign non-governmental aid promotion program for 2013-2020 in accordance with the provisions of this program as well as the actual situation of the province. Phu Tho promotes the mobilization and attraction of foreign non-governmental aid funds. There are some outcomes below:

The fields of activities of the programs and projects are very diverse and rich, including the fields of agriculture, forestry, and rural development; health and education; social issues; environment; disaster risk reduction and response to climate change... Programs and projects that are most interested and implemented by donors and are most suitable to advocacy orientations and actual needs of the locality are the health and education sectors. The fields of training, vocational training, and career guidance; Remedial war; Culture, sports, and response to climate change have received no aid programs or projects. About the operating spots: Projects focus on supporting rural and mountainous areas, especially poor and remote communes with difficult economic conditions, including districts: Yen Lap, Tan Son, Thanh Son, Cam Khe, Doan Hung.

Benefit from programs that include many target groups, namely: women, children, people with disabilities, farmers, poor households, etc. most are children. There have been many scholarships/gifts given to poor students who have overcome difficulties to study well in Phu Tho province with a total value of over 200,000 USD; several organizations regularly pay attention and sponsor children through scholarship programs, including international SOS; Vietnam - Korea Cultural Exchange Center, Good People International, Kim Man Deok Commemorative Association (Korea)...

There are some positive effects of foreign non-governmental aid in Phu Tho province such as: supporting for rural development and poverty alleviation; overcoming post-war consequences, minimizing effects caused by natural disasters; providing technical guidance and training, transfer of experience, technology, raising people's knowledge, medical care, education universalization; Improving the people's material and spiritual life, ensuring social security, especially for women, children, and ethnic minorities living in remote and extremely difficult areas; contributing to the

sustainable development of the province/locality and helping local households with emergency aid and disaster recovery

However, the number of projects and the amount of funding value were rather low, with a limited geographical area. The impact on the socio-economic development of the province has not been collected effectively. In addition, there are a few negative impacts of foreign non-governmental aid in Phu Tho province that have been recognized, for instance: It caused adverse effects on the security-defense situation, protecting internal politics, national secrets, religion, or ethnicity.

- The implementation of programs and projects in localities is mostly in the form of part-time staff, so the program contents are sometimes not well implemented, the coordination process between donors and the local receiving the project is limited. The project management and implementation of local officials' capacity and the awareness of households. Therefore, the ability to absorb and apply soft skills, experience, and programs the training of the aid project has not been achieved yet.

- Some NGOs are not effective, aid value is low, not continuously according to commitment prolong implementation; some NGOs have just stopped applying for a license to operate in Phu Tho, conducting assessment and surveying the current status, but have not yet provided practical support to the local. In addition, aid mobilization, hand over and use of aid projects have not received attention from local authorities.

4. Direction and solutions of foreign non-governmental aid in Phu Tho Province

4.1. Orientation to ensure livelihoods for the poor from foreign non-governmental aid

- Ensure publicity, transparency, accountability, explanation of the parties, and the participation of the people in the process

of implementing cooperation activities with NGOs.

- Build and strengthen cooperation relations with NGOs and development partners based on Vietnam's foreign policy and guidelines.

- The advocacy and receipt of foreign non-governmental aid must be consistent with Vietnam's regulations, development orientations, and policies of the State of Vietnam and Phu Tho province in each period and each specific field.

4.2. Directions to attract and use aid funds from foreign non-governmental organizations

* Priority:

(i) In terms of educations:

- Building educational infrastructure: Support to build and invest in teaching and learning equipment for preschools, primary schools, and junior high schools; to renovate and upgrade boarding schools for ethnic minorities, a system of boarding and semi-boarding houses; develop a suitable library system to school-level requirements; Creating conditions for the development and replication of educational programs on soft skills for students.

- Support in training and provide information technology equipment for high schools in rural, mountainous, remote, and isolated areas; Foreign aid should support the training of teachers at all levels, with priority given to preschool, primary, and lower secondary school teachers in rural, remote, and ethnic minority areas, and teachers for children with disabilities.

- Building material foundations and providing vocational training equipment for vocational schools and vocational training centers; giving priority to vocational training projects for people with disabilities and children with extremely difficult situations. These supports should associate with job creation for the poor, disadvantaged groups

in society, people with disabilities, helpless orphans, etc., to have jobs and stable incomes.

(ii) In terms of Health care:

- Upgrading, building, and supplying medical equipment for specialized medical facilities at the provincial level; district-level hospitals and healthcare centers, and commune-level health stations to be able to meet people's medical examination and treatment needs in their localities.

- Training of health workers: Support to train health workers through sharing experiences, exchanging methods and skills; grant scholarships to train domestic and foreign medical staff.

(iii) In terms of Agriculture, forestry, fishery, and rural development:

- Support the development of high-tech agriculture, organic agriculture, green agriculture in rural areas and suburban.

- Support to improve farming techniques, livestock and poultry raising, and small-scale aquaculture; improve the capacity to control and manage diseases on plants and animals; environmental management in animal husbandry and fisheries; develop production models that ensure food quality, safety, and hygiene.

- Supporting the development of a network of agricultural, forestry, and fishery extension, training, training, knowledge, and experience sharing for agricultural, forestry, and fishery extension officers.

- Scientific research in agriculture, forestry, fishery, and rural development; support research and application of livestock and crop production to adapt to climate change.

* Priority in Countryside:

- Supporting socio-economic development in ethnic minority areas and developing community-based disaster prevention and mitigation model and suggested activities include vocational training; craft

development; creating job opportunities and non-agricultural supporting microfinance programs; supporting cooperatives, handicraft cooperative groups.

- To develop agricultural, forestry, and fishery extension, those activities should be implemented: supporting the development of production infrastructure such as irrigation works, pumping stations, village roads...; to build an integrated rural development model, developing new rural areas, bring into play the characteristics and advantages of each region, supplement a new rural development model.

- Training medical staffs; supporting schools to train health workers through sharing experiences, exchanging methods developing skills; developing health infrastructure such as upgrading, building, and supplying equipment for provincial-level hospitals and specialized centers, district-level health centers, and commune-level medical stations; supply clean water, improve environmental sanitation.

5. Conclusions

Phu Tho Province has been receiving non-governmental aid for more than 7 years. In this paper, we have discussed the quality of this aid funding on the development. We explore the positive and negative impacts of this aid campaign from 2013 to 2020. This also studies some projects to show the role, influence, and contribution of aid capital of foreign NGOs in supporting the livelihood of poor households in Phu Tho province.

This article proposed several solutions and suggested policies for managers to further promote the role and contribution of this capital source in the socio-economic development of Phu Tho province especially in ensuring the livelihoods of poor households... Suggesting several groups of solutions: Solutions on raising awareness of foreign non-government aid; Solutions on continuing to improve the legal basis and reform administrative procedures; Solution on enhancing

information dissemination and sharing; Solutions on Innovation and diversification of methods, objects of cooperation, advocacy for foreign non-governmental aid; Solutions on strengthening advocacy capacity and aid use; Solutions on strengthening inspection, examination, supervision, and evaluation.

To attract more non-governmental aid from the NGOs and other donors, local authorities should focus on: Analyzing the current situation of supporting and facilitating the sponsoring partners to research and survey the local reality on the field and area of funding; understanding the status of supporting partners in project development or non-project financing procedures, and the status of support to connect donors with entities directly implementing projects in localities.

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VỐN VIỆN TRỢ PHI CHÍNH PHỦ NƯỚC NGOÀI VÀ PHÁT TRIỂN Ở TỈNH PHÚ THỌ

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Tóm tắt

Trên cơ sở lý luận của tác động nguồn vốn viện trợ PCPNN đến phát triển Kinh tế - xã hội của địa phương cấp tỉnh, đề đánh giá thực trạng tác động nguồn vốn này đến phát triển nói chung và sinh kế của người dân nói riêng, tập trung vào nhóm hộ nghèo ở tỉnh Phú Thọ. Trong giai đoạn vừa qua, một số tổ chức phi chính phủ cũng dịch chuyển sang các tỉnh có điều kiện khó khăn hơn tỉnh Phú Thọ nguồn viện trợ giảm xuống. Việc đánh giá đầy đủ viện trợ PCPNN, những tác động đối với phát triển KT-XH của tỉnh nói chung, đặc biệt là các hộ nghèo trên địa bàn tỉnh đến nay chưa được đánh giá đầy đủ. Bài viết đề xuất các giải pháp huy động viện trợ PCPNN trên địa bàn tỉnh cho sự phát triển ở tỉnh Phú Thọ trong thời gian tới.

Từ khóa: *Tác động, phi chính phủ nước ngoài, phát triển, Phú Thọ.*