



**Community Entrepreneur Development Institute**

**LIVELIHOOD SOVEREIGNTY BASED  
COMMUNITY ENTREPRENEUR DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY  
(CENDI 2015-2025)**

**Ha Noi December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015**

## **BACKGROUND ANALYSIS**

The Community Entrepreneur Development Institute (CENDI) is the outcome of a dynamic process of adapting to the changing needs of Indigenous Ethnic Minority Peoples in the Mekong region. This process began in 1994 with the establishment of Toward Ethnic Women (TEW), one of the first NGOs to be established in Vietnam. TEW's main focus was upon 'Women's Rights' and it oriented its activities toward improving the situation of indigenous ethnic minority women in Vietnam, a section of the ethnic minority population that was most disadvantaged due to the negative prejudices and stereotypes that were held in Vietnamese society in general, by government officials in particular, and even among ethnologists and sociologists that ethnic minorities were 'backward', 'ignorant' and 'dirty'. In contrast, TEW valued the inherent strengths of ethnic minority women who live in nature and gain from all that nature offers via their wisdom of medicinal herbs and textile handicrafts to provide for their families' livelihoods. TEW engaged working directly with the women in order to consolidate their strengths and promote recognition of their capabilities and thereby change community, policy maker and academic attitudes<sup>1</sup>.

In 1999, in the face of government policy of displacing ethnic minority communities from their traditional lands for industrial development (a policy that had a devastating effect not only upon indigenous culture but also upon Nature), TEW up-graded its Northern Field Office to the Center for Human Ecology Studies of the Highland (CHESH) to focus more strongly upon 'Nature's Rights'<sup>2</sup>.

The following year (2000), TEW up-graded it's Central Field Office to the Centre for Indigenous Research and Development (CIRD) to focus upon 'Indigenous Rights'<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> From 1994 to 1997 TEW worked together with the Yen Chau District Women's Union leader Mrs Quang Thi Vien of the Black Thai ethnic group to *successfully lobby to have Xinh Mun women's names entered legally in the land title book ('Red Book')*. This was the first initiative of TEW in the land allocation program of Phieng Khoai commune, Yen Chau district, Son La province. A second initiative was providing for one household to legally manage more than one land title so that title holders could transfer or mortgage one area of land without this affecting other areas that they might hold in a different ecological zone. This initiative was successful in the TEW land allocation program in Son kim Commune, Huong Son district, Ha tinh province in 2001-2002. It took 7 years of continuous lobbying after that to *successfully change the Land Law 2003, at Article 48, 3b and 3c to legitimize the initiative*. Gaining political advantage from this initiative, TEW established three field offices – in North, Central and Southern Vietnam - to enlarge its influence horizontally and vertically on the rights of ethnic minority women.

<sup>2</sup> CHESH promoted different communities who were living harmonious with nature and nurturing nature by their own voluntary customary beliefs and behaviors in their daily livelihood to receive local legal recognition. Eventually, *this work was recognized at the legislative level by the Forest Preservation and Development Law 2004, Article 29*.

<sup>3</sup> 'Indigenous Rights' were here interpreted as the right of indigenous people to live on their traditional lands to which they were related spiritually, and not be moved out and resettled on land with which they had no ancestral or spiritual connection. Inherent in CIRD's approach to 'Indigenous Rights' was supporting the right of indigenous people to practice their own 'Indigenous Knowledge' through their own customary institution, therefore sustaining their own cultural and livelihood identity. CIRD was successful in lobbying local authorities to legalized community herbal medicinal forestry ownership nation-wide through the "Herbal wisdom in community health care and bio-cultural diversity preservation" theme - the Left Hand of MECO-ECOTRA (see below) - as a way of moving forward the TEW-SPERI civil society river, 2005-2015.

From 2000 to 2005, TEW, CHESH and CIRD formed a united front in support of Women's Rights, Nature's Rights and Indigenous Rights in order to confront commercial and political interests that were appropriating the natural resources of indigenous peoples<sup>4</sup>.

In 2006, in order to provide a more concerted focus for lobbying government policy for indigenous rights to land, TEW, CHESH and CIRD were merged into the Social Policy Ecology Research Institute (SPERI). SPERI linked the results of action research undertaken in different ethnic minority communities to provide an evidential basis for government policy analysis and critique<sup>5</sup>. *In general, the direction of SPERI's work has been to opposing commercial and political interests in order to defend cultural and biological diversity in the Mekong region.*

## **TRANSFORMING ANALYSIS 1995-2015**

### **Defining Structural Poverty**

When TEW began its work in 1994, 'poverty alleviation' was a key word in development circles, and at that time poverty was defined in terms of income levels. People without a certain level of monetary income were defined as 'poor' and were targeted for resettlement closer to commercial centers where they were encouraged to take up cash crop production, an activity that very often ended them in debt and eventually landless. TEW had a different understanding of poverty, particularly with respect to indigenous ethnic minorities. TEW recognized that indigenous ethnic minority were poor in the sense of: 1) having un-equal political opportunity to participate in decision making according to their own choice; 2) Poor in the sense of lack of cooperation and respect from the political system; 3) Poor in the sense of being subject to a mind-set of 'civilization' held by modern scientist and other outsiders who are naive in their understanding of indigenous people's worshiping of their ancestral land in their daily living. TEW valued indigenous ethnic minorities differently; as inherently rich in terms of living harmoniously with their surrounding natural resources, and subsequently developed its own concept of poverty which it called '*structural poverty*', described as consisting of a vicious circle of three interrelated conditions: *Isolation, In-confidence and No-ownership*

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<sup>4</sup> Strong networks were developed between indigenous leaders. Those, who were traditional herbal healers were developed into Traditional Herbal Healer Associations for the purpose of receiving land rights to traditional herbal forest. Others, who were traditional spirit leaders were developed into Customary Law Association for initiating Customary Rights in Community Forestry Governance. These initiatives were extended to Laos and engaging with Karen network, Hmong Association, Lisu, Lahu, and Dzao ethnic minority communities in Northern Thailand. From Herbal Healer, Customary Leader and Key Farmer Network Organizational and Institutional Development there arose officially recognized Traditional Herbal Medicine Centers operating alongside Government Health Clinics to provide alternative forms of health treatment in Vietnam in 2001-2004, and customary governance in watershed forest management in Luang Prabang, Laos, in 2003-2005.

<sup>5</sup> Major actions were also taken in advocating for a Civil Society Law in Vietnam and in lobbying against Bauxite mining in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. To facilitate the latter, SPERI up-graded its Lobby Department to Consultancy on Development (CODE) and in its action against Bauxite mining CODE united 17 independent intellectuals to provide technical evidence on the social and environmental impacts if Bauxite mining was to go ahead

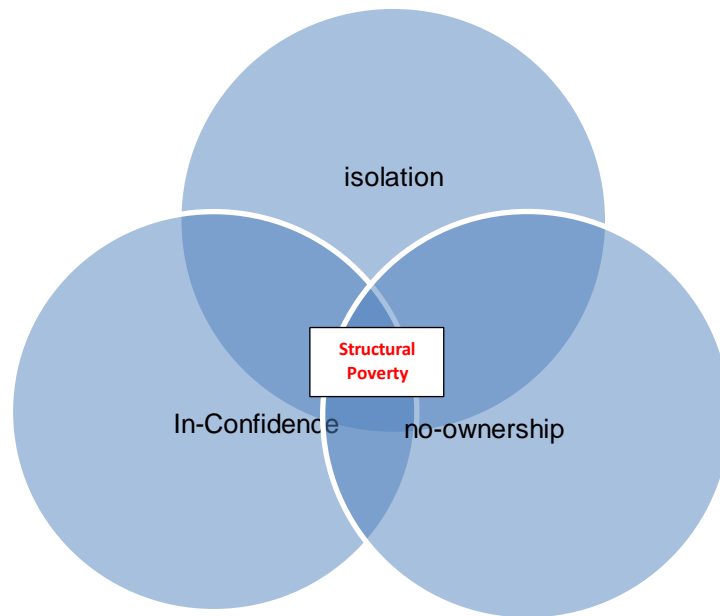


Figure 1

In this configuration, ‘*Isolation*’ means isolation not in the geographical sense, but isolation from the centers of decision making where decisions are made that directly affected the lives of indigenous ethnic minority people, but in which they had no say. This is a form of isolation that leads to ‘*In-confidence*’ in relations to decision making processes – especially as those making the decisions look upon minority peoples as ‘*backward*’ and ‘*superstitious*’. The resulting in-confidence in dealing with government authorities leads to ‘*No-ownership*’, i.e., a lack of control over one’s own land, culture and identity.

### **Breaking down structural poverty by key farmer networking**

TEW’s solution to this problem of structural poverty was first to breakdown the feeling of isolation. They did this by building up networks throughout the whole Mekong region (Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand) of **Indigenous Ethnic Minority (IEM) Key Farmers**<sup>6</sup>. Following its “*NINE STEPS APPROACH to structural poverty reduction and sustainable development*”<sup>7</sup>, TEW brought **IEM Key Farmers** together in study tours, workshops and conferences where they could learn from each other and discover that their experiences of being isolated and marginalized were experiences that other shared as well. The next step was to build up the confidence of **IEM Key Farmers** to speak out about their concerns. To achieve this, TEW held national conferences where the **IEM Key Farmers** could speak about their grievances directly to high-ranking government officials. After this, the **IEM Key Farmers** gained the confidence to lobby the government for recognition of their traditional ownership of their land, culture and identity.

<sup>6</sup> Key Farmers are knowledgeable and prestigious farmers who are willing to learn, do experiments, share and debate on the basis of their own knowledge and integrated and adaptable technologies. They are pioneering in setting up pilot models of farming, animal husbandry, agro-forestry gardens, and use their farms as practical forums to share their experiences and ideas with villagers from different communities, the media, researchers and policy makers. They engage not only in awareness-raising, but also in lobby and advocacy activities for land rights for the community and villagers.

<sup>7</sup> See Nine STEP Right Based Approach of TEW for breaking down three circles of structural poverty by TEW in 1995-2005 in annex 1

## **Key Farmer Networking Based Organizational and Institutional Empowerment**

As a result of this work, there emerged a powerful and articulate body of **IEM** Key Farmers who were able to continue the process of Organizational and Institutional Development on their own. As Community Key Farmer Coordinators, Inter-Community, Regional and National Key Farmer Board Members, different Key Farmers became actively involved in planning and decision making at commune, district and provincial levels. In collaboration with local progressive authorities, and with expert advice from eminent personalities and media they came to play an active and often leading role in lobbying government policy at both the local and national levels on behalf of indigenous minorities, especially in the area land and forest rights. Some Key Farmers have become local authority officers at different levels standing in the official system and applying the TEW/ CHESH/ CIRD/ SPERI approach inside the formal governing system, and practicing the ways of bottom-up participation. Some have become parliamentarians<sup>8</sup> and some have become community entrepreneurs<sup>9</sup>.

## **Key Farmer Institutional Developments in Legislative and Policy Changes**

Together with its Key Farmers, SPERI has successfully lobbied district and provincial authorities to change the policy on allocating forestland rights certificates (“Red Books” in Vietnam), not only in the name of individuals and households, but also in the name of local communities. As a result, local communities are now officially recognized as collective land right holders. Customary law has been recognized as a basis for natural resource management, and some local authorities have accepted SPERI’s participatory and customary-law based approach of forestland allocation as a sustainable direction for poverty alleviation and forest protection. Recently, SPERI has been invited to work on community right to spirit forest in the Central Highlands of Vietnam - one of the most politically sensitive issues in one of the most politically sensitive areas. This is an acknowledgement of the effectiveness and value of SPERI’s philosophy of rights-based sustainable community development in respect to indigenous ethnic minorities.

## **Beyond Key Farmer Networking to MECO-ECOTRA<sup>10</sup>**

The Regional and National Key Farmers Networks established by TEW have now developed and expanded across national borders to become Mekong Community for Ecological Trading (MECO-ECOTRA), a regional network of traditional elders and key-farmers and a grassroots

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<sup>8</sup> Mrs Ro Cham Hzeo - Gia rai group, Mrs Lu Thi Phuong - Thai group, and Mrs Quang Thi Vien - Black Thai women. Especially, Mrs Quang Thi Vien – a Black Thai Women’s Union leader, who initiated Xinh mun women being named on Land Right Titles during 1994-1999. When she became a District People’s Committee chairperson in 2000, she followed the TEW approach and took the initiative in 2001 of approving diverse forms of community land titles to land and forest for the whole Hmong Community, different clans, Women’s groups, Youth groups, and Communist Party committees in her district, long before this was provided for in the Law. She thereby pre-empted the Land Law of 2003, the Forest Preservation and Development Law in 2004, and the Land Law 2013 by more than 10 years. This approach was straight away extended to her whole Son la province by the Forestry Department and Son la People Committee, with the effect that that province now has the higher percentage (81.23%) of any province in Vietnam of forest land protected under community ownership, having increased forest recovery from 5% in 2001 to 42 % in 2013 (*Report by MARD 2013*)

<sup>9</sup> Mrs Ly May Chan - Red Dzao, Mrs Trieu thi Khang - Dzao

<sup>10</sup> MECO-ECOTRA= Mekong Community Network for Ecological Trading

foundation<sup>11</sup> for traditional Civil Society Organizational and Institutional Development across national, ethnic and political borders.

## Eco-Farming Based and Local Niche Enterprising 2005 to 2010

In the period from 2005 to 2010, SPERI focused, through the 6 Thematic Approaches of MECO-ECOTRA, on human resource capacity building, young leadership development and pilot actions at 4 levels: 1) household agro-ecological farming enterprising (after a community has received legal Land Right Titles); 2) communal agro-ecological co-governance based on customary law; 3) inter-community curriculums for exchanging and training of young leadership; and 4) international curriculum for young leadership empowerment and enrichment. Monitoring and evaluation of each of these 4 different levels of action have shown that whenever people over the last 20 years have been devoted to and engaged in their own indigenous ways of life living harmoniously with their surrounding nature, worshiping spirit forest, mountain and water, they are now all clearly feeling wellbeing and happiness.

## Livelihood sovereignty<sup>12</sup> Based YIELDS - AGREE<sup>13</sup> 2010-2015

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<sup>11</sup> MECO-ECOTRA can be envisaged as a human body with two strong legs standing on their ancestral land to which the indigenous people have legal right. *The Head* is for thinking forward to customary-based community governance of natural resource. *The Heart* is the Farmer Field Schools established by SPERI - central places where traditional indigenous wisdom and knowledge, experience, institutions, and norms of daily behavior toward Nature are transferred to the young. *The Left Hand* is for herbal wisdom for community health care and bio-cultural diversity preservation; and *the Right Hand* is for eco-farming knowledge for land use planning and livelihood security. *Connecting leg, head, heart and hand* are the activities of *eco-food processing and traditional textile handicraft* manufacture for daily livelihood identity.

The 6 body parts of MECO-ECOTRA can also be thought of as 6 Thematic Approaches and as playing the role for indigenous ethnic minorities of 6 Ministries, paralleling those of the state: the *Legs* represent the *Ministry of Natural Resource Planning and Environmental Protection*; the *Head*, the *Ministry of Justice*; the *Heart*, the *Ministry of Education*; the *Left Hand*, the *Health Ministry*; the *Right Hand*, the *Agriculture Ministry*; and the cross-cutting function of *Ecological Food Production and Textile Handicrafts*, the *Ministry of Trade*.

<sup>12</sup> The concept of 'Livelihood Sovereignty' should not be confused with other like-sounding concepts such as 'Livelihood Security' or 'Food Sovereignty'. SPERI's concept of 'Livelihood Sovereignty' is something much broader and deeper than these. At its root is a holist understanding of 'livelihood' as involving both a material and a spiritual dimension. Livelihood Sovereignty is in the first place a social and cultural achievement involving the voluntary sharing of responsibility by all members of a community not only for their material existence but also for their social and spiritual wellbeing. This holistic communal commitment is best captured by SPERI in their use of the term 'Livelihood Identity.'

<sup>13</sup> **YIELDS - AGREE** = Young Indigenous Ethnic Leadership Development Strategy (**YIELDS**) for **AGro-Ecological System Enterprising (AGREE)**. After 20 years, MECO-ECOTRA/SPERI has to make a shift of paradigm: From bottom-up Community-Based Organizational and Institutional Development directed by grassroots farmers to, in the coming 10 years 2015-2025, developing Young Indigenous Leadership in order to maintain the leadership, governance and sovereignty of their community organizations and institutions that has been built up over the years so that they will not be undermined by new political-economic intrusions.

In order to resist outside intrusions, indigenous communities need to develop a new generation of strong indigenous leadership to maintain and build upon the gains in community governance achieved by Community-based Organizational and Institutional Developments in the past; to build upon the existing foundation of MECO-ECOTRA, and to move ahead confidently with new skills in order to ensure that those achievements are not undermined. To achieve this, the MECO-ECOTRA's Young Indigenous Ethnic Minority Leadership Development Strategy (**YIELDS**) will need to be combined with Agro-Ecological Entrepreneurship (**AGREE**) in a new strategy of **YIELDS-AGREE** in order to maintain and develop the SPERI/MECO-ECOTRA philosophy of Nurturing Nature and Cultural Diversity into the future.

From this point of view, 2015-2025, under the CENDI philosophy of Community Entrepreneur Development, Young Indigenous Ethnic Minority Eco-Farmers will be encouraged and empowered to initiate, under the supervision of the Elders and Key Farmers of MECO-ECOTRA, new Community-Based activities aimed at bolstering their communities' independence and livelihood sovereignty. Elders and Key Farmers of MECO-ECOTRA from the last 20 years will take over the role of practical and philosophical supervision previously held by SPERI, and SPERI will take on the role of world-wide coordination of Independent Intellectual Activists in support of the new YIELDS-AGREE strategy. Financial Donors will take on the role of

Through working alongside traditional healers, spirit leaders and ordinary farmers, SPERI has promoted intensive networking at all levels - individually, communally and regionally - promoting and supporting bottom-up participatory learning and action for sharing and enriching in order to empower grass-roots democratization and self-determination. Through this process SPERI has learnt about the aspirations of indigenous minority people for ‘Livelihood Sovereignty’.

Taking their inspiration from the indigenous ethnic minority people themselves, SPERI has defined ‘Livelihood Sovereignty’ in terms of five interrelated ‘livelihood rights’ that indigenous ethnic minority people see as necessary if they are have control over their own futures and wellbeing:

- 1) The right to land, forest and water, clean air and natural landscape (*basic*);
- 2) The right to maintain one’s own religion (*unique*);
- 3) The right to live according to one’s own way of life and values of happiness and wellbeing within one’s own natural environment (*practice*);
- 4) The right to operate according to one’s own knowledge and decide what to plant, initiate, create and invent on one’s own land; (*holistic*); and
- 5) The right to co-manage or co-govern natural resources with neighboring communities and local authorities (*strategic*).

## **YIELDS-AGREE BASED ORGANIZATIONAL & INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT (2015-2025)**

Given the primacy of access to traditional lands for every other aspect of Livelihood Sovereignty, SPERI has in the past focused the major part of their efforts upon acquiring for indigenous ethnic minority communities secure title to their land. Over the last 20 years TEW/CHESH/CIRD/SPERI/CODE has organized the allocation of over 60,000 ha of land to almost 10,000 families in 50 communities in Vietnam and Laos. In addition, in several provinces of Vietnam, some local authorities have adopted the SPERI-approach and methodology to land allocation with the result that the overall impact of SPERI’s work in land allocation has been much greater.

However since the passage of the 2013 Vietnam Land Law, which was aimed at privatizing land in favor of large business corporations, there is less land available for allocation to communities, and the effort now needs to be put into preserving in community ownership of that land which has been allocated to communities over the last 20 years. Where there are parcels of land still available for allocation to communities in some provinces (such as in Kon Tum province, central highland) effort will be put into allocating that land. But the major priority now has to be protecting community control of that land that has been allocate to communities as a result of SPERI work in the past.

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connecting/bridging the different Civil Society Organizations they support in order to create an effective network of Young Agro-Ecology Farmers in order to make change via Practical and Intellectual Movement for village-based Livelihood Sovereignty based upon Customary Law Governance and Ecological Farming.

In order to protect this land from encroachment by commercial interest, *strong community entrepreneurs, community enterprises and community sovereignty* (see figure 2 below) needs to be developed, and to aid this development, a strong intellectual/eco-agricultural movement is needed to demonstrate to the world at large, and to local government authorities in particular, the benefit for all in terms of biodiversity preservation and environmental protection services of continuing that land in indigenous community ownership and management. To this end, a paradigm shift will be necessary over the coming 10 years. *The new paradigm will aim at transform of MECO-ECOTRA and its six thematic networks to focus more concertededly upon Young Indigenous Ethnic Minority Leadership Development Strategy for AGro-Ecological Enterprising (YIELDS-AGREE). It is to undertake this transformation that the Community Entrepreneur Development Institute (CENDI) has been established.*



Figure 2

## Community Entrepreneur Development Institute (CENDI)<sup>14</sup>

### <sup>14</sup> What are Community Entrepreneurs?

The term 'community entrepreneur' is new to the field of community development and should not be confused with more well-known terms such as 'economic' or 'social entrepreneurs'. The 'product' of community entrepreneurs is the intangible social, cultural, spiritual, communal values that are essential to a community's wellbeing as well as its ecologically sustainable development.

Community entrepreneurs are people who are able to encourage other members in their community to voluntarily maintain loyal relations with Nature, show full responsibility for their society, and strictly follow the national laws. They are progressive members of their communities who have built their prestige and capability in convincingly spreading their own philosophy through their daily behaviors toward other community members and Nature. Their 'capital/assets' are in the form of prestige and the ability to inspire others, and comes from their ability to lead their community in voluntarily action aimed at creating new cultural and material forms based upon those fundamental values that the community respects as the basis for its norms, customs and identity.

Community entrepreneurs can be defined as brave and venturesome persons who create the free spaces that are necessary for the nurturing of the creativity necessary for the progressive governing and development of their communities. They have freedom in mind, self-confidence and responsibility for community decisions. They are respected as both secular and spiritual leaders who



CENDI was established in January 19<sup>th</sup> 2015 as an independent scientific and technological legal entity with its own stamp and bank account, and operating according to the law under the umbrella of the Southeast Asian Research Association of Vietnam. Its functions and tasks are:

1. To consolidate and strengthen prestigious community leaders and YIELDS who voluntarily lead initiatives of customary institutions in preserving and enriching biodiversity and cultural identity to be recognized and legalized as “community entrepreneurs”, and to *continue strongly and concertedly to defend community right to forest and land as fully as possible*;
2. To upgrade and professionalize community agro-eco-farming curriculums<sup>15</sup> both practically and in documentary form such as videos, booklets, brochures and Power Point Instructions in different languages for world-wide sharing in the CENDI-LISO website;
3. To conduct comparative research on the differences between two logics<sup>16</sup> of governing natural resource and land use where SPERI has been working over the last 20 years: one logic being exploitative and the other nurturing, and compare which of these logics is sustainable and what type of entrepreneurs are needed to sustain it. The research outcomes will be used as a basis for social, political, ecological, economic platforms and lobbying.
4. Provide scientific consultancy and critiques, compose documents, organize workshops and seminars, and provide training to enhance professional capacity in the mentioned research fields.
5. To cooperate and coordinate inter-continently and worldwide with individuals and organizations in order to promoting YIELDS-AGREE and Community Entrepreneur Factors and Indicators.
6. To recommend and analyze an alternative solution for development today via connecting 4 Pillar Initiatives: 1) Good Living in Latin America<sup>17</sup>; 2) Gross National Happiness in

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help the community overcome difficulties and challenges, as well as personal temptations in order to maintain and develop traditional and customary values of ethical behavior and the cultural practices that nurture harmonious relations with Nature, and the safe and autonomous development of the community. The non-material values created for their communities by the community entrepreneurs are ecological, moral, social, cultural, organizational and inspirational. In summary, the concept of the ‘community entrepreneur’ is yet to be popularized in the development world and the ‘product’ of community entrepreneurs cannot be measured by scientific achievements and financial indexes alone. The community entrepreneur’s ‘capital’ cannot be measured directly in monetary values, but rather in terms of ethical, cultural, social and environmental values. Community entrepreneurs create the non-material values that are fundamental and decisive for the meaning and quality of life within a community – and the basis upon which a prosperous material existence can be sustained. In other words, they produce the necessary cultural, social and ethical values necessary for sustainable development and the fulfillment of both material and spiritual needs.

<sup>15</sup> Curriculums will be applied directly to the Vocational Technical Training System at local, district and provincial levels both nation and region wide in Mekong countries.

<sup>16</sup> Case studies in comparative research will be directed applied to social, political, economic, and sustainable bio-diversity concerned media nationwide which aim at advocacy and lobby for “The Forest Preservation and Development Law” in the year to come.

<sup>17</sup> SPERI/CENDI and PACS will engage together in order to promote Latin American and Mekong Region Indigenous People to empower their own Livelihood Sovereignty.

Himalaya - Bhutan<sup>18</sup>; 3) National Self-Reliance<sup>19</sup> (Pacific - Vanuatu) and 4) Livelihood Sovereignty<sup>20</sup> in Mekong region.

The strategic planning of CENDI is to build upon the foundation of community ownership and community governance rights that have been achieved already for those communities with which TEW/SPERI has been working over the last 20 years. These communities need to be consolidated and strengthened as models of sustainable development that cannot be overlooked, i.e., models of *community entrepreneurship* with traditional leaders sustaining their communities' self-determination and sovereignty according to the voluntarism inherent in customary institutions based on the five rights of livelihood sovereignty. *But this by itself is not enough.* Individual communities that are not connected through a network of shared social-political-environmental consciousness remain vulnerable. So, on the one hand, we need to continue to develop individual communities toward livelihood sovereignty, but on the other, we need to *connect them at different levels into a global movement aimed at changing current political-economic attitudes and consumerist habits of life*, and contribute to the development among the *young generation of new non-consumerist ways of thinking, understanding and valuing nature and society.*

## **YIELDS-AGREE MOVEMENT 2015-2025**

### **The Movement will operate at 5 levels:**

Level 1: Household Eco-Farming Activists<sup>21</sup>

Level 2: Community Entrepreneurs<sup>22</sup>

Level 3: National Intellectual Civil Society Activists<sup>23</sup>;

Level 4: Continental Independent Intellectual Activists<sup>24</sup>;

Level 5: Global ecological political economic activists<sup>25</sup>

In this case the foundation of 5 levels of MECO-ECOTRA (household, community, national, regional, and international) built up so far will shift to 5 levels of YIELDS-AGREE with a focus upon building on the foundation of villages inter-continentially with 4 main pillars: Good Living in Latin America, National Self-Reliance in Pacific, GNH<sup>26</sup> in Bhutan, and Livelihood Sovereignty in Mekong. These 4 pillars will hopefully connect hand-in-hand in order to promote young leadership worldwide in Agro-Ecological Enterprising and in determining local community livelihood sovereignty by community entrepreneur and community agro-ecological enterprising initiatives.

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<sup>18</sup> SPERI/CENDI/PACS and Royal College of Natural Resource in Bhutan will work together

<sup>19</sup> SPERI/CENDI/PACS/Royal College of Bhutan will engage with the National Self-Reliance Strategy of Vanuatu National Council of Chiefs.

<sup>20</sup> SPERI/CENDI will engage with MECO-ECOTRA and YIELDS-AGREE

<sup>21</sup> For example, Oshi - Karen in Thailand; Chily - Hmong in Laos; Somlit - Lao Lum, in Laos; Mr Suong - Nung in Northern Vietnam nearby Yunnan China; Denka and Jigmi in Bhutan; A Duu - Ro ngao in Central Highland; A Pan - H're in Central Highland, Vang Sin Min - Hmong in Vietnam, Loc Van Vin - San Ziu in HEPA, Vietnam.

<sup>22</sup> For example, Elders Joni and Zua, Thailand; Xay Khu, Laos; Lenh, Tran Quoc Viet, Ly May Chan, Vietnam...

<sup>23</sup> For example, SPERI-CENDI Seniors; Celina and Oliana, CCFD's Volunteers, France; Helena Doris, Columbia.

<sup>24</sup> For example, Hans and Wallapa (TOA) in Thailand; Hmong Association in Luang Prabang.

<sup>25</sup> For example, Professor Goeltenboth, Germany; Professor Marcos, PACS, Brazil; Tshering and Tashi Sonam. Bhutan Royal College of Natural Resource Management; John in Tropical Rainforest Farming, Nicolai, CCFD; CARITAS

<sup>26</sup> GNH = Gross National Happiness

## CHALLENGE ANALYSIS

Worldwide, natural diversity is being displaced by industrial farming, mono-crop agriculture, and extractive industries (timber and minerals); native species are being displaced by new artificially created high-yield breeds; diverse knowledge is being displaced by single-paradigm knowledge applied everywhere for profit maximization; moral diversity is being displaced by simple-minded consumerism; thinking and analysis is become one-way, dominated by money oriented economic thinking (e.g. economic growth measured by GDP).

At the local level, the challenge is that emerging partnerships between business and government will bring about a change in policy and legislation to enable the appropriation of land from indigenous communities for commercial development. This will perpetuate and exacerbate the loss of natural and cultural diversity described above.

## KEY STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Actor/ Factor	Motivation	Concern	Approach	Norm	Outcome	Sustainable Impact indicator
Community Entrepreneur/ spirit leader	Land is mother	Healthy mother	Nurturing Land	Kinship order and harmonious with nature	Diversity	Wellbeing in self-sufficiency
Development Worker: PACS- SPERI- CENDI - TOA. etc.	Land is Identity	Livelihood Sovereignty	Connecting for empowerment	Enriching Natural Diversity and cultural identity	Health and wellbeing	Fair, Care and Share socially ecologically and economically
Nation State	Industrialized national lifestyle	Revenue	Economic Growth	Modernized rural livelihood identity	Homogenized living style	Gross National Product
State Owned Watershed Management board	Power over natural resource for Centralized Management	Wage payment/salary/month	Top-down bureaucracy	Bureaucratic governance	Exclusion of people from nature	Forest degrading and conflict over the forest land for daily livelihood
Private - Business	Profit seeking	Access to resources	Exploitation	Money	Exhaustion of natural resources	Conflict over the land for livelihood security
Non - Profit Funding Agency: CCFD- CARITAS	Good Partner for governing good project	Social & environmental Justice	Grassroots and civil society empowerment in decision making	Accountability and integrity	Livelihood Security for the vulnerable group	Self-determination

## HOW CAN WE MEET THIS CHALLENGE?

To meet this challenge, governments need to be convinced that the long-term ecological/social/economic benefits of maintaining forestland under community governance outweighs the short-term revenue benefit of commercial exploitation. To do this, research needs to be conducted to calculate the ecological, social (livelihood), and economic benefits to the country/world of maintaining forests intact under community governance. This research will focus on the comparative benefits of voluntary, community-based, agro-ecological management of natural resources versus firstly, the profit-driven commercial exploitation of natural resources (plantations, extractive industries - mining, logging) and secondly, government subsidized

bureaucratic management of natural resources through state owned watershed management boards and national parks.

Data from this research will then be used to prepare platforms for public forums at which local farmers armed with this information can speak directly to government officials and business executives – the target group for persuasion – to elicit from them public commitments to preserve the natural environment in their area. Public media will be invited to broadcast the proceeding of these forums and the resulting government commitments to raise wider social awareness and ensure public accountability for promises made.

Research data will also be used for direct policy advocacy toward relevant Government Ministries (Natural Resource Governance, Culture; Agro-Forestry), local, national and international television, and to influence teaching curriculum agendas of levels of schools.

## **FOLLOW - UP STRATEGY**

1. Take this information and experience from deep comparative research of the case studies to National, Regional, World Social Forum;
2. Take deep comparison of environmental/economic benefits of natural resource preservation versus exploitation to World Economic Forum;
3. Publish the results of the research and analysis via videos, books, booklets, pamphlets, newspapers articles, academic journals, theses for wider dissemination.

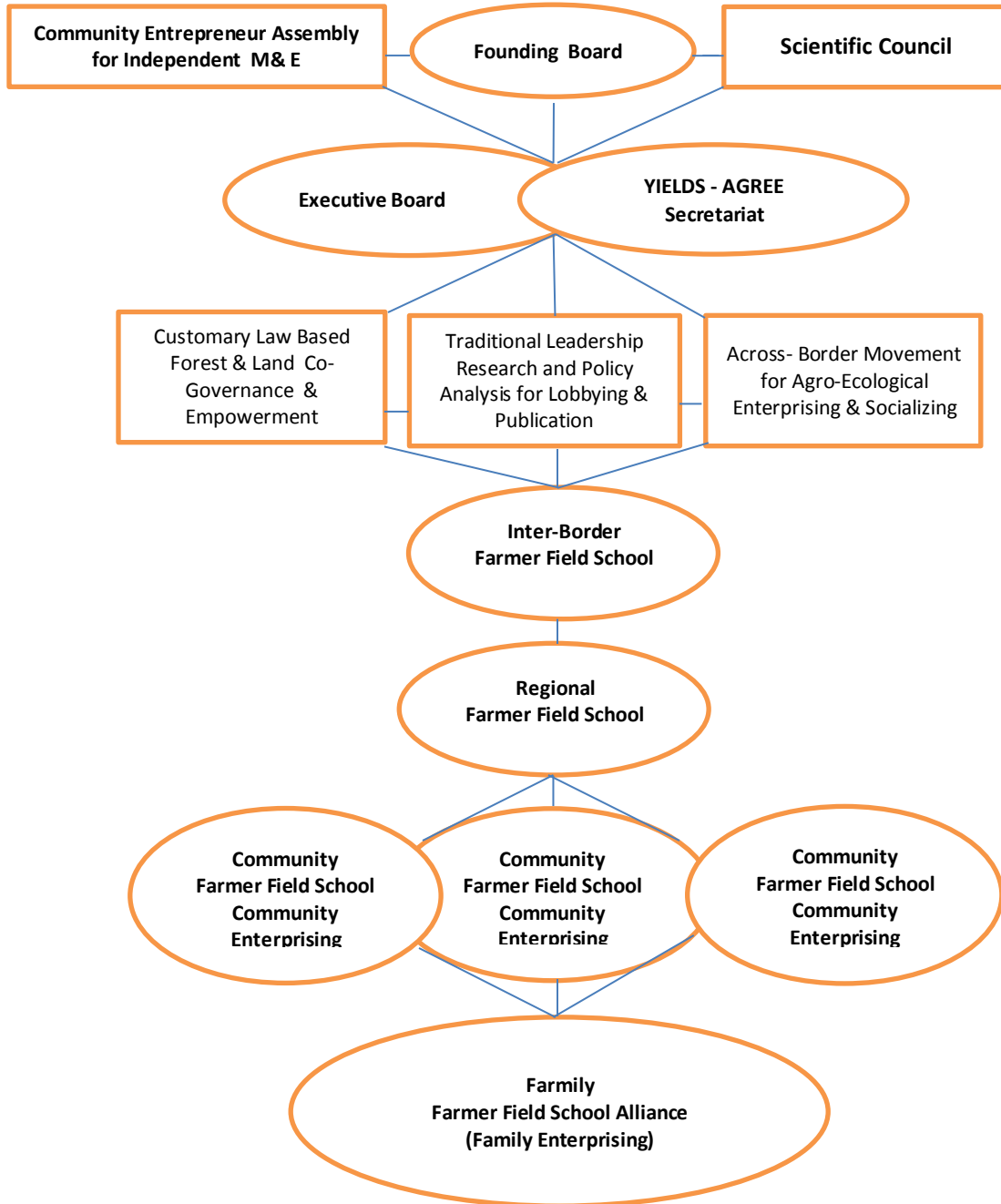
The principle lesson to be communicated via this research is that Agro-Ecology and Indigenous Farmers play a vital role in offering life support to people all over the world through their daily actions with regard to natural environment preservation and deserve to be supported in their role.

## **OBJECTIVES**

1. *To have more forest and land areas legitimized as under customary law based governance for more communities and households in order to secure their livelihood sovereignty and livelihood identity. (Northern Laos, Central Highland of Vietnam will be high concentrated).*
2. To have stronger young agro-ecology farmer leadership locally, confident in the respect of the wider society for their way of life, and a stronger young agro-ecological farmer leadership world-wide connected through international internships, forums, study tours, speaking tours.
3. To have stronger and professional task-force oriented to moving forward *the philosophy of nurturing nature for self-reliance and community governance according to the values of nurturing nature (livelihood sovereignty), rather than the philosophy of selling nature in return for a life of landlessness and vulnerable market dependency.*
4. To protect and advance the interests of small-scale independent agro-ecology farmers world-wide.



## Operational Structure



## **Founding Board's Responsibility**

- Nurturing CENDI philosophy, actions and daily behavior;
- Monitoring CENDI's methodology and financial operation;
- Appointing CENDI's Directorate Board members;
- Oversight of CENDI's operations;
- Calling emergency meetings to review operations;
- Yearly meeting for reviewing Executive Board's implementation;
- The Board's members participate and work in the network in a voluntary manner;
- CENDI covers the cost for traveling, food, and overnight accommodation for Board members' work.

## **Scientific Council's Responsibility**

- Scientific advice for action research on Agro-ecological production;
- Scientific advice on action research for adding value to Agro-Ecological System product via processing;
- Scientific advice on bridging communities and Agro-ecological enterprises across national borders;
- Meeting when research problem occurs and advice is needed;
- The Council's members participate and work in the network in a voluntary manner;
- CENDI covers the cost for traveling, food, and overnight accommodation for the Council members' work.

## **Community Entrepreneur Assembly for Independent Monitoring and Evaluation**

- Monitor and give advice for key farmers to identify persons who have sufficient quality, capacity, courage and methodology in their local communities to become community leaders and entrepreneurs of Agro-Ecological System Enterprising (give priority to MECO-ECOTRA which has been engaged with TEW/CHESH/CRID/SPERI/CODE/CENDI since 1995);
- Monitor and give advice for key farmers to initiate an independent, transparent, objective linkage between potential community entrepreneurs and the Scientific Board in order to support CENDI's Executive Board in updating initiatives, challenges, and solutions for further action;
- Supervise and advise Founding Board and Scientific Board on strategy;
- Annual meeting with CENDI Executive Board and YIELDS-AGREE Secretariat to review and up-date the local challenges and find solutions;
- The Assembly's members participate and work in the network in a voluntary manner;

- CENDI covers the cost for traveling, food, and overnight accommodation for The Assembly members' work.

### **YIELDS-AGREE Secretariat**

- Facilitate and give advice for young farmers to build up a network for agro-ecological enterprises in different regions;
- Encourage and give advice for key farmers to identify unique ecological products from different ethnic groups and localities for obtaining intellectual copyrights and trademarks;
- Train of Trainer and give advice for strengthening local ecological producers and relevant partnership with mindful consumers;
- Empower inter-national young agro-ecological farming activists;
- Annual meeting with CENDI Executive Board and Community Entrepreneur Assembly to review and up-date the local challenges and find solutions;
- The Secretariat's members participate and work in the network in a voluntary manner;
- CENDI covers the cost for traveling, food, and overnight accommodation for the Secretariat members' work.

### **Inter-Border Farmer Field School**

- Agro-Ecological Practical Farming, Enrichment and Demonstration;
- Comparative Research on Agro-Ecological Farming and Conventional Farming;
- Agro-Ecological Comprehensive Curriculum Building and Training of Trainer;
- Young Agro-Ecological Farming Leadership Empowerment;
- Watershed Forest Co-Management Action and Platforms.

### **Regional Farmer Field School**

- Pilot Action on Agro-Ecological Farming and Networking;
- Integration with Formal Vocational Technical Training for advocacy;
- Youth Movement on Native Species Collecting, Nurturing and Planting;
- Environmental preservation and social awareness raising and local youth movement
- Experimenting with Agro-Ecological Production for Enterprising and Value Added Training.

### **Community Farmer Field School**

- Consolidation of the traditional farming by local technique;
- Dairy and Video local knowledge in preserving natural landscape;
- Customary Law Based Ecological Product Enterprising;
- Local workshop, exchanging and practical instruction for outsider;
- Forest and Land Co-Governance with neighbors.

## **Family Farmer Field School**

- Securing “Land Right Title” by practicing pilot land use planning for sustainable daily livelihood;
- Provide Indicator of Self-determining family livelihood sovereignty inter-generationally;
- Female capacity building by daily practicing ecological food processing;
- Functioning as practical curriculums for sharing and learning with neighborhood;
- Advocacy and lobbying local authority and concerned stakeholder.

## **Operational mechanism**

- Annual membership fees for rotating visits, exchanging and ecological product niche market networking and campaigning.



