

Vietnam Business for Environment – VB4E

Project title: Strengthen partnership in promoting the development of ecological public space models in Hue City (including extended areas) in order to raise awareness and community engagement for biodiversity conservation and environmental protection

Project duration: February 2022- November 2022

Geographic area of the proposed project: Hue City (including the extended areas)

Project idea:

What is the problem to be solved / the situation to be improved?

Currently, Hue City, especially in the suburbs is in the process of rapid urbanization leading to the degradation of the living environment (land concreting, agricultural land to non-agricultural, narrowing lagoons, ponds,..) and biodiversity (reduction of tree density, species...). The residents do not have a good awareness of environmental protection and biodiversity, partly due to one-way communication methods. The urban biodiversity public space model is an appropriate way to create important ecological buffers, balancing the development with biodiversity conservation in urban areas. The priority solution in this project is to focus on cooperation among stakeholders to effectively use local resources to jointly solve the problems of biodiversity conservation and environmental protection. Solutions will focus on protecting native species, increasing tree density, enhancing habitat space and living environment, limiting concreting and creating space for engaging green behavioral practices at community level.

What are the main causes for this problem?

The development of a city directly impacts the urban biodiversity and how it is distributed among the different groups of the population. The pressure of population growth, rapid urbanization, changes in land use methods, environmental pollution and the effects of climate change which have significantly reduced the habitat area, increased the fragmentation of ecosystems. In Vietnam, the field of urban biodiversity is still quite new and there is not much practice at the community level, especially in the central region. More importantly, stakeholders (biodiversity researchers, urban planners, CBOs..) have not had the opportunity to exchange and apply initiatives to build urban biodiversity models with community participation. The urban population will increase (currently the world accounts for 50%), so the need to improve the urban environment and urban ecology to harmonize with human activities and culture is also becoming very urgent. Public space with its specific characteristics is very suitable as a place to create urban biodiversity conservation models, contributing to the improvement of space in a sustainable way as well as raising awareness of the urban residents on the role of the environment and biodiversity.

Which of these causes does the project address and what is the rationale behind this choice?

In this project, CCRD and TPG focus on building capacity for communities to build pilot ecological public space models in Hue City. From these models, the project will promote communication activities, experience exchange and networking to spread the model as well as develop policy advocacy plans.

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This choice comes from experiences in the development of public spaces in urban areas. We believe that community participation in the design, construction and operation of public spaces will increase their ownership and responsibility, as well as create an environment of community cohesion for joining hands to improve their living environment.

Where did the idea for the project originate from?

TPG is a pioneer social enterprise in the field of renovating sustainable public spaces with community participation in urban areas in Vietnam. In the process, we noticed the lack of ecological public spaces in the urban area along with the lack of connection between stakeholders. From 2019, TPG started to pilot some ecological public spaces: adventure playground, community garden, food forest... and we recognize the importance and relevance of these models in urban areas.

Are there other organisations working on the same problem in the project area?

Not yet

What would be the project objectives, main activities, main results and outputs / deliverables?

Project objectives:

- Enhance the conservation and development of biodiversity, improve the living environment in the project areas
- Promote community participation to improve urban living space towards biodiversity conservation, inclusion and sustainability
- Raise public awareness about biodiversity conservation and environmental protection
- Enhancing the capacity of residential communities to develop and manage public spaces
- Building cooperation relationships in the field of urban ecological space development

Expected result:

- Conserve and develop peri-urban ecological systems (plants, native organisms), improve environmental quality including air, soil and water quality
- Prioritize the use of friendly, recycled, local materials in the construction of public space works to reduce emissions (accounting for at least 50% of materials in public spaces).
- At least 3 public space models are built in different locations in the extended areas of Hue city ensuring the principles: ecology, inclusion and sustainability
- At least 1000 people directly benefit from public spaces
- At least 60 people (especially women's groups) have improved capacity in the management of public spaces
- At least 50 people (from organizations, communities, etc.) to learn from the model
- At least 200 people participate in awareness raising activities on environmental and ecological protection.
- At least 200 people will be shared practical guideline for building ecological public spaces
- At least 10 media agencies (press, television...) have reported on public space models and project activities
- A network of experts in ecology, urbanism, community development, etc. was established and committed to cooperate in developing sustainable urban ecosystems.

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Main activities

Activity 1: Launching the project: Surveying potential sites, assessing the current state of urban ecology, biodiversity and community needs, site survey and assessment

Activity 2: Proposing design to renovate public spaces with the participation of the community and stakeholders (agency agencies, groups of experts on ecology, environment and architecture)

Activity 3: Building capacity for the community to jointly build ecological public spaces at selected locations

Activity 4: Training on management and maintenance of public spaces with local communities

Activity 5: Organizing a workshop to share experiences in building ecological public spaces and study tours.

Activity 6: Organizing educational community events on ecology/environmental protection topics

How many people will benefit from the project?

- At least 1000 people directly benefit from public spaces
- At least 60 people (especially women's groups) have improved capacity in the management of public spaces
- At least 50 people (from organizations, communities, etc.) to learn from the model
- At least 200 people participate in awareness raising activities on environmental and ecological protection.
- At least 200 people will be shared practical guideline for building ecological public spaces

How do you define if the project was a success?

3 public space models are designed, built and handed over with the active participation of communities, especially disadvantaged groups (children, people with disabilities, women...). The maintenance and management of these spaces is planned with the participation of community groups.

Community awareness of ecological space is enhanced through effective communication and experiential education activities.

A network of experts in related fields was established to share experiences as well as build long-term cooperation plans.

Relevance to VB4E thematic areas

- Biodiversity conservation
- Climate change
- Plastic waste management

(Optional: based on the site survey and needs assessment)

- Sustainable tourism development
- Marine and coastal conservation
- Water and wetland conservation

How would the project relate to VB4E 8 focus areas?

The project's priority is to renovate public spaces in an ecological, inclusive and sustainable way. Based on ecological features in the area, the project will renovate the public space with community participation to enhance biodiversity, prioritizing the use of friendly, recycled, local materials in



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the construction of public space works to reduce emissions. The project also provides activities to raise awareness for the public relating to biodiversity conservation, climate change and plastic waste management through workshops, study tours and community events.

Regarding the selection area, CCRD and TPG plan to survey areas in Hue City including Thuan An sea area, Ru Cha mangrove forest... If these areas meet all the conditions of space, community capacity, the project will implement activities here.

Management structure:

Main Coordinator: Centre for Community Research and Development (CCRD)

Design and construction consulting Organization: Think Playgrounds Social Enterprise (TPG)

Total Budget: Estimated around 700,000,000 VND

Total Budget from Green Viet grant: 506,000,000 VND

Co-financing: 200,000,000 VND (crowdfunding, contributed by project organizations and community)

Please contact coordinator at VB4EAlliance@gmail.com for further information if you are interested in the project idea.