An investigation of the relationship between Adult Basic Education (ABE) and accessing poverty alleviation resources in selected ethnic minority communities in Vietnam

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Doctor in Philosophy

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An investigation of the relationship between Adult Basic Education (ABE) and accessing poverty alleviation resources in selected ethnic minority communities in Vietnam.

Abstract

Colman Patrick Ross

This study examines two approaches to Adult Basic Education (ABE) and their influence on accessing poverty alleviation resources in selected ethnic minority communities in Vietnam. In a multiple case study that relied heavily on structured and semi-structured interviews, investigations focused on the curricula, methodology, teacher / facilitator training, use of local languages, link to poverty alleviation and post-course use of literacy and literate environments by participants in each of the three selected case study communities.

Although there are numerous models and methods for implementing ABE programmes, this study focused on Reflect and the Government of Vietnam’s Adult Literacy Programme implemented by local education authorities (DOET). Reflect an approach developed by ActionAid is based on the theory of conscientisation, pioneered by Paulo Freire. Adult learners explore development challenges and these become the basis to be taught literacy and numeracy skills. This approach is compared and contrasted with the more conventional functional literacy approach of DOET using the Government of Vietnam poverty alleviation programme P135 to measure the influence both approaches have on access and participation. Findings concentrate on answering the main research question: How do differences in ABE / literacy approaches impact on how specific ethnic minorities access specific poverty alleviation resources in Vietnam?

Major findings indicate that ABE approaches that deliver good overall levels of literacy provide a necessary platform for participants to develop an awareness and understanding of P135 which can improve access and is essential for meaningful participation. ABE approaches such as Reflect have a greater potential to impact upon access and participation in P135 when implemented using participatory methodology and delivered by local facilitators who are from the target ethnic group, understand the local language and culture and have an awareness and understanding of Government of Vietnam (GoV) poverty alleviation strategy. Impediments to accessing ABE resources include residential location, mobility, inadequate incentives and resources and limited culturally relevant literate environments.

Implications of findings centre on recommendations to improve the planning, location and implementation of complementary ABE and poverty alleviation interventions that match local expectations by using culturally sensitive approaches and local human and material resources to promote inclusion and community participation to achieve realistic and sustainable development objectives.
Declaration

I declare that this thesis has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university and it is entirely my own work.

I agree to deposit this thesis in the University’s open access institutional repository or allow the library to do so on my behalf, subject to Irish Copyright Legislation and Trinity College Library conditions of use and acknowledgement.

Colman Patrick Ross  19/06/2012
Summary

This study examines two approaches to Adult Basic Education (ABE) and their influence on accessing poverty alleviation resources in selected ethnic minority communities in Vietnam. In a multiple case study that relied heavily on structured and semi-structured interviews, investigations focused on the curricula, methodology, teacher / facilitator training, use of local languages, link to poverty alleviation and post-course use of literacy and literate environments by participants in each of the three selected case study communities.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this research thesis to my family and in particular my wife Nguyen Mai Chi and son Liam Nguyen Ross. Without the continual support of my greater family and friends in Ireland and Vietnam this research would never have reached completion. Their dedicated support was a source of inspiration to me and their encouragement has helped me in times of difficulty to complete this work.

There have been many people who have influenced me before and during this research none more than my mother Mary and father John who encouraged me to discover and achieve my personal goals through learning and knowledge. I dedicate this achievement to them.

Finally I would like to dedicate this thesis to family and friends who have sadly departed during the course of this research. Their passing helped me to locate my work in the general scheme of life and put it into perspective. I hope that I have managed to achieve this and that this research will contribute to a better understanding of the importance of Adult Basic Education for personal and community development in Vietnam.
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Finally to the staff of ActionAid Vietnam, the Centre for Community Development (CCD), respective Departments of Education and Training (DOET), Departments of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) and Departments of Ethnic Minority Affairs (DEMA) in Ha Giang and Dien Bien provinces and the participants of Reflect and DOET Adult Basic Education (ABE) courses who took part in this study I extend my sincere appreciation and acknowledge that without their cooperation this study could never have been realised.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Declaration</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Maps</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Images</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Boxes</td>
<td>xiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Appendices</td>
<td>xiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Abbreviations and Acronyms</td>
<td>xv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 1: Introduction</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Study Overview</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Study Relevance</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Researcher’s Background in Vietnam</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Research Objectives and Questions</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Methodological Approach</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 Thesis Outline</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 2: Concepts of Adult Basic Education</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Introduction</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1 Adult Basic Education</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2 Freire and Adult Basic Education</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.3 Functional Literacy</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Impact of Adult Basic Education in the Developing World</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3.1 Adult Basic Education and Development 23
2.3.2 Literacy as an Agent of Social Change in Developing Countries 27
2.3.3 Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals 32
2.4 Summary 35

Chapter 3: Adult Basic Education in Vietnam 37

3.1 Introduction 37
3.2 Vietnam: Education for Ethnic Minorities 37
3.2.1 Vietnam: A General Background 37
3.2.2 Education in Vietnam: An Historical Perspective 39
3.2.3 Adult Basic Education in Vietnam: An Update 40
3.3.1 Adult Basic Education Initiatives in Vietnam 45
3.3.2 Structure of Adult Basic Education in Vietnam 45
3.3.3 Community Learning Centres (CLC) and ABE Promotion 50
3.3.4 Methodological Approaches to Adult Basic Education in Vietnam 54
3.3.4.1 REFLECT 55
3.3.4.2 MOET / DOET Approach 60
3.4.1 Ethnic Minority Poverty and Adult Basic Education in Vietnam 63
3.4.2.1 Differences in Education of Adults in Vietnam 67
3.5 Conclusion 71

Chapter 4: Methodology 73

4.1 Introduction 73
4.2.1 The Nature of Educational Research 73
4.2.2 Quantitative Research 77
4.2.3 Qualitative Research 78
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.2.4 Mixed Methods</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Case Study Research</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Research Issues in Development Contexts</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 Research Context – Vietnam</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6 Research Design and Methodology</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7 Data Collection</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7.1 Case Study Data</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7.2 Literature Review</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7.3 Document Analysis</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7.4 Questionnaires</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7.5 Interviews</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7.6 Observations</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7.7 Research Journal</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7.8 Recordings and Video</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8 Analysis of Case Study Evidence</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9 Validity and Reliability</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10 Bias</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.11 Ethics</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.12 Triangulation</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.13 Project</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.14 Assessment</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.15 Conclusion</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chapter 5: Presentation of Case Study Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Introduction</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1 Obtaining Access and Permission for Data Collection</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2 Case Study 1: Thuan Hoa Commune - Background Data</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 6: Discussion and Analysis

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Cross-case Data Analysis

6.3 Differences between Reflect and DOET Adult Literacy Approaches

6.4 Impact of ABE Approaches on Participants’ Access to P135II

6.5 Impediments to Accessing Adult Education Resources

6.6 How do differences in ABE / Literacy Approaches Impact on Ethnic Minority Adults’ Participation in Poverty Alleviation Programmes

6.7 Summary of Research Findings

Chapter 7: Conclusions

7.1 Study Summary

7.2 Major Findings

7.2.1 Impact of ABE Approaches on Access to P135II

7.2.2 Impact of ABE Approaches on Participation in P135II
7.2.3 Impediments to Participation in P135II

7.2.4 Impediments to Accessing Adult Education Resources

7.3 Recommendations

7.3.1 ABE Policy

7.3.2 Poverty Alleviation Policy

7.4 Study Limitations

7.5 Suggestions for Further Research

7.6 Reflections

References

Appendices

List of Maps

Map 1.1 Location of Study (CS1, CS2, CS3) 2

Map 5.1 Case Study 1 141

Map 5.2 Case Study 2 and 3 and Pilot Areas 190

List of Tables

Table 3.1 Classification of Ethnic Minorities 37

Table 3.2 Literacy Rates of Kinh and Non Kinh 42

Table 3.3 New MOET / DOET Adult Literacy / Complementary Curriculum 62

Table 4.1 Overview of Interviews Conducted 107

Table 4.2 Integrative Framework for Inference Quality 121

Table 5.1 Case Study Locations Overview 138
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.2</th>
<th>Case Study 1 Locations</th>
<th>140</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.3</td>
<td>New Ha Giang DOET Adult Literacy Curriculum</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.4</td>
<td>Thuan Hoa Poverty Rate (%) 2005-10</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.5</td>
<td>P135II Activities in Vi Xuyen District (all 22 communes in P135II) by Component</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.6</td>
<td>P135II Activities in Thuan Hoa Commune by Component</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.7</td>
<td>Curricula Differences between \textit{Reflect} and DOET AL in Thuan Hoa Commune (CS1)</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.8</td>
<td>Case Study 2 Location</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.9</td>
<td>Development of \textit{Reflect} in Dien Bien Province</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.10</td>
<td>Dien Bien DOET ABE Curriculum</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.11</td>
<td>Overview of P135II in Dien Bien Province</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.12</td>
<td>P135II Activities in Thanh Nua Commune (CS2) by Component</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.13</td>
<td>Objectives and Curriculum Content of \textit{Reflect} Phases</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.14</td>
<td>Case Study 3 Location</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.15</td>
<td>ABE Activities in Na Tau Commune 2000-2011 (CS3)</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.16</td>
<td>P135II Activities in Na Tau Commune (CS3) by Component</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.17</td>
<td>EU SLLCRDP 2000-2005 Overview (CS3)</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.18</td>
<td>DOET Adult Literacy (AL) Teacher Training CS3</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.19</td>
<td>Benefits from Poverty Alleviation Programmes Case Study 3</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6.1</td>
<td>Differences in Curriculum and Methodology</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6.2 Differences in Facilitator / Teacher Training and Methods
Table 6.3 Use of Local Languages in Reflect and DOET AL Classes
Table 6.4 Ethnicity and Language Use of CS populations
Table 6.5 Differences in ABE Management
Table 6.6 Impact of ABE Approaches on Participants’ Access to P135II
Table 6.7 Reflect / DOET Participants Benefits from P135II
Table 6.8 Impediments to Accessing Adult Education Resources
Table 6.9 Participant’s Assessment of Adult Education Resources
Table 6.10 Implications of Findings for Adult Basic Education Policy
Table 6.11 Impact of ABE Approaches on Participation in P135II
Table 6.12 Impediments to Participation in P135II
Table 6.13 Implications of Findings for Poverty Alleviation Policy
Table 6.14 Summary of Research Findings

List of Figures

Figure 3.1 Vietnam Ethnic Minority Populations
Figure 3.2 Overview of Education System in Vietnam
Figure 3.3 The difference between Kinh and ethnic minority poverty widens
Figure 3.4  Gaps between Kinh and non-Kinh continue to grow 65
Figure 3.5  Educational attainment of Kinh/ Hoa and Ethnic minorities, adults of 18 years and older, 1993-2004 68
Figure 3.6  How Differences between Kinh and Minorities Become Disadvantages 69

List of Images

Image 3.1  MOET Adult Literacy Primers 1956, 1967 and 1990 60
Image 5.1  Traditional Tay Nha San 145
Image 5.2  Interviewing a Reflect Participant in Na Lun Hamlet CS1 161
Image 5.3  Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Matrix 162
Image 5.4  Na Lun Hamlet CS1 185
Image 5.5  Interviewing a Dao Reflect Participant CS1 188
Image 5.6  Black Thai Nha San in Co Ke Village 195
Image 5.7  Reflect Circle Co Ke Village, Thanh Nua CS2 200
Image 5.8  Na Tau Market CS3 234
Image 5.9  EU DOET Adult Literacy Class 2004 239
Image 5.10  Book 1-3 of DOET Adult Literacy Curriculum 249
Image 5.11  DOET Adult Literacy Cert (CS3) 253
Image 5.12  Na Tau CLC CS3 266
Image 5.13  DOET Participant Interview CS3 270
Image 5.14  Shop 1 Ta Cang CS3 288
List of Boxes

Box 5.1  Experience of Literacy Learning before Reflect 167
Box 5.2  Reflect Facilitator Assessment of Literacy Levels of Participants 172
Box 5.3  Na Lun Hamlet, Mich B Village, Thuan Hoa Commune 183
Box 5.4  Key Results CS1 187
Box 5.5  Key Results CS2 231
Box 5.6  Shopkeeper 1 Case Study 3 (Ta Cang Village, Na Tau Commune) 284
Box 5.7  Shopkeeper 2 Case Study 3 (Ta Cang Village, Na Tau Commune) 284
Box 5.8  Shopkeeper 3 Case Study 3 (Ta Cang Village, Na Tau Commune) 285
Box 5.9  Ta Cang Village 286
Box 5.10 Key Results CS3 291

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 The 12 Adult Literacy Benchmarks 372
Appendix 2 Comparative Development Statistics between Vietnam and Ireland 374
Appendix 3 Data Collection Framework 375
Appendix 4 PRA Tools 378
Figure 1. Income Expenditure Tree
Figure 2. Village Mapping

Figure 3. Animal Husbandry Matrix

Figure 4. Using PRA Tools in ABE Class

Appendix 5  In-depth Structured Interview Schedule  381
            Example 1. Reflect Participants
            Example 2. Reflect Circle Facilitator

Appendix 6  Semi-Structured Interview Schedule  385
            Example 1. P135 Management District
            Example 2. Reflect Programme Management

Appendix 7  Study Objectives  387

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAV  ActionAid Vietnam

ABE  Adult Basic Education

ADB  Asian Development Bank

AE  Adult Education

AL  Adult Literacy

APL  Adult Performance Level

APPEAL  Asian and Pacific Programme of Education For All

APO  Agricultural Promotion Officer

BARD  Bureau of Agriculture and Rural Development

BOET  Bureau of Education and Training

BOLISA  Bureau of Labour Invalids and Social Affairs

CARE  International NGO
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCD</td>
<td>Centre for Community Development (local NGO Dien Bien)</td>
</tr>
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<td>CDSP</td>
<td>Cao Dang Su Pham (Teacher Training College)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEC</td>
<td>Continuing Education Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEMA</td>
<td>Committee of Ethnic Minorities Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLC</td>
<td>Community Learning Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLCP</td>
<td>Community Learning Centre Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPC</td>
<td>Commune People’s Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPRGS</td>
<td>Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPV</td>
<td>Communist Party of Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS</td>
<td>‘Chia Se’ Vietnam-Sweden Poverty Alleviation Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSA</td>
<td>Country Social Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVC</td>
<td>Cluster Village Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWS</td>
<td>Church World Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DANIDA</td>
<td>Denmark International Development Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DARD</td>
<td>Department of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
</tr>
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<td>DEMA</td>
<td>Department of Ethnic Minorities Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development (UK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOET</td>
<td>Department of Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPC</td>
<td>District People’s Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPI</td>
<td>Department of Planning and Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRV</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education For All</td>
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<tr>
<td>EM</td>
<td>Ethnic Minorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EUSLLCRDP  EU Son La, Lai Chau Rural Development Project
FF       Fatherland Front
FPS      Finance and Planning Section
FU       Farmer’s Union
GCE      Global Campaign for Education
GDP      Gross Domestic Product
GIZ      German Development Cooperation
GoV      Government of Vietnam
GSO      General Statistics Office
HEPR     Hunger Eradication and Poverty Reduction
IA       Irish Aid
IEC      Information Education Communication
IEMA     Institute of Ethnic Minority Affairs
IEO      Institute of Ethnology
IFAD     International Fund for Agricultural Development
IPSARD  Agriculture and Rural Development Institute Vietnam
INGO     International Non-governmental Organisation
ILSA     Institute of Labour and Social Affairs
IOS      Institute of Sociology
JICA     Japan International Cooperation Agency
MARD     Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MDGs     Millennium Development Goals
M+E      Monitoring and Evaluation
MOET     Ministry of Education and Training
MOF           Ministry of Finance
MOLISA        Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs.
MPI           Ministry of Planning and Investment.
NEFAAP        National Education For All Action Plan
NFUAJ         National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan
NFE           Non Formal Education
NGO           Non-governmental Organisation
NMPPRP        Northern Mountains Poverty Reduction Programme (World Bank)
NORAD         Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NRDM          New Rural Development Model (MARD)
NTP           National Targeted Programme
ODA           Overseas Development Assistance
O+M           Operation and Maintenance
P134          Programme 134 (Government of Vietnam Poverty Programme)
P135          Programme 135 (Government of Vietnam Poverty Programme)
PMU           Project Management Unit
PPC           Provincial People’s Committee
PRA           Participatory Rural Assessment
PSO           Provincial Statistics Office
RCLCE         Research Centre for Literacy and Continuing Education (Ha Noi)
RECENFED      Research Centre for Continuing Education (Ha Noi)
RVN           Republic of Vietnam (Old South Vietnam)
SEA           South East Asia
SEDP          Socio-economic Development Plan
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sida</td>
<td>Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>SNV</td>
<td>Netherlands Development Organisation</td>
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<td>SPD</td>
<td>Support Programme for Development (ActionAid Vietnam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRV</td>
<td>Socialist Republic of Vietnam (Unified Vietnam after 1976)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOT</td>
<td>Training of Trainers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCD</td>
<td>Trinity College Dublin (University of Dublin, Ireland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UKaid</td>
<td>United Kingdom Department for International Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VBARDA</td>
<td>Vietnam Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>VBSP</td>
<td>Vietnam Bank for Social Policy (Bank for the Poor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC</td>
<td>Vice Chairman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VD</td>
<td>Vice Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VDC</td>
<td>Village Development Club <em>Reflect</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VHLSS</td>
<td>Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VLA</td>
<td>Vietnam Learning Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VLC</td>
<td>Village Learning Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VMDGs</td>
<td>Vietnam Millennium Development Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOICE</td>
<td>Village Ownership and Investment for Community Empowerment (Irish Aid)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VSO</td>
<td>Voluntary Services Overseas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VVOB</td>
<td>Flemish Association for Development Cooperation and Technical Assistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------</td>
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<tr>
<td>WB</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>WU</td>
<td>Women’s Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>YU</td>
<td>Youth Union</td>
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Chapter 1: Introduction

This is a study that investigates the relationship between Adult Basic Education (ABE) and accessing poverty alleviation resources in selected ethnic minority communities in Vietnam. The study has been conducted over a period of four years from the development of the Research Proposal in April 2008 to the completion of the thesis in June 2012. Chapter 1 outlines an overview of the study, reasons and rationale for undertaking the study, the relationship between the researcher and the area of research and includes study objectives and specific research questions. In addition the methodological approach and thesis layout will be summarised providing the reader with an overview of the approach and the concise substance of each individual chapter to facilitate a clear understanding of the study as a whole.

1.1 Study Overview

The examination of two approaches to Adult Basic Education (ABE) and their influence on accessing poverty alleviation resources in specific ethnic minority communities in Vietnam constitutes the main objective of this study. This investigation has been conducted as a multiple case study relying heavily on qualitative data gathered from structured and semi-structured interviews. The main focus of investigations centred on the curricula, methodology, teacher / facilitator training, use of local languages, link to poverty alleviation and post-course use of literacy and literate environments by ABE participants in each of the three selected case study communities.

Although in Vietnam and throughout the developing world there are many models and methods for implementing ABE programmes, this study focuses on Reflect and the Government of Vietnam’s (GoV) Adult Literacy Programme implemented by local education authorities (DOET). Reflect is an approach that is implemented by ActionAid and is based on the theory of conscientisation, developed by the Brazilian educator and pioneer of critical pedagogy Paulo Freire. Development challenges are explored by adult learners and these challenges become the basis for a participatory learner centred curriculum. This unconventional approach is compared and contrasted with the more conventional functional literacy approach.
of DOET using the Government of Vietnam (GoV) poverty alleviation programme P135 as a measurement of the influence both approaches have on access and participation. The rationale for using P135 as a measurement of access and participation is based on its implementation in all designated poor communes in Vietnam which helped to increase choices for research locations and scope for the potential application of research findings. Research findings concentrate on answering the main research question that focuses on how differences in ABE approaches impact on how specific ethnic minorities access specific poverty alleviation resources in Vietnam.

Map 1.1: Location of Study (CS1, CS2, CS3)


1.2 Study Relevance
The reasons and rationale for undertaking this study stem from the concentration of poverty alleviation interventions in Vietnam in ethnic minority regions where Kinh (Vietnamese) is not the main language spoken and where the indigenous cultures have been developing for hundreds, and in some cases, thousands of years. While it is widely acknowledged that Vietnam has recorded significant progress in alleviating poverty in the last 25 years, ethnic minority groups who represent 14% of the population account for 52% of the poor. Recent research confirms that the proportion of ethnic minority poor is disproportionate to their overall percentage of the population. Geographical location, cultural diversity and differences in economic and educational development contribute to this over-
representation of ethnic minorities living in poverty (CSA, 2009; see also Table 3.1; Figure 3.1).

Although there have been many studies that correlate general education, particularly primary and secondary, with the achievement of overall development ambitions in Vietnam there has been a lack of specific research on the relationship between Adult Basic Education (ABE) and poverty alleviation. Research from the World Bank and supported by data from the Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey (VHLSS) indicates that in spite of a concerted effort by the GoV and donors to alleviate and reduce poverty, ethnic minorities lag behind the mainstream Kinh majority population (see 3.4.1). This study attempts to directly investigate tangible links between ABE, with a particular focus on adult literacy in Kinh, with accessing and participating in GoV poverty alleviation programmes. In order to include mainstream and alternative approaches to ABE both the GoV approach and Freirean Reflect approach have been investigated.

The GoV ABE approach based on functional literacy principles developed by UNESCO in the 1960s has in recent years been curtailed due to the acclaimed successes of the final nationwide ‘Eradication of Illiteracy’ drive in the 1990s. Official statistics indicate that over 96% of the population is now literate in lowland Kinh areas and over 90% in remote rural ethnic minority areas. According to official and independent surveys the majority of illiterate adults are now concentrated in poor ethnic minority communities which are supported by poverty alleviation programmes such as P135.

Reflect is active in a large number of ethnic minority provinces in Vietnam and is implemented by ActionAid Vietnam and a number of other INGOs and local NGOs. The Reflect approach attempts to directly link adult literacy with community development issues placing an emphasis on dialogue and action, awareness-raising, cooperation and empowerment. In contrast to conventional ABE approaches Reflect participants explore local development challenges in an attempt to find localised solutions. By including both approaches in this particular study there is an opportunity to look more closely at what adult participants learn in ABE interventions and how these interventions impact on participants’ access and
participation in P135. By focusing on specific elements of both approaches such as curriculum development, methodology, teacher / facilitator training and methods, use of local languages, links to poverty alleviation, and post-course use of literacy and literate environments the impact of each approach can be compared and contrasted using access and participation in P135 as a tangible basis for measurement.

In doing so it is hoped that the scope and robustness of this research will be improved and that findings reflect an unbiased evaluation of the impact of two ABE approaches on a specific GoV poverty alleviation programme that has been implemented countrywide since 1999. A third phase of P135 is now under consideration by the GoV and it is hoped that findings from this limited study can contribute to a better understanding of the potential influence of ABE on programme objectives. The literature review and theoretical framework endeavours to link both national and international theory and practice in ABE and poverty alleviation to help contextualise the aims and objectives of this research. Vietnam as an active member of the UN and signatory of the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All Compact has developed localised strategies to achieve targets and goals that bind national interventions to international global ambitions. It is in both these contexts that this particular study has been located and it is hoped that this provides a relevant framework that helps to justify the time and endeavour needed to complete this investigation.

1.3 Researcher’s Background in Vietnam
The researcher’s association with educational and development issues in Vietnam began in 1998 during a three year placement as a teacher trainer with Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) in Da Lat Teacher Training College located in the Central Highlands. The following eleven years 2001-12 have been spent working on various development programmes supporting rural development and poverty alleviation in mainly ethnic minority areas and conducting research on the impact of ABE on accessing poverty alleviation resources.

During the course of this direct involvement in development projects in Vietnam the experience as a development practitioner has gradually led the researcher to
the realisation that further research was required in order to fully understand the impact of ABE on GoV and donor poverty alleviation interventions. After spending most of these 14 years living and working in ten provinces with a high proportion of ethnic minority people, issues relating to language, literacy, communication and implementation of various programme objectives began to formulate recognisable patterns. Although the researcher has been involved in directly supporting ABE initiatives and understood the general importance of ABE to achieving development goals this was not fully appreciated until the link between levels of participation were correlated to different ethnic groups during the researcher’s involvement with the Sida Chia Se (Sharing) poverty alleviation programme from 2006-2008.

In this programme supported by the Swedish and Vietnamese governments access and participation results were significantly higher in one more predominately Kinh (Vietnamese speaking) province compared to the two other predominately ethnic minority provinces. As an adviser who had worked for the first year (2006) in the Kinh province and later moved to work in one of the ethnic minority provinces, the differences in awareness and participation while partly explained by more top-down management styles and cultural differences were perceived to be possibly linked to participants’ levels of ABE. It was during the final period of the researcher’s involvement in this particular programme that the proposal for this research on the relationship between ABE and accessing poverty alleviation was developed and accepted by the University of Dublin, School of Education.

While the researcher has been involved in supporting programmes directly and indirectly in both of the provinces in this research (Ha Giang and Dien Bien), including the collaboration with ActionAid Reflect and advice to DOET ABE interventions in Dien Bien, during intermittent periods of involvement between 2002 and 2005 with the EU Son La Lai Chau Rural Development Programme (EU SLLCRDP), mechanisms were integrated into the research design and methodology to reduce the conscious and sub-conscious intrusion of biased opinions and attitudes. Advice from Yin (2009) was particularly helpful in avoiding bias while collecting case study evidence and every effort was made to acquire
Yin’s proposed skill set necessary for effective case study enquiry prior to the commencement of data collection (Yin, 2009, 69). Familiarity with the socio-economic and cultural diversity of the three case study locations created distinct advantages for the researcher in organising and conducting data collection and personal and professional relationships within both provinces were invaluable while negotiating access to research sites, individuals and official documentation (see Map 1.1). A conscious effort in the development of the research design that incorporated diverse ABE and poverty alleviation theories and concepts assisted in the development of an approach that helped to triangulate findings using multiple data sources in order to limit the influence of bias.

1.4 Research Objectives and Questions
The research objectives concentrate on completing an investigation of the relationship between Adult Basic Education (ABE) and accessing poverty alleviation resources in selected ethnic minority communities in Vietnam. The main objectives can be summarised as follows:

- Investigate two approaches to ABE / literacy (Reflect and DOET / GoV Adult Literacy Programmes) with a focus on the following:
  1. Curriculum
  2. Methodology
  3. Teacher / facilitator training and methods
  4. Use of local languages
  5. Link to poverty alleviation
  6. Post-course use of literacy and literate environments by participants.

- Measure the impact of approaches on participants’ access and participation in poverty alleviation programme P135 II and incorporating the planning and implementation of the following outcome objectives of P135 II.
  1. Production development
  2. Infrastructure development
  3. Capacity building
  4. Improvement of socio-cultural living standards.
• Explore the impediments to accessing adult education and poverty alleviation resources.

The main study objectives as outlined above are developed to assist in answering the following overall research question and sub-questions.

**Research Question**

• How do differences in ABE / Literacy approaches impact on how specific ethnic minority adults access specific poverty alleviation resources in Vietnam?

**Research sub-questions**

• Are there differences between the Reflect and DOET Adult Literacy approaches?
• How do different approaches to ABE / adult literacy impact on ethnic minority adults’ participation in poverty alleviation programmes in Vietnam?
• What are the impediments to accessing ABE resources for specific ethnic minority adults?
• What are the impediments to accessing poverty alleviation resources from P135II for specific ethnic minority adults?
• Are policy changes implied by the research findings? What are these?

**1.5 Methodological Approach**

Having explored the available approaches and attended workshops related to undertaking educational research in development contexts it was decided after considerable discussion and reflection to conduct this research as a mixed methods multiple case study. Because of the nature of the research, location of the communes and ethnographic uniqueness of the populations a case study approach was considered the most appropriate and culturally sensitive methodology to use. The researcher’s experience of living and working in the region and understanding of the potential limitations of exclusively quantitative survey methods in areas with poor communications, lower literacy levels and restrictive and bureaucratic barriers helped to identify a case study as an appropriate methodological approach. In addition the advice and warnings of Yin
(2009) and Chambers (2008) were taken into consideration throughout this rather lengthy process.

In essence this study relies heavily on qualitative data collected using in-depth structured and semi-structured interviews and observations during field visits to case study sites. A substantial amount of quantitative data from official government documentation, statistics, reports and archival records has been used to supplement qualitative data. In the development of the 7 in-depth structured and 10 semi-structured interview forms, questions focus on research objectives and answering the overall study questions. In total there were 64 interviews as well as over 20 informal interviews conducted inside and outside the confines of the three case study areas. Questions were piloted in locations similar to the case study areas in one of the selected provinces (Dien Bien) and adjusted based on feedback, experiences and practical considerations. General guidelines from Robson (2002, 253), Bryman (2008, 42) and Kvale (1996) were used in the development of in-depth and semi-structured interview schedules (see Appendices 5 and 6).

All interviews were conducted in both English and Vietnamese (Kinh) with the researcher’s questions being translated to interviewees into Vietnamese (Kinh) and replies translated back into English by the research assistant. At no stage during the 9 separate fieldtrips (38 days) to the three case study locations was it necessary to use local ethnic language interpreters. All in-depth and semi-structured interviews were recorded in both written and audio formats. Data collection in case study locations and other locations in Vietnam was conducted over a twelve month period from September 2010 to September 2011. In addition to interviews in case study locations there were interviews with GoV agencies, donors, INGOs, NGOs and UN agencies and Irish Aid and Embassy officials in Ha Noi (see Appendix 3, Data Collection Framework). Follow-up interviews on a second trip to Vietnam were conducted with ActionAid, RECENFED and Irish Aid in April / May 2012.

Following suggestions from Yin (2009) the triangulation of information from multiple sources including documents, archival records, interviews and
observations helped to develop converging lines of inquiry and increased the robustness and reliability of the case study evidence. The development of a case study protocol that included an overview of the study, field procedures, case study questions and an outline of the case study report helped to guide the researcher and inform local authorities and agencies about the aims and objectives of the study. Because of the size of this document and the time needed to study and understand its contents a more concise version of the study objectives was used during individual interviews (see Appendix 7).

A continuous process of document analysis was conducted prior to, during and after the completion of field research. The recording of interviews, observations and field notes detailing summaries of events and the researcher’s initial reflections were conducted using principles developed by Bryman (2008, 417). In total there were three large A4 size research journals used in the recording and analysis of case study evidence during this study. The use of images and to a limited extent video augmented recordings and field notes. Images play an important role in the portrayal of geographical locations, socio-economic conditions and ethnographic and physical environments in each of the three case study locations. While each case study description provides geographical, historical, social, economical and ethnographic context for the reader it is difficult without prior experience of the region to visualise local realities without the inclusion of images.

Cross-case synthesis techniques have been used to analyse data from this multiple case study research. This technique treats each individual case study as a separate study and following the advice of Yin (2009, 160) word tables have been developed to display the data from individual cases according to a uniformed framework in order to enhance argumentative interpretation. Strong, plausible and fair arguments are supported by data using this technique throughout this study. In this study aspects of validity and reliability were considered as important requirements for the development of effective and credible conclusions. The multiple aspects of validity and reliability that are outlined in Chapter 4 by Cohen et al. (2007), Hammersley (1992), LeCompte and Prissle (1993), Lincoln and Guba (1985), Kvale (1996) and Tashakkori and Teddlie (2009) helped to guide the
researcher when conducting field work and data collection. The ‘Integrative Framework for Inference Quality’ developed by Tashakkori and Teddlie (2009) was utilised extensively to keep a check on aspects of research design and interpretive quality.

During the course of this research all ethical considerations as outlined by Cohen et al. (2007, 51-57) in planning and implementing research were adhered to. The integrity and wishes of the individuals and groups who took part in this research were respected and at no stage were participants involved without their knowledge and consent, coerced or misinformed about the nature of the research, or deceived.

1.6 Thesis Outline

The development of the final design and outline of this thesis facilitates a general overview and includes the review of the literature, development of the theoretical framework, outline of the methodology and methods, presentation and analysis of case study data, discussion and analysis, and conclusions.

Because the theoretical framework of this study combines elements of both ABE and poverty alleviation theory there has been a conscious effort to develop a literature review that outlines concepts of ABE linking them to development from a global and Vietnamese perspective. In chapters two and three the various theoretical perspectives that underpin the fields of ABE and poverty alleviation are discussed and contextualised to include both international and national ambitions and realities while focusing on providing background theory, policy and practice in a framework that matches overall study objectives.

Chapter 4 while specifically designed to outline the methodology used to conduct this study provides an extensive overview of aspects relating to the nature of educational research that links relevant methodological paradigms to the theoretical framework and the actual mechanics of conducting a relevant, robust and ethical study on the relationship between ABE and accessing poverty alleviation resources in Vietnam. Chapter 5 following the advice of Yin (2009) treats each of the three case studies as individual studies presenting data in an
identical and systematic framework under the headings outlined in the overall study objectives. Chapter 5 is comprehensive and detailed in an effort to treat each individual case in an unbiased manner in order to enhance possibilities of cross-case discussion and analysis in Chapter 6.

The discussion and analysis of evidence from the three case studies in Chapter 6 utilises tables to display and synthesise data that forms the basis for strong cross-case argumentative interpretations linking study objectives and research questions to the development of major findings and recommendations in Chapter 7.

Study limitations, suggestions for further research and reflections on the ‘research journey’ provide a conclusion that locates this study primarily in the context and confines of the communities and ethnic groups where the study was conducted while broadening the scope for potential dissemination of findings to a wider audience that may assist in developing a better understanding of the dynamics and relationship between ABE and poverty alleviation interventions in Vietnam.
Chapter 2: Concepts of Adult Basic Education

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will examine the concept of Adult Basic Education (ABE) and outline the particular definitions of ABE that will be used throughout this thesis. Adult basic education and literacy, and the various theoretical perspectives that underpin the field, are discussed and debated in section 2.2.2 and 2.2.3. Section 2.3 discusses the impact of ABE in the developing world with specific reference to ABE and development (2.3.1). It explores literacy as an agent for social change (2.3.2) and links these specific aspects of ABE to international initiatives such as Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals (2.3.3). The aim and purpose of this chapter is to provide background information on the development of ABE with a particular focus on the Freirean and functional literacy approaches. Both approaches are central to the development of this thesis and are examined extensively in the context of the three case studies in Chapter 5 and 6.

2.2.1 Adult Basic Education

Jarvis (1990) in the preface to the first edition of his ‘International Dictionary of Adult and Continuing Education’ states that adult and continuing education is changing at a ‘tremendously rapid rate’. He notes that the field of adult and continuing education is complex and that his dictionary would at least act as a guide book to those who wished to find their way through these complexities. He emphasises that the dictionary reflects his own understanding of the field and consequently it contains its own limitations. The preface to the second edition (1999) acknowledges that the field has actually changed much more rapidly than he anticipated (Jarvis, 1999).

The second edition defines Adult Basic Education (ABE) as:

Education of adults in the area of primary knowledge, such as literacy and numeracy, of social and life skills, of understanding of community life, necessary to responsible participation in society (Jarvis, 1999, 4).

The definition of Adult Education (AE) in the same edition has six separate sections that encompass:

- the institutions offering learning opportunities to adults;
• liberal education for adults;
• communication designed to bring about learning in adults;
• the entire body of organised educational processes;
• overtones of a democratic social learning movement;
• and the educational process conducted in a mature (adult) manner.

The Hamburg Declaration (UNESCO, 1997, 3-4) defines both basic education for all and adult literacy: ‘Basic education for all means that people, whatever their age have an opportunity, individually and collectively, to realise their potential’. The statement goes on to broadly define adult literacy as:

The basic knowledge and skills needed by all in a rapidly changing world, a necessary skill in itself and one of the foundations of other life skills. Literacy is also a catalyst for participation in social, cultural, political and economic activities and for learning throughout life. The provision of a literate environment to support oral culture for the realisation of learning opportunities for all including the unreached and the excluded.

It is advocated for the purpose of this thesis that both UNESCO and Jarvis definitions will be used. Jarvis (1999) provides an appropriate and succinct definition of ABE in general while the UNESCO (1997) definition encompasses a specific definition of adult literacy as a vital element in ABE. Throughout this thesis the skills associated with literacy will be defined with an emphasis on context and use as defined by UNESCO:

Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve his or her goals, develop his or her knowledge and potential and participate fully in community and wider society (UNESCO, 2005, 21).

2.2.2 Freire and Adult Basic Education
Paulo Freire the Brazilian radical educator spent most of his life developing and expanding on critical adult education theory. His book ‘Pedagogy of the Oppressed’ (1973) became a watershed in the development of critical adult education and an inspiration to adult educators who questioned mainstream approaches to literacy and basic adult education. West (1993, xiii) described this classic work as ‘a world historical event for counter-hegemonic theorists and
activists in search of new ways of linking social theory to narratives of human freedom’. It is claimed his work is relevant to any investigation into the relationship between adult basic education and forms of empowerment in developing countries and especially in the context of remote and marginalised communities (see Archer and Cottingham, 1996; Yousif, 2003).

Freire developed many of his theories while working with remote communities in Brazil as well as in other parts of Latin America and Africa. His contribution to the education of illiterate adults in the developing world is based on the assumption that, when given the opportunity, people act upon and transform their world to create a fuller and richer life both individually and collectively (Mayo, 1995).

Central to Freire’s ideas is a quality of human consciousness (Jarvis 1991; Giroux 1983). According to Freire literacy was not just the development of particular skills needed to read and write. He stresses the transformation of relations between, what he terms the dominant and the dominated (Freire, 1973). He was convinced that every human is capable of looking critically at the world, but in order to do so, there is a necessary awakening. To achieve this awakening people must develop a critical consciousness (conscientizacao) (Jarvis, 1991). Giroux (1983) links this notion of ‘conscientisation’ to reflection and action in a process of emancipation which can be both individual or collective. The ideology of a given form of literacy can help people to become active in social change by providing them with the tools necessary for critical dialogue. In order to achieve this dialogue Freire claimed that education must find a solution to the ‘teacher student contradiction’ (Freire, 2003, 72). Education based on what Freire (Freire, 2003, 72) called the ‘banking concept’ is the transfer of knowledge to students by those who consider themselves knowledgeable. This type of transfer of knowledge alienates the student and ignores the knowledge that the student can transfer to the teacher. This in turn damages the process of conscientisation and in doing so the contribution of the student to social change and indeed self-development.

Dialogue is seen as the key to this dilemma by Freire (2003; 1973). He believed that the literacy teacher’s role was to facilitate dialogue around themes related to concrete situations and lived experiences, taken from the student / learners’ daily
lives. Freire encouraged the use of human knowledge and the cultural capital of the underprivileged to help build confidence and to authenticate their voices in order to negotiate with the dominant society (Giroux, 1983). According to Freire, the dominant culture and the literacy and basic education approaches it uses, also teach people how to live passively (Freire, 1973). In this he mirrors the ideas of the early Bourdieu (1977). The antithesis to the banking concept for Freire is the use of ‘problem posing’ to engage people in literacy and culture circles. The former he claimed attempts to maintain the submission of consciousness while ‘the latter strives for the emergence of consciousness and critical intervention in reality’ (Freire, 2003, 81). The alienation of people from making their own decisions according to Freire, changes them into objects (Freire, 1973). The notion of praxis is a central element in Freire’s critical education process (Fransman, 2008; Archer and Cottingham, 1996; Giroux, 1983). This is an adoption of a Marxist term by Freire to refer to the relationship between individual reflection and the action that results from reflection. To Freire human activity consists of action and reflection, which to him is praxis, and in order for the praxis to be illuminated, theory is needed (Freire, 2003). Dialogue alone to Freire is not praxis, and without the combination of the word and the process of action / reflection, there can be no praxis. The transformation of reality by praxis according to Freire can reshape and create history (Freire, 2003).

The development of texts and material by students, based on their own experiences that reflect the social and political issues that are important to them, is a form of praxis that Freire encouraged in literacy and cultural circles. However, Elsasser and John-Steiner (1977) maintain that people must reach a certain language skill level in order to critically examine through theory their political and cultural experiences, and that basic literacy levels are not appropriate. There is also a question of language that is sometimes not so clearly explained in Freire’s ideas. According to Mayo (1995) if praxis is to serve as the cornerstone of more democratic social relations, the emphasis should be put on indigenous cultures. This has relevance to Vietnam and will be discussed in the following chapter.

Reflecting on the literacy experience in Guinea Bissau, Freire insisted that the so-called failure of the ‘Freire Method’ was because Portuguese was used as the
vehicle of instruction (Freire and Macedo, 1987). It led him to advocate the use of Creole in both Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde. Freire recognises that many countries adopt the language of the colonisers for technical, scientific and political thinking (Freire, 1985). Mayo (1995) maintains that Freire was cautious about promoting the language of the coloniser as a medium of instruction as that would render it a form of ‘cultural capital’ and as a result would be seen as a vehicle for reproducing the colonial class system.

By touching on the issue of cultural reproduction in Guinea Bissau, Freire acknowledges that by using Portuguese as the language in education only the children of the elite would be able to advance educationally (Freire and Macedo, 1985). This issue becomes complex in countries where there exists a dominant indigenous literacy and other suppressed local literacies (see Trudel and Klass, 2010; Wedin, 2008; Street and Lefstein, 2008; Barton, 1994; Street, 1994). So Freire’s own use of Portuguese in the Nord-est of Brazil may be seen as problematic given the existence of other local indigenous literacies. Mayo (1995) maintains that this has undermined Freire’s notion of praxis. Freire, in a dialogue called ‘Rethinking Literacy’ with Macedo, states that literacy projects in such areas with indigenous literacies would have to go through the reading of the word in their own language (Freire and Macedo, 1987). There is still an ongoing debate about the use of local literacies in ABE including in Vietnam and many other countries in SE Asia with a multi ethnic population base. In Vietnam there have been initiatives to develop literacy using local indigenous languages such as H’mong, Dao, Thai, Tay and Khmer, however the practicality of reviving archaic scripts or developing new scripts has been questioned by researchers and ABE practitioners (see UNESCO, 2008; Fransman, 2008; Nguyen and Baulch, 2007).

Assessments of Freire maintain that he continues to exercise an important influence on liberal and radical educators (ActionAid, 2011; UNESCO 2008; Yousif, 2003; Archer and Cottingham, 1996; Mc Laren, 1999; Giroux, 1983). He has become synonymous with the concept and practice of critical pedagogy and the standard reference for teaching for critical thinking. However, Giroux (1983) makes the point that Freire’s work, while originating in Brazil, has passed through Latin America, Africa, Asia and on to North America and Europe. The
appropriation by academics, adult educators and others, who live in the West, of Freire has reduced his theories to pedagogical technique or method. What has been lost is the ‘profound and radical nature of its theory and practice as an anti-colonial and postcolonial discourse’ (Giroux 1983, 177).

While Freire’s work has been widely utilised and adapted within educational theory, there have been several criticisms of areas within his theory of education for empowerment. Freire’s theories can be open to many different interpretations and therefore it can be argued that there are different ways in which his theory of education for empowerment can be unravelled. Gibson (2008) in his criticism of Freire ‘contends that Freire poses as a Marxist in his writings but practices as a social democrat who is more amenable to the requests of industrial modernisation than to a humanistically just society’ according to Fleury (2011, 83). Freire’s teaching according to Gibson (2008) brings the possibility of social justice to a dead end and warns that following Freire’s work will lead to people participating directly in their own oppression. Gibson’s criticism centres on Freire’s self-description of a devout Catholic Marxist and the contradictions that arise from this. Fleury (2011) while acceptant of Gibson’s view puts forward a more tolerant view, appreciative of the difficulties of theorising in a single minded manner, understanding the disparities that may naturally occur. He believes that ‘a less demanding stance toward theory in general and the fidelity of Freire’s actions in particular reveals a more dynamic and historically experiential process of thinking aimed at changing the habitually dysfunctional oppressor / oppressed relationships in civil society’ (Fleury, 2011, 84).

Freire’s recommendations for the implementation of a system of education in which learners develop a critical eye, as well as having the aspirations and the knowledge to change their lives and improving society for the better, are all well and good but a significant argument is the lack of direction and practical instruction his recommendations entail. This refrain from providing any practical methods in which his theories may be implemented into an education system in general is the source of much criticism. Mc Laren (1999, 54) suggests that this weakness in Freire’s theory is also a source of strength by stating ‘it is precisely his refusal to spell out alternative solutions that enables his work to be reinvented in the
contexts in which readers find themselves’, therefore transcending geographical, geopolitical and cultural borders. It can be argued that Freire’s theory allows educators and organisations to create their own models of critical pedagogy to match their specific requirements and as a result helps them to remain dynamic while constantly taking societal and cultural changes into consideration.

Freire’s works have remained more relevant to areas of the world where communities are marginalised and underprivileged and where education can be delivered in a non-formal and locally developed approach (see ActionAid, 2011; UNESCO, 2010; Fransman, 2008; Archer and Cottingham, 1996). In this context his ideas are easier to interpret and his methods more flexible and appropriate for implementation. In the process of conducting this particular research Freire will be referred to frequently and practical methods of conducting basic education based on his theories and ideas will be examined and evaluated. In the following section the development of the functional literacy approach will be outlined and examined. This approach is important in the development of the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) ABE programme being implemented by provisional Departments of Education and Training (DOET) throughout Vietnam. Both approaches are compared and contrasted in this case study investigation in chapters 5 and 6.

2.2.3 Functional Literacy
Levine (1986, 25) identifies functional literacy as the key contemporary concept used to advance a utilitarian argument for providing ‘broad-based, socially relevant literacy’. Levine goes on to map the changes that functional literacy has gone through during its promotion by UNESCO. It was used to emphasise the value of literacy to economic development, human rights and social-cultural advancement. Overall, the meaning given to functional literacy was instrumental or utilitarian in tone. The stress was on the importance of people fitting into existing circumstances and practices in order to perform a productive role in national development (UNESCO, 2005; Mc Laren and Leonard, 1993; Levine, 1986; Giroux, 1987).
Jarvis (1999, 75) defines functional literacy as:

the ability to read, write and calculate so that individuals may engage in all of those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of their group and community and also enabling them to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for their own and the community’s development.

The UNESCO definition first developed at the 1978 General Conference and still used today, is very similar:

A person is functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his own and the community’s development. (UNESCO, 2005)

The Adult Performance Level (APL) team at the University of Texas developed a model of functional literacy that clearly explains the type of skills and competencies that are necessary to become functionally literate (Adult Performance Level Study, 1975). They constructed their model of functional literacy on two dimensions: content and skills. The type of information that individuals need access to and the knowledge they must be able to generate to function competently in daily life they referred to as content. Five general knowledge areas comprise the content of functional literacy. These are:

- consumer economics
- knowledge related to occupations
- community resources
- health
- law and government.

The skills that adults need according to the APL are:

- communication skills (reading and writing)
- speaking and listening
- computation skills
- problem solving skills
- interpersonal relation skills.
Lankshear (1993) remarks that to be functionally literate in this sense, entails a minimal negative and positive state. Such functionally literate people are helped to cope with the world, they can manage to fill in an application form and survive in the job by reading instructions, timetables, forms and the like. Functionality in this sense is to be able to cope with the most minimal procedures of mainstream society (see Street and Lefstein, 2008; Street, 2004; Abadzi, 2004; Levine, 1982). From a Freirean perspective functional literacy would be seen as a domesticating act. For Freire, literacy and basic education are instruments of liberation by which marginal people are instilled with a revolutionary praxis to reshape their history (Freire, 1973). Literacy is politicised and transcends the limiting restrictions of functionality. Freire (2003, 71-86) in ‘Pedagogy of the Oppressed’ maintains that domesticating education, which can also be applied to teaching literacy, takes the form of banking education, is anti-dialogical, and reflects false generosity. Functional literacy using the APL model would be influenced by the teacher / instructor and the methods he or she adapted when examined from a Freirean perspective. Freire considered functional literacy as a strengthening of the political status quo and at most an induction into routines, values and perceptions that would continue to reinforce disadvantage.

Kozol (1985) rejects functional literacy outright. According to his interpretation a functionalist philosophy minimalises human beings. Functional literacy aims to equip adults with just enough skills and knowledge to function but not to develop. The stress is on illiterate adults to be capable of coping with external demands imposed on them by the world of work and civic duty and not on their personal development as human beings. Functional literacy limits humans from using the world of print as a vehicle for discovering, expressing and enhancing their humanness. Levine (1986, 41) wonders how competence in reading labels and instructions, in filling out forms, ‘produce the advantages promised by the way definitions of functional literacy are formulated’ by many literacy agencies. He goes on to question whose interest is being served by functional literacy programmes and suggests that it is not the interest of the illiterate person but that of the state, employers, authorities and power elites. The aim according to Levine is to domesticate and further subordinate rather than to increase the autonomy and social standing of the illiterate person.
Papen (2005) discusses what has become known as ‘The New Literacy Studies’ (NLS). This is a view of literacy as social and cultural practice (Street and Lefstein, 2008; Street 2001, 1993; Barton and Hamilton 1998; Barton et al., 2002). The results of this body of studies confirm that literacy is more than a set of uniform, technical skills and view literacy as a social practice, situated in discourses, social relationships and institutional contexts. Ethnographers of literacy education have critiqued the dominant model for literacy education for its narrow focus on work and income related skills based on school based types of literacy. They suggest that literacy education needs to look at the range of literacy practices and their relationship with learner’s everyday lives (see Yates, 1994; Prinsloo and Breire, 1996; Street, 2001). The need to build on learners’ everyday literacy practices in the teaching of new skills is emphasised. In order to do so ethnographic research is necessary to identify these everyday literacy practices.

Studies that have been conducted in South Africa, Nigeria and Nepal are outlined in Papen (2005). According to Papen’s research findings it is useful and necessary to carry out research which identifies learner’s everyday literacy practices. These researches are different from the usual needs assessments that are normally undertaken, which only look at the use of literacy and not the complex and abstract meanings of literacy. Ethnographic studies try to investigate people’s discourses about literacy in order to provide programme planners and curriculum developers with a deeper understanding of the value of literacy to learners. Papen (2005) believes that programme designers and educators should not exchange textbook and formal curricula for ‘real’ texts and everyday literacy because they assume learners want to use them in their classes. She goes on to discuss the failure of NLS to sufficiently theorise issues of power in literacy, and the differences in ways that external planners and consultants think about power in contrast to local participants. Planners may assume that local adult participants reject local classroom ‘school literacy’ for alternative participatory methods but that may not be the case. In her findings what learners were after was some form of education that was closer to their perception of education.

According to Street (1984), in order to understand the implications of a particular language policy within a literacy campaign, it is necessary to take an ideological
approach to literacy. This refers to the diversity of literacies that exist within particular cultural contexts, along with the social practices and relationships of power that surrounds them. Street (1987) points out that within many development agencies there is a tendency to adhere to what he calls the autonomous model. This is where literacy is narrowly defined as an ‘essay text’ form of literacy. Barton (1991) suggests that there needs to be a consideration of literacies as opposed to literacy, and explains that dominant definitions of literacy focus on school-based and workplace literacy and neglect literacy practices that are outside these domains.

Mother-tongue literacy is also an area that is often neglected when national literacy programmes are developed. Yates (1995) cites bilingual education programmes in Nigeria and Peru. Both used local languages as initial forms of instruction which equipped learners with increased comprehension of reading, greater ease of writing and increased transmission of educational content. Both countries have multilingual ethnic groups but one official language. Vietnam has a similar if somewhat more complicated ethnic and linguistic make-up. Hornberger’s (1987) study in Peru shows that despite being a success in pedagogical terms, the community rejected instruction in Quechua, a widely used indigenous language. The reason being, that the school was perceived as being a Spanish language domain and that Spanish literacy was seen as being necessary in supporting the community against wider social abuse.

Yates (1994) sees many parallels between the Peruvian case study and the Ghanaian Functional Literacy Programme (FLP). The ambitious vernacular language policy in Ghana was contested locally by learners who wished to learn a language of wider communication. English was seen as more advantageous. The huge logistical task of producing and distributing mother-tongue literacy material in fifteen languages in Ghana is seen by Yates (1994) as an example of the commitment that is required to carry through such a policy. Four of the fifteen languages had been only recently orthographised with the help of the Bureau of Ghanaian languages. The challenges of such a policy in a country like Vietnam that has fifty four recognised ethnic groups and over a dozen language families will be discussed in the following chapter.
2.3 Impact of Adult Basic Education in the Developing World
Having outlined and explored the development of the Freirean and Functional Literacy approaches the following section will examine the general impact of Adult Basic Education (ABE) on development in the underdeveloped regions of the world. As well as looking at the general impact of ABE on economic and social development, the specific influence of adult literacy will be highlighted. Aspects of power and motivation will be examined as well as the impact of globalisation. Initiatives such as the Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals by global bodies such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank will be assessed in the light of their influence on the impact of ABE on poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

2.3.1 Adult Basic Education and Development
Education has played a crucial role in the global agenda for development since the end of the Second World War. Educational investment as a key strategy in the fight against poverty and sustainable development is something that international bodies, governments and NGOs all agree on. Since the development of human capital theories in the sixties there has been an assumption that education is more about investment than consumption and there is international agreement on the benefits of education in raising the level of national labour productivity and economic growth (Becker, 1964; Barro, 1997, 2001). However, despite the many social, economic and cultural advantages attributed to education, it was not until the 1990s that it became a priority strategy in the global plan for poverty alleviation. Green (2007) attributes this to globalisation and the increasing gap between the richest and poorest countries of the world.

According to Tarabini (2010) it has become clear that the economic growth strategy for fighting poverty and underdevelopment has failed. Tarabini (2010) maintains that as well as not being sufficient in improving the living conditions of populations, growth can have a negative effect. Education has therefore acquired an increasing international legitimacy as a preferential strategy in the fight against underdevelopment and poverty. The World Bank (WB) has been a key body in the development of this consensus and Tarabini (2010) highlights its focus on
investment in human capital as a key strategy and policy for poverty reduction. The international summits of Education for All in 1990 and 2000 and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) have contributed to consolidating this agenda and to disseminating its recommendations and targets to be achieved.

Bhola (2005) agrees with the ideas of Tarabini (2010) that the role of education in poverty alleviation and development is universally assumed. Bhola sees the potential of adult and lifelong education for assisting in poverty alleviation as:

- hinging on the context of globalisation in which poverty is defined;
- the need for understanding the nature of adult education as an agent of democracy;
- and a script for a future adult education system that will deliver adult education for all in the larger framework of lifelong education.

He identifies the theoretical construct of ‘sustainable development’ to include the provision of clean water, sanitation, adequate shelter, energy, health care, food security, and environmental protection as originating from a United Nations Conference in Johannesburg in 2002. Based on the weight of evidence in this study and other studies located in Vietnam and the developing world I agree with Bhola and will highlight the role of education with a particular focus on ABE for achieving sustainable development throughout this thesis (see also Sinclaire 2001, 1998; UNESCO, 2006, 2007, 2008b, 2010).

The paradigm of poverty reduction / alleviation, according to Bhola (2005), was developed to help include the poor in the process of sustainable development. Bhola goes on to maintain that poverty reduction / alleviation cannot be actualised without education. He argues that adult education is identified as a priority for poverty reduction ahead of the schooling of children because it prepares adults in poverty for participation in present day life. Appropriate adult education with adult literacy at its core can be responsive to the needs of the poor in an immediate manner by bringing knowledge and skills to farmers and home makers as well as factory workers and urban dwellers. Adult literacy work and adult literacy statistics
according to Bhola (1998) have come to serve as a proxy for measuring progress in adult education in the world today.

Van Der Veen and Preece (2005), outline that one of the main Millennium Development Goals declared by the United Nations in 2000 was to reduce by half the population of people living in extreme poverty by 2015. In order to focus donor support, all low income countries are now required to submit Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). The trend in adult education policies (when they exist) in PRSPs according to Van Der Veen and Preece (2005) has been to focus on literacy and basic education. Six percent of education budgets is recommended by the World Bank for the development of adult education but this is not always adhered to. Research by Raditloaneng (2004) has shown that basic education skills are not in themselves sufficient to make a major impact on poverty reduction. Adult education can be potentially much more than literacy and basic education and can include agricultural extension, vocational education, community development and training for active citizenship. Van Der Veen and Preece (2005) argue that developing countries need more extended systems for adult education than traditional practices.

The field of adult education, especially in the developing world, can be seen as a political movement for social justice and a profession. There are different ideologies and strategies associated with adult education. According to Rodrik (1999) adult education strategy should focus on the market and how expanding markets can reduce poverty by creating employment. This is known as the neo-liberal strategy in which two sub-strategies for adult education are promoted: agricultural extension in rural areas and vocational training in urban areas. The second strategy focuses on the role of civil society, NGOs and the local community in creating social capital through self-organisation. It is also referred to as a social capital strategy (see Saegert and Thomson, 2001; Grootaert and van Bastelaer, 2002). The third strategy labeled as political-economical strategy, focuses on the role of the state in creating and distributing wealth (see Fine, 2001; Wilenski, 2002).
Basic education for adults is potentially more than just learning how to read and write. In developing countries programmes for functional literacy integrate reading and writing with other life skills. Basic adult education can also help in the development of modern attitudes and critical thinking. The Reflect method of ActionAid is a good example (ActionAid, 2011; UNESCO, 2008b). More and more post-literacy courses are now being included in basic education and these according to Raditloaneng (2004) involve beekeeping, screen printing and sewing, vegetable gardening, basketry and pottery. The distinction between non-formal and formal adult education is important in understanding the role of basic adult education in development. Formal education complies with state regulations as a condition for financing and certification. Moser (1996) reports that the advantages of non-formal education is in its flexibility as it adapts its content and methods to the wants of the stakeholders. Courses are often very short and can last for between a few days or a few hours for a limited number of weeks.

According to the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD, 2002), agricultural services to help in the alleviation of poverty for farmers can be a solution to rural poverty. Narayan (2000) reports in her worldwide study ‘Voices of the Poor’ that although farmers value better guidance on pest control and training on new agricultural techniques, they complain that these services are not efficient and often exploit poor farmers’ lack of education to overcharge. The lack of access to information is often cited as an element of poverty. In Africa and many parts of Asia and the developing world, rural communication is largely oral. Adeya (2003) uses the example of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh to show how modern oral technology in the form of mobile phones can be used to run a village-based microfinance service. In Latin America, Africa and India, even illiterate adults have learned how to use icon-based web services. From the two examples above it can be seen that a more extended system of basic adult education may help people to generate income. There is also evidence from case studies that the development of social capital can contribute to poverty reduction (UNESCO, 2008b; DIFID, 2000; ADB, 2003; USAID, 2003) if there is a focus on targeted groups including women and people with disabilities.
Marshall (1992) explains that the political-economical strategy advocates a structural solution to poverty by creating a welfare state. In developing countries this is difficult and in order to be effective, needs to be built on strong social planning with the participation on local citizens. Adult educators can play an important role in supporting truly representative democracy according to the UNDP (2002). Wilensky (2002) points out that strong welfare states are also characterised by strong civil society organisations. These networks are underdeveloped in poor countries, and basic adult education programmes, including national and international, need to develop strategies around building these networks in a sustainable manner.

Effective social planning is in essence participatory. Local authorities in many developing countries, even in countries with strong decentralization policies, are typically autocratic and inefficient (Narayana et al., 2000). Gleich (2000) cites the example of Bolivia and the introduction of the ‘Participacion Popular’ to counterbalance the tendency of autocratic governance. While it has been successful there is a huge societal learning process and many teething problems. The introduction of similar policies in Vietnam will be discussed in the following chapter.

Narayan (2000) indicates that the main barriers in accessing government services include bureaucratic hurdles, incomprehensible rules and regulations, difficulties in accessing necessary information, humiliation of the poor by officials and widespread corruption. The example of India, a country with one of the world’s largest programmes of basic services and public assistance for the poor, and which often fails to implement these rights in practice, is cited. Basic adult education has a role to play in helping to provide better information about the rights of the poor, in training of communication skills of the less educated and in raising awareness about the importance of participation.

2.3.2 Literacy as an Agent of Social Change in Developing Countries
Statements such as ‘A lack of literacy is strongly correlated with poverty’ (UNESCO 2005, 30) are often seen in development material. This indicates that literate people are likely to be better off than non-literate people. Literacy is seen
as an instrument of economic growth and the belief in literacy as an agent of social change is still powerful (Street and Lefstein, 2008; Street, 2001).

Shiohata (2009) states that some literacy programmes in developing countries provide reading material in a supply-side orientated fashion. Outsiders decide which titles are appropriate for learners to read, and judge which titles and primers can deliver the expected outcome of the programme. Casual talk about literacy has led theorists, policy-makers, and practitioners to adopt the assumption that literacy automatically generates economic growth or social development (King and Rose, 2005). Literacy has been a central concern of education planners and policy makers in the developing world for the last fifty years. During that time the argument to support literacy education has changed.

The pervading approach in the fifties and sixties was orientated to economic growth. This approach was named by Street (1984) as the ‘autonomous model’. Winchester (1990) labeled it as the ‘standard picture’ of literacy. Illiteracy was regarded as a hindrance to growth and eradication of illiteracy was called for. Literacy was simply understood as the ability to read and write and issues such as what people should learn through literacy or how they should learn literacy were hardly addressed (Winchester, 1990).

UNESCO and the UNDP introduced the concept of functional literacy in the sixties. This approach as stated in the previous section was regarded as a means to prepare people for economic and social roles (UNESCO, 1978). In functional literacy programmes, economic activity such as cash crop farming was combined with reading and writing. The idea was that the learning of reading and writing would be efficient when linked with learners’ economic activities and their livelihoods would be enhanced by becoming literate (UNESCO, 2008b).

The Freirean approach to literacy, firstly in Latin America and later in other parts of the developing world, advocated ‘conscientisation’, which referred to the transformation of societies and individuals. This approach had an explicit political commitment to work with the poor and advocated that adult education can challenge oppressive social relations. The focus was on people’s daily lives as the
basis of its participatory pedagogy. ActionAid Reflect (Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques) that emerged in the nineties has continued to carry the torch of the Freirean approach (UNESCO, 2008b; Archer and Cottingham, 1996).

In the late 1980s and early 1990s the development of the ethnographic approach to adult literacy developed. This approach attaches great importance to the exploration of literacy to reveal, understand, and address power relations. The approach is based on the premise that literacy can play different roles in individual cultures. Advocates of this approach reject the dichotomy between literate and illiterate, or literacy and orality, and named this approach the New Literacy Studies (NLS) (Street, 1993). The NLS approach employs in-depth qualitative methods to observe and describe the perceptions people have of literacy. Literacy is understood as local practices, referring to the ‘broader cultural conception of particular ways of thinking about and doing reading and writing in cultural contexts’ (Street, 2001, 11).

Because the economic, political and socio-cultural approaches to literacy in the development field are presented in chronological order does not mean that the contemporary focus has entirely shifted to social and cultural approaches. Different approaches co-exist although there is a greater recognition of the social and cultural aspects of literacy. The notion that economic growth depends on a prior acquisition of literacy is still persistent today in many developing countries (Bhola, 2005). In recent years there has been a focus in low-income countries on primary education because of international initiatives such as the MDGs and Education for All (EFA) (King and Rose, 2005). Robinson-Pant (2006), states that when adult literacy is not considered effective as an investment by aid donors and governments, primary education is prioritised. UNESCO (2007) claims that although international data on aid to literacy programmes is difficult to obtain, ‘it is clear that most donors have given very little priority to literacy’.

Wedin (2008) provides us with an outlook on literacy from a power perspective. Missionaries in the mid-nineteenth century used teaching to read and write as a
central activity. The focus among Protestant missionaries was on reading the bible. During the colonial era from 1850-1960, school and literacy were important tools used to rule and to orient people to Western world views. Katoke (1973) provides the example of traditional schools in Karagwe in Tanzania that were disbanded by colonialists. These schools were important to the ruling strategy of the traditional chiefs and so a systematic transformation of the schooling system was necessary to introduce Western style political organisation. Even today many projects in the developing world are based on the assumptions made in advance by literacy ‘experts’ and literacy planners from the West. Among the assumptions are what targeted groups should learn, why they should learn it and how this should be carried out (Wedin, 2008). These assumptions have been challenged in recent years by researchers trained in fieldwork methods such as participatory observation and a sensitivity to local literacy practices. Anthropological and cross-cultural frameworks in the study of situated literacies have been conducted in a variety of places such as the USA (Heath, 1983), Peru (Hornberger, 1994), Iran (Street, 1995), Polynesia (Besnier 1995), South Africa (Prinsloo and Brier, 1996), the UK (Barton, 2001), Eritrea (Wright, 2001), Pakistan (Zubair, 2001) and Tanzania (Wedin, 2004).

The concept of literacy practices which is an anthropological perspective of literacy as culturally and historically situated social practices, has opened up a more critical and reflective perspective on literacy. Old views have been challenged and new ways opened for researchers to study literacy holistically (Wedin, 2004). Linked to the concept of literacy practices is the concept of communities of practice developed by Lave and Wegner (1991). The notion of communities of practice provides a forum for talking about learning in groups with a common identity and shared cultural view (Barton and Tusting, 2005). The concept of literacy as a multi-layered, social and cultural phenomenon that exists in interaction has been developed in this literacy practices perspective. The use of ethnography as a research framework enables studies of literacy practices that contest as well as compliment more traditional approaches. This perspective is particularly useful in examining the relationship between literacy and power.
Wagner (1990) cites the example of Sweden in the sixteenth century as a classic example of how literacy does not always have a positive relation to power. The peasantry was encouraged to become literate in Sweden at this time and it is estimated that eighty five percent of adults had basic reading skills. The type of bible study that was promoted did not provide more access to power. Life for the ordinary commoner in Sweden remained the same except that the practice of reading the bible became more practiced. Lankshear’s (1997) argument supports this view when he states that literacy is a social practice that has empowering potential but with clear limitations. Comparisons between the promotion of a restrictive form of adult literacy in sixteenth century Sweden and the politicised approach by GoV bodies in Vietnam are relevant when literacy is used as a tool for indoctrination.

As we have seen literacy as well as being an empowering agent can also be a tool for oppression. In the developing world there are many examples of literacy being used as a tool to consolidate power and authority. Rodgers (2005) puts forward the argument that needs are multiple and changing and that we need flexible literacy programmes that meet the specific needs in different locations. Literacy programmes in poor settings should take learners’ own agenda into consideration. Literacy programmes that claim to be a tool for empowerment of the poor and marginalised should consider the needs and aspirations of target groups and consult them on cultural norms and restrictions that may affect the outcome of the programme (Papen, 2005).

Trudell and Klass (2010) discuss the motivations for local language literacy in Senegalese communities. According to their paper, understanding the motivations and outcomes associated with adult literacy learning is extremely relevant to the successful provision of adult literacy and basic education. They outline motivation to be economic, political, social, religious and personal. Rassool (1999) looks at motivation in the context of cultural identity and cultural expression. This area has received a relative lack of attention due to the fact that it is often linked to mother tongue literacy learning by speakers of less recognised and less developed minority languages of the world. Non major language users are often not recognised as coherent communities and in many cases the written form of the
language is very under-developed (Ager, 2001). The study by Trudell and Klass (2010) focuses on two types of motivation. The first is the drive among selected communities in Senegal for internal social cohesion, solidarity and cultural uniqueness. The second is the drive towards citizenship, acceptance and equality in the larger national society. The study explores the way in which these two apparently opposing motivations interact to strengthen the popularity of the local language literacy programme on offer. The study concludes with both motivations being significant and co-existing together. It provides evidence for the argument that both motivations can exist and even compliment each other, in a single minority language community. The communities indicated that literacy in the local language can be a powerful tool, for both reinforcing cultural uniqueness and facilitating acceptance into national society. Because of this the social and economic benefits of integration can be had without losing cultural identity. Although this study has been summarised here, it will be looked at in more details in the following chapters as the sociocultural implications for vernacular literacies in Vietnam have many parallels and contrasts with Senegal that contribute to understanding the motivations and outcomes associated with adult literacy learning among ethnic minority adults with indigenous languages. The contrast between Vietnam which has a one language literacy policy and findings by Trudell and Klass (2010) in Senegal are developed in Chapter 6.

### 2.3.3 Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals

The final section of this chapter will briefly evaluate the contribution and significance of the Education for All and Millennium Development Goals for the advancement of ABE in the developing world. Both initiatives have been referred to in the above sections of this chapter. In order to concentrate on the contribution of both initiatives to the development of Adult Basic Education it will be necessary to only briefly refer to primary, secondary and other areas of formal education that are prominent in the aims and objectives of both initiatives.

The World Declaration on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs adopted in Jomtien proclaimed to the world that:

> Every person-child, youth and adult – shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs.
These needs comprise both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem solving) and the basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes) required by human beings to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning. (Inter-Agency Commission, 1990)

Mundy (2006) considers the Education for All (EFA) conferences held in Jomtien in 1990 and Dakar in 2000 as playing a vital role in framing a ‘global compact’ on education for development. Bilateral and multilateral development agencies now assume that in order to achieve development it is essential to make advances in the field of education. Since the EFA conferences, education has become an inevitable part of the global development agenda (King, 2007).

EFA is sponsored by four main agencies, namely UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP and the World Bank. According to King (2007) the initial idea of EFA based on the generic definition of ‘basic education’ has been gradually redefined to mean primary education. Evidence suggests that adult literacy and non-formal education as well as secondary and vocational training have been pushed into the background after Dakar (see Urwick et al. 2012). The Dakar Framework for action states (UNESCO, 2000a, 18) that ‘a multi-sectorial approach to poverty reduction requires that education strategies compliment those of the productive sectors as well as health, population and social welfare’. Specific actions in this regard include: integrating basic education strategies into broader national and international poverty alleviation measures such as United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (NDAF), Comprehensive Development Frameworks (CDF) and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) (UNESCO, 2008b, 2000a).

Tarabini (2010) maintains that locating the EFA strategies within the new political instruments of the World Bank indicates a clear acceptance of its approaches, recommendations and strategies. PRSPs are also used to focus donor support for the Millennium Development Goals and all low-income countries are now required to submit them annually. According to Van Der Veen and Preece (2005) basic adult education has not featured significantly in the PRSPs.
Limage (1999) acknowledges that throughout its existence UNESCO has been associated with the promotion of universal literacy. The linkage however, has been varied under the pressure of competing priorities. Limage (1999) argues in agreement with King (2007) and Tarabini (2010), that youth and adult literacy programmes have become the first victims of this dispersion of priorities since the original EFA conference in 1990. Bhola (1998) strengthens this argument when commenting, that although the objectives of the World Declaration of Education for All (1990) did include adult literacy, numeracy, as well as concerns for individual actualisation, family life and community development, in reality it concentrated on primary and lower secondary grades in schools. He attributes this dilution of the original declaration to the influence of the World Bank. Through its sector-wide approaches (SWAps) the World Bank prioritises improving results on the ground in all sectors including education by influencing the consistency and coherence of policy and investments. When World Bank policy prioritises primary education then developing countries like Vietnam, who receive substantial loans for education development, are under pressure to follow World Bank advice (see World Bank, 1995; Bhola, 1998; King, 2007; Tarabini, 2010).

The Millennium Development Goals were launched ten years after the first EFA conference at Jomtien. The gathering of the largest number of heads of states in history at the United Nations in New York in 2000 made a crucial contribution to the consolidation of the global agenda for development. Robertson et al. (2007) attributes this contribution of the MDGs to the ability to link poor and rich countries in a global objective of eradicating poverty using specific goals and commitments. It can be said that the MDGs have made a clear commitment to work towards a better world, with the highest priority on the lofty goals of eliminating poverty and sustaining development. The MDG related specifically to education is Goal 2: achieve universal primary education. Target three for this goal is; ensure that by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. As can be seen the goal reduces the EFA focus to primary schooling, completely removing the inclusive idea of basic education initiated in Jomtien (King and Rose, 2005). The broad ambition in the MDGs of reducing adult literacy by 50% is not elaborated with specific targets according to UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report: Reaching the Marginalised (2010).
The UNESCO Education For All Global Monitoring Report (2008,1) opens with the following statement ‘Illiteracy is receiving minimal political attention and remains a global disgrace, keeping one in five adults (one in four women) on the margins of society’. This strong statement according to Robinson-Pant (2010) indicates unusual attention being given to the relationship between adult literacy and achieving the Millennium Development Goals related to Education For All. The UNESCO Global Monitoring Report (2006) which had an exclusive focus on literacy appears to give greater emphasis to universal primary education by conflating child and adult literacy (Robinson-Pant, 2008; UNESCO, 2008b).

The UK Literacy Working Group (2007) emphasises the need to build a literate environment as more important than addressing individual skills. It goes on to highlight adult literacy as the invisible glue missing from national plans seeking to address the MDGs. Several key policy papers including Oxenham and Aoki (2002) and Lauglo (2001) outlined evidence that the adult literacy interventions could contribute to improved livelihoods and poverty reduction. Reliable sources including the UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report indicate that resources from donor agencies and national government budgets allocated to adult basic education are minimal compared to primary schooling (UNESCO 2006; 2008b).

2.4 Summary
These shifts in policy by major agencies and donors have affected all countries in the developing world. Vietnam is no exception and in the next chapter these influential policy shifts by the World Bank and UNESCO will be examined in the context of Adult Basic Education developments in Vietnam. Important aspects outlined in the above sections on education research in a development context are directly related to this study. Issues such as the development of human capital, the role of civil society, NGOs and government agencies in ABE strategies in Vietnam will be examined. The ideas of the NLS approach (Street and Lefstein, 2008; Street, 1993) and literacy practices perspectives (Wedin, 2004) are important counterbalances to the ‘Literacy First’ model (Rogers, 2000) which advocates that once individuals acquire literacy skills, they participate in other development activities. The use of ethnography as a research framework is central to the NLS approach and literacy practices perspectives. Aspects of literacy and power,
motivation and participation are also relevant to a study that will investigate the relationship between ABE and accessing poverty alleviation resources in a remote ethnic minority area of Vietnam. The global influence of both the EFA and MDG on national and NGO policy and strategy cannot be ignored as both have far-reaching influence on ABE programmes in the developing world and donor support from the developed world.
Chapter 3: Adult Basic Education in Vietnam

3.1 Introduction
This chapter places a spotlight on literature relating to the background, development and effectiveness of adult basic education (ABE) in Vietnam. The period before the declaration of independence in 1945 will be referred to and forms an important background to the development of post-colonial education policy and strategy. Aspects relating to specific state and non-state ABE initiatives will be examined and evaluated in the light of relevant literature. Special attention will be paid to ethnic minority education and its relationship to poverty alleviation and general development. Community Learning Centres (CLC) as providers of ABE in remote communities are highlighted and aspects related to their function and efficiency are examined. ABE methodologies such as Reflect are discussed and considered in relation to overall community development and poverty alleviation.

3.2 Vietnam: Education for Ethnic Minorities
This section will outline a general background on Vietnam; an historical perspective on education and its development and an update on ABE in Vietnam.

3.2.1 Vietnam: A General Background
Vietnam is a country that is more than 3,000km in length. This gives it a wide topographical and cultural range. It has a population of over 86 million people of which ethnic minority groups make up 14% (Nguyen and Baulch, 2007). Although minority groups are a relatively small percentage of the total population they make up an average of 52% of poor people in Vietnam (CSA, 2009). The minorities in Vietnam have settled in mostly remote mountainous areas and in delta and costal regions of the south-east coast and Mekong River. Many of the minorities in central and south Vietnam have been resident there for thousands of years and pre-date the Kinh (Chinese origin) majority (Hickey, 1982). Table 3.1 shows some of the main groupings.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People (Vietnamese Name)</th>
<th>English Name</th>
<th>Language Family</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Percent of the Population in 1999</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kinh, Viet</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>Viet-Muong</td>
<td>Countrywide</td>
<td>86.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tay</td>
<td>Tay, Tho</td>
<td>Tai-Kadai</td>
<td>Northern Highlands</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>Black Thai; White Thai</td>
<td>Tai-Kadai</td>
<td>Northern Highlands</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoa</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Sinitic</td>
<td>Urban centers mainly in Ho Chi Minh City</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muong</td>
<td>Muong</td>
<td>Viet-Muong</td>
<td>Northern Highlands</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kho Me</td>
<td>Khmer, Khmer Krom</td>
<td>Mon-Khmer, Austro-Asiatic</td>
<td>Southern Vietnam</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nung</td>
<td>Nung</td>
<td>Tai-Kadai</td>
<td>Northern Highlands</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hmong</td>
<td>Hmong (Meo)</td>
<td>Miao-Yao</td>
<td>Northern Highlands</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dao</td>
<td>Yao, Mien</td>
<td>Miao-Yao</td>
<td>Northern Highlands</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gai Rai</td>
<td>Jarai</td>
<td>Austronesian or Malayo-Polonesian</td>
<td>Central Highlands</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E De</td>
<td>Rhade</td>
<td>Austronesian or Malayo-Polonesian</td>
<td>Central Highlands</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cham</td>
<td>Cham</td>
<td>Austronesian or Malayo-Polonesian</td>
<td>Central and Southern Vietnam</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Chay</td>
<td>San Chai</td>
<td>Tai-Kadai</td>
<td>Northern Highlands</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ba Na</td>
<td>Bahnar</td>
<td>Mon-Khmer, Austro-Asiatic</td>
<td>Central Highlands</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xo Dang</td>
<td>Sedang</td>
<td>Mon-Khmer, Austro-Asiatic</td>
<td>Central Highlands</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Other groups</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mon-Khmer, Austro-Asiatic</td>
<td>Central Highlands</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 other Tai Groups</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tai-Kadai</td>
<td>Northern Highlands</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 other groups</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sinitic</td>
<td>Northern Highlands</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 other groups</td>
<td></td>
<td>Austronesian or Malayo-Polonesian</td>
<td>Central Highlands</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Kadai groups</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tai Kadai</td>
<td>Northern Highlands</td>
<td>&lt;0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 other groups</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tibeto Burman</td>
<td>Northern Highlands</td>
<td>&lt;0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Keyes, 2002, 1185)

Roughly 75% of Vietnam's ethnic minorities live in two main regions: the Northern Mountains which border China, and the Central Highlands which border Laos and...
Cambodia. The Khmer, Chinese and Cham minority groups are found in the Mekong Delta, urban areas of Ho Chi Minh City and on the South Eastern coastline from Da Nang to Binh Tuan province. This geographical distribution can be seen in Figure 3.1 which is based on 1999 census data (GSO, 2004).

Figure 3.1: Vietnam Ethnic Minority Populations

![Vietnam Ethnic Minority Populations](image)

Source: GSO, 2004 (CS1 in Ha Giang-4, CS2 and CS3 in Dien Bien-2)

3.2.2 Education in Vietnam: An Historical Perspective

The institutionalisation of education in Vietnam predates the development of the French colonial system (circa 1858). Following a Chinese model in the northern part of the country there were stringent systems of learning established under the guidance and supervision of the Imperial Court. This elite system of formal education was aimed at the development of the mandarin class who served the
ruling dynasty. Mandarins were the bureaucrats and functionaries who ran every aspect of the early state including trade, taxation, law, diplomacy, defense and education (Weller Taylor, 1983). In 1076, during the Ly Dynasty, Vietnam’s first University, the Quoc Tu Giam or Imperial Academy was established within the Van Mieu Confucian Temple [1070]. As well as bureaucrats the university trained nobles, royalty and members of the elite. The university within the Temple of Literature [Van Mieu] functioned for more than 700 years until 1779 (Weller Taylor, 1983). Other educational institutions modeled on this first university were established in Hue when the imperial court moved there in the early 19th century. In Khmer controlled areas of South Vietnam formal education was carried out by Buddhist monks in wats (temples). While not standardised, wat–school curriculum consisted of reading and writing Khmer, principles of Buddhism, rules of property and some arithmetic. Wat-school education differed from Confucian-style education in that it put great emphasis on work, as students worked with monks to build temples, dwellings, roads, bridges, water reservoirs as well as manufacturing furniture and other things (Torhorst, 1966, 154). Little is known about education under the Cham Kings in central Vietnam but it can be assumed that it followed a similar structure to education in parts of Hindu India and Indonesia.

Whilst Confucian style higher education can be traced to the 11th century, universal primary, secondary and tertiary education has a relatively short history. The 1917 law on Education by the French colonial government abolished the Confucian education system replacing it with a French model. This new system remained fundamentally elitist, reaching only an estimated 3% of the indigenous population and functioning primarily as a means of training civil servants for colonial service throughout French Indochina (Nguyen and Baulch, 2007). After the August Revolution of 1945 and especially following the victory in the war of resistance against the French in 1954, the new government was faced with an illiteracy rate of over 85% (Phan et al., 2004). Education became a priority for the new socialist regime in the north and the education reforms of 1945 and 1950 established a basic system of national education comprising of limited pre-school programmes, primary and secondary schools, popular education for adults and a network of colleges and universities (Nguyen and Baulch, 2007). Similar reforms were also undertaken by the Saigon regime from 1945-75. In the south education
was more influenced by the former colonial system and indeed some of the famous secondary schools including the Lycee Yersin (Da Lat Teacher Training College today) remained functioning until the fall of Saigon in April 1975 (Hickey, 1982). Education levels improved greatly in both independent parts of Vietnam after 1945. However, as in other developing countries in the region, with largely agrarian populations, the majority of citizens were privileged if they managed to finish primary school (Mc Elwee, 2004). Vietnamese began replacing French as the dominant language of learning in both parts of the country after 1945. Quoc Ngu, the modern Vietnamese writing system based on the Roman alphabet developed by the French missionary Alexander de Rhodes in the 17th century, revolutionised access to formal education and helped improve literacy levels during the formative years of the present Vietnamese state (Nguyen and Baulch, 2007). However, there was a disparity between the levels of access to education of different ethnic groups. Remote areas become less remote with the development of communications, however, for a country in development like Vietnam, geographical location remains an important influence on access to education. Other cultural, social, political and linguistic influences have also played prominent roles in both access and completion of various levels of the education system (CSA, 2009).

Because of the long struggle for independence and the embargo imposed on Vietnam after the cessation of hostilities in 1975, Vietnam has been disadvantaged as a developing country when compared to some of its South East Asian neighbours. The recent (late 1980s) opening up of both the economy and the institutions that support the system, plus the normalisation of relations with both the USA and other western countries have helped to speed up development (UNDP, 1998). The support for universal education for all Vietnam’s citizens is central to government development policy. There have been great strides in this direction and literacy and completion of primary schooling rates have ‘officially’ reached a level of over 90%. This is a significant achievement in such a short period of time (UNESCO, 2010; Phan et al., 2004).

Following the initiation of Doi moi (economic renovation) in 1986, the education system in Vietnam was reformed. Adjustments have been made to improve the
education system in ethnic minority areas, especially since 1997. There is no
difference in the educational system geographically, however, special support has
been provided for ethnic minority students and teachers working in the ethnic
areas. In addition to overall education policies, support for ethnic minority
education includes scholarships and social grants for school materials and living
expenses, boarding schools at all levels, pre-universities, and the nomination
policy for ethnic minority students (UNICEF, 2002; Nguyen and Baulch, 2007).

Education policies for ethnic minorities are implemented by the Ministry of
Education and Training (MOET) in conjunction with the Committee for Ethnic
Minority Affairs (CEMA) or other respective ministries such as the Ministry of
Finance (MOF) and the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA).
This in itself makes the implementation of policy rather complex as ministries and
sub-ministries do not always cooperate effectively and conflicting priorities often
hinder efficient coordination (Nguyen and Baulch, 2007). While acknowledging that
there have been major improvements in both literacy and education at all levels
there are still pockets within ethnic minority areas that lag behind (CSA, 2009).

3.2.3 Adult Basic Education in Vietnam: An Update
In 1945, shortly after declaring independence, on behalf of the Vietnamese people,
the new President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh proclaimed
that:

In order to preserve our independence, to make our people strong, our
country ever prosperous, every Vietnamese should know his own interests
and duty, should obtain his own knowledge aimed at being able to make his
own contribution to the country’s construction. First and foremost he should
know how to read and write in the national language. (Biddington and
Biddington, 1997)

The acknowledgement of the significance and importance of knowledge and
literacy for national development during the early days of transition from colonial
rule to independence can be seen as one of the cornerstones of nation building in
Vietnam. Literacy levels at the time were less than 10% and one of the first actions
taken by the new government was the establishment of the first literacy campaign,
which lasted from 1945 to 1954. This campaign was followed by another campaign
from 1956 to 1959 and a third campaign after unification of north and south
Vietnam in 1976 (Phan et al., 2004). Okukawa (2008) explains that nationwide literacy campaigns were carried out with much success in Vietnam from the mid nineteen forties to the nineteen seventies. By 1998, according to the ‘EFA in Vietnam Report 1990-2000’, the literacy rate for adults aged between fifteen and thirty five was reported to be 95.6%. This figure excluded the substantial number of adults who were over thirty five years old. The 1999 Population and Housing Census estimated that adult literacy for the population over fifteen years old as 90.3% (GSO, 1999). Phan et al. (2004) developed the following table from the GSO 1999 Census. They divided the literacy rate in Vietnam by gender, area of residence, ethnicity and age group.

Table 3.2: Literacy Rates of Kinh and Non Kinh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Sub-Group</th>
<th>Literacy Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>94.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>86.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>94.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>88.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Kinh</td>
<td>92.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non Kinh</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Under 35 years</td>
<td>94.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35 years and over</td>
<td>85.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td></td>
<td>90.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Phan et al. (2004, 3)

Following the introduction of the ‘Doi Moi’ (Renovation) policy in 1986, education development strategies were directed at the education system as a whole. The universalisation of primary education of children aged from six to fourteen years became law in 1991 (UNICEF, 2002). To achieve this, the school system was expanded to include special efforts to educate children and adults in remote areas. Expenditure on education, including literacy and post-literacy programmes, was increased substantially. This was in response to the ‘Eradication of Illiteracy Order’ passed in January 1990. The order set out the targets and measures for implementation. The purpose of the order was to achieve universal primary education (UPE) and literacy by 2000. Efforts were concentrated on the under thirty five year olds and the National Committee for the Eradication of Illiteracy was established to coordinate and manage the programme (Phan et al., 2004). According to Biddington and Biddington (1997) the establishment of the National
Committee for the Eradication of Illiteracy in 1989 improved the implementation of government policy related to education and literacy. After the EFA Jomtien Conference in 1990 the National Committee for the Eradication of Illiteracy became the National Committee on Education for All (Pham, 1991).

Muller (2007) when examining education within revolutionary societies considers Bourdieu’s conceptualisation of education within social reproduction of particular relevance. Bourdieu regarded education as a form of ‘symbolic violence’ that is manifested in the imposition of the dominant culture as the legitimate culture, and the internalisation of its values by the wider population (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). In a revolutionary context education can be a decisive tool and as powerful as the armed struggle (see Miller and Aya, 1971; Berkin and Lovet, 1980; Davidson, 1981; Selbin, 1993; Tetreault, 1994; Muller, 2005). Muller (2007) sees the pronounced shift towards economic modernisation in the policy of Doi Moi since 1986 as having a profound effect on the restructuring of the education system in Vietnam (see Gleewe et al., 2004; Sloper and Le Thac Can, 1995; Moock et al., 2003; Turley and Selden, 1993). The restructuring of the education and training system has made it ‘the driving force for the realisation of socio-economic national development objectives’ (Le Thac Can and Sloper, 1995, 11). According to Goodkind (1995) Doi Moi has compromised the commitment for social equity in favour of greater economic efficiency. Arnove (1999) cautions against the use of education as either instruments of ideological or political socialisation or as a driver of economic growth and modernisation. In contrast schooling should strive to establish intellectual curiosity and ‘establish the bases for lifelong learning in a variety of settings’ (Arnove, 1999, 470).

The following section will outline adult basic education (ABE) initiatives in Vietnam in recent years under the restructuring of the education system since Doi Moi. Specific attention will be paid to marginalised ethnic minority areas that lag behind in overall national socio-economic development (see CSA, 2009; Swinkels and Turk, 2006; Baulch et al., 2006; UNICEF, 2002).
3.3.1 Adult Basic Education Initiatives in Vietnam

In order to examine the adult basic education initiatives in Vietnam since 1986 it will be necessary to have a better understanding of the education structure as a whole. Most education activities in Vietnam take place with the cooperation and support of the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). Vocational training is under the guidance of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA). The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) as well as other ministries such as the Ministry of Planning and Investment conduct training and capacity building in all areas of the country including remote and marginalised communities (MOET, 2010; Okukawa, 2008).

3.3.2 Structure of Adult Basic Education in Vietnam

In the MOET (2010) overview of the education system in Vietnam below (see figure 3.2) non-formal education (NFE) can be seen as a generic term that covers educational activities such as adult literacy, post literacy, awareness-raising and other aspects of adult basic education of a technical or cultural nature. UNESCO (2010, 448) defines ‘Non-Formal Education’ (NFE) as:

> Learning activities typically organised outside the formal education system. The term is generally contrasted with formal and informal education. In different contexts, non-formal education covers educational activities aimed at imparting adult literacy, basic education for out of school children and youth, life skills, work skills and general culture.

MOET (2010) refers to continuing education as a sub-division of the system of education. Adult Literacy (AL) initiatives are sometimes referred to as continuing education in Vietnam. To avoid confusion this research will use the term non-formal education (NFE) to cover adult literacy and basic education for out of school children and youth, life skills and general culture. The management of Education For All (EFA) in Vietnam is under the unified management of the Vietnamese Government. The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), through its organisation and systems from the central grassroots levels, implements pre-school, primary, literacy and post-literacy and continued education (UNESCO, 2000; UNICEF, 2002). The National Committee for Literacy, an inter-sectoral organisation which coordinates branch activities at the central level, and through
its organisations and system from the provinces to communes, coordinates with MOET to implement the National Education for All Action Plan (NEFAAP).

Figure 3.2: Overview of Education System in Vietnam

In the provinces, the Vice-Chairman of the People’s Committee (Local Government Executive), who is responsible for social service and culture, takes on the additional role of the Head of the Provincial Committee for Literacy and UPE. From the central to the grassroots level, besides government bodies, there is also the direct participation of social / mass organisations such as the ‘Vietnam

Specific objectives and targets for Non-Formal Education (NFE) in Vietnam as outlined in the National Education for All Action Plan (NEFAAP) 2003-2015 (DOET, 2003) are as follows.

Objectives

- To ensure that all out-of-school youth (in primary and secondary school age) have education opportunities to achieve primary and lower secondary levels.
- To ensure that all adults, especially women and disadvantaged groups, have access to free and quality literacy and post-literacy programmes and to affordable and quality life skills programmes and lifelong learning opportunities.
- To improve the quality, relevance and results of all continuing education programmes (complementary primary and lower secondary programmes, literacy, post-literacy and life skills programmes) for youth and adults up to the age of 40.
- To develop a comprehensive national strategy for affordable and relevant continuing education, lifelong learning opportunities and to build a learning society.
- To strengthen management capacity of non-formal education (NFE) and continuing education at the local level.

Specific Targets

- Achievements of literacy campaigns consolidated with emphasis on young illiterate adults (aged 15-34) and women.
- 50% of all communes have a Community Learning Centre (CLC) by 2005; 90% by 2010 and all communes by 2015.
• Out-of-school children aged 6-14 (30% by 2005 and 75% by 2015) attend complementary primary programmes.
• Out-of-school youth aged 11-14 (30% by 2005 and 75% by 2015) attend complementary lower secondary programmes.
• Curriculum and textbooks of complementary primary and lower secondary programmes improved.
• Post-literacy and life skills programme diversified to meet the needs of local populations by providing sufficient funds to develop and implement lifelong learning programmes.
• Continuing Education Centres (CEC) set up in all districts and developing localised materials and training programmes.
• Management of CE and NFE reformed and modernised at every level.

It is difficult to evaluate the progress of all objectives and targets for non-formal education as outlined in the National EFA Action Plan 2003-2015. The UNESCO Asia and Pacific Education For All Mid-Decade Assessment (2008) has evaluated the progress of the Vietnam National Education for All Action Plan (NEFAAP) 2003-2015. The following are some of the findings that relate to NEFAAP. The overall progress reported by UNESCO (2008) is extremely positive. The network of Community Learning Centres (CLC) where much of NFE takes place has expanded rapidly. The target for 2006 of 5,300 CLCs was surpassed and the actual figure reached 7,384. The building and development of CLCs is central to the implementation of the NEFAAP.

CLCs are normally situated in commune centres in order to provide NFE activities for the villages that make up the commune. A small minority of villages have Village Learning Centres (EU SLLCRDP, 2005). The target for district-level Continuing Education Centres (CEC) was 498 for 2006 and this has also been surpassed and reached 577 by 2006 (UNESCO, 2008). The number of people who have been provided with access to life skills and lifelong learning programmes through the provision of CLCs and CECs has reached 6.3 million. The target in the NEFAP for 2006 was 3.2 million. From 2000 to late 2007 UNESCO (2008) reports a strong improvement in the access to continuing education, literacy, post-literacy,
lower secondary complimentary education and life skills programmes. The report goes on to commend Vietnam for the number (no figures quoted) of out-of-school children from 6-11 and 11-14 years old who have been provided with opportunities to enrol in ‘universal education’ (primary and lower secondary), and primary and lower secondary complementary education classes. However outstanding challenges were outlined in the UNESCO report (2008). They include the following.

- The access by ethnic minorities to NFE, especially H’mong, Bahnar and Giarai groups, and those in the Mekong River Delta, North West and Central Highlands is still limited.
- Female literacy (15+) has improved most considerably (86.5 to 90.2%) but the literacy rate for females is still lower than for males (92.7%).
- Many out of school youth and adults have not been provided with opportunities to attend complementary education classes at primary and lower secondary levels.
- Many adults, especially women and disadvantaged groups, have not been provided with opportunities to participate in training, theme-based training, and life-skills programmes (UNESCO, 2008).

UNESCO (2008) reports that teaching and learning materials have been developed for CLCs to support young adults. Learning material has been developed to meet the needs of ethnic minorities, and local languages have been used where scripts are available. However, this has been questioned by many researchers, and the disparity between policy and the actual situation regarding the use of culturally sensitive material and local languages in CLCs and ABE programmes is debatable (see CSA, 2009; Nguyen and Baulch 2008; Baulch et al., 2007; Swinkles and Turk, 2006).

The UNESCO (2008, 219) assessment outlines government basic literacy programmes in Vietnam as covering ‘reading, writing, speaking, listening comprehension and numeracy’. Literacy according to this UNESCO report is assessed by examination in Vietnamese (Kinh) and in ethnic minority languages
for which scripts are available. Approximately thirteen ethnic minority languages have scripts. The use and practicality of these scripts are discussed in numerous research papers and reports. Most observers claim that minority language scripts have been used in a very limited manner and that apart from some information posters and pamphlets, they have not been used effectively (see Zolfaghari et al., 2009; Trinh Thanh, 2009; Okukawa, 2008; UNICEF, 2002).

According to UNESCO (2008) funding for non-formal education is low and priority is given to ethnic minority areas. Challenges include sustaining literacy after completion of literacy training and the sustainable development of CLCs and CECs through the mobilisation of additional resources for NFE to supplement the public budget. The need for effective coordination between the education sector and other social organisations, such as the youth and women’s unions is highlighted (UNESCO, 2008). Norlund (2007) in her paper on Civil Society in Vietnam maintains that although civil society / social organisations in Vietnam are many and of considerable size, they are restricted by the rules and regulations of society. She goes on to commend their efforts in poverty alleviation but emphasises limitations in lobbying and advocacy. The UNESCO (2008, 222) assessment section on NFE concludes by stating that ‘one of the main barriers to literacy development is that many of the illiterate are poor and live in remote mountainous areas’.

3.3.3 Community Learning Centres (CLC) and ABE Promotion

The concept of Community Learning Centres is not confined to Vietnam (Okukawa, 2008). In an attempt to improve countries’ literacy levels, the Asian and Pacific Programme of Education For All (APPEAL) established Community Learning Centres to act as a ‘linkage for local institutions to focus on the broader issues of community development’ (Zolfaghari et al., 2009). The APPEAL Community Learning Centre Programme (CLCP) was initially developed with the support and encouragement of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), UNESCO and the ministries of education in APPEAL member countries. Financial assistance for the establishment of the CLCP came from Norway and Japan. So far 25 countries including Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea,
Philippines, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives and Vietnam are implementing the CLCP (Zolfaghari et al., 2009). The programme targets under-educated and unskilled adolescents and youth, unemployed educated youth, child labourers, women, and subsistence farmers. The promotion of literacy is achieved through instruction in basic life skills, non-formal education, and community development activities (UNESCO, 2008). One of the key features of the CLCP is that new infrastructure is not required and the use of existing school, meeting halls, community centres, and other suitable locations are encouraged (Zolfaghari et al., 2009).

The CLCP in Vietnam began in 1998 with the establishment of two pilot CLCs in Hoa Binh and Lai Chau provinces in the north western mountains. The programme is under the guidance of the Research Centre for Literacy and Continuing Education (RCLCE), which is supervised by the National Institute for Educational Sciences of MOET (APPEAL, 2001). According to RCLCE (1999), VLA (2008) and Okukawa (2008) the main objectives of CLCs in Vietnam represent a new integrated approach to improve the quality of life of community members. This can be achieved by:

- providing information and making continuing education available to everyone;
- providing community meeting places and resources for study including books, periodicals, and offering access to computers and software training;
- helping villagers and communities to increase their income-generating activities;
- developing literacy and maintaining literacy levels by organising literacy and post-literacy classes;
- establishing and upgrading libraries of CLCs;
- improving villagers’ lives through the organisation of seminars, group discussions and talks on relevant topics. Gender equality, human rights and democracy, government policy are listed as topics;
- preserving and enriching villagers’ lives through the promotion of socio-cultural and sports activities.
Okukawa (2008) outlines the evaluation of CLCs in Vietnam by the National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan (NFUAJ), a Japanese non-governmental organisation (NGO) working with UNESCO. NFUAJ and its project for promoting literacy and continuing education through CLCs (2000-2005) was instrumental in the establishment and institutionalisation of CLCs in Vietnam (Zolfaghari et al., 2009; MOET, 2004). The NFUAJ CLC project was initially located in the province of Dien Bien in the north west of Vietnam. Dien Bien province was separated into two provinces, namely Dien Bien and Lai Chau in 2003, and the forty one CLCs of the first phase of the NFUAJ project were spread between the two provinces (MOET, 2004). Because the concept of CLCs was relatively new at this stage, the development of the NFUAJ project was closely monitored by the Continuing Education Department of MOET (Okukawa, 2008). The success of the NFUAJ project in convincing MOET to roll out the CLC model to all areas of the country can be seen in the inclusion of CLCs in the Education For All Action Plan 2003-2015 (MOET, 2004).

The importance of the organisational structure of CLCs is highlighted in the NFUAJ evaluation. The influence of the culture, religion and political system of the many countries in the CLCP is also recognised. However, all CLCs share the distinctive feature of being managed by a ‘CLC Committee’ selected from representatives of the people in the community. The major duties of the CLC Committee are:

- to assess and identify learning needs of the community;
- to mobilise necessary resources;
- to implement and evaluate learning programmes (Okukawa, 2008).

In Vietnam CLCs are located in Communes. The commune is the local authority that is closest to village level and the positioning of CLCs at this level promotes the development of village Non Formal Education (NFE). Local people are encouraged to mobilise support for literacy, post-literacy and lifelong learning through a local delivery mechanism (MOET, 2004). The NFUAJ evaluation in 2005 collected data from 5,407 households from a total of 24,415 people. The baseline
data collected at the beginning of the project in 2000 was compared with the data collected in 2005. Results included:

- literacy rate of people aged 15 and above rose from 66.3% to 75.2%;
- the proportion of children without any experience of schooling decreased from 20.4% to 10.4%;
- cash income increased by 35%;
- increased awareness and use of local health facilities;
- decrease in disease due to better sanitation and cleaner drinking water (Okukawa, 2008).

However in the NFUAJ Final Report (2005), issues of sustainability and participation were raised and serious concerns relating to the top-down control of local communities in the development of learning activities were recorded. When comparing the development of CLCs in Vietnam to NFE institutions similar to CLCs in Japan and Thailand, the importance of permanent and better trained staff was noted. Both Thailand and Japan have better funding and resources to sustain activities that are selected by local communities. The coordination and linkage with other agencies responsible for agriculture, health care and various sectors other than education is sometimes weak in Vietnamese CLCs (NFUAJ, 2005; Muller, 2007). UNESCO Asia and Pacific Bureau for Education (2006) reinforces this concern and promotes the strengthening of sector support and cooperation with civil society organisations for the sustainable development of CLCs. Civil society in Vietnam is constrained by political interference and the development of independent community based voluntary groups is restricted (Norlund, 2007). This can be seen as detrimental to the sustainable development of CLCs.

MOET (2010) reports that there are 9,551 CLCs in existence in Vietnam in 2009. The report does not indicate the number of CLCs that have been designed and built specifically for NFE, as well as the resources they have at their disposal. Details of activities, learners, trained facilitators and make-up of management committees are also difficult to obtain. The target of 90% of all communes having CLCs by 2010 set in the NEFAAP 2003-2015 has been reached (MOET, 2010) but the monitoring evidence is ambiguous (UNESCO, 2010). The quality and
effectiveness of NFE activities in CLCs is another pressing question that needs to be investigated (Okukawa, 2008). Individual projects such as the NFUAJ project have built in monitoring and evaluation (M+E) systems, as have most programmes run by NGOs. Trinh Thanh (2009) reports that only 30% of CLCs in Vietnam operated as specified in MOET regulations. Because CLCs can be located in the local Commune People’s Committee (CPC) building or in a separate place there is an ambiguity about the actual number of functioning CLCs in Vietnam. Although there are actual CLCs in existence in over 90% of communes in Vietnam, there is insufficient evidence to suggest that they are functioning as intended. The ‘NFUAJ Final Report’ (2005) highlights the importance of the training for CLC managers and NFE practitioners and development of learning material components of the programme for the effective and sustainable functioning of CLCs. According to Okukawa (2008, 196) the ideal CLC Management Committee should compose of ten to fifteen members including local school teachers, village heads, representatives of mass organisations and government line sections (health, agriculture etc). The collaboration of local individuals and groups is cited as one of the important lessons learned in both NFUAJ (2005) and Okukawa reports.

According to UNESCO (2010, 103) ‘programmes that provide for active learning through a relevant curriculum and offer follow-up have achieved results’. These programmes are built on partnerships, extending from local communities to NGO actors and government agencies. One prominent example mentioned by UNESCO (2010) is Reflect.

3.3.4 Methodological Approaches to Adult Basic Education in Vietnam
This section outlines the two main ABC approaches being investigated in this study. 3.3.4.1 examines the Reflect approach used in Case Study 1 and Case Study 2 while 3.3.4.2 concentrates on the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) functional literacy approach implemented by respective provincial Departments of Education and Training (DOET) in the two provinces (Ha Giang and Dien Bien) where the study was conducted. The main purpose of these sub-sections is to provide background information and facilitate an understanding of similarities and differences from a methodological perspective of these two ABE approaches.
3.3.4.1 REFLECT

*Reflect* is an acronym for ‘Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques’. It is based on the theory of conscientisation, pioneered by the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1973). The emphasis is placed on dialogue and action, awareness-raising, cooperation and empowerment. Adult learners explore development challenges and find ways to overcome them. Such issues become the basis for learners to be taught literacy and numeracy skills. Communities are also encouraged to use these skills to generate income to improve their livelihoods. This empowering process gives an opportunity to freely discuss any issue including sensitive cultural traditions. The main task of facilitators is to keep the interactive dialogue on track (ActionAid, 2009).

*Reflect* was developed by ActionAid in 1993 and first used in El Salvador, Bangladesh and Uganda. *Reflect* is now used by over 500 organisations in 70 countries to address a wide range of issues, from peace and reconciliation in Burundi, to community forestry in Nepal, from opposing domestic violence in Peru to Education for Ethnic Minorities in Vietnam [funded by Irish Aid] (Trinh Thanh, 2009). The *Reflect* approach links learning to empowerment, and strengthens the voice of the poor in education decision making at all levels. Having originated as an approach to adult literacy, *Reflect* is now a tool for building people’s capacity to communicate through whatever medium is most relevant to them (Aderinoye and Rogers, 2005). *Reflect* creates a democratic space where people can analyse issues for themselves, and is the basis for mobilisation, which enables people to strengthen their own organisations and capacity to advocate for themselves at all levels (Duffy et al., 2009).

Although *Reflect* projects are diverse, they all focus on enabling people to articulate their views. The development of literacy and other communication skills is closely linked to the analysis of power relationships and the active engagement of people in wider processes of development and social change. Groups develop their own learning material by constructing maps, calendars, matrices, and diagrams or using drama, story-telling and songs to capture social, economic, cultural and political issues from their environment (Archer and Cottingham, 1996). While members of a *Reflect* circle learn the basics of literacy, they are also
learning how to access information or demand services more effectively. Reflect circles often strengthen people’s dignity and self-confidence, as well as having an impact on improving resource management, health practices, children’s education, local community organisations and civic life (Duffy et al., 2009). The Reflect approach has won UN Literacy Prizes in 2003, 2005, 2007 and 2009 (UNESCO, 2010).

The Reflect programme in Vietnam started in early 2000 when ActionAid Vietnam cooperated with the Research Centre for Literacy and Continuing Education (RCLCE). The dual aim of the programme was to develop literacy and increase the participation of marginalised women in community activities. ActionAid Vietnam also cooperates with partners from government, NGOs, including Oxfam Hong Kong, as well as bilateral donors such as Irish Aid to establish Reflect circles (ActionAid Vietnam, 2009). Participants use locally available written material to develop their literacy skills. Local written resources such as newspapers, leaflets, posters, and other awareness-raising material related to relevant community issues are utilised. The calculation of family income and expenditure and small business transactions are encouraged to develop numeracy skills, and practice in filling in forms and writing applications relating to participants’ daily life is promoted. ActionAid Vietnam has translated the Reflect ‘Mother Manual’ (Archer and Cottingham, 1996) and ‘Communication and Power’ (Newman and Archer, 2003) as resource material for Reflect circles. Video, DVDs, music, drama, folk stories and proverbs are also used (Trinh Thanh, 2009).

Areas in Vietnam where Reflect circles are active include provinces such as Cao Bang, Ha Giang, Dien Bien, Lai Chau, Hoa Binh, Son La, (Northern Mountainous area), Quang Ninh, Hai Phong (North East coast), Ha Tinh, Dak Lak, Gia Lai (Central / Central Highlands), Vinh Long, Soc Trang, Ninh Thuan, Tra Vin, Ho Chi Minh City (South / Mekong Delta). Most of these provinces have ethnic minority populations and are remote and under-developed (Keys, 2002). As well as organising Reflect circles as part of their own programme, ActionAid Vietnam leads a national network of twelve Reflect implementing organisations, including government and local / international NGOs. The network publishes a bulletin,
provides training and advocates for *Reflect* as an approach to adult literacy and community development in Vietnam (ActionAid Vietnam, 2009).

The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), in an evaluation (2008) of the ActionAid Vietnam ‘Literacy and Community Development Programme’ (LCDP), commends ActionAid Vietnam for focusing on illiterate and neo-literate people, mostly women and ethnic minorities living in remote areas. The programme was initially implemented in two districts but has spread to eleven, and has trained up to 12,000 learners, of whom 80% are women. In addition the programme has been adapted by other agencies, including Aus Aid, German Development Cooperation (GIZ), World Vision, World Bank, Caritas, Malteaser and Oxfam Hong Kong for their literacy programmes. The three phases of the LCDP include:

- Literacy Phase;
- Advanced Literacy Phase;
- Community Development.

The programme is comprised of various themes which are seen as important for overall community development. Included are health (nutrition and HIV/AIDS prevention), gender inequality, environment, agriculture (animal and crop farming), business training (local budget analysis) and income generation. The LCDP programme endeavours to:

- combat illiteracy among rural people, especially among marginalised people such as ethnic minorities and women;
- empower the community with relevant information, techniques and skills to actively address or solve the challenges and problems they encounter in their daily life;
- promote social networking and organisation for community development (UIL, 2008).

Central to all *Reflect* programmes are trained and motivated facilitators. Many of these facilitators are local people who come from the local communities (Fransman, 2008). Facilitators in Vietnam attend a ten to twelve day training of trainers (TOT) course, followed by regular one-day monthly sharing and training
workshops, as well as two five-day advanced refresher training courses. The following content is emphasised during training:

- fundamentals of adult education including curriculum content, adult teaching and education methodologies, management of adult learning characteristics;
- community development and gender issues (equity) which often take four to five days;
- use of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools;
- necessary linkages and networks for conducting the programme;
- participatory monitoring and evaluation of adult literacy programmes. In-house and actual field practice on all the technical content (UIL, 2008).

According to the UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning (2008) several key and practical indicators point to long-term sustainability of the LCD programme. Key indicators include: community participation and ownership; strong commitment and material contribution of local government; the replication of the programme by several donors and NGOs and the adaption of LCDP methodologies in some Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) adult education programmes.

A recent study conducted by Jude Fransman (2008) in Tanzania and Vietnam that compared policy and practice in the light of the International Benchmarks for Adult Literacy (see Appendix 1), in cooperation with ActionAid and the ministries of education in both countries, reveals some interesting findings. The International Adult Literacy Benchmarks (2007) were developed by the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), UNESCO, ActionAid International and the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006. A major survey was undertaken to retrieve lessons from successful literacy programmes, and the analysis of the results led to the development of the twelve benchmarks for running effective adult literacy programmes. They were published in a report called Writing the Wrongs (ActionAid, 2007).

Fransman (2008) examined the compatibility of Reflect with the benchmarks and the broader policy environment. In Vietnam the research outlined serious
inadequacies in official literacy statistics. Fransman (2008) reports that the benchmarks provide a sound framework but are a long way from being met. The literacy deficit is particularly prominent among the following groups: women; the elderly; ethnic and linguistic minorities; people with disabilities; people affected by HIV/AIDS and people in remote rural areas. According to the research greater political will and resources are needed, improved professionalism in facilitators, and the sustainable development of a culture of needs-assessment and a literate environment. The status accorded to literacy by MOET and in the agendas of donors and NGOs is low, and decreasing, and if political will is not enhanced, advances in Vietnam in the area of literacy will be undermined (Fransman, 2008).

*Reflect* is acknowledged as a powerful tool to meet the benchmarks according to Fransman (2008). However, there are serious challenges for the programmes in Vietnam and Tanzania. A summary of the issues are as follows:

- *Reflect* networks might be used to gauge the true extent of illiteracy and learning priorities of the most excluded through community-based needs assessments;
- since *Reflect* circles are community-based and low cost they can be replicated in more remote locations, reaching additional marginalised communities;
- teaching and learning topics in *Reflect* circles respond directly to community development needs and can mobilise participants into action;
- *Reflect* is one of the few adult literacy initiatives that promotes a professionalised and sustainable source of adult literacy facilitators. A movement towards the training of local facilitators and away from reliance on outside primary school teachers (as in some areas of Vietnam) should be put in place.

Research in Vietnam as well as in other countries where *Reflect* is practiced indicates that not all facilitators follow the methodology and so it is vital that the facilitators are carefully selected, monitored and supported (see Trinh Thanh, 2009; Fransman, 2008; Archer and Cottingham, 1996). In Vietnam literacy is traditionally taught in the national *Kinh* language and this sometimes excludes
many ethno-linguistic minorities (Nguyen and Baulch, 2007; Swinkels and Turk, 2006; Trinh Thanh, 2009; Fransman, 2008). The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) through its Continuing Education Department has been the main promoter of ABE in Vietnam since independence in 1945 and its approach will be outlined in the following sub-section.

3.3.4.2 MOET / DOET Approach

ABE has been an important element in the provision of educational services by the Vietnamese state since gaining independence in 1945 (see 3.2.2 and 3.2.3). One of the specific Non-Formal Education (NFE) objectives outlined in the National Education for All Action Plan 2003-2015 (MOET, 2003) is to ensure that all adults have access to free and quality literacy, post literacy, quality life skills programmes and lifelong learning (LLL) opportunities (see 3.3.2). The approach used by MOET to achieve this ABE objective has developed since the early days of independence including the years of almost continuous armed conflict from 1945-1975. In interviews with the MOET Research Centre for Non-Formal Education (RECENFED) the approach used to deliver ABE including adult literacy (AL) and post-literacy was described as a functional literacy approach (see 2.2.3) using literacy primers as the basis for curriculum development (Interviews 13/12/10 and 24/04/12). Various primers have been developed since 1956 which have become more graphic and colourful over the years (see Image 3.1 below).

Image 3.1: MOET Adult Literacy Primers 1956, 1967 and 1990

Source: RECENFED
Although primers have changed the approach to teaching literacy has relied mainly on primary school methods and teachers for implementation. According to RECENFED the reasons for this is that primary school teachers and to a lesser extent literate army personnel and GoV officials were the only educated adults available in remote ethnic minority regions where levels of literacy in the national language (Kinh) are lower than the norm. In lowland areas where the population is predominately Kinh levels of literacy steadily increased from less than 10% in 1945 to over 96% in 2009. However, in remote mountainous ethnic minority areas where Kinh is not the first language, literacy levels remained under 90% until recently (MOET, 2009). For the purpose of this particular study a focus on the period from 2000-2005 and 2006-2011 is necessary in order to coincide with the implementation of the GoV P135 poverty alleviation programme. In this context the ABE approach promoted by MOET and implemented by the respective Departments of Education and Training (DOET) will be examined.

In contrast to Reflect where the curriculum is developed based on participants needs the MOET / DOET approach is divided into specific lessons designed to be taught during a restricted period of time. Up until 2006 this entailed 150 lessons based around topics relating to family health, hygiene, agriculture / income-generation, animal husbandry, civic responsibility and law. The duration of this curriculum which was developed around a series of 5 books (Book 1-3 literacy and 4-5 post-literacy) usually lasted six months covering 150 sessions and 450 hours of teaching. After completing books 1-3 adult learners were examined and when successful received MOET / DOET literacy certificates which entitled them to move on to the post-literacy curriculum. Completion of the post-literacy curriculum was seen as equivalent to completing primary school (MOET, 2010, 2009, 2007; Okukawa, 2008; SLLCRDP, 2005).

Although this curriculum has been officially phased out and replaced by a more intensive complementary primary school curriculum that requires adult learners to attend 1,290 sessions (753 hours) there is evidence in this study that the old curriculum is still being used (see Table 3.3). RECENFED staff explained that the new curriculum is too intensive for many adult learners, requiring them to go back to school and when evening adult literacy classes are requested the old curriculum
is often seen as more appropriate. There is a proposal in place according to RECENFED to develop an additional curriculum based on the more flexible old curriculum that targets older illiterates who are not willing to go back to school to take part in the complementary primary school curriculum (Interview, 24/04/12).

For the purpose of this study the old curriculum used in Case Study 3 (Na Tau Commune) from 2000-2005 will be examined and references to the new curriculum will be made when describing the current ABE activities in all three case study locations (see 5.2.4).

### Table 3.3: New MOET / DOET Adult Literacy / Complementary Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Adult Literacy</th>
<th>Post-literacy</th>
<th>Total Lessons (35 mins)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>Grade 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature and Social Studies</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History and Geography</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Both old and new curricula are delivered by primary school teachers who have been trained in methodology to teach children. Training in ABE methodology is limited and in some provinces non-existent according to RECENFED. The design and outline of both sets of books encourage the use of rote learning and a didactic, teacher-centred approach. The MOET / DOET approach relies on teacher-led rather than learner-centred and learner-led approaches promoted by Reflect. However, evidence from the literature is available which testifies to the efficacy of such rote learning, didactic approaches in the early acquisition of literacy skills such as reading and writing (see Westwood, 2008; Wang, 2008; Lonigan, 2006; Jarvis, 2002; Brookfield, 1996). Analysis of the methodological approaches investigated in this study (Reflect and MOET / DOET) will be conducted in chapters 5 and 6 based on evidence from the three case study locations.
In the following section ABE will be examined in the context of ethnic minority poverty in Vietnam. In general Vietnam has made great strides in poverty reduction and general development, including education since the mid 1990s. However, there are regions of the country that lag behind including the two provinces, Ha Giang and Dien Bien, where the three case studies in this investigation are located.

### 3.4.1 Ethnic Minority Poverty and Adult Basic Education in Vietnam

In recent years there has been a substantial amount of research on the broad area of Ethnic Minority Poverty in Vietnam (CSA, 2009; Baulch et al., 2007; Nguyen and Baulch, 2007; Swinkels and Turk, 2006; Gleweee et al., 2002). All recent research indicates that the proportion of ethnic minority poor is disproportionate to their overall percentage of the population. In this section some of the findings from these research papers and reports will be looked at in an attempt to explore the link if any between ethnic minority poverty and levels of ABE in these regions.

In their paper ‘Explaining Ethnic Minority Poverty in Vietnam’, Swinkels and Turk (2006) provide convincing evidence that ethnic minority poverty is persisting in Vietnam. They demonstrate that hunger among ethnic minorities is still widespread, even when minorities are living in parts of the country that are experiencing rapid growth. Access to land of different types, particularly forest land is identified as a major reason for this trend (Vuong Xuan Tinh, 2001). Ill-suited agricultural extension services compound this problem. On the positive side, the paper provides evidence of improving access to basic services. Also, efforts to provide additional subsidies for basic education and curative healthcare seem to be increasingly effective in reaching ethnic minority populations. However, the standard and quality of these services according to Swinkels and Turk (2006) are not always on par with those of lowland areas of the country (see UNESCO, 2010; World Bank, 2007).

The population of Vietnam has enjoyed well documented improvements in living standards over the past decade. While 58% of the population was living in poverty in 1993, only 20% of the population was still poor in 2004 (VHLSS, 2002, 2004). The graph below (Figure 3.3), demonstrates that the improvements have been
much more rapid for the *Kinh* or mainstream Vietnamese and Chinese populations than for the ethnic minorities. The graph shows that the gap in welfare between the majority and minority groups has grown over the decade. Ethnic minorities are 52% of all poor people while only representing 14% of the total population. This represents a near-doubling of the proportion of ethnic minority in the poor population in eleven years. This trend of rapid poverty reduction for *Kinh* and Chinese combined with much lower rates for ethnic minorities can be seen in all areas of the country (CSA, 2009).

**Figure 3.3: The difference between Kinh and ethnic minority poverty widens**

![Poverty trend in Vietnam by ethnicity 1993-2004](image)

Source: Swinkels and Turk (2006)

Even in regions considered remote, the *Kinh* populations have seen remarkable improvements in living standards. As can be clearly seen in Figure 3.4, in the Central Highlands only 13.6% of *Kinh* and Chinese are poor in 2004 compared to nearly 70% of the ethnic minority population. Similarly in the North West, the poorest region of the country, only 17% of *Kinh* and Chinese are poor.
The 2009 World Bank Country Social Analysis, Ethnicity and Development, sheds some light on the reasons for the trends indicated in Figure 3.2 and 3.3. In its summary section on ‘Theoretical Explanations for Minority Poverty’ (CSA, 2009, 19-20), the CSA research team explain that poverty is effecting minority households in different and more significant ways than Kinh households. The multiple ways in which ethnic minority poverty can be explained by different stakeholders are summarised as follows.

- Ethnic minorities may have fewer physical assets—land, capital, credit—than Kinh. While overall land holdings of minorities tend to be higher, they tend to have less annual crop land and less wet rice or highly productive land. They also tend to have larger households, 5.7 vs. 4.7 members (VHLSS, 2006), they are more likely to have more children (43% of ethnic minority households had a child below 6 years old, compared to 27% of Kinh).

- Ethnic minorities may have fewer social assets—education, health, access to social services than Kinh. A study based on VHLSS data notes that living in a household with an illiterate head almost doubles an individual’s chances of living in chronic food poverty (Baulch et al., 2002, 3). Data from
the VHLSS show that minorities have worse health and report more illness than *Kinh*, and have significantly lower levels of education (23% of household heads of ethnic minority households had no education compared to 6% of the *Kinh* heads of households, VHLSS, 2006 data).

- Ethnic minorities are often found in geographically remote areas, limiting their mobility and access to services and markets (World Bank, 2007). Lack of physical mobility, caused by lack of access to roads and transportation, has been identified as a key factor in poverty. VHLSS data show that ‘households living in communities with a paved road, where most households have electricity, where a lower secondary school exists, where an upper secondary school exists, or with a market are more likely to escape poverty than households who live in communes where facilities do not exist’ (Glewee et al. 2002, 784). The expansion of road systems, electricity and schooling as a result of government poverty alleviation programmes (P135 and HEPR) investment in recent years has dramatically increased the number of ethnic households with access to these services, yet areas remain where roads, electricity, and schooling do not reach all communes and villages (see World Bank, 2007; ADB, 2002).

- Ethnic minorities may not be benefiting from government poverty reduction programmes as successfully as *Kinh*. This could be due to cultural factors such as lack of knowledge of policies, their inability to read or hear about materials related to poverty programmes due to language barriers, and a lack of poverty reduction cadres fluent in minority languages (Mc Elwee, 2004). There may also be cases of discrimination and power relations where minorities feel unable to access programmes that are in place (Tran Thi Thu Trang, 2004).

- Ethnic minorities may possess other socio-cultural factors that are keeping them out of mainstream economic development. These may include such factors as language barriers; community levelling mechanisms that create social pressure against excess economic accumulation and cultural perceptions of social obligations and “shared poverty;” religious obligations that require economic expenditures; gender expectations grounded in
different cultural models; and community ownership of land and assets (see Nguyen and Baulch, 2007; UNDP, 1998).

The CSA (2009) research summarises these explanations for minority poverty citing two distinct possibilities which focus on assets, capacity and voice. People may be poor if they lack endowments and assets, such as land, physical capital, and human capital, especially education. Similarly, people may be poor because they have lower returns on the assets they do have. When minorities are not able to make their physical assets of land, labour and capital work for them, and when they suffer from lower levels of social capital, such as education and health, poverty is likely to result (see IEMA and P. Mc Elwee, 2005; VandeWalle and Gunewardena, 2001).

3.4.2.1 Differences in Education of Adults in Vietnam

The Institute for Ethnic Minorities Affairs (IEMA) notes in recent research that local authorities often explain the persistent poverty in terms of “cultural backwardness” (WB/IEMA, 2006a). However, the IEMA report suggests that there are other factors for the persistence of poverty and that this emphasis on “backwardness” is misplaced. A review of the education data available from the VHLSS (2006) and other surveys support the IEMA and suggest that it is not “backwardness” that is a problem, but that the delivery of education services fails to deliver comparable education outcomes for ethnic minority and Kinh children (see Figure 3.5). Ethnic minority children still have lower enrolment rates even though the situation has improved.
A recent assessment of learning outcomes in 3,660 schools in disadvantaged ethnic minority communities across Vietnam shows that a combination of lower quality teaching, poor facilities, long travel times and language issues mean that grade 5 children are learning less than those in other parts of the country (WB, 2004). In recent years, various pilot projects have been initiated to trial innovative mechanisms to engage communities more in the provision of education services. These include the formation of more active parent-teacher associations in ethnic minority areas, more intensive efforts to train ethnic minority teachers and experimentation with mother tongue instruction in the early years of education (see Irish Aid, 2008; Norlund, 2007; Muller, 2007).

According to the CSA (2009), education has a significant impact on a household’s economic status (see Figure 3.6 available from CSA, 2009). Less education means higher rates of illiteracy among ethnic minorities, resulting in less opportunity, less likelihood of off-farm employment, and less access to a multitude of government and other services. Ethnic minorities are less likely to be mobile in Vietnam. They visit areas outside their village less often than Kinh and travel shorter distances (CSA, 2009). Ethnic minorities are therefore less likely to migrate in search of employment and opportunity. Much poverty alleviation investment has focused on infrastructure to increase access and mobility for remote areas (Swinkels and Turk, 2007).
However, the CSA research (2009) suggests that mobility is more than access to roads. Ethnic minorities need to have places to go to such as markets, schools, training centres, and to have networks and people to do business with. But without Vietnamese language skills, without contacts outside the village and wider networks, ethnic minorities cannot take advantage of roads and infrastructure to increase mobility and subsequently improve livelihoods in the same way that Kinh can (CSA, 2009).

**Figure 3.6: How Differences between Kinh and Minorities Become Disadvantages**

Analysis of VHLSS (2006) data has shown that, given the above disadvantages, rural roads have mainly benefited Kinh and Chinese and not other ethnic minority groups (CSA, 2009; World Bank, 2007).

The lack of access to affordable credit has serious implications for ethnic minority ability to expand agricultural production, diversify livelihoods, and invest in new activity like trade or services. Results of a household survey among ethnic
minorities in 2005 showed that credit and saving schemes had positive impacts on households when they could access them. 78% of the surveyed ethnic minority households that borrowed money from the VBSP and VBARD banks said that credit has had a positive impact on their household (WB/IEMA, 2006b). According to VHLSS data (2002, 2004), overall size of landholdings are often higher for ethnic minorities than for the Kinh. However, while these landholdings may be larger overall, they are less productive than Kinh lands. CSA (2009) data shows significant differences between ethnic minority groups and Kinh in the amount of wetland, industrial crop land, and upland areas cultivated (IEMA and Mc Elwee, 2005).

There is a widespread belief among government officials and others that ethnic minorities are poor because they lack familiarity with the market economy and are only concerned with self-sufficiency (World Bank, 2007; ADB, 2002). The CSA (2009) has found that minorities want to be and are engaged in the market. Nearly half of all households surveyed by the CSA (2009) sold something at a physical marketplace and the vast majority raised some sort of income from selling goods. However, they face disadvantages which limit their livelihood benefits from market involvement. Market access is about more than infrastructure. Ethnic minorities use physical marketplaces less than Kinh, implying that investment in marketplaces may have benefited Kinh more than ethnic minorities. Disadvantages in language, credit, and type of crops sold affect ethnic minorities’ ability to compete (CSA, 2009; UNDP, 1998).

A further issue, that of stereotyping can lead to both decreased participation of ethnic minorities (due to lack of self-confidence) but also less inclination of authorities to listen to ethnic minorities because they are perceived to be ‘less educated’ or have lower ‘intellectual capacity’. Stereotyping also leads to assumptions that are often not backed up by reality: that ethnic minorities are subsistence farmers or ‘nomadic’, when quantitative data shows most ethnic minorities produce for the market and no one is ‘nomadic’ (CSA, 2009; Swinkels and Turk, 2006).
Many Kinh beliefs about ethnic minorities are based on stereotypes that have persisted for many years, backed up by the mass media. Stereotyping may lead to flawed policy prescriptions. For example, the stereotype that ethnic minorities are nomadic and in need of sedentarisation has resulted in funding programmes that have not had desirable impacts on poverty or on deforestation (IEMA and Mc Elwee, 2005). Investments in infrastructure like markets that benefit more Kinh than ethnic minorities is another example. Belief that ethnic minorities have less intellectual capacity can result in investments in Kinh developments to ‘show ethnic minorities how to develop’ as was the case with migration programmes in Quang Tri Province, rather than directly investing in minority communities themselves (CSA, 2009).

3.5 Conclusion
This chapter gave a general summary of the historical background to the development of education in Vietnam. Particular attention was paid to the ethnic make-up and location of the ethnic minorities in Vietnam. The structure of the education system focusing on ABE was outlined and discussed. ABE initiatives such as the development and functioning of CLCs as well as support interventions from UNESCO, NGO’s and INGOs were outlined and evaluated.

Evidence from the literature suggests that the Reflect ABE methodology as implemented by ActionAid Vietnam is central to the discussions relating to the inclusion of literacy into community development approaches. The focus on Reflect is fundamental to the development of this thesis and assessments of its impact will be outlined in the following chapters. Recent research from the WB and independent researchers has been referred to in order to explain ethnic minority poverty in Vietnam. Differences between Kinh and ethnic minorities in relation to mobility, education, income and access to credit have been spotlighted.

In conclusion, the above discussion indicates that there is scope for further investigation and research into the relationship between adult basic education (ABE) and accessing poverty alleviation resources among selected ethnic minority communities in Vietnam. Central to the research is the objective to provide additional evidence to answer the following research question:
How do differences in ABE approaches impact on how specific ethnic minority adults access specific poverty alleviation resources in Vietnam?

Research sub-questions include:

- Are there differences between the *Reflect* and MOET / DOET Adult Literacy approaches?
- How do different approaches to literacy impact on ethnic minority adults’ participation in the outcome orientated objectives of Programme 135?
- What are the impediments to accessing adult education and poverty alleviation resources for specific ethnic minority adults?
- Are policy changes implied by the research findings? What are these?
Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an extensive outline of the methodology used in conducting this research project. Included in the sections outlined below are aspects relating to the nature of educational research and the research methods used to gather data, sections on quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research. A particular focus is placed on the case study research method in this chapter.

Educational research and development issues are investigated and compared both in context and relevance to this case study investigation. The theoretical underpinnings of this study rely heavily on both educational and development research and the related literature receives particular attention. Methodologies associated with ABE in general and adult literacy in particular are examined as agents of social change in developing countries and related to developments in adult education in Vietnam. The globalisation of education and development through international initiatives such as the multi-agency backed Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals are highlighted.

Issues directly related to this case study inquiry are discussed in section 4.5. The research design and methodology of the study are outlined and the research project placed in context regarding ethnic minority groups and development in Vietnam with particular attention to ABE / literacy and poverty alleviation. Section 4.7 examines data collection methods and includes an overview of the literature review. Methodological issues relating to validity and reliability, bias, ethics, triangulation are highlighted in the context of case study inquiry. The final two sections outline the project undertaken and key areas to be assessed and monitored.

4.2.1 The Nature of Educational Research

Anderson and Arsenault (1998, 6) define educational research as a ‘disciplined attempt to address questions or solve problems through the collection and analysis of primary data for the purpose of description, explanation, generalisation and prediction. They explain that research is fundamentally a problem-solving
activity which addresses a problem, tests an hypothesis or explains phenomena. Anderson and Arsenault (1998, 7) outline ten characteristics of educational research. These include:

1. educational research attempts to solve a problem;
2. involves gathering new data from primary or first-hand sources or using existing data for a new purpose;
3. is based upon observable experience or empirical evidence;
4. demands accurate observation and description;
5. generally employs carefully designed procedures and rigorous analysis;
6. emphasises the development generalisations, principles or theories that will help in understanding, predicting and/or control;
7. requires expertise – familiarity with the field; competence in methodology; technical skill in collecting and analysing the data;
8. attempts to find an objective, unbiased solution to the problem and takes great pains to validate the procedures employed;
9. is a deliberate and unhurried activity which is directional but often refines the problem or question as the research progresses;
10. is carefully recorded and reported to other persons interested in the problem.

Within educational research there are dominant research paradigms. A paradigm is a way of categorising a body of complex beliefs and world views (Blaxter et al, 2008). Oakley (1999, 155) defines paradigms as:

ways of breaking down the complexities of the real world that tell their adherents what to do. Paradigms are essentially intellectual cultures, and as such they are fundamentally embedded in the socialisation of their adherents: a way of life rather than a set of technical and procedural differences. [emphasis in original]

The most common paradigms that educational researchers are introduced to are quantitative and qualitative. They offer a basic framework for dividing up knowledge camps. Within these two broad camps there are debates about how educational research should proceed. Although it is not the purpose of this thesis to further this debate it is necessary to briefly outline four approaches commonly
used within quantitative and qualitative research before looking at both paradigms in more detail. It is important that a distinction is made between methods and methodology before outlining the four approaches. Methods are generally understood to relate to the tools of data collection or analysis. Methodology has a more philosophical meaning and refers to the approach or paradigm that underpins the research (Blaxter et al, 2008).

Beck (1992) acknowledges positivism as a recurrent theme in the history of western thought from the time of the ancient Greeks, and Oldroyd (1986) identifies Comte as the modern inventor of this ‘new science of society’ and the one who labelled it positivism. Duncan (1968) maintains that although the term positivism is used by philosophers and social scientists it has deep-rooted beginnings in the natural sciences. Giddens (1975) makes the following connected suppositions: the methodological procedures of natural science can be directly applied to the social sciences; investigations by social scientists can be formulated in terms similar to those of natural science. This mirroring of natural science by social science is an approach that is inherently but not exclusively quantitative, emphasising measurement of behaviour and prediction of future measurements (Anderson and Arsenault, 1998). While there are many variations of positivism, quantitative approaches that use statistics and experiments are seen by many as classic examples (Crotty, 1998). One criticism of positivism is that observation is not value free and that the very nature of what one observes as well as how we observe it implies a set of values in the observer (Anderson and Arsenault, 1998). The most powerful criticism of positivism stems from intellectuals closely associated with the ‘Frankfurt school of critical theory (see Horkheimer and Adorno, 1972; Habermas, 1972). They argue that the scientific mentality has been elevated to a form of religion that neglects hermeneutic, aesthetic, critical, moral, creative and other forms of knowledge.

Post-positivism is seen as a response to the criticisms that have been made about positivism. Denzin and Lincoln (2005, 27) state that ‘post-positivism holds that only partially objective accounts of the world can be produced, for all methods for examining such accounts are flawed’. Post-positivism accepts values and perspectives as important considerations in the search for knowledge. While
maintaining the same basic set of beliefs as positivism, post-positivism argues that we can only know social reality imperfectly and probabilistically (Blaxter et. al, 2008).

Interpretivism as a broad approach has many variants. These include hermeneutics, phenomenology and symbolic interactionism. Interpretivist approaches to social research see interpretations of the social world as being derived from culture and situated in an historical time-frame (Blaxter et. al, 2008). A characteristic of the phenomenological, ethnomethodological and symbolic interactionist perspectives, which make them attractive to educational researchers, is the way they fit the kind of concentrated action found in classrooms and schools. The influence of the researcher in structuring, analysing and interpreting is minimal compared to more traditional research approaches (Cohen et. al, 2007). Interpretivism is closely associated with Weber’s concepts of verstehen (understanding) and erklaren (explaining) which he used to contrast the interpretative approach needed in human and social sciences with the explicative approach, focused on causality, found in the natural sciences (Crotty, 1998, 67).

Critical research regards other paradigms as presenting incomplete accounts of social behaviour by neglecting the political and ideological contexts of educational research. Positive and interpretative paradigms are considered as being preoccupied with technical and hermeneutic knowledge respectively (Gage, 1989). Critical educational research is influenced by the early works of Habermas and his predecessors in the Frankfurt School, including Adorno, Marcuse, Horkheimer and Fromm (Cohen et. al, 2007). According to Crotty (1998, 113) critical research is:

a contrast between a research that seeks merely to understand and a research that challenges … between a research that reads the situation in terms of interaction and community and a research that reads it in terms of conflict and oppression … between a research that accepts the status quo and a research that seeks to bring about change. [emphasis in original]

Included in this category is feminism, neo-Marxism, anti-racist and participatory approaches. Adult educational thinkers including Freire, Giroux, Meziro, Mc Laren, bell hooks and Antonia Darder are some of the many prominent educational researchers who have underpinned their research with critical theory.
Postmodernism advocates argue that the era of big narratives and theories is over and that locally, temporally and situationally limited narratives are now required (Flick, 1998, 2). According to Crotty (1998, 212) what the post-modernist spirit has brought into play ‘is primarily an overpowering loss totalising distinctions and a consequent sense of fragmentation’. Post-modernist approaches seek to overcome the boundaries that are placed between art and social science but ‘do not offer a rational progression to a better world’ (Blaxter et. al, 2008). Post-structuralism can be seen as a position within the broad label of post-modernism.

Paradigms are ideal types and it can be argued that ‘they can never exist in a pure form’ (Grenfell and James, 1998). According to Grenfell and James (1998, 10) educational research is haunted by issues of objectivity and subjectivity and that researchers are ‘either being too personal and context-dependent, or conversely, too general and too distant from the people and situations they study’. The idea of a synthesis of existing paradigms is something that theorists such as Bourdieu have been promoting since the 1960s.

### 4.2.2 Quantitative Research

The distinction between quantitative and qualitative research is regarded by some writers as ambiguous and by others as a fundamental contrast (Layder, 1993). Bryman (2008, 21) sees the distinction as a useful means of classifying different methods of social research and a ‘helpful umbrella for a range of issues concerned with the practice of social research’. Punch (2005, 3) defines the difference between quantitative and qualitative research as: ‘Quantitative research is empirical research where the data are in the form of numbers. Qualitative research is where the data are not in the form of numbers’. However, this distinction although very clear-cut can also be seen as skirting the fundamentals of both paradigms. Bryman (2008, 22) sees quantitative research as a research strategy that focuses on quantification in the collection and analysis of data and that:

- entails a deductive approach to the relationship between theory and research, in which the accent is placed on the testing of theories;
- has incorporated the practices and norms of the natural scientific model and of positivism in particular; and
- embodies a view of social reality as an external, objective reality.

The following characteristics of quantitative research are adapted from Oakley (1999, 156) and can be seen to compliment Bryman.

- Seeks the facts/causes of social phenomena
- Obtrusive and controlled measurement
- Objective
- Removed from the data: the outsider perspective
- Ungrounded, verification orientated, reductionist, hypothetico-deductive
- Outcome-orientated
- Reliable: hard and replicable data
- Generalisable
- Particularistic
- Assumes a stable reality

4.2.3 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is a research strategy that has been described as emphasising words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data. Byrman (2008) sees qualitative research as inductivist, constructionist, and interpretivist but emphasises that not all qualitative researchers subscribe to all three of these features. According to Anderson and Arsenault (1998, 119) ‘qualitative research is a form of inquiry that explores phenomena in their natural settings and uses multi-methods to interpret, understand and bring meaning to them’.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994, 2) offer the following definition of qualitative research.

Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings that people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of empirical materials ---- case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts ---- that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals’ lives.
Definitions such as the above from Denzin and Lincoln, although clear and easy to understand, would be seen as out of date by many research practitioners. The idea that the positivist or scientific research community exclusively prove or disprove hypotheses and that the qualitative research community seek only understanding from a real world context is somewhat outmoded today. Similarities between qualitative and quantitative research include:

- While quantitative research may be mostly used for testing theory, it can also be used for exploring an area generating hypotheses and theory.
- Similarly, qualitative research can be used for testing hypotheses and theories, even though it is used for theory generation.
- Qualitative data often includes quantification (e.g. statements such as more than, less than, most, as well as specific numbers).
- Quantitative approaches (e.g. large scale surveys) can collect (non numeric) data through open-ended questions.
- The underlying philosophical positions are not necessarily as distinct as stereotypes suggest. (Blaxter et. al, 2008)

According to Hammersley (1992, 172) ‘the distinction between quantitative and qualitative approaches does not capture the full range of options that researchers face’ and that this distinction obscures the complexity of the problems, rendering our decisions less effective than they might otherwise be. Crotty (1998, 15) notes that in most research textbooks qualitative and quantitative research are set against each other and divided into two parts. He suggests that the objectivist research associated with quantitative methods set against the constructionist or subjective research associated with qualitative methods is not justified. Crotty (1998) links both and maintains that most methods known today as ‘qualitative research’ have been carried out in former times in an empiricist, positivist manner. He uses the early history of ethnography as an example. Research according to Crotty (1998) can be quantitative or qualitative, or both, without being problematic.

4.2.4 Mixed Methods

Mixed methods is a term that combines quantitative and qualitative research (Bryman, 2008). The controversy referred to as the ‘paradigm debate’ (Creswell
and Plano Clark, 2007) and the ‘paradigm wars’ (Hammersley, 1992; Oakley 1999), when many commentators viewed quantitative and qualitative research as based on incompatible assumptions seems to have subsided in recent years. The popularity of mixed methods and commitment to a pragmatic position can be seen in the numbers of mixed methods research projects being undertaken (Bryman, 2008).

Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) suggest that the development of mixed method research has proceeded through four stages.

1. A formative period from the 1950s to 1980s.
3. A procedural development period in the 1980s.
4. An advocacy period, the arrival of the handbook for mixed methods researchers (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003) and the founding of the Journal of Mixed Methods Research.

According to Punch (2005) there are eleven ways to combine qualitative and quantitative research effectively. Bryman (2008) lists sixteen ways of combining quantitative and qualitative research. It is not possible to go into detail of all but some common ideas include: logic of triangulation; completeness of research; explanation; credibility; illustration; diversity of views. Blaxter et. al (2008) states that most research projects in the social sciences are in essence multi-method. The following section will examine the use of the case study approach in research. This particular investigation of the relationship between ABE and accessing poverty alleviation in Vietnam is in essence a mixed method multiple case study that relies heavily on structured and semi-structured interviews to gather qualitative and quantitative evidence in three remote communes in Northern Vietnam. Because of perceived literacy deficits among the target cohort of ABE participants, interviews as opposed to questionnaires were seen as a more culturally sensitive and practical data collection method in remote communities where communications are restricted (see Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2009).
4.3 Case Study Research
Yin (2009) in the introduction to the fourth edition of his *Case Study Research* warns of the challenges of using case studies for research purposes. He proposes that the goal of the case study researcher is to design a good case study and to bring it to closure with a compelling report or book. He goes on to explain that as a research method, 'the case study is used in many situations, to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organisational, social, political and related phenomena (Yin, 2009, 4).

Cohen et al. (2000, 185) defines the case study as follows:

> Unlike the experimenter who manipulates variables to determine their casual significance or the surveyor who asks standardised questions of large representative samples of individuals, the case study researcher typically observes the characteristics of an individual unit – a child, a clique, a class, a school or community. The purpose of such observation is to probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit with the view to establish generalisations about the wider population to which the group belongs.

Loxley et al. (forthcoming) describe the case study as a research approach that has a long and distinguished history in the production of influential and innovative studies in the field of education. However, Loxley et al. (forthcoming) in support of Yin (2009) warn of the contentious and problematic aspects of generalisability and representativeness in conducting case studies as a research approach.

The case study is suited to small scale research because it allows the researcher to focus on one or a few examples. Blaxter et al. (2008, 72) lists these examples as the researcher’s place of work, an institution or organisation, a company, a voluntary organisation, a school or a prison. It could also be an element of any of the above: a class, a work team or a community group. Individuals or a small number of individuals could be the focus. According to Hitchcock and Hughes (1995, 319) case studies:

- will have temporal characteristics which help to define their nature;
- have geographical parameters allowing for their definition;
- will have boundaries which allow for definition;
- may be defined by an individual in a particular context, at a point in time;
- may be defined by the characteristics of the group;
may be defined by role or function;
may be shaped by organisational or institutional arrangements.

Loxley et al. (forthcoming) conducted an on-line search using the Eric Resource Information Centre (ERIC International) that resulted in 15,529 articles with case study in the title and 389 articles within the 68 educational journals in JSTOR. Despite such obvious popularity, the case study according to Loxley et al. (forthcoming), is among the most misunderstood and contested methods of educational and social research. Nisbet and Watt (1984, 91) counsel case study researchers to avoid:

- *journalism:* picking out more striking features of the case, thereby distorting the full account in order to emphasise more sensational aspects;
- *selective reporting:* selecting only that evidence that will support a particular conclusion, thereby misrepresenting the whole case;
- *an anecdotal style:* degenerating into an endless series of low-level banal and tedious illustrations that take over from in-depth rigorous analysis; one is reminded of Stake’s (1978) wry comment that ‘our scrapbooks are full of enlargements of enlargements’, alluding to the tendency of some case studies to overemphasise detail to the detriment of seeing the whole picture;
- *Pomposity:* striving to derive or generate profound theories from low-level data, or by wrapping up accounts in high-sounding verbiage;
- *Blandness:* unquestioningly accepting only the respondents views, or including only those aspects of the case study on which people agree rather than areas on which they might disagree.

In order to avoid some of the above pit-falls in case study research Yin (2009, 24) advises that before embarking on a case study project the researcher should:

- define the unit of analysis and likely case(s) to be studied;
- develop theory, propositions, and issues underlying the anticipated study;
- identify the case study design (single, multiple, holistic, embedded);
- define procedure to maintain case study quality.
Yin (2009, 26) uses the definition of Nachmias and Nachmias (1992, 77-78) which describes a research design as a plan that:

- guides the investigator in the process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting observations. It is a *logical model of proof* that allows the researcher to draw inferences concerning causal relations among the variables under investigation. [emphasis in original]

Before deciding on the case study design the researcher must decide if the case is (1) a single-case (holistic), (2) a single embedded case, (3) multiple-case (holistic), and (4) multiple-case embedded. Yin (2009) outlines the specific rationale for deciding which type of case study to use. The following is a short summary of the rationale of the four main categories, single, holistic, embedded and multiple cases as outlined by Yin (2009, 47-53).

- **Rationale for single-case designs:** (1) To test the critical case when the case represents a well formulated theory. (2) When the case represents an extreme case or a unique case. (3) When the case is the representative or typical case. (4) When the case is revelatory (a phenomenon previously inaccessible). (5) When the case is the longitudinal case.

- **Holistic versus embedded case studies:** The same case study may have more than one unit of analysis. Thus the terms holistic and embedded. (1) Holistic design is advantageous when no logical sub-unit can be identified or when the relevant theory underlying the case study is itself of holistic nature. (2) Embedded design with sub-units can help to avoid slippage (when research design becomes inappropriate) and act as a focusing device for case study inquiry. (3) Embedded designs that only focus on the sub-unit level and fail to return to the larger unit of analysis are problematic.

- **Multiple- versus single-case study designs:** Yin sees multiple and single case studies to be variants of the same methodological framework. (1) The evidence for multiple-case studies is seen as more compelling and robust (Herriot and Firestone, 1983). (2) The unusual case, the critical case and the revelatory case are likely to involve only single cases. (3) The pressure on resources to conduct multiple-case studies may be beyond the means of a single student or independent research investigator. (4) In multiple-case studies each case study must be carefully selected so that it either (a)
predicts similar results (*a literal replication*) or (b) predicts contrasting results but for anticipatable reasons (*a theoretical replication*).

- **Rationale for multiple-case designs.** (1) Derives from the researchers’ understanding of literal and theoretical replication. (2) Choosing two or more cases that are believed to be literal replications for example (with exemplary outcomes) and hoping for direct replication. (3) Two-tail design from cases from both extremes (of some important theoretical condition, such as good or bad outcomes) have been deliberately chosen. (4) Prior hypothesising of different types of conditions and the desire to have subgroups of cases covering each type. These are more complicated so that theoretical replications across subgroups are complimented by literal replications within each subgroup.

- **Multiple-case studies: Holistic or embedded.** (1) Each individual case in a multiple-case study may be holistic or embedded. (2) The difference between the two variants depends upon the type of phenomenon being studied and the research question. [emphasis in original]

Yin (2009, 60) summarises his section on designing case studies by stating that multiple-case studies are becoming more prevalent. His warning that they are also more costly and time-consuming must be heeded as well as his advice on the use of replication in design and careful choice of each case. He concludes by stating that ‘when embedded design is used, each individual case study may in fact include the collection and analysis of quantitative data, including the use of surveys within each case’. After an extensive review of methodological approaches, attendance at a number of internal and external research method workshops, consultation and discussions with supervisors and consideration of the practical, logistical, ethical and ethnographical aspects of this study it was decided in early 2010 that this particular research would be conducted as a multiple case study. The researchers knowledge, understanding and personal experience of working in the region where the case studies are located confirmed that a case study approach would enhance and facilitate the collection of qualitative data in the selected communes. Having explored the available approaches, the following section will examine the major issues involved in undertaking research in
development contexts which may impact upon the design and selection of particular approaches and methods.

4.4 Research Issues in Development Contexts

Gill (1993) maintains that the large-scale customised survey has been discredited in data collection in the developing world. According to Chambers (2008, 9) enumerator-respondent difference of literacy, language, gender, demeanour, power and their relationship in an interview situation have created serious divergences in data collection in a development context. Chambers elaborates and contends that despite pilot testing, large scale questionnaires are ‘liable to be preset, top-down, imposing fixed categories on realities, in contrast with learning processes which are iterative, interactive and emergent’ (Chambers, 2008, 19). In the context of this particular research it would be unwise to use large scale questionnaires as the main source of data. Multiple sources of evidence collected in an appropriate and culturally sensitive manner with the meaningful participation and input of selected communities formed the basis of data collection for this study. Suitable methods and tools for conducting interviews, observations as well as keeping a research journal and recording evidence using audio-visual technology will be outlined later in this chapter. In his book *Revolutions in Development Inquiry* Chambers (2008) outlines the development of Participatory Methods (PMs) from the repertoire and principles of Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA). The development of RRA in the mid-1970s led to development and use of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) among development practitioners in the 1980s and 1990s. All three continue to be practiced and are in various complementary ways (Chambers, 2008). PRA methods as PMs are often referred to have three principle components (Mascarenhas et al. 1991). These are:

- **PRA Methods.** Which are visible and tangible and performed by small groups. Maps and diagrams are made by local people, often on the ground using local materials, but sometimes on paper. Using earth, sand, stones, seeds, twigs, chalk, charcoal, paper, pens and other materials, and objects as symbols, community members make diagrams to represent many aspects of their communities, lives and environments. Methods include time lines, trend and chart diagrams, wealth and well-being ranking, seasonal
diagramming, Venn diagrams, casual linkage diagrams, and proportional piling. Matrix ranking and scoring are used for complex and detailed comparisons. There are many variants of these and other methods and tools.

- **Behaviour and Attitudes.** Many of the pioneers of PRA see behaviour and attitudes as more important than methods (Chambers, 2008). The *ABC of PRA* (Kumar, 1996) where ABC stands for attitude and behaviour change was published following the South-South International Workshop Initiative in the mid-1990s. Some behaviours and attitudes were expressed as precepts like ‘Hand over the stick’, ‘Don’t rush’, ‘Sit down listen and learn’ and ‘Use your own best judgement at all times’ (Chambers, 2008). By promoting the development of a natural environment drawing on the instinctive behaviour and attitudes of participants PRA facilitates participation and sharing.

- **Sharing.** Referred to villagers sharing their knowledge initially and included sharing food, sharing training, ideas, insights, methods and material between organisations (NGO and governmental) and by mid-2000 included relationships (Chambers, 2008). The key phrase of ‘sharing without boundaries’ (Absalom, 1995) made clear the principle of openness and sharing between methodologies as well as respondents.

According to Chambers (2008) participatory approaches and methods can generate quantitative as well as qualitative data in research. Chambers (2008, 105) explains that ‘since the early 1990s, a quiet tide of innovation has developed a rich range of participatory ways, many of them visual and tangible, by which local people themselves can produce and own numbers’. Figure 4.1 shows the many benefits of the ‘qual-quant’ or Q-squared interactions (see SW and SE quadrants). Chambers (2008, 108) points out that qualitative and quantitative data collection methods have a dominant extractive mode which have not benefited from the ‘revolution in which it is local people themselves who conduct their own appraisals, investigations and research’. Mayoux (2005) asks if quantitative, qualitative and participatory are three different worlds of research and argues for optimising combinations for purpose where local people generate and are empowered by their own numbers. Chambers (2008, 108) sees participatory
numbers as much more than checks to conventional and established methods and offers the opinion that they are often better alternatives, ‘with their own rigour and range’. Figure 4.1 indicates that two common linked assumptions are false. Firstly, that participatory approaches only generate qualitative insights (the NW quadrant) and secondly, that quantitative data can only be produced by questionnaire surveys or scientific measurements (the SE quadrant). According to Chambers (2008) a whole new field, that is largely unrecognised in academic, government and aid agency mainstreams, has opened up (NE quadrant). The generation of numbers using participatory approaches are referred to as participatory numbers in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1

Source: Chambers (2008, 109)
The researcher attended a week long training workshop on conducting research in developing countries organised by the Trinity International Development Initiative (TIDI) in November 2009. Methodology, methods and the use of data collection tools were discussed and demonstrated by experienced researchers from Ireland and abroad who work in the developing world. Relevant literature was suggested and used while conducting the literature review which has helped in the development of the data collection framework and implementation. Above all the ideas and discussions that were fostered during the TIDI data collection training workshops helped to clarify implementation concerns and avoid field-work procedural pitfalls.

4.5 Research Context – Vietnam
Successive Vietnamese Governments have paid a great deal of attention to the development of ethnic minorities. One of the reasons for this is that ethnic minorities are among the poorest groups in Vietnam. For example, in 2004, the ethnic minorities accounted for only 12.6% of the total population but made up 39.3% of the poor population according to the Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey (VHLSS) of 2004 (WB, 2007). The World Bank Country Social Analysis Report ‘Ethnicity and Development in Vietnam’ quotes a higher figure of ‘around’ 14% of the total population and 52% of the total poor (CSA, 2009). Most ethnic communities are located in remote and difficult areas, which account for three-quarters of the land area of the whole country.

Therefore, many policies have been targeted to ethnic minority development in Vietnam. Prior to 1998, 21 national targeted projects were implemented to invest in the ethnic minority and mountainous areas. A more logical policy system was developed after 1998, including the development of the Socio-economic Development of the Most Vulnerable Communes in Ethnic Minority and Mountainous areas of Vietnam Programme, commonly known as (Programme 135), Programme 134, and policies on land, forest, education and health, etc., which aimed to cover all economic, cultural and social fields (Nguyen and Baulch, 2007).
Programme 135 was established by GoV Decision 135/1998/QD-TTg issued in 1998. Initially, Programme 135 aimed to reduce the proportion of poor households living in extremely difficult communes to less than 25% by 2005, to provide adequate clean water, to increase the proportion of school-age children attending school to more than 70%, further train poor people in production, control dangerous and social diseases, construct roads to inter-commune centres, and develop rural markets. Beneficiaries of this initial programme have come from 22 ethnic minority groups (ADB, 2002). During its first phase, Program 135 provided support to more than 10 million people living in extremely difficult (Region 3) communes, of whom nearly 5.5 million were from the ethnic minorities (Dinh, 2006). Most communes benefiting from the Programme 135 are in ethnic areas, where the Programme is executed by the Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA).

Programme 135 originally had five components: infrastructure, the development of communal centres, re-settlement, production support and training. Then, in 2000, Decision 138/2000/QD-TTg moved the components of Programme 133 concerned with re-settlement and sedentarisation, support for extremely difficult ethnic minorities, and communal centre development in mountainous areas policies into Programme 135. In addition, the policy to support extremely difficult ethnic minority households was shifted from the Programme 143 to Programme 135 in 2001 (Nguyen and Baulch, 2007). Programme 135 II (phase 2) began in 2006 with the aim of increasing the effectiveness of phase 1. It receives financial support in the form of loans and grant funding from the World Bank and several European donors including Ireland through the Poverty Reduction Support Credit (PRSC) (WB, 2007). Irish Aid pledged 30 million Euro in grant support to P135 II out of a total direct bilateral support of 87.5 million Euro to Vietnam from 2007-2010 (Irish Aid, 2007). Programme 135-II has the broad objective of:

- Eradicating hunger by 2010 in the poorest areas of Vietnam;
- Reducing the number of poor households to below 30%;
- Facilitating significant improvement in agricultural production knowledge;
• Sustainably improving the socio-cultural development of people living in communes facing extreme hardship (Irish Aid, 2007).

In the recently published Irish Aid Vietnam Country Strategy 2011-2015 direct support to P135III (if extended to a third phase) or a similar National Targeted Programme (NTP) will be continued with an allocation of 59% (32.5 million Euro) of the total budget and 24% (13.4 million Euro) to strengthen policy formation at central level in addressing poverty and marginalisation. The total budget support from Irish Aid to Vietnam (2011-2015) is 55 million Euro (Irish Aid, 2011). [See appendix 2 for comparative Development Statistics between Vietnam and Ireland] The research was conducted in Ha Giang and Dien Bien provinces. Both Ha Giang and Dien Bien provinces are located in the Northern Mountains Region of Vietnam. Ha Giang and Dien Bien are among the poorest provinces in the country and have large ethnic minority populations. Programme 135II and other National Targeted Programmes (NTPs) to reduce poverty combine with multi-lateral, bi-lateral and INGO poverty alleviation interventions in both provinces assist in the socio-economic development of the region. Chapter 5 (Presentation of Case Study Data) provides detailed information on the socio-cultural and economic background of both provinces with a particular focus on the three Case Study Communes (1.Thuan Hoa, 2. Thanh Nua, 3. Na Tau). Thuan Hoa is located in Ha Giang Province and Thanh Nua and Na Tau in Dien Bien Province.

4.6 Research Design and Methodology
Although the researcher has been living and working in Vietnam for over ten years and has experience of working with numerous development programmes targeting remote ethnic communities there were a number of issues that needed consideration early on in the design phase. The following is a short list:
• use of a critical approach to research in a society that is sensitive to scrutiny;
• understandings of concepts such as Adult Basic Education (ABE), literacy, community, civil society, NGO, participation, access, poverty alleviation resources may be different in Vietnam than in western countries;
• support and cooperation of donors, NGOs, ministries, local authorities;
• access to households and villagers;
• languages for interviews, surveys and general data collection;
• identification of research assistants / team;
• training of research team for data collection;
• general logistics regarding accommodation, meals, transport etc;
• financial support.

The design of the research project focuses on investigating the relationship between ABE and accessing poverty alleviation resources in selected ethnic minority communities in Vietnam. Specifically, it aims to investigate whether ethnic minority adults who have been taught using the Reflect approach are better equipped to access the poverty alleviation schemes that are available than those who have been taught using the MOET / DOET ABE approach. The following is a summary of the research design identified and devised after extensive consideration of the literature, the aims of the study, and a reflection on the appropriacy of various methods and approaches to data collection.

1. Theoretical Framework (ABE and poverty alleviation theories and concepts, critical theory and ethnographic approaches to educational research)

2. Case Study (multiple-embedded) using ActionAid Reflect and MOET / DOET Adult Literacy Programme as the two main cases. Embedded cases include:
   1. Literacy class participants
   2. Adult Education (AE) teachers / facilitators
   3. P135II trainers / participants
   4. Adult Education and P135II management


5. Data collection tools: interviews, observations.

7. Measurements
   1. Pre-existing literacy experiences of participants.
   2. Curriculum / Objectives and participant learning expectations. a) content; b) structure of course; c) use of material / books; d) methods / language; e) teacher facilitator training.
   3. Use of CLC / libraries / literate environment.
   4. Impact of course on use of literacy by participants: a) 3Rs; b) oral skills; c) problem-solving skills; d) access to financial credit; e) critical thinking skills
   5. Participation in and access to Programme 135II; a) production development; b) Infrastructure development; c) improvements in socio-cultural living standards.

8. Research Questions
   - How do differences in ABE approaches impact on how specific ethnic minority adults access specific poverty alleviation resources in Vietnam?
   - Are there differences between the Reflect and MOET Adult Literacy approaches?
   - How do different approaches to literacy impact on ethnic minority adults’ participation in the outcome orientated objectives of Programme 135?
   - What are the impediments to accessing adult education and poverty alleviation resources for specific ethnic minority adults?
   - Are policy changes implied by the research findings? What are these?

4.7 Data Collection
Robson (2002, 223) advises that once a focus for the research, the research questions and overall research strategy are developed the next step is to consider what research methods will be used to collect data. This section on data collection
will describe the methods that have been used in the collection of data in this research study. Because of the nature of this research and the focus on three remote ethnic minority communes (communities) in Vietnam there will be a concentration on methods that are associated with the collection of data in a case study investigation (4.7.1). Other methods of data collection including the utilisation of information from the literature review (4.7.2), document analysis (4.7.3) and use of methods and tools such as questionnaires (4.7.4), interviews (4.7.5), observations (4.7.6), research journal (4.7.7) and video and recordings (4.7.8) are outlined in the context of this multiple case study that investigates the relationship between Adult Basic Education (ABE) and accessing poverty alleviation resources in selected ethnic minority communities in Vietnam.

4.7.1 Case Study Data
According to Yin (2009) case study evidence can come from many sources. He outlines six sources which include:

- Documentation
- Archival records
- Interviews
- Direct observation
- Participant-observation
- Physical artefacts.
These are the sources of evidence most commonly used in case study research and as stated in section 4.6 a mixed method approach was used to collect data for this particular research. In addition to the six sources of evidence above, a research journal was used. Yin (2009) outlines three principles of data collection that will help to maximise the benefits of the above six sources of evidence. These include:

1. use multiple sources of evidence
2. create a case study data base
3. maintain a chain of evidence.

1. Multiple sources of evidence: Yin (2009) explains that all of the above mentioned sources of evidence can and have in the past been used individually as the basis for entire studies. Rationale for using multiple sources of evidence includes:
   - triangulation (the collection of information from multiple sources aimed at corroborating the same fact or phenomenon);
• development of converging lines of inquiry (see Figure 4.2).

2. A Case Study Database should contain the following (Yin, 2009)

• Case Study Notes: most common component of a database.
• Case Study Documents: can be in hardcopy or electronic format.
• Tabular Materials: can include survey and other quantitative data.
• Narratives: certain types of narratives produced when all data collection is completed (see Figure 4.3).

**Figure 4.3**

**Chain of Evidence**

- Case Study Report
  - Case Study Database
    - Citations to Specific Evidentiary Sources in the Case Study Database
      - Case Study Protocol (linking questions to protocol questions)
        - Case Study Questions

Source: Yin (2008, 123)

According to Yin (2009, 79) a case study protocol contains the instrument but also contains the procedures and general rules to be followed in using the protocol. Yin (2009) states that having a protocol is desirable under all circumstances, but is essential if you are doing a multiple-case study. It is a major way of increasing the reliability of case study research and is intended to guide the investigator in carrying out the data collection. The following is a proposed outline of a Case Study Protocol (Yin, 2009, 79-91).
A. Introduction to the Case Study and Purpose of Protocol
   1. Case study questions, hypothesis, and propositions.
   2. Theoretical framework for the case study.
   3. Role of protocol in guiding the case study investigator (notes that the protocol is a standardised agenda for the investigator’s line of inquiry).

B. Data Collection Procedures
   1. Names of sites to be visited, including contact persons.
   2. Data collection plan (covers the type of evidence to be expected, including the roles of people to be interviewed, the events to be observed, and any other document to be reviewed when on site).
   3. Expected preparation prior to site visits (identifies specific information to be reviewed and issues to be covered, prior to going on site).

C. Outline of Case Study Report
D. Case Study Questions
E. Evaluation

In general according to Yin (2009, 81) a case study protocol should include the following sections:

- an overview of the case study project (project objectives and auspices, case study issues, and relevant readings about the topic being investigated);
- field procedures (presentation of credentials, access to case study sites, language pertaining to the protection of human subjects, sources of data, and procedural reminders),
- case study questions (the specific questions that the case study investigator must keep in mind in collecting data, ‘table shells’ for specific arrays of data, and the potential sources of information for answering each question); and
- a guide for the case study report (outline, format for data, use and presentation of other documentation, and bibliographical information).
During the process of data collection that spanned a period of one year in Vietnam (Sept. 2010 to Sept. 2011) all of the above procedures were followed using the six sources of evidence and three guiding principles recommended by Yin (2009).

4.7.2 Literature Review
This case study required a detailed literature review which is presented in chapters two and three. The literature review has helped to create a theoretical framework for the research topic and for its analysis. Included in the literature review is an examination of the concepts of ABE, looking at the background to its development and the definitions of ABE that are used throughout this thesis.

The literature review process included a review of a large volume of relevant international and national texts from sources such as libraries, organisations, journals and online resources. While in Vietnam the researcher reviewed a large volume of relevant development literature, historical documents and histories, general background on the development of state relations with and classification of ethnic minorities. Educational and other relevant policies past and present including policies that have shaped poverty alleviation initiatives were examined. The researcher had access in Ha Noi to development libraries such as the WB Vietnam Development Information Centre and the Vietnam Union of Friendship Organisations (VUFO-NGO) Resource Centre as well as contact with research institutes such as the Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agricultural and Rural Development (IPSARD), the Institute of Labour Science and Social Affairs (ISSLA) and the Institute of Ethnic Minority Affairs (IEMA) inside ministries and sub-ministries who have influential roles in the development of poverty alleviation policies.

The researcher also sought access to key Government of Vietnam (GoV) policy documents, reports and studies from ministries and departments in Ha Noi. These include the Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA); the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET); the Ministry of Labour Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA); the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD); the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) and the General Statistics Office (GSO) and Vietnam Households Living Standards Survey (VHLSS). Reference to
International Non Governmental Organisations (INGOs) and bi-lateral and multi-lateral poverty alleviation programmes are important as a counter balance to National Targeted Programmes (NTPs) developed by the GoV. While conducting the literature review the researcher had consultations with leading researchers in the field of poverty alleviation such as Dr. Bob Baulch of the University of Sussex, representatives of Oxfam, Church World Service (CWS), Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and Irish Aid. In focusing the literature review on specific aspects of development that have a direct influence on the research theme the researcher has attempted to keep the literature relevant and in line with recent research findings.

In order to create a better understanding of the complex history between different ethnic groups in Vietnam it was necessary to include an historical background section. Because of the many misconceptions and myths about Vietnam it is important that this research has a sound historical foundation for the researcher to develop a thesis that links the past to the situation at present. Like other post-colonial countries Vietnam has both borrowed from the colonisers’ policies and created its own. Vietnam is a very unique country in SE Asia because of its historical development and particular political system and it is necessary to provide some background for the research and also to facilitate the readers’ understanding. The mass media and film industry has created many myths and false impressions regarding the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and it is hoped that any misinformed information will not surface in this research. The relations between the minority groups and the majority have been influenced by social and historical developments and section 3.2.2 (Education in Vietnam: An Historical Perspective) looks at literature that covers the period from 938 AD to the mid twentieth century. This includes the period after colonial rule and incorporates both Indochinese wars as well as from 1975 to the introduction of the Doi Moi policy in 1986.

In section 3.4.1 (Ethnic Minority Poverty and ABE in Vietnam) the researcher relies heavily on recent research that focuses on the implications of GoV policies on remote ethnic minority communities. Research studies supported by the WB and DFID / UKaid have concentrated on development in ethnic minority areas and by
using statistics from GSO and the VHLSS, compare and contrast development on ethnic lines. The research theme is closely linked to the findings of many of these research papers and they are extremely relevant as secondary literature for this particular project. Putting the spotlight on the numerous poverty alleviation programmes and initiatives by both GoV agencies and major donors, the literature review outlines the current situation and the focus that rural poverty reduction programmes have. Programmes such as P135, P135II and P134 are reviewed as well as major education policies for poor and ethnic minority areas. The structure of Adult Basic Education (ABE) in Vietnam and aspects of adult education policy such as the National Education for All Action Plan and the implementation of these policies are examined. This was intended to be a comprehensive literature review from a national perspective which focuses on relevant and influential policies and research findings. This policy and research background review is important for the development of this study in order to understand the scope of ABE and poverty alleviation interventions and evaluate and test to what extent they have been successful and effective in the context of the research objectives.

Aspects relating to education and development are extensively covered in section 2.4 (Impact of ABE in the Developing World). Sections 2.4.1 (ABE and Development) and 2.4.2 (Literacy as an Agent of Social Change) investigates the link between adult literacy and sustainable development. Approaches including UNESCO functional literacy and Freirean participatory pedagogy are examined in an international context and are central to the development of this research thesis because of their direct link to ABE interventions in the three case study communes under investigation. The development of the New Literacy Studies (NLS) approach to literacy (Street and Lefstein, 2008; Street, 1993b) and subsequent ethnographic research with ethnic minority communities in Africa, South America and Asia are highlighted in this section. The contribution and significance of the Education for All and Millennium Development Goals to the advancement of ABE in the developing world is evaluated in section 2.4.3 (Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals). These two global initiatives influence ABE policy and interventions in all countries in the developing world including Vietnam. Positive and negative aspects of the EFA and MDGs’ influence on ABE policy and
practice in Vietnam are examined and are important in understanding ABE interventions in the context of this study.

The literature review from a more regional development perspective is limited. There are many interesting policies and programmes being implemented in countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Laos, Cambodia and the Philippines that can be used to compare and contrast with Vietnam. Literature such as *Civilizing the Margins* (Duncan, 2004) which is a compilation of research papers by noted experts looking at government policies targeting ethnic minority development in all SE Asian countries is relevant and has been reviewed. Because of limited access to sources, time and funding to visit ABE and poverty alleviation programmes in the region there are few regional comparisons in relation to policy and implementation. The CLC development under the guidance of the Asian and Pacific Programme of Education for All (APPEAL) is reviewed in section 3.3.3 (CLC and ABE Promotion) and linked to the development of the CLC concept in Vietnam. Although it was envisaged that the researcher would visit the CLC programme in Laos where *Reflect* is a prominent approach to ABE delivery there was not the opportunity or time to do this. This is something that needs to be explored in the light of future comparative research.

4.7.3 Document Analysis

During the course of this research a detailed review and analysis of key documentation was required. Document analysis is a continuous process and was conducted prior to, during and after the completion of field research. Bryman (2008) categorises documents as:

- official documents deriving from the state;
- official documents deriving from private sources (such as documents produced by organisations);
- personal documents in both written form (such as diaries and letters) and visual form (such as photographs);
- mass media outputs;
- virtual outputs such as internet sources.
The state according to Bryman (2008) is a source of information of potential interest to social researchers. In order to investigate the relationship between ABE and accessing poverty alleviation resources in selected ethnic minority communities in Vietnam, it was necessary to source and analyse documentation from official sources. Included in the list of government ministries and agencies where documents related to adult education and poverty alleviation policy and programmes were sourced are:

1. Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) and relevant sections such as the Continuing Education Department, provincial Departments of Education and Training (DOET) and District Bureaus of Education and Training (BOET).
2. Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), provincial (DARD) and district Bureaus of Agriculture and Rural Development (BARD).
3. Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLISA) and related institutes such as ISSLA.
4. Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) and relevant provincial Departments of Planning and Investments (DPI) and district Finance and Planning Section (FPS).
5. Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA), provincial Departments of Ethnic Minority Affairs (DEMA) and related institutes such as the Institute for Ethnic Minority Affairs (IEMA).

The involvement of INGOs, NGOs, bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors as well as UN agencies such as the UNESCO, UNDP and UNICEF in education and poverty alleviation in Vietnam is well documented (see UNESCO, 2008; CSA, 2009; World Bank, 2007; ActionAid Vietnam, 2008). Reports, policy papers, strategic plans, reviews, evaluations, assessments and research from the following organisations were consulted and analysed in the development of this research:

1. ActionAid Vietnam, ActionAid Ireland, ActionAid International
2. Irish Aid Vietnam, Irish Aid Ireland Head Office
3. UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP
4. World Bank and ADB
5. European Commission, Ha Noi
6. Oxfam HK and Oxfam GB, GIZ
7. Sida, DFID, Aus Aid
8. VUFO-NGO Resource Centre Ha Noi

In addition numerous relevant reports, studies and research papers / theses were sourced using internet databases and search engines.

Robson (2002, 360) describes data archives as a record or set of records in the form of documents containing texts and / or quantitative statistical information produced for some other purpose than for ‘your use as a researcher’. He cites the ten yearly National Census (collected in most countries), population surveys and general household surveys as some of the archetypal examples. The advantages of using such data according to Robson (2002), is the ability to tap into data sets drawn from extensive representative samples which are beyond the means of individual researchers. The disadvantage is that surveys, even if carried out for research purposes, are unlikely to be focused on the research questions you are interested in (Robson, 2002). In this particular research, the researcher used data archives such as the Vietnam Census, VHLSS, surveys from relevant ministries, Socio-Economic Development Programme plans as well as the World Bank (WB), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), INGO, NGO and civil society data in order to support an approach to document analysis that was descriptive, informative, comparative and critical depending on the needs of the study at any given time. The Vietnam Census (1999, 2009) and the VHLSS data have been particularly relevant and data from these two sources are frequently cites throughout this study.

4.7.4 Questionnaires
Questionnaires as well as document analysis, interviews, observations, journals, recordings and video have been considered to collect case study evidence for this research (see Appendix 3 Data Collection Framework). Questionnaires are used as a strategy for participants to express their ‘attitudes, beliefs, and feelings toward a topic of interest’ (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2009). According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2009) the use of questionnaires is dependent on a level of reading ability and when literacy is not an issue, questionnaires can be an efficient data collection strategy.
Considerations when using questionnaires for many researchers revolve around using open or closed question formats (Bryman, 2008). The advantages and disadvantages of using open questions are outlined below.

Advantages

- Respondents can answer in their own terms.
- They allow unusual responses to be derived.
- The questions do not suggest certain kinds of answers to the respondents.
- They are useful for exploring new areas or ones in which the researcher has limited knowledge.
- They are useful for generating fixed-choice format answers.

Disadvantages

- They are time consuming.
- Answers have to be coded. Answers need to be read to derive themes.
- They require greater effort from respondents. This can put respondents off answering the questions. [Adapted from Bryman, 2008]

Questionnaire items according to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2009) can be closed-ended, open-ended or both. They maintain that closed-ended QUAN questionnaires (QUEST-QUAN) are used more frequently than open-ended QUAL questionnaires (QUEST-QUAL). The reason for this is that closed-ended responses are more efficient to collect and analyse.

In this study questionnaires were considered for use to gather information, data and opinions on issues related to ABE, literacy, development plans directly related to P135II and socio cultural information on relevant ethnic minority groups. However, this did not materialise because of the necessity to interview a relatively manageable cohort of ABE and P135II participants, teachers / facilitators and managers who were contacted during field-visits to the three case study locations. The predominant methods used to collect data for this study are qualitative interviews with a significant inclusion of questions that produced quantitative data. Interviews with each of the above mentioned cohorts were developed specifically
and included a total of 17 individual structured and semi-structured interview forms. The quantity of data generated using interviews contributed to the decision not to use questionnaires in the end of the day. However, the use of questionnaires was always a viable option when field visits were completed and additional information was needed by the researcher after returning to Ha Noi and Ireland. It was envisaged that additional follow-up information from GoV bodies and NGOs could be collected using an online questionnaire.

4.7.5 Interviews
The use of interviews in various forms, are central to gathering information and data in this research (see Annex 3 Data Collection Framework). The utilisation of interviews in research are regarded by Kvale (1996, 11) as marking a move away from manipulating human subjects for collecting data, and towards considering knowledge as generated through conversations. Kvale (1996, 14) sees an interview as ‘an exchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest’. Laing (1967) considers the interview as not being either exclusively subjective or objective but as inter-subjective. Interviews enable participants to discuss their interpretations of the world and express their own point of view and according to Cohen et al. (2007, 349) ‘the interview is not simply about collecting data about life: it is part of life itself, its human embeddedness is inescapable’.

Types and formats of interviews vary depending on sources. LeCompte and Prissle (1993) cite six types: standardised interviews; in-dept interviews; ethnographic interviews; elite interviews; life history interviews; focus group interviews. According to Robson (2002) types and styles of interviews depend on distinctions based on the degree of structure or standardisation. The following are examples:

- **Fully structured interview.** Has predetermined questions with fixed wording, usually in a pre-set order.
- **Semi-structured interview.** Has predetermined questions, but the order can be modified based upon the interviewer’s perception of what seems most appropriate.
• **Unstructured interview.** The interviewer has a general area of interest and concern, but lets the conversation develop within this area. Can be completely informal (Robson, 2002, 270).

In the course of this research structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews have been used. Following Lincoln and Guba (1985, 269) structured interviews were utilised when the researcher was aware of what he did not know and therefore framed questions that supplied the knowledge required, whereas unstructured interviews were used when the researcher was not aware of what he did not know, relying on respondents to inform him. A fitness of purpose criteria was developed based on Lincoln and Guba (1985) when using standardised and non-standardised interview formats. While gathering data relating to the development, planning and implementation of ABE and poverty alleviation programmes, such as P135II, structured and semi-structured interviews were used.

Structured and semi-structured interviews were utilised for gathering both quantitative and qualitative information from programme officers working for ActionAid Vietnam (AAV), Departments of Education and Training (DOETs), Bureaus of Education and Training (BOETs), P135II management boards as well as with local authority officials and civil society activists. 64 structured and semi-structured interviews (over 90 hours of recorded interviews) took place in the three case study communes with participant numbers varying from one to four. There were 7 in-depth structured interview and 10 semi-structured interview forms developed and administered in 64 interviews during the study (see Appendix 5 and 6 for examples of Interview Schedules). In addition there were over 20 unstructured interviews conducted inside and outside the confines of the three case study areas and Ha Noi with ActionAid, CCD, DOET, UN, donor agency and GoV staff, ethnic minority youth, shopkeepers, commune officials and farmers. Information from these informal interviews helped to develop a more complete ethnographic sketch of the case study areas and contributed to a better understanding of local and national socio-economic policy and development.
Robson (2002, 253) provides the following advice when conducting structured interviews.

1. **Appearance**: Dress in a similar way to those you will be interviewing. If in doubt, err on the side of neatness and neutrality.

2. **Approach**: Be pleasant. Try to make the respondent comfortable.

3. **Familiarity with questions / interview schedule**: View yourself as an actor, with the interview schedule as your script. Know it thoroughly.

4. **Question wording**: Use the exact wording of questions and keep to their sequence.

5. **Fixed-alternative response questions**: Allow only the standard alternatives.

6. **Open-ended response questions**: Either code immediately or record the answers for later coding. Don’t make cosmetic adjustments, correct or fabricate.

This advice was followed using the 17 individual structured / semi-structured interview forms that were administered to the 30 Reflect and DOET Adult Literacy (AL) participants, 8 Reflect and DOET facilitators / teachers, 2 Reflect / DOET Facilitator / Teacher Trainers and 5 P135ll Trainers. There were 19 semi-structured interviews with ABE and P135ll management and 20 unstructured interviews with a diverse category of participants (see Table: 4.1). Interviews lasted from 40 to 60 minutes depending on the mode and were conducted in English using translations into Vietnamese (Kinh) with answers translated back from Kinh to English. All structured and semi-structured interviews were recorded (see Appendix 5 and 6 for examples of structured and semi-structured Interview Schedules).
### Table 4.1: Overview of Interviews Conducted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Mode</th>
<th>Target Participants</th>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-depth (45)</td>
<td>ABE Participants, ABE Facilitators / Teachers / P135 II Trainers</td>
<td>Detailed education, training background, curriculum content, link to ABE / poverty alleviation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured (19)</td>
<td>ABE / CLC Management, P135II Management</td>
<td>Management structures, institutional links, support mechanisms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unstructured (20)</td>
<td>GoV officials, (l)NGO, project staff, Donors, Research Institutes, consultants, farmers, youth / school children, elderly, shopkeepers</td>
<td>Diverse socio-economic, policy, strategy, cultural and ethnographic information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 84

The following general guidelines from Bryman (2008, 442) were used when preparing an interview guide for conducting the 18 semi-structured interviews with management of *Reflect* and DOET Adult Literacy (AL) and P135II programmes in each of the three case study areas:

- create a certain amount of order on the topic areas, so that questions about them flow but be prepared to alter the order of questions during the interview;
- formulate interview questions so that they will help you answer the research questions;
- use language that is comprehensible and relevant to the people being interviewed;
- just as in interviewing in quantitative research, do not ask leading questions;
- ask or record ‘facesheet’ information of a general kind (name, age, gender etc.) and of a specific kind (position, years employed etc);
- make sure to be familiar with the setting in which the interviewee works or lives or engages in the behaviour of interest to you;
- use a good quality recording machine;
- use a quiet and private setting for conducting the interview;
• prepare by cultivating as many of the criteria of a quality interviewer as suggested by Kvale (1996);
• conduct pilot interviews to test procedure, questions and gain experience.

Pilot interviews to test structured and semi-structured interview questions, schedules and recording equipment were conducted during a field-visit (09/03/11-11/03/11) to Ma Thi Ho Commune in Muong Cha District and Thanh Nua Commune / Co Phuc Village in Dien Bien Province (see Map 5.2). During this exploratory field-visit there were in-depth structured and semi-structured interviews with DOET AL Teachers / Reflect facilitators, DOET AL / Reflect participants, DOET AL / Reflect managers, P135II Trainers and management at village, commune and district levels. Lessons learned from conducting interviews and difficulties with understanding and interpreting questions were discussed with the data collection team (researcher and assistant) leading to the reorganisation of questions and wording for the implementation of revised interview formats during the field visit to Thuan Hoa (Case Study 1) in Ha Giang (13/04/11-15/04/11). Before the field visit interview formats and questions were shared with supervisors in TCD, ActionAid Head Office staff in Ha Noi and feedback and changes to wording in Vietnamese and English was incorporated into the final version before implementation.

The format, questions and procedures for all subsequent structured and semi-structured interviews remained the same for the duration of the data collection process in the three case study communes (see Appendix 5 and 6). Valuable experience with the recording equipment was also utilised to help produce quality recordings of interviews. Participants of Reflect in CS1 and CS2 were interviewed based on lists and names given to the research team. Sampling in all three case studies was determined by participation in phase 1 of Reflect and the basic adult literacy component of DOET. Because numbers in all three case study sites were relatively manageable all participants that matched the criteria above were interviewed. In case study three there was no list available just some names and by contacting known participants a list was drawn up.
Group interviewing is an important technique in gathering data and information for case study research. The advantages and disadvantages of group interviewing for collecting data in educational research are outlined by Watts and Ebbutt (1987). Advantages include the potential for discussions to develop, encouraging a wide range of responses and in creating awareness of different opinions. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) state that group interviews may be useful for the development of subsequent individual interviews. According to Cohen et al. (2007) there are practical and organisational advantages of group interviews that minimise disruption, speed up interviews and save time, and bring together people with varied opinions or representatives of different collectivities. By having more than one interviewee present can provide a cross-check of events that can be complimentary and supportive (Arksey and Knight, 1999). Disadvantages outlined by Arksey and Knight (1999) include intense disagreement, domination by individuals and gender groups, sensitivity to questions, use of the ‘public line’ and the practice of withholding information. Watts and Ebbutt (1987) explain that group interviews can prevent the emergence of personal matters. They explain that the ‘dynamic of the group’ denies access to certain types of personal data. Cohen et al. (2007, 374) outline issues to be addressed when organising and conducting group interviews as follows.

- How to divide your attention as interviewer and to share out the interviewees’ responses – giving them all a chance to speak in a group interview.
- Do you ask everyone to give a response to a question?
- How to handle people who are too quiet, too noisy, who monopolise the conversation, who argue and disagree with each other?
- What happens if people become angry with you or each other?
- How to make people be quiet or stop talking while being polite?
- Do you ask named individuals questions?
- How to handle a range of very different responses to the same question?
- Why have you brought together the particular people in the group?
- What to do if more experienced people answer first in a group interview?
- As an interviewer, be vigilant to pick up on people who are trying to speak.
Focus groups are a form of group interview that avoids the sense of a backwards and forwards interaction between interviewer and group. ‘Rather, the reliance is on the interaction within the group who discuss a topic supplied by the researcher’ (Morgan, 1988, 9). Participant interaction in order that the views of the participants emerge is the key to focus group interviews. Focus groups are distinct from group interviews in three ways according to Bryman (2007, 473).

- Focus groups typically emphasise a specific theme or topic that is explored in depth, whereas group interviews often span very widely.
- Sometimes group interviews are conducted to save time and money. However, focus groups are not carried out for this reason.
- The focus group practitioner is interested in the ways in which individuals discuss a certain issue as members of a group, rather than as individuals. The researcher is interested in how people respond to each other’s views in order to build up a view out of the interactions that take place within the group.

Most focus groups are carried out within the traditions of qualitative research and good facilitation is vital to the successful use of focus group methods in research (Bryman, 2007). Although focus group interviews were considered and initially planned in this study none were conducted in a systematic manner as outlined by Bryman. During the course of this study there were a number of group discussions during interviews with ActionAid, CCD, DOET, Departments of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) and all three Commune Peoples’ Committies but these interviews could not be considered as focus group discussions.

4.7.6 Observations

The distinctive feature of observation as a research process is according to Cohen et al., (2007, 396) ‘that it offers an investigator the opportunity to gather ‘live’ data from naturally occurring social situations’. Robson (2002, 309) outlines three fundamentally different approaches to observational methods in enquiry. The three types are:

- **Participant observation** – an essentially qualitative style, rooted in the work of anthropologists and associated with the Chicago School of Sociology.
• **Structured observation** – a quantitative style used in a variety of disciplines associated with fixed design research of both experimental and non-experimental types.

• **Unobtrusive observation** – has a defining characteristic that is non-participatory in the interests of being *non-reactive*. Can be structured but is usually more unstructured and informal.

Observation as a technique has advantages and disadvantages. A major advantage according to Robson (2002, 310) is its directness as ‘the researcher does not ask people about their views, feelings or attitudes but watches what they do and listens to what they say’. Data from direct observation can contrast with and complement information obtained using any other technique (Robson, 2002). Disadvantages according to Robson (2002, 311) are that it is neither an easy or trouble free option; issues are related to the extent to which an observer affects the situation; how to know what the behaviour would be like if it hadn’t been observed, and time involved, especially with participant observation.

Morrison (1993, 80) outlines how observations in an educational context can enable the researcher to gather data on:

• the *physical setting* (the physical environment and its organisation)

• the *human setting* (the organisation of people, the characteristics and make up of the groups or individuals being observed)

• the *interactional setting* (the interactions that are taking place, formal, informal, planned, unplanned, verbal, non-verbal etc.)

• the *programme setting* (the resources and their organisation, pedagogic styles, curricula and their organisation).

Additionally according to Bailey (1994, 244) ‘observational data may be useful for recording non-verbal behaviour, behaviour in natural and contrived settings and for longitudinal analysis’. Lack of control, coupled with difficulties with measurement, small samples, gaining access and maintaining anonymity may render observation less useful (Bailey, 1994, 245-6). Observational data should enable the researcher ‘to enter and understand the situation that is being described’ (Patton, 1990, 202).
In this research, observations were used for the following data collection purposes:

- to gather information on the physical and cultural setting of the communes and villages in the research areas;
- to gather information on the interactional and programme settings of the research areas;
- to observe during interviews and group meetings;
- to observe ABE activities and literate environments in research areas;
- to observe P 135 II interventions, both physical and educational;
- to observe the use of local languages;
- to observe income-generation activities and economic climate.

Observation was an intrinsic part of the data collection process. During the nine field-visits to the three case study areas there were opportunities to experience the socio-economic conditions and cultural environment of the households, hamlets, villages, communes, districts and provinces in this multiple case study. The researcher as an experienced development practitioner who has worked in the region since 2002 was aware of many of the cultural norms and expectations of the ethnic groups in the three case studies. Conscious of the Pygmalion and Hawthorne effects on participants the researcher used his experience and previous observations of Tay, Thai, Dao and H’mong cultural norms to minimise expectations on participants to provide convenient and complementary answers to interview questions. In doing so the expectation to perform was reduced and behavioural changes during interviews minimised. The use of an experienced female social science graduate who assisted the researcher in a culturally sensitive and respectful manner helped to create an unobtrusive and natural environment during interviews and observations (see Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1992; Adair, 1984).

Observations were recorded in memory as well as in recordings (audio and visual / digital), images and field notes. There was a conscious attempt by the researcher and assistant to travel on foot from household to household and between villages in order to develop a clear ethnographic sketch of each of the three case study areas. Transport by car or motorbike would have contaminated this process.
4.7.7 Research Journal

The recording of observations is a concern for inexperienced case study researchers according to Cohen et al. (2007). How and in what form observations and field notes are recorded are a matter for individual researchers. Bryman (2008, 417) describes field notes as ‘detailed summaries of events and behaviour and the researcher’s initial reflections on them’. Some general principles in recording field notes are outlined by Bryman (2008, 417).

- Write down notes, however brief, as quickly as possible after seeing and or hearing something interesting.
- Write up field notes either during the day or at the end of the day, including the details of location, who is involved, what prompted the exchange, date and time of day, etc.
- Notes should be vivid and clear.
- The researcher needs to take copious notes, so, if in doubt write it down.

Cohen et al. (2007) advises that researchers should: record notes as quickly as possible after observations; reconcile to the fact that recording of field notes can be as long as time spent in observation; simulate thought through writing notes; type field notes when possible; make at least two copies of field notes keeping the original copy as reference; notes should be full enough to summon up a vivid picture of any described event. Wolcott (1973) maintains that researchers (especially ethnographers) should not resume observations until the notes of the proceeding observation are complete. In this study this advice was followed as much as possible.

In this research the above guidelines were followed. The researcher used a research journal to record observations as indicated in section 4.7.6 as well as to record meetings and interviews with local officials, NGO staff and trainers, teachers, facilitators, managers and participants of ABE initiatives. Interviews were structured and semi-structured in accordance with a set of predetermined criteria or categories.
4.7.8 Recordings and Video

Heath and Luff (2007) recognise that video provides the social sciences with an unprecedented opportunity to analyse human culture and social organisation. According to Heath and Luff (2007) ethnographers used film as part of their studies as far back as the 1880s. Marks (1995), states that since the early beginnings of recording and film there has been a burgeoning interest (particularly within social anthropology) in using video in qualitative research. Ethnographic film powerfully portrays cultural organisation, everyday practice and social institutions that arise in contemporary society (Alasuutari et al., 2008). Approaches that address the ways in which video can be used to analyse social interaction and everyday activities are many and varied (see Goodwin, 1981; Heath, 1986; Heath and Luff, 2000; Kendon, 1982; Knoblauch et al., 2006).

Bryman (2008, 424) supports Heath and Luff (2007) by recognising the growth of interest in the use of visual materials as one of the ‘striking developments in qualitative research in recent years’. Bryman (2008, 424) cites the following instances of the use of visual material in research.

- Photographs of tribes and villages in social anthropology.
- Articles that made use of photos in journals.
- Photographs in academic books.

Photo-elicitation according to Bryman (2008, 424) is when the researcher uses the images as a ‘springboard for discussion concerning the meaning and significance of the images’. Ways in which photographs have been employed by qualitative researchers are listed by Bryman (2008, 424) as follows:

- As an aide-memoire in the course of fieldwork, in which context the images become components of the ethnographers’ field notes.
- As sources of data in their own right.
- As prompts for discussion by research participants (photographs may be taken by researchers or participants).

Pink (2001) in analysing the different ways in which visual images have been conceptualised in social research, identifies what she calls realist and reflexive
approaches. Reflexive is seen by Pink (2001) as being collaborative and uses research participants’ ideas on what photographs should be taken and how they should be interpreted.

Bryman (2008) advises that in qualitative research the interview should be audio-recorded and transcribed whenever possible. Heritage (1984, 238) suggests the following advantages of recording and transcribing interviews:

- It helps to correct the natural limitations of our memories and of the intuitive glosses that we might place on what people might say in interviews.
- It allows more thorough examination of what people say.
- It permits repeated examination of the interviewees’ answers.
- It opens up data to public scrutiny by other researchers, who can evaluate the analysis that is carried out by the original researchers of the data.
- It helps to counter accusations that an analysis might have been influenced by a researcher’s values or biases.
- It allows the data to be reused in other ways from those intended by the original researcher.

Bryman (2008, 451) acknowledges that recording is: very time-consuming; requires good equipment; may result in the accumulation of a large pile of transcripts; and that equipment may be off-putting to interviewees.

In this research photos and recordings were used extensively at every stage of the study. Video was used to record a Reflect circle in Case Study 2 (Thanh Nua Commune) and the inside of a typical Tay traditional house (Nha San) in Case Study 1 (Thuan Hoa Commune). As well as recording the physical, cultural and social environments of research areas, interviews and meetings were digitally recorded. An extensive data base of recordings of in-depth structured and semi-structured interviews, images of households, hamlets, villages and communes visited, portraits of participants in interviews, conditions of schools, Community Learning Centres (CLC), Commune People’s Committee buildings, roads, markets and general topography of the remote rural areas in the three diverse case study locations is available to supliment and enhance written material. This data base is extensive and due to limitations in the use of audio visual material only a small
portion of it is presented in this thesis. Permission was sought and granted for recording all the audio visual material available in this extensive database with the exception of landscapes / panoramic views in the open countryside.

4.8 Analysis of Case Study Evidence

Data analysis according to Yin (2009, 126) ‘consists of examining, categorising and tabulating data to draw empirically based conclusions’. Yin (2009) explains that analysing case study evidence is especially difficult and to overcome this every case study should follow a general analytic strategy. Yin (2009) suggests four general strategies which include:

- relying on theoretical propositions;
- developing a case description;
- using both qualitative and quantitative data;
- examining rival explanations.

Any of these strategies can be used to implement five specific techniques for analysing case studies: pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, logic models, and cross-case synthesis (Yin, 2009). In order to analyse case study data Yin (2009) suggests that researchers start with the questions developed in the case study protocol. By starting with small questions and identifying evidence that address the questions, conclusions can be based on the weight of the evidence according to Yin (2009).

This case study research has developed a case description as part of its strategy to analyse evidence. Theoretical propositions based on theories associated with poverty alleviation and the benefits of ABE to marginalised groups in Vietnam are reflected in the case study research question and sub-questions (see 4.6 Research Design and Methodology).

The use of both qualitative and quantitative data is central to the analysis of case study data in this research. Quantitative data is relevant to outcomes of the two approaches to the provision of ABE and also the embedded units of analysis in these two main approaches. The Reflect and DOET Adult Literacy (AL)
Programme approaches in selected communities as well as individual classes, participants and teachers / facilitators were investigated using both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Qualitative data was used to explore, describe and explain events. Rival explanations have been examined in the analysis of data in this case study and other influences besides the interventions of *Reflect* and DOET AL Programme approaches have been outlined.

Cross-case synthesis techniques have been deemed suitable to analyse this multiple case study research. This technique treats each individual case study as a separate study (Yin, 2009). Word tables as suggested by Yin (2009, 157) have been devised to display the data from individual cases according to a uniformed framework. According to Yin (2009, 160) ‘an important caveat in conducting this kind of cross-case synthesis is that the examination of word tables will relay strongly on argumentative interpretation, not numeric tallies’. Strong, plausible, and fair arguments are supported by data throughout this case study. The organisation of Chapter 5 (Presentation of Case Study Data) and Chapter 6 (Discussion and Analysis) are developed in a uniformed framework incorporating wordtables to facilitate the presentation and analysis of data in a thematic and logical manner that enhances cross-case synthesis analysis across three case study sites.

### 4.9 Validity and Reliability

There are many types of validity and reliability according to Cohen et al. (2007). Both validity and reliability can be applied to quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research (see Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2009; Bryman, 2008; Cohen et al. 2007; Brock-Utne, 1996; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In this section validity and reliability will be examined in general terms and specifically in relation to this particular case study research. In addition the concept of ‘Inference’ as developed by Tashakkori and Teddlie (2009) for mixed methods research will be adapted to match relevant aspects and issues of validity and reliability.

Cohen et al. (2007, 133) define validity as an important key to effective research and thus a requirement for both qualitative and quantitative / naturalistic research. Winter (2000) explains that qualitative data validity can be addressed through the:
• honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved;
• participants approached;
• extent of triangulation and
• disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher.

Quantitative data validity might be improved according to Cohen et al. (2007, 133) through:
• careful sampling;
• appropriate instrumentation; and
• appropriate statistical treatment of the data.

Hammersley (1992, 50-51) sees validity in qualitative research as a replacement of certainty with confidence (in the results), and therefore, as reality it is independent of researchers’ claims which are only representations of that reality rather than reproductions of it. Maxwell (1992) outlines five kinds of validity in qualitative methods that match his notion of ‘understanding’:
• Descriptive validity
• Interpretive validity
• Theoretical validity
• Generalisability
• Evaluative validity.

Internal and external validity can be addressed by qualitative and quantitative methods (Cohen et al., 2007). Internal validity according to Cohen et al. (2007, 135) seeks to:

demonstrate that the explanation of a particular event, issue or set of data which a piece of research provides can actually be sustained by the data. In some degree this concerns accuracy, which can be applied to quantitative and qualitative research. The findings must describe accurately the phenomena being researched.

LeCompte and Preissle (1993, 323-324) list internal validity in ethnographic, qualitative research as:
• confidence in the data;
• the authenticity of the data;
• the cogency of the data;
• the soundness of the research design;
• the credibility of the data;
• the auditability of the data;
• the dependability of the data;
• the confirmability of the data.

Lincoln and Guba (1985, 219-310) claim that credibility in naturalistic inquiry requires the following.
• Prolonged engagement in the field.
• Persistent observation: in order to establish the relevance of the characteristics for the focus.
• Triangulation: of methods, sources, investigators and theories.
• Peer debriefing.
• Negative case analysis: in order to establish a theory that fits every case, revising hypotheses retrospectively.
• Member checking: respondent validation, to assess intentionality, to correct factual errors, to offer respondents the opportunity to add further information on record; to provide summaries and to check the adequacy of the analysis.

External validity can be interpreted as ‘the degree to which the results of research can be generalised to the wider population, cases or situations (Cohen et al. 2007, 136). Lincoln and Guba (1985, 189, 300) see threats to external validity as:
• selection effects: where constructs selected in fact are only relevant to a certain group;
• setting effects: where the results are largely a function of their context;
• history effects: where the situations have been arrived at by unique circumstances and, therefore are not comparable;
• construct effects: where the constructs being used are particular to a certain group.
Other types of validity described in Cohen et al. (2007) include: content validity; construct validity; ecological validity; cultural validity; catalytic validity; consequential validity and criterion-related validity.

Reliability has different meanings in quantitative and qualitative research (Cohen et al. 2007). According to Cohen et al. (2007, 146) reliability in quantitative research is synonymous with ‘dependability, consistency and replicability over time, over instruments and over groups of respondents’. Three principle type of reliability in quantitative research are listed by Cohen et al. (2007):

- Reliability as stability
- Reliability as equivalence
- Reliability as internal consistency.

Reliability as a term in qualitative research is contested (see Coen et al., 2007; Winter, 2000; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) prefer to use terms such as credibility, neutrality, confirmability, dependability, consistency, applicability, trustworthiness, and transferability in place of reliability. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) suggest the following three ways in which reliability and replicability can be addressed in qualitative research.

- Stability of observation: same observations and interpretations if the phenomena had been observed at a different time or in a different place.
- Parallel forms: same observations and interpretations if the researcher paid attention to other phenomena during the observation.
- Inter-rater reliability: same theoretical framework used by another observer and observing the same phenomena would be interpreted in the same way.

Bogdan and Biklen (1992, 48) regard reliability in qualitative research as ‘a fit between what is recorded by researchers and what really occurs in the area being researched’. Kvale (1996, 181) states that, ‘in conducting interviews there might be as many interpretations of the data collected as there are researchers’.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects of Quality</th>
<th>Research Criterion</th>
<th>Indicator or Audit</th>
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| **Design quality** | Design suitability (appropriateness) | 1a. Are the methods of the study appropriate for answering the research questions? Does the design match the research questions?  
1b. Does the mixed methods design match the stated purpose for conducting an integrated study?  
1c. Do the strands of a mixed methods study address the same research questions (or closely related aspects of questions)? |
| 2. Design fidelity (adequacy) | 2. Are the QUAL, QUAN, and MM procedures or design components (e.g. sampling, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures) implemented with the quality and rigor necessary for (and capable of) capturing the meanings, effects, or relationships? |
| 3. Within-design consistency | 3a. Do the components of the design fit together in a seamless manner? Is there within-design consistency across all aspects of the study?  
3b. Do the strands of the MM study follow each other (or are they linked) in a logical and seamless manner? |
| **Analytic adequacy** | 4a. Are the data analysis procedures/strategies appropriate and adequate to provide possible answers to the research questions?  
4b. Are the MM analytic strategies implemented effectively? |
| **Interpretive rigour** | 5. Interpretive consistency | 5a. Do the inferences closely follow the relevant findings in terms of type, scope and intensity?  
5b. Are multiple inferences made on the basis of the same findings consistent with each other? |
| 6. Theoretical consistency | 6a. Are the inferences consistent with theory and state of knowledge in the field? |
| 7. Interpretive agreement | 7a. Are other scholars likely to reach the same conclusions on the basis of the same results?  
7b. Do the inferences match participants’ constructions? |
| 8. Interpretive distinctiveness | 8. Is each inference distinctively more credible / plausible than other possible conclusions that might be made on the basis of the same results? |
| 9. Interactive efficacy (mixed and multiple methods) | 9a. Do the meta-inferences match adequately incorporate the inferences that are made in each strand of the study?  
9b. If there are credible inconsistencies between the inferences made within / across strands, are the theoretical explanations for these inconsistencies explored, and possible explanations offered. |
| 10. Interpretive correspondence | 10a. Do the inferences correspond to the stated purpose/questions of the study? Do the inferences made in each strand address the purpose of the study in that strand?  
10b. Do the meta-inferences meet the stated need for using MM design? (i.e., is the stated purpose for using MM met?) |

Source: Tashakkori and Teddlie (2009, 301-302)
In the view of Tashakkori and Teddlie (2009, 287), ‘inferences are conclusions and interpretations that are made on the basis of collected data in a study’. The most important step in any mixed methods study according to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2009, 286) is when the results from the ‘QUAL and QUAN strands are incorporated into a coherent conceptual framework that provides an effective answer to the research question’. By using a mixed methods approach a better understanding of the phenomenon under research can be achieved (Teddie and Tashakkori, 2009). Table (4.2) above has been developed by Teddie and Tashakkori (2009, 301-302) as an ‘Integrative Framework for Inference Quality’.

In this research aspects of validity and reliability were considered as important requirements for an effective and credible outcome. The multiple aspects of validity and reliability as outlined in this section by Cohen et al. (2007), Hammersley (1992), LeCompte and Preissle (1993), Lincoln and Guba (1985), Bogdan and Biklen (1992), Kvale (1996), and Tashakkori and Teddlie (2009) helped to guide the researcher when conducting field work and data collection. The ‘Integrative Framework for Inference Quality’ developed by Tashakkori and Teddlie, (2009) was utilised extensively to keep a check on aspects of design and interpretive quality. Given the importance of interviews in this research it was necessary to use ‘convergent validity’ (Cohen et al., 2007) as a form of validation.

4.10 Bias
Yin (2009, 69) lists the following skills necessary for effective case study enquiry.

- A good case study investigator should be able to ask good questions and interpret the answers.
- An investigator should be a good ‘listener’ and not be trapped by her or his own ideologies and preconceptions.
- An investigator should be adaptive and flexible, so that newly encountered situations can be seen as opportunities, not threats.
- An investigator must have a firm grasp on the issues being studied, even if in an exploratory mode. Such a grasp reduces the relevant events and information to be sought to manageable proportions.
A person should be unbiased by preconceived notions, including those derived from theory. Thus, a person should be sensitive and responsive to contradictory evidence. [emphasis in original]

To avoid bias Yin (2009) advises that a case study investigator should not neglect the above skill-set. If an investigator seeks only to use a case study to ‘substantiate a preconceived position’ then she/he will be prone to bias (Yin, 2009, 72). According to Becker (1958; 1967) case study investigators are susceptible to bias because they must understand the issues in the case study beforehand. Researchers according to Yin (2009) may select a particular case study in order to advocate specific issues, however, on the other hand research assistants may be less vulnerable to bias because of the distance they take from the conception of the case.

According to Cannell and Kahn (1968), in interviews, inferences about validity are made on the basis of face validity. Cohen et al. (2007, 150) define this as ‘whether the questions asked look as if they are measuring what they claim to measure’. Lessing et al. (1961) describe bias as systematic errors that overstate or understated the true value of an attribute. Cohen et al. (2007) suggest that one way to validate interview measures is to compare them with other measures that have been shown to be valid. This is known as ‘convergent validity’. The sources of bias in interviews according to Cohen et al. (2007, 150) are ‘the characteristics of the interviewer, the characteristics of the respondent, and the substantive content of the questions’ which include:

- the attitudes, opinions and expectations of the interviewer;
- a tendency for the interviewer to see the respondent in his or her own image;
- a tendency for the interviewer to seek answers that support preconceived notions;
- misconceptions on the part of the interviewer of what respondents are saying;
- misunderstandings on the part of the respondent of what is being said.
Ethnicity, gender, religion, status, sexual orientation, social class and age can be strong sources of bias that effect interviewers (Cohen et al., 2007; Scheurich, 1995; Lee, 1993). According to Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) the nature of interviews are interpersonal, with human interaction dictating that the researcher will have some influence on the respondent and therefore on the data collected. Oppenheim (1992, 96-97) suggests the following causes of bias in interviewing:

- biased sampling;
- poor rapport between interviewer and interviewee;
- changes to question wording (in attitudinal and factual questions);
- poor prompting and biased probing;
- poor use and management of support materials (support cards);
- alterations to the sequence of questions;
- inconsistent coding of responses;
- selective or interpreted recording of data/transcripts;
- poor handling of difficult interviews.

The researcher although involved in a number of Adult Basic Education (ABE) and poverty alleviation projects in Vietnam since 1998 has conducted this research with an open mind and taken precautions to avoid bias during all stages of the research. Having worked on projects and programmes that were prominent in the two provinces (Ha Giang and Dien Bien) where the three case studies where conducted, the researcher was familiar with the socio-economic conditions and cultural diversity of the three case study locations. This was an advantage in many respects and although the possibility of bias was recognised, mechanisms were integrated into the research design and methodology to avoid the conscious and sub-conscious intrusion of biased opinions and attitudes. Preliminary findings during data collection have been shared with stakeholders and a number of critical colleagues. Alternative explanations and suggestions have been taken on board to reduce bias. The research design (see 4.6) using a theoretical framework that incorporated diverse ABE and poverty alleviation theories and concepts based on critical theory and ethnographical approaches assisted in the development of mixed methods that helped to triangulate findings using multiple data sources in order to limit the influence of bias.
4.11 Ethics
The awareness of ethical concerns in research according to Cohen et al. (2007, 51) can be seen in the appearance of relevant literature and development of regulatory codes for research practice by agencies and professional bodies. Robson (2002, 66) maintains that although a distinction is often made between ethics and morals, ethics usually refer to general principles of what a researcher ‘ought to do’.

Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1992) developed the costs / benefits ratio concept which underlines the ethical dilemma in social research where researchers have to consider the social benefits of their studies against the personal costs of the participants. According to Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1992) there are few absolutes and researchers are forced to make decisions about research content and procedures based on professional and personal values. Ethical issues may originate from the type of problems being investigated and the methods used to obtain reliable and valid data (Cohen et al., 2007). These issues and problems may arise from: the nature of the research; the context for the research; the procedures to be adapted; methods of data collection; the nature of the participants; the type of data collected; and what is to be done with the data (Cohen et al., 2007, 51).

Initial ethical considerations according to Cohen et al. (2007, 51-75) in planning research should include:

- informed consent;
- gaining access to and acceptance in the research setting;
- the nature of ethics in social research generally;
- sources of tension in the ethical debate, including non-maleficence, beneficence and human dignity, absolutist and relativist ethics;
- problems and dilemmas confronting the researcher, including matters of privacy, anonymity, confidentiality, betrayal and deception;
- ethical problems endemic in particular research methods;
- ethics and evaluative research;
• regulatory ethical frameworks, guidelines and codes of practice for research;
• personal codes of practice;
• sponsored research; and
• responsibility to the research community.

In the development of this research ethical considerations have been of upmost importance. Because of the nature of the case study and the sensitivity of the data collected there was strict adherence to accepted ethical codes. Following the advice of Yin (2009) the researcher developed a case study protocol that outlined the general procedures and rules to be followed while conducting the research (see section 4.7 Data Collection). These included: introduction to the case study and purpose of the protocol; data collection procedures; outline of case study report; case study questions. Transparency and openness were seen as precursors to contact and engagement with individuals, organisations, government bodies and communities. An overview of the case study protocol (Study Objectives) was developed in Vietnamese and English and made available to all parties involved in this research and has been an important document in the understanding of the research project and in training research assistants (see appendix 7).

During the course of the research all ethical considerations as outlined by Cohen et al. (2007) were adhered to. Additionally there were specific cultural sensitivities taken into account while gathering data in ethnic minority villages in Ha Giang and Dien Bien province. The integrity and wishes of the individuals and groups who took part in the research were respected and adhered to. At no stage were participants involved without their knowledge and consent, coerced, misinformed about the nature of the research or deceived.

In Vietnam it is necessary to obtain official permission from central, provincial, district and commune authorities before conducting research in remote ethnic minority communities (see Bonnin, 2010). With the assistance of the Embassy of Ireland / Irish Aid and ActionAid Vietnam / Ireland letters introducing the
researcher and outlining the nature and scope of this study were sent to Lai Chau, Ha Giang and Dien Bien Provinces. After an initial delay because of difficulties to conduct research in Lai Chau permission was granted to proceed with field-visits to Dien Bien and Ha Giang provinces (see 5.2.1 Obtaining Access and Permission for Data Collection).

Before each interview participants had the opportunity to read the study objectives document and in cases where literacy levels were low the objectives were carefully explained. Payment for interviews at different levels was developed with ActionAid Vietnam, the Centre for Community Development (CCD) and local authorities and openly outlined before agreement to conduct the interview was given by interviewees. It was explained to the researcher that this was a policy of both organisations and that it was the norm for local authorities to receive nominal payments for research interviews. Permission was at all times sought to use recording equipment and cameras and in only one situation out of 64 structured and semi-structured interviews was permission to use the recorder refused. At the conclusion of interviews and on receiving payment interviewees signed the researcher’s notes to acknowledge payment. Throughout this thesis there are no names of individuals used and this was explained carefully to participants before interviews. This was particularly important to GoV officials, INGO / NGO staff, ABE participants, teachers and facilitators. The nature of the restricted scope for open criticism in Vietnamese society was understood and anonymity was facilitated and respected by the research team. ABE and P135II staff were not present for interviews with participants and the research team conducted all interviews in an independent manner (see 5.2.1 Obtaining Access and Permission for Data Collection). Interviews were conducted in a culturally sensitive manner and respect for local customs and traditions were in all cases adhered to.

4.12 Triangulation
Webb et.al. (2000, 3) in their book on unobtrusive measures, first published in 1966, made the following early reference to triangulation:

Once a proposition has been confirmed by two or more independent measurement processes, the uncertainty of its interpretation is greatly reduced. The most persuasive evidence comes through a triangulation of measurement processes.
Tashakkori and Teddlie (2009, 27) describe triangulation as referring ‘to the combinations and comparisons of multiple data sources, data collection and analysis procedures, research methods, investigators, and inferences that occur at the end of a study’. Robson (2002, 371) describes triangulation in surveying as ‘a method of finding out where something is by getting a fix on it from two or more places’. Denzin (1988) outlines four distinct types of triangulation.

- Data triangulation – involving the use of a variety of data sources in a study.
- Methodological triangulation - the use of multiple methods to study a single problem.
- Investigator triangulation- involving several researchers in a single study.
- Theory triangulation- the use of multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data.

According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2009) the use of triangulation strategies led to the development of a wider range of mixed methods techniques.

A major strength of case study data collection according to Yin (2009, 114) is ‘the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence’. Yin (2009) adds that the need to use multiple sources of evidence in case study inquiry exceeds that in other methods such as surveys, experiments, or histories. The most important advantage of using multiple sources of evidence according to Yin (2009, 115) ‘is the development of converging lines of inquiry, in a process of triangulation and corroboration’. Yin (2009, 115) proceeds to state that ‘any case study finding or conclusion is likely to be more convincing and accurate if it is based on several different sources of information, following a corroboratory mode’.

Combining evidence from multiple sources such as interviews (structured, in-depth and focused), archival data, document analysis, questionnaires and observations has helped to triangulate data in this case study investigation. The use of both qualitative and quantitative methods to conduct the study has helped to advance methodological triangulation. The involvement of a number of research assistants in this research and the use of participatory methods to meaningfully involve selected members of communities in the collection of data and information promoted investigator triangulation. Research assistants kept notes during
interviews and acted as critical colleagues throughout development of the data collection methods and tools and data collection process itself. There were three research assistants involved in this study. The main research assistant took part in six of the nine field visits and the two others assisted in one each. The initial field visit to CS1 was conducted with the assistance of the ActionAid programme officer. The selection of the main research assistant took place after an extensive series of interviews (20 in total) until a suitable candidate was found. The professional background, education, experience, suitability and prolonged availability of candidates for assisting in qualitative data collection in remote ethnic minority communes were deciding factors in the selection of the main research assistant. It was fortunate that a suitable person with the right attributes was found for a five month period from March to August 2001.

The analysis and interpretation of data and information gathered during this multiple case study was conducted using a triangulation of multiple perspectives and schools of thought. For example in order to triangulate evidence gathered from interviews with ABE management it was necessary to include a number of similar questions in interview schedules when interviewing ABE participants. All structured and semi-structured interviews were designed based on the study objectives and research questions. This in itself contributed to continuous triangulation of information regarding dates, times, curricula, content, methodology, training of trainers (TOT), assessment and links between the two ABE programmes (Reflect and MOET / DOET) been investigated and P135II the poverty alleviation programme that was used as a measurement of ABE participant’s access and participation in poverty alleviation programmes. Direct field observations when conducting interviews in the three case study communes contributed significantly to triangulation. This could not have been as effective if the study was conducted as a survey administered from a distance.

4.13 Project
This research study, ‘An investigation of the relationship between Adult Basic Education (ABE) and accessing poverty alleviation resources in selected ethnic minority communities in Vietnam’ has been developed based on the researcher’s experience working on development programmes in Vietnam (1998-2009). Having
worked as an adviser between 2006 and 2009 on the Sida Vietnam-Sweden Chia Se (Sharing) Poverty Alleviation Programme, the researcher realised that the level of access, participation and understanding of the programme varied among the three targeted provinces of Quang Tri, Yen Bai and Ha Giang (see Chia Se, 2009). One of the provinces, Quang Tri implemented the programme in two districts that had high levels of adult literacy. The main reason for this was that over 90% of the population of these two districts were Kinh (majority ethnic group in Vietnam). In contrast the project districts in both Yen Bai and Ha Giang provinces consist of over 90% ethnic minority populations with adult literacy levels as low as 40% in some communes. Considerable differences in access, participation and effectiveness of programme objectives between provinces prompted the researcher to further investigate and measure the impact of ABE / adult literacy in Kinh on poverty alleviation interventions. The research proposal was developed while the researcher was still working on the programme but the decision to investigate approaches to literacy as an element of the study developed later. This research looks at the relationship between ABE with a particular focus on literacy, and its connection to assisting the access and participation of selected ethnic minority adults in poverty alleviation programmes in Vietnam.

As a developing country Vietnam receives support and funding from many sources including funding from UN agencies, development banks (WB and ADB), bi-lateral and multi-lateral sources as well as from INGOs. Irish Aid has been working in Vietnam since 2005 and is among the numerous donors who promote the development of underprivileged and marginalised sections of the population. Included in this support is direct funding to the Socio-economic Development of the Most Vulnerable Communes in Ethnic Minority and Mountainous areas of Vietnam Programme (P135) run by the Vietnamese government. Other programmes supported by Irish Aid include support to education programme in Northern Mountain Provinces (Ha Giang, Lai Chau, Cao Bang), implemented by ActionAid. This research investigated the use and effectiveness of the ActionAid Reflect approach, a literacy and community development methodology developed from the theories of Paulo Freire, as a support mechanism for accessing and participating in poverty alleviation programmes. This approach was compared and contrasted with the approach of the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET)
Adult Literacy Programme in similar ethnic minority communes. A multiple case study of two approaches to literacy delivery was instrumental in the development of this research. By comparing two approaches to the delivery of ABE it was possible to identify aspects that facilitate or inhibit access and participation in poverty alleviation initiatives in three communities / communes.

4.14 Assessment
The two approaches to adult literacy (Reflect and MOET / DOET) were measured based on pre-existing experiences of literacies, course curricula and content, teacher / facilitator training and impact of participants’ post-course literacy and literate environments on access to and participation in the outcome-orientated objectives of P135II developed to help improve living standards, upgrade farming and technical skills and encourage community development. These outcomes objectives are in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and the Vietnam Development Goals (VDG) (Ha Viet Quan, 2008) and include the following.

- Production development: to upgrade skills and develop new production techniques among ethnic minorities.
- Infrastructure development: to insure that all communities have the basic infrastructure needed to improve living conditions, production development and incomes, including schools and community learning centres (CLC), health clinics, electricity and roads.
- Capacity building: to provide commune staff and village leaders with skills and knowledge to manage poverty reduction activities, including legal skills and investment knowledge; to strengthen the capacity of communities and create favourable conditions for them to participate more effectively in the monitoring and supervision of interventions in the area.
- Improvement of socio-cultural living standards: to ensure access to basic social services including clean water and latrines, health services, primary and secondary school enrolment, and universal and free access to legal assistance to those in need.
All of the above objectives can be linked to the use of literacy / literacies in participation in planning sustainable implementation as well as evaluation. In order to participate meaningfully and productively in poverty alleviation programmes it is argued that a minimum level of basic literacy is anticipated (Chia Se, 2009). All project documents are written in Kinh (Vietnamese), meetings are often conducted in Kinh, books provided by CLCs and information for health and income-generation are usually in the national language (Kinh). Training and capacity building for government officials and community members are also designed for participants with at least a minimum level of literacy. It is suggested that access to poverty alleviation programmes may be blocked by illiteracy, low literacy or inappropriate literacy (Bhola, 2005). In measuring participation in P135II it was necessary to break down each of the above objectives and determine what meaningful and productive participation in these schemes entails. This was the key to identifying aspects of both approaches that facilitate or inhibit access and participation in P135II. A comparative case study of two approaches to literacy delivery was instrumental in the development of assessment strategies in this research, in order to explore, which if any, was more effective in preparing participants to engage with and benefit from the available resources and support under the P135II poverty alleviation programme.

4.15 Conclusion
In conclusion Chapter 4 provides an extensive outline of the methodology, methods, ethical considerations and safeguards used in the development of this study. Although both qualitative and quantitative paradigms are discussed and considered it was decided that the most effective methodology to conduct this study would be to use a mixed method multiple-case study approach with data collection instruments that relied predominantly on qualitative data. Analysis of data collected from the three case study locations relies heavily on cross-case analysis as outlined by Yin (2009) and is specifically streamlined to match study objectives and specific research questions. Chapter 5 is designed to present case study data in a clear and logical manner that treats each case study in an exact and methodical manner facilitating unbiased cross-case analysis and discussion.
Chapter 5: Presentation of Case Study Data

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide the background to the selection of the three communes that constitute the boundaries of this multiple case study investigation. The three case study communes are located in Ha Giang and Dien Bien Provinces. Case Study 1 (Thuan Hoa Commune) is in Ha Giang Province, while Case Study 2 (Thanh Nua Commune) and Case Study 3 (Na Tau Commune) are in Dien Bien Province. Both provinces are in the Northern Mountain Area of Vietnam (see Map 1.1). As well as indicating why these particular areas were chosen, the order of their presentation will be explained. It is hoped that a detailed description of the three cases including their geographical locations, demographics and economic living standards will provide sufficient understanding of these communities in the context of this study.

A particular focus will be placed on Adult Basic Education (ABE) activities with reference to adult literacy initiatives. In a study that investigates the relationship between ABE and accessing poverty alleviation resources, it is logical to outline and describe relevant activities and initiatives that have taken place in each of the case study areas. Reflect and DOET adult literacy courses being implemented in each area will be described in relation to the main study objectives which will provide a later basis for comparison focusing on: curriculum, methodology, teacher / facilitator training and methods, use of local languages, links to poverty alleviation and post-course use of literacy and the literate environment by participants.

Poverty alleviation initiatives and resources are outlined and discussed in each of the case study areas in order to identify similarities and differences as well as linking them to ABE activities. The four main components of P135II, namely, production development, infrastructure development, capacity building and improvement of socio-cultural living standards are prioritised and highlighted in each case study description.
Section 5.2.1 describes the process and negotiations that took place in the selection of and access to case study areas to collect data. Sections 5.2.2, 5.2.3, 5.2.4 and 5.2.5 introduce the background and context to Case Study 1 (Thuan Hoa Commune). This includes Background Data (5.2.2) covering geographical, demographic and general information on Ha Giang Province and Socio-cultural and Economic Context (5.2.3) focusing on Thuan Hoa Commune. Adult Basic Education Activities (5.2.4) and Poverty Alleviation Initiatives (5.2.5) are described using first hand data collected during field visits to Ha Giang Province. In order to access information on ABE activities and poverty alleviation activities in Ha Giang, with a focus on Thuan Hoa Commune (Case Study 1), it was necessary to arrange to meet and interview local government officials and programme planners and implementers. A large proportion of this background information and data is original and was used to supplement reports and other programme documents that were sourced by the researcher. Background information on Case Study 2 (Thanh Nua Commune) and Case Study 3 (Na Tau Commune) which are both located in Dien Bien Province was gathered using the same process and methods and will be reported in an identical manner later in this chapter as outlined above.

ABE (Reflect and DOET) and access and participation in poverty alleviation schemes for each of the three Case Studies will be examined by putting a spotlight on the impact of curriculum, methodology, teacher / facilitator training and methods, use of local languages, link to poverty alleviation and post course use of literacy and literate environments by participants on general development and poverty alleviation.

Chapter 6 will consist of a cross-case study analysis of the main research question and sub-questions that focuses on

- How do differences in ABE / literacy approaches impact on how specific ethnic minority adults access specific poverty alleviation resources in Vietnam?

The following research sub-questions will be used to determine the effectiveness of each of the two approaches in regard to the main research question.

- Are there differences between Reflect and DOET Adult Literacy approaches?
• Do different approaches to literacy impact on ethnic minority adults’ participation in the outcome oriented objectives of Programme 135II?
• What are the impediments to accessing adult education and poverty alleviation resources for specific ethnic minority adults?
• Are policy changes implied by the research findings?

5.2.1 Obtaining Access and Permission for Data Collection
The data collection process began with the identification of suitable locations. This took place long before the researcher departed from Ireland to Vietnam in September 2010. Because of a long association with Vietnam and involvement in Adult Basic Education (ABE) projects there since 2002 the researcher had several locations in mind before a final decision was made. As it turned out the final decision was based on a combination of protracted negotiations with influential gatekeepers and a number of fact-finding field visits. ActionAid Vietnam (AAV) is the INGO that introduced Reflect as a methodology to teach adult literacy and community development in Vietnam (ActionAid Vietnam, 2008) and it was therefore necessary to begin negotiations regarding the collection of data in suitable locations long before a return to Vietnam was organised.

Correspondence with the AAV Education Officer responsible for all programme provinces in Vietnam began in March 2010. This was facilitated by the helpful intervention of ActionAid Ireland (AAI) and the previous association the researcher had with this particular INGO in Vietnam. However, unexpected barriers were encountered when the researcher arrived back in Vietnam at the end of September 2010. Because of a change in higher management and the untimely resignation of the Education Officer in AAV, permission to investigate suitable locations for data collection was retracted. With the intervention of the Embassy of Ireland and lobbying from interested staff in AAV a meeting was arranged to discuss data collection locations in January 2011. At this meeting Ha Giang province in the north-east of Vietnam was suggested as suitable for data collection. The original province Lai Chau was deemed not suitable because of illicit evangelisation activities by foreign nationals that were being reported to AAV.
While waiting for this initial face to face meeting with AAV, information came to light that a local NGO called CCD (Centre for Community Development) in Dien Bien Province was implementing *Reflect* in former AAV communes since 2008. CCD was established by ex-AAV staff with the support of AAV to continue community development activities, including *Reflect*, in Dien Bien Province. Irish Aid in the Embassy of Ireland in Ha Noi facilitated a formal introduction and a visit was arranged on January 19 2011 to CCD in Dien Bien. This field visit took place before the visit to Ha Giang and it was during this visit that the idea of having alternative options to AAV Ha Giang developed. After the initial field visit to Ha Giang (February 23), a decision was made by the researcher and supervisors in TCD to collect data in both Ha Giang and Dien Bien provinces simultaneously. In the long-run this decision was justified, as a suitable DOET adult literacy location to conduct a case study was found in the same district as CCD (Dien Bien District) in Dien Bien Province. For practical and logistical reasons this saved time, expense and reduced the formalities regarding permission to visit the area.

Getting permission as a foreign researcher to visit remote and sensitive ethnic minority areas in Vietnam is not easy and it was fortunate that cooperation with both provinces went smoothly after the initial three month wait. Some of these difficulties are mirrored in a paper ‘Navigating field work politics, practicalities and ethics in upland borderlands of northern Vietnam’ by Christine Bonnin (2010). Bonnin outlines the difficulties in brokering agreements with official gatekeepers or ‘border guards’ as she refers to them. The combination of eventual support from AAV, letters of introduction from Irish Aid / Embassy of Ireland and my personal experience and contacts in both Ha Giang and Dien Bien provinces helped to get the ‘red stamp’ from the gatekeepers / border guards. Similar to Bonnin’s experience there were extremely frustrating periods when it seemed that permission would not be forthcoming.

The order in which the three case study descriptions appear does not reflect a chronological but more a linear-analytic structure as outlined by Yin (2009,176). Although data collection field visits began in Dien Bien with CCD in January 2011, the first case to be described will be Thuan Hoa Commune which is situated in Xi Xuyen District of Ha Giang Province. At that time preliminary investigations
regarding case study sites in Dien Bien Province were still ongoing when it was decided to concentrate on Thuan Hoa Commune in Ha Giang Province as the first case study commune. There was a field visit to Quang Ba District in Ha Giang Province in February 2011 on the advice of AAV (*Reflect*) but for logistical as well as other practical reasons Quang Ba was deemed unsuitable. CCD suggested Thanh Nua Commune in Dien Bien District of Dien Bien Province as a suitable site to conduct data collection on its *Reflect* programme and after preliminary visits to *Reflect* circles in Co Phuc and Co Ke villages, the Co Ke circle was selected. Communes in Vietnam consist of a number of villages administered from a commune centre by the Commune People’s Committee (CPC).

The selection of the Department of Education and Training (DOET) adult literacy case study site took longer to organise. It was suggested that Muong Cha District about 60km north-west of Dien Bien provincial capital, Dien Bien Phu City, would be suitable by the DOET. However after a two day exploratory field-trip (09/03-11/03/11) it became apparent that conducting research in such a remote and potentially troublesome border district could be risky. As it turned out ethnic disturbances in neighbouring Muong Nhe District in May 2011 prompted the authorities to seal off the area that was suggested by DOET from any foreign visitors. This would have been during the height of the data collection period and it was fortunate that another DOET adult literacy site was located in the south-east of Dien Bien District. Na Tau Commune with a particular focus on Ta Cang Village is the third case study site that will be described after the two *Reflect* case study sites of Thuan Hoa Commune and Thanh Nua Commune. Data from Thanh Nua and Na Tau communes in Dien Bien were collected during the same field visits after a final decision on the case study sites was made. The field-visit to Muong Cha District / Ma Thi Ho Commune coincided with the development of the first draft of the in-depth structured and semi-structured interview questions and provided an excellent testing site for DOET AL participants, teachers and management as well as management and trainers of P135II. Co Phuc Village in Thanh Nua Commune (Case Study 1) was visited on the same field-visit and *Reflect* in-depth and semi-structured questions were piloted with *Reflect* participants, facilitators and management there.
Because of the expense of flying to Dien Bien (researcher and assistant) and the difficulties of obtaining permission prior to every visit, it was deemed more practical to lengthen the time in the field and conduct the two field visits at the same time. This lengthened the field-visits from the usual 3-4 days in Ha Giang Province to 6-7 days for each visit in Dien Bien Province. Dien Bien Province differed from Ha Giang Province regarding permission as it was required that permission to conduct field work would have to be sought prior to each visit. This was coordinated through the Foreign Affairs Department of the Provincial People’s Committee (PPC), the highest authority in the province. Once permission from the PPC was granted, letters (with the official red stamp) were sent out to the communes and agencies outlined in the faxed agenda sent ten days prior to the visit. At times permission came at the very last minute creating a lot of apprehension. In Ha Giang it was also necessary to send out an agenda for field visits to AAV and with the help of the AAV staff, arrangements were made with the local authorities. In total there were nine field-visits (38 days in total) from 18/01/11-23/07/11, five field-visits to Dien Bien Province (Case Study 2 and 3) and four to Ha Giang Province (Case Study 1).

Table 5.1: Case Study Locations Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study</th>
<th>Name of Commune / Villages</th>
<th>Location in Vietnam</th>
<th>ABE approach / implementer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case Study 1</td>
<td>Thuan Hoa Commune / Mich A, Mich B Villages.</td>
<td>Vi Xuyen District in Ha Giang Province.</td>
<td>Reflect AAV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study 2</td>
<td>Thanh Nua Commune / Co Ke Village</td>
<td>Dien Bien District in Dien Bien Province</td>
<td>Reflect CCD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study 3</td>
<td>Na Tau Commune / Ta Cang Village</td>
<td>Dien Bien District in Dien Bien Province</td>
<td>DOET Dien Bien</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the second field visit to Ha Giang (12-15 / 04/11) we obtained the names and addresses of Reflect participants in Thuan Hoa from one of the managers of the programme. She printed out the list and highlighted the participants who attended the first phase of Reflect after we explained that this was the priority cohort. Some Reflect participants on the list did not attend phase 1 and started Reflect in the second phase. The Reflect manager was asked to inform the phase 1 participants that we would be conducting interviews in April and May. In addition
news of the research soon spread in the target villages after the first interviews and on a few occasions we were approached by villagers who enquired if they were on the list to be interviewed.

Interviews with Reflect and DOET participants were difficult to arrange prior to field visits and these were conducted by walking to households in the hope that the interviewees would be at home. If not we would return at another time during that particular field visit or during a subsequent one. This gave us a certain amount of freedom and independence regarding interviewing adult literacy course participants and the chance to interview people who lived in areas that were not accessible by motorbike. Most local officials and indeed AAV / CCD / DOET staff do not generally travel long distances on foot, and this meant that we could conduct interviews with locals in a completely independent manner as they did not want to accompany us when we had to walk. Apart from the obvious physical exercise this entailed there was an opportunity to get to know the lie of the land, observe and interact with the local community and take in the stunning scenery and natural beauty of the case study areas. Interviews with GoV officials, facilitators / teachers, managers and trainers were easier to arrange using correspondence, emails and telephone calls and exact times and dates were indicated and verified. On a few occasions interviews were rescheduled during field visits because of unforeseen circumstances. In the following sub-sections I will present the data from each case study.

5.2.2 Case Study 1: Thuan Hoa Commune - Background Data
The following sub-sections 5.2.2 to 5.2.5 will provide valuable background data on Case Study 1. These sections include data on geographical locations, populations, ethnic groups, cultural aspects and economic living standards (5.2.2 and 5.2.3). Adult Basic Education (ABE) activities and poverty alleviation initiatives are outlined in sub-sections 5.2.4 and 5.2.5 respectively. The specific objectives of the study will be examined following the provision of background data for each individual case study.
Table 5.2: Case Study 1 Locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study</th>
<th>Name of Commune / Villages</th>
<th>Location in Vietnam</th>
<th>Ethnic Make-up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case Study 1</td>
<td>Thuan Hoa Commune / Mich A and Mich B Villages, Na Lun Hamlet</td>
<td>Vi Xuyen District in Ha Giang Province.</td>
<td>Tay, H’mong, Dao, Kinh (main groups).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thuan Hoa Commune (Case Study 1) is situated in Xi Xuyen District of Ha Giang Province. Ha Giang Province is located in the most northern part of Vietnam and is characterised by precipitous limestone mountains with elevations exceeding 1100 metres above sea level. The climate is sub-temperate and soil rusty-red from the oxide rich laterites (UNFPA, 2008). The population of Ha Giang in 2010 was 735,800 people living in a total area of 7945.8 km2 with a population density of 93 people/ km2 (GSO, 2010). The provincial capital is also called Ha Giang and is 320km from Ha Noi on Highway 2. As well as bordering China along a 270km border Ha Giang is bounded by Cao Bang, Tuyen Quang, Lao Cai and Yen Bai provinces. Major rivers flowing through Ha Giang are the Lo and the Mien (Boobbyer, 2008). Ha Giang province is divided into one town municipality, ten districts, five precincts, thirteen towns under districts and one hundred and seventy seven communes. Thuan Hoa Commune in Vi Xuyen District forms the geographic boundaries for Case Study 1. The population of Ha Giang is made up of 22 ethnic minority groups of which H’mong (30.75%), Tay (24.94%), Dao (15.16%), Nung (9.69%) and Kinh (12.13%) are the prominent ones (GSO, 2010).
Because Ha Giang is a predominately mountainous province agricultural production is limited to up-land rice, corn and tea. Much of the mountainous areas are covered in forest leaving the lower central plateau to be utilised for growing plums, peaches and persimmons for export. Oranges and mandarin production has been introduced in recent years and has helped increase incomes in lower
lying areas. The province is also rich in minerals including antimony, iron ore, manganese, ferrite, zinc, tin, copper, bauxite, gold, gemstones, kaolin and mineral water. Direct foreign investment from China, South Korea and Thailand has boosted the mining and processing industries in recent years (Embassy of Vietnam, USA, 2003).

The natural beauty of Ha Giang Province contributes to its popularity as a destination for both domestic and foreign tourists. Spectacular mountain scenery combined with traditional ethnic minority villages, markets and festivals attract large numbers of tourists to the province. The tourist industry is important to the overall economy of Ha Giang and is expanding at a steady pace. Areas such as the Quang Ba valley, Dong Van, Meo Vac, Khau Vai Love Market, Do Thong and Hoang Su Phi are popular places where tourists visit (Boobbyer, 2008).

Ha Giang as well as being rich in mineral wealth and natural beauty is one of the poorest provinces in Vietnam with a poverty rate of 40% (GSO, 2010). Because of this relatively high poverty rate there are numerous government, non-government, bi-lateral and multi-lateral poverty alleviation interventions in the province. Prominent among these interventions are projects managed by ministries such as the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), the Ministry of Labour Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) and the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). Multi-agency international support from the UN (UNESCO, UNICEF and IFAD), the World Bank (WB) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has been active in Ha Giang since the mid-1990s. INGOs including AAV, CARE and Caritas (Switzerland) are also active working together with local partners to help reduce poverty and develop sustainable development solutions. Sida (Sweden) and Irish Aid are among the numerous international government development agencies that support Ha Giang provincial Socio Economic Development Plan (SEDP) strategies through direct support and implementation of specific programmes like Chia Se (Sida) or through funding channelled through government poverty alleviation programmes such as P135II (Chia Se, 2009; Irish Aid, 2011, 2007).
5.2.3 Case Study 1: Socio-cultural and Economic Context

Vi Xuyen District, in which the Case Study 1 Commune of Thuan Hoa is located, surrounds Ha Giang provincial town. Vi Xuyen district consists of two district towns and twenty two communes and has a total population of 87,164 (GSO, 2010). The district centre of Vi Xuyen is situated 25km south-west of Ha Giang on Highway 2. In order to get from Vi Xuyen District to Thuan Hoa Commune it is necessary to pass through Ha Giang provincial town. Travelling on Highway 4c along the banks of the Tiem River, the turn off to Thuan Hoa Commune is located about 10km from Ha Giang provincial town in a northerly direction towards Quang Ba District. After crossing a small metal bridge, that is planked to take four wheeled vehicles, the dirt road to Thuan Hoa Commune winds spectacularly through the mountains for 5km until it reaches the valley where the commune centre is located. The dirt road to Thuan Hoa can be dangerous when it rains and rather adventurous when on the back of a hired motorbike. Apart from the initial visit to Thuan Hoa with AAV, field-trips were made by motorbike (Field Notes, 2011).

Thuan Hoa Commune is made-up of fifteen villages with Mich A village at its centre. There are 924 households with 4,902 people living in the commune. It is a multi-ethnic commune of which the main ethnic groups are H'mong (50%), Tay (30%), Dao / Man (20%) and very small numbers of Kinh and Hoa (Interview with CPC, 25/02/2011). Ethnic groups tend to live in separate and distinctive villages but there are instances of mixed villages in this research. Of the fifteen villages in the commune only five are connected to mains electricity. All but one village can be reached by motorbike. Villages in Thuan Hoa Commune have sometimes smaller settlements under their jurisdiction and for the purpose of this study these settlements will be referred to as hamlets.

The H'mong are the dominant ethnic group in Thuan Hoa Commune (50%) and Ha Giang Province (30.75%). The H'mong people came to Vietnam from Yunnan, China about 200-300 years ago. Many H'mong settled in the north east and north west of Vietnam because of the proximity to Yunnan. Others travelled to Laos, passing through Lai Chau and Son La into Xiangkhoung and Sam Neua in Laos (Luong, 2000). Throughout the world there are approximately seven million people of H'mong origin living in China, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, the USA and Central
and South America. The H'mong form a clan-based society and worship a common ancestor. It is a patrilineal and male dominated society that practices animism believing that well-being produces harmony thus creating a balance with the spirit world. Down through the ages the H’mong practiced slash-and-burn cultivation that suits their mobile lifestyle (UNFPA, 2008). Although the H’mong are the dominant ethnic group in Thuan Hoa Commune the numbers of interviews conducted with H’mong are very low in this study. Reasons for this can be explained by the locations of the villages Mich A and Mich B where much of the data collection among Reflect participants was conducted. Both of these villages are situated in the valley and are inhabited by Tay and Dao people.

The Tay ethnic minority group is the second largest in Vietnam. There are 1,190,342 Tay people in Vietnam. In Ha Giang the Tay population accounts for almost 25% of the province (GSO, 2010) and 30% of Thuan Hoa Commune. The Tay are one of the oldest ethnic groups in Vietnam and have been present in the region perhaps as early as 500BC. The Tay are traditionally farmers and have a long tradition of wet rice cultivation. They live in valleys and because of their early arrival in northern Vietnam they occupy some of the best areas for rice and fruit tree cultivation as well as animal husbandry. The Tay live in stilt houses with thatch roofs and settle in areas close to water (rivers, streams, lakes). Tay irrigation techniques have been developed to support their intensive cultivation methods. The combination of the attractive Nha San (stilt-house) dwellings situated along rivers or streams and occupied by villagers in traditional dress gives Tay settlements a timeless Arcadian aura. The majority of Tay adhere to ancestor and spirit worship. Recently many Tay people have been influenced by mainstream culture in Vietnam and China. The Tay are politically strong in Vietnam and have been represented at the highest level in government (Vietnam Culture, 2010). In Tuan Hoa Commune the majority of local government officials interviewed for this study were Tay despite the fact that the H’mong outnumber them. The Tay because of their residential location, status, and political connections occupy a greater number of official positions than the H’mong (Interviews; Field Notes, 2011; CSA, 2009).
The Dao ethnic group account for 15.16% of the population of Ha Giang Province and 20% of Thuan Hoa Commune. The Dao are also known as ‘Man’ in the area. There is a total population of 473,954 Dao people in Vietnam. The Dao originally came from China and immigrated into Vietnam in the 12th and 13th centuries with a second migration at the beginning of the last century. The Dao traditionally cultivate swidden (slash and burn) fields, rocky hollows and wet-rice paddies. Many Dao groups such as the Dao Quan Trang (white), Dao Ao Dai (long tunic) and Dao Thanh Y (blue clothes) specialise in wet-rice cultivation. These are the groups that are found in Thuan Hoa. In Thuan Hoa the Dao live in close proximity to the Tay but reside generally on a higher elevation. If you can imagine a valley surrounded by mountains, the Dao will be situated between the H’mong (highest elevation) and the Tay in the valley. As well as cultivating rice, corn and vegetables such as gourds, pumpkins, the Dao raise buffaloes, cows, pigs, chickens, horses and goats. The Dao are also famous for their ironwork and tool
making / repairing skills as well as being expert silversmiths making necklaces, earrings, rings, silver chains and betel nut boxes. Dao houses are distinctive from the Tay and similar to the H'mong in that they are constructed directly on the ground. Dao religious beliefs are a mixture of agricultural rituals and traditional practices mixed with elements of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism (Vietnam Culture, 2011; Field Notes, May 2011).

There is a main primary school and numerous satellite schools, a secondary school but no high school for the population of 4,902 in Thuan Hoa Commune. The Commune People's Committee (CPC) has a large two story building with other smaller buildings adjacent to it which are used for administrative purposes. There is a health centre, a post-office and a number of small shops spread out in the commune. The commune market is situated close to the CPC and is used for buying and selling local agricultural products on a daily basis. On Saturday mornings a larger market takes place that attracts people and products from outlying villages and hamlets. At present the Song (River) Mien Hydropower Project supported by Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland is being constructed by a Chinese company in the commune and is scheduled to be completed in 2012 (CDM, 2006). As well as providing much needed electricity to the area the project employs local workers and brings revenue to the local shops and businesses. The negative environmental effects of the project are evident in the silting of the river and the condition of the dirt road.

Agriculture is still the main source of income in the commune and the cultivation of land for rice and maize as well as other crops is common. Animal husbandry (buffalo, pig, goat and chicken) is another important source of income in the commune. However, Thuan Hoa Commune is still considered to be a poor commune and there is a very high proportion (62%) of poor people in the commune (UKaid, 2011). The fact that poverty alleviation programmes such as P135II are implemented in all villages indicates that the poverty rate is high.
5.2.4 Case Study 1: Adult Basic Education Activities (Thuan Hoa Commune)

In this section data relating to ABE activities including those of Reflect and DOET programmes as well as interventions by Community Learning Centre’s (CLCs) and adult training courses organised by various other agencies will be outlined and discussed. There will be a concentration on information received during interviews and documents that were kindly provided by the local authorities and Adult Education (AE) agencies.

In an interview conducted with the ActionAid Vietnam (AAV) Support Programme for Development (SPD) office staff in Xi Xuyen District (23/02/11), an overview of the Reflect and other AAV programme activities were outlined. AAV started implementing activities in Vi Xuyen District in 2002. A pilot phase was conducted in two communes (Thuan Hoa and Cao Bo) with an initial intervention of five Reflect circles (3 in Cao Bo and 2 in Thuan Hoa). Between 2004-08 AAV was active in eight out of twenty two communes in Vi Xuyen District with a total of thirty four active Reflect circles (Field Notes; Interviews, 23/02/11). Reflect circles have three distinct phases that include:

1. Phase 1: Literacy based on needs of participants
2. Phase 2: Post-literacy with aspects of community development
3. Phase 3: Community Development.

The ages of the participants range from 15-45 but there is no strict cut-off age. As well as literacy, aspects of community development covering sectors such as health care, agriculture, law, livelihoods and women’s rights / issues form an important part of the curriculum. In fact the teaching of literacy using Reflect methodology is closely related to all these sectors and issues (ActionAid, 2008; Field Notes; Interviews, 23/02/11).

AAV in Vi Xuyen District implements Reflect in close cooperation and coordination with the district Bureau of Education and Training (BOET). In a semi-structured interview (13/04/11) with Vi Xuyen District Reflect Programme Management members, which included two AAV SPD staff, the BOET director, vice-director and one BOET officer, the management structure of Reflect was outlined. Reflect is managed by BOET with the support of AAV according to responses provided to Q. 1 (see appendix 6). This indicates the influence of BOET on Reflect and the
importance of this link to the functioning of the programme. Phase 1 of Reflect is conducted exclusively by local primary teachers / facilitators in programme communes Vi Xuyen District including Thuan Hoa Commune (Case Study 1). After phase 1 the use of local teachers declines according to Reflect management responses. It was also stated in the interview that community development issues were present in all phases of Reflect including phase 1. Micro-credit, income-generation and awareness-raising play an important role in attracting villagers to Reflect as the material benefits of taking part in the programme are attractive to the poor and non-poor. It was reported that participants are empowered in the process and more socially aware as a result of attendance. An important aspect of the implementation of Reflect is the use of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methods during circle sessions. Data provided by the interviewees revealed that facilitators are trained in the use of PRA and use tools such as village mapping, matrices, income-output trees and seasonal charts to conduct the sessions (ActionAid Vietnam, 2008).

In Thuan Hoa Commune (Case Study 1) Reflect is now in its third phase and circles have become what AAV describe as Village Development Clubs (VDC). These clubs are still supported by AAV but are at a stage where they are looking at ways in which they can become more independent and self-sustaining. The idea is that the VDCs will utilise the training that both the participants and facilitators have received to continue the philosophy of Reflect through the promotion of knowledge and skills, focusing on personal and community development. Subsequent interviews with Reflect participants, facilitators and CLC managers indicate that this stage is still developing and VDCs are still very dependent on support from AAV in Thuan Hoa Commune (Field Notes, Interviews, 2011).

In a preliminary interview with the Department of Education and Training (DOET) in Ha Giang Province (23/02/11) the DOET director and deputy head of the Continuing Education Department provided some valuable insights into the focus and organisation of Adult Education (AE) activities by DOET in the province. There were two important developments in recent years regarding AE strategy that came to light. Firstly the changes to the DOET adult literacy curriculum, organisation of classes and age restrictions of participants, and secondly the role of the relatively
newly established Community Learning Centres (CLCs) in coordinating and organising AE activities at commune level (Interview DOET Ha Giang, 23/02/11).

Traditionally DOET adult literacy classes were conducted in the evening and focused on working adults. This has changed in recent years to concentrate on the universalisation of primary education focusing on complementary primary school programmes targeting the inclusion of young adults. In doing so adult literacy classes have changed radically and in place of seasonal evening literacy and post-literacy classes, a semi-full time complementary system conducted during school hours has been introduced. This is in contrast to Reflect classes. Since the end of the adult literacy ‘eradication’ drives in the 1990s there has been a concentration of the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) resources to build up pre-school, primary, secondary and high-school education (MOET, 2009, 2003). As we can see from the following table committing to the ‘second-chance’ style complementary primary school curriculum being implemented by MOET to help adults between the ages of 15-25 means almost full-time attendance at school for an intensive period of time (see MOET, 2009, 2003). This is especially the case for phases 2-3.

Table 5.3: New Ha Giang DOET Adult Literacy Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Total Hours</th>
<th>Hours per Month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>140+30 Knowledge subjects</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>140+30 Knowledge subjects</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DOET Ha Giang 22/02/11

Adults over the age of 25 and indeed those who are younger, who for circumstantial or personal reasons, can’t or are not comfortable with returning to school, are dependent on other initiatives such as Reflect for literacy learning. Although interviews with Ha Giang DOET and BOET Vi Xuyen (23/02/11) verified the implementation of the MOET primary and secondary school complementary programme targeting adults there were no statistics available on the numbers who avail of this programme. The DOET director in Ha Giang indicated that the illiteracy rate of adults from 15-35 years old was very low now (3-5%) and that
most adults in this age group had attended primary school already. In Thuan Hoa commune the school principal informed the research team that between 2005 and 2009 there were 4 complementary primary and secondary classes with a total of 80 adults with 13 dropping out before completion. All classes were held during school hours (Interview, 25/02/11)

The coordinating role of the Community Learning Centre (CLC) in Thuan Hoa is vital to the planning and implementation of AE initiatives and activities in the commune including Reflect, DOET and P135II. In an interview conducted in the relatively new CLC in Thuan Hoa (Field Notes, 25/02/11) the three responsibilities and activities of the CLC were outlined as follows:

1. Collaborate with primary and secondary schools to bolster attendance and support DOET complementary programmes.
2. Conduct surveys and needs assessments of local people and coordinate and plan activities with local Government of Vietnam (GoV) line agencies (education, agriculture, health care etc), mass organisations such as the Women’s Union (WU), Farmer’s Union (FU), Fatherland Front (FF), Youth Union (YU) and local and international NGOs including AAV Reflect.
3. Support the implementation of training courses for adults such as raising animals, planting trees and crops, awareness-raising on areas such as health care, credit, law and general AE.

The CLC management committee consists of a board that is representative of the community. It includes the Vice Chairman of the Commune People’s Committee (CPC) who acts as the CLC manager, the headmaster of the primary / secondary school and representatives of the GoV line agencies and mass organisations. Meetings take place once a month according to respondents to the interview (Field Notes, Interview, 25/02/11). There is a close connection between the CLC and Reflect as it is a policy of AAV to provide training and financial / material support to CLCs in areas where Reflect is active. AAV provides training to the CLC manager on AE methodology, organisation and management and on how to conduct needs assessments. Material support includes the provision of a computer and paper as well as a monthly allowance for the manager (Commune ABE Interview, 16/06/11).
Because management of the CLC and supervision of GoV training for local political cadres / administrators and residents are the responsibility of the CPC there is an important role for the Agricultural Promotion Officer (APO). The APO is appointed by the CPC and is a trained agriculturalist who has attended university or agricultural college (Interview APO1 CS1, 15/06/11). He or she is also responsible for the organisation and implementation, in coordination with the district Bureau of Agriculture and Rural Development (BARD) of the Production Development Component of P135II. Training that is conducted through P135II for this component includes:

- the transfer of modern agricultural technology;
- introduction of new seed varieties and rice planting techniques;
- animal husbandry;
- some vocational training.

As reported there is a diversity of AE activities in Thuan Hoa Commune (Case Study 1). From interviews, observations and field notes taken from February to June 2011 it is clear that there is a strong emphasis on practical training in conjunction with other interventions to help improve literacy and awareness-raising. AAV in coordination with the local GoV authorities plays an important role in supporting AE activities in Thuan Hoa Commune. According to Reflect management, facilitators, participants, local educators and CPC officials Reflect encourages the development of Adult Basic Education (ABE) including literacy, awareness raising on a topics such as health care, income-generation, gender issues and law and the development of practical skills that can be applied in technical training conducted by programmes such as P135II. The CLC plays a vital role in this support coordinating between government and non-government programmes and providing information to adult villagers on the best available options in an unbiased way (Interviews; Field Notes, 13-14/04/2011).

5.2.5 Case Study 1: Poverty Alleviation Initiatives (Thuan Hoa Commune)
Thuan Hoa Commune (Case Study 1) is categorised as a poor commune in Ha Giang Province (UKaid, 2011). As stated earlier in this chapter, the relatively high poverty rate dictates that there are numerous government, non-government, bi-
lateral and multi-lateral poverty alleviation interventions in Ha Giang Province. In order to focus on Thuan Hoa Commune there will be an outline of programmes that are being implemented in the commune with reference to other programmes in the district and province only when necessary. Because the GoV poverty alleviation P135II is central to this particular study the following four components, production development, infrastructure development, capacity building and improvement of socio-cultural living standards will be outlined using data collected through interviews, observations and document reviews.

**Table 5.4: Thuan Hoa Poverty Rate (%) 2005-10**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commune</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thuan Hoa</td>
<td>Tay-H’mong-Dao</td>
<td>78.7</td>
<td>69.5</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As is evident from Table 5.4 the poverty rate in Thuan Hoa Commune was decreasing steadily from 2005-09. In 2005 the rate was 78.7% and in 2009 it had decreased by over 42% to 35%. However, the rate increased 27% in 2010 to 62%. In order to explain this there needs to be an understanding of the way poverty is measured in Vietnam. At the end of 2010 the Ministry of Labour Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) adapted a new poverty line or rate of income to categorise families in poverty for the period 2011-15 (UKaid, 2011). In this new poverty line the monthly income per capita of rural households doubled from 200,000VND ($10 US) to 400,000VND ($20). In Thuan Hoa this had the effect of almost doubling the percentage of poor households in the commune. The consequences of this will be discussed later in Chapters 6 and 7 in connection with the implementation of a proposed new third phase of P135. Possible implications are that the number of beneficiaries of P135 in Thuan Hoa Commune will double thus decreasing individual benefits. P135 phases 1 and II have been the most significant poverty alleviation interventions in Thuan Hoa Commune since 2000 (Field Notes, 2011; Interviews 13/04/11). ActionAid Vietnam (AAV) has been active in Thuan Hoa since 2002 as well as other GoV programmes such as P134 and P129. UN
agencies like UNICEF, UNDP and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) as well as Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and Irish Aid are active in Vi Xuyen district (Field Notes, 2011; Interviews 13/04/11). From the figures in Table 5.4 it is clear that Thuan Hoa is a poor commune and therefore disadvantaged. All 15 villages in Thuan Hoa are categorised as being poor and therefore entitled to support from GoV programmes such as P135II as well as interventions from UN agencies and INGOs such as AAV.

Thuan Hoa Commune is located in a province and region that is targeted for donor support and the commune has been selected for the collection of data for the UKaid ‘Participatory Poverty Monitoring in Rural Communities in Vietnam’ (Nguyen and Baulch, 2007; CSA, 2009; UKaid, 2011). The involvement of Thuan Hoa Commune in the participatory poverty monitoring initiative by UKaid with the support of Oxfam and AAV was not known about before or during the data collection process for this study. It only came to light through a recent literature search and will be a valuable source of secondary data. This initiative was started by Oxfam GB, Oxfam Hong Kong and AAV in early 2007. Ten communes in ten districts spread across ten representative provinces in North, South and Central Vietnam were chosen (UKaid, 2011). The data in Table 5.4 comes from Round 4 of the ‘Participatory Poverty Monitoring in Rural Vietnam’. The three previous rounds have valuable data that will be referred to when necessary. Thuan Hoa was also chosen for the collection of data in 2003 by the Poverty Task Force (PTF) for Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPA) in 12 provinces and 43 communes in Vietnam (PPA, 2003). Data from both of the above research studies will be used to supplement data collected during this research.

The management of P135II in Ha Giang Province differs from that of most provinces in that the Department of Planning and Investment (DPI) instead of the Department of Ethnic Minority Affairs (DEMA) has been given responsibility for overseeing implementation. The Provincial People’s Committee (PPC) of Ha Giang has the authority to designate which provincial department is responsible for P135II and took the unusual step to appoint the Department of Planning and Investment (DPI) with this responsibility. During the first field visit to Ha Giang on
the 23/02/11 an appointment was made to interview DEMA. Five minutes into the interview it was explained that DEMA were not the managing body for P135II but will be in charge of the new phase III starting in 2011 / 12. This was surprising news after the long and interesting interview that was conducted on the 20/01/11 with DEMA in Dien Bien province (the other province in this study). A meeting with DPI Ha Giang was organised for the following day 24/02/11 which shed light on the ‘particular’ management structure of P135II in Ha Giang. In Ha Giang instead of the usual CEMA-DEMA-District DPC-Commune CPC management structure for P135II there is a CEMA-DPI-Planning and Finance Section / DPC-CPC structure. When asked about the management responsibility of DPI in relation to P135II the following areas were outlined:

1. consult and help the PPC and Provincial Poverty Alleviation Steering Committee to coordinate P135II planning and implementation;
2. cooperate with other provincial departments;
3. develop and implement road-map for P135II;
4. develop criteria for fund management;
   - evaluate poverty rate
   - survey the quality of roads
   - determine the population density
5. develop Monitoring and Evaluation (M+E) mechanisms;
6. compile management training documents (Interview, 24/02/11).

In many ways this decision by Ha Giang to involve DPI in the management of P135II was logical as DPI is the leading provincial department for other important poverty alleviation programmes in the province such as Sida Chia Se Poverty Alleviation Programme (Chia Se, 2009). DPI is also the coordinating department for the inclusive provincial Socio Economic Development Plan (SEDP) 2006-10 and 2011-15. CEMA does not have the same level of involvement in SEDP or other poverty alleviation programmes. However, the recent decision to revert back to DEMA management for the new phase of P135 is interesting in the light of the advantages of giving this role to DPI. Because P135II is under the central management of CEMA there would have been resistance to the management of the programme by DPI in Ha Giang. Programmes like P135 are zealously
protected in poor provinces in Vietnam and infighting among departments over the management of such programmes is not uncommon (CSA, 2009; Nguyen and Baulch, 2007). Ha Giang took the unusual but logical step to have one Poverty Alleviation Steering Committee for all poverty alleviation programmes instead of separate steering committees for each individual programme. This was reported as being more efficient and conducive to cooperation (Field notes; Interview, 24/02/11 and 15/04/11). In Vi Xuyen District P135II implementation is also managed through a steering committee as it is at commune level in Thuan Hoa and other communes. The steering committee consists of the Vice Chairman of the District People’s Committee (DPC) and the Head of Finance and Planning Section (FPS) (Interview P135 Management District, Ha Giang, 13/04/11). The Vi Xuyen District steering committee coordinates and monitors the implementation of P135II in all communes in the district. Twelve out of twenty four communes plus an additional fifteen poor villages are part of P135II in Vi Xuyen District. Activities that take place in P135II components at commune level in Vi Xuyen District are as follows.

**Table 5.5: P135II Activities in Vi Xuyen District (all 22 communes in P135II) by Component**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Activity and Responsibility</th>
<th>Total Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production Development</td>
<td>Provision of planting seeds, animals, machines and tools (Finance and Planning Section).</td>
<td>12 billion VND ($600,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training on planting and animal husbandry (Agricultural Promotion Centre of BARD).</td>
<td>70 million VND ($3,500)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure Development</td>
<td>Schools (satellite, primary, kindergarten), village cultural centres, bridges, electricity</td>
<td>No figure given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>infrastructure, water, irrigation systems, building markets and health stations (FPS).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
<td>Planning skills for P135II management at all levels (FPS)</td>
<td>No figure given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement of Socio-cultural</td>
<td>67 propaganda and legal classes by legal and social officers (FPS)</td>
<td>2m VND per commune per year ($100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Standards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: P135II Management District Interview, Vi Xuyen (13/04/11).
In an interview with the Commune People’s Committee (CPC) Chairman of Thuan Hoa the management structure of P135II was described as a steering committee (following GoV policy) consisting of 5-7 people from commune and village level. There is a division of responsibilities and regular monthly meetings. At village level the village head and one or two other villagers meet to discuss issues related to P135II when necessary (Interview, P135II Management Commune, 13/04/11). All 15 villages in Thuan Hoa Commune (Case Study 1) are involved in P135II. Activities for the four components of P135II are summarised in Table 5.6.

**Table 5.6: P135II Activities in Thuan Hoa Commune by Component**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Activity and Responsibility</th>
<th>Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production Development</td>
<td>Distribution of seed, corn, rice and fertiliser as well as pigs and other animals. Training on all of the above. CPC and Agricultural Promotion Officer responsible.</td>
<td>No figure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure Development</td>
<td>Roads and Schools. Repairing P135 phase 1 schools and building 2 satellite schools and boarding accommodation. CPC responsible for planning.</td>
<td>No figure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
<td>Technical training on agriculture, animal husbandry and planting Trees. CPC staff get TOT training at district and then train at commune. P135II management training. CPC / FPS / BARD and MPI responsible.</td>
<td>No figure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement of Socio-cultural Living Standards</td>
<td>Legal support and awareness-raising. Scholarships. CPC responsible.</td>
<td>Less than 3mVND per year ($150)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: P135II Management Commune Interview, Thuan Hoa (13/04/11)

Tables 5.5 and 5.6 indicate that all components of P135II are being implemented in Case Study 1. However there are few budgets to help break-down and compare funding allocated to components. What can be deduced from the figures provided is that Component 4 (Improvement of Socio-cultural Living Standards) has an extremely small budget ($150 per year) and that activities are therefore restricted. Table 5.5 provides a revealing insight into Component 1 (Production
Development). $600,000 has been used to procure seed, animals, agricultural machines and tools and only $3,500 on production development training. This when divided among the 22 Communes in P135II in Vi Xuyen District indicates that the provision of seed and farming implements / machines ($27,272 per commune) took precedent over training ($159 per commune). The figure for training is extremely low for a period that spans from 2006-2010. Case Study 2 and 3 are in Dien Bien Province and figures on budgets for P135II components are only available at province (DEMA) level. These indicate that each commune is allocated an average $10,000 for the implementation of the Production Development Component (2006-2010), $35,000+ for the Infrastructure Development Component, $2,500 for the Capacity Building Component and no figures available for the Improvement of Socio-cultural Living Standards. When the Production Development Component concentrates on procurement the funding available for training is restricted. An interview with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in Ha Noi (06/04/11) supports this assumption. All indications from data collected in the three case studies point to a province / district (centralised) control of P135II funding. The consequences of this will be discussed in Chapter 6.

5.2.6 Adult Basic Education and Access and Participation in Poverty Alleviation Initiatives in Thuan Hoa Commune (CS1)
The previous two sections looked at the background and availability of ABE activities and poverty alleviation initiatives with a particular focus on the Case Study 1 area of Thuan Hoa Commune. Having presented the background data, I will now link this to the overall objective of this research investigation. The overall objectives of this study are to:

- Investigate two approaches to ABE / literacy (Reflect and MOET / DOET GoV Adult Literacy Programmes) with a focus on the following:
  1. Curriculum
  2. Methodology
  3. Teacher / facilitator training and methods
  4. Use of local languages
  5. Link to poverty alleviation
  6. Post-course use of literacy by participants and literacy environment
• Explore the impact of two different approaches on participants’ access and participation in poverty alleviation programmes and incorporating the planning and implementation of the following outcome objectives of P135 II.
   1. Production Development
   2. Infrastructure development
   3. Capacity building
   4. Improvement of socio-cultural living standards.

• Look at the impediments to accessing adult education and poverty alleviation resources.

In Ha Giang, Thuan Hoa Commune (Case Study 1) the focus during the collection of data, gathered between September 2010 and September 2011, was on AAV Reflect and P135II. Thuan Hoa Commune was selected because it had both Reflect and P135II, so it was possible to interview participants of Reflect who were living in a commune / village that was supported by P135II. In doing so both elements of the study were examined during a series of interviews. Participants, facilitators / teachers, managers and trainers of both programmes were interviewed. In total 24 interviews using in-depth structured and semi-structured questions took place. These can be broken down as follows:
   • 11 Reflect Participants (in-depth structured)
   • 4 Reflect Facilitators (in-depth structured)
   • 2 P135II Production Development Trainers (in-depth structured)
   • 7 Managers of Reflect and P135II from Provincial, District and Commune / Village level (semi-structured).

In addition seven meetings and discussions took place with a diverse group of people and organisations directly involved in Adult Basic Education (ABE) and poverty alleviation in Ha Giang Province, including Vi Xuyen District, Quan Ba District, Hoang Su Phi District and Thuan Hoa Commune. These were supplemented by observations during field-visits. There was no field visit to Hoang Su Phi District during the data collection period but there were three meetings with
management of the Sida Chia Se (Sweden) poverty alleviation programme in Ha Giang town.

The Reflect approach in Thuan Hoa (Case Study 1) with specific reference to the six study objectives and their impact on the participants’ access and participation in P135II are examined in this section. The other two case studies will be assessed in the same manner. Reflect the torchbearer of the Freirean approach to literacy was developed by ActionAid in the 1990s and introduced into Vietnam by the same INGO at the end of that decade (ActionAid Vietnam, 2008). The Freirean approach adapted by Reflect has at its core the concept of ‘conscientisation’, which refers to the transformation of societies and individuals. The focus is on people’s daily lives as the basis of its participatory pedagogy. Freire believed that the literacy teacher’s role was to facilitate dialogue around themes related to concrete situations and lived experiences, taken from the learners’ daily lives (Freire, 1973; Giroux, 1983; Archer and Cottingham, 1996). Reflect in Vietnam was first started in early 2000 in Lai Chau (now Dien Bien) and Bac Giang provinces. An evaluation in 2002 indicated a high appreciation from both community and local authorities, and ActionAid Vietnam decided to roll out the approach to all their operational project areas including Ha Giang (Reflect Vietnam, 2011).

5.2.6.1 Curriculum (CS1)
Reflect prides itself on the principle of developing a curriculum that is based on real life situations and relevant issues. In order to find out what Reflect participants’ issues are, Reflect facilitators are trained in participatory methodology and skills needed to develop and use Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools and methods. The self-development of the curriculum for all three phases of Reflect starts with the training of facilitators. After completing training, that lasts for up to 15 days (initial training), facilitators are equipped with basic skills to lead Reflect circles. This is an important starting point as Reflect facilitators don’t have the luxury of conventional manuals and primers (ActionAid Vietnam, 2008; Interviews / Field Notes / Observations, 09/11/10-23/07/11).
Questions relating to curriculum development were incorporated into in-depth and semi-structured interviews that were answered by *Reflect* managers, facilitators, participants and P135II managers and trainers (*Reflect* Programme Interviews 13-14/04/11, 6-8/05/11 and 15-16/06/11). *Reflect* managers at district and commune level indicated that the curriculum is based on the needs of participants and that it is never pre-determined (*Reflect* Programme Management Interview, 13/04/11). In Thuan Hoa Commune a *Reflect* circle manager explained that the curriculum is based on images developed through mapping and other PRA methods. Facilitators then use these images as the basis to teach participants how to read, write and count. Learning words and numbers for literacy and numeracy are based on participants’ outputs from the initial series of classes / sessions (*Reflect* Circle Management Interview, 15/06/11). All interviewees at management level in Xi Xuyen District and Thuan Hoa Commune reported that the main *Reflect* activities centred on literacy learning (particularly phase 1), community development and women’s rights.

As indicated in Table 5.6 all four components of P135II are implemented in Thuan Hoa Commune (Case Study 1). The effect of the *Reflect* curriculum on access and participation in these components can be seen in the link between literacy, personal needs / issues and community development. P135II management at district and commune level indicated that literacy (including reading, writing, listening and speaking) in Kinh was advantageous if not imperative for full access and participation in P135II. According to P135II management, in order to understand the objectives and regulations, participate in planning meetings, to take part in capacity building and training courses and improve socio-cultural living standards literacy was essential (Interview P135II Management District, 13/04/11).

*Reflect* by facilitating the development of a flexible curriculum based on the needs of participants provides a level of literacy and awareness for meaningful access and participation in community development according to *Reflect* management respondents (Interviews with *Reflect* Management, 13-14/04/11 and 15/06/11). However, other important elements need to be in place before access and participation can be fully achieved in poverty alleviation programmes. One of the most important elements is the facilitation of open participation by poverty
alleviation Programme Management Units (PMUs) (Chia Se, 2009; CSA, 2009; Nguyen and Baulch, 2007).

Image 5.2: Interviewing a Reflect Participant in Na Lun Hamlet CS1

According to the four Reflect facilitators (R.F.1-4 CS1) the development of the Reflect curriculum is directly related to poverty issues of the participants (Q.4). Ways in which this is achieved are by linking curriculum to community development and everyday living issues of participants according to the four facilitators. Poverty issues include:

- **Health Care:** cause and effect of diseases and health including contraception. Identification of toxic substances including mushrooms
- **Awareness-raising:** domestic violence, gender inequality
- **Income-generation:** agricultural methods, animal husbandry, how to do business, open a shop, go to the market and trade.
Key to the development of a curriculum based on the above everyday living issues of Reflect participants in Thuan Hoa Commune (Case Study 1) is the use of PRA tools such as village mapping, matrixes and poverty trees (see Image 5.1 and Appendix 4) (Interviews R.F.1-4 CS1, 13-14/04/11, 07/05/11, 16/06/11).

Image 5.3: Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Matrix

Source: Co Ke Reflect Circle CS2

The difference between Reflect and the Department of Education and Training (DOET) adult literacy (AL) curriculum development (Q.7) was summarised by a facilitator when she pointed out that the DOET objective is providing literacy while Reflect is literacy and how to use literacy. The curriculum in Reflect is very different as it develops the curriculum based on participants’ needs (R.F.1 CS1, 13/04/11). Differences outlined by interviewees are categorised in Table 5.7 below.

Eight out of eleven Reflect participants interviewed indicated in answering Q.3a on motivations for joining Reflect, that to become literate, was one of the main reasons for taking part. However, all eleven participants interviewed replied that to improve possibilities of income-generation (Q.3c) was the main motivation. Possibilities to get knowledge to set-up small businesses and learn how to
calculate, avail of micro-credit and receive agricultural and technical training were cited by all.

Table 5.7: Curricula Differences between Reflect and DOET AL in Thuan Hoa Commune (CS1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflect Curriculum</th>
<th>Differences with DOET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Based on real life issues and needs and ideas of participants</td>
<td>- DOET uses text-books and teachers don’t use imagination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Time and location flexibility to suit participants</td>
<td>- Reflect facilitators prepare more and work less in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No books, use group-work and games</td>
<td>- Reflect easier to understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Facilitator and participants develop curriculum</td>
<td>- DOET participants just sit and listen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reflect based on participation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Interviews with R.F.1-4 CS1, 13-14/04/11, 07/05/11 and 16/06/11.

The Reflect programme in Thuan Hoa Commune was promoted by ActionAid Vietnam (AAV) and the local authorities as an adult literacy programme with a curriculum that would combine literacy and numeracy with technical skills for farming, ideas on income-generation and the possibility of taking part in the AAV micro-credit scheme. In promoting a curriculum that combined these two elements (ABE and income-generation) participants noted that they were attracted to Reflect. Other motivational reasons for joining the Reflect circle (Q.3) were:

b) to understand more about community development issues (11)  
d) to help younger family members with school work (11)  
e) to communicate at the local market with other ethnic groups (11).

Evidence from interviews in Case Study 1 with Reflect management, facilitators, participants and P135II trainers indicate that a curriculum that combines literacy and numeracy with practical skills and awareness-raising helps participants to become literate and to improve life chance opportunities (Interviews, 13-14/04/11, 07/05/11, 16/06/11). The extent to which the curricula in the ABE approaches in Case Study 2 (Thanh Nua Commune) and Case Study 3 (Na Tau Commune) achieve this will be compared and contrasted with Thuan Hoa Commune (Case Study 1) later in the study.
5.2.6.2 Methodology Used (CS1)

*Reflect* methodology is comprehensively outlined in section 3.3.4 (Methodological Approaches to Adult Basic Education in Vietnam). Based on the theory of conscientisation, pioneered by Paulo Freire, the emphasis of the *Reflect* approach is on dialogue and action, awareness-raising, cooperation and empowerment. Adult learners explore development challenges and find ways to overcome them. These issues become the basis of literacy and numeracy skills. *Reflect* participants are encouraged to use these skills to generate income to improve their livelihoods. This empowering process provides an opportunity to freely discuss any issue including sensitive cultural traditions. The main task of the facilitator is to keep the interactive dialogue on track (ActionAid, 2009).

In theory *Reflect* methodology is ideally suited to marginalised and remote ethnic minority communities like Thuan Hoa. In this study respondents to questions related to methodology used by *Reflect* verify that the approach is based on dialogue / discussion, focusing on participants’ needs and addressing issues related to poverty, income-generation, gender, abuse and promoting empowerment (Field Notes, Interviews, 2011). When asked how *Reflect* adult literacy courses encourage participation in community development *Reflect* management responses included:

- Awareness of issues
- Practical use of vocabulary in the development of the curriculum
- Use of PRA methods such as mapping and diagrams
- Empowerment.

One respondent at Vi Xuyen District management (*Reflect*) level indicated that the use of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methods was key to *Reflect* methodology. The same respondent outlined awareness of issues such as health, income-generation, gender and the law as being central to *Reflect’s* encouragement of and participation in community development. The prioritisation of women, active participation, innovative activities and leadership training were also cited by management as being aspects of the *Reflect* approach that promoted
community and self development in Thuan Hoa Commune (Interview R.M.D.1 CS1, 13/04/11).

The use of a methodology that promotes dialogue, awareness-raising, cooperation and empowerment beneficial to participants’ access and involvement in P135II. Participants in Reflect circles that are located in communes and village where P135II is implemented should in theory be aware and conscious of their rights and entitlements, and have the necessary skills to actively take part and benefit from the four components of P135II. Trainers (APOs) involved in the production development component of P135II in Thuan Hoa Commune acknowledge that the vast majority of training courses are conducted in Kinh, with handouts in Kinh and that a good knowledge of the national language is vital to understanding and benefiting from P135II training. According to trainers this is common practice in all P135II locations in the district and province and not particular to Thuan Hoa (Interview A.P.O.1 CS1, 15/06/11; A.P.O 2 CS1, 17/06/11).

Meetings related to the planning of P135II activities take place at both village and commune level in Thuan Hoa. These meetings are all conducted in Kinh according to P135II management respondents at district and commune level. Reflect methodology encourages dialogue and discussion and participants in Thuan Hoa Commune who were interviewed indicated that Reflect helped them to take an active part in such meetings (R.P.1-11 CS1, 14/04/11, 6-8/05/11 and 15-16/06/11). Meetings for higher management of P135II also take place at district and province level but Reflect participants would normally not be involved in such meetings. It is possible that Reflect management or facilitators could take part in district or provincial meetings but during this study in Ha Giang there has been no indication that this occurred.

Capacity building initiatives with a focus on the management of P135II at district, commune and village level are conducted in the national language and use handouts that need a good level of literacy for meaningful participation (Interview A.P.O 2 CS2, 17/06/11). Although, these capacity building initiatives target management it is possible that Reflect participants, facilitators and managers at commune level and village take part. In Thuan Hoa Commune (Case Study 1) the
Reflect managers at commune and village level are commune and village leaders who are targeted by the capacity building component of P135II. The Reflect manager in Mich B village is the village leader and has attended all P135II capacity building courses (Interview, 15/06/11). Reflect is not implemented at district level only at commune and village level. The programme has however, a management structure at district level like all development programmes in Vietnam.

The fourth component of P135II (Improvement of socio-cultural living standards) has the potential to be closely linked to Reflect methodology. In Thuan Hoa Commune there are activities including legal support and awareness-raising that Reflect participants have taken part in. However, the budget for this is the smallest of all P135II components which limits its scope. This is evident from Table 5.6 where the budget for this component is 3m VND ($150) a year. Like all components in P135II activities are concentrated at commune and village levels and only take place in the district when a number of communes combine for training and capacity building (Field Notes, Interviews P135II Management, Trainers and Reflect Participants, 13/04, 17/06, 14/04/11).

Reflect management at all levels (District / Commune / Village) acknowledge that there are differences in methodology between Reflect and the DOET adult literacy classes (Q.3b). Differences in methodology that have been identified include:

- Reflect uses Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methods and tools such as mapping
- Reflect lessons are based on discussions / group work and use local materials developed and sourced by facilitators and participants
- DOET uses traditional methodology used by teachers
- DOET uses books (Interviews, 13-14/04/11, 15/06/11).

Reflect facilitators are key to the implementation of methodology associated with the approach. All facilitators interviewed verify that they have received comprehensive training in methodology and methods that are vital for the successful implementation of Reflect. A methodology that is defined as
participatory is dependent on methods and tools that facilitate participation. The training of facilitators is only the first step in the process however and in order for the methodology to be effective it must be practiced and implemented (see sub-section 5.2.5.3). Reflect participants (R.P.1-11 CS1) who took part in the in-depth interview that was conducted in their homes in Mich A / Mich B villages and Na Lun hamlet assessed the effectiveness of Reflect as a methodology to teach literacy as being good (10) and very good (1). Reasons given include:

- Good facilitators (teachers) who are young and active
- Use of mapping, matrices, diagrams
- Good atmosphere / relaxed and fun, games, help from classmates
- Learned counting, reading and writing. Improved literacy. Good for people with low literacy levels
- Use of discussion, exchanged and received information
- Learned practical things like how to plant crops and raise animals
- Helped with income-generation and access to credit.

Although all R.P.1-11 CS1 provided a positive assessment of Reflect methodology there were some criticisms and difficulties. One participant complained about the lack of notebooks and pens. Another acknowledged that it was difficult to learn after so many years.

**Box 5.1: Experience of Literacy Learning before Reflect**

*I didn’t attend school at all. Between 1996 and 1997 I took part in a DOET adult literacy class. We got free books and pens. It was held in the summer from June to August and I attended everyday. The content of the course included Vietnamese language learning, reading, writing and maths. It was taught by a primary school teacher who now teaches in Minh Tuan Commune. We had an exam and got a certificate after attending. This was a great advantage when I joined Reflect in 2006 in Thuan Hoa*.

Source: R.P.11 CS1, 15/06/11.

One participant who was the last to be interviewed (R.P.11 CS1, 15/06/11) in Thuan Hoa explained that although Reflect was good in general and especially for
exchanging ideas, the literacy impact was not so good. She reported that not all participants in phase 2 of Reflect could read and write even though they attended phase 1. This particular participant didn’t take part in phase 1 of Reflect because she was already literate after attending a DOET literacy class (1996-7). Box 5.1 above is her reply to Q.2 on her experience of literacy learning before Reflect.

Reflect Participant eleven’s experience of not attending school was typical of the other ten participants interviewed. Seven participants didn’t go to school at all, two finished Grade 1, one attended Grade 3 and one finished primary school (Grade 5). All participants interviewed were women between the ages of 33 and 49 with an average age of 40. Participant eleven, because she was already literate when she joined Reflect phase two was in a good position to make a judgement on the effectiveness of Reflect methodology for the ‘delivery’ of literacy. Her negative assessment on literacy levels was supported by participant six who finished primary school (Grade 5). Her motivation for joining Reflect in Thuan Hoa in 2003 was to improve her literacy level (Q.3a). Her reply to Q.3a was ‘I was able to read and write a bit. Joined for fun and to become more literate but they didn’t teach much of that’ [literacy] (R.P.6 CS1, 07/05/11).

When asked if participants were assessed on their level of literacy during Reflect six participants said that they were but that no certificates were given. Assessment ranged from tests on counting, writing a letter, to filling in a form for the Policy Bank [Bank for the Poor]. Five Reflect participants in Case Study 1 (Thuan Hoa Commune) replied that they had no test to assess their level of literacy prior to or during phases of Reflect. While conducting interviews with Reflect participants in Thuan Hoa Commune (Case Study 1), it was necessary to sign for the small interview payment. It was evident from the great struggle that 64% (7 participants) had with signing their names that writing skills were extremely weak. Many of the signatures were illegible (Field Notes; Observations, 14/04/11-15/06/11). The ability of participants to sign after receiving payment for interviews was almost 100% in Case Study 2 (Thanh Nua Commune) and Case Study 3 (Na Tau Commune). Comparisons between the impact of methodology on specific aspects of literacy learning such as writing, reading, speaking and listening was not assessed in any systematic manner during this study except through interviews,
recordings and observations. In Case Study 1 unlike Case Study 2 it was not possible for the researcher and assistant to attend a Reflect circle (Phase 3). Evidence from participants’ interviews indicates that phase 3 of Reflect in Case Study 1 (Thuan Hoa Commune) is not very active. While there is clear evidence in Case Study 1 that the main aspects of Reflect methodology has been understood by management, facilitators and participants and implemented in Reflect circles, there is less evidence to support its effectiveness as an adult literacy approach.

The Reflect approach places an emphasis on dialogue and action, awareness-raising, cooperation and empowerment. Adult learners explore development challenges and seek ways to overcome them. These development issues become the basis for learners to be taught literacy and numeracy skills (ActionAid, 2009). The successful implementation of Reflect is dependent on the skills of the facilitators and their acceptance of a methodology that is unconventional and at odds with traditional approaches to adult literacy learning. If there is an imbalance in the approach and an over-emphasis on dialogue and awareness-raising and a neglect of the link between development issues and the different aspects of literacy learning, Reflect participants’ literacy levels, particularly reading and writing, could be negatively affected as the evidence in Case Study 1 would suggest. The role of the facilitator is paramount in keeping both aspects of Reflect methodology in sync and vital for the successful implementation of the approach, a balance that according to some of the participants is not being fully achieved.

5.2.6.3 Facilitator Training and Methods (CS1)

The importance of Reflect facilitator training is fundamental to the implementation of the programme. Because Reflect is focused on enabling people to articulate their views, the role of the facilitator is central to achieving this. Reflect circles develop their own learning materials by constructing maps, calendars, matrices, and diagrams or using drama, story-telling and songs to capture social, economic, cultural issues from their environment (Archer and Cottingham, 1996). In order for facilitators to facilitate and encourage the use of these diverse methods and skills they need to learn how to master them themselves.
During the course of this study there have been a number of interviews with *Reflect* facilitator trainers, managers and facilitators. A key *Reflect* facilitator trainer with over 20 years experience and considered by both AAV and CCD as one of the leading experts on the approach in Vietnam was interviewed in Ha Noi and again in Dien Bien. In Thuan Hoa Commune three facilitators were interviewed and one facilitator in Vi Xuyen District. The facilitator in Vi Xuyen has now become a trainer and her insights were much appreciated. *Reflect* facilitator trainers receive comprehensive training before they begin to train facilitators. Data from the above sources in this study revealed that elements of the training included:

- *Reflect* philosophy
- PRA methods / tools
- How to teach without using primers
- How to integrate practical methods into the curriculum
- Self assessment process based on action (R.F.T.1 CS2, 23/07/11).

The different stages of training for *Reflect* facilitators in all communes in Vi Xuyen District including Thuan Hoa Commune (Case Study 1) were described as:

- How to teach adults (Adult Education (AE) methodology)
- Basic and advanced training on Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)
- How to utilise local material and ideas and experiences of participants
- Evaluation.

The methodology used at the facilitator training courses for *Reflect* communes including Thuan Hoa was listed as:

- Methodology for teaching literacy
- Development of teaching plans
- Participatory methodology
- Use of discussion and games
- Lecturing
- Needs assessments
- How to use PRA tools.
The three Reflect facilitators interviewed in Thuan Hoa Commune and the one Reflect trainer (formally a Reflect facilitator) interviewed Vi Xuyen District were all very positive about the usefulness of this methodology, methods and tools. They indicated that they helped both the facilitator and participants to become sensitive to issues and eased language and communication problems between facilitator and participants.

All four Reflect facilitators in Case Study 1 are primary school teachers. Three are female between the ages of 33 and 50 and one male aged 35. Three are from the Tay ethnic group and one Kinh. Three have been Reflect facilitators since 2002 and one for a two year period from 2005-07. The most experienced is now a Facilitator Trainer in the district (Vi Xuyen District) and her insights into the training process confirm the comprehensive training that was reported by the other three facilitators in Thuan Hoa Commune. Initial training lasted for 10 days with additional advanced training ranging from 2-5 days depending on the content. As well as learning about the theoretical aspects of Reflect methodology as outlined above, facilitators in Case Study 1 learned how to use methods to encourage participation and discussion, as well as methods to elicit learners’ needs and progress assessments. Tools and techniques to help implement these methods included, warm-up activities, village mapping, matrixes, charts, seasonal schedules (agricultural) and income and expenses trees. All four facilitators agree that these methods tools and techniques (Q.3d) are useful and all four confirm that Reflect methodology is linked to poverty issues and poverty alleviation (Q.5) in the development of curricula in Reflect circles (Interviews R.F.1-4 CS1, 13-14/04/11, 07/05/11).

Because all four Reflect facilitators interviewed in Thuan Hoa and Vi Xuyen are working within the formal education sector and are trained primary school teachers they provided revealing answers to Q.7 on the differences between Reflect and DOET adult literacy classes. All agree that there are differences while two elaborated to state that the differences are ‘clear’ and ‘many’ (see 5.2.5.1 Curriculum). The Reflect facilitator (R.F.1 CS1) in Vi Xuyen’s description of the objectives of the two programmes is revealing, ‘DOET’s objective is literacy and Reflect is literacy and how to use literacy’. This is a succinct and insightful
comparison. This analysis of the objectives of both Adult Basic Education (ABE) programmes is reinforced when the same respondent answered the follow-up question on differences in the training of facilitators / teachers (Q.7b). She stated that there are ‘big differences’. Teachers have knowledge and methods (from primary teacher training education) and DOET just encourages them to teach adults to read and write. Reflect facilitators get longer training (specifically to teach adults). Both programmes have different targets and objectives. Reflect has encouraged participation by learners more than DOET according to this respondent (Interview R.F.1 CS1, 14/04/11).

When interviewing the last of the four Reflect facilitators in Case Study 1 (16/06/11) all interviews with Reflect participants (11) had been completed. By that time there was convincing evidence of low literacy levels among a sizable number of participants and an attempt to triangulate this evidence was included at the end of the interview with R.F.4 CS1. This facilitator was chosen because she was identified as the facilitator who taught Phase 1 of Reflect to the majority of participants who were interviewed in Case Study 1. She is also the only Kinh facilitator to be interviewed in Thuan Hoa. Her answer to Q.14 is in Box 5.2 below.

**Box 5.2: Reflect Facilitator Assessment of Literacy Levels of Participants**

‘50% are good and equivalent to Grade 3 primary school. Others are lower. Assessments were based on attendance and involvement but not on literacy ability. It would be better to have literacy assessment after Phase 1 of Reflect to see where students stand. Good [learners] participants can get benefit from assessments. Bad [weak] participants need financial support to participate’.

Source: R.F.4 CS1, 16/06/11.

The above statement supports evidence and observations from interviews with participants themselves. As well as posing questions on the suitability of Reflect as an effective approach for literacy delivery it opens up a debate on the importance of the literacy component of Reflect in curriculum development and facilitator training in Thuan Hoa Commune. All four facilitators who were interviewed in Case Study 1 are trained primary school teachers and this provides an interesting contrast to Case Study 2 (Thanh Nua Commune) where local villagers are used as
facilitators for Reflect. The use of local facilitators including health workers and agricultural production officers (APOs, formally agricultural extension workers) has been acknowledged by facilitator 1 (now Facilitator Trainer) in Case Study 1 as a strategy that is being implemented to help with sustainability (Q.13). There are financial as well as Facilitator Training issues associated with this strategy that may be beneficial to the long term sustainability of Reflect in Case Study 1 (Interview R.F.1 CS1, 13/04/11).

Some of the methodology and methods used in Facilitator Training and Reflect circles have been utilised by P135II trainers according to data provided in their interviews. P135II trainers (APOs) interviewed reported that training had the following elements:

- lecturing that presented key ideas from developed material
- question and answer sessions
- handout of leaflets
- group work and feedback
- practical farming methods conducted on site.

What is interesting in the replies received is that training using elements of PRA or other participatory methods was not conducted. When the researcher drew this to their attention, reasons given by both trainers were:

- because of the overload of training content
- takes too much time to use Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) in a 2 day training course
- need more budget and longer training to use PRA
- have been trained to use PRA but don’t use it because of the short course, small halls, level of participants and language differences (Interviews A.P.O 1 CS1, 15/06/11; A.P.O.2 CS1, 17/06/11).

The last reason seems contradictory as PRA is designed to help participants in training courses who have lower levels of education / literacy and transcends languages through the use of mapping and images (Chambers, 2008). It is arguable that Reflect facilitator training and methods would be ideal for the
implementation of P135II training as well as interventions in the other components such as capacity building, meetings for planning infrastructure development and the improvement of socio-economic living standards. In locations where literacy levels are low and communication hindered by language constraints, methodology designed to induce participation is ideal (Chambers, 2008; ActionAid, 2008). The willingness to use this methodology and methods is however questionable with restrictions on time, budget and facilities being cited (Field Notes, Interviews P135II Management, Trainers and Reflect participants, 13-14/04/11, 17/06/11).

5.2.6.4 Use of Local Languages (CS1)
Thuan Hoa Commune consists of a population (4,902) of mixed ethnicity. The majority of the households are H’mong (50%), then Tay (30%) and Dao / Man (20%). There are also small numbers of Kinh and Hoa (Interview, CPC, 25/02/11). The use of language, indigenous and national, in the development, planning, implementation and evaluation of both Reflect and P135II will be discussed in the light of the overall language use in the commune.

In the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Education for All Mid-Decade Assessment (UNESCO, 2008) it was reported that teaching and learning materials have been developed for CLCs in Vietnam to support young adults. The assessment claims that learning material has been developed to meet the needs of ethnic minorities, and local languages have been used where scripts are available. This has been questioned by some researchers, and the disparity between policy and the actual situation regarding the use of culturally sensitive material and local languages in CLCs and ABE programmes is debatable (CSA, 2009; Nguyen and Baulch 2008; UNESCO, 2008b; Baulch et al.,2007; Swinkles and Turk, 2006).

The UNESCO (2008, 219) assessment outlines government basic literacy programmes in Vietnam as covering ‘reading, writing, speaking, listening comprehension and numeracy’. Literacy according to this UNESCO report is assessed by examination in Vietnamese (Kinh) and in ethnic minority languages for which scripts are available. Approximately thirteen ethnic minority languages have scripts. The use and practicality of these scripts are discussed in numerous research papers and reports. Most observers claim that minority language scripts
have been used in a very limited manner and that apart from some information posters and pamphlets, they have not been used effectively (Zolfaghari et al., 2009; Trinh Thanh, 2009; Okukawa, 2008; UNICEF, 2002). All interviews during the course of this study were conducted using two languages, Kinh (Vietnamese) and English. Leading questions were asked in English, translated into Vietnamese, answered in Vietnamese and translated back into English. In total there were 24 in-depth and semi-structured interviews conducted in Thuan Hoa (Commune-20), Vi Xuyen (District-3) and Ha Giang (Province-1). Interviews in Vi Xuyen District and Ha Giang Province were conducted to supplement data from Thuan Hoa Commune. Only six of the people interviewed were native Kinh speakers and only two of these were in Thuan Hoa Commune. Eleven Reflect participants, mostly farmers who dropped out of school at an early age (4) or didn’t attend school at all (7) were the main cohort interviewed in Thuan Hoa Commune. The majority were Dao (5) but there were also Tay (4) and H’mong (2) interviewees. Their level of Kinh varied according to the research assistant’s assessment but at no stage was it necessary to seek a local translator. This is a testament to the ability of the interviewees to understand and speak Kinh. The language used in households among family members was Tay, H’mong and Dao. Kinh was only used in answering questions posed by the researcher and assistant. GoV officials, teachers, P135II and Reflect management from the Tay, H’mong and Dao ethnic groups were better educated and therefore had higher levels of Kinh language ability than the Reflect participants (Field Notes, Observations, Interviews, 02-07/2011).

However, in support of findings by other researchers there was no reference to or observation of material in local scripts in Thuan Hoa Commune (Zolfaghari et al., 2009; Trinh Thanh, 2009; Okukawa, 2008; UNICEF, 2002). Reflect and P135II activities (especially training) in Thuan Hoa Commune were conducted in Kinh even when the facilitator / trainer was from an ethnic minority group and spoke the local language. The only reference to the use of local languages in Thuan Hoa Commune was when some members of the Reflect circle, P135II training course or meeting asked for translations. Reflect facilitators were both Kinh and local ethnic people in Thuan Hoa. The majority of Reflect participant respondents in Thuan Hoa indicated that their first facilitator (R.F.4 CS1) for Phase 1 was a Kinh
teacher working in the local primary school. Facilitators for Phase 2 and 3 were mostly local ethnic Tay teachers and government village officials (Tay). The three Tay *Reflect* facilitators who were interviewed in Thuan Hoa Commune replied that their knowledge of local languages included Tay, Dao, H’mong and of course Kinh. The one Kinh facilitator interviewed answered the same question in the negative indicating that Kinh was the only language she could speak and understand (R.F.4 CS1, 16/06/11). The implications of teaching local ethnic minority adults basic literacy without being able to communicate with them in their own language may have had negative effects on the acquisition of literacy skills in Case Study 1.

All material, information, literacy text-books (primers), GoV forms, certificates, reports and evaluations we came across in Thuan Hoa Commune were in Kinh. There was some information from donors and INGOs in English. At no stage of the data collection process in Thuan Hoa Commune was a poster, leaflet, sign, direction, public notice over the local intercom, in local languages seen or heard (Field Notes, Observations, 02-07/2011). P135II trainers, management and participants all answered that training was conducted in Kinh. *Reflect* Participant 1 (Thuan Hoa) stated that she translated sometimes for other participants seated near her if they couldn’t understand trainers (R.P. 1 CS1, 14/04/11). Lecture style training with handouts was the predominant training method used by P135II trainers in Thuan Hoa Commune. Training held in Vi Xuyen District to support implementation of P135II in Thuan Hoa was reported as similar. However, both P135II trainers answered that training could be improved by diversifying language use and restricting and tailoring the amount of written material and handouts. The lengthening of training courses to facilitate the use of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methods and tools would make training easier to understand according to P135II trainers in Thuan Hoa Commune and Vi Xuyen District. Increasing the training budget and improving training of trainers (TOT) were also suggested as ways to develop training for a new phase of P135 (Field Notes, Interview A.P.O.1 CS1, 15/06/11; A.P.O.2 CS1, 17/06/11).

The practicality and usefulness of using local scripts (where they exist) for ABE and training is not viable in Case Study 1. However, the use of local ethnic minority Tay, Dao and H’mong facilitators / teachers and trainers and the inclusion
of PRA methods would according to evidence from management, trainers and participants in Reflect and P135II help to improve the effectiveness of training interventions in ABE and poverty alleviation in Thuan Hoa Commune.

5.2.6.5 Link to Poverty Alleviation (CS1)
The objectives of this study indicate the importance of the relationship between ABE and accessing poverty alleviation resources as criteria for assessment in this thesis. Reflect has at its core a link to poverty alleviation through emphasising dialogue and action, awareness-raising, cooperation and empowerment. It is a methodology that proports to encourages adult learners to explore development challenges and seek ways to overcome them. These issues become the basis for learners to be taught literacy and numeracy skills. Reflect communities are encouraged to use these skills to generate income to improve their livelihoods (ActionAid, 2009). In Vietnam Reflect began with the dual aim of developing literacy and increasing the participation of marginalised women in community activity. The calculation of family income and expenditure and small business transactions are encouraged to develop numeracy skills, and practice in filling in forms and writing applications relating to participants’ daily lives is promoted (ActionAid, Vietnam, 2009). Reflect is however not restricted to areas where ActionAid have programmes and is implemented by twelve Reflect implementing organisations, including government and local / international NGOs. CCD in Dien Bien (Na Tau Commune, Case Study 2) is an example.

Key to the link between Reflect and poverty alleviation is the training that facilitators receive before and during the development of Reflect circle activities. In an interview with an acknowledged expert and key Reflect Facilitator Trainer Q.4 enquired ‘How does the methodology used in Reflect Facilitator training link to poverty issues and poverty alleviation? It was answered as follows: ‘Reflect encourages the use of internal strength to use available resources to improve life’. The Reflect Facilitator Trainer went on to explain that the development of the Reflect Facilitator Training curriculum is directly related to poverty, community development and everyday living issues of Reflect participants (Interview, R.F.T.1 CS2, 23/07/11).
*Reflect* facilitators (4) interviewed in Thuan Hoa Commune answered the same question relating to the link between *Reflect* and poverty issues and poverty alleviation by stating that *Reflect* methodology:

- helps participants to learn better because of the link to poverty alleviation;
- that the development of the *Reflect* curriculum is directly linked to poverty issues, especially health, contraception, numeracy, income-generation, trading at the market. The analysis of cause and effects of diseases (human and animal), development of poverty trees, village mapping and discussions on family issues;
- and directly related to community development and everyday living issues of participants.

*Reflect* managers (3) at district and commune level indicated that *Reflect* encourages participation in community development (Q.4) by:

- awareness-raising on issues and developing a consciousness of GoV policies as well as a willingness to help each other;
- practical use of vocabulary in curriculum development;
- use of PRA methods such as mapping and diagrams is key to *Reflect* methodology;
- promoting and encouraging empowerment, gender equality and discussion.

*Reflect* participants (11) in Thuan Hoa Commune replied that the link to poverty alleviation helped them to:

- know their rights and entitlements;
- understand community development issues, know about commune circulars (GoV information);
- become empowered. One respondent (R.P. 1 CS1) stated that ‘I am now the key person in the household and my husband and children listen to me. If I didn’t attend *Reflect* I would be under the control of my husband’.

All eleven *Reflect* participants replied that they were aware of poverty alleviation initiatives in the commune (Q.8). However, only six participants interviewed recognised the name of P135II (Q.8a). Three in reply to the same question stated
that they didn’t know the name P135II but that their husbands probably knew. Two participants replied that they knew about a GoV programme to help the poor but didn’t know its name. Eight participants when asked if they knew of ActionAid Vietnam (AAV) replied that they never heard of that organisation (NGO). All eight replied that they knew the classes (circle / group) that they attended and the teachers (facilitators) who conducted them but never heard of Reflect. Participants were interviewed based on a list given to the researcher and his assistant, and information in interviews and cross-checking with facilitators and managers verify that all participants attended Reflect. It is not uncommon in Vietnam that a large programme is known by its local name or by the name of the benefits that people get from it (roof, irrigation, school, chicken project). All eleven participants when questioned received some benefits from poverty alleviation programmes (Q.9).

Benefits from P135II (Q.9a) included:

**Production Development:** Training on agriculture techniques and animal husbandry (6 benefitted) and allocations of rice, seed, fertilizer and animals (goats) (4).

**Infrastructure Development:** Commune infrastructure projects such as roads, bridges, schools, irrigation systems (11). Family benefits included toilets (2), water tanks (2) and roofs (1).

**Capacity Building:** No benefit to participants as this component focuses on village and commune officials. One Reflect circle manager in Mich B village benefitted.

**Improvement in socio-cultural living standards:** School scholarships for children (3), legal support and awareness-raising (0).

Although five respondents (45.5%) reported that they did not receive training from P135II (Q.9a) because they are not categorised as poor, ten (91%) responded that Reflect (or ‘the group’ as it was called by some) helped them in participation in other training courses in Thuan Hoa Commune. Eight Reflect participants (73%) expressed the opinion that Reflect helped them to take an active part in meetings related to poverty alleviation and P135II in their village (Q.10b) and to know their rights and entitlements (Q.10c). All eleven (100%) replied that Reflect helped them to understand community development issues (Q.10e). Six (54.5%) out of eleven Reflect participants took part in specific training courses by P135II (Q.11) on agricultural techniques (seed and peanut planting) and animal husbandry (goats,
pigs). One participant got some money from P135II to buy a goat, which was pregnant, and now has 13 goats. Training courses for P135II which includes technical support for all the above interventions were conducted as lectures (talks) with hand-outs in Kinh by the Agricultural Promotion Officer (APO) in the Commune. Translations were used sometimes for people with low literacy in Kinh and trainers were Kinh and Tay (Interviews R.P.1-11 CS1, 14/04/11, 6-8/05/11, 15/06/11).

Table 5.6 outlines the P135II activities by component as reported by the P135II steering committee in Thuan Hoa Commune. All of these activities were verified in a direct or indirect reference by Reflect participants, facilitators and managers except for the legal support and awareness-raising. The participation of Reflect participants in P135II poverty alleviation activities depended on their poverty status. Participants who were categorised as poor were entitled to training, animals, house repairs and grants / scholarships. Those who were not poor benefitted from commune infrastructure projects supported by P135II. The implementation of the P135II production development component by the District and Commune Agriculture Promotion Officers (APOs) had very tangible links with the literacy elements in Reflect. APOs in Case Study 1 explained that training objectives in P135II were linked to the needs of poor households (Q.6a) and implemented in Kinh (Q.7), using handouts containing 90% pure text (Q.8). When asked how important literacy in Kinh was to understanding and benefitting from P135II production development training both APOs replied that it was very important (Q.9).

Although both APOs couldn’t distinguish in any detail between Reflect and DOET approaches to adult literacy (Q.10) they recognised that effective approaches to literacy (Q.11) impacted on people’s participation in training courses in P135II. Ways in which they impact are reported as: understanding content of presentations and handouts; participation in activities and using PRA methods. The importance of literacy levels for the development and sustainability of skills learned during P135II training (Q.12) by reading technical instructions, obtaining additional information, and keeping up with skills were outlined by both APOs. The district and commune APO’s in Case Study 1 suggested that training could be
improved in any new phase of P135 (Q.14) by: increasing the budget to lengthen training, including PRA and other participatory methods, improving material design to suit low levels of literacy and increasing training allowances to improve motivation and standard of training (Interviews A.P.O.1 CS1, 15/06/11; A.P.O.2 CS1, 17/06/11).

The evidence in Thuan Hoa provides a clear link between Reflect and poverty alleviation. The development of the Reflect methodology based on the Freirean theory of ‘conscientisation’ that advocates dialogue and action, awareness-raising, cooperation and empowerment is ideally suited to linking adult literacy interventions with poverty alleviation programmes. The Reflect programme itself has at its core issues related to poverty alleviation and elements of these are evident in the Reflect programme in Thuan Hoa Commune. However, the practical evidence that Reflect participants in Thuan Hoa have converted this awareness into action and empowerment through meaningful involvement in P135II is less convincing. Cross-case analysis with the other two case study areas in Chapter 6 will attempt to evaluate the practical effectiveness of this link between specific ABE interventions and poverty alleviation programmes such as P135II.

5.2.6.6 Post-course use of Literacy and Literate Environment (CS1)
The post-course use of literacy of the participants of the Reflect programme in Thuan Hoa Commune and the general state of the literate environment in the commune will be the focus of this final section on Case Study 1. Because Reflect is ongoing in Thuan Hoa Commune, and many of the participants have been involved in Reflect circles for a number of years, there will be a concentration on Phase 1 and Phase 2. These two phases are equivalent to Literacy and Post-literacy phases of the Department of Education and Training (DOET) adult literacy phases and therefore comparable. Phase 3 of Reflect also known as the Village Development Club, is reported to be active in Thuan Hoa but this is according to many participants interviewed, limited in scope and activities.

Kozol (1985) maintains that a functionalist philosophy to literacy minimalises participants. According to Kozol functional literacy aims to equip adults with just enough skills and knowledge to function but not develop, and limits adults from
using the world of print as a vehicle for discovering, expressing and enhancing their humanness (Kozol, 1985). The New Literacy Studies (NLS) school of thought views literacy as social and cultural practice (Street and Lefstein, 2008; Street 2001, 1993; Barton and Hamilton 1998; Barton et al., 2002). This body of studies confirms that literacy is more than a set of uniform, technical skills and views literacy as a social practice, situated in discourses, social relationships and institutional contexts. The UK Literacy Working Group (2007) emphasises the need to build a literate environment as more important than addressing individual skills. It sees adult literacy as the invisible glue missing from national plans seeking to address the Millennium Development Goals (see UNESCO, 2008b). The evaluation of the post-course use of literacy and literate environment in all three case studies will attempt to link aspects of the above literature to locate findings in a broader research context.

*Reflect* participants in Thuan Hoa Commune who responded positively to Q.11 (7 out of 11) on participation in training courses conducted by P135II are stating that they have used literacy skills developed by *Reflect*. These training courses such as agricultural techniques for planting rice and raising animals are conducted in Kinh using manuals and handouts. In reply to Q.15 ‘Has *Reflect* and literacy helped to improve your life?’ 100% of *Reflect* participants interviewed (11) replied that reading and writing, involvement in community development and increased confidence have helped to improve their lives. The possibility to obtain books / audio visual material by *Reflect* participants is rather limited. In answering Q12 the majority (8 out of 11) of respondents indicated that the availability of books was extremely limited. A summary of answers includes:

- There is no adult library in Thuan Hoa commune or any of the villages (8).
- There is limited printed material and information available from mass organisations such as the Women’s Union (WU) (9).
- No availability of books and reading material in shops or local markets. Only children’s copy books. Have to travel to Ha Giang provincial town to obtain them (10).
The literate environment as observed during the collection of data in Thanh Hoa Commune is stunted by the lack of reading material. Households (11) where interviews with Reflect participants took place, while having children’s school books had no visible adult material including newspapers and magazines. Because of the remoteness of some of the hamlets in Thanh Hoa Commune, Na Lun in particular, it is very difficult to get to Mich B village or the commune centre of Thuan Hoa to attend AE activities. The nature of Reflect with its emphasis on the self-development of course material by participants and facilitators eliminated the presence of literacy text-books in participants’ households. When asked if there was any reading material in households 75% of respondents replied that apart from children’s school books there were none. TV and radio was common in households where interviews took place but lack of stable electricity restricted use (Field Notes; Observations; and Interviews, 02-06/2011). The location of Reflect participants’ households plays an important role in the post-course use of literacy and the literacy environment in Case Study 1. Of the eleven Reflect participants who were interviewed six (55%) reside in Na Lun Hamlet (see Box 5.3 below).

**Box 5.3: Na Lun Hamlet, Mich B Village, Thuan Hoa Commune**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Na Lun Hamlet is located in Mich B Village in Thuan Hoa Commune. Mich B is one of the 15 villages in Thuan Hoa Commune. The distance between the commune centre to Mich B Village centre is 3km and from Mich B to Na Lun Hamlet another 4km. Walking from Mich B to Na Lun takes about one hour. Travel by motorbike is restricted because of the steepness of the ascent and condition of the small path. There are more than 20 households in Na Lun of mixed ethnicity (Tay, Dao and H’mong). Na Lun has no mains electricity and no school or health centre. The nearest school is in Mich A Village (5km away). Other services such as the Health Centre and Community Learning Centre and market are in Thuan Hoa Commune Centre 7km away. The Reflect Phase 3 Village Development Group meets in the village leader’s house in Mich B village.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source: Researcher’s journal, 06/05/11.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reason why such a large proportion of Reflect participants interviewed in Case Study 1 reside in Na Lun Hamlet is because of low literacy levels there. All participants in Na Lun attended Phase 1 of Reflect which was one of the main
criteria for the selection of interviewees. By walking from the commune centre (Thuan Hoa) through Mich A and Mich B villages to Na Lun Hamlet, during four field-trips, the researcher and research assistant experienced first hand the distances and difficulties involved in such a hike. These difficulties were compensated by the natural beauty of the area and hospitality and kindness of the people. The remoteness of Na Lun Hamlet also provided the research team with an additional level of independence as local officials, commune police, Reflect facilitators and managers were not inclined to accompany us on these challenging trips. Of the six participants who were interviewed in Na Lun Hamlet three were Dao, two H’mong and one Tay. All were women and mothers between the ages of 33 and 49. Three of the participants in Na Lun Hamlet attended Phase 1 of Reflect for six nights a week in Mich A primary school (5km / 10km round-trip) and three in the secondary school in Thuan Hoa Commune (7km / 14 km round-trip) also for six nights a week for one year. Phase 1 of Reflect lasts one year with breaks. Phase 2 of Reflect took place in Mich A and Mich B villages / school and met once a week. The effort and dedication to attend Phase 1 of Reflect by participants from Na Lun is astonishing considering the distance involved for mothers and wives who work the land as farmers.

In answering Q.12 on the possibility of obtaining books / audio visual material in the hamlet all six participants in Na Lun replied that none were available. Only two respondents knew about the existence of a library (Q.12a) for children in Mich A primary school and nobody had heard of the Community Learning Centre in Thuan Hoa Commune. It was also reported by all six respondents that there was no awareness-raising material provided by the Women’s Union or any other mass-organisation. Books (copybooks and children’s books) were available in the commune (Thuan Hoa) but no adult books or material (Interviews, R.P. 2,3,4,5,9,10 CS1, 06/05-08/05/11).
The assessment of the level of adult education resources in the Na Lun Hamlet was recorded as low as 1 (where 10=excellent) and averaged at 2.67. The other five Reflect participant respondents in Case Study 1 averaged at 5.5 in their assessment of adult education resources in Thuan Hoa Commune. When asked how resources could be improved in Na Lun (Q.13c) and the commune in general, replies included: open adult classes here in the hamlet; establish a satellite school in the hamlet and use it for pre-school, primary and adult education; have Reflect here in the hamlet (too far to go to Mich B village); provide books, electricity, TV and radio; more access to resources; mobile library to visit hamlet. The appreciation of Reflect and how it has helped to improve participants’ lives (Q.15) was unanimous during interviews in Na Lun Hamlet but it was evident from interviews that the post-course (Reflect Phase 1 and 2) use of literacy was limited. Reasons can be attributed to lack of resources, activities and remoteness from the commune centre. This extremely basic adult literacy environment has stunted the
possibilities of building on the achievements of Reflect in Na Lun Hamlet. Na Lun is an extreme example of a general trend in Case Study 1 (Interviews; Observations, 24/0211-15/06/11). In all three Case Studies the correlation between the geographical remoteness of households and availability of ABE resources, including reading material is strong. Na Lun Hamlet is the most remote location visited in this study. The four Reflect Facilitators were asked to outline the main difficulties of adult learners in developing literacy skills in Thuan Hoa Commune (Q.11). Responses included: lack of information; Reflect is based on needs but sometimes we don’t have the resources, books and material etc; participants only interested in income-generation and not books to read. In the same question (Q.11a) the same four facilitators were asked to describe the literate environment in Thuan Hoa Commune. Answers included: people watch TV but don’t use literacy a lot; the literate environment is mostly oral/spoken as there are not many books or access to them; people use literacy at the market to look at prices and dates on products and for bargaining. Not many books in the commune. A village library would help as the commune is far from villages and has limited resources. Village loudspeakers used to communicate in Kinh and TV is common; people live independently and have no reading material including magazines and posters. Library is far away and limited. People have to work very hard and don’t have much time. They like to watch TV and listen to songs. According to all four facilitators there is limited use of literacy in households (Q.11b). Literacy use is restricted to listening to the news and announcements, helping children with school work and sometimes filling in forms and writing to the local authorities (Interviews, R.F.1-4 CS1, 13-14/04/11, 07/06/11, 16/06/11).

Although local ethnic languages (Tay, Hmong and Dao) are spoken at home, communication between different ethnic groups is in Kinh. Many transactions at the market/shops and dealings with officialdom are also in Kinh. Forms, notices and signs are all displayed in the national language. As stated earlier there was limited difficulty for the research assistant and researcher to communicate in Kinh with participants, facilitators, commune and village officials, children and villagers in general. The only exception being the very old members of the communities visited. While spoken Kinh was of a relatively good standard and communication in Kinh with the research assistant and researcher did not break down, there was
little evidence that the overall literate environment in Kinh was healthy (Field Notes, Observations and Interviews, 02-06/2011). Primary and secondary data collected in connection with Thuan Hoa Commune indicates that the commune has been active in the development of ABE activities and poverty alleviation initiatives. ABE activities including Reflect and training promoted by P135II have taken place to varying degrees since 2002 and before, and have contributed to improving literacy levels and community development. The link between attending Reflect and accessing and participating in P135II is tangible according to participants, facilitators and managers and trainers of P135II. However, there is evidence from data collected and observations during data collection that the effectiveness and sustainability of these interventions are limited due to a stunted literate environment and lack of opportunities for Reflect participants to attend training and capacity building supported by P135II and other poverty alleviation programmes. Cross-case analysis using data from all three case study communes will be undertaken in Chapter 6.

**Box 5.4: Key Results CS1**

Key results in CS1 indicate that Reflect has been active in CS1 since 2002 and P135II since 2006. Although curriculum, methodology and facilitator training were implemented as recommended by AAV the impact of the Reflect approach on participants access and participation in P135II was restricted by an over reliance on primary school teachers, location of sessions and heterogeneous make-up and mobility of the three main ethnic groups. Limited literacy of over 60% of the Reflect participants and an under-developed and stunted literate environment contributed to the poor awareness and understanding of P135II thus limiting the potential impact of an approach (Reflect) with a proven record for its contribution to community development in Vietnam.

Restrictive funding, top-down planning, didactic methodology and a concentration on community infrastructure in P135II impede the potential of skills gained in Reflect to contribute to P135II objectives. Impediments to accessing ABE resources include limited resources, under-use of local human and material potential and prioritisation of school based literacy to meet GoV UPE targets.
Image 5.5: Interviewing a Dao Reflect Participant CS1

Source: Field Visit CS1
5.3.1 Case Study 2: Thanh Nua Commune - Background Data

Case Study 2 focuses on Thanh Nua Commune which is in Dien Bien District and one of the 112 communes in Dien Bien Province. As with Case Study 1 the presentation of background data will begin with relevant geographical, demographic and socio-economic / cultural information about the province, district and commune, in that order.

Table 5.8: Case Study 2 Location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study</th>
<th>Name of Commune / Villages</th>
<th>Location in Vietnam</th>
<th>Ethnic Make-up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case Study 2</td>
<td>Thanh Nua Commune / Co Ke Village</td>
<td>Dien Bien District in Dien Bien Province</td>
<td>Thai, H’mong, Kho’Mu, Kinh (main groups)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dien Bien is a mountainous province situated in the North West Region of Vietnam. It has a land area of 9,563km² and shares a 360km border with the Lao PDR and a 40km border with Yunnan Province in China. In total the province has nine administrative units, including Dien Bien Phu City, Muong Lay Town and seven districts, with 112 rural communes and urban wards. Topographically the province consists of dissected mountainous terrain with peaks rising to 1,800m. 70% of the land area of Dien Bien has a gradient of over 25 degrees. Dien Bien Phu City, the provincial capital, is situated in the fertile Muong Thanh valley (150km²). Major rivers that flow through Dien Bien province are the Da and Ma (UNICEF, 2010).

The population of Dien Bien Province in the 2009 census was reported by the General Statistics Office (GSO) as 493,000 of which 85% is rural (418,287) and 15% urban (74,720). Ethnic minorities account for 80% of the total and are mainly concentrated in rural districts and communes. Dien Bien Province has an average population density of 52 people per km². This is the third lowest in Vietnam (GSO, 2010). However, within the province population density ranges from 22 people per
km2 in Muong Nhe District to 760 people per km2 in Dien Bien Phu City, with the average in rural districts being round 46.3 people per km2 (PSO Dien Bien, 2009).

Map 5.2: Case Study 2 + 3 and Pilot Areas

There are 21 ethnic groups in Dien Bien Province including Thai (40.5%), H’mong (29%) and Kinh (20%). The proportion of ethnic minorities ranges from 21% in Dien Bien City to 99% in Dien Bien Dong and Muong Nhe districts. The Thai and the H’mong are the most populous ethnic minority groups with the Kho Mu, Dao, Giay, Ha Nhi, Lao and Lu the larger of the remaining ethnic minority groups. The smallest is the Si La with less than 1,000 people of which 200 are living in one village in the remote Muong Nhe district on the Lao / China border. The ethnic diversity of Dien Bien Province is similar to other provinces in the Northern Mountains Region that includes Ha Giang Province (Case Study 1). The coexistence of ethnic groups over a protracted historical period in rural settlements is common in this region. A common pattern in Dien Bien is the location of Thai villages in lower areas near to the commune centre and other ethnic groups situated at higher altitudes (UNICEF, 2010).

Although a poor province Dien Bien has benefitted from steady economic growth since the late 1990s. Sectors such as agriculture, forestry and fisheries, tourism, hydropower and mining have been developed in recent years. According to the VHLSS (2008) the average per capita monthly income in Dien Bien has more than doubled from 224,000 VND ($11) in 2004, to 485,000 VND ($24) in 2008. Even so, levels of income in Dien Bien continue to be amongst the lowest in Vietnam, and well below the national average of 995,000 VND ($50) per month for 2008. This reflects the widening income gaps between regions in Vietnam. The average per capita income in the South East Region is three times higher than in the North West Region (UNICEF, 2010).

Dien Bien Province is strategically located in respect to developing transport linkages and external economic relations with countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-region. The Tay Trang border gate with Phongsaly Province in the Lao PDR was recently upgraded to international status and a new Economic Zone is being built around the border gate (UNICEF, 2010). According to the Dien Bien Provincial People’s Committee (PPC) while the majority of rural communes have roads to the commune centre, only 70% are all-weather roads. 77% of communes have electricity supply from the national grid, but there are many rural households without electricity even in communes connected to the grid. Many outlying villages,
especially the more remote ones, remain outside the national grid. 100% of communes have clinics but only 42% of these communes have reached the national health standards (Dien Bien PPC, 2008; Field Notes, Interviews and Observations, 02-07/2011).

Poverty rates, according to the Ministry of Labour Invilids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) 2008 poverty line, in the North West Region declined from 39.4% in 2006 to 35.4% in 2008 and in Dien Bien Province from 42.9% to 39.3% in the same period (GSO, 2010). Interventions by Government of Vietnam (GoV) poverty alleviation programmes as well as from multi-lateral, bi-lateral and INGOs in Dien Bien Province have helped to reduce the poverty rate. Prominent among the agencies involved in poverty reduction projects in Dien Bien are UNICEF, UNDP, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), European Union (EU), World Bank (WB), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), ActionAid, World Vision, CARE and Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV). The Embassy of Ireland has funded various poverty alleviation interventions including Adult Basic Education (ABE) activities in cooperation with the Dien Bien provincial Women’s Union (WU) in recent years. Key GoV ministries and sub-ministries such as Ministry for Planning and Investment (MPI), MOLISA, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and Committee of Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA) coordinate from central government level with corresponding provincial departments to implement programmes such as P134, P135II and 61 Poor Districts.

5.3.2 Case Study 2: Socio-cultural and Economic Context (Thanh Nua)
Dien Bien Province has seven districts including Dien Bien District. For the purpose of this study Dien Bien Phu City which is surrounded by Dien Bien District and administered by an urban authority will be treated independently. Dien Bien Phu or the ‘Seat of the Border County Prefecture’ is not really a place name. The original village in the valley where Dien Bien Phu is situated was known as Muong Thanh but changed after Auguste Pavie, the French Consul in Northern Lao created a Protectorate in the region in 1889. The purpose of this ‘Protectorate’ was
to control the opium trade in this remote outpost of French Indochina. In 1954 the name Dien Bien Phu came to national and international attention when it was the location of the decisive battle of the first Indochina War between the French Union Forces and the Viet-Minh (Vietnamese Nationalists) led by Ho Chi Minh. In Vietnam the name Dien Bien Phu is synonymous with independence and in France with the end of its influence in South East Asia and the beginning of the end of its importance as a colonial power (Fall, 1968).

Dien Bien District has the largest number of inhabitants (106,390) of all seven districts in Dien Bien Province. This is excluding the 48,836 people living in Dien Bien Phu City. The population of the other six districts average just over 54,000 making Dien Bien District by far the most populous district in the province (PSO Dien Bien, 2010). The close proximity of Dien Bien District to Dien Bien Phu City and its location near to the main border crossing into Lao are factors that contribute to its relatively large population. Another factor is the fertility of the land in the Muong Thanh Valley and other smaller valleys in the area. Dien Bien District has a total area of 1563.1km2 with a population density of 68 people per km2.

Thanh Nua Commune (Case Study 2) centre is located seven km North West of Dien Bien Phu City along National Road 12 and fifteen km from Dien Bien District centre. In order to travel from Thanh Nua Commune to the new Dien Bien District centre it is necessary to pass through Dien Bien Phu City. In this way Thanh Nua is similar to Thuan Hoa (Case Study 1) in Vi Xuyen District, Ha Giang Province. The new district centre replaced the old district centre in 2009 and is located west of Dien Bien Phu City in an area five km from the city boundary. This centre which is still under development is isolated and out of the way for local officials and residents. The creation of new district centres is quite popular in Vietnam at present and part of strategic urban planning in many provinces (Field Notes, Interviews and Observations, 01-07/2011).

Thanh Nua Commune is one of fourteen communes in Dien Bien District. Like several other communes such as Muong Loi, Muong, Nha, Na U, Pa Thom, Thanh Luong and Muong Pon, Thanh Nua borders Lao (Vietnam Administrative Atlas, 2011). Because Thanh Nua is a border commune there were restrictions regarding
data collection in villages striding the Lao border. Along the border there is a ten km restricted buffer zone patrolled by the Vietnamese Border Army. The reasons for this can be explained by the use of the border area for smuggling goods and narcotics from the notorious ‘Golden Triangle’ of Lao, Burma and China (Field Visits, Interviews and Observations, 01-07/2011).

The four main ethnic groups that make up the population (6,726) of Thanh Nua Commune (Case Study 2) are Thai (68%), H’mong (19%), Kho’ Mu (5%) and Kinh (8%) (PSO Dien Bien, 2010). During the first field visit to Thanh Nua Commune (19/01/2011) the research team were taken by the Centre for Community Development (CCD) to visit a Reflect circle in Co Ke village (Thai). In a subsequent field visit (11/03/2011) exploratory interviews took place in Co Puc village (Kho’Mu) with a Reflect facilitator and two participants. It was later decided that Co Ke was more suitable and it was in this Thai village that data relating to Reflect implementation was concentrated. In Na Tau Commune (Case Study 3), where the DOET Adult Literacy classes were conducted, the vast majority of the population and people interviewed were also Thai. Both sets of Thai villages and hamlets are Black Thai and located in two communes (Thanh Nua and Na Tau) in Dien Bien District (Field Visits, Interviews and Observations, 01-07/2011).

The Thai account for 40.5% of the total population of Dien Bien Province. Thanks to the existence of ancient transcripts the Thai have a recorded history and culture. According to these records the first Thai came to Vietnam from Yun Nan Province in China in the 7th century and continued to migrate across the border to the North West of Vietnam until the 11th century. However, many believe that the White and Black Thai in the Muong Thanh Valley (Dien Bien District) are indigenous, with their ancestors being of ancient Tay-Thai descent. There are two main groups of Thai, Black Thai (Tay Dam) and White Thai (Tay Khao / Tay Don). Apart from settling in different parts of the North West and a few provinces south of Ha Noi and differences in dress (women) and customs, the culture and traditions both groups of Thai are quite similar (VNA, 2008, Interviews, 02-07/2011). According to the 1999 census the Thai accounted for 1,328,725 of the total population of Vietnam (GSO, 1999).
With such a large population the Thai are one of the most influential ethnic minority groups in Vietnam. As well as settling in various parts of Vietnam the Thai have also emigrated to France and the USA. It is estimated that there are 20,000 Vietnamese-Thai people living abroad (VNA, 2008).

Thai society is organised in accordance with the *ban* (village / hamlet) *muong* regime. The size of the *muong* can vary but there exists only one central *muong* called the *muong luong* which is in essence a convergence of other *muong*. As a well established ethnic group in the northern mountains of Vietnam the Thai have identified well-positioned areas to establish their *ban* and *muong*. These areas are located in mountain valleys near rivers, convenient for cultivation, transportation and trading. The Thai favour a model of small family units in which parents, children and sometimes grandparents live together. The Thai family is patriarchal and the father is traditionally the family head (VNA, 2008; The Gioi, 2007).
Thai families live in *Nha San* or timber framed stilt houses. The Black Thai in Dien Bien traditionally build three to five room (partitioned from one main room) *Nha San* with the stilt upright pillars buried in the ground. The roof of the Black Thai *Nha San* is traditionally shaped like a tortoise shell with decorations (*khau cut*) at each end of the ridge. In recent times traditional thatch roofing has been replaced by tiles and corrugated cement sheets (VNA, 2008; Field Notes, Observations, 01-07/2011).

Throughout their history the Thai have held on to different forms of beliefs such as the belief that all living beings have a soul (*van vat huu linh*) symbolised by the use of totemic images and totem poles. In more recent times, the Thai, like many of the other ethnic minority groups in the region adapted new forms of beliefs that centred around ancestor-worship, combining this with the traditional Thai belief that the *muong*’s soul is protected by 34 deities called *Phi then*. The *Xen Muong* festival, held to venerate the spirits (*Phi*) who founded the *muong*, and to wish for prosperity and happiness, is one of the major annual festivals of the Thai. Offerings including buffaloes, which are chosen by *muong* leaders, are sacrificed to honour the *muong* spirits (VNA, 2008; The Gioi, 2007).

The Thai in Vietnam have been rice growers for longer than their history has been recorded. Wet rice cultivation in level and terraced fields is common in Thai communities. Thai communities have developed irrigation systems, sowing and harvesting techniques throughout many generations and have accumulated vast experience in rice production. Two rice crops per year between February and May and July and October are common. The buffalo is still used extensively for ploughing, although machinery is being slowly accepted and will probably replace the buffalo in time. Other crops such as corn, cassava and various vegetables are cultivated. Additional agricultural activity including animal husbandry (pigs, cattle and fowl), fishing, hunting and gathering are practiced (VNA, 2008; Field Notes, Observations, 01-07/2011). Traditional handicrafts such as cloth weaving and knitting are still popular and these products are available at local markets and sold to craft shops in Dien Bien Phu and Ha Noi. Thai handicraft is considered high quality in Vietnam and continues to be elegantly worn by Thai women in areas such as Thanh Nua and Na Tau in Dien Bien. Interviews with young Thai girls
during this study indicate that this trend is declining, as the younger generation who move out of the commune to urban areas want to assimilate with other ethnic groups like the Kinh (VNA, 2008; The Gioi, 2007; Field Visits, Observations, Interviews 01-07/2011).

Thuan Hoa Commune has benefited from its proximity to Dien Bien Phu City and has many socio-economic advantages over more remote communes in Dien Bien District. Because of its location along National Road 12 it has access to transportation, communications and other vital services. Co Ke Village is situated between Dien Bien Phu City and Thanh Nua commune, two km off National Road 12 and adjacent to the Doc Lap Martyrs Cemetery, where the remains of over 2,500 Viet-Minh soldiers from the Battle of Dien Bien Phu (1954) rest. Co Ke has a population of 145 people who are all Black Thai (Field Visits, Interviews and Observations, 01-07/2011).

Because of the historical significance and natural beauty of Dien Bien District the tourist industry plays a vital role in socio-economic development. Large numbers of Vietnamese visitors come to Dien Bien to tour the battle sites and pay their respect to the fallen soldiers. Because of its international importance as an historical site Dien Bien District and province attracts visitors from across the globe. French nationals are particularly represented. The airport in Dien Bien Phu City is located near to Thanh Nua Commune and is on the same site as the original military airfield used in the great battle in 1954. Having an airport in such a remote area attracts both investment and tourists. To travel the 500km from Ha Noi to Dien Bien by road takes over twelve hours (Dien Bien PPC, 2008; Field Visits, Interviews and Observations, 01-07/2011).

5.3.3 Case Study 2: Adult Basic Education Activities (Thanh Nua Commune)
This section will outline Adult Basic Education (ABE) activities in Thanh Nua Commune with a special focus on Reflect. Other aspects of ABE including the Department of Education and Training (DOET) / Bureau of Education and Training (BOET) initiatives will be outlined and examined. The role and function of the commune Community Learning Centre (CLC) in coordinating and supporting ABE activities will also be outlined. Finally, training courses targeting adults with a
particular emphasis on P135II will be described. As in Case Study 1 there will be a concentration on reporting information received during interviews and from sources such as local authorities and Adult Education (AE) agencies.

During the first field visit to Dien Bien (19/01/2011) in an interview with the Centre for Community Development (CCD) management that included the CCD director and vice director, an overview of the development of the local NGO and its use of Reflect was outlined. ActionAid Vietnam (AAV) had been active in Dien Bien Province since 1997 working closely with local partners such as the Women’s Union (WU), District People’s Committee (DPC) Dien Bien provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), district Bureau of Agricultural and Rural Development (BARD) and DOET / BOET. Programmes included Reflect (Literacy and Community Development), microfinance, gender, HIV/AIDS, food security and governance. The AAV programme was phased out in Dien Bien in 2004 and handed over to a newly established local NGO called TechnoAid, set up by former AAV staff. TechnoAid changed its name to the Centre for Community Development (CCD) in 2008. CCD expanded its inherited base from 12 communes in Dien Bien Phu City / District to 30 communes that included 3 new districts Dien Bien Dong, Tua Chua and Muong Cha. Staff increased to 14 with funding and support from AAV and CARE (Interview 19/01/11; ActionAid, 2008).

### Table 5.9: Development of Reflect in Dien Bien Province

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Reflect Activity</th>
<th>Agency Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000 - 2002</td>
<td>20 Reflect circles (Pilot Phase). Literacy and Community Development</td>
<td>AAV, DOET / BOET, Research Centre for Literacy and Continuing Education (RCLCE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-05</td>
<td>Expanded to 45 Reflect circles</td>
<td>AAV, TechnoAid, DOET / BOET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-08</td>
<td>Reflect programme stopped</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-11</td>
<td>Reflect programmes re-established and expanded to 30 communes in Dien Bien, Dien Bien Dong, Tua Chua and Muong Cha districts.</td>
<td>CCD in direct partnership with commune CPC with support from AAV and CARE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Interviews with CCD Management, 19/01/11.
A brief history of the development of Reflect in Dien Bien from interviews and documentation can be summarised in the table above. The first two phases of Reflect in Dien Bien follow the same original model used in 2000 when the programme was piloted. Phase 3 is geared to developing sustainability. Phases include:

1. Literacy based on participants’ needs
2. Post-literacy with aspects of community development and agricultural technology / techniques
3. Community Development. Establishment of Village Development Clubs (VDC) using micro-credit interest payments to encourage self-sustainability.

Topics used in the self-developed curricula are decided by the participants following the Reflect philosophy. These include; family health, agriculture, animal husbandry, income-generation, law, gender issues and cultural identity. Ages of participants range from 15-45 years old with no strict cut-off age. However, information from interviews and observations show that the make-up of Reflect circles is dominated by married women from 25-40 years old. Many of those interviewed have been involved since 2002 which would indicate that they began Reflect in their late teens and early twenties (Interviews, Field Notes and Observations, 01-07/11).

Because Dien Bien was one of the original pilot areas for Reflect in 2000 there was a strong initial link to the formal education sector (DOET). The use of primary school teachers as Reflect facilitators was favoured because of this link and continued until 2005. There were also local facilitators from various backgrounds used from the beginning of the programme but the numbers were low in comparison to trained teachers. This has changed in recent years since the taking over of the Reflect programme by CCD and now local facilitators predominate. CCD has developed a direct partnership with the communal Commune People’s Committees (CPCs) and Community Learning Centres (CLCs) with support from the BOET in Dien Bien District and other districts when needed. According to interviews this has helped to create more efficiency and effectiveness (Interviews, CCD Management, 01-07/11; CLC Management, 22/07/11).
In a preliminary interview with the Dien Bien provincial DOET (19/01/11), the vice-director and other representatives of DOET explained the changes to ABE strategy since 2006. Before 2006 adult literacy classes and other ABE activities such as awareness-raising were conducted in commune and village schools in a flexible manner. Since 2006 this has changed to a focus on promoting the universalisation of primary school education that includes young adults (15-25) who dropped out of school or failed to attend. This follows the nationwide Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) strategy and compels the participants to a fulltime school commitment for two years as part of the complementary education programme (see MOET, 2009, 2007, 2003). In those two years participants are fast-tracked to complete the standard five years of primary school. If they pass they receive their Primary School Certificates (Interview, DOET 19/01/11).
Table 5.10: Dien Bien DOET ABE Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>No of Lessons</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1</td>
<td>250 lessons</td>
<td>Vietnamese, Maths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>180 lessons</td>
<td>Vietnamese, Maths, History and Science.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Interview DOET Dien Bien, 19/01/11

DOET receives needs assessments from communes and plans ABE activities in accordance with demand. Teachers are primary school teachers in the selected schools and receive training from ‘core-teachers’ in their school who attend Training of Trainers (TOT) training during the summer breaks. It was stated by the DOET that 25% of all primary teachers in Dien Bien Province are ethnic minority and that these teachers are prioritised for teaching ABE classes. The methodology used is dictated by a strictly set programme with textbooks / primers. According to DOET the drop-out rate is about 20%. The attendance at DOET ABE primary school complementary classes is restricted according to the DOETs in CS1 and CS2 because of the time commitment that it entails. Both DOETs were involved in the development of Reflect and many of their staff became Reflect trainers and facilitators. There was a clear impression during interviews that DOET in Dien Bien and Ha Giang provinces see Reflect as complimentary to their ABE activities and MOET’s Life Long Learning (LLL) strategy (see MOET, 2009). The DOET ABE complementary curriculum according to both DOETs targets adults from 15-25 years old who have dropped out of school, leaving programmes like Reflect and the Women’s Union adult literacy programme to concentrate on adults over 25. Although DOET continues to implement literacy classes using the pre 2006 approach and methods these evening classes are no longer the main focus. In Ha Giang Irish Aid support the Women’s Union who use the old DOET curriculum to supplement their own approach and in CS3 an adult literacy class in the local prison was using the same old DOET approach. Unfortunately it was not possible to observe these classes (Interviews, Field Notes and Observations, 01-07/2011).

The role of the Community Learning Centre (CLC) in coordinating both Reflect and DOET ABE activities was emphasised by CCD and DOET representatives. CCD explained that they replaced their Programme Management Unit (PMU) at
commune level by utilising the CLC. They went a step further by nominating an experienced Reflect facilitator as vice-director of the CLC. In this way the activities of Reflect would be well understood and supported by the commune CLC. The DOET in Dien Bien also acknowledged the importance of CLCs as a support mechanism for ABE activities. It was stated that CLCs assist with gathering statistics and conducting needs assessments relating to ABE and education in general. In Thanh Nua Commune the CLC exists as an organisation housed in a small office in the Commune People’s Committee (CPC) compound. As of yet (20/12/2011) the commune has not acquired a purpose built CLC building with space and resources to conduct AE activities. The Vice-Director (VD) of the CLC acknowledged the vital support that the CLC receives from CCD. This is in the form of training and financial assistance. The CLC is managed by a Board consisting of a Director who is the Vice-Chairman (VC) of the CPC, VDs who are Commune School Principal and VC of Women’s Union (WU), Secretary and representatives of village heads and mass-organisations. The Board meets once a month in the small CLC room (Interviews, 19/01/11, 11/03/11, 22/07/11).

Commune ABE activity in Thanh Nua Commune was described in detail during an interview on 11/03/2011. The vice chairwomen (VC) of the WU and Reflect coordinator indicated that DOET adult literacy classes stopped in 2005 but that Reflect has continued and is still active. The reason given was that there was a change in strategy by DOET who decided to concentrate on implementing the complementary primary and secondary ABE programmes that were part of the MOET 2003-15 Education for All Action Plan (MOET, 2003). In addition official statistics indicated that there was a substantial increase in literacy levels due to the implementation of the recent eradication of illiteracy drives and increased attendance at school. Reflect had been implemented in Thanh Nua since 2000 and had been highly evaluated by MOET, AAV and the Research Centre for Literacy and Continuing Education (RCLCE). As in CS1 Reflect helped to provide a viable alternative for illiterate adults who were not keen on returning to school to attend DOET ABE complementary classes. Other activities include agricultural and vocational training, cultural exchanges and field trips to pilot income-generation schemes. ABE activities take place sometimes in the commune schools, CPC
meeting room and at village level in local houses (Nha San). The commune CLC is not suitable for holding activities other than small meetings.

Adult literacy and post-literacy classes are the responsibility of Reflect while different line-agencies and mass-organisations are responsible for awareness-raising classes. Agricultural training is the responsibility of the Agricultural Promotion Officer (APO) in coordination with the district Bureau of Agriculture and Rural Development (BARD) and provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) (Interview, 11/03/2011). Training supported by P135II capacity building, production development and improvement of socio-cultural living standards components take place in Thanh Nua Commune CPC hall and sometimes in Dien Bien District. Activities include management and financial training for CPC and village staff for the implementation of P135II, agricultural techniques and animal husbandry. Awareness of and solutions for dealing with domestic violence and health issues also take place to help improve living standards. Scholarships for children from poor households to attend school (primary, secondary and high-school) are also provided. Socio-cultural activities include cultural exchanges and the organisation of traditional festivals (Interview, P135II Commune Management, 11/03/2011).

5.3.4 Case Study 2: Poverty Alleviation Initiatives (Thanh Nua Commune)

Poverty alleviation initiatives in Dien Bien District and in particular Thanh Nua Commune include interventions from the Government of Vietnam (GoV) through provincial, district and commune line-agencies, INGOs / NGOs, and civil society / mass-organisations such as the Women’s Union (WU), Farmer’s Union (FU) and Youth Union (YU). In addition several bi-lateral and multi-lateral poverty alleviation programmes have been active in the area in recent years. Because of the significance of P135II to the development of this thesis there will be a focus on its four components. Dien Bien Province has the second highest rate of poverty at 40% in all of Vietnam (GSO, 2010). The poverty rate for Thanh Nua Commune is 24.6% (Interviews DEMA, 20/01/11; P135II Commune Management, 11/03/11; PSO Dien Bien, 2010). In Dien Bien Province, unlike Ha Giang Province (Case Study 1), the management of P135II is under the control of the Department of Ethnic Minority Affairs (DEMA). This is the provincial body that is subordinate to
the Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA) in Ha Noi, which has the main management role in P135II nationwide.

Table 5.11: Overview of P135II in Dien Bien Province

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>No of Communes</th>
<th>Total Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production Dev.</td>
<td>DARD</td>
<td>73 communes in Area 3 (poorest area) and 29 villages in Area 2 (second poorest area)</td>
<td>200m VND ($10,000) per commune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure Dev.</td>
<td>DEMA</td>
<td>Same</td>
<td>700m VND ($35,000) per commune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
<td>DEMA</td>
<td>Same</td>
<td>50m VND ($2,500) per commune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-cultural living standards</td>
<td>DEMA</td>
<td>Same</td>
<td>Depends on commune needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DEMA Dien Bien (20/01/2011)

In an extensive interview with DEMA in Dien Bien (20/01/2011), the programme in the province was outlined by the vice director. She explained that P135II (2006-2010) is the second phase of P135 and was originally implemented from 1999-2005. The components, responsibility and budgets for implementation in Dien Bien province were explained as outlined in Table 5.11.

On average each commune receives 1.3billion VND ($65,000) for the programme cycle. In Dien Bien the management structure from Province to Commune level follows a line structure like in Ha Giang: PPC-DEMA (province)-DPC (district)-CPC (commune). There was no mention of steering committees in Dien Bien but in Thanh Nua Commune the CPC vice chairman (VC) explained in an interview that P135II was managed by a Management Board that consisted of representatives of the CPC, Village Heads, WU, FU and Fatherland Front (FF). Activities that take place at commune level can be seen in Table 5.12 below.
Table 5.12: P135II Activities in Thanh Nua Commune (CS2) by Component

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production Development</td>
<td>Supply of animals, seed and rice. Training and workshops on agricultural techniques.</td>
<td>BARD and Commune Agri. Promotion Officer (APO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure Development</td>
<td>Building village roads, irrigation systems and cultural houses.</td>
<td>CPC in coordination with DEMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
<td>Management of P135II and some technical training on accounting and tendering</td>
<td>DEMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-Cultural living standards</td>
<td>Awareness on domestic and cultural issues. Scholarships for children to attend school</td>
<td>DEMA and CPC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Interview P135II Management (20/01/11, 10/03/2011)

Planning activity for P135II involves the gathering of information at village level by conducting needs assessments. Village Heads then report on the findings of the needs assessments to the P135II Management Board who plan activities in coordination with DEMA and BARD. Because Thanh Nua Commune has only 4 out of a total of 27 villages in P135II it is easier to manage activities than in P135 Phase 1 when all 27 villages were involved. Co Ke Village, where the Reflect circle in Case Study 2 is located, is one of the four P135II villages. According to P135II management in Thanh Nua Commune, meetings take place at village level to plan and implement activities for all four components of the programme. Meetings are conducted mostly in the national language (Kinh) and methods such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), discussion, presentation and lectures are reported to be used. Specialists from the district with the assistance of CPC staff conduct the training courses (Interview P135II Management, 20/01 and 10/03/2011).

Other poverty alleviation initiatives that have taken place in Thanh Nua Commune include support from GoV National Targeted Programmes (NTPs) such as P134 and P129 as well as interventions by AAV, CARE, EU, DANIDA, JICA and UNICEF. These interventions cover a large scope of sectors including, housing, health care, income-generation, agricultural development, infrastructure and
education. All have been conducted in partnership with Thanh Nua CPC and in coordination with provincial line departments.

5.3.5 Adult Basic Education and Access and Participation in Poverty Alleviation Initiatives in Thanh Nua Commune (CS2)

This section will mirror section 5.2.5 in Case Study 1 (Thuan Hoa Commune) and in a similar fashion focus on the six study objectives with particular reference to Thanh Nua Commune and Dien Bien District. The six objectives that spotlight structures of ABE programmes such as Reflect and DOET will be examined with a particular focus on the four components of P135II as implemented in Thanh Nua Commune (Case Study 2) under the guidance, support and supervision of Dien Bien District and Dien Bien Province. These four components of P135II are:

1. Production Development
2. Infrastructure Development
3. Capacity Building
4. Improvement of socio-cultural living standards.

In Dien Bien Province, Dien Bien District and Thanh Nua Commune (Case Study 2) the data collection process focused on information gathered between September 2010 and September 2011. Thanh Nua Commune was selected because it has both Reflect and P135II. Not all villages in Thanh Nua are involved in P135II and it was necessary to locate a village that was part of both programmes. With the assistance of the Centre for Community Development (CCD) and the Commune People’s Committee (CPC) in Thanh Nua Commune, Co Ke Village was chosen. Participants of Reflect who are living in a village (Co Ke) that receives support from P135II were interviewed using the same in-depth structured interviews as in the other two case studies. In addition facilitators, trainers and managers of both Reflect and P135II were interviewed. The following is a break-down of the number and type of interviews that were conducted in Case Study 2 (Thanh Nua Commune):

- 7 Reflect Participants (in-depth structured)
- 1 Reflect Facilitator (in-depth structured)
- 1 Reflect Facilitator Trainer (in-depth structured)
In addition there were lengthy interviews with the provincial Department of Education and Training (DOET) and Department of Ethnic Minority Affairs (DEMA) during the first field visit to Dien Bien (19-20/01/2011). Because Case Study 2 and 3 are both in Dien Bien District some interviews with provincial and district management are relevant to both cases. Case Study 3 (Na Tau Commune) differs from case study 1 and 2 in that it focuses on DOET adult literacy interventions and not Reflect. All three cases (communes) have P135II as the main poverty alleviation initiative being implemented.

5.3.5.1 Curriculum (CS2)

In Thanh Nua Commune questions relating to curriculum development were incorporated into in-depth and semi-structured interviews that were administered to Reflect managers, facilitators and facilitator trainers (TOT), participants and P135II managers, trainers and beneficiaries. The development of curricula in Reflect is individual and dependent on the real life situations and relevant issues of the participants (Duffy et al., 2009; ActionAid Vietnam, 2008; Archer and Cottingham, 1996). In theory no two Reflect circles should have the same curriculum. Themes and issues could be similar but individual circumstances and needs dictate what is learned and discussed in individual Reflect circles. Groups develop their own learning material by constructing maps, calendars, matrixes, and diagrams or using drama, story telling and songs to capture, social, economic, cultural and political issues from their environment (Archer and Cottingham, 1996; Interviews, Field Notes and Observations 19/01-23/07/2011).

In an interview with one of the most experienced Reflect facilitator trainers (TOT) in Vietnam an insight into the role facilitators play in the facilitation of curriculum development was revealing (Interview, R.F.T.1 CS2, 23/07/11). Her opinion was that, because facilitators learn about Reflect philosophy, PRA methods / tools, how to teach without using primers and how to integrate practical methods into
curriculum development they have the insights, skills and tools to help participants develop curricula. The differences between Reflect and traditional curricula development by DOET was outlined by the Reflect Facilitator Trainer (Q.7) as ‘Reflect adapts to learners’ needs and includes elements of community development in its curriculum while DOET has a fixed curriculum using primers’. It is worth noting that this particular Reflect Facilitator Trainer spent many years working with the DOET Adult and Continuing Education section in Dien Bien Province. The Reflect Facilitator in Co Ke Village expressed the differences in curriculum development between Reflect and DOET (Q.7) as:

DOET has manuals and standard textbooks while Reflect is based on the needs of participants. Reflect has a participatory curriculum and is more flexible than DOET. Reflect encourages empowerment and has a lot of practical methods and tools (Interview, R.F.1 CS2, 02/07/11).

The above differences in curriculum development between Reflect and DOET were verified in interviews with Reflect management at commune / village level in Thanh Nua Commune. Differences included (Q.3) ‘Reflect has no books like DOET and is more flexible and based on the needs of participants who learn things that they can apply’ and ‘DOET uses text-books and in Reflect this is optional’ (Interviews, 11/03/1).

The Researcher was invited to attend a Phase 3 Reflect circle in Co Ke Village (19/01/11) and observations back-up the above information on Reflect curriculum content. The circle was facilitated by the same facilitator (R.F.1 CS2) who was later interviewed on 02/07/11, and took place in a traditional Black Thai ‘Nha San’ (stilt-house). Fourteen Black Thai women attended along with some small children (see Image 5.7). The content of the session focused on discussing agricultural and animal husbandry models that included rice production, pig, fish and chicken raising. The circle was divided into two groups and with the aid of large sheets of paper and markers presentations were made by selected representatives in Vietnamese. Pig raising was seen by the majority of Reflect participants in this circle as being the most effective income-generation method for Co Ke Village. The facilitator helped with the organisation of the discussion and commented on the presentations. Presentations were organised on matrixes developed using
PRA methods. Some translations in Thai were used but most of the discussion was in Vietnamese.

### Table 5.13: Objectives and Curriculum Content of Reflect Phases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflect Phase</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Curriculum Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1</td>
<td>Development of literacy based on the needs of participants</td>
<td>- Selection of relevant issues and themes using PRA methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Learning of words associated with issues and themes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Basic practical use of literacy and numeracy for real life situations based on selected issues and themes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>Literacy and Community Development</td>
<td>- Utilisation of basic literacy to discuss and understand community development issues and develop relevant technical skills to improve living standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>Establishment of Village Development Clubs</td>
<td>- Sustain and develop awareness and skills through regular circle meetings and managing micro-credit for personal and community benefit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Interviews with Reflect management, facilitators and participants (19/01/- 23/07/2011).

Participants sat in a circle while the facilitator stood at head of the room, beside an up-turned table, that improvised as a presentation board. Sections of the session were filmed and photographed by the researcher (Observations, 19/01/11).

According to CCD there has been no real difference in the method of curriculum development between now and 2000 when Reflect was first introduced into Thanh Nua Commune and Dien Bien District. Because Thanh Nua was one of the pilot communes for Reflect there has been an almost unbroken connection with the programme since its inception in Vietnam. The handover to TechnoAid and CCD did not influence the methods to develop curricula (Interviews with Reflect management, 19/01/11 and 22/07/11). The three main phases in the Reflect programme have different objectives and these influence the curriculum.
development of each phase according to CCD and commune / village *Reflect* management sources (see Table 5.13).

According to *Reflect* management in Thanh Nua Commune the popular curricular activities in circles in the commune are developed around literacy training, community development issues such as health care, income-generation and animal husbandry. Women’s issues such as domestic violence and equal rights are also popular choices as the majority of participants are female adults. Microfinance and how to maximise benefit from involvement in micro-credit schemes is also built into the curriculum (Interview, 22/07/2011). Other curricular activity mentioned in interviews with *Reflect* management, participants and facilitators in Thanh Nua Commune are cultural games, songs, environmental issues, child care and family planning (Interviews with *Reflect* Management, Facilitators and Participants, 19/01/-23/07/2011).

All participants’ (7) responses to Q.3 on their main motivation for joining the *Reflect* circle was (a) to become literate / learn how to read and write. In a value judgement on the effectiveness of *Reflect* (Q.7) all respondents (7) gave it the second highest value possible (good). There may be some bias in this response as the programme curriculum was developed in theory by the participants themselves and based on their needs. Other motivational reasons cited by all seven respondents to Q.3 were:

a) To understand more about community development issues (7 / Yes)
b) To improve possibilities of income-generation for you and your family (7)
c) To help younger members of your family with school work (7)
d) To communicate at the local market and with other ethnic groups (7).

Because all seven *Reflect* participants confirmed (Q.4) that they have completed Phase 1 and 2 and are now in Phase 3 of *Reflect* there is an implication that they were satisfied with the curriculum developed in the circle and that the motivational reasons for joining the Co Ke Village *Reflect* circle were still strong. Phase 3 of *Reflect* meets as a group (circle) in Co Ke Village (Q.5), twice (6), or three times (1) a month according to the seven respondents. This is verified by *Reflect* management and the facilitator (R.F.1 CS2) and is testament to the momentum
and consistency of the circle which can be interpreted as a positive reflection on the relevance of the curriculum.

P135 management and trainers indicated that any adult literacy curriculum that helps participants understand the contents of training presentations, handouts and uses participatory methods such as PRA is of great benefit to achieving training objectives for the Production Development Component of P135II (Interviews with P135II management and trainers, 10/03 and 22/07/2011). The Reflect curriculum developed by the participants with technical assistance from facilitators covers all these areas. P135 II management in Thanh Nua Commune described P135II component activity as covering areas such as animal supply and agricultural training, infrastructure development such as roads, irrigation systems, cultural house construction, capacity building that includes various technical skills and awareness-raising on social and cultural issues (see Table 5.12). Although the P135II trainers (APOs) were not aware of the differences in approaches to literacy teaching (Q.10) they both evaluated the importance of literacy in Kinh as being very important (top evaluation) in understanding and benefiting from P135II training courses (Q.9). Reasons given were that in order for participants to understand trainers (in Kinh) and read handouts it was necessary to be literate (Interviews A.P.O.1 CS2, 01/07/11; A.P.O.2 CS2, 22/07/11).

As well as providing participants with literacy, the Reflect curriculum provides practical skills and knowledge on farming techniques and animal husbandry that benefit participants when attending training for the P135II Production Development Component. In theory a curriculum that encourages discussion and awareness-raising on issues as diverse as family health care, domestic violence, income-generation, credit management and cultural appreciation, in order to empower Reflect participants, can be adapted for participation in all four components of P135II. Knowledge and awareness of personal and community development issues can help to raise and articulate issues at planning meetings and in participation and supervision of poverty alleviation programmes such as P135II. Evidence from Case Study 2 (Thanh Nua Commune) indicates that all these prerequisites for meaningful participation of Reflect participants in P135II are
present but similar to Case Study 1 there is less evidence that access to P135II matches the ability to participate.

5.3.5.2 Methodology Used (CS2)

The link between the Reflect methodology as implemented in Thanh Nua Commune and the four components of P135II will be examined in this section. Aspects of the Reflect approach that facilitate access and participation in P135II will be examined using evidence from data collected during interviews in Thanh Nua Commune, Co Ke Village, Dien Bien District and Dien Bien Province. Evidence from Co Ke village where Reflect and P135II are implemented will be of particular significance to the findings from this section.

Responses to questions related to the methodology used by Reflect in Thanh Nua Commune confirms that the approach is based on dialogue / discussion, focusing on participants’ needs and addressing issues related to poverty, health care, family economics, legal issues and women’s rights. When asked how Reflect adult literacy courses encourage participation in community development management responses included:

- awareness of issues; from sharing experiences and raising capacity on hygiene, women’s issues and health care;
- practical use of vocabulary in the development of curricula;
- use of PRA methods such as mapping and diagrams;
- empowerment (Interviews, Reflect Management, 22/07/11).

Thanh Nua Commune Reflect management described Reflect methodology as an approach that uses participatory methods and incorporates the experience of participants by applying Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and tools for literacy and community development (Interview, 22/07/11). The PRA approach is in essence participatory and encourages the sharing of knowledge, training, skills, ideas, insights, methods and material as well as responsibility and decision making between individuals and organisations / programmes (Chambers, 2008). This approach is sometimes confused with the methods and tools such as time lines, trend and chart diagrams, wealth and well-being ranking, seasonal
diagramming, Venn diagrams, casual linkage diagrams, and proportional piling that assist rural populations to express their ideas and insights. In this sense methodology has a more philosophical meaning, and refers to the paradigm that underpins the approach. We can see from the importance given to PRA for the development of Reflect methodology that they both belong to the same paradigm, or body of complex beliefs and worldviews. Data collected in Thanh Nua Commune in interviews with Reflect management, facilitator trainers and facilitators provides ample evidence that this is the case and is triangulated in interviews with Reflect participants and observations by the research team while attending a Reflect circle in Co Ke Village (Interviews, Reflect Management, Facilitators and Participants; Field Notes; Observations, 19/01/11-22/07/11. However, the paradox of expecting the same participatory principles in poverty alleviation programmes that are more restrictive and less inclusive may provide valuable evidence and insights on tangible levels of empowerment provided by Reflect in ethnic minority communes such as Thanh Nua.

According to Aderinoye and Rogers (2005) the Reflect approach links learning to empowerment, and strengthens the voice of the poor in education decision making at all levels. Aderinoye and Rogers explain that the Reflect approach was originally associated with adult literacy but has developed as a tool to develop people’s capacity to communicate through whatever medium is most relevant to them (Aderinoye and Rogers, 2005). Reflect in its purest form creates a democratic space where people can analyse issues for themselves, and is the basis for mobilisation, which enables them to strengthen their own organisation and capacity to advocate for themselves at all levels (Duffy et al., 2009). This evaluation of the methodology used in CS2 will attempt to link the above literature to the context of this particular study.

The highly experienced Reflect facilitator (R.F.1 CS2) in Co Ke Village, Thanh Nua Commune responded to Q.6a on the impact of Reflect on access and participation in P135II, stating that Reflect participants get to know and understand P135II in circles and that the capacity building component of P135II targets village leaders who are also members of the circle. In this way capacity building skills learned are shared with other Reflect participants and there is an open information flow on
P135II activities. As a village leader himself he feels responsible to pass on all information on poverty alleviation programmes to all village members. The Reflect circle in Co Ke village facilitates this and he reports that the methodology and ethos of participation helps create an understanding and awareness among members that provides them with advantages over other villagers (Interview, R.F.1 CS2 02/07/2011).

All seven Reflect participants (100%) in Co Ke village who were interviewed expressed their appreciation of the effectiveness of Reflect methodology to teach literacy (Q.7) by evaluating it as good (second highest evaluation). All seven were familiar with poverty alleviation programmes in Thanh Nua Commune (Q.8) and all confirmed that their involvement in Reflect helped them to access and participate in P135II and other poverty alleviation programmes in Co Ke Village and Thanh Nua Commune (Q.10). As revealed from the data collected in interviews with Reflect participants there is strong evidence that the methodology applied in Reflect in Co Ke Village has been beneficial in teaching adult literacy, providing awareness on a range of issues and practical skills in animal husbandry and agricultural techniques as well as assisting in access and participation in P135II and other poverty alleviation programmes (Interviews with Reflect Participants, 31/05/11, 02/07/11, 22/07/11).

In comparison to some of the criticisms of Reflect as a methodology to teach literacy in CS1, in CS2 there was an almost unanimous praise of the approach in all interviews. Reasons for this may stem from the application of the approach by a highly trained local ethnic minority facilitator from Co Ke village whose understanding and belief in the approach created positive experiences for participants. The link between the implementation of the Reflect approach using PRA methods by locals with no teaching background will be examined in the following section and referred to later in the concluding chapters. The number of interviews with Reflect facilitators in CS2 is limited to one because the same facilitator has been in place since the formation of the Reflect circle in Co Ke village in 2000. While this limits the facilitator sources in CS2 it creates a basis for comparative analysis with CS1 where there have been four facilitators (all primary teachers) used during a similar period.
5.3.5.3 Facilitator Training and Methods (CS2)

The training of motivated facilitators and use of participatory methods is central to all Reflect programmes according to Jude Fransman (2008). Facilitators in Vietnam attend an initial ten to twelve day training course, followed by a regular sharing and training workshops, as well as two five-day advanced refresher training courses (ActionAid Vietnam, 2008). According to the UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning (2008) the following content is emphasised during Reflect Facilitator training in Vietnam:

- fundamentals of adult education including curriculum content, adult teaching and education methodologies, management of adult learning characteristics;
- community development and gender issues (equity);
- use of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools;
- necessary linkages and networks for conducting the programmes;
- participatory monitoring and evaluation of adult literacy programmes. In-house and actual field practice on all the technical content (UIL, 2008)

In 1999 ActionAid Vietnam (AAV) selected a number of suitable candidates to attend a Reflect Facilitator Trainers (TOT) training course in the Philippines. Among those selected, was the Reflect Facilitator Trainer (R.F.T.1 CS2) who is also AAV Coordinator with CCD in Dien Bien Province. In an in-depth interview with this key Reflect Facilitator Trainer (23/07/2011) aspects of this initial training were described. Because the participants from Vietnam had little experience and understanding of Reflect she reported that they had to learn about:

- Freirean philosophy and pedagogy;
- PRA methods / tools;
- how to teach adults without manuals and primers;
- how to integrate practical methods into curricula;
- and the use of self-assessment based on action.

The course in the Philippines lasted for 8 days and was conducted by Reflect TOT experts from India, Thailand, Nepal and England. Trainers from Vietnam then used what they learned in the Philippines to train Reflect Facilitators in different
provinces in Vietnam including Dien Bien and Ha Giang. Methodology and methods were identical and initial course duration was from 10-12 days. Training in needs assessments was also included in order that new Reflect Facilitators could assess learners’ needs. PRA tools that were taught included matrixes, problem and income / output trees, village mapping and strengths and weaknesses analysis (Interview, R.F.T.1 CS2, 23/07/2011).

The Reflect facilitator (R.F.1 CS2) interviewed in Co Ke Village, explained that since 2000 he received two weeks initial training followed by many regular short training courses. During the first two months facilitators had regular meetings with substantial support from AAV. Facilitator observation during the facilitation of new circles took place in Co Ke and other villages in Dien Bien. Feedback was given and peer-experience sharing by facilitators was encouraged. He also took part in three PRA advanced training courses and a workshop on Reflect in Ha Noi. This indicates the thoroughness of the training that Reflect facilitators receive and the specific training that this particular facilitator in Co Ke village benefited from (Interview, R.F.1 CS2, 23/07/2011). During this study the researcher and research assistant were invited to observe a Phase 3 Reflect circle in Co Ke Village (19/01/11) which was facilitated by the interviewed facilitator. The presence of a foreign researcher in the circle had an effect on the dynamics of the group but not to the extent that it was intrusive. By observing from outside the circle, and at a discrete distance, it was possible to limit the disruption as much as possible. The circle was facilitated in Kinh (Vietnamese) and evidence of participatory methodology including PRA was clear to see. There were a number of matrixes and charts hanging on the walls, participants sat in a circle on the floor, using notebooks and pens on low tables, and presentations were prepared using group discussion and large sheets of paper (see Image 5.7). A question and answer session, led by the facilitator, concluded this session that compared agricultural and animal husbandry models. There were no books, text-books, manuals or written material evident apart from the AAV awareness-raising posters and material developed by the group (Observation, 19/01/11).

Fransman (2008) in a comparative research conducted on Reflect in Vietnam and Tanzania remarked that Reflect is one of the few adult literacy initiatives that
promote a professionalised and sustainable source of adult literacy facilitators. Her study recommends that movement towards the training of local facilitators and away from the reliance on outside primary teachers (as in CS1) should be put in place. Other research in Vietnam indicate that not all facilitators follow the Reflect methodology and it is therefore vital that facilitators are carefully selected, monitored and supported (Trinh Thanh, 2009). Findings in Dien Bien during this study support this and are evident in interviews with Reflect management, facilitators and the key Facilitator Trainer (Interviews, 19/01-22/07/11).

In Vietnam adult literacy is traditionally taught by primary school teachers. When Reflect was piloted in Dien Bien by AAV in 2000 with the support of MOET / DOET and the Research Centre for Literacy and Continuing Education (RCLCE) it was stipulated (as in other provinces including Ha Giang) that primary school teachers as well as suitable local ethnic minority villagers should be used as Reflect Facilitators. This policy continued in Dien Bien until the end of the Pilot Phase in 2002 when a review of the programme suggested that local ethnic facilitators were better equipped and more flexible for implementing Reflect methodology and methods. Local facilitators were also identified by CCD, when the programme was revitalised in 2008, as a sustainable trained resource for the reintroduction of Reflect. Many of the teachers who were originally trained in 2000 had moved on to other communes by 2008 (Interviews, 19/01-23/07/2011). The influence of DOET / BOET on the management, planning, facilitation and monitoring of Reflect in Dien Bien is minimal since 2008 and in stark contrast to Ha Giang in Case Study 1 (Thuan Hoa). The effects of this influence by DOET / BOET on Reflect will be examined in more detail in Chapter 6.

The Reflect facilitator interviewed in Co Ke Village (02/07/2011) stated that local facilitators combine the training they receive from Reflect with their community knowledge and cultural experience. Many of the primary school teachers in the commune are from outside the area and not members of the local Thai / Kho Mu or H’mong ethnic groups. CCD (Reflect) management stated that all facilitators are now local people recruited from the local community. This is more sustainable and efficient according to CCD management (Interview, 22/07/2011). The interviews with the seven Reflect participants in Co Ke Village confirm that the Reflect circle
is facilitated by a local Thai farmer (Q.6). When asked about the effectiveness of the Reflect programme (Q.7) all seven participants give it the second highest value (good) and three state that the reason why it is effective is because of the attention, skill and knowledge of the facilitator. The other four state, that the reason why Reflect is ‘good’ is because they can now read and write. This can also be interpreted as a direct result of good facilitation (Interviews, 31/05-02/07/2011).

In the interview with Reflect management in Thanh Nua Commune and Dien Bien District, Q3c inquires if there are differences in the training of facilitators in Reflect and DOET. Respondents at both levels of management confirm that there are and state that Reflect has more training and at more regular intervals. Reflect circle management in Thanh Nua Commune confirm in answering Q.5b that local facilitators and not primary school teachers facilitate Reflect circles in the commune. Reasons are explained as:

Local facilitators are not pedagogically trained so it is easier for them to adapt to Reflect methodology and methods. Teachers are not suitable for facilitating Reflect. Local facilitators learn new methods quicker than teachers and are a more sustainable resource than teachers who are mainly not from the local ethnic group or commune. Teachers don't want to get involved in community development projects. They are not interested generally and too busy. (Interview, R.C.M. CS2, 22/07/11)

The above statement by Reflect circle management in Thuan Hoa Commune indentifies some of the advantages of using local facilitators. The provision of training for these local facilitators is vital as many have no previous experience in facilitating groups and teaching literacy. Evidence from Case Study 2 indicates that training of facilitators is a priority of Reflect management at district (CCD) and commune level. This training is systematic and regular, based on the principles of Reflect and incorporating the use of PRA methodology and tools. By building the capacity of local facilitators CCD with the support of AAV is providing a sustainable human resource for the implementation and development of its Reflect programme (Interviews; Observations; Field Notes; Video; Photos, 19/01/-22/07/11).
5.3.5.4 Use of Local Languages (CS2)

Thanh Nua Commune has three main ethnic minority groups, Thai, Kho Mu and H'mong. The population of the commune is 6,726. The majority of the ethnic minority population are Black Thai (68%), followed by H'mong (19%) and Kho Mu (5%). Because of its proximity to Dien Bien Phu City there are a sizable number of Kinh people (8%) living in the commune. During the course of conducting Case Study 2 the majority of the local authority and Reflect management / participants who were interviewed were Thai.

Reflect circles are conducted by local facilitators in Kinh and discussions and material developed during activities are in Kinh. This is to encourage the development of literacy in Kinh, the national language. In Co Ke Village the Reflect facilitator is a local Thai farmer who has been implementing Reflect in the village since 2000. In answering Q.12c on the advantage of knowing local languages for facilitators, he (R.F.1 CS2) replied that it was very important. Expanding on this he said that being from a local ethnic group was a big advantage especially for facilitating phase 1 of Reflect. Phase 1 of Reflect is the basic literacy component of the programme and the literacy levels of participants are in general very low. Knowing Thai helps when participants have difficulties and translations can help to clarify words and terms in Kinh, he explained. Another aspect of local language knowledge and use is the close connection that it has with the culture, and according to R.F.1 CS2 in Co Ke Village this creates a better understanding of the customs and cultural sensitivities. People will not return to the circle if they are embarrassed or insulted even by mistake, he explained (Interview, R.F.1 CS2, 02/07/2011). In addition, the use of local facilitators avoids the necessity of sometimes using local ethnic minority assistants to help Kinh facilitators according to an interview with the Facilitator Trainer. Having one local facilitator is more effective according to this source (Interview, R.F.T.1 CS2, 23/07/2011).

Training courses conducted by P135II are in Kinh and information and meetings connected to the programme are also delivered in the national language. When necessary, local leaders translate for other participants who don’t understand. During training courses 80% of handout content contain pure text in Kinh with 10% diagrams / matrixes / tables and 10% technical instructions, according to the
Agricultural Production Officer (APO) in Thanh Nua Commune (Interview, A.P.O.2 CS2, 22/07/2011).

In an interview at the Dien Bien District Agricultural Promotion Office (A.P.O.1 CS2) the officer interviewed informed the research team that between 30-100 people at any given time attend training courses for the Production Development Component of P135II. Lecturing using power-point is the most common method used (90% of training) and that training courses are conducted in Kinh. Sometimes local languages are used to explain some terms by training assistants from the commune. When asked if she considered literacy in Kinh as important in understanding and benefiting from training courses in P135II, she answered that this was very important. Reasons given included, to understand lectures, read hand-outs and for giving feedback. There isn’t much writing involved in P135II Production Development training according to this respondent (Interview, A.P.O.1 CS2, 01/07/11).

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) in Dien Bien Province rated the importance of literacy (reading, writing, speaking and listening) in Kinh for the successful delivery of training (Q.8a) as 8 out of 10. If literacy levels are low then more practical demonstrations should be used (Q.8b) according to DARD. Literacy levels are considered when developing agricultural training courses according to DARD (Q.8c), and Agricultural Promotion Officers (APO) at commune level are chosen from qualified local ethnic minority members. These APOs can be used to communicate in local languages to farmers when necessary (Interview, A.P.O.1 CS2, 01/07/2011). The APO (A.P.O.2 CS2) in Thanh Nua Commune maintains that literacy in Kinh is very important to understanding and benefiting from P135II Production Development training (Q.9a). He explains why (Q.9b) by stating that reading is very important for understanding handouts and providing feedback. According to this APO (A.P.O.2 CS2) writing is not so important. He was not aware of any differences between literacy approaches such as Reflect or DOET (Q.10) but stated that an approach that provided experience with PRA methodology and tools would help levels of participation in P135II training (Q.11). When asked in Q.15 how P135II training could be improved, replies included:
a) improvement of methodology and methods by using PRA, longer training courses with more days and conduct proper evaluations;
b) provide feed-back forms for training;
c) improve training based on feed-back and suggestions from participants (Interview, A.P.O.2 CS2, 22/07/11).

In support of findings in Case Study 1 the use of PRA is similarly suggested by the APO in Thanh Nua Commune. PRA is recognised in both case studies as a methodology that can help to deliver effective training courses in areas with low literacy levels and a variety of indigenous languages. However it is reported that the use of PRA is restricted by budgets allocated for the Production Development Component of P135II and the number of days allocated for training on particular topics. Data from both Case Study 1 and Case Study 2 confirms this through interviews with P135II trainers, participants and management (Interviews, 01/07 and 22/07/2011).

5.3.5.5 Link to Poverty Alleviation (CS2)
The importance of the relationship between Adult Basic Education (ABE) and accessing poverty alleviation resources as criteria for assessment is central in this thesis. In Case Study 2 the relationship between Reflect, a programme that promotes ABE, and accessing and participation in P135II, the largest Government of Vietnam (GoV) initiative to reduce poverty is examined. Case Study 1 (Thuan Hoa Commune) in Ha Giang Province looked at the same two programmes, Reflect and P135II. There are differences in the management and implementation of both programmes in Case Study 1 and Case Study 2 and these differences will be highlighted here and in Chapter 6.

The International Adult Literacy Benchmarks (2007) were developed by the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), UNESCO, ActionAid International and the Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report 2006. A major survey was undertaken to retrieve lessons from successful literacy programmes, and the analysis of the results led to the development of the twelve benchmarks for running effective adult literacy programmes. The benchmarks were published in a report called Writing the Wrongs (ActionAid, 2007; see appendix 1). Benchmark 1
and 2 below provide useful initial indicators in assessing the link between adult literacy programmes and general development, including poverty alleviation.

1. **Literacy is about the acquisition and use of reading, writing and numeracy skills, and thereby the development of active citizenship, improved health and livelihoods, and gender equality. The goals of literacy programmes should reflect this understanding.**

2. **Literacy should be seen as a continuous process that requires sustained learning and application. There are no magic lines to cross from illiteracy into literacy. All policies and programmes should be defined to encourage sustained participation and celebrate progressive achievement rather than focusing on one-off provision with a single end point.**

Fransman’s (2008) comparative study in Vietnam and Tanzania, reports that the benchmarks provide a sound assessment framework but are a long way from being met in Vietnam. She identifies an adult literacy deficit that is particularly prominent among the following groups in Vietnam: women; the elderly; ethnic and linguistic minorities; people with disabilities; people affected by HIV/AIDS and people in remote rural areas. All three case study areas have all of the above mentioned groups (Interviews, 19/01-22/07/11). If Benchmark 1 and 2 are used as a framework to assess Reflect in Case Study 2 (Thanh Nua Commune) there is evidence from interviews with management, facilitators and participants, that it aspires to achieve Benchmark 1 as all of the above aspects (reading, writing and numeracy skills, health issues, income-generation, gender equality and active citizenship) are included in their Reflect curriculum. The almost continuous intervention of Reflect in Thanh Nua Commune since 2000 and inclusion of a core group of interviewed participants who have been involved, 3 since 2000 and 4 since 2008, indicates a sustained participation and progressive achievement of Benchmark 2. Evidence in CS2 suggests that Reflect needs time to bed down in a community as it is an approach that also requires a long-term commitment by participants, facilitators and management to be effective and sustainable. In contrast to approaches that target quick results, Reflect when implemented according to its principles attempts to create long-term impacts on human and social capital in targeted communities. In CS1 evidence suggests that Benchmark 2 has not been met as 65% of Reflect participants interviewed are no longer active.
members of the Mich B circle and those who are report that activities are limited and lack focus. Differences between CS1 and CS2 in relation to sustainability will be analysed further in Chapters 6 and 7 (Interviews; Field Notes; Observations, 19/01-22/07/11).

In contrast to those in CS1, Reflect participants (7) interviewed in Co Ke Village were all aware of poverty alleviation programmes including P135II (Q.8). The benefits that the seven participants received from the programme (P135II) were similar to those in CS1 and included (Q.9):

- Training on animal husbandry and planting techniques (5 benefited)
- Rice donations, seed, fertilizers (2)
- Animals (chickens, cow, buffalo) (1)
- Roofing material, water tank, well (3)
- House repairs (2)
- Community Infrastructure (schools, bridges, irrigation systems etc) (all 7 benefited).

In answering the same question (Q.8) Reflect participants in Case Study 2 were given the opportunity to identify other programmes in Thanh Nua Commune / Co Ke Village that they have received support and benefits from. 6 out of 7 respondents identified the Centre for Community Development (CCD) as a major source of support through the provision of agricultural / animal husbandry training, animals (ducks, fish and chickens), seed (rice, corn), fertiliser and access to credit. Access to credit was reported to be highly appreciated by all Reflect participants and a major incentive for involvement in Reflect. The interest rates were noted as being better in the CCD credit scheme than the rates from the GoV Policy Bank [Bank for the Poor]. CCD as the manager of Reflect in Dien Bien Province, Dien Bien District and Thanh Nua Commune has provided a vital and tangible link between ABE and poverty alleviation by promoting adult literacy and community development initiatives in combination with training and material / financial support. Comparisons between Reflect programmes in Case Study 1 and Case Study 2 managed by AAV and CCD respectively provide interesting insights into the link between the two programmes and poverty alleviation. These comparisons
will be examined through cross-case in Chapter 6. The Reflect Facilitator Trainer interviewed in Dien Bien (R.F.T.1 CS2, 23/07/11) reaffirmed the key role that facilitator training plays in understanding poverty alleviation theory and initiatives in communes and villages where Reflect facilitators are active (Q.6). She maintained that because Reflect facilitators are local and active members of communities, they are more aware. Facilitator training helps facilitators to be aware of and indentify poverty alleviation resources that are available in their commune / village.

With specific reference to P135II R.F.T.1 CS2 explained (Q.6a) that local Reflect facilitators are key people in villages and they know all about P135II and the resources that are available from the components of this programme. Reflect facilitators are also trained on the link between ABE and income-generation, jobs and micro-credit at training courses (R.F.T.1 CS2, Q.6c).

Similarly the Reflect Facilitator in Co Ke Village confirmed that participation in his Reflect circle impacts on participants’ access to poverty alleviation resources (R.F.1 CS2, Q.6). He explained in an in-depth interview (02/07/11) that Reflect participants know their rights and entitlements in relation to P135II in Co Ke and Thanh Nua. He confirmed that some participants received buffalos, other animals, seed and technical support from P135 1+II. Other participants in the Reflect circle get to know and understand P135II as a result. Interventions by P135II for community infrastructure are discussed in the Co Ke circle but the Commune People’s Committee (CPC) makes the decisions. The capacity building component of P135II targets village leaders and Women’s Union (WU) members and the Co Ke circle has both categories as members. The fourth component of P135II (Improvement in Socio-cultural living standards) is not implemented in Co Ke village but at commune level in Thanh Nua Commune. It is reported that participation in Reflect helps participants access other GoV and NGO programmes (Q.6b), income-generation and jobs (Q.6c) and creates an awareness of poverty alleviation resources (Q.6d). According to the Reflect Facilitator in Co Ke Village:

Participants are more aware and confident. Even people with grade 9 schooling (secondary) are not as confident as Reflect participants. There is strong empowerment associated with Reflect and at village meetings Reflect participants express their opinions and if they see inequality or family violence they speak up. They are not troublemakers but just aware.

(R.F.1 CS2, 02/07/11)
In reply to Q.8 both the Reflect Facilitator Trainer and Facilitator provide positive feedback on the impact of Reflect on participants in the four outcome orientated components of P135II.

Production Development: Reflect participants understand more quickly than people who don’t attend Reflect. They have critical thinking skills and so will speak up and ask questions (R.F.T.1 CS2). Reflect participants have literacy and knowledge (R.F.1 CS2).

Infrastructure Development: Reflect participants know more about their rights and so ask questions about infrastructure projects. When the village is evaluating who is categorised as poor they ask for equality and justice (R.F.1 CS2). Reflect participants are more critical of infrastructure development (R.F.T.1 CS2).

Capacity Building: Reflect participants can use this component to advance their careers in local politics and become leaders, especially women (R.F.T.1 CS2).

Improvement of socio-cultural living standards: Reflect participants discuss many similar issues and are familiar with using role-play for awareness-raising (R.F.T. CS2). Reflect participants are more enthusiastic to get involved in these issues because they discuss them in the circle (R.F.1 CS2).

Reflect participants (7) interviewed in Co Ke Village / Thuan Hoa Commune unanimously agree (Q.10) that their involvement in Reflect helped them to access and participate in P135II and other poverty alleviation programmes. Aspects of access and participation include:

- Being able to read and understand about P135II (7)
- Take part in meetings to plan P135II (6)
- Participate in activities such as training (7)
- To know your rights and entitlements (7)
- Understand community development issues (7).

However in contrast, in CS1 a significant number of participants (4 / 36%) indicated that involvement in Reflect was not beneficial to accessing and participating in P135II training. Similar to CS1, P135II management (Province, District and Commune), P135II trainers (District and Commune) interviewed in CS2 (Thanh Nua Commune) all agree that literacy is vital for ethnic minority adults.
to benefit fully from P135II interventions. Interventions in the area of training (Production Development Component) in P135II are particularly dependent on literate participants because of the reliance on lectures, power-point presentations, handouts and manuals in Kinh. P135II trainers (APOs) indicated that training would be more effective in P135II if PRA methods were used. Reflect provides participants with literacy skills combined with experience of using PRA which could help increase the levels of meaningful participation in P135II and other poverty alleviation programmes who adopt more participatory methodology (Interviews, 01/07/11, 02/07/11, and 22/07/11). In all three case study sites P135II trainers and managers propose the adoption of PRA methods but the lack of budgets and large numbers at short training courses inhibits its use.

In conclusion there is strong evidence from data collected in Case Study 2 that Reflect as an ABE approach helps its participants to access and benefit from poverty alleviation programmes such as P135II.

5.3.5.6 Post-course use of Literacy and Literate Environment (CS2)

In examining the post-course use of literacy by participants of Reflect in Case Study 2 it is necessary, as in Case Study 1, to separate the first two phases of Reflect from phase 3 which is currently being implemented. The phases of Reflect are:

Phase 1: Literacy based on needs of Reflect participants

Phase 2: Post-literacy with aspects of community development and agricultural technology / techniques

Phase 3: Community Development. Establishment of Village Development Clubs (VDC) using micro-credit interest payments to encourage self-sustainability.

Phase 1 and 2 of Reflect are equivalent to the literacy and post-literacy of MOET / DOET adult literacy courses, therefore creating a framework for the comparison between Case Study 1, 2 and 3. Phase 3 of Reflect has been developed into Village Development Clubs in Case Study 2 and in Case Study 1. Reflect is managed by different agencies in these two case studies. In Case Study 2 Reflect is managed by the Centre for Community Development (CCD) and Case Study 1
by ActionAid Vietnam (AAV). Although there are many similarities in both Reflect programmes there are also some important differences. In relation to the post-course use of literacy and literate environments in CS1 and CS2 the major difference is in the way Phase 3 (Village Development Club) is managed and implemented. 45% of Reflect participants interviewed in CS1 indicated that they attend Phase 3 while 100% of participants in CS2 attend the Reflect Village Development Club. Reasons for this discrepancy that centre on management, geographical location / mobility and motivation of participants and facilitators to take part in and implement Reflect will be discussed and linked to development of sustainable literate environments in this section and in Chapters 6 and 7.

In examining the post-course (Phase 1 and 2 Reflect) use of literacy in Case Study 2 it is useful to look at the pre-course experience of literacy learning by Reflect participants from an ethnographic and gender perspective (see Papen, 2005; Barton et al., 2002; Street, 2001, 1993; Barton and Hamilton, 1998). Before joining the Reflect circle in Co Ke Village the experiences of literacy learning of all seven interviewed participants was extremely limited (Q.2a). Three participants didn’t go to school at all, three attended but dropped out in grade 1 (primary school) and one attended grade 2. Six out of seven participants interviewed are Black Thai women between the ages of 25 and 45 with the majority in their late 20s and early 30s. The one male Black Thai participant interviewed is 31 years old and is the only one to attend grade 2 of primary school. Reasons given for not attending school at all, or dropping out after grade 1 by the female participants interviewed included, ‘I am from a large family and had to take care of younger siblings. We were poor and had no money to go to school’ (R.P.3 CS2, 02/07/11). ‘There were too many children in the family. The school was not near where I lived then (not Co Ke Village) and to attend school I had to walk a 10km round-trip everyday’ (R.P.2 CS2, 31/05/11). The male Reflect participant explained that he dropped out of school in grade 2 because ‘I had to work on my parent’s small farm to take care of rice seedlings’ (R.P.4 CS2, 02/07/11). It is noteworthy that almost all of the ABE participants interviewed in this investigation are women but it is beyond the scope of this current study to spotlight gender issues associated with ABE in Vietnam.
After missing out on primary schooling and the possibility of becoming literate none of the seven Reflect participants interviewed attended adult literacy classes (Q.2b), before joining the Reflect circle in Co Ke Village. All seven participants stated that the main motivation for joining Reflect was to become literate (Q.3a). It can therefore be surmised that all seven interviewed participants were illiterate and had little experience of literacy learning before taking part in Reflect. Three interviewed participants started Reflect in 2000 and four in 2008. It is interesting that the youngest interviewed participant (R.P.3 CS2) joined Reflect in 2000 when she was 14 years old (Interviews, 31/05/11, 02/07/11, 22/07/11).

Post-course use of literacy according to data in Case Study 2 centres on the involvement of participants in Phase 3 of Reflect. Phase 3 focuses on community development through Village Development Clubs (VDC), using micro-credit interest payments to encourage participation and self-sustainability. Phase 3 meets twice a month according to participants, facilitator and management in interviews. Discussions and training on a variety of topics including health care, income-generation, agricultural techniques, gender and family issues, awareness-raising and law take place in the Village Development Club in Co Ke. The use of participatory methodology and PRA tools as observed by the researcher (19/01/11) facilitates the involvement of Reflect participants (Interviews; Observations, 19/01/11, 31/05/11, 02/07/11, 22/07/11). In addition to using literacy skills in Phase 3, participants can use literacy skills when attending other training courses (including P135I), meetings and cultural activities. All seven participants interviewed maintained that motivation for becoming literate included the possibility to help younger family members with school work (Q.3d) and to communicate at the local market with other ethnic groups (Q.3e). The continued use of literacy to improve possibilities of income-generation (Q.3c), and to help with accessing credit, are additional motivations cited by Reflect participants in Co Ke Village to improve literacy levels (Interviews; Observations, 19/01/11, 31/05/11, 02/07/11, 22/07/11). Writing skills among Reflect participants in CS2 were substantially better than in CS1 as demonstrated when signing for interview payments. All 7 Reflect participants could sign their names clearly and without assistance. No systematic test was applied but this can be seen as a clear indicator.
As we can see the perception of literacy and education of the seven *Reflect* participants interviewed in Co Ke is based on their own individual and group experiences. This sits neatly in relation to Papen’s (2005) findings and her idea that, adult learners with little experience of formal education, will seek to develop their own perception and relationship with education and what that means to them. The findings in Co Ke can also be interpreted as supporting the use of ‘real texts’ promoted by Street (2001) and the other proponents of the New Literacy Studies (NLS) school of thought. *Reflect* methodology encourages the self-development of curricula and with the use of tools such as PRA promotes democratisation in the circle. Findings from CS2 indicate that the curriculum in Co Ke *Reflect* circle was developed by the participants using PRA methods and tools and based on real needs, which has encouraged democratisation. In CS1 the evidence for the above aspects of participants’ involvement and circle dynamics is less convincing.

The post-course use of literacy is also restricted in Case Study 2 by the lack of resources, coordination between education authorities and other organisations, use of the Community Learning Centre (CLC), time and motivation of villagers to take part in adult education activities and lack of incentives, according to the *Reflect* Facilitator Trainer (Q.9a-e). The *Reflect* Facilitator (R.F.1 CS2) in Co Ke Village similarly supports this data in all the above areas, but disagrees that there is a lack of coordination between local authorities and organisations and incentives. Ways in which access and participation in Adult Basic Education (ABE) activities could be improved, according to the *Reflect* Facilitator Trainer R.F.T.1 CS2 and R.F.1 CS2, include developing resources, improvement of training of trainers, better coordination between GoV and non-governmental organisations and raising the awareness of the benefits of ABE among villagers (Interviews, 02/07/11, 22/07/11).

The literate environment in Case Study 2 can be described as limited. During data collection in Thanh Nua Commune, books were seen at the Commune People’s Committee (CPC) compound but there was little evidence of written material elsewhere in the commune. While visiting participants’ houses and conducting interviews, there were mostly negative signs in relation to a vibrant literate environment in Co Ke Village. Apart from children’s school books and the
existence of a small children’s library, there was no evidence of adult written material, including manuals, newspapers, magazines and training handouts. Q.12 of the Reflect Participants interview asks if there are possibilities to obtain books / audio visual material in the commune. All seven participants answered that there was no library at village level and that the only source of adult written material in the village was to borrow from the Reflect Facilitator. Three respondents confirmed the existence of a small adult library in Thanh Nua Commune Post Office and that sometimes the mass-organisations provide awareness raising material. The Community Learning Centre (CLC) in the commune has no reading resources and in order to buy adult books a trip to Dien Bien Phu City was necessary. Reflect participants were asked to assess the level of adult education resources in Co Ke and Thanh Nua on a scale of 1-10, 10 being excellent (Q.13). Four participants evaluated the level of adult education resources at 4, one at 3, one at 5 and one at 8. More activities (classes and training), resources and facilities at village and commune level were suggested by all 7 participants as ways to improve the situation (Q.13c). TVs in houses with stable electricity was common as well as VCD / DVD players that were used to show films and music clips (Interviews; Observations, Field Notes, 19/01/11-22/07/11).

The main difficulty for adult learners in developing literacy skills (Q.11) would be the lack of activities (circles / classes / training) according to RF1 CS2 in Co Ke Village. When asked to describe the literacy environment (Q.11a) he replied:

There are not many books or reading material in Co Ke and Thanh Nua. There is a small library in the post office in Thanh Nua but would be better to have an adult library in a villager’s house, and a computer also. In all the villages in the commune there is only one small children’s library and nothing for adults. (Interview, R.F.1 CS2, 02/07/11)

The Facilitator Trainer answered the same question (Q.11) by stating that it is necessary to sustain the contribution and work of the facilitators and encourage self- study among participants. The literate environment was described as (incorporating all villages in Dien Bien District) ‘villagers only filling-out forms and watching TV’ and that villagers don’t use literacy much at home except for watching TV (Interview R.F.T.1 CS2, 23/07/11). Thai language material exists in Vietnam and includes the written history of the Thai from the 7th century, the famous narrative poem ‘Song chu son sau’ (seeing off a lover) and the ‘Pap moi
mu’ book used to choose auspicious dates for organising marriages, building new houses and interpreting dreams. The problem is that the majority of the Thai in Vietnam cannot read these books and only a few scholars and shamen can interpret them (VNA, 2008). When interviewing in Co Ke Village and Thanh Nua Commune (CS2) no Thai material apart from some Lao music DVDs were seen. The Thai and Lao languages are similar and many Thai listen to Lao music (Observations; Interviews; Field Notes 19/01-23/07/2011).

Box 5.5: Key Results CS2

Key results in CS2 indicate that when Reflect is implemented in a homogeneous ethnic minority village by a skilled and motivated local facilitator who understands the principles of participatory methodology (PRA) and the potential of ABE to impact on access and participation in community development and poverty alleviation (including P135II) the impact of Reflect can be significant. Reflect participants in CS2 were more aware of and empowered to contribute to the planning and implementation of P135II compared to participants in CS1. Although the budget, planning and training methodology in P135II restricts access and participation in CS2 Reflect participants with the encouragement of an aware and informed local facilitator developed a capacity to lobby to improve access and participation.

Impediments to accessing adult education resources centred on the limitations of material resources, including AE learning centres (CLC), in the commune and villages although the capacity to manage improved resources by the local authorities and Reflect management exists. Improvements in access and participation in both ABE and P135II activities are dependent on an increase in budgets and a commitment to using participatory methodology in the planning, implementation and assessment of interventions that match the cultural and material expectations of the targeted community. Reflect in CS2 has provided the foundation for developing such a strategy.
5.4.1 Case Study 3: Na Tau Commune – Background Data

Case Study 3 focuses on Na Tau Commune, which is located in Dien Bien District and is one of the 112 communes in Dien Bien Province. As indicated in Table 5.14 below, Case Study 3 (Na Tau Commune) shares a common location in relation to district (Dien Bien District), province (Dien Bien Province) and ethnicity of the population to Case Study 2 (Thanh Nua Commune). The introduction to Case Study 2 (5.3.1) provides geographical, demographic and socio-economic / cultural information regarding Dien Bien Province and Dien Bien District which is relevant to Case Study 3 (Na Tau Commune). The major difference between Case Study 2 and Case Study 3 is that the Dien Bien provincial Department of Education and Training (DOET) adult literacy approach is the focus of the Adult Basic Education (ABE) data collection and not Reflect. Case Study 1 and 2 investigated the relationship between Reflect and accessing and participating in P135II, while Case Study 3 investigates the same relationship between ABE and P135II but instead of Reflect the focus is on the Dien Bien DOET adult literacy programme.

Table 5.14: Case Study 3 Location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study</th>
<th>Name of Commune / Villages</th>
<th>Location in Vietnam</th>
<th>Ethnic Make-up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case Study 3</td>
<td>Na Tau Commune / Ta Cang Village</td>
<td>Dien Bien District in Dien Bien Province.</td>
<td>Thai, H’mong, Kho Mu, Kinh (main groups).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4.2 Case Study 3: Socio-cultural and Economic Context (Na Tau)

Na Tau Commune is the second of the fourteen communes in Dien Bien District to be included in this research study (see Map 5.2). As stated above Na Tau Commune has similarities with Thanh Nua Commune (Case Study 2) in terms of location, ethnicity and socio-economic conditions. There are however subtle differences between the two communes which will be described here.

Na Tau Commune is located 25km North East of Dien Bien Phu City on National Road 279 bordering Muong Anh District (Vietnam Administrative Atlas, 2011). Unlike Thanh Nua Commune (Case Study 2), Na Tau does not have a border with Lao and has therefore no restricted areas within the commune. As with Case
Study 2 to travel from Na Tau to the district centre (Dien Bien District) it is necessary to pass through the provincial capital (Dien Bien Phu). The distance to Dien Bien District is 30km and although the road has been recently up-graded the nature of the mountain terrain restricts travelling time to over an hour. Na Tau Commune is centred around the small market village also known as Na Tau. Because of its location on National Road 279, Na Tau village has an active and colourful daily market that strides the lines of small businesses situated on either side of the road (see Image 5.8). As well as attracting local ethnic minorities such as Thai (Black), H’mong and Kho Mu to buy and sell local produce, passing traffic on the way to and from Dien Bien Phu City are an important source of trade (Interviews; Field Notes; Observations, 31/05/11-23/07/11). The Na Tau Commune People’s Committee (CPC) local government compound has been recently relocated from Na Tau Commune centre to a location mid way between Na Tau and Ta Cang villages to a new purpose built compound to provide more accessibility to outlying villages (Interviews; Field Notes; Observations, 31/05/11-23/07/11).

Na Tau Commune has a population of 6,719 people. The ethnicity of the population is quite similar to Thanh Nua (Case Study 2) but with a higher proportion of Thai (84.55%). The H’mong account for 8.28% of the population, the Kinh 5.59% and Kho Mu 1.40%. Other smaller ethnic minority groups living in the area are the Hoa, Tay and Muong (Interviews; Field Notes; Observations, 31/05/11-23/07/11). Because ethnographic descriptions of the Thai and the H’mong are included in sections 5.3.2 and 5.2.2 there is no need to repeat this important background information in Case Study 3. The Kho Mu and the majority ethnic group in Vietnam, the Kinh, are the only two relevant ethnic groups that have not been described.

The Kinh ethnic group account for 20% of the population in Dien Bien Province, 10% of Dien Bien District and 70% of Dien Bien Phu City according to the Dien Bien Provincial Statistics Office (PSO, 2010).
The migration of the Kinh to the traditional Thai controlled region of Vietnam began before the French Colonial period (1859-1954) but there were no significant numbers of lowland Viet / Kinh present in the region around Dien Bien until after the decisive battle with the French Union Army at Dien Bien Phu (1954). During the siege of Dien Bien Phu the French military installations were obliterated and the only real military infrastructure of any significance that remained was the airfield. Around this airfield the present city of Dien Bien Phu developed from a small military outpost in 1954 to a city of 50,000 inhabitants in 2011 (Interviews; Observations, 19/05/11-23/07/11).

The Kinh who are of Chinese extraction, like many of the ethnic groups in Northern Vietnam including the Tay, Thai, H'mong and Dao, are the largest and most dominant ethnic group in Vietnam since the 17th century. The Kinh account for 85% of the population of 86 million people in Vietnam (GSO, 2009).
Government of Vietnam (GoV) officially recognises 54 ethnic groups, 53 ethnic minorities plus the Kinh, using a classification system developed in 1979 when a major ethnological classification project was carried out (Keys, 2002). Traditional Kinh beliefs centre on a mix of Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism and ancestor worship. Many Kinh are nominal Buddhists but only a small percentage practice. There are small numbers of Kinh who have converted to Christianity (Catholics 7% and Protestant 1% of the total population). Other minority religions among the Kinh include the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao sects in the south of Vietnam (CSA, 2009; Nguyen and Baulch, 2007).

It is however the cultural, lingustical and economic development aspects of the Kinh that have had the most influence on other ethnic groups since independence. Vietnamese (Kinh) began replacing French as the dominant language of learning in all parts of the country after 1945. Quoc Ngu, the modern Vietnamese writing system based on the Roman alphabet developed by the French missionary Alexander de Rhodes in the 17th century, revolutionised access to formal education and helped improve literacy levels during the formative years of the present Vietnamese state (Nguyen and Baulch, 2007). The influence of the Kinh on culture, economic development, politics and communications is an important facet in the development of all three case studies in this research.

The Kho Mu are an ethnic minority group that live in close proximity to the Thai in Dien Bien province. The Kho Mu have a population of more than 43,000 people inhabiting the provinces of Dien Bien, Nghe An, Lai Chau, Son La, Thanh Hoa and Yen Bai. The Kho’ Mu are also called Xa Cau, Mun Xen, Pu Thenh, Tenh and Tay Hay. The language of the Kho’ Mu is of the Mon-Khmer family. The Kho Mu live from cultivation and animal husbandry. They mainly grow maize, sweet potatoes and cassava. Rudimentary tools such as knives, axes and sticks are utilised on farms and buffalos are still used for ploughing. Hunting and gathering are necessary for daily survival needs, especially in the intervals when rice stocks are low between harvests. Kho Mu families rear poultry and cattle to provide food for sustenance, sale at markets and for feasts, rites and ceremonies. Basketry has developed to provide food containers for personal use and sale. The Kho Mu do not practise cloth weaving, so have to buy cloth and garments from the Thai
In Case Study 2 and 3 there were no Kho Mu interviewed. The reason is that the collection of data from DOET adult literacy participants concentrated on Ta Cang Village which is almost totally inhabited by the Thai (Black) and there were no Kho Mu involved in any other interviews.

Socio-economic development in Na Tau Commune (Case Study 3) has been slow and the majority of the population work as subsistence farmers. Farming is concentrated on rice production, vegetable growing and animal husbandry. Produce on sale at the daily market in Na Tau village include, rice, corn, beans, bamboo shoots, peanuts, cassava, fowl, fish, pork, beef and an assortment of Thai handicraft items such as woven cloth, embroidered scarfs and tunics. The numerous small businesses along the National Road 279 are concentrated in Na Tau Village. There are three shops selling general household goods and providing a number of agricultural services in Ta Cang Village which are run by former DOET adult literacy participants. People who are not employed in farming, work as government officials, teachers, healthcare workers and in the army or police. The location of a large prison in the commune (Ta Cang Village) provides employment for some villagers but has also reduced the amount of farming land of neighbouring Thai families. The socio-economic influence of Dien Bien City on Na Tau Commune is less than on Thanh Nua Commune (Case Study 2). The distance (25km) from the provincial capital is the main reason. There are no historical or tourist sights of any significance in Na Tau although it is adjacent to Muong Phang Commune which was the headquarters of Ho Chi Minh and General Ngo Nguyen Giap (Viet-Minh leaders) during the Battle of Dien Bien Phu (1954). Tens of thousands of visitors travel to this area every year but Na Tau Commune benefits little from this tourism (Interviews; Field Notes; Observations, 19/05/11-23/07/11).

5.4.3 Case Study 3: Adult Basic Education Activities (Na Tau Commune)
As in Case Study 1 and 2 the information in this section will outline Adult Basic Education (ABE) activities in Na Tau Commune with a particular focus on the Dien Bien Department of Education and Training (DOET) adult literacy programme. Aspects of the DOET adult literacy (AL) programme and changes to its focus and strategy covering a period from 2000 to 2011 will be highlighted. The function and
responsibility of the Na Tau Commune Community Learning Centre (CLC) in coordinating and supporting ABE activities will also be examined. Training initiatives targeting adults by the Government of Vietnam (GoV), NGOs, development agencies, and bi-lateral / multi-lateral donors (EU, UN, JICA) will be described and linked to DOET adult literacy initiatives. The link with P135II as in Case Study 1 and 2 will provide the main focus on the relationship between ABE and poverty alleviation. Following the outline of this section in the previous two case studies there will be a concentration on data gathered during interviews and from sources including local authorities and line agencies, such as DOET and the district Bureau of Education and Training (BOET).

In an interview with DOET in Dien Bien Province during the first field visit (19/01/11) it was explained that the DOET adult education literacy curriculum changed in 2006 (see Table 5.10). Changes to the curriculum centred on the promotion of the ‘Universalisation’ of primary education to include young adults between the ages of 15 and 25 who dropped out of school or didn’t attend at all. This entails a semi full-time approach to adult literacy that includes attendance at local primary and secondary schools in special adult complementary classes when the numbers are large enough. Otherwise, when numbers are low adults sit in on children’s classes. Adults can in theory fast-track grades and complete a full primary cycle (5 years) in a two year period. As well as Vietnamese language training in reading and writing participants learn maths and discuss community issues. According to DOET the methodology to teach this new curriculum to adults has changed recently to include role-play on awareness-raising issues (Interview, 19/01/11). Although there has been much progress in relation to UPE statistics there is evidence that this change in policy has had a detrimental effect on the sustainability of AE gains since 2006.

For the purpose of this study and to match a similar time-line in Case Study 1 and 2, when Reflect participants took part in Phase 1 of Reflect it was decided to look for a DOET adult literacy class that took place before the start of P135II (2006). With the help of the provincial DOET and district BOET in Dien Bien, Na Tau Commune (Case Study 3) was identified. Being literate through attendance at a DOET adult literacy class before the beginning of the second phase of P135 was a
necessary pre-condition in the identification of villagers to interview in Na Tau Commune. The Bureau of Education and Training (BOET) in Dien Bien District suggested that Ta Cang Village would be an ideal starting point in Na Tau Commune as there where numerous DOET adult literacy classes held there from 2000 to 2005.

DOET received substantial financial support and technical assistance (TA) from the European Union (EU) Son La Lai Chau Rural Development Project adult education (AE) component during this period to run adult literacy, post-literacy and awareness-raising classes in EU Cluster Village Centre (CVC) primary schools built between 2002 and 2005. The EU AE component also provided training for primary school teachers to teach AE literacy classes, material support such as adult libraries and audio-visual equipment as well as posters on a variety of topics for awareness-raising classes (Interviews, 19/01/11-23/07/11; EU SLLCRDP, 2005). The curriculum used to teach the DOET adult literacy and post literacy classes in Na Tau between 2002 and 2005 with the support of the EU was based on five books developed by DOET for adult literacy education. Each book was linked to a grade (1-5) in primary school and after successfully completing one grade adult learners moved on to the next. Completion of Grade 3 after an examination entitled participants to receive a GoV DOET certificate to prove that they had finished Grade 3 and were therefore literate. Grade 4 and 5 completion (post-literacy class) certificates are equivalent to finishing primary school. In a semi-structured interview with DOET adult literacy management in Na Tau (21/07/11) the vice-principal of Na Tau Primary School 2 confirmed that the last DOET adult literacy class supported by the EU took place in 2005. Since 2006 the commune has reached the ‘Universalisation’ of primary school education standard set by the government (GoV) that included adults (15-25 years old) and according to DOET (Interview, 19/01/11), there was no need to continue adult literacy classes in the pre-2006 fashion.
Children and young adults who drop out of school and want to finish primary schools re-enter the education system using the new complementary curriculum. The use of such a skewed statistical calculation on adult literacy as used by the DOET ignores all adults who were over 25 years old in 2005 and before. Often statistics on adult literacy in Vietnam use this age category to cover all adults thus ignoring older members of communities (EU, SLLCRDP, 2005; MOET, 2003). According to the DOET adult literacy management in Na Tau Commune the only adult literacy classes held outside the primary school system (new complementary curriculum) are those held in the new prison in Ta Cang Village, and those organised by Reflect (CCD). The prison classes are conducted by primary school teachers and use the old DOET adult literacy curriculum (books 1-5). It was not possible to visit the prison but an interview with one of the responsible teachers confirmed this information (Interview, DOET T.3 CS3, 20/07/11).
### Table 5.15: ABE Activities in Na Tau Commune 2000-2011 (CS3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ABE Activity</th>
<th>Responsible Agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997-2002</td>
<td>Adult Literacy, Post-literacy Classes</td>
<td>DOET / BOET / Na Tau Commune Primary Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training courses P135 1 (limited)</td>
<td>Department of Ethnic Minority Affairs (DEMA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-2005</td>
<td>Adult Literacy Post-literacy and Awareness-raising Classes</td>
<td>DOET / BOET / EU SLLCRDP / Na Tau Commune Primary Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agricultural Technical Training</td>
<td>Department of Agriculture and Rural Dev (DARD) / EU SLLCRDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2011</td>
<td>Adult Literacy, Post-literacy Classes</td>
<td>DOET using primary school and new complementary curriculum with focus on 15-25 years. Limited literacy classes in local prison.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Literacy and Community Development</td>
<td>Reflect CCD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training courses P135 II</td>
<td>DEMA and DARD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other Adult Training / Awareness-raising</td>
<td>Line Agencies, Mass-organisations, NGO’s including CCD.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Interviews 19/01/11-23/07/11; EU SLLCRDP, 2005.

The Vice Director and manager of Na Tau Community Learning Centre (CLC) is also an active Reflect facilitator (Reflect also in CS3) as well as being the commune Agricultural Promotion Officer (APO1 CS3). He was in an ideal position to outline current Adult Basic Education (ABE) Activity in Na Tau Commune. In answering Q.1 of the semi-structured interview on ABE activities the activities in Table 5.15 were outlined by the CLC manager, commune Vice Principal and BOET in Dien Bien District.

Because the focus on ABE activities in Na Tau Commune (Case Study 3) was on DOET adult literacy classes between 2000 and 2005 (pre-P135II) the Reflect programme in the commune which began in 2008 was not investigated in any detail. The commune APO / manager of the CLC as a Reflect facilitator became the main information source on the activities of Reflect in Case Study 3 (Na Tau Commune). He also was the key informant on CLC and P135II training activities.
He was interviewed as CLC manager (CLC.1 CS3, 21/07/11) and as a P135II Trainer (A.P.O.1 CS3, 30/06/11).

The CLC as in Case Study 1 and 2 plays an important role in coordinating ABE activities in Case Study 3 (Na Tau Commune). The CLC, like in the other two cases, receives substantial support from the implementer of Reflect (CCD in Case Study 2 and 3 and ActionAid Vietnam in Case Study 1). In this way all three cases receive similar support from their local CLC. However, Case Study 1 and 3 have large new CLC buildings to operate from while Case Study 2 has only a small office. Different mass-organisations such as the Women’s Union (WU) and Farmers Union (FU) are active in awareness-raising in Case Study 3 according to the CLC manager. Other agencies and local authorities including sectors such as education, agriculture, health-care and the Commune’s People’s Committee (CPC) are on the management board of the CLC in Case Study 3 to coordinate ABE activities in Na Tau Commune (Interview A.P.O.1 CS3, 30/06/11; CLC.1 CS3, 21/07/11).

ABE activities that are directly connected to P135II in Case Study 3 include agricultural techniques, animal husbandry, planting (corn and rice) and information on the prevention of disease in animals. According to the P135II trainer who is also the commune Agriculture Promotion Officer (A.P.O.1 CS3) and CLC Manager (CLC.1 CS3) training for P135 II Production Development Component are 70% lecture style presentations and 30% practical demonstration. All lectures and presentations are delivered in Kinh. Handouts contain 80% text in Kinh and 10% diagrams / matrixes and tables with the additional 10% images according to the P135II trainer (A.P.O.1 CS3, 30/06/11). At district level the Bureau of Agriculture and Rural Development (BARD) APO responsible for training in P135II Production Development component quotes a figure of 90% lecture style training with 10% demonstrations (A.P.O.2 CS3, 01/07/11). All 12 participants in the DOET adult literacy courses interviewed in Case Study 3 confirmed that taking part in the DOET classes helped them to participate in training courses including P135II (Interviews, 29/06/11-20/07/11, 30/06/11, 01/07/11, 21/07/11).
As is evident from the above information gathered during interviews with the DOET, BOET, CLC Manager, BOET Adult Literacy Teachers and Participants, P135II Trainers and Management, there has been a range of ABE activities in Na Tau Commune from 1997-2011. Some like the DOET adult literacy and post-literacy courses and Reflect are directly related to literacy learning, while others like P135II training and awareness-raising use approaches that are dependent on Kinh language / literacy skills. Na Tau Commune was chosen as a location for its direct involvement in DOET adult literacy classes from 1997-2011 with a particular focus on the period 2002-2005 when the EU SLLCRDP supported DOET in the development and implementation of adult literacy in CVC primary schools, including Ta Cang Village CVC in Na Tau Commune. Ta Cang Village is the location where all 12 DOET adult literacy participants interviewed reside. DOET Teachers and Managers (including the CLC Manager) and P135 II Trainers and Managers were interviewed in Na Tau Commune in diverse locations such as the commune primary school, Commune People’s Committee (CPC) compound and the commune Community Learning Centre. Information regarding ABE activities in Case Study 3 was supplemented by interviews with DOET, BOET, DARD, BARD and DEMA at province and district levels.

5.4.4 Case Study 3: Poverty Alleviation Initiatives (Na Tau Commune)

Na Tau Commune has a poverty rate of 49.6% according to Dien Bien Provincial Statistics Office (PSO, 2010). That is 22% higher than Thanh Nua (Case Study 2). Both communes are in Dien Bien District which has an overall poverty rate of 18.3% and in a province which is the second poorest (40%) in Vietnam (GSO, PSO, 2010). Because of such a high poverty rate Dien Bien Province and Na Tau Commune has had a number of diverse poverty alleviation initiatives since the mid 1990s. These include interventions from the Government of Vietnam (GoV), multi-lateral agencies such as the UN and EU, loan support for poverty reduction programmes from the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, bi-lateral interventions from JICA and DANIDA and international and local NGO’s such as ActionAid, SNV and CCD. Irish Aid has supported projects in Dien Bien Province and District since 2007 but not directly in Na Tau Commune (Interviews, 19/01/11-23/07/11).
Table 5.16: P135II Activities in Na Tau Commune (CS3) by Component

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production Development</td>
<td>Models for planting rice, animal husbandry, fish raising, provision of seed and training on agricultural techniques. Focus on farmers.</td>
<td>BARD and Commune Agri. Promotion Officer (APO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure Development</td>
<td>Building schools, health care stations, irrigation systems, clean water provision and roads.</td>
<td>CPC in coordination with DEMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
<td>Management of P135II and some technical training on accounting and tendering. Training for trainers.</td>
<td>DEMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-cultural living standards</td>
<td>Awareness on domestic and cultural issues. Scholarships for children to attend school.</td>
<td>DEMA and CPC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Interview P135II Management, 31/05/11

In an interview with P135II management at Na Tau Commune CPC the poverty alleviation activities of P135II were outlined as covering Production Development, Infrastructure Development, Capacity Building and Socio-cultural aspects (see Table 5.16).

The Department of Ethnic Minority Affairs (DEMA) in Dien Bien Province which is the overall management authority of P135II quoted an average figure of 1.3 billion VND ($65,000) per commune for P135II (Interview, 20/01/11). Budgets for components were not available from Na Tau Commune but it was indicated that the major part of the budget went on Infrastructure Development (80%). This is in line with Case Study 1 and 2 budget breakdowns. All 32 villages in Case Study 3 are involved in P135II in comparison to only 6.5% of villages in Case Study 2. The reason for this is the high poverty rate of almost 50% in Case Study 3. In order to plan and implement the above components of P135II there are consultations and meetings within and among communes in Dien Bien District. This inter-commune / district consultation is linked to the development of the district Socio Economic
Development Plan (SEDP) which is a five year overall development plan using resources from all sources including P135II. According to the management of P135II in Na Tau Commune this restricts the consultation with and participation of the targeted poor in decision making. While the village leaders are consulted by the CPC and P135II management there is often no direct meeting with programme beneficiaries. This is a kind of centralised planning that is often associated with P135 phase 1 and II (Interview 31/05/11; CSA, 2009; CEMA / UN, 2009).

While there have been numerous GoV poverty alleviation programmes in Na Tau Commune including P135 1 and II, P134, P129 and UN and NGO interventions, the one project according to interviews, that has made an important and influential impact on Case Study 3 is the EU Son La Lai Chau Rural Development Project (EU SLLCRDP) 2000-2005 (see Table 5.17). When the EU SLLCRDP began planning its intervention in ten districts of Son La and Lai Chau (split into two provinces Lai Chau and Dien Bien in 2003) provinces in 2000, the DOET (1997-2000) adult literacy ‘eradication’ drive was winding down. By this stage the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) had declared that the adult literacy rate of people aged between 15 and 25 had reached overall levels of 90%+ in all of Vietnam (UNESCO, 2000c). The success of the adult literacy ‘eradication’ programme and ‘Universalisation’ of primary education were acknowledged and acclaimed. For those working closer to the areas where literacy levels where lowest there was a more realistic evaluation of adult literacy statistics and when the EU SLLCRDP proposed a plan to support Adult Basic Education (ABE) interventions in the newly established CVC primary schools, the DOETs of Son La and Lai Chau accepted (SLLCRDP, 2005).

The concept of the EU SLLCRDP Cluster Village Centre (CVC) was based on the provision of both primary and adult education in remote locations in villages or in strategic sites between villages. An inclusive and culturally sensitive education for all ages, with a priority on the completion of primary school and provision of ABE for the local community were the twin pillars of the CVC.
Table 5.17: EU SLLCRDP 2000-2005 Overview (CS3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Intervention in Na Tau (Case Study 3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Provided training, seed and equipment for farmers. Used PRA methods and trained APOs and village agricultural extension workers / paravets.</td>
<td>All in Na Tau Commune and Ta Cang Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry</td>
<td>Provided training for farmers and forestry staff, trees and ideas on forest production and harvesting.</td>
<td>All in Na Tau Commune and Ta Cang Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>Built roads, irrigation systems and set-up Operations and Maintenance (O+M) Groups</td>
<td>All in Na Tau Commune and Ta Cang Village</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: EU SLLCRDP Final Report; Interviewes 19/01/11-23/07/11

CVCs were designed to have three classrooms, a teacher’s room that included a children’s and adult library / audio-visual equipment, electricity, running water and toilets. The training of teachers in both child-centred and adult education methodologies and capacity building for education managers on how to run, develop and maintain the CVCs was central to the human resource development of the EU SLLCRDP intervention. Adult Basic Education interventions in CVCs focused on adult literacy, post-literacy and awareness-raising on 14 diverse topics in close collaboration with DOETs, BOETs, line agencies, mass-organisations and the Agriculture, Forestry and Infrastructure components of the EU SLLCRDP. Na Tau Commune benefited from all the above interventions (see Table 5.17) as well as receiving support for non CVC schools and scholarships for all poor children.
from remote villages to board at commune primary, secondary and high-schools (EU SLLCRDP, 2005; Interviews, Field Notes, Observations 19/01/11-23/07/11).

5.4.5 Adult Basic Education and Access and Participation in Poverty Alleviation Initiatives in Na Tau Commune (CS3)
Although poverty alleviation initiatives in Case Study 3 have been many and varied over the last 15 years there will be a concentration on the four outcome orientated components of P135II when matching the study objectives to DOET adult literacy interventions in Na Tau Commune. Aspects relating to: curriculum; methodology; teacher / facilitator training and methods; use of local languages; link to poverty alleviation; post-course use of literacy and literacy environment will be examined and directly related to the four components of P135II. Comparisons, contrasts and reference to Case Study 1 (Thuan Hoa Commune) and Case Study 2 (Thanh Nua Commune) will be made when relevant. A cross-case analysis of all three case studies using the research question and sub-questions as a framework will be conducted in the concluding chapters 6 and 7.

Na Tau Commune was selected as a case study site because of the combination of being a P135II commune and having had DOET adult literacy and post-literacy classes from 1997 to 2011. With the cooperation of Dien Bien provincial DOET, Dien Bien District BOET and the Commune People’s Committee (CPC) in Na Tau Commune the village of Ta Cang was chosen as the location for conducting in-depth interviews with DOET adult literacy participants, teachers and adult education managers. In addition interviews were conducted with P135II managers and trainers at commune, district and province level. The following is an overview of the number and type of interviews that were conducted in Na Tau Commune:

- 12 DOET adult literacy Participants (in-depth structured)
- 3 DOET adult literacy Teachers (in-depth structured)
- 1 DOET adult literacy Teacher Trainer (in-depth structured)
- 2 P135II Production Development Trainers / APOs (in-depth structured)
- 4 Managers of DOET adult literacy and 2 P135II Managers from Provincial, District and Commune / Village level (semi-structured).
The interview questions for DOET adult education participants, teachers, teacher trainers and managers are identical to interviews conduct with Reflect participants, teachers, teacher trainers and managers. All in-depth and semi structured interviews in the three case studies are the same. In addition there were extensive interviews with the provincial DOET and Department of Ethnic Minority Affairs (DEMA) as well as informal interviews with former staff of the EU SLLCRDP. Some of the former EU SLLCRDP staff were seconded from DOET and DARD in Dien Bien Province and BOET and BARD in Dien Bien District and have returned full-time since 2005 to their respective departments. Four of these seconded staff took part in interviews at district and provincial level. In addition the Reflect Facilitator Trainer interviewed in Dien Bien Province for CS2 held a key position in the EU SLLCRDP Adult Education Component from 2000-2004. Because Case Study 3 (Na Tau Commune) and Case Study 2 (Thanh Nua Commune) are located in Dien Bien District and Province there is some overlap regarding interviews with provincial and district managers and trainers at DOET, BOET, DARD, BARD and DEMA as these officers are responsible for all communes including CS2 and CS3.

The access and participation of DOET adult literacy participants in poverty alleviation initiatives, with a particular focus on P135II will be examined in the following six sub-sections. Because of the reported positive intervention of the EU SLLCRDP (2000-2005) on DOET adult literacy interventions in Case Study 3 the period between 2002 and 2005 was identified as suitable for data collection on Adult Basic Education. This provided a comparable cohort of DOET adult literacy and post-literacy participants who had finished courses prior to the beginning of P135II in 2006. The lack of courses and significant numbers of mature participants, plus the nature of the new DOET ABE primary complementary curriculum contributed to the exclusion of DOET literacy courses after 2005 in this study. The new complementary curriculum is referred to in all three case studies but for the purpose of comparison with Reflect the old DOET adult literacy curriculum will be used.
5.4.5.1 Curriculum (CS3)
In Case Study 3, as with Case Study 1 and 2, questions relating to curriculum development were included in in-depth and semi-structured interviews with DOET / BOET adult literacy managers, teachers and teacher trainers, participants as well as with P135II managers, trainers and beneficiaries. The development of the DOET adult literacy curriculum in Case Study 3 follows a functional literacy approach using primers (Book 1-5) that have been developed by the Vietnam Institute for Education Sciences for the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) in Ha Noi (Interview RECENFED / MOET, 03/12/10). The development of this curriculum was influenced by UNESCO’s promotion of functional literacy as a link with learners’ economic activities, their livelihoods and family life. The stress is on the importance of adults fitting into existing circumstances and practices in order to perform a productive role in personal and national development (see 2.3.2.3 Functional Literacy; Levine, 1986). Books 1-5 are organised around themes including family economics, health care, hygiene, agriculture, social problems, safety and good citizenship. According to the DOET in Dien Bien Province the old literacy curriculum for adults continued in the province until 2006 and was replaced by a semi-fulltime course that requires adults to attend primary school complementary classes.

Because the DOET adult literacy participants interviewed in Case Study 3 attended literacy and post-literacy classes prior to 2006 the old DOET curriculum (see Image 5.10) will be analysed and the new post 2006 curriculum referred to when describing the current approach to ABE and adult literacy. In fact there is evidence in this study from interviews with the DOET and Women’s Union in Ha Giang, DOET and BOET in Dien Bien, and primary school teachers in Case Study 3, that the old curriculum books are still widely used. This is backed up in an interview with RECENFED / MOET in Ha Noi (03/12/10) when it was explained that the new adult literacy text books were only recently developed and printed. In interviews with the DOETs in Ha Giang and Dien Bien it was confirmed that the new text books had not yet been delivered to the provinces (Interviews; Field Notes; Observations, 03/12/10-23/07/11).
In Vietnam adult literacy in the national language (Kinh) was seen as key to national and personal development by the founding father of the Vietnamese state, Ho Chi Minh (Biddington and Biddington, 1997). From 1945, when literacy levels in Kinh were less than 10%, to 1954 the first great literacy campaign took place in North Vietnam. The second literacy campaign in the north between 1956-1959 was followed by a third campaign after the unification of North and South Vietnam in 1976 (Pham et al., 2004). All these campaigns had elements of the functional literacy approach as the emphasis was on national, community and personal development in a socialist one party system where functionality and communal contribution was seen as vital for the very existence of this relatively new state. Literacy in Kinh was from a GoV Marxist-Leninist perspective intrinsically linked to national and therefore personal development (see 3.2.3 ABE in Vietnam: An Update).

A final literacy campaign was launched in the 1990s to help achieve the targets of the Eradication of Illiteracy Order (1990) and by 2000 the literacy rate for adults under 35 years was reported to be 95.6% (EFA Vietnam Report, 1990-2000). As can be seen from this statistic targets were being met but figures are deceptive given the age limitations. The 1999 Census estimated that adult literacy for the population over 15 years old was 90.3%. This figure was further broken down to be 85.8% for adults over 35 years old. These figures cover the country as a whole disguising the fact that provinces such as Dien Bien, with an ethnic minority
population of over 80% non-native Kinh speakers, had much lower literacy levels. It was against this background that the EU DOET adult literacy classes in Case Study 3 (Na Tau Commune) were organised.

The curriculum content and development of the EU DOET adult literacy course in Case Study 3 was based on DOET adult literacy text books with aspects of participatory methods including Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). According to the DOET teacher trainer (DOET TT1 CS3) interviewed, the Adult Education Component of the EU SLLCRDP worked closely with DOET to develop the adult literacy curriculum to include participatory methodology in teacher training courses. Initial Teacher Training courses lasted 10 days and included:

- curriculum content and development based on DOET textbooks;
- adult education methodology (How to teach adult learners);
- adult learning styles;
- how to lecture and encourage discussion;
- management of group-work;
- evaluation of learners (Interview, DOET T.T.1 CS3, 01/07/11).

Two of the three teachers who conducted the EU DOET adult literacy classes in Case Study 3 confirmed that they learned: how to adapt DOET adult literacy text books and supplement them with additional local material and manuals; theories on how to teach adults; presentation skills; group work facilitation; leading discussions. The third adult literacy teacher interviewed (DOET T.1 CS3) did not take part in the EU DOET adult education teacher training course and explained that he received only two hours instruction on how to use text book 1 (ABC book) and teach it in one month to adult literacy learners. The contrast between the two hour training and 10 day initial training plus 5 day refresher training by the EU DOET adult literacy teacher training course for the same adult literacy curriculum (book 1-5) is stark (Interview DOET T.1 CS3, 29/06/11; DOET T.2 CS3,29/06/11; DOET T.3 CS3, 20/07/11).

Methodology used during the EU DOET adult literacy teacher training courses tried to link poverty issues and poverty alleviation to the development of the DOET
curriculum (Q.4a) according to the teacher trainer interviewed. Ways in which this was achieved included creating awareness that literacy and education in general helps to increase knowledge and therefore reduces poverty. Training how to link content of the curriculum and literacy course to participant’s everyday life, to community development issues (Q.4b) and issues related to women’s empowerment, communication and confidence building were confirmed (Q.4c). Over 70% of adult literacy class participants are women (Interview, DOET T.T.1 CS3, 01/07/11).

Q.7a enquired of DOET adult literacy teachers and teacher trainers if there were differences between DOET adult literacy and Reflect curriculum development and replies included:

- DOET uses primers (book 1-3 and 4-5)
- Reflect develops its own curriculum.

One of the interviewed DOET literacy teachers explained that normally there are big differences but that the EU DOET literacy course encouraged participatory methods that were similar to Reflect (Interview, DOET T.T.1 CS3, 01/07/11; DOET T.3 CS3, 20/07/11).

Of the 12 DOET adult literacy participants interviewed 10 stated that one of the main motivations for joining the DOET adult literacy class in Ta Cang Village, Na Tau Commune was to become literate (Q.3a). The other two participants were literate before joining the DOET class, one finished Grade 6 and the other Grade 4 primary school. It is interesting that both became class leaders and helped other classmates during the course. Other motivational reasons for joining the DOET class in Ta Cang that participants confirmed were: Q.3b To understand more about community development issues (11 yes); Q.3c To improve possibilities of income-generation (12); Q.3d To help younger family members with school work (11); Q.3e To communicate at the local market and with other ethnic groups (12).

The one participant who answered no to Q.3b and Q.3d explained that he had dropped out of school at a very early age and was only 12 years old when he attended the DOET adult literacy class so he had no interest in community development and was the youngest member of his family.
Participants attended DOET adult literacy classes in Ta Cang for 5-7 days (evenings) a week for three months in the summer for literacy and post-literacy classes. To complete both courses took 6 months usually spread over a 2-3 year period. This was flexible during busy farming periods and could be held at lunchtime and early afternoon. Classes were held in the new EU CVC primary school after 2002 and in the old temporary school before that period. Primary teachers taught the classes according to participants with the majority (10) having more than two teachers. Local teachers from the Thai ethnic group as well as Kinh teachers (Q.6) taught the classes. One Kinh teacher (DOET T.3) was named by 10 out of 12 participants as being their teacher for part of the DOET adult literacy class. She and another two teachers mentioned were still living and working in Na Tau Commune and were interviewed during the study. DOET T.3 CS3 is a key informant as she also took part in the EU DOET teacher training courses (2003-2005).

The DOET adult literacy and post-literacy curricula in Case Study 3 were taught intensively over a period of three months (for each course) usually during the summer months. In answering Q.4 on the completion of both literacy and post-literacy courses 9 participants completed both courses and two completed the literacy course only. Each curriculum is designed to conclude with a DOET examination and 11 participants confirmed that they took part and received certificates. One participant (DOET P6 CS3) explained that she couldn’t attend the exam because she went into labour on that day but because she was an excellent student her sister was allowed to sit the exam for her. All 12 participants interviewed were extremely proud of their certificates and produced them as proof that they completed the DOET adult literacy courses. Some had the certificates hanging on their wall (see Image 5.11). The literacy certificate is equivalent to the completion of Grade 3 primary school and post-literacy is equivalent to completion of the highest grade in primary school, Grade 5 (Interviews DOET P.1-12, 29/06-20/07/11).
P135II management at provincial, district and commune levels acknowledged that literacy was important for accessing and participating in P135II. In answering Q.9 both P135II trainers (A.P.O.1 and A.P.O.2 CS3) agreed that literacy in Kinh was very important for understanding and benefiting from P135II training courses. When asked in Q.10 if they were aware of different approaches (DOET and Reflect) to adult literacy in Na Tau Commune one P135II trainer (A.P.O.1, CS3) replied that he was aware of the differences. In answering Q.11 on the impact of different approaches on participation in P135II training he stated that Reflect participants may understand more on the content (presentations and handouts), be more active in training and understand PRA methods better. He qualified this by stating that some of the P135II training conducted in Na Tau Commune may be boring for Reflect participants who are used to more active involvement (Interview A.P.O.1 CS3, 30/06/11; A.P.O.2 CS3, 01/07/11).

While the traditional curriculum used in DOET adult literacy and post-literacy classes are reliant on a set of primers (textbook 1-5) there is evidence through interviews with teachers, teacher trainers, adult literacy class participants that this curriculum (pre-2006) has been effective in delivering levels of literacy and post-literacy that helped all 12 participants interviewed to pass state exams and receive
In contrast to *Reflect* curriculum development it was a pre-designed course that progressed from basic literacy learning to more advanced reading, writing and maths skills. Aspects of the functional literacy approach were included in text books 2 - 5 covering areas such as income-generation, healthcare, farming, animal husbandry and community development. During the period when the EU SLLCRDP provided technical assistance (TA) for curriculum development (2002-2005) DOET adult literacy teachers received extensive training on how to supplement the traditional DOET curriculum with local material, group work / discussion, the use of PRA methods, needs assessments and evaluation.

Many of the positive aspects and ideas of *Reflect* curriculum development were integrated into the EU DOET adult literacy teacher training courses. Reports from the EU SLLCRDP Adult Education Component and evidence from Case Study 3 indicate that, although these methods were practiced and learned during teacher training courses by primary school teachers there is a strong possibility because of time constraints, large classrooms (25 adult learners per class), seating arrangements, conservatism, and training in primary school teaching methods, that the use of participatory methodology, methods and tools were restricted (Interviews; Field Notes; Observations, 19/01/11-23/07/1; EU SLLCRDP, 2005).

In conclusion this can be seen as a missed opportunity to provide participants with both functional literacy and PRA skills that could be utilised during agricultural and other community development and personal training. It was an ambitious attempt by the EU SLLCRDP to fuse elements of *Reflect* into the DOET functional literacy approach and can be seen as having influenced a more participant / learner centred approach to DOET ABE interventions. At that time in Dien Bien and in other provinces where DOET was directly involved in the development of *Reflect* new methods were being embraced by trainers and teachers but because of contradictions between the two approaches it was difficult for teachers with only a limited amount of training to incorporate new ideas into teaching practice. It is arguable that had the EU DOET experiment been less reliant on trained primary school teachers the results may have been different. The following section will examine aspects of the EU DOET adult literacy intervention from a methodological perspective.
5.4.5.2 Methodology Used (CS3)

An examination of the link between the methodology used in the DOET adult literacy courses in Na Tau Commune and the four components of P135II is the focus of this section. Aspects of the participatory methodology introduced during the intervention of the EU SLLCRDP will be included as the period under examination (2000-2005) coincided with the collaboration of the EU SLLCRDP Adult Education Component support for DOET adult literacy classes. Evidence from data collected in Case Study 3 includes interviews at national, provincial, district, commune and village levels. Na Tau Commune and Ta Cang Village are the areas where DOET and P135II implemented their respective programmes and where the bulk of interviews took place. Methodology, defined as the approach used by DOET to deliver adult literacy and post-literacy classes in Na Tau Commune and including the teaching styles, methods and tools used by teachers has been integrated into in-depth and semi-structured interviews. Comparisons including similarities and contrasts with Reflect in Case Study 1 (Thuan Hoa Commune) and Case Study 2 (Thanh Nua Commune) will be refereed to in the context of impacting access and participation in P135II.

In an interview with RECENFED, one of the leading research institutes of the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) in Ha Noi, the director described the DOET Adult Literacy (AL) courses (old and new) as essentially functional. Following traditional functional literacy methodology the DOET adult literacy and post-literacy curriculum used in the EU DOET classes in CS3 includes basic language skills that can be functionally applied in real life situations. Textbooks 1-5 are designed to gradually develop language skills in Kinh for illiterate adults using lessons based on healthcare, farming and social issues. There is a new curriculum (series of textbooks) in development according to RECENFED based on similar functional literacy principles that cover four areas: law, citizen rights and GoV policy; income generation; enhanced education; environmental education. Because these new textbooks are not yet available it is difficult to compare them with the old set of textbooks that have been used in Case Study 3 (Interview RECENFED, 03/12/11).
The DOET in Dien Bien Province during two separate interviews verified that the methodology used for adult literacy and post-literacy classes is based on the traditional functional literacy approach using text-books 1-5. The new organisation of classes into a semi-fulltime attendance at school for young adults (15-25) has replaced the older (pre-2006) flexible organisation of classes but the methodology and text-books have stayed basically the same with exception of the introduction of role-play and a component on community development. New text-books for adult literacy have not been seen in Dien Bien yet (Interview DOET M.P.1 CS3, 19/01/11, 22/07/11). Of the three DOET adult literacy teachers who were interviewed two took part in the specialised DOET Adult Education (AE) Teacher Training Programme (DOET T.3 and DOET T.2 CS3) supported by the EU SLLCRDP (2003-05) and one did not (DOET T.1 CS3). The contrast between the two experiences is highlighted in table 5.18.

Table 5.18: DOET Adult Literacy (AL) Teacher Training CS3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Training / duration</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Methodology / Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DOET T1 CS3</td>
<td>Instruction on how to teach DOET AL text-books. One session / 2 hours.</td>
<td>Each teacher given one book to teach in one month. Instructed on how best to teach it.</td>
<td>Instruction / lecture / tips from trainer / senior teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOET T2 and T3 CS3</td>
<td>EU DOET AL Teacher Training. 2 stages, 10 days and 5 days (Total 15 days)</td>
<td>-AE theory -AE learning styles -Facilitation skills -Group work skills -Adaption of DOET curriculum</td>
<td>-Participatory -Discussion -Presentation -Basic PRA methods -Practice using mapping, matrixes, diagrams etc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Interviews DOET T.1 and T.2 CS3 29/06/11; DOET T.3 20/07/11.

Although the three DOET AL teachers taught the same DOET curriculum there are striking differences in the training that they received prior to teaching the course. While DOET T.1 CS3 received very basic training (Q.2), DOET T.2 and T.3 CS3 attended extensive residential training in two stages for a total of 15 days with Adult Basic Education Teacher Trainers from Dien Bien and Ha Noi. When asked in Q.4 if the methodology used during the teaching of the DOET adult literacy classes links to poverty alleviation DOET T.1 CS3 replied ‘not really’ while DOET...
T.2 and T.3 CS3 replied that the link related to practical knowledge learned during the courses. When asked in Q.4a if the development of the DOET curriculum was directly related to poverty issues DOET T.1 CS3 replied ‘No. Just letters, reading and writing. Post-literacy more related to these issues’. DOET T.2 CS3 saw the link to raising animals and health issues and DOET T.3 CS3 expressed the view that participants use knowledge and ideas on poverty issues from classes in real life. DOET T.2 and T.3 CS3 also saw the link between DOET AL methodology and community development issues while DOET T1 CS3 recognised no link at all (Interviews DOET T.1 and T.2 CS3, 29/06/11; DOET T.3 CS3, 20/07/11).

The DOET Adult Literacy (AL) Teacher Trainer interviewed (DOET T.T.1 CS3) was also a trained Reflect facilitator as was another teacher trainer (RFT1 CS2) who took part in the EU DOET teacher training courses between 2003 and 2005. This is significant as the design of the DOET teacher training course was influenced by the experience of the trainers with Reflect. Asked in Q.6 if the participation of DOET AL teachers in the EU DOET teacher training course helped them to understand poverty alleviation issues and resources in their commune, DOET T.T.1 CS3 replied that it did. She explained that through the EU DOET teacher training course DOET AL teachers became more aware of GoV poverty alleviation policy and projects and used participatory methodology to adapt the DOET curriculum to match these resources with the needs of participants. DOET AL teachers became more aware of poverty alleviation issues and resources after the EU DOET AL teacher training courses. Women’s issues were particularly important according to this informant (DOET T.T.1 CS3) as most of the DOET AL participants are women. Linking these issues to enhance the DOET AL curriculum was possible through the participatory methods, tools and skills learned at the EU DOET AL teacher training courses. The general opinion was that the EU DOET training improved the DOET approach, removing it from the primary school emphasis and incorporating PRA and other participatory methods from Reflect (Interview DOET T.T.1, 01/07/11).

All three DOET AL teachers who work as full-time primary school teachers agreed that the participation in DOET AL classes helped people access poverty alleviation
resources (Q.6). DOET T.3 CS3 outlined the differences between DOET AL courses and *Reflect* (Q.7) as:

- **Curriculum Development:** ‘Yes normally. DOET uses books. Used participatory methods for the EU DOET AL classes though which are similar methods to *Reflect*’.
- **Training of Teachers / Facilitators:** ‘Yes. DOET normally has no training for AL teachers. The EU DOET supported AL classes had (2002-2005). DOET AL teachers usually use primary school methodology and methods to teach adults’.
- **Active Participation of learners:** Yes normally but the EU DOET AL course (2002-2005) helped learners participate and understand more.

Of the 12 DOET AL participants (DOET P.1-12) interviewed, 10 evaluated the DOET AL literacy methodology for teaching literacy (Q.7) as good and 2 participants (DOET P.1 and P.3 CS3) gave it the highest evaluation very good. Reasons given are:

- teachers were good, careful, detailed, enthusiastic;
- learned how to read, write, count, deal, buy and sell and other knowledge;
- can speak Kinh and express ideas;
- good atmosphere in class, competitive, worked in groups, singing and dancing;
- useful textbooks and material;
- lecture style class with traditional seating arrangements. Not always easy to follow the teacher though.

From the above evidence it is clear that all the DOET AL participants appreciated the classes and could see the benefits of literacy. All were assessed and passed the DOET examinations receiving certificates. In Case Study 1 and 2 *Reflect* participants were assessed in an *ad hoc* manner and did not receive certificates to prove that they had completed literacy courses. In answering Q.4c on literacy assessment *Reflect* participants interviewed in CS1 (45%) and CS2 (57%) answered that they were assessed. Methods of assessment in CS1 and CS2 included:
- tested on how to write a letter and counting;
- exercise to fill in a form for Policy Bank;
- two tests in class and one at home;
- tested on counting and weighing;
- oral questions on healthcare and HIV
- test on reading.

R.F.4 CS1 indicated that assessments were based on attendance but not on literacy ability and that it would be better to have assessments based on literacy skills (see Box 5.2). All Reflect participants interviewed expressed the opinion that they would appreciate certificates to indicate that they completed Reflect courses. Assessment in Reflect and the accreditation of the programme to match DOET standards has been an issue since the introduction of Reflect according to the Dien Bien DOET and R.F.T.1 CS2 (Interviews, 22/23/07/11).

P135II management at provincial, district and commune level in Case Study 3 agreed that being literate was advantageous to accessing and participating in P135II interventions. According to the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) literacy in Kinh is very important for the successful delivery of training to farmers (Interview DARD1 CS3, 01/07/11). One P135II Production Development Component Trainer (A.P.O.2 CS3) while not knowing the different approaches to teaching literacy (Q.10), indicated in answering Q.11 that if approaches to teaching adult literacy included PRA methods the positive impact on participants in P135II training would be greater (Interview, A.P.O.2 CS3, 01/07/11). The link between PRA and agricultural training is strong throughout the developing world including Vietnam (Chambers, 2008; EU SLLCRDP, 2005).

The Na Tau Commune Agricultural Promotion Officer (A.P.O.1 CS3) and P135II trainer when asked if differences in approaches (methodology) to literacy impacts on people’s participation in training conducted by P135II (Q.11), he replied yes. He explained that DOET AL teaching was one dimensional (one way of teaching) while Reflect used practical methods and a lot of discussion. Reflect participants he explained may understand more related to the content (presentations and
handouts); be more active in training and ask more questions; understand and use PRA methods. In the same interview he suggested that P135II training could be improved by decreasing the amount of presentations and lecturing and increasing the use of PRA to encourage better participation from trainees (Q.15). He suggested that P135 should follow the Reflect CCD (Case Study 2) methods. When asked about the use of language and amount of written material the same P135II trainer (A.P.O.1 CS3) proposed continue using Kinh but to reduce the amount of written text and increase the use of images.

It must be noted that this particular APO and P135II trainer (A.P.O.1 CS3) is also a Reflect facilitator in Na Tau Commune and his opinions may therefore be biased. However, his opinions were backed up by A.P.O.2 CS3, who suggested in answer to Q.15 that it would better to use different methods including PRA, have longer training courses, and evaluate training properly in any new phase of P135. Better tools for training and more practical demonstrations were also suggested (Interview A.P.O.1 CS3, 30/06/11; A.P.O.2 CS3, 01/07/11).

In conclusion it is evident from interviews with DOET management, DOET AL teachers and teacher trainer that methodology plays an important role in the training of AL teachers for the delivery of AL classes. Differences in the quality and thoroughness of training and use of methodology for the delivery of DOET AL classes are outlined in Table 5.18. During the period when the EU SLLCRDP supported the DOET to implement the standard DOET curriculum there is clear evidence that methodology improved. The two DOET AL teachers (DOET T.1 and T.2 CS3) who attended the 15 day teacher training (2 phases) express the opinion that the training in the use of participatory methodology and methods enhanced their skills and benefited delivery of the course. The management of DOET AL classes in Case Study 3 stated that generally DOET AL teachers use traditional primary school teaching methodology because the participants (under 25) are younger than Reflect participants and the literacy course is focused on learning how to read and write (Interviews, 29/06/11, 20/07/11, 21/07/11).

Participants of the DOET AL classes were appreciative of the methodology used by teachers and the link to poverty alleviation of the courses but unlike the Reflect
participants in Case Study 1 and 2 there is no mention of PRA or tools like mapping, matrixes and diagrams. It can therefore be concluded that DOET AL teachers used these participatory tools sparingly or not at all. The rigidity of the DOET AL curriculum and a working culture immersed in primary school teaching methods may have inhibited the use of PRA methods in class. Classroom arrangements and furniture may also have contributed. However, participants expressed great pride and appreciation of DOET AL Certificates (Image 5.11) and to have successfully passed DOET exams in reading, writing and maths is a testament to the effectiveness of the methodology used to teach the courses. Findings in CS3 indicate that while PRA approaches are clearly more adult learner focused, they may not be as effective in the early stages of literacy acquisition as traditional DOET methods.

Finally the link to poverty alleviation of an AL methodology that provides participants with literacy skills is clear in the interviews with P135II management and trainers. P135II trainers also see the usefulness of PRA methods in combination with literacy and appreciate approaches that include participatory tools when teaching adult literacy. Adult literacy (AL) methodology that uses everyday living scenarios and practical knowledge links adult literacy to income-generation and helps improve living standards according to interviews with P135II management and trainers and is supported in interviews with DOET management, AL teachers and participants. The EU DOET supported AL classes between 2003 and 2005 integrated elements of Reflect into a more traditional methodology, based on aspects of functional literacy using established primers, that was appreciated by DOET AL teachers interviewed in Case Study 3. This will be examined in more detail in the following section.

5.4.5.3 Teacher Training and Methods (CS3)
Teacher / facilitator training in Case Study 1 and 2 concentrated on the training of facilitators for the implementation of Reflect by ActionAid Vietnam in Thuan Hoa Commune (Case Study 1) and the Centre for Community Development (CCD) in Thanh Nua Commune (Case Study 2). In Case Study 3 the training of DOET adult literacy (AL) teachers will be examined using references to reports and interviews with DOET staff in Dien Bien Province, BOET staff in Dien Bien District and
teaching and management staff at commune and village level in Na Tau. Relevant information from interviews with Community Learning Centre (CLC) managers and P135II management and trainers will be referred to. Comparisons, contrasts and similarities to Case Study 1 and 2 will help to locate findings in Case Study 3 in the context of the study as a whole.

Okukawa (2008) when commenting on CLC development in Vietnam expressed the view that the literacy campaigns that were carried out in Vietnam from 1945 to 1976 were successful and effective in lowland areas populated by Kinh communities. After 1976 and particularly more recently in the 1990s the school system was expanded to include special efforts to educate children and adults in remote areas. Because of the lack of trained teachers in these remote areas large numbers of young, newly graduated Kinh teachers, were relocated from overpopulated lowland provinces to help establish new schools (Phan et al., 2004). As well as teaching children at primary level many of these young Kinh teachers were ‘mobilised’ along with soldiers of the Vietnamese Border Army to teach literacy to ethnic minority adults. Training for adult literacy (AL) teachers was limited and comprised of a crash-course on how to teach the DOET AL curriculum in three months (Okukawa, 2008; EU SLLCRDP, 2005). In an interview in Case Study 3 with a retired primary school teacher (DOET T.1 CS3, 29/06/11) he verified that this was still the method of training DOET AL teachers in 2002. The experience of DOET T.2 and T.3 CS3, who received extensive training before teaching the EU supported DOET AL classes from 2003 to 2005 contrasts with the experience of DOET T.1 (see Table 5.18). Both teacher training methods will be examined based on data collected during interviews and information from reports and relevant literature.

DOET TT1 CS3 who was part of the training team that conducted the EU DOET AL Teacher Training courses from 2003 to 2005 was recruited to the team because of her experience with adult education and her facilitation skills. She is now the director of the Continuing Education Centre of Dien Bien District and when interviewed (DOET T.T.1 CS3, 01/07/11) had a vivid memory of the training courses and still had the training curriculum and records in her office. Because of her background in adult and continuing education within the GoV DOET system in
Dien Bien for over thirty years her insights were valuable. The development of the EU DOET Teacher Training Course for AL teachers that included two primary teachers from Case Study 3 was designed to provide methodology and methods to supplement the DOET AL curriculum (textbooks 1-5). Content of the EU DOET Teacher Training Course included:

**Methodology:** Mixture of participatory and traditional. Curriculum content and development based on DOET AL textbooks (1-5). Adult education theory and methodology associated with adult learning.

**Methods:** How to lecture to adults; facilitate discussion and group work; presentation skills, evaluate learners.

**Tools and Techniques:** PRA tools including mapping, charts, matrixes, poverty trees. How to use A0 (large sheets) paper to develop colourful presentations. Training in needs assessments for teachers to survey adult learner needs (Interview DOET T.T.1 CS3, 01/07/11).

Between 30 and 50 participants took part in each of the EU DOET AL Teacher Training courses that were held to train 230 primary school teachers in EU DOET Cluster Village Centre (CVC) schools to teach DOET AL classes. Two teachers from each of the 106 CVC primary schools were selected to take part in the training and participants were divided into groups of 15 teachers for the duration of the 10 day and 5 day training courses. The two DOET AL teachers interviewed in Case Study 3 evaluated the training as being very comprehensive and practical. All methods, tools and techniques were seen as useful from an active DOET AL teaching perspective (Q.3d). Both teachers confirmed what was reported by the EU DOET Teacher Trainer. The training course provided participants with ideas and tools (PRA) on how to link the DOET AL curriculum (book 1-5) to poverty issues and poverty alleviation. One of the teachers (DOET T.3 CS3) in answering Q.7b on the difference between training of AL teachers / facilitators in DOET and *Reflect* replied that DOET AL teachers usually receive no training and that the EU DOET was an exception. He also pointed out that DOET AL teachers usually use primary school methods to teach literacy to adults (Interview DOET T.2 CS3, 29/06/11; DOET T.3 CS3, 20/07/11).
The DOET AL Teacher Trainer (DOET T.T.1 CS3) expressed the same opinion as DOET T.1 and T.2 CS3 when comparing the EU DOET to Reflect (Q.7b). She was a trained Reflect facilitator so had insights into both and elaborated by pointing out that the provision of teacher manuals at the EU DOET Teacher Training courses to support the use of DOET AL textbooks and the finances available from the EU to pay for material, books, copybooks, libraries, equipment and teacher’s allowances helped to improve the DOET AL Teacher Training and literacy classes (Interview, DOET T.T.1 CS3, 01/07/11). However, there is evidence during the collection of data in Na Tau Commune and Ta Cang Village that this support was not sustained by DOET after the EU SLLCRDP project ended and that the adult libraries and audio-visual equipment that were provided for each CVC primary school had been removed from Ta Cang (Interviews; Field Notes; Observations, 19/01/11-23/07/11).

In an interview with the Community Learning Centre manager (CLC M.1 CS3) he expressed the opinion that presently teachers who are currently involved in DOET AL courses receive very limited training on adult education methodology. He pointed out (Q.4) that only Reflect facilitators get training on adult education methodology from CCD in Na Tau Commune. Although there are still some DOET AL classes in Na Tau Commune prison there is no evidence that teacher training has taken place (Interview CLC M.1 CS3, 21/07/11). An interview with the Bureau of Education and Training (BOET) director in Dien Bien District revealed that teacher training for DOET AL teachers is minimal in comparison to when supported by the EU SLLCRDP. She was a seconded staff member of the EU SLLCRDP Education Component (2000-2005) and involved with the coordination of both primary school and adult education initiatives. It was on her advice that Na Tau Commune / Ta Cang Village were chosen for conducting Case Study 3. Unfortunately it was not possible to get permission to observe a current DOET AL class using the old curriculum and textbooks (1-5) in Na Tau Commune as the nearest one was taking place in the prison that is located in Ta Cang Village (Interview BOET M.1 CS3, 11/03/11).

There were no reported primary complementary classes targeting school dropouts and young adults taking place in Ta Cang Village school and although these
classes are reported by DOETs in Ha Giang and Dien Bien to be common none were observed in CS1, CS2 and CS3. During the first visit to Ta Cang Village school (31/05/11) it was reported by the head teacher that although officially all adults are literate in Na Tau there is still literacy classes being implemented using the old DOET pre-2006 curriculum in satelite schools and villagers houses. This contradiction between official statistics and reality was also observed in CS1 where the Women’s Union are active in teaching literacy to adults using the the old DOET pre-2006 curriculum (Interview, 16/06/11).

In conclusion the practice and effectiveness of DOET AL teacher training in Case Study 3 has gone through three distinct phases according to interviewees. These are:

**Phase 1** (1990-2002) When DOET AL teacher training was conducted by senior primary school teachers in a two hour session held at the commune / village school. Instruction on how to teach the curriculum (textbooks) in a restricted period of time (3 months for 3 books) was the main content. Primary teaching methodology used to teach adults.

**Phase 2** (2003-2005) EU SLLCRDP support for DOET AL teacher training designed conducted by adult education experts to include participatory methodology, methods and tools to supplement the DOET AL curriculum. Teacher training was residential that entailed two courses of a total of 15 days.

**Phase 3** (2006-2011) A concentration on complementary ABE classes for young adults 15-25 yrs within the primary school system using primary school teaching methods. Limited pre-2006 style AL classes outside the primary school system. The organisation and methodology / methods of DOET ABE / AL teacher training similar as in Phase 1.

In Case Study 3 two of the three AL teachers interviewed who took part in the EU DOET teacher training courses were still teaching and therefore could be used as an important human resource for AL teaching in Na Tau Commune. In comparison to *Reflect* facilitator training in Case Study 1 and 2 there are many similarities with
the DOET teacher training courses during the EU SLLCRDP support period (2003-05). However, the sustainability of this support was dependent on the funding from the EU and DOET AE teacher training returned to the old ‘crash course’ variation once funding ceased. The presence of Reflect in Ta Cang Commune relieved the pressure on DOET to provide AL classes and this in combination with improved literacy statistics and a back to school policy for young illiterates rendered the old style DOET AL classes semi-redundant. However, the DOET AL period being investigated in Case Study 3 is pre 2006 and the relevance of the EU DOET AL teacher training courses is significant. The majority of DOET AL participants attended classes during the EU intervention and have evaluated the performance of their DOET AL teachers highly. There is compelling evidence that the support from the EU for DOET AL teacher training and classes impacted on the effectiveness and link to poverty alleviation in Case Study 3.
5.4.5.4 Use of Local Languages (CS3)

Na Tau Commune is similar to Case Study 2 (Thanh Nua Commune) in that it has three main ethnic minority groups, Thai, H’mong and Kho Mu. The population of Na Tau Commune is 6,719 and the majority of the population are Black Thai (84.55%) followed by H’mong (8.26%) and Kho Mu (1.4%). Because of the influx of Kinh people to the region since 1954 they represent 5.59% of the overall population. There are also small numbers of Tay, Hoa and Muong ethnic minority people living in Na Tau. The majority of local authority, DOET and P135II management and trainers and DOET AL participants interviewed in Na Tau Commune were Black Thai. Interviews in Dien Bien District and Province were conducted with line agencies such as DOET / BOET, DARD / BARD and DEMA who are managers and trainers in DOET AL and P135II initiatives. During all interviews the languages used were almost exclusively English and Vietnamese (Kinh). Questions were asked in English translated into Kinh and answers were translated back into English. This method of language use also gave the researcher direct involvement and control during interviews. At no stage in any case study was it necessary to locate a local ethnic minority translator. This is a positive reflection on the oral language skills in Kinh of the DOET AL / Reflect participants and other local ethnic minority officials, teachers / facilitators and trainers who were interviewed. Incidentally as in Case Study 2 (Thanh Nua Commune) only two ethnic groups Thai and Kinh took part in interviews. There where no H’mong or Kho Mu among the DOET AL participants interviewed in Ta Cang Village. The main reason for this is that both villages in CS2 and CS3 are homogeneous Black Thai villages. Other ethnic groups such as H’mong and Kho Mu live in separate villages. In Dien Bien Province pilot interviews took place in Co Phuc Village which is a Kho Mu village and also in Ma Thi Ho Commune in Muong Cha District which is H’mong. Both locations have Reflect and DOET AL classes (Interviews; Field Notes; Observations, 19/01/11-23/07/11). In contrast the CS1 Reflect circle had three ethnic groups namely Dao, Tay and H’mong participating. The outcomes of Reflect and DOET interventions in heterogeneous and homogeneous rural societies in this study will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

According to the DOET in Dien Bien 25% of the teaching staff in the province are ethnic minority teachers. During the collection of data in Case Study 3 two of the
three DOET AL teachers interviewed were Black Thai, one of P135II trainers was also Black Thai and the same trainer was also interviewed as the manager of Na Tau Commune Community Learning Centre. All DOET AL participants (DOET P.1-12) interviewed in Ta Cang were Black Thai as was one Commune School Principal and the Chairman of the Commune People’s Committee. Out of a total of 17 in-depth and semi-structured interviews conducted in Na Tau Commune 16 were with Black Thai. Only one interview at commune and village level (Case Study 3) was conducted with a native Kinh speaker and who because of marriage and over 25 years teaching in Na Tau Commune could speak both Thai and H’mong languages (Interviews; Field Notes; Observations, 19/01/11-23/07/11).

The contrast between this Kinh teacher who has assimilated through work, marriage, language and residence in Na Tau Commune (DOET T. 3 CS3) and the Kinh teacher in CS1 (R.F.4 CS1) is fundamental to understanding the importance of culture and language assimilation for Reflect facilitator and DOET AL teacher effective implementation of ABE interventions. This will be further discussed in Chapter 6.

DOET AL courses in Case Study 3 are designed to be conducted in Kinh. However all three DOET AL teachers indicated that knowing a local language has helped them in their work. All are primary school teachers (one now retired) and can speak Thai, H’mong, and Kinh. One teacher can also speak Sin Mon. Knowing local ethnic languages comes natural to Thai people according to one of the DOET AL teachers (DOET T.1 CS3), while the only Kinh teacher (DOET T.3 CS3) to be interviewed explained that her husband is H’mong and that she received some training in local languages by DOET but picked up most herself. Literacy learning can be difficult for illiterate adults and children and being able to translate for them is a great advantage according to the three DOET AL teachers interviewed. As in Case Study 1 and 2 these teachers explained that understanding the local cultures is just as important as knowing the languages. The DOET AL Teacher Trainer (DOET T.T.1 CS3) interviewed in Dien Bien District maintained that not knowing a local language was a disadvantage for DOET AL teachers (Interviews DOET T.1 CS3, 29/06/11; DOET T.T.1 CS3, 01/07/11; DOET T.3 CS3, 20/07/11).
Training courses for P135II are in Kinh (Q.7) according to P135II trainers. One P135II trainer in Na Tau Commune (A.P.O.1 CS3) explained that he sometimes helps out Thai trainees if they don’t understand some concepts. In H’mong villages where literacy levels are traditionally lower he said that local H’mong village leaders sometimes translate for participants. As in Case Study 2 which is located in the same district Dien Bien, P135II training is conducted using presentations and handouts (90%) with little use of diagrams and images. The importance of literacy in Kinh was evaluated as being the most important factor in understanding and benefiting from P135II according to both P135II trainers. The continued use of Kinh in P135 training (Q.15b) was seen by both trainers as necessary but with less presentations and handouts and more use of participatory methodology and PRA tools (Interview A.P.O.1 CS3, 31/05/11; A.P.O.2 CS3, 01/07/11).

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) in Dien Bien Province, which is the main advisor for the implementation of P135II Production Development Training considered literacy in Kinh as being very important for successful training outcomes (Q.8). On a scale of 1-10 (10 being most important) literacy in Kinh was assessed as 8. When literacy levels are not adequate, more demonstrations and hands on type training should be used according to DARD respondents (DARD M.1 CS3) to Q.8a. However, it was pointed out that this is more expensive and takes more time. Agricultural Promotion Officers (APOs) at commune level according to DARD in Dien Bien are local ethnic minority people and they are an important human resource and source of local knowledge. Findings from Case Study 1, 2 and 3 verify this as all APOs were local people who had agricultural college and university training (Interview DARD M.1 CS3, 01/07/11).

In Case Study 3 there is a strong sense of cultural identity in the majority Thai (84.55%) population. Although Thai scripts have not been used for over half a century in the locality, people have a strong association with their ethnic language. It was not possible to get the opinions of other ethnic minority groups in Case Study 3 as only Thai and Kinh people were interviewed. The absence of a functional written script in Thai has accelerated the development of literacy in the national language Kinh.
As in Case Study 2 which has also a Black Thai majority (68%), there was no evidence of any written material in Thai or any other ethnic minority language. Thai is used in the home and Thai traditional dress is still preferred to modern Kinh dress by the majority of Thai women. However, younger female teenagers informed the researcher that they preferred to wear traditional clothes on special occasions only. It is possible that like the written script the Thai traditional dress will be reserved for ceremonial purposes in the future (Interviews; Field Notes; Observations, 19/01/11-23/07/11).

5.4.5.5 Link to Poverty Alleviation (CS3)

The link between the DOET Adult Literacy (AL) courses and poverty alleviation with a particular focus on P135II will be examined in the context of Na Tau Commune in this section. Case Study 1 (Thuan Hoa Commune) and Case Study 2 (Thanh Nua Commune) examined the link between Reflect and P135II as both
communes have been implementing *Reflect* during the intervention of P1351 and P135II. Case Study 3 (Na Tau Commune) and Case Study 2 (Thanh Nua Commune) are located in the same district of the same province (Dien Bien) and therefore have much in common in relation to management, budgets and implementation of P135II. There are however differences, the most important being that Case Study 3 will look at the relationship and link with the GoV Dien Bien provincial Department of Education and Training (DOET) and district Bureau of Education and Training (BOET) implementation of AL classes and P135II. General literature on the impact of Adult Basic Education (ABE) and literacy on poverty alleviation in the developing world with specific reference to Vietnam will be referred to and linked to the DOET AL literacy and P135II interventions in Na Tau Commune (Case Study 3). Research studies on causes of ethnic minority poverty in Vietnam by the World Bank and independent researchers and the Mid-Term Review of P135II will be used to evaluate findings from interviews and observations in Case Study 3 in the general context of Vietnam.

Although the link between education and development had been expressed in human capital theories as far back as the 1960s it was not until the 1990s that it became a priority strategy in the global plan for poverty alleviation (Green, 2007). Bhola (2005) sees the potential of adult and lifelong education for assisting in poverty alleviation as:

- hinging on the context of globalisation in which poverty is defined;
- the need for understanding the nature of adult education as an agent for democracy;
- and a script for a future adult education (including ABE) that will deliver adult ‘Education for All’ in the larger framework of lifelong education.

Bhola (2005) identifies sustainable development as including clean water, sanitation, adequate shelter, energy, health care, food security and environmental protection and states that without including these elements into Adult Basic Education (ABE) poverty reduction / alleviation cannot be actualised. In CS3 there was a conscious attempt by the EU DOET AL Programme (2002-2005) to strengthen these elements in the DOET AL curriculum. The DOET functional
literacy approach includes lessons on clean water, sanitation, health care, food security and environmental protection. According to evidence in CS3 because of the support from the EU SLLCRDP through teacher training, material (adult libraries and posters) and financial support the impact of these important elements were highlighted (Interviews; Field Notes; Observations, 19/01/11-23/07/11).

One of the main Millennium Development Goals declared by the UN in 2000 was to reduce by half the population of people living in extreme poverty (Van Der Veen and Preece, 2005). Research by Raditloaneng (2004) has shown that ABE skills are not in themselves sufficient to make a major impact on poverty alleviation. In order to do so ABE should include elements agricultural extension / promotion, vocational education, community development and training for active citizenship. More extended systems for ABE than traditional practices need to be introduced in developing countries according to Van Der Veen and Preece (2005).

In CS3 because the ABE intervention supported by the EU SLLCRDP was not exclusively targeted at adult literacy and post-literacy there was a support mechanism in place for a limited number of years (2000-2005) that integrated the agriculture, forestry, infrastructure and education components of the project into one coordinated intervention in selected communes which included Na Tau. The development of awareness raising classes that included health care, sanitation, income-generation, agriculture and environmental protection supplemented the DOET AL curriculum and helped to broaden ABE skills. In addition each component of the EU SLLCRDP held participatory training courses using PRA methods that included agricultural techniques, forest management and protection and setting up operation and management (O+M) groups (Interviews, 19/01/11-23/07/11; EU SLLCRDP, 2005).

Benchmark 3, of the Adult Literacy Benchmarks (see Appendix 1), states that ‘Governments have the lead responsibility in meeting the right to adult literacy, and in providing leadership, policy frameworks, an enabling environment and resources’. They should:

- ensure cooperation across all relevant ministries and links to all relevant development programmes;
• work in systematic collaboration with experienced civil society organisations;
• ensure links between all these agencies, especially at local level;
• and ensure relevance to the issues in learners’ lives by promoting the decentralisation of budgets and of decision-making over curriculum, methods and materials.

In Case Study 3 (Na Tau Commune) the GoV DOET AL programme when supported by the EU SLLCRDP Adult Education Component (2002-2005) met most of the above recommendations in Benchmark 3. In an interview with the DOET AL Teacher Trainer, Q.4 enquired how the methodology used in the EU DOET AL teacher training linked to poverty issues and poverty alleviation and she replied:

Yes it did because we tried to link the EU DOET AL Teacher Training Course to poverty alleviation in general. We created awareness among teachers that Adult Basic Education and particularly literacy will help to increase knowledge and reduce poverty. The content of the course linked the everyday issues of literacy of the DOET AL participants to curriculum development. It also linked to community development issues, women’s issues, empowerment, communication and confidence building. (Interview DOET T.T.1 CS3, 01/07/11)

The DOET AL Teacher Trainer indicated when answering Q.6 that participation in the teacher training course helped participants (DOET AL teachers) understand poverty alleviation resources in their respective communes. This included P135 and its components, access to other GoV and NGO programmes, ideas for income-generation and jobs and to create a general awareness of poverty alleviation resources available in communes in the area (DOET T.T.1 CS3, 01/07/11). In order to achieve this there needed to be a close collaboration and cooperation between DOET teachers and relevant poverty alleviation programmes including the comprehensive EU SLLCRDP implemented in Case Study 3 (2000-2005).

The two DOET teachers Na Tau Commune (DOET T.2 and T.3 CS3) who took part in the EU DOET AL Teacher Training Course verified in answering Q.4 that the methodology linked poverty issues and poverty alleviation in the development
of the curriculum to supplement the standard DOET textbooks to include community development and everyday living issues of literacy class participants. Both teachers also agreed that participation in the DOET AL classes helped learners access and participate in P135 and other poverty alleviation programmes, develop ideas for income-generation and jobs and to be more aware of poverty alleviation resources in the commune (Q.6) (Interviews DOET T.2 CS3, 29/06/11; DOET T.3 CS3, 20/07/11). The DOET teacher (DOET T.1 CS3) who didn’t attend the EU DOET AL Teacher Training courses answered Q.4 by stating that it doesn’t and that the curriculum has no relationship to poverty issues, community development or everyday issues of participants. It is ‘just related to letters, reading and writing’. However he pointed out in Q.6 that reading and writing, without awareness of community development issues and income-generation, still helped DOET AL class participants to take part in P135 training, to understand information on different poverty alleviation programmes, conduct business and be aware of poverty alleviation resources (Interview DOET T.1 CS3, 29/06/01).

The awareness of DOET AL class participants of poverty alleviation programmes in Na Tau Commune (Case Study 3) was strong. Answering Q.8, ten out of twelve participants were sure about knowing P135 and two had heard of the name but weren’t too sure about the programme. Ten out of twelve participants remembered the EU SLLCRDP and its interventions in Education, Agriculture, Forestry and Infrastructure in Na Tau from 2000-2005. Four participants mentioned some other poverty alleviation programmes including CCD Reflect, and health care initiatives. When asked if their families had benefited from any of the poverty alleviation programmes (Q.9) in Na Tau Commune (Case Study 3) all 12 participants stated that they had. Benefits received from P135 and other programmes including EU SLLCRDP are in Table 5.19.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Number of Beneficiaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P135 II (2006-10)</td>
<td>Production Dev: Training on rice, seed, corn, vegetables trees and fertiliser. Animal husbandry (goose, fish, chickens, ducks). Infrastructure: School and other infra like roads, bridges, irrigation systems, clean water. Capacity Building: Socio-cultural living standards: Scholarships, roof, toilets, water tanks</td>
<td>7 (6 Poor House Holds) (HH) 12 (all) 1 6 (only poor HH)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU SLLCRDP (2000-2005)</td>
<td>Training (all four components), literacy, infra including roads, schools, irrigation systems, plants, seed, trees, scholarships</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-Credit from Policy Bank - Mosquito nets - Health station - Husking and ploughing machines - Electricity credits</td>
<td>1 3 5 2 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Interviews DOET P.1-12, CS3, 29/06/11, 30/06/11, 20/07/11

Some benefits from P135II, as can be seen from Table 5.19 are restricted to poor households (HH). Poor HH can avail of certain types of training, the distribution of animals and seed, repairs to houses and provision of toilets, pens and water tanks. Other benefits that poor HH are entitled to are scholarships for their children to attend school and access to low interest credit. When participants (12) were asked if involvement in DOET AL classes helped to access and participate in P135II and other poverty alleviation programmes in Na Tau Commune 100% replied that it did (Q.10). Ways in which it helped are:

- Being able to read and understand about P135II (11 Yes)
- Take part in meeting to plan P135II (7 Yes)
- Participate in activities such as training (8 Yes)
- To know your rights and entitlements (11 Yes)
- Understand community development issues (12 Yes)
A majority of participants (8) claim that they have taken part in some P135 II training courses that were conducted as lectures in Kinh with some limited demonstrations in Na Tau Commune. Trainers were reported to be from the district (Dien Bien) and Na Tau Commune (Interviews DOET P.1-12 CS3, 29/06/11, 30/06/11, 20/07/11).

P135II management at provincial level (DEMA) in Dien Bien informed the researcher during the first field visit (20/01/11) that the Capacity Building (CB) component of P135II targeted village / commune and line section leaders. Only one of these categories included a participant of the DOET AL classes. Although cultural activities and legal aid was also mentioned by DEMA as support through the Socio-cultural Living Standards Component 4 of P135II, no DOET AL participant respondent mentioned this during interviews. The lack of reference to this component by participants was consistent in all three case studies. The major constraint in the implementation of P135II according to DEMA in Case Study 3 and Case Study 2 (both in Dien Bien Province / District) is:

- educational levels of participants including literacy;
- cultural backwardness;
- agricultural practices that focus on self-sufficiency;
- ownership of P135II by participants is weak;
- lack of Operation and Maintenance (O+M) groups for small infrastructure investments of P135II.

Literacy levels of P135II participants are very important according to DEMA in Case Study 2 and Case Study 3 to access information and understand about P135II. Literacy is very important for awareness-raising so ethnic minority participants in P135II need to know more than one language according to the director of DEMA (Interview DEMA M.1 CS2 and CS3, 19/01/11).

In a Mid Term Review (MTR) of P135II ‘Reviewing the Past responding to New Challenges’ (2008), conducted for the Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA) and UN in Vietnam, the issue of low literacy levels for participation in P135II planning were inhibiting because of:
limited education and fluency in Vietnamese (Kinh) of the ethnic minority groups who represent the bulk of the poor in those areas (P135II). This may result in inadequate articulation between (i) development priorities expressed by villagers, (ii) results targets set for various programme components at various time horizons, and (iii) yearly budget allocations to various communes and then to different projects in the communes does not appear to be clear-cut (CEMA / UNDP, 2009).

As can be seen from the interview with DEMA in Dien Bien these issues are relevant to CS2 and CS3. Evidence from interviews with participants, facilitators / teachers, trainers and managers confirm this and highlight the importance of literacy in Kinh (Vietnamese) for the planning, implementation and evaluation of P135II (Interviews; Field Notes; Observations, 19/01/11-23/07/11).

The Dien Bien Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) expressed the view in an interview (DARD M.1 CS3, 01/07/11) that literacy was very important for the successful delivery of training in P135II in Case Study 2 and Case Study 3. In Na Tau Commune the P135II management confirmed that literacy is important for accessing and participating in P135II. Literacy levels impact the following aspects of participation according to P135II management in Case Study 3:

- understanding programme objectives and regulations;
- participating in planning;
- taking part in capacity building and training courses;
- and improving socio-cultural living standards.

Because all training courses are conducted in Kinh and are delivered through lectures and presentations (90%), literacy levels of P135II participants in Kinh are of the upmost importance (Q.9), according to P135II trainers in Case Study 3. Approaches to literacy that include knowledge of PRA would help participation (Q.11) if P135II training was conducted in a more participatory manner. However, at present this is not the case according to P135II trainers in Case Study 3. One P135 II trainer (A.P.O.1 CS3) in Case Study 3 maintained that Reflect participants may understand more than DOET AL participants in P135II training, but his reasoning is based on Reflect participants being trained in agricultural techniques / animal husbandry and being more aware and active than DOET from the use of
PRA methods. Similarly to other P135II trainers in CS1 and CS2 he suggests that P135II training could be improved (Q.15) by using PRA. At present this is not the case so there is not as much advantage for Reflect participants as is suggested (Interview A.P.O.1 CS3, 30/06/11; A.P.O. 2 CS3, 01/07/11).

In section 3.4.1 (Ethnic Minority Poverty and ABE in Vietnam) research on the broad area of ethnic minority poverty indicates that the proportion of ethnic minority poor is disproportionate to their overall percentage of the population. While accounting for approximately 14% of the population, ethnic minority groups average 52% of the poverty rate in Vietnam (CSA, 2009; Baulch et al., 2007; Nguyen and Baulch, 2007; Swinkels and Turk, 2006; Glewwee et al., 2002). In this particular research the average poverty rate of Case Study 1, 2 and 3 is 45% with Case Study 1 (Thuan Hoa Commune) at 62%, Case Study 2 (Thanh Nua Commune) at 24.6%, and Case Study 3 (Na Tau Commune) at 49.6%. All three communes are predominately ethnic minority and all are situated in remote and disadvantaged areas of the Northern Mountain Region of Vietnam.

According to the World Bank Country Social Analysis (CSA, 2009) Kinh populations have seen remarkable improvements in living standards even in remote and disadvantaged areas (see Figure: 3.3 and 3.4). Two of the main five contributing factors for this according to the 2009 World Bank Country Social Analysis (CSA) are that ethnic minorities have fewer social assets and may not be benefiting from government poverty reduction programmes as successfully as Kinh. Reasons according to the CSA (2009) include lack of knowledge of policies, inability to hear or read about programmes due to language barriers and discrimination (see Mc Elwee, 2004; Trang Thi Thu Trang, 2004). Other factors include fewer physical assets such as: land, capital and credit: geographical locations and lack of physical mobility; and socio-cultural factors that are keeping ethnic minority communities out of main stream economic development (CSA, 2009).

Evidence in CS3 indicates that DOET AL participants are more aware of P135II than Reflect participants in CS1 but that their understanding of the complexities of the programmes are hindered by limited availability of information, participation in
planning and distribution of funding to target the development of social assets (training, health, access to social services) and human capital. Data from this study while not focusing on the differences between Kinh and ethnic minorities reveals that within ethnic minority groups there are some significant differences in access and participation in P135II.

According to Swinkels and Turk (2007) and verified in data from Case Study 1, 2 and 3 of this research, a high proportion of poverty alleviation investment has focused on infrastructure to increase access and mobility to remote areas of Vietnam. However, the World Bank CSA (2009) suggests that mobility is more than just access to roads and that ethnic minorities in Vietnam need to have places such as markets, schools, training centres to go to and networks and people to do business with. In CS1 Reflect participants in Na Lun Hamlet complained that the lack of a road from the hamlet to Mich B village hindered participation in Reflect and accessing P135II interventions. Without Vietnamese (Kinh) language skills, without contacts outside the village and wider networks, ethnic minorities cannot take advantage of roads and infrastructure to increase mobility and improve livelihoods in the same way that Kinh or better situated ethnic groups can. Data from the imbedded case of Na Lun Hamlet in CS1 supports these findings. In CS2 and CS3 the location of the two communes along national roads benefits access to general development, including attendance at ABE classes, more than in CS1 where the location of Thuan Hoa commune in a remote valley is a distinct disadvantage. In CS3 11 of the 12 DOET AL participants live within ten minutes of the Ta Cang primary school where AL literacy and post-literacy classes took place.

In conclusion there is convincing evidence in Case Study 3 (Na Tau Commune) that the link between taking part in the DOET AL courses and accessing and participating in poverty alleviation programmes including P135 II (2006-2010) is positive. The period (2000-2005) that was specifically focused on coincided with substantial support to the Dien Bien DOET for Adult Basic Education (ABE) by the EU SLLCRDP Adult Education Component. This period was just prior to the beginning of P135II implementation period (2006-2010), thus providing a cohort of DOET AL participants who were certified as literate before P135II was
implemented. Na Tau Commune DOET AL participants, teachers, teacher trainers, managers, P135II managers and trainers provide positive reflections on the impact of adult literacy and post-literacy classes on access and participation in poverty alleviation programmes including P135II. There are many similarities to Reflect in Case Study 2 and Case Study 1 in regard to teacher / facilitator training because of the intervention of the EU SLLCRDP and the promotion of participatory methodology.

The main differences concern the use of standard primers (textbooks) in DOET and the exclusive utilisation of primary school teachers to conduct AL classes. A striking contrast between EU SLLCRDP support for DOET AL classes and the situation before and after this intervention can be seen from interviews with management and teachers. The period between 2000 and 2005 and especially the three years when the EU SLLCRDP supported DOET to integrate the development of AL classes into the overall poverty alleviation strategy of the project should not be seen as a definitive reflection of the link between DOET AL interventions and poverty alleviation. It is however a concrete example of the possibilities of linking literacy to poverty alleviation and community development in a coordinated manner. Chapter 6 will discuss and analyse this further in the context of the study as a whole using the three case studies.

5.4.5.6 Post-course use of Literacy and Literate Environment (CS3)

The post-course use of literacy and the literate environment in Na Tau Commune will be examined in this section. In order to do so reflections and insights from interviews with DOET AL participants, teachers, managers and P135II implementers will be matched with relevant literature and observations from the data collection process. The three communes in this multiple case study are similar in many respects including proportion and type of ethnic minorities in the population, locations in Vietnam and in their respective provinces and socio-economic make up. All three case study communes have had Adult Basic Education (ABE) initiatives prior to and during the implementation of the GoV P135II poverty alleviation programme. The examination of the use of literacy after completion of selected phases of these ABE initiatives and the literate
environment in each case study commune provides an important insight on sustainability issues.

The Adult Performance Level (APL) team at the University of Texas developed a model of functional literacy that explains the type of skills and competencies that are necessary to become functionally literate. They constructed their model of functional literacy on two dimensions: content and skills. The type of information that individuals need access to and the knowledge they must be able to generate to function completely in daily life they referred to as content. The five general knowledge areas that comprise the content of functional literacy according to the APL team are:

1. Consumer economics
2. Knowledge related to occupations
3. Community resources
4. Health
5. Law and government.

The skills that adults need to be functionally literate are

- Communication skills (reading and writing)
- Speaking and listening
- Computation skills
- Problem solving skills
- Interpersonal relations skills (Adult Performance Level Study, 1975)

Although this APL study was conducted in 1975 (the year when the Vietnam War ended) the general knowledge areas and skills listed above are still relevant to remote ethnic minority areas in Vietnam. Many of these general knowledge areas and skills are included in DOET AL and Reflect curricula. It is argued that functionally literate people are better equipped to cope with the world, can manage to fill in application forms, read instructions, manuals and regulations. Functionality in this sense is to be able to cope with the most minimal procedures of mainstream society (Street and Lefstein, 2008; Street, 2004; Abadzi, 2004; Levine, 1982).
The pre-course literacy experience of DOET AL participants in Case Study 3 (Q.2) was minimal as reported earlier. Eight never attended school at all and four had limited experience of Grades 1-4 in primary schools. One participant (DOET P.3 CS3) was the exception and finished Grade 6 (first year in secondary school). She and another DOET AL participant (DOET P.5 CS3) who finished Grade 4 became class leaders and assistants to the DOET AL teacher. It is also interesting that both continued their education after completing the DOET AL and post-literacy classes and finished Grade 9 receiving a DOET Secondary School Certificate. It is evident that these two participants used literacy skills after finishing the DOET AL classes and acquired a higher standard than the other ten participants interviewed. The involvement in a course that was accredited and within the conventional education (DOET) system helped them to continue their formal education albeit through the informal Continuing Education system (Interviews DOET P.3 CS3, 29/06/11; DOET P.5 CS3, 30/06/11). Of the 18 Reflect participants interviewed in Case Study 1 and Case Study 2, there were no such examples of participants continuing their formal education.

Of the other ten DOET AL participants 7 completed the literacy and post-literacy exams and 3 the literacy exams only. All 12 DOET AL participants received DOET certificates and were proud to show them to me when interviewed. Exams were described as difficult by some and ‘normal’ by others. While attending DOET AL classes there were intensive periods in the learning process (Q.5). These periods consisted of two hour sessions five days a week and lasted up to three months in Ta Cang Village EU CVC school after 2002 and before 2002 in the temporary school that it replaced. The advantage of the new school was that there were proper classrooms and an adult library / resources. Most participants (10) named the same Kinh teacher (Teacher 3) as the DOET AL teacher who taught them literacy (Q.6). Other local Thai teachers were also mentioned for both literacy and post-literacy classes. All evaluated the course (Q.7) as being good (9) and very good (3) citing reasons including the teaching skills of the DOET AL teacher and effectiveness of the course. It is clear that participants considered themselves literate after the courses ended and all signed for interview payment without any problems (Interviews DOET P.1-12 CS3, 29/06/11, 30/06/11, 20/07/11).
The post-course use of literacy by DOET AL participants in Case Study 3, according to information from interviews, centred on involvement in training courses in agriculture and awareness-raising (Q.11). All 12 participants attended training and all training was conducted in Kinh using presentations and handouts. This constitutes solid evidence that functional literacy skills (listening, reading) were utilised by all participants but the regularity of the training is not clear and indications are that because of restrictions in budget they were short (one day) and irregular. The use of writing apart from filling in forms and applying for credit is limited in Case Study 3. DOET AL courses stopped after post-literacy with no possibility to continue unless going to Continuing Education classes in the district or joining a Reflect circle. Although Reflect is present in Na Tau Commune (Case Study 3) none of the 12 DOET AL participants were members of a Reflect circle. It is possible that when Reflect became active in Na Tau it targeted illiterate adults and the DOET participants were considered literate and so excluded (Interviews DOET P.1-12 CS3, 29/06/11, 30/06/11, 20/07/11).

There were three clear exceptions, apart from the two participants who finished Grade 9, in relation to the post-course use of literacy in Ta Cang Villag. After interviewing the Ta Cang primary school (built by the EU SLLCRDP in 2002) principal during the first field visit for this research study (31/05/11) and verifying that there were DOET AL classes held in the village from 2000-2005 it was suggested by the principal that a visit to one of the local shopkeepers could help with gathering the names of local adults who took part in the DOET AL courses. Records were not available and the only way to find out the names was to contact a known participant and follow the trail (literally) from there. As it turned out there were three shopkeepers all located in close proximity to the Ta Cang primary school who took part in DOET AL classes. They will be referred to as Shopkeeper 1, 2 and 3.
Shopkeeper 1 is a 39 year old Black Thai mother with no previous experience of literacy or education before joining a DOET Adult Literacy class in Ta Cang Village, Na Tau Commune (2001). She has completed both DOET adult literacy and post-literacy courses and has DOET certificates. She opened her business one year before attending the DOET AL classes.

Q. Before DOET AL Classes: ‘I couldn’t count, read labels on products, deal with salesmen, keep accounts, read prices on products, keep customer tabs, fill in tax forms and read invitations to social gatherings such as weddings’.

Q. Has literacy helped with business development? ‘Yes greatly. I would not be as successful without literacy. My business has developed and now includes: general grocer shop; butcher (supply our own pork); service for rice husking’.

Source: Interview DOET P.1 CS3, 29/06/11 and 21/07/11

Shopkeeper 2 is a 36 year old Black Thai mother who finished Grade 3 primary school before joining a DOET AL class in Ta Cang Village, Na Tau Commune (2001). She has completed both DOET adult literacy and post-literacy courses and has DOET certificates. She opened her business in September 2010 which is next door to Shopkeeper 1.

Q. Before DOET AL Classes? ‘Forgot a lot of literacy that I learned when very young at primary school. Classes were not good here back in the 1980s. Couldn’t read, write and count well’.

Q. Has literacy helped with business development? ‘Yes. Dealing with money (counting and multiplying; checking prices and codes on products; dealing with salesmen and customers; keeping accounts; reading bills and writing receipts. My business has a grocery shop, service for rice sales and my husband has a truck now. We have a good relationship with the other two shopkeepers and we are all old DOET classmates, neighbours and friends’.

Source: Interview DOET P.2 CS3 29/06/11 and 21/07/11
**Box 5.6: Shopkeeper 3 Case Study 3 (Ta Cang Village, Na Tau Commune)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shopkeeper 3 is a 31 year old Black Thai mother who had no experience of school before joining a DOET AL class in Ta Cang Village, Na Tau Commune (2002). She couldn’t attend primary school because her mother died and she had to stay home to help. She has completed both DOET adult literacy and post-literacy courses and has DOET certificates. She got the post-literacy certificate when in labour but because she was a good student her sister was allowed to sit the exam for her. She opened her business ten years ago (2001) which is across National Road 279 opposite to Shopkeeper 1 and Shopkeeper 2 in Ta Cang Village.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q. Before DOET AL Classes? ‘I couldn’t read or write. Not able to count. Was totally illiterate’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. Has literacy helped with business development? ‘Yes of course. Counting, buying products and dealing with sellers from different places, also bus drivers who drop off goods from the cities and large towns, keeping accounts and providing credit, filling in tax / VAT forms. I don’t become re-illiterate because of business. My business has grown and now we have a grocery shop; rice milling / husking service and small truck’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Interview DOET P.6 CS3, 30/06/11 and 21/07/11

The literate environment in Case Study 3 covers the areas in Na Tau Commune where data was collected. This centred on Ta Cang Village one of the 32 villages that makes up the commune. In addition interviews were conducted in Na Tau Commune Centre with Commune People’s Committee (CPC) officers including the CPC chairman and commune Agricultural Promotion Officer (APO) and Community Learning Centre (CLC) manager.
Box 5.7: Ta Cang Village

Ta Cang Village is situated 5km East of Na Tau Commune centre. Ta Cang is a Black Thai village with a population of 567 people. It is located on both sides of National Road 279 with its centre located around three shops and the primary school. The primary school was built by the EU SLLCRDP in 2002 but has been developed with funding from P135 to include an additional two storey block. The majority of the population are engaged in rice farming, vegetable growing, animal husbandry and handicraft production. Produce is sold to the three local shops or at the daily market in Na Tau village 7km away. There are no paved roads leading from National Road 279 to individual houses and hamlets. A new road is under construction to the large new prison that has been built on the outskirts of the village. As well as providing employment for local people the prison has had a detrimental affect on the amount of agricultural land of nearby Thai farmers. Households in Ta Cang Village (12) where interviews took place are scattered across a relatively confined area and could only be reached on foot because of path / road and weather conditions.

Source: Researcher’s Journal 31/05/11

The literate environment in Ta Cang Village is typical of small Black Thai villages in the commune according to respondents. When asked in Q.12 if there are possibilities to obtain books / audio visual material in the village or commune the majority (8) of participants replied that there was no adult library (Q.12a), no reading material available from the Women’s Union or Mass-organisations (Q.12b) or the possibility to purchase books in local shops (Q.12c). Two participants said that it was possible to get some healthcare leaflets from the health station and two others said that there was a small library in the commune Post Office (PO) (7km away). Some children’s books are available in the schools for children to read. Three participants reported that during the EU SLLCRDP support (2002-2005) to DOET AL classes there was a large adult library with a variety of reading and technical books as well as a TV, DVD player and DVD material. According to the EU SLLCRDP Final Report (2005) all 106 CVC Primary / Adult Education schools including Ta Cang CVC (Case Study 3) were equipped with adult libraries that included 350 books (on diverse topics and including novels), posters, awareness-raising material and audio-visual equipment. Visits to Ta Cang primary school
(former EU SLLCRDP CVC) by the researcher and information from DOET participants, teachers and local DOET managers confirm that these adult education resources and library have been moved to storage in the commune centre and are not used. One awareness-raising poster with the EU SLLCRDP logo was seen by the researcher in Ta Cang School (Interviews, 29/06/11, 30/06/11, 20/07/11).

DOET AL participants in Case Study 3 assessed the level of adult education resources (Q.13a) in the village and commune as 4.83 out of 10 (where 10=excellent). One participant replied that the level was 9 out of 10 during the support from the EU SLLCRDP (2002-2005). What prevents participants from accessing resources (Q.13b) is: lack of resources; lack of activities; distance to Na Tau Commune centre and Dien Bien Phu City. Resources could be improved (Q.13c) by the provision of adult libraries and other resources; classes; activities; more training; provide resources at village level; DVDs; space where adults can come to read at the village; promotion of the benefits of reading and ABE (Interviews DOET P.1-12 CS3, 29/06/11, 30/06/11, 20/07/11).

DOET AL management at commune level (Case Study 3) including the manager of the large new Community Learning Centre explain that the impediments to accessing adult education resources (Q.7) are:

- lack of adult education resources and activities;
- distance to resources for villagers;
- management of activities and resources;
- lack of needs assessments on adults’ educational needs;
- workload of local farmers (Interview CLC1 CS3; DOET A.L.M.1 CS3, 21/07/11)

There is a strong correlation between the data from participants and ABE management regarding impediments to accessing adult education resources. Key issues such as a lack of resources and activities, distance and incentives / motivation to take part in ABE activities are also noted in DOET AL teacher interviews.
DOET AL Teachers (3) see the impediments to accessing adult education resources (Q.8) as similar to DOET AL participants. They also cite a: lack of adult education resources; use and utilisation of the Community Learning Centre; time and motivation of villagers to take part in adult education activities; incentives to take part in activities. Proposed improvements to access and participation in ABE in Case Study 3 according to DOET AL Teachers (DOET T.1-3 CS3) include (Q.10): development of resources; better training for trainers; improvement of coordination between GoV and non-government agencies; raising awareness of the benefits of adult education among villagers. The main difficulties for learners to develop literacy skills (Q.11) are according to teachers are; books to read, motivation and activities to continue education; no chance to practice literacy skills so lose them; lack of opportunity and environment to practice skills learned at literacy classes (Interviews DOET T.1-3 CS3, 29/06/11, 20/07/11). The DOET AL Teacher Trainer maintains that many people who attend literacy classes become
re-illiterate because of difficulties to practice and develop literacy skills (Interview DOET T.T.1 CS3, 01/07/11).

The literate environment (Q.11a) was described by the DOET AL Teacher Trainer and three DOET AL teachers as; not great / not good / could be better; not a lot of material, books, no working library even in the commune. They add that people use literacy in their homes (Q.11b) by; counting; speaking; looking at TV; reading but not a lot of books (only schoolbooks) and newspapers and magazines which are also scarce. There are no functional / active written scripts among the Thai and other ethnic groups in the area (Q.11c) according to respondents. In order to acquire adult reading material a trip to Dien Bien Phu City is required which is 30Km from Ta Cang Village (Interviews DOET T.T.1 CS3, 01/07/11, DOET T.1-3 CS3, 29/06/11, 20/07/11).

The new Community Learning Centre (CLC) which is a purpose built building, which while providing an excellent space for training courses and meetings has no teaching or learning resources. The manager of the CLC described the type of resources (Q.6c) at the Na Tau Commune CLC as: large modern building; chairs and tables; loud-speaker system, press but no books or library yet. He explained that training courses and meetings take place in the CLC and some are connected to P135II. The CLC manager and DOET AL management in Na Tau Commune see impediments to accessing adult education activities / resources (Q.7) as: lack of activities and resources; distance to activities / resources and management of activities and resources through better planning using needs assessments based on villagers’ demands and awareness-raising on the benefits of adult education. The Centre for Community Development (CCD) who promote Reflect in Na Tau Commune support the CLC with funding and training but support from DOET and GoV sources are very weak (Interviews CLC M.1 CS3; DOET A.L.M.1 CS3, 21/07/11).

In conclusion it is evident from interviews with DOET AL management, teachers / teacher trainer, participants, the Community Learning Centre (CLC) manager and P135II management and trainers (APOs) that although literacy in Kinh is utilised in Case Study 3 its use is limited. To understand and benefit from training courses
conducted by P135II, participants need to be literate in Kinh. Other everyday activities where literacy is used include filling in forms, attending meetings, buying and selling at the market and reading notices and information from GoV agencies.

The literate environment in Na Tau Commune is similar to Case Study 2 (Thanh Nua Commune) and Case Study 1 (Thuan Hoa Commune). The advantage in Case Study 1 and 2 over Case Study 3 is that the Reflect programme is still active (more evidence in Case Study 2) and therefore participants meet to take part in activities that utilise literacy skills. Evidence suggests that all three case studies have a limited literate environment which becomes more limited the further the village or hamlet is from the commune centre and provincial capital. Na Tau Commune had for a period of three years (2002-2005) support from a multi-lateral donor (EU SLLCRDP) that enhanced the literate environment substantially during this period. However, this was not sustained and the resources and equipment provided by the EU to develop the literate environment in Ta Cang Village were removed to storage in the commune. Despite the availability of resources the commune CLC management complains of lack of books and equipment to develop the literacy environment. There is a culture in Vietnam to be over protective of books and material and sometimes this is exaggerated when project interventions such as the EU SLLCRDP come to an end. This development in Na Tau indicates that the Ta Cang CVC primary school reverted to prioritising primary education once the EU intervention ceased and all adult education material including books, posters and equipment were removed to storage. The DOET in Dien Bien when informed about this in a final interview (21/07/11) said that they would help to get the adult library relocated to the Na Tau CLC.

Solutions to the development of the literate environment and increased use of literacy in Case Study 3 are similar to the other two case studies. Suggestions include; provision of adult books, reading / awareness-raising material, manuals and libraries close to villages and hamlets; organisation of additional adult education activities and training; promotion of the benefits of adult education to villagers; better incentives for participants and trainers to take part in activities and additional funding. One of the significant differences between the practical use of literacy in CS 3 compared to CS2 and CS1 is the development of literacy skills by
shopkeepers. This highlights the necessity for adult literacy participants to continue to develop literacy skills through everyday use after literacy courses finish. However, literacy should not be confined to commercial dealings and according to the UK Literacy Working Group (2007) the need to build a literate environment is more important than addressing individual skills. Evidence from this research study in three separate communes in two disadvantaged provinces in the Northern Mountain Region of Vietnam confirm that the literate environment plays an important role in the sustained use and development of literacy skills and where the literacy environment is weak the development of literacy including reading, writing, speaking, listening and the use of numeracy is severely inhibited.

**Box 5.8: Key Results CS3**

| Key results in CS3 indicate that by providing a good level of literacy in Kinh the DOET approach had a significant impact on improving the capacity of participants to understand literature and communication methods used by P135II at meetings and training courses. The location of DOET AL courses and the homogeneous make-up of the geographically confined Thai village (Ta Cang) facilitated the delivery of the DOET approach by local primary school teachers who were familiar with the local Thai language and cultural sensitivities of participants. Although some of these local teachers were trained in the use of PRA there is little evidence that the demanding and restrictive DOET curriculum was adapted to include more learner centred participatory methods. There was strong evidence that ABE interventions improved during the period when support from the EU SLLCRDP was available and deteriorated when the support ceased. Impediments to access P135II resources are similar to CS1 and CS2 and centre on the distribution of funding, restriction in the use of participatory methodology, focus on community infrastructure and direct support to designated poor families. The poor management and coordination of existing ABE resources is confounded by the neglect to develop the substantial potential to enhance the literate environment in a culturally sensitive and sustainable manner. |
5.5 Conclusion

Chapter 5 presented the data from the three case studies in this research project. The selection of the three case studies was explained and the order of presentation outlined. Each case study was examined using the same set of instruments and presented in a similar manner. The presentation of data that provided background information covering geographical, demographic and socio-cultural information provided a contextual and descriptive foundation for the development of each individual case, focusing on Adult Basic Education (ABE) and poverty alleviation initiatives. Findings from interviews, discussions, reports and observations were outlined in a case by case format that linked the study objectives to explore two approaches to ABE (Reflect and DOET) and their impact on participants’ access and participation in poverty alleviation programmes. The two approaches were examined to shed light on the impact of curriculum, methodology, facilitator / teacher training and methods, use of local languages, link to poverty alleviation and post-course use of literacy and literacy environment on access and participation in the GoV poverty alleviation Programme 135II. All data collected between September 2010 and September 2011 was presented in Chapter 5.

Major findings confirm that there are differences in curriculum and methodology, teacher training and methods between Reflect and DOET but these differences were significantly reduced during the intervention of the EU SLLCRDP project in CS3. Findings related to language use and teacher / facilitator ethnicity reveal that being from the same ethnic group and having the ability to communicate in local languages enhances delivery of ABE interventions. The impact of ABE approaches on participants’ access and participation in P135II is dependent on facilitators’ / teachers’ and participants’ awareness and understanding of the programme as much as literacy and other skills learned during courses. Findings in all three case studies indicate that literacy in Kinh is essential for better understanding, access and participation in P135II. Impediments to accessing ABE resources include distance from commune centres, availability of resources, use of CLC and the literate environment in case study communes. Further cross-case analysis of the findings using the research question and sub-questions as a framework will be presented in Chapter 6.
Chapter 6: Discussion and Analysis

6.1 Introduction
Following the presentation of data from the three case studies, Chapter 6 will discuss and analyse these findings. Cross-case analysis will be used to analyse evidence from this multiple case study. Following recommendations from Yin (2009) each individual case study was treated as a separate study using a uniformed framework to present data in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 will utilise tables and other visual techniques to display and synthesise data that will form the basis for strong cross-case argumentative interpretations. This chapter is divided into seven sections that link directly to the research objectives, questions and sub-questions. Section 6.2 outlines the development and use of cross-case analysis as suggested by Yin (2009) and specifically designed for this study. Differences between Reflect and DOET AL approaches (6.3) and the impact of these two approaches on access to P135I will be examined in section 6.4. Impediments to accessing adult education resources and the implications of study findings for adult education policy will be outlined in sections 6.5. Section 6.6 provides a succinct synthesis on the impact of ABE / literacy approaches on participation in poverty alleviation programmes in the three case study sites including policy implications for P135. The final section (6.7) summarises the main research findings with concluding comments and recommendations.

6.2 Cross-case Data Analysis
The research design and methodology of this multiple case study is outlined in section 4.6. The design of the research focuses on the relationship between Adult Basic Education (ABE) and accessing poverty alleviation resources in selected ethnic minority communities in Vietnam. The theoretical framework that underpins this research relies heavily on ABE and poverty alleviation theories and concepts (see Chapters 2 and 3). A mixed methods qualitative approach using document analysis, interviews and observations was designed to measure differences between Reflect and DOET adult literacy approaches and the impact these approaches have on participants’ access and participation in poverty alleviation programmes with a particular focus on the GoV P135I.
A multiple case study design incorporating three case studies is an ideal framework for using cross-case synthesis techniques for data analysis according to Yin (2009). This technique treats each individual case study as a separate study aggregating findings across a series of individual studies (Yin, 2009, 156). The development of word tables synthesising the findings from each of the three individual case studies (CS1 Thuan Hoa Commune, CS2 Thanh Nua Commune and CS3 Na Tau Commune) provides visual comparisons and starting points for identifying patterns, similarities and differences. The case study question and sub-questions are embedded into sections 6.3-6.7 to facilitate the logical development of strong, plausible and un-biased arguments supported by case study evidence.

6.3 Differences between Reflect and DOET Adult Literacy Approaches

The differences between Reflect and DOET AL approaches are examined under the spotlight of curriculum and methodology, facilitator and teacher training, use of local languages and management in this section. Comparisons, contrasts and general effectiveness of each approach will be outlined based on interviews, observations and measurements in the context of this study. Relevant literature from Chapters 2, 3, and 4 is referred to to locate evidence from data presented in Chapter 5 in a wider theoretical framework and context. Word tables provide visual summaries to aid and enhance succinct discussion and conclusions. Case study questions and sub-questions are central to the discussion and analysis with a focus on differences between Reflect and DOET AL approaches in this particular section. Numerical evidence from interview respondents will augment qualitative findings to enhance robustness.

Differences and similarities in curriculum and methodology between the three case studies are outlined in Table 6.1 below. CS1 and CS2 focus on the use of Reflect introduced by ActionAid Vietnam in the late 1990s as a methodology to teach adults literacy and CS3 on the traditional pre 2006 DOET approach. CS1 and CS2 have many similarities in that the approach utilises the needs and ideas of the Reflect circle to develop the curriculum. Evidence from interviews indicates that there is a strong link in CS1 and CS2 to issues relating to health care, awareness-raising and income-generation in the development of the Reflect curriculum.
Table 6.1: Differences in Curriculum and Methodology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CS</th>
<th>Curricular Development</th>
<th>Length of phase</th>
<th>Textbooks</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Cert / Exam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CS1</td>
<td>Reflect circle</td>
<td>restricted / flexible</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Participatory</td>
<td>School / local house</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS2</td>
<td>Reflect circle</td>
<td>restricted / flexible</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Participatory</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS3</td>
<td>DOET / EU</td>
<td>restricted</td>
<td>Books 1-5 + local material</td>
<td>Traditional / Participatory</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS3*</td>
<td>DOET</td>
<td>restricted</td>
<td>Books 1-5</td>
<td>Traditional primary school</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Interviews, Field Notes, Observations CS1, CS2 and CS3, 19/01-23/07/11

*CS3 Pre-EU DOET curriculum and methodology

Both CS1 and CS2 have three phases covering literacy, post-literacy and community development. Phases 1 and 2 have restricted lengths starting with intensive five to six day a week circle sessions for one year (phase 1) to twice or three times a month for phase 2. Phase 3 (Village Development Club) is flexible in both CS1 and CS2 but there is compelling evidence in CS1 that activities in this phase are limited. CS1 and CS2 differ from CS3 in that textbooks are not used and PRA is extensively relied on for the development of the curriculum. Participatory methods are central to the development of the Reflect curriculum and the involvement of the participants in this curriculum development is one of the major differences between the two cases that investigated Reflect (CS1 and CS2) and the DOET case (CS3).

DOET AL classes in CS3 use textbooks 1-5 for the literacy (books 1-3) and post-literacy (books 4-5) phases. Textbooks are divided into lessons and lessons are calculated to be covered in a restricted time-frame. CS3 differed from the usual DOET AL curriculum in that the inclusion of local material and resources provided by the EU SLLCRDP (2000-2005) supplemented the standard curriculum. However, there is little evidence that this material was utilised in any systematic way. The curriculum used in CS3 was designed to deliver a functional literacy course using traditional primary school teaching methodology. Although DOET teachers interviewed attended training courses (DOET EU SLLCRDP) specifically
designed for introducing adult education methodology including participatory approaches, discussion and basic PRA methods there is little tangible evidence from interviews with teachers, participants and management that these participatory approaches were utilised in DOET literacy and post-literacy classes in CS3. The foundations of the curriculum development of CS1 and CS2 are based on participatory methodology and the use of PRA methods according to facilitators, facilitator trainers, management and participants. In CS2 it was possible to observe and verify the use of this methodology and methods during a Reflect circle session in Co Ke Village (see Image 5.1 and 5.2). The absence of a primer orientated curriculum in CS1 and CS2 promoted the use of Reflect participatory methodology in the development of the curriculum while its presence in CS3 restricted the use of participatory methodology and methods learned by DOET teachers who attended EU DOET Teacher Training Courses.

Although differences in curriculum and methodology are pronounced between the two Reflect cases and CS3 according to evidence, there was a comprehensive attempt by the DOET EU SLLCRDP intervention in CS3 to merge both approaches. The following table (Table 6.2) on facilitator / teacher training and methods will help to discuss and analyse this intervention in more detail. The location of Reflect and DOET classes may have enhanced or inhibited the development and implementation of curricula through the influence on circle / classroom environment. CS1 Reflect phase 1 and 2 were held in local primary schools by DOET teachers trained in Reflect methodology. CS2 Reflect circle sessions were held in a local house (Nha San) and conducted by a local Thai farmer facilitator. CS3 DOET classes were held exclusively in primary schools and conducted by DOET teachers. It would appear that the combination of location and occupation of facilitators / teachers had a strong influence on methodology and methods used. Classroom layouts and furniture which were restrictive and limited, and reliance on methods used to teach children basic literacy appear to have diluted the participatory and adult education methodology approaches learned at teacher / facilitator training courses.

A significant indicator of satisfaction with curriculum and methodology from participants was the awarding of course certificates. All CS3 participants were
extremely proud of their DOET literacy and post-literacy certificates. CS1 and CS2 participants had no tangible proof that they had completed Reflect phases 1 and 2 and no certificates to indicate that they were literate. It was therefore difficult for CS1 and CS2 participants to take part in established DOET or vocational training courses to further their formal education. In CS1 two participants evaluated the effectiveness of the Reflect methodology to teach literacy as very good, eight as good and one as not so good. One participant in CS1 quantified the percentage of participants who could read and write in Reflect phase 2 at between 20-25%. All seven participants (100%) interviewed in CS2 evaluated the effectiveness of Reflect to teach literacy as good and in CS3 DOET AL methodology was evaluated by two participants as very good and ten as good suggesting that they felt that they benefitted from traditional AL methodology. Evidence while conducting interviews with participants in all three case studies indicate that literacy levels in CS2 and CS3 were significantly higher than in CS1. The difficulty of 65% of participants in CS1 to sign for interview payment supports the assessment by R.P.11 CS1. Although evidence shows that the curriculum development and methodology used in CS1 and CS2 are similar the results when gauged on ability to sign for interview payments are different. Explanations relating to the heterogeneous ethnicity of participants and facilitators, distance and isolation from Reflect circles and ABE activities and literate environment partly explain the poor levels of literacy among 65% of Reflect participants in CS1.

In conclusion there is significant evidence that differences in curriculum and methodology are more pronounced between CS1 / CS2 (Reflect) and CS3 (DOET). CS1 and CS2 developed and implemented Reflect in an almost identical manner albeit with variations in results. CS3 was influenced by aspects of Reflect methodology during the period that DOET was supported by the EU SLLCRDP. The traditional methodology used to teach DOET AL classes prior to the intervention of the EU SLLCRDP was based on primary school methods according to evidence. Although the methodology introduced by the EU SLLCRDP was evaluated as being very effective by management, teachers and participants there are few indications from interviews with DOET AL participants that participatory methodology, particularly PRA methods learned at DOET EU Adult Education
Teacher Training Courses were utilised during DOET literacy and post-literacy classes.

As can be seen in Table 6.2, similar content and approaches were explored by predominantly trained teachers but over different time spans. The methodology and content of facilitator training in CS1 and CS2 are similar with a concentration on understanding the particularities of Reflect as a methodology, the use of dialogue and discussion and the articulation and presentation of participants’ ideas and opinions through the use of PRA methods (see Image 5.3 and Appendix 4). According to R.F.T.1 CS2 Reflect facilitators receive comprehensive training on how to teach literacy without the aid of literacy primers. This is key to Reflect facilitator training as the objective of Reflect as a literacy methodology is to teach literacy based on participants’ needs. Skills needed to help participants explore these needs centre on the use of PRA methods and tools. The ability of the Reflect facilitator to master the use of these methods and tools is paramount to the successful implementation of the Reflect approach. According to Fransman (2008) the training of motivated facilitators and use of participatory methods is central to all Reflect programmes. Motivation and the development of the necessary skills to implement Reflect can be seen as the two attributes that determine successful programme delivery (see Archer and Cottingham, 1996; ActionAid, 2011).

When one or both of these attributes are missing then Reflect participants’ acquisition of literacy, awareness of community development issues and empowerment will most probably be restricted. There is evidence from interviews, observations and limited assessment in this study that the motivation and skills necessary for quality Reflect interventions are more prevalent in CS2 than CS1. Data from CS1 and CS2 confirms that motivated Reflect facilitators are more likely to be from the same ethnic group as participants, reside in the targeted commune and are interested and involved in local community development issues.
### Table 6.2: Differences in Facilitator / Teacher Training and Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CS</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Methodology / Content</th>
<th>Methods / Tools Learned</th>
<th>Teachers or Local Facilitators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CS1</td>
<td>15days+</td>
<td>Participatory - discussion / group work / presentations. <em>Reflect</em> methodology, needs assessment. How to link to community dev / poverty issues</td>
<td>PRA methods and tools (standard) Warm-up.</td>
<td>All teachers (4) R.F. 1-4 CS1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ethnicity: 3 Tay, 1 Kinh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ethnicity: Thai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS3</td>
<td>15days</td>
<td>Participatory – AE theory / methodology, curriculum development to supplement DOET books, needs assessments. How to link to poverty issues</td>
<td>Lecturing, discussion, presentation skills, PRA tools (standard), evaluation.</td>
<td>All teachers (2) DOET T.2 and T.3 CS3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ethnicity: 1 Kinh, 1 Thai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS3*</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>Instruction / tips on how to teach each DOET book in 3 months. Book content.</td>
<td>Scheduling classes.</td>
<td>Teacher (1) DOET T.1 CS3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ethnicity: Thai</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Interviews, Field Notes, Observations CS1, CS2 and CS3 19/01-23/07/11
CS3* Pre EU DOET Teacher Training

It was explained by DOET teacher trainers that the objective of the EU DOET AL Teacher Training courses was to supplement the DOET AL and post-literacy curriculum by introducing AE theory and participatory methodology / methods to teachers during special residential AL teacher training courses (see Table 6.2). The intention of this teacher training initiative was not to replace the existing DOET AL curriculum but to enhance it. Evidence in CS3 confirms that this objective was achieved. The methodology used during these AL teacher training courses was in the main participatory and influenced by key aspects of *Reflect*. CS2 and CS3 are
in the same district (Dien Bien District) where Reflect was piloted (2000-02) under the supervision of DOET and utilised DOET trainers and teachers in combination with local facilitators such as R.F.1 CS2. The teacher / facilitator trainers in CS2 and CS3 were both DOET staff that had been trained as Reflect facilitators and both were instrumental in the development of the EU DOET AL Teacher Training Courses. In essence there was a conscious attempt to fuse elements of both DOET and Reflect methodology into the training courses and there is strong evidence that this was successful during DOET AL Teacher Training Courses. DOET AL teachers who attended these courses learned how to use PRA methods and tools as well as presentation, lecturing and evaluation methods and skills.

An important element of the DOET AL Teacher Training courses in CS3 that is missing in CS1 and CS2 Reflect facilitator training courses is the use and adaptation of DOET AL textbooks 1-5. Evidence in this study suggests that using DOET AL primers as a basis for Teacher Training courses helped teacher trainers and participants (DOET AL Teachers) focus on assimilating PRA and other participatory methods into lessons. Evaluations of these teacher training courses are positive and according to DOET AL teachers interviewed these methods were implemented during adult literacy and post-literacy classes thus encouraging a more participant centred approach. However, there is also evidence that the pressure to complete the curriculum in a restricted period of time (3 months per course), numbers in traditional classrooms, conflicting methodological philosophies and teacher conservatism inhibited actual implementation. Data from DOET participants support this assumption and at no stage during the twelve interviews with DOET participants were tools associated with participatory methodology (PRA) mentioned or referred to. Evidence suggests that there was a strong appreciation from DOET participants of the use of primers which helped them to attain a level of literacy to pass state examinations therefore indicating that this method was successful in achieving the objectives of DOET.

DOET teacher trainers and teachers provide insightful views of DOET AL teacher training prior to and after the EU SLLCRDP support in CS3. The teacher who did not attend the EU DOET AL Teacher Training courses explained that training on teaching the DOET AL curriculum prior to 2002 consisted of a two hour session on
how to teach one of the 5 DOET AL textbooks in one month. Another teacher explained that DOET teachers usually receive no AL training and that the EU DOET training was an exception. The CLC manager (CLC M.1 CS3) in Na Tau maintained that currently DOET teachers teaching AL classes receive little training. The BOET director in Dien Bien District CS3 supported this by stating that teacher training for DOET AL teachers is minimal compared to training during the EU SLLCRDP support. Evidence suggests that the DOET teachers who took part in the EU DOET AL Teacher Training Courses were significantly better trained to plan, implement and evaluate AL courses using traditional DOET textbooks and it can be assumed that methods and methodologies learned at these teacher training courses were assimilated when deemed appropriate into their actual teaching practice (see Levine, 1986; UNESCO, 2005).

Column 5 in Table 6.2 indicates the pedagogical background of facilitators and teachers in the three case studies. It is interesting to note that all Reflect facilitators interviewed in CS1 are DOET primary school teachers. In CS2 the Reflect facilitator is a local Thai farmer with no pedagogical background and in CS3 all AL teachers interviewed are DOET primary teachers. The significance of this reliance on primary school teachers to act as Reflect facilitators in CS1 is important in understanding differences between the two Reflect case studies (CS1 and CS2) and central to findings in this study. R.F.4 CS1 was a Reflect facilitator from 2002-2006 and was cited as the ‘outsider’ Kinh teacher who facilitated phase 1 of Reflect by the majority of Reflect participants in CS1. Phase 2 of Reflect in CS1 was facilitated by a local Tay teacher and phase 3 (Village Development Club) is facilitated (when active) by a local village leader who did not facilitate any other phases of Reflect and has very limited training as a facilitator.

The contrast with CS2 where there has been one facilitator, a local Thai farmer (R.F.1 CS2) who has been the Reflect facilitator in Co Ke Village since 2000 is significant because of issues relating to language, culture and understanding of participants’ development issues. When comparing interviews between R.F.4 CS1 and R.F.1 CS2 there are striking differences in knowledge relating to Reflect as a methodology, links to community development and information relating to poverty alleviation programmes including P135II. R.F.1 CS2 was insightful and gave the
impression that he understood the core elements of participatory methodology and Freirean philosophy that encourages dialogue and action in order to empower Reflect participants. This combination of motivation and skills, developed during numerous training courses, embodied the recommendations of Fransman (2008) that Reflect requires such attributes in its facilitators. The lack of conflicting pedagogical experience and approaches has helped R.F.1 CS2 to understand and implement Reflect in its pure form. Because Reflect in its pure form contradicts the fundamentals of traditional Vietnamese pedagogy the adaption of its methods by trained primary school teachers is difficult. Local facilitators with no pedagogical background are better suited as Reflect facilitators according to the Reflect circle manager because they are closer to the participants, know their issues and apply the approach using Reflect methods (R.C.M. CS2, 22/07/11). A similar opinion was also expressed in interviews with R.F.1 CS1 (a BOET official), with R.F.T.1 CS2 and with Reflect district management (CCD) in CS2 (see Freire, 1973; Giroux, 1983; Archer and Cottingham, 1996). In the International Benchmarks on Adult Literacy, Benchmark 6 promotes the use of indigenous local facilitators / teachers (see Appendix 1).

There are also strong assumptions that participatory methodology and PRA methods introduced during the EU DOET AL Teacher Training courses to supplement the standard DOET AL curriculum were sparingly used by DOET teachers because of conflicting pedagogical training and not sustained once support from the EU SLLCRDP ceased in 2005. During data collection in CS1 and CS3 where the majority of facilitators / teachers interviewed are DOET teachers there was a strong impression that Reflect and PRA, while appreciated and for the most part understood, are viewed as approaches that lacked rigour, discipline and order (see Fransman, 2008; Okukawa, 2008; Archer and Cottingham, 1996; Freire, 1973; Appendix 1: Adult Literacy Benchmarks). In contrast Agricultural Promotion Officers (APOs), DARD / BARD officials and local Reflect facilitators all promoted the use of PRA methods for ABE interventions and training. In this study there is strong evidence that primary school teachers who took part in Reflect facilitator training courses were not as effective at implementing Reflect approaches as local facilitators from a non-teaching background. This indicates that teachers in general have difficulty adapting to Reflect approaches because of
their pedagogical training and cultural background and especially if from another outside ethnic group (particularly Kinh). The impact of these differences in attitudes to ABE approaches will be discussed in relation to pedagogy going forward in the concluding chapter.

Table 6.3 below outlines the use of local languages in the implementation of Reflect in CS1 and CS2 and the DOET AL course in CS3. Reflect as outlined in Table 6.1 and 6.2 implements a curriculum that is not primer based. However, all written material developed in Reflect, according to interviews and observations are in the national language Kinh (see Freire, 1973; Freire and Macedo, 1987).

**Table 6.3: Use of Local Languages in Reflect and DOET AL Classes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CS</th>
<th>Curriculum / language</th>
<th>Textbooks / books</th>
<th>Local language use</th>
<th>Ethnicity of Teacher / Facilitator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CS1</td>
<td>Reflect. Kinh (Vietnamese)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes limited</td>
<td>3 Tay+1Kinh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS2</td>
<td>Reflect. Kinh</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes limited</td>
<td>1 Thai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS3</td>
<td>EU DOET. Kinh</td>
<td>DOET 1-5 in Kinh.</td>
<td>Yes limited</td>
<td>2 Thai+1Kinh*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Interviews, Field Notes, Observations CS1, CS2 and CS3 19/01-23/07/11

Using PRA methods entails the development of material with images, maps, diagrams, matrixes and charts. Headings and labels are in Kinh and supplement numerical and statistical information on material developed by the Reflect circle (see Image 5.3; Appendix 4). There is limited use of texts and materials that are not developed by the circle, although, Reflect facilitators in CS1 and CS2 indicated that locally sourced awareness-raising and technical material is sometimes used. In contrast CS3 DOET AL teachers used a curriculum based on text-books in Kinh. Although UNESCO (2008) reported that local ethnic minority scripts are used for primary and adult education in Vietnam there was no sign of this material in any of the three case study sites. All 5 Reflect facilitators and 3 DOET AL teachers interviewed confirmed that Kinh was the main language of instruction in circles / classes. The possibility of using local languages in written formats is severely restricted by lack of material and understanding of scripts by facilitators and participants. Both facilitator / teacher trainers and management of Reflect and
DOET programmes verify the predominant use of Kinh in ABE classes and activities. Although the use of Kinh in ABE classes is widespread the ability of local facilitators to verbally translate Kinh into local languages is seen as a distinct advantage. All three case study communes have large ethnic minority populations as outlined in Table 6.4 below.

**Table 6.4: Ethnicity and Language Use of CS populations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CS</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Script</th>
<th>Domestic Language Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CS1</td>
<td>4,902</td>
<td>H’mong 50% Tay 30%, Dao 20%</td>
<td>Not active</td>
<td>Local languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS2</td>
<td>6,726</td>
<td>Thai 68% H’mong 19%, Kinh 8%* Kho Mu 5%</td>
<td>Not active</td>
<td>Local languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS3</td>
<td>6,719</td>
<td>Thai 84.5% H’mong 8%, Kinh 5.5%* Kho Mu 1.5%</td>
<td>Not active</td>
<td>Local languages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Interviews, Field Notes, Observations CS1, CS2 and CS3 19/01-23/07/11

Although the importance of Kinh in the implementation of Reflect and DOET AL classes is verified in all three case studies the domestic use of local languages within family units and ethnic minority communities is still strong. All languages in Table 6.4 are active and seen as defining aspects of cultural identity in the three case study sites, thus to impose Kinh or negate local languages would have consequences on the cultural and linguistical equilibrium of these communities. In CS1 three of the four Reflect facilitators interviewed were Tay while 5 participants were Dao, 4 Tay and 2 H’mong. It is significant for cultural, linguistical as well as logistical reasons that there were no Dao or H’mong facilitators and that the one Kinh facilitator, who had limited local language / cultural knowledge and lived outside the commune, was responsible for teaching the majority of the participants interviewed in phase 1 of Reflect. In CS2 the Reflect facilitator (farmer) interviewed was from the local Thai village (Co Ke) and all 7 participants interviewed were also Thai and from the same village. In CS3 two DOET AL teachers were local Thai and the one Kinh teacher interviewed is married to a local H’mong, lives in the commune for over 25 years and speaks all the local languages. Similar to CS2 all 12 participants interviewed in CS3 were Thai (see Fransman, 2008).
R.F.1 CS2 expressed the opinion that being from the local Thai ethnic group and knowing the local language was a distinct advantage as a Reflect facilitator and especially in phase 1. Because literacy levels of participants in phase 1 of Reflect are low, knowing the local language is a great advantage according to this facilitator. He explained that language is intrinsically linked to the Thai culture and customs and not knowing it would be a disadvantage for facilitators. In CS3 all interviewed DOET AL teachers spoke the language of the 12 DOET AL participants and all indicated that knowing the local language and culture was important for AL teachers. The DOET teacher trainer maintained that not knowing the local language was a disadvantage for DOET AL teachers. In an interview with the DOET in Dien Bien it was pointed out that 25% of all teaching staff in the province (80% of provincial population is ethnic minority) are ethnic minority teachers and these teachers are prioritised for conducting DOET AL classes. If this policy is implemented as indicated there are distinct advantages for implementation of ABE initiatives and development of local teaching skills.

While the use of local languages in the three case studies is somewhat restricted in Reflect circle and DOET AL classroom activities there is compelling evidence in this study that being from the same ethnic group as participants and knowing their language is a distinct cultural, linguistical and practical advantage for facilitators and teachers when implementing ABE programmes. In CS2 and CS3 the absence of mixed ethnicity in Reflect and DOET groups combined with facilitators / teachers who are from this particular (Thai) local ethnic group or who speak the local language contrasts greatly with CS1. In CS1 the foundation stage of Reflect was facilitated by a teacher who was not from any of the three ethnic groups (Dao, Tay, H'mong), who didn’t reside in the commune and who had a very basic knowledge of the local cultures and languages. This particular facilitator (R.F.4 CS1) expressed the opinion in an interview (16/06/11) that by the end of phase 1 only 50% of her circle could be deemed as literate implying that the effectiveness of the programme was influenced by her linguistical and cultural limitations. There was no systematic evaluation of literacy levels in CS1 so this was her personal estimate, but when compared to evaluations of participants in CS2 and CS3 by facilitators / teachers who are more culturally and linguistically assimilated there are striking differences (see Freire, 1973; Freire and Macedo, 1987).
Furthermore, there were no Dao or H’mong facilitators in successive Reflect phases although these two ethnic groups made up 70% of participants interviewed in CS1. Data from all three case studies suggest that there are distinct pedagogical advantages for facilitators / teachers who implement ABE classes in their native localities and among their particular ethnic group. From data collection evidence it can be concluded that although delivery of courses in all three case studies is predominately in Kinh the ethnicity, cultural knowledge and ethnic language skills of the facilitators and teachers are important factors in the effective implementation of ABE interventions (see Street, 1994; Yates, 1995).

Table 6.5: Differences in ABE Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CS</th>
<th>Agency / NGO</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Commune</th>
<th>CLC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CS1</td>
<td>AAV Ha Noi and AAV SPD office in Xi Xuyen. BOET has seconded staff in SPD.</td>
<td>BOET / AAV SPD office</td>
<td>CPC, commune school authorities.</td>
<td>Yes with support for CLC management. New CLC (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS2</td>
<td>CCD in Dien Bien. Direct co-op with commune.</td>
<td>CPC, village</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes. CLC building limited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS3*</td>
<td>DOET</td>
<td>BOET</td>
<td>Commune schools</td>
<td>Same</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Interviews, Field Notes, Observations CS1, CS2 and CS3 19/01-23/07/11 CS3* DOET before and after EU SLLCRDP support

There are distinct differences in management structures in the Reflect and DOET programmes in the three case studies. Reflect is an approach / methodology that has been adopted by different INGOs, local NGOs and GoV agencies in Vietnam (ActionAid Vietnam, 2011, 2009, 2008). In CS1 Reflect is managed by ActionAid Vietnam (AAV) through its Support Programme for Development (SPD) office in Xi Xuyen and the district BOET. At commune level the Commune People’s Committee (CPC), Community Learning Centre (CLC) manager and commune school authorities along with the Reflect circle managers and facilitators coordinate with the SPD and BOET for implementation, supervision and
evaluation. This is a rather cumbersome and top-down management structure with a large number of agencies, organisations and individuals involved. The BOET has one seconded staff member in the SPD who acts as a liaison. In addition the SPD and BOET are under the overall guidance of the District People’s Committee (DPC) who appoint a member who acts as a ‘Director’ of the SPD office. All formal members of the management structure receive an allowance that is paid by AAV thus increasing management and implementation costs. The effect of this complicated ‘high maintenance’ management structure creates an overly bureaucratic approach to an intervention that supports grass root and bottom-up decision making (see Robinson-Pant, 2001, 2006; UNESCO, 2008).

In comparison the management structure of Reflect in CS2 is much less complicated and more efficient. As outlined in Table 6.5 there is a direct link from the implementing agency the Centre for Community Development (CCD) in Dien Bien Phu City and Thanh Nua Commune. In addition the CLC has taken over the responsibility of the former CCD Programme Management Unit (PMU). It was proposed that the manager of the CLC should be chosen from the pool of trained Reflect facilitators in the commune and this was agreed by the Thanh Nua CPC. This has created a direct link to CCD and also insured that a qualified person with AE and Reflect training and experience manages the CLC. According to interviews with Reflect management, this management structure has reduced the amount of bureaucracy, costs and increased the efficiency of Reflect management in CS2. There was no attempt in this study to investigate or compare management costs between CS1 and CS2 but it can be assumed that the cost effectiveness and efficiency of the CS2 model is superior. The Reflect circle is active in Co Ke Village and there is clear evidence that other Reflect circles such as Co Phuc Village (visited by the researcher) and four other circles in Thanh Nua Commune reported by management are functional. There was no tangible evidence from management and participants in CS1 that the Reflect circle was functioning on a regular basis although local authorities and managers were still receiving allowances. From evidence in this study the Reflect management structure in CS2 is more efficient and cost effective than the Reflect management model in CS1 and when all aspects of both models are taken into consideration the CS2 model works better (see Narayan, 2000; Bohla, 2005; UNESCO, 2008b).
In CS3 the management of DOET AL classes is in normal circumstances the responsibility of the provincial (DOET), district (BOET) and commune education sections. During the period of the EU SLLCRDP support (2002-05) DOET AL classes were managed by DOET and the EU SLLCRDP. This was achieved by seconding DOET and BOET staff to the EU SLLCRDP Education / Adult Education Component. Each of the 10 districts in the projects area had an education Programme Management Unit (PMU) which coordinated with the main PMU in Dien Bien City and with the communes and villages where DOET AL and primary education activities took place (in EU built CVC schools). In comparison to CS1 and CS2 this was a much broader intervention albeit for a restricted number of years (2002-05). This management structure was necessary according to the EU SLLCRDP Final Report (2005) because of the scale of the programme that encompassed 106 Cluster Village Centres (CVC) schools spread out in three provinces. Management allowances as well as the majority of financial costs were paid for by the EU. Thus CS3 had access to resources, funding and training that would not have been the case without the EU SLLCRDP support.

The interviews with DOET teachers in CS3 show how extreme the differences are before the EU SLLCRDP intervention. The management structure in CS3 during the period 2002-05 helped to provide both training and support and increased capacity for the implementation of DOET AL and post-literacy classes. However, this management structure was not sustainable without outside financial support, and as data collected in CS3 confirms post 2005 conditions and resources for ABE activities including AL and post-literacy deteriorated. In is interesting to note that the large new CLC in CS3 is managed by a Reflect facilitator and supported by CCD. In an interview with the CLC manager (CLC M.1 CS3, 21/07/11) he observed that currently the local commune education authorities had little involvement in AL and ABE activities and concentrated on primary and secondary education leaving CCD and its Reflect programme responsible for literacy and other ABE interventions. In all three case study locations Reflect is active and the management of CLC is supported by the organisation supporting Reflect (CS1/AAV, CS2 and CS3 /CCD). It is evident that the local education authorities have been relaying on outside support, particularly funding, for ABE interventions since
2002 and that they have become dependent on this support to manage and run the CLCs which is their official responsibility (see Trinh Thanh, 2009).

It can be concluded that differences in management structures have had a profound impact on the implementation, quality and sustainability of ABE interventions in the three case study sites. The combination of an efficient and cost-effective management structure with a motivated and well trained local facilitator / teacher from the targeted ethnic minority community is likely to have the best possibilities of sustainable success irrespective of which ABE approach is being implemented. Although there are distinct differences in curriculum and methodology between Reflect and DOET there were significant instances of cross-over in CS3 to indicate that Reflect methodology and methods influenced DOET AL teacher training and classes between 2002 and 2005 and possibly beyond.

6.4 Impact of ABE Approaches on Participants' Access to P135II

The impact of the two ABE approaches (Reflect and DOET) on participants’ access to P135II is evaluated and measured in Table 6.6 below. Aspects of both approaches that impacted or in some cases inhibited access to P135II are outlined and will be the basis for cross-case discussion and analysis in this section. Table 6.7 provides a statistical breakdown on the benefits that all three case study participants received from accessing P135II. These benefits will be compared and contrasted between cases in order to provide quantitative evidence to supplement and enhance data summarised in Table 6.6.

Table 6.6 indicates that all three case study sites are locations where P135 has been active. CS1, CS2 and CS3 communes were part of the original P135 I areas and continued to be part of P135II until 2010. In total all three communes have been involved in this GoV poverty alleviation programme since 1999. CS2 differs from CS1 and CS3 in that only a limited number of poor villages (4) have been included in P135II. The impact of ABE interventions in each of the three case study communes on participants’ access to P135II is measured using 6 indicators: Awareness of P135II; Understanding of P135II; Information on P135II; Impact of Literacy; Impact of PRA; Impact of other skills.
Table 6.6: Impact of ABE Approaches on Participants’ Access to P135II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CS</th>
<th>Awareness of P135</th>
<th>Understanding of P135II</th>
<th>P135 II information</th>
<th>Literacy</th>
<th>PRA</th>
<th>Other Skills learned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CS1</td>
<td>Limited awareness from Reflect participants .</td>
<td>Poor understanding by participants and facilitators.</td>
<td>Minimal info available and few village meetings to plan and discuss.</td>
<td>Positive for understanding and training. Writing / reading levels (65% low).</td>
<td>Potential if used by P135II</td>
<td>Agri, animal husbandry, income-generation, credit management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS2</td>
<td>Good awareness from Reflect participants .</td>
<td>Good understanding by participants and very good by facilitator.</td>
<td>Good info available and some village meetings to plan and discuss.</td>
<td>Positive for understanding and training. Literacy levels mixed ability (70% good).</td>
<td>Potential if used by P135II .</td>
<td>Agri, animal husbandry, income-generation, credit management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS3</td>
<td>Good awareness from DOET participants * P135II began after 2005.</td>
<td>Good understanding by participants and fair by teachers.</td>
<td>Restricted info available and limited village meetings to plan and discuss.</td>
<td>Positive for understanding and training. General literacy levels good (80% good).</td>
<td>Not learned in DOET classes. Not used by P135II.</td>
<td>Numeracy. Limited other skills learned in DOET classes. Concentration on traditional aspects of literacy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Interviews, Field Notes, Observations CS1, CS2 and CS3 19/01-23/07/11

There was limited awareness of P135II among Reflect participants in CS1 compared to CS2 and CS3. 82% of CS1 participants had never heard of the name P135 (Du An mot ba lam) when asked during interviews. This contrasts greatly with the awareness levels of ABE participants interviewed in CS2 and CS3. In addition the knowledge of Reflect facilitators / DOET teachers interviewed in CS2 and CS3 in relation to poverty alleviation programmes including P135II was much superior to that of the four Reflect facilitators interviewed in CS1. Three Reflect facilitators at commune level in CS1 are DOET teachers who received extensive training including awareness and understanding of the link between poverty alleviation and ABE. It can be assumed that the lack of awareness and
understanding of the Reflect facilitators at commune level of P135II had a knock on effect on participants’ awareness levels. This indicates that Reflect in CS1 had little if any impact on the knowledge and understanding of participants on P135II and implies that low literacy levels and teachers’ rudimentary awareness and knowledge of P135II combined to limit Reflect’s potential impact.

In CS2 the awareness of P135II was strong and the understanding of the programme aims and objectives by the facilitator and participants was improved by the availability of information. Minimal access to information and few village meetings to discuss and plan activities related to P135II inhibited awareness in CS1 while a good level of communication relating to P135II in CS2 and to a lesser extent in CS3 helped to improve awareness. Distance from the commune centre is another interesting caveat that needs to be considered when measuring participants’ awareness of P135II. In CS1 73% (8) of Reflect participants lived in remote hamlets that ranged from a distance of 7km to 5km from the commune centre where most P135II activities and interventions are focused. In addition only one of the 4 Reflect facilitators (R.F.3 CS2) interviewed was a resident of the commune (Thuan Hoa) and his knowledge of P135II activities was very limited. This facilitator (R.F.3 CS1) does not attend P135II meetings and is therefore not as aware of programme activities and management structures and therefore does not share insights into P135II with participants. In CS2 and CS3 all participants lived in close proximity to each other and were all from the same ethnic group (Thai) living in a homogeneous village making it easier to access and share information. The mixed ethnicity of Reflect participants in CS1 with 64% (7) from Dao and H’mong ethnic backgrounds contrasted with the predominance of facilitators from Tay (3) and Kinh backgrounds. Distance from the village / commune, ethnicity, language and knowledge and understanding of the facilitator in relation to P135 and other poverty alleviation programmes can be seen as influencing awareness in all three case studies. While awareness levels among participants in CS2 and CS3 are relatively good the Reflect facilitator in CS2 (R.F.1 CS2) expressed a deep knowledge and understanding of P135 and other poverty alleviation programmes and linked this awareness to his facilitation of the Reflect circle. The Reflect circle in CS2 was also fortunate to have the village leader (Co Ke Village) who is responsible for the management of P135II as a
member. In CS2 the focus of P135II was on 4 poor villages out of a total of 27 villages in the commune and this may have contributed to heightening awareness of poverty alleviation interventions such as P135II. In CS1 (15 villages) and CS3 (32 villages) all villages are considered equally poor and part of P135II.

Being literate is not a criterion for access to P135II but can be an important asset in developing an understanding of and gaining access to information on available support from P135II. All documentation, information, notices, applications and request forms relating to P135II are in Kinh (Vietnamese). Village meetings are also held in Kinh and Commune People’s Committee (CPC) circulars relating to P135II as well as needs and poverty assessments are communicated in Kinh. In CS1 there was a noticeable writing and reading deficit among 64% (7) of Reflect participants interviewed. Their dependency on word of mouth and verbally communicated information was hindered by poor communications, few village meetings and the isolation of six participants in Na Lun Hamlet (see Box 5.3) and two on the outskirts of Mich A Village. In CS2 and CS3 overall literacy levels (reading, writing and speaking) were deemed better than in CS1 and this combined with participants’ proximity to the village / commune centres may have contributed to a better understanding of and access to P135II interventions. Research findings in this study in relation to low adult literacy and general ABE levels combined with restricted mobility and how these deficits translate into disadvantage support the findings from the World Bank CSA (2009) study in Vietnam (see Figure 3.6; Narayan, 2000; Bohla, 2005; Robinson-Pant, 2010).

As outlined extensively in Chapters 2, 3 and 5 Reflect is an approach that uses participatory methodology and PRA methods and tools to help facilitate participants to express their needs. There is a strong focus on individual and community development needs that are articulated through words, images, matrixes and a variety of other visual aids. PRA is central to this development of critical consciousness and awareness. In CS1 and CS2 the impact of PRA in Reflect circles on participants’ access to P135II is difficult to gauge. As an approach used by an experienced, motivated and aware facilitator PRA can be a powerful tool-set to enhance awareness of and access to P135II and other poverty alleviation programmes (see Chambers, 2008; ActionAid, 2011, 2008, Fransman,
In CS1 there is evidence that PRA has been used but its effectiveness to develop literacy levels and awareness among participants of P135 is questionable. In CS2 the systematic use of PRA as the main methodological approach in the Co Ke Reflect circle is confirmed by the facilitator (R.F.1 CS2), participants and observation by the researcher and assistant (19/01/2011). There is convincing evidence that PRA had a positive impact on awareness of and access to P135II by participants in CS2. In CS1 and indeed CS3 there is also convincing evidence that Reflect facilitators and DOET teachers have been trained in the use of PRA, however, there is less convincing evidence that this training has been effectively utilised. Commitment to the approach requires time and material development investments by facilitators and participants in a participatory manner that is missing in CS1 and CS3. The fact that all facilitators / AL teachers are primary school teachers in CS1 and CS3 supports evidence that teachers are less suited to implementing PRA methods than locals with no teaching background (see Freire, 1973; Archer and Cottingham, 1996; ActionAid, 2008, Fransman, 2008).

100% of Agricultural Promotion Officers (APOs) and district (BARD), provincial (DARD) agricultural staff, interviewed in this study, express the opinion that PRA is their preferred approach for the delivery of training for the Agricultural Promotion Component of P135II. However, PRA is not used by P135II in any of the three case study sites because of lack of funding and restricted number of training days. The potential of PRA for the development of awareness, communication of information and the effective implementation of training objectives for Reflect and P135II is dependent on a commitment by management to utilise it in its pure form in order to improve the meaningful participation of the target groups.

The final indicator in Table 6.6 on the impact of Reflect and DOET ABE approaches on access to P135 is based on the additional skills that participants learned during the implementation of the two ABE approaches in CS1, CS2 and CS3. Participants, facilitators and management of Reflect in CS1 and CS2 reported that agricultural techniques, animal husbandry, income-generation and credit management skills were important aspects of their Reflect circle activities. This corresponds to the Reflect philosophy of exploring typical development challenges in order to find solutions to overcome them. According to ActionAid
(2009) the emphasis in *Reflect* is placed on dialogue and action, awareness-raising, cooperation and empowerment. Issues explored in the *Reflect* circle become the basis for participants to be taught literacy and numeracy skills. While phase 1 of *Reflect* concentrates on the development of basic literacy skills, based on the needs of participants, phase 2 and 3 concentrate on community development and income-generation. There is a greater probability that these practical skills have helped participants participate in P135II after gaining access than contributing to access in the first place. The restriction imposed by P135II on non-poor households accessing training courses and other benefits inhibits the selection of over 40% of *Reflect* and DOET participants in CS1, CS2 and CS3 in P135II activities. In CS3 additional skills acquired during DOET AL classes are not as impressive as the two *Reflect* circles in CS1 and CS2. However, as can be seen in Table 6.7 CS3 DOET AL participants acquired similar levels of benefits from P135II compared to participants in the two *Reflect* cases. It can be therefore concluded that the level of skill gained by *Reflect* as opposed to DOET participants does not necessarily correlate to increases in benefits when participating in P135II (see Moser, 1996; DFID, 2000; IFAD, 2002; Raditloaneng, 2004).

Table 6.7 divides P135II into its four components and displays the relative benefits of the programme to the *Reflect* and DOET AL class participants interviewed in the three case studies. The first two components, Production Development and Infrastructure Development were accessed more frequently than the Capacity Building and Socio-cultural Living Standards components by all participants. Reasons for this concentration of involvement in production and infrastructure development can be explained by restrictions relating to participation in capacity building and relatively small budgets for the improvement in socio-cultural living standards. CS2 *Reflect* participants have a much higher (71.5%) involvement in training activities and benefits from family infrastructure than CS1 and CS3 participants. Reasons for this may be explained by the limited number of villages (4) in P135II in CS2 leading to a more concentrated approach to training and direct benefits from family infrastructure.
Table 6.7: Reflect / DOET Participants Benefits from P135II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CS</th>
<th>Production Dev.</th>
<th>Infrastructure Dev.</th>
<th>Capacity Building</th>
<th>Socio-cultural living standards</th>
<th>% Poor HH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CS1</td>
<td>54.5% (6)</td>
<td>45.4% (5)</td>
<td>0% of participants</td>
<td>27.2% (3) Scholarships for children.</td>
<td>54.5%(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training 36.3% (4) Seed and Animals</td>
<td>Family Infrastructure 27% Community Infrastructure</td>
<td></td>
<td>9% (1) Legal Class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS2</td>
<td>71.4% (5)</td>
<td>71.5% (5)</td>
<td>14.2% (1) participant</td>
<td>No reference from participants</td>
<td>57.1%(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training 42.8% (3) Seed and Animals</td>
<td>Family Infrastructure 100% Community Infrastructure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS3</td>
<td>58.3% (7)</td>
<td>50% (6) Family Infrastructure 100% Community Infrastructure</td>
<td>8.3% (1) participant</td>
<td>33.3% (4) Scholarships for children</td>
<td>50%(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training 91.6%(11)* Seed 25%(3) Animals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Interviews, Field Notes, Observations CS1, CS2 and CS3 19/01-23/07/11

CS3 DOET AL participants’ access is slightly better than CS1 in all four components. There was a high distribution of free seed to participants in CS3 indicating that poor and non-poor benefited which can be explained as a local interpretation of P135II seed distribution based on ‘sharing’ resources with all residents. Table 6.7 indicates that 100% of Reflect and DOET AL participants in CS2 and CS3 benefited from community infrastructure which includes schools, health centres, bridges, irrigation systems, electricity supply and roads. While 95% of participants in CS2 and CS3 live in villages that are targeted along with commune centres for community infrastructure projects, 73% of participants in CS1 live in isolated hamlets that are outside this target zone. Na Lun Hamlet in CS1 is a good example (see Box 5.3) and Reflect participants there indicated that apart from sending their children to the nearest school (5km away) they benefit little from community infrastructure in P135II. It has been estimated that over 80% of funding allocated to communes from P135II is reserved for community infrastructure (CEMA / UNDP, 2009; CSA, 2009). Conclusive evidence in CS1,
CS2 and CS3 indicates that household location has a greater influence on access to P135II community infrastructure than literacy levels but that improved literacy levels increase awareness therefore reducing isolation. The issue of mobility will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter (see CSA, 2009).

In CS2 and CS3 DEMA in Dien Bien estimated that out of a total P135II budget of $65,000 per commune 53% goes to community infrastructure, 15% on production development, 4% on capacity building and the remaining 28% on socio-cultural living standards or whatever the commune decides. There is significant evidence in CS2, CS3 and CS1 that the Socio-cultural Living Standards Component receives the least amount of funding of all four components in P135II. There is a significant amount of funding for scholarships for poor children to attend school in P135II and in CS1 (27.2%) and CS3 (33.4%) of Reflect and DOET AL participants benefited from this fund. CS2 participants made no reference to this scholarship fund. The amount ranges from $7 to $3.50 per child per month depending on the age of the child. The source within P135II budget structures of this funding is not clear and reasons for this may stem from its centralised management at provincial level. It is probable that the schools receive this funding for distribution directly from DEMA / DOET through the internal DOET management system (DEMA, CS3, 19/03/11). There is also evidence in CS1 that budgets for individual components in P135II have been utilised for other components in certain circumstances.

According to findings in this study the impact of Reflect and DOET ABE approaches on access to P135II when measured under the six indicators in Table 6.6 is increased when information is communicated openly, facilitators / teachers are aware of and understand P135II, and literacy skills are good enough to read circulars, fill in forms and take part in planning meetings. Distance from the commune centre inhibits awareness and access to community infrastructure for participants of both approaches. Reflect provides participants with a number of skills that supplement literacy but these skills do not significantly influence access to P135II because it is their official poverty status that determines if villagers are eligible to access specific components of P135II including training courses in Production Development and not their capacity. CS2 participants’ better understanding of and access to P135II reflects the implementation of the Reflect
approach by a motivated local facilitator who is provided with well coordinated and cost-effective support from Reflect and CLC management. Thus, this seems to make a significant difference (see Fransman, 2008; UNESCO, 2008b).

6.5 Impediments to Accessing Adult Education Resources

Table 6.8 below synthesises the impediments to accessing adult education resources in the three case study locations. Impediments are measured under four important aspects that include: Location; Availability of Resources; Use of Community Learning Centre (CLC); Literate Environment. Motivational considerations from participant perspectives are included in the discussion and analysis of respective literate environments. Cross-case discussion and analysis utilising evidence from case study data and observations are linked to relevant literature from Chapters 2 and 3 to locate findings within specific research paradigms. Although generalisation is limited due to the scale and scope of this study, education policy changes implied by findings are outlined in a succinct format in table 6.10 and contribute to overall study conclusions in the summary of research findings and conclusions (6.7). The importance of location and residence of participants as an inhibiting and in some cases contributing factor in accessing adult education resources in all three case studies is significant. CS1 has a high percentage (85%) of participants who reside in locations ranging from 2-5km from the nearest village / Reflect circle. In CS2 and CS3 participants interviewed live relatively close to where classes and other adult education activities are conducted (see CSA, 2009, Nguyen and Baulch, 2007).

In the presentation of data for each of the three case studies (Chapter 5) the post-course use of literacy and literate environments of each case was described in detail. CS1 and CS2 are both at the Village Development Club stage of Reflect which is the follow-on stage from phase 1 and phase 2. In CS2 there is convincing evidence from interviews and observations that the Village Development Club (VDC) in Co Ke Village is active and well organised. 100% of participants interviewed indicated that they attend this stage of Reflect twice a month.
Table 6.8: Impediments to Accessing Adult Education Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CS</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Availability of Resources</th>
<th>Use of CLC</th>
<th>Literate Environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CS1</td>
<td>Isolated from commune / district and province.</td>
<td>Limited Reflect and ABE activities. No adult libraries and limited material.</td>
<td>Underuse of new CLC. Limited resources. Poor management and organisation</td>
<td>Negative and stunts the development of gains made by Reflect and other ABE initiatives. 73% of Reflect participants marginalised from limited resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS2</td>
<td>Outskirts of commune / district and province.</td>
<td>Active Reflect circle, limited libraries and resources.</td>
<td>No CLC building. Management structure good.</td>
<td>Poor availability of books and material but encouraging adult learning environment and organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS3</td>
<td>Connected to commune but isolated from district and province.</td>
<td>Limited DOET AL classes, libraries and resources.</td>
<td>Limited use of new CLC. Used for meetings more than training.</td>
<td>Dormant and stagnant but with potential to develop if promoted by DOET and CLC.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Interviews, Field Notes, Observations CS1, CS2 and CS3 19/01-23/07/11

In CS1 Reflect participants (36%) who live within 2km of where the Reflect circle (VDC) is reported to take place, in Mich B Village, replied in interviews that they attend when sessions are organised. Significantly, 64% from Na Lun Hamlet do not attend. The main reason given was the 10km round trip that would have to be completed on foot because a steep narrow path is the only route available. Location and mobility are the main inhibiting factors for access to ABE resources for residents in Na Lun and the most significant factor in accessing services and poverty alleviation resources in this study. Apart from attending training courses organised by P135II in CS3 (see Table 6.7) there are no other reports from DOET AL participants of attending adult education classes in the commune after 2005. Two participants in CS3 furthered their education to reach grade 9 by finishing secondary school in the district Continuing Education Centre in Dien Bien. One is the local health worker and the other the Head of the Women’s Union indicating that they were part of the target group for the GoV continuing education policy. Another impediment to accessing adult education resources in CS1, CS2 and CS3
is the scarce availability of resources and activities. All three case studies have limited ABE activities and few resources.

Table 6.9: Participant’s Assessment of Adult Education Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CS</th>
<th>Highest 1-10</th>
<th>Lowest 1-10</th>
<th>Average 1-10</th>
<th>How to Improve Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CS1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.67 (55%)*</td>
<td>More activities and closer to homes, open satellite schools in hamlets, mobile library, electricity, audio visual material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.5 (45%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Increase activities and resources at village and commune level, open library in villagers’ house. Village Learning Centre needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>Provision of adult library and resources at village and commune level. More activities and training and promote the benefits of reading and ABE.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Interviews, Field Notes, Observations CS1, CS2 and CS3 19/01-23/07/11

* Na Lun Hamlet CS1

Table 6.9 above is a summary of the 30 participants’ (CS1, CS2, CS3) assessment of adult education resources available in their commune. In CS1 the assessment of 55% of participants of adult education resources is the lowest at 2.67 / 10. The significance of this cohort is that they all live in Na Lun Hamlet which is the farthest away location in CS1 from the commune centre. The average of the other 45% participants in CS1 is 5.5 /10. CS2 and CS3 average just under 5 /10 indicating that there are similarities in assessments in all three case studies. Both CS2 and CS3 are similar in that all participants interviewed live relatively close to the village centre. The existence of a Community Learning Centre (CLC) and its organisation and use (see Table 6.8) is not necessarily an indicator that there is sufficient adult education resources in communes to meet the demands of adults. In CS1 and CS3 there are impressive new and purpose built CLCs in both communes but the effective use, level of resources and management of these two CLCs to meet adult learners’ demands is questionable (see Image 5.12). Many of the participants interviewed in CS1 never heard of the CLC and few in CS3.
Management of CLCs in CS1 and CS3 and all facilitators / teachers confirm that there are few resources apart from furniture in these buildings. The effective use and management of CLCs can be seen as an impediment to accessing adult education resources in CS1 and CS3. In CS2 there is enthusiasm from CLC management to develop resources and provide better access to adults including sourcing support for the development of a CLC building with adequate resources. The location of scarce adult education resources including CLCs in commune centres is another impediment according to participants in all three case studies. Suggestions from participants on how to improve resources centre around locating resources including books, material, equipment and activities closer to households and providing better support and incentives to take part in adult education initiatives.

Research conducted by the New Literacy Studies (NLS) researchers and supported by findings of other ethnographic studies (see Trudell and Klass, 2010; Street and Lefstein, 2008; Papen, 2005; Ager, 2001; Rassool, 1999) place people’s own cultural understandings of literacy at the forefront of their investigations. These cultural and social approaches to the study of literacy focus research on measuring the development of sustainable literate environments in marginalised communities, maintaining that this is a more important aspect than the development of individual skills (see 2.4.1 ABE and Development; Robinson-Pant, 2006; Street, 1993). Findings from this research support the NLS perspective and recognise the importance of the respective literate environments in each case study for the sustainable development of ABE initiatives. Table 6.8 summarises the effect of literate environments on accessing adult education resources. In CS1 research findings using aspects of ethnographic methodology, including mainly qualitative methods and observation, reveal a quite negative adult literate environment that has stunted gains made by Reflect. In CS2 the situation is more encouraging with a vibrant adult learning environment that is held back by the limited access to resources. In CS3 while there is a noted eagerness from interviewed DOET participants to continue to attend classes, training and awareness-raising, the development of the overall literate environment lacks support from the local and district authorities. All three case study areas lack
resources and in the case of CS3 the local education authorities restrict the availability of ABE material for adult learners to utilise.

Understanding the motivations and outcomes associated with adult literacy learning is extremely relevant to the successful provision of adult literacy and basic education according to Trudell and Klass (2010). Motivations for attending Reflect and DOET AL classes among the 30 participants interviewed (Q.3) in this study centre on the following:

- to become literate (90%)
- to understand more about community development (100%)
- to improve possibilities for income-generation (100%)
- to help younger family members with school work (90%)
- to communicate with other ethnic groups at the local market (100%)

When examining this high level of motivation to take part in Reflect and DOET AL classes and matching it to the context of cultural identity and cultural expression (Rassool, 1999) of the four distinct ethnic minority groups (Tay, Dao, H'mong and Thai) there are few connections. Each of the four ethnic languages is the main language for communication within the households where interviews took place. The use of archaic local scripts is extremely limited and so it is encouraged to learn another language (Kinh) in order to learn how to read and write. Trudell and Klass (2010) identified two types of motivation in literacy learning. The first is the drive for internal cohesion, solidarity and uniqueness. The second is the drive towards citizenship, acceptance and equality in the larger national society. According to Trudell and Klass (2010) both motivations complement each other in a single minority language community when literacy learning concentrates on the local language. In this study this important link between literacy acquisition based on local languages, culture and uniqueness is missing as literacy is exclusively taught in Kinh and not the local indigenous languages. This can be interpreted as an important impediment to the development of sustainable literacy environments in the unique and individual ethnic communities that collaborated in the study. There is also evidence that the increase in literacy and education levels in Kinh of younger community members in CS1, CS2 and CS3 has begun to erode aspects
of cultural identity and local language use. Additional research is however needed to examine this phenomenon more closely.

According to 100% of Reflect facilitators and DOET AL teachers (8) interviewed, free time and motivation among villagers to take part in ABE activities are inhibiting factors in accessing adult education resources. All eight facilitators and teachers interviewed agreed that incentives are necessary to attract poor farmers to ABE activities as well as local facilitators and teachers to programmes. The Reflect Facilitator Trainer (R.F.T.1 CS2) and DOET Teacher Trainer (DOET T.T.1 CS3) both propose the use of non-monetary incentives for participants and appropriate remuneration for facilitators and teachers. The implications of all the above impediments for Adult Basic Education (ABE) policy in Vietnam are summarised in Table 6.10 below.

Table 6.10: Implications of Findings for Adult Basic Education Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of ABE activities</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Use of CLCs</th>
<th>Literate Environments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Close to target groups including villages and hamlets. Include activities in households. Create satellite CLC in villages</td>
<td>Assess needs. Support initiatives with adequate human (local) and material resources. Increase volume of ABE activities.</td>
<td>Develop CLC concept in line with local needs. Improve management and organisation. Provide libraries, material and equipment. Establish satellite VLC (village).</td>
<td>Develop literate environments with appropriate reading / audio material. Link activities and resources to social, economic and cultural realities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Interviews, Field Notes, Observations CS1, CS2 and CS3 19/01-23/07/11

Findings in this research imply that by locating ABE activities closer to target groups, assessing needs (human and material) and developing the concept of CLCs to satisfy local demands will remove many of the impediments outlined in Table 6.8. The enhancement of literate environments in a culturally sensitive and sustainable manner is dependent on local adults’ appreciation of the potential of literacy to improve their social, economic and cultural wellbeing. The use of local Tay, Dao, H’mong and Thai languages as a basis for literacy learning is deemed impractical given that these languages have archaic (Tay and Thai) and artificial
(Dao and H’mong) scripts. The dysfunctional use of Kinh in remote communities in this study is a result of conflict between cultural expression and the language of literacy (Kinh) thus impeding the natural development of a vibrant literate environment (see Street 2001; Papan, 2005; Wedin, 2008; Trudell and Klass, 2010).

6.6 How do differences in ABE / Literacy Approaches Impact on Ethnic Minority Adults’ Participation in Poverty Alleviation Programmes.

Section 6.4 focused on the impact of Reflect and DOET AL approaches on accessing resources with a particular spotlight on P135II. This section assesses how these two ABE approaches impact ethnic minority adults’ participation in poverty alleviation programmes after gaining access to resources. P135II is used as a measurement for participation with other relevant poverty alleviation programmes providing context, contrasts and comparisons. In answering the main research question there will be a reference to the overall study objectives and research sub-questions that investigated differences in approaches and impediments to accessing resources. Table 6.11 provides a framework to measure participation in P135II using planning, production development, literacy and numeracy and other skills including PRA as indicators. Impediments to participation are highlighted when examining the programme focus and funding for P135II, use of needs assessments, monitoring and evaluation (M+E) and operation and maintenance (O+M), methodology and language in Table 6.12. Policy implications are outlined in Table 6.13 and discussed to develop recommendations based on research findings.

As can be seen in Table 6.11, Reflect in CS1, had little influence on P135II planning because of limited consultation between P135II management at commune level with target beneficiaries. Although P135II in CS1 has a ‘Steering Committee’ at commune level (Thuan Hoa Commune) that includes village heads, planning of activities is based on the opinions of the authorities and not the target groups. This style of top-down decision making impedes participation of villagers directly in decision making.
Table 6.11: Impact of ABE Approaches on Participation in P135II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CS</th>
<th>Planning</th>
<th>Production Development</th>
<th>Literacy / Numeracy</th>
<th>Other Skills / PRA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CS1</td>
<td>Little impact. Few village meetings and consultations with villagers. Awareness of P135II low. Reflect facilitator’s motivation low. Participation restricted.</td>
<td>54.5% attended training. 36.3% got seed and animals. Reflect approach promotes agricultural dev. and income-generation.</td>
<td>Low literacy level (65%) inhibits participation and understanding in 4 components of P135II.</td>
<td>Agricultural and animal husbandry skills. Limited PRA skills. PRA preferred but not used in P135II in CS1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS2</td>
<td>Some impact. Informed and aware of P135II. Empowered and critical. Attend P135II meetings and lobby for benefits. Reflect facilitator is motivated village activist.</td>
<td>71.5% attended training. 42.8% got seed and animals. Reflect participants’ knowledge on agricultural dev. increases benefits when participating.</td>
<td>70% good level. Enhances participation and benefits from 4 components. Reading / understanding presentations.</td>
<td>Agricultural and animal husbandry skills. PRA central to approach and actively used in circle. PRA preferred but not used in P135II in CS2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS3</td>
<td>Limited impact. Aware of P135II and attend meetings to propose activities. Approach focus pedagogical and teacher’s priority literacy.</td>
<td>58.3% attend training. 91.6% got seed and 25% animals. DOET approach has limited direct impact on agricultural knowledge.</td>
<td>80% good level. Enhances participation / benefits. Reading / understanding.</td>
<td>Few other skills from approach. PRA not used in class. PRA preferred but not used in P135II in CS3.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Interviews, Field Notes, Observations CS1, CS2 and CS3 19/01-23/07/11

Although 91% of Reflect participants in CS1 indicated that Reflect helped them to take part in meetings to plan P135II (Q.10b) evidence suggests that these meetings were not planning meetings but information meetings on who is entitled to participate in P135II and what activities will take place. Reflect helped participants to voice their opinions and take part in the selection of households (HH) who were categorised as poor but not in decision making on what activities
should take place. This is in stark contrast to the Sida Chia Se Poverty Alleviation Programme in the same province (Ha Giang) where villagers themselves decide what funding should be focused on. This can be attributed to the management structure and ownership of funding more than the actual literacy levels of beneficiaries. When villagers have control of funding their participation in decision making is significantly increased. Literacy levels can increase participation and empower participants to voice their opinions when making communal / village decisions according to the Chia Se Results Analysis Report (Chia Se, 2009).

In CS2 the planning of activities involved the gathering of information at village level by conducting needs assessments according to P135II management. Meetings take place at village level to plan activities. Reflect participants, facilitators and managers confirm this and indicate that through Reflect empowerment and awareness of community development issues Reflect participants can lobby for preferred activities in P135II. The motivation and commitment of the Reflect facilitator in CS2 to village development and his knowledge of P135II is augmented by the presence of the village leader in the Co Ke Reflect circle. Awareness of P135II objectives is stronger in CS2 than CS1 among facilitators and participants. 73% of participants in CS1 live outside the village (2-5km) which restricts involvement in village meetings. In CS3 the impact of the DOET AL approach on planning for P135II activities is limited. This approach concentrates on the delivery of adult literacy with minimal emphasis on awareness of community development issues and empowerment. Teachers in CS3 are similar to those in CS1, in that they perceived their role as a purely pedagogical one although they received extensive training on the link between ABE and community development. 58% of DOET AL participants in CS3 indicated that they took part in planning meetings for P135II while 71.5% of participants in CS2 attended similar meetings. Attendance at P135II meetings is not an indication that participants have an input into planning but research findings indicate that participants who are aware of their entitlements and empowered to lobby have a better chance of influencing planners and obtaining benefits from P135II. Evidence in this study indicates that because all planning meetings are conducted in Kinh higher literacy levels in combination with enhanced awareness are important
indicators for participation. The *Reflect* approach when it delivers both as in CS2 enhances possibilities of participation.

The Production Development Component of P135II is highlighted in Table 6.11 because it is the component that targets villagers’ direct participation in activities. Activities centre on training in agricultural techniques and animal husbandry with the provision of seed, animals and tools. The low levels of participation of *Reflect* and DOET AL participants in the capacity building (6.7%) and improvement in socio-cultural living standards components (23.3%) compared to 96.6% participation in the production development component warrants attention. In all three case studies participants took part in training as well as receiving material benefits such as seed and animals. CS2 participants had the highest attendance rate (71.5%) at training courses and CS3 participants the highest rate (91.6%) that benefited from the allocation of seed. From a Freirean perspective ActionAid in CS1 and the Centre for Community Development (CCD) in CS2 provide a combination of literacy and income-generating techniques and skills to participants that should enhance participation in P135II Production Development Component (see ActionAid, 2009; Duffy et al., 2009; Archer and Cottingham, 1996; Freire, 1973). Participants (100%) in CS1 and CS2 report that one of the main motivations for taking part in *Reflect* was to improve possibilities of income generation. *Reflect* facilitators (100%) interviewed indicate that the methodology used in *Reflect* links income-generation to poverty issues and community development in CS1 and CS2 communes and that *Reflect* helps participants to avail of and benefit from GoV poverty alleviation programmes, including P135II. Findings in this study indicate that *Reflect* in CS2 was significantly more effective at linking income-generation to poverty issues and community development.

In CS3 participants (100%) also cite possibilities to improve income-generation opportunities as motivation for taking part in DOET AL classes (Q.3c). While 83.3% of participants in CS3 claim that DOET AL classes helped them to participate in activities such as training there are no concrete examples of skills other than literacy skills provided. As an approach *Reflect* has a greater impact on participation in the Production Development component of P135II provided that training focuses on agricultural techniques, animal husbandry and income-
generation. The DOET AL approach has less of an impact on participation in P135II Production Development training related to agriculture and animal husbandry because the focus of its curriculum is on the provision of literacy skills. Although DOET management in CS1 and the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) in Ha Noi claim that the curriculum is designed to be functional for ethnic minority participants there is little evidence that functionality translates into the acquisition of practical skills that would impact on participation in Production Development interventions by P135II. However, the Agricultural Promotion Officer (A.P.O.1 CS3) in Na Tau commune indicated (Q.11a) that although Reflect participants may understand more when involved in P135II Production Development training they are also more likely to be bored with the methodology used (see Bhola, 2005; UNESCO, 2005; IFAD, 2002; Jarvis, 1999; Levine, 1986; Adult Performance Level Study, 1975).

The importance of literacy and numeracy levels for meaningful participation in the four outcome-orientated components of P135II is verified in this study. According to 100% of P135II management and trainers (APOs) in CS1, CS2 and CS3 literacy (Kinh) is very important for understanding and benefiting from training courses (Q.9) and for the development and sustainability of skills acquired during training (Q.12). The importance of literacy was evaluated by DARD in Dien Bien Province (CS2 and CS3) as 8 out of 10. A dependency in all three case studies on using lecture style presentations in Kinh by P135II trainers to large numbers of participants (50-100) during indoor training courses necessitates a good level of reading and listening skills in order to benefit from participation. Handouts during training contain on average 85% pure text according to the five APOs interviewed in CS1, CS2 and CS3. Only 20% of practical farming methods are used during training and hardly any group work in all three case studies. The consequences of being illiterate and attending training courses, meetings and receiving written information regarding P135II translates into significant disadvantage in regard to meaningful participation in P135II according to findings in this study. CS2 and CS3 participants are evaluated as having overall better literacy levels than participants in CS1. Evaluations of literacy levels were based on reading and writing abilities. The listening and speaking skills of CS2 and CS3 participants were evaluated by the research assistant to be generally better than CS1 participants. Findings in this
study indicate that because of perceived literacy deficits in writing and reading of 65% of *Reflect* participants in CS1 their understanding of and potential to participate in the four components of P135II is less than other participants with higher levels of general literacy in CS1, CS2 and CS3. Participants with particularly low overall levels of literacy in CS1 were located in Na Lun Hamlet (see Box 5.3) and the outskirts of Mich A and Mich B villages indicating that mobility is an additional factor that inhibits their participation in P135II components (see CEMA / UNDP, 2009; CSA, 2009; World Bank, 2007; Swinkels and Turk, 2007; Nguyen and Baulch, 2007; VHLSS, 2006).

The cross-case study evaluation of the impact of other skills including PRA on participation in P135II are summarised in column 5 of Table 6.11. *Reflect* in both CS1 and CS2 provides agricultural and animal husbandry skills to participants as part of a self-developed curriculum based on circle needs (Duffy et al., 2009; ActionAid, 2009; Aderinoye and Rogers, 2005). Because CS1 and CS2 participants are ethnic minority farmers living in under-developed provinces in the Northern Mountainous Region of Vietnam there are many similarities in the type of skills that are learned in both case study *Reflect* programmes. Skills include planting, harvesting and raising animals such as pigs, goats, ducks, chickens and fish as well as managing credit for developing income-generation opportunities. The identification of needs and development of skills depends on the *Reflect* facilitators and participants’ mastery and use of PRA methodology and tools. Evidence from CS1 indicates that the PRA skills among facilitators and participants are less developed than in CS2. PRA is seen as central to the *Reflect* approach and actively used in CS2. Reasons for this reliance on PRA methodology and methods are easily identified as the facilitator in CS2 has no other experience of pedagogical methodology other than the participatory methods promoted by the *Reflect* approach and participants little or no experience of formal schooling. In addition the *Reflect* facilitator is himself an experienced farmer which contrasts with the facilitators interviewed in CS1 who are all primary school teachers. The consequences of not fully understanding and applying PRA methods plus limited farming experience translates into distinct disadvantage when facilitating *Reflect* circles with ethnic minority farmers (see Trinh Thanh, 2009; Fransman, 2008; UNESCO, 2008; Appendix 1).
Participants in CS1 indicated that the main focus of Reflect was phase 1 and that phase 2 and particularly phase 3 interventions were not as well organised or frequent. Phase 1 of Reflect is the foundation for the development of phase 2 and 3 where agricultural techniques and skills are developed by literate participants. In CS3 PRA methodology was learned by DOET teachers who attended the EU DOET Teacher Training courses but all indications are that the pressure to complete the DOET curriculum (text-books 1-5) was an impediment to the use of PRA in DOET AL classes. Apart from awareness-raising issues related to agriculture, health and family management in DOET primers there were few practical skills acquired by participants during DOET AL classes in CS3.

PRA is identified by P135II Production Development trainers (APOs) and DARD / BARD provincial and district agricultural management as the preferred method to conduct training. In-depth and semi-structured interviews in all three case studies with APOs and management of P135II production development interventions cite budget and the number of training days as restrictions that inhibit the use of PRA. All APOs interviewed are trained in the use of PRA and see it as the most appropriate methodology to conduct needs assessments and training with ethnic minority adults. When asked how training could be improved in P135 (Q.15) the use of PRA, longer training courses and improved budgets for activities and allowances were reported by all APOs and agricultural sector managers. Other programmes such as Sida Chia Se as well as IFAD, DANIDA, JICA, EU, WB NMPRP and MARD’s New Rural Development Model (NRDM) successfully use PRA methodology for needs assessments and training in CS1, CS2 and CS3 areas according to respondents (see CEMA / UNDP, 2009; Chia Se, 2009, Chambers, 2008; UIL, 2008).

Table 6.12 below outlines the main impediments that restrict participation in P135II based on data collected in the three cases study sites. Impediments are categorised under four headings: Focus / Funding; Needs Assessments / M+E / O+M; Methodology; Language. It is ironic that the focus on poor households (HH) by P135II becomes an impediment to participation in many of the programme activities. All three case studies have a similar rate (50-57%) of designated poor participants who were interviewed (see Table 6.7).
Table 6.12: Impediments to Participation in P135II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus / Funding</th>
<th>Needs Assessments / M+E / O+M</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus on poor. Limited funding when divided into 4 components and among villages and HH. 80% budget spent on community infrastructure.</td>
<td>Use of needs assessments limited. M+E by participants restricted. O+M not developed to include participants.</td>
<td>Restricts participation. PRA not used because of budget and time limitations.</td>
<td>Kinh used for communications, meetings, training and reporting. Without literacy in Kinh participation restricted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Poor households are entitled to apply for benefits including home improvements, training, seed, animals and scholarships for children to attend school. In CS1, CS2 and CS3 the numbers of participants who benefited from P135II are significant in the Production Development and Infrastructure Development components and less significant in the Capacity Building and Socio-cultural living standards components (see Table 6.7). Limited funding when divided into 4 components restricts the impact of P135II on all households in the three communes studied. An average budget of $65,000 for the total implementation of P135II in selected communes for a period of 5 years (2006-2010) was quoted by DEMA in CS2 and CS3. When 80% of this funding ($52,000) is designated for community infrastructure projects there is only $13,000 remaining for the other 3 components. CS1 has a population of 4,902 and 15 villages, CS2 a population of 6,726 and 27 villages (4 in P135II) and CS3 a population of 6,719 and 32 villages. The total amount of funding for CS2 was much lower because it has only 4 villages in P135II but proportionally the same (per village) as CS1 and CS3. This restriction in funding has a bearing on the selection of activities leading to a preference in all three case study communes for community infrastructure. Findings from this study support findings from CEMA / UNDP, CSA and the World Bank that community infrastructure investments benefit some sections of communities more than others and particularly those households who reside close to schools, CLCs, bridges, irrigation systems, wells, roads, electricity supply and markets (CEMA / UNDP, 2009; CSA, 2009: World Bank, 2007).
The use of Needs Assessments, community Monitoring and Evaluation (M+E) and Operation and Maintenance (O+M) increases community participation and ownership in P135II (see CEMA / UNDP, 2009; Chia Se, 2009; Chambers, 2008). Needs assessments were reported to be used in all three case study areas. However, the indication in this study is that they were conducted in relation to the Production Development Component by commune APOs and had little bearing on the implementation or the outcome of the other three components. In an extensive interview with DEMA in Dien Bien Province (19/01/11) the vice-director and deputy head of P135II in the province expressed the opinion that M+E and O+M is restricted by small budgets, awareness and capacity / education levels of villagers. This translated into weak ownership of P135II interventions according to this source. Constraints on participation were increased due to the distances from villages to commune centres where most of the P135II implementation is concentrated (DEMA, CS2, CS3, 19/01/11).

Methodology used to plan, communicate and implement P135II initiatives in the four components restricts participation according to findings from this study. In CS1, CS2 and CS3 reported planning meetings were in effect information sharing sessions on what will be implemented and who will benefit from P135II. Participants in CS2 were more informed and aware of P135II activities and this may have increased their participation in activities but there is insufficient evidence to suggest that it had an effect on decision making and planning. Training methodology in all three case study areas was criticised by trainers who blamed low budgets, allowances and the restricted number of training days for impeding participant input and the application of PRA. DEMA, the P135II provincial management body for CS2 and CS3 suggested that the methodology used by trainers for the Capacity Building component that targets P135II management at commune and village level needs to improve in order to be less theory orientated. Concepts such as community M+E and O+M are not understood by participants who attend Capacity Building training courses according to DEMA (DEMA, CS2, CS3, 19/01/11). P135II management in CS1 also supports the use of more participatory methodology including PRA. The use of PRA as a training methodology could increase the interchange of knowledge including local
indigenous knowledge and experience during planning and training and therefore improve participation (see Chambers, 2008; Chia Se, 2009).

Language barriers impede participation in P135II according to findings in all three case study sites. Kinh (Vietnamese) is used almost exclusively for communications, meetings, training and reporting. P135II management and trainers at all levels recognise the existence of language barriers and the importance of literacy in Kinh as vital for participating in and benefiting from all aspects of P135II. CS1, CS2 and CS3 areas are situated in two remote, northern, provinces of Vietnam (Ha Giang and Dien Bien) where the majority of the populations are non-native Kinh speakers. Findings in all three case studies indicate that the limited practicality of reviving or developing scripts in Tay, H'mong, Dao and Thai, which are four of the major ethnic minority groups in Vietnam, restricts the development of indigenous literacy (see Wedin, 2008; Papen, 2005; Street, 2001). Research findings confirm that without good levels of literacy in Kinh (reading, writing, listening, speaking) and numeracy participation in the 4 components of P135II is significantly restricted in CS1, CS2 and CS3.

The implications of research findings for poverty alleviation policy in this limited mixed method multiple case study are summarised in Table 6.13. Because research data was collected in three P135II communes findings can be generalised to a limited extent (Yin, 2009). Findings are more relevant to the two provinces where the three cases are located than to other provinces where P135II is implemented in Vietnam. The scope of activities and planning methods of P135II, based on multiple sources of evidence in this study, could be expanded to be more inclusive.

The use of systematic needs assessments and the involvement of villagers in participatory planning could improve inclusion and possibly increase effectiveness. Ownership could be improved by involving beneficiaries (villagers) in M+E and O+M activities.
Table 6.13: Implications of Findings for Poverty Alleviation Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scope / Planning</th>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More inclusive. Planning from bottom up (Village-Commune) using needs assessments. Involve villagers in M+E and O+M. Plan based on needs of villagers.</td>
<td>Increase funding and focus more on production development and socio-cultural living standards. Include micro-credit. Impact of community infrastructure limited to commune centres and near-by villages.</td>
<td>Develop training based on literacy levels. Include literacy training when needed. Focus training on villagers. Increase budget and training days. Use trainers from local ethnic groups.</td>
<td>Use PRA for all aspects including planning, training, M+E and O+M. Utilise participants’ local knowledge, culture, language and skills.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Funding levels for communes in P135II are low in comparison to the ambitions of the programme in relation to poverty alleviation. According to DEMA in Dien Bien Province only one commune out of 73 communes in P135II reduced poverty levels significantly between 2006 and 2010. With the adoption of the new poverty line which increased income thresholds for poor households from $10 to $20 per month the number of poor has increased in Dien Bien and Ha Giang. In CS1 the poverty rate was 35% in 2009 and increased to 62% in 2010 (see Table 5.3).

There is substantial evidence in this study that the Reflect participants in Na Lun Hamlet (see Box 5.3) in CS1 benefited less from P135II community infrastructure investments than participants who resided in Mich A or Mich B villages closer to Thuan Hoa Commune centre. This supports findings from World Bank research in Vietnam (CSA, 2009). Components such as Production Development combined with community micro-credit schemes can have a direct impact on poor households’ income according to P135II trainers (APOs) and Production Development management in CS1, CS2 and CS3. However, only 10% of P135II funding was allocated for this according to data and much of this is spent on procuring animals, seed and farming tools leaving little for agricultural training and micro-credit. Case study evidence suggests that training based on the needs and literacy levels of participants and designed to include practical demonstrations using local trainers should be prioritised. The potential for adopting more
participatory methodology using tried and tested PRA methods for all stages of P135II from planning and implementation to M+E and O+M could help to include participants’ local knowledge, culture, language and skills. Of the two ABE approaches investigated in this study the impact and contribution of Reflect to the adaptation of participatory methods including PRA in remote ethnic minority communities is significantly greater than conventional approaches to ABE used by Gov educational agencies such as DOET.

6.7 Summary of Research Findings

In adherence to the objectives of this research study, findings concentrate on the investigation of the relationship between Adult Basic Education (ABE) and accessing poverty alleviation resources in selected ethnic minority communities in Vietnam. The research design and methodology focused on three case studies using two ABE approaches, Reflect and DOET, comparing and contrasting curriculum, methodology, teacher / facilitator training and methods, use of local languages, post-course use of literacy / literacy environment and link to poverty alleviation. A mixed methods approach underpinned by ABE and poverty alleviation theories and concepts, within the context of Vietnam, provided the framework for the development of in-depth and semi-structured interviews conducted in three poor and remote communes supported by the GoV P135II. In addition to data from interviews, findings are triangulated by observations, reports and evaluations.

Findings succinctly summarised in Table 6.14 concentrate on answering the specific research question and sub-questions that focus on the impact of ABE approaches on access and participation in P135II and impediments to accessing P135II and ABE resources as well as evaluating overall case performances. Discussion and analysis of the implications of major findings conclude with policy recommendations.
### Table 6.14: Summary of Research Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CS</th>
<th>Impact on Access and Participation in P135II</th>
<th>Impediments (P135II)</th>
<th>Impediments (ABE)</th>
<th>Effectiveness 1-10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CS1</td>
<td>Limited / poor impact on access. Low literacy and location of 73% of cohort inhibits participation. <em>Reflect</em> potential restricted by facilitators and management.</td>
<td>Funding / focus, distance</td>
<td>Location, resources, management and poor literacy environment.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS2</td>
<td>Good / positive impact on access. Good literacy and diverse skill set plus awareness of cohort enhances participation. Motivated and informed <em>Reflect</em> facilitator and management.</td>
<td>Funding / focus</td>
<td>Resources limited but encouraging signs for development.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS3</td>
<td>Good awareness re access. Good literacy levels benefits participation.</td>
<td>Funding / focus</td>
<td>Management and organisation of resources.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bearing in mind that the impact of ABE approaches on access and participation in P135II is restricted by influences outside the control of *Reflect* and DOET there is still convincing evidence in this study that the *Reflect* approach implemented in CS2 has performed significantly better than *Reflect* in CS1 and marginally better than DOET in CS3. The awareness and understanding of P135II by *Reflect* participants and acquisition of a diverse set of skills including literacy in CS2 is testament to the management, facilitation and implementation of the approach. In contrast to CS2, CS1 *Reflect* participants had limited awareness, lower literacy levels and fewer practical skills that could be attributed to the motivation of management and facilitators to implement *Reflect* based on the principle of empowerment through the exploration of development challenges. The use of a local facilitator in CS2 with no previous pedagogical training reinforced the adherence to *Reflect* participatory methodology and created a strong and sustainable bond between student and facilitator / teacher thus nullifying what
Friere (1973) referred to as the ‘teacher student contradiction’ as well as enhancing the process of conscientisation and contribution of the participants to social change and self-development. Although there are similarities in facilitator training, curriculum and methodology in CS1 and CS2 the ability of the CS2 facilitator to communicate in the local language and link poverty issues to circle activities helped to develop the use of literacy and the provision of practical skills that enhanced access and participation in P135II.

The impact of the DOET AL approach in CS3 on participants’ access and participation in P135II can be attributed to the acquisition of literacy and ability to understand communication literature, circulars and information at meetings relating to P135II and the use of literacy skills during training courses. Literacy levels according to P135II management and trainers have a significant impact on access and participation in P135II. Although the DOET AL approach in CS3 attempted to fuse elements of Reflect into its curriculum between 2003 and 2005 there is no tangible evidence that this transpired. Although DOET teachers acknowledge that they were trained in the use of needs assessments, PRA and the use of local material to supplement DOET primers there was no reported transfer of these skills to participants. The detrimental effect of this was reduced by the limited use of participatory methodology and PRA in P135II in CS3.

The focus of P135II on prioritising assistance to registered poor families is an impediment to participation of marginal and non-poor households. Direct support in P135II in the form of house renovations, out-buildings, wells, toilets, animals, seed, school scholarships and agricultural and animal husbandry training is targeted at the certified poor. The margins between poor and non poor in all three case study areas is minimal which can ironically be the cause of friction and jealousies within communities. The phenomenon of ‘wishing to remain poor’ in order to benefit directly from poverty alleviation programmes was evident in all three case studies (see UKaid, 2011). In CS1, CS2 and CS3 the allocation of up to 80% of P135II budgets on community infrastructure is a major impediment for Reflect and DOET participants who live in hamlets and isolated locations. The concentration of community infrastructure works in commune centres and adjacent villages benefit families who live nearby, more than isolated communities.
Residents in Na Lun Hamlet in CS1 were particularly affected by restricted mobility and isolation. Funding is a major impediment to participation in P135II in all three case study sites and ABE approaches have little influence apart from creating awareness and empowering participants to lobby for interventions. Findings indicate that CS2 Reflect participants have the greater awareness and potential to lobby for funds.

Impediments to accessing ABE resources and interventions in all three case studies restrict the improvement of adult literacy levels, awareness and community development which can have a detrimental and negative effect on the overall literate environment. Findings in CS1 confirm that residential location is one of the main inhibiting factors in accessing ABE resources. The location of 65% of Reflect participants in Na Lun Hamlet (see Box 5.3) in CS1 provided an embedded case that could be compared and contrasted with the location of other Reflect participants in CS1, CS2 and DOET participants in CS3. Mobility as an impediment to accessing ABE resources is more likely to inhibit communities like Na Lun who are outside the zone where community infrastructure in P135II including roads, schools and learning centres are targeted.

Although Reflect participants in Na Lun attended phase 1 and phase 2 of Reflect the sustained attendance at ABE interventions so far (10km round-trip) from their residence is not realistic given that they are all married working women with children. CS1 and CS3 while having new spacious Community Learning Centres (CLC) close to their commune centres have few other resources including books, learning material and equipment to develop these centres into active learning facilities. Findings indicate that the management of ABE activities and resources is vital for facilitating access for participants and supports findings from numerous other studies (see Table 6.5; Trinh Thanh, 2009; Zolfaghari et al., 2009; Okukawa, 2008; Robinson-Pant, 2001). CS2 while having fewer physical and material ABE resources than CS1 and CS3 has the potential to use its efficient and functional management structure to develop limited resources and reduce ABE access impediments.
There is significant evidence from findings that the development of a healthy and culturally sensitive literate environment encourages the active involvement of ethnic minority adults in ABE activities (see UNESCO, 2008b; Street, 2001; Rogers, 2000). Findings in this multiple case study support findings in other developing countries by ethnographic researchers that consider literacy as a multi-layered, social and cultural phenomenon that exists in interaction through literacy practices (see Barton and Tusting, 2005; Wedin, 2004; Wenger, 1998, 1991). The development of literate environments in the three case study areas is not exclusively dependent on the provision of books, learning material and ABE activities and in order for the literate environments to flourish they need to be intrinsically linked to local customs, culture, language and literacy practices.

The development of the literate environment in CS1 is particularly poor, not only because of the lack of resources and effective management, but also due to the multi-cultural make-up of the Reflect participants and local population that include Tay, H’mong and Dao families. CS2 and CS3 are exclusively Thai communities located in geographically confined villages where the development of a literate environment that matches cultural and social norms is less complicated. Findings indicate that there needs to be a combination of certain conditions that match local realities and expectations for the effective development of a vibrant literate environment. Imposing norms or trying to imitate literate environments from exclusively Kinh communities is likely to be unsuccessful in communities where the local languages are still the main means of communication within households and between neighbours.

In conclusion, implications of findings for ABE and poverty alleviation policy from this study are outlined in Tables 6.10 and 6.13 respectively. While recommendations from a small scale multiple case study that investigated the relationship between Adult Basic Education (ABE) and accessing specific poverty alleviation resources in selected ethnic minority communities in Vietnam are limited and can only be considered applicable in the communities and to a lesser extent districts and provinces in the study, there are also aspects that reflect the general situation of ABE and poverty alleviation in Vietnam as a whole. The selection of three communes in two provinces in the same region that is
considered one of the poorest areas of Vietnam increases the possibility of generalisation. In a state where policy is centralised and closely monitored it is possible to conclude that findings from this study can be considered as a gauge that measured the relationship between Reflect and MOET / DOET Adult Basic Education interventions on accessing P135II resources in selected ethnic minority communities that are representative of other similar communities.

The importance of adult literacy in Kinh (Vietnamese) for accessing and participating in all four components of P135II is indisputable according to findings in this research. The effectiveness of an approach to literacy delivery that includes awareness-raising, understanding of community development issues and empowerment on impacting access and participation in poverty alleviation programmes is dependent on the motivation and commitment of participants and facilitators to adhere to the principles on which the approach was developed. Reflect in CS2 came closest to achieving this and demonstrated that an unconventional Freirean approach to ABE can be a valuable and culturally sensitive alternative to government ABE interventions in ethnic minority communities.

In order for the access to and effectiveness of P135 to be improved there needs to be an inclusion of targeted beneficiaries in planning prioritised activities that have a direct impact on income-generation and family welfare. The development of ABE in the remote ethnic minority communities that constitute the geographical boundaries of this study is dependent on parallel poverty alleviation interventions that promote the utilisation of literacy and other ABE skills in ways that match individual community social, cultural and material expectations.

The concluding chapter will summarise the study focusing on aims and objectives, major findings, recommendations and limitations. Areas needing further research and reflections on the research journey will provide a reflective framework for concluding comments.
Chapter 7: Conclusions

In this final chapter, conclusions outlining major findings and recommendations within the context and limitations of this study will be highlighted. Because of the limited scale and scope of this multiple case study, suggestions for additional research based on findings will be put forward and recommended. In addition reflections on the research journey, lessons learned and experiences based on the research process and contribution of the work will be candidly expressed.

7.1 Study Summary

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between Adult Basic Education (ABE) and accessing poverty alleviation resources in selected ethnic minority communities in Vietnam. The selection of the communities was based on protracted negotiations with relevant GoV agencies, NGOs / INGOs and local authorities. The final selection of the three case study sites in Ha Giang and Dien Bien provinces was influenced by their compatibility with the main study objectives, permission to conduct data collection field-trips as well as important ethical and logistical considerations.

The development of overall study objectives in 2009 before undertaking fieldwork provided a realistic roadmap and reference for all who participated in this research. The literature review combines elements of ABE and poverty alleviation theory in order to develop a theoretical framework that combines both fields of study in a conscious attempt to conceptualise and locate this research in a Vietnamese and international context. Concepts of ABE outlining definitions of ABE and the various theoretical perspectives including Freirean and functional literacy elements provide a framework for evaluating ABE as an agent for social change, linking specific initiatives in Vietnam to the Education for All Compact and Millennium Development Goals ambitions. There has been a conscious attempt in this study to build on significant research studies that focused on ethnic minority poverty and development in Vietnam in an attempt to include specific research findings linking education and poverty alleviation with the aims and objectives of this particular research. By focusing study objectives on investigating the relationship between ABE and accessing poverty alleviation resources it was
necessary to integrate both elements into a theoretical framework that assisted in an empirical and reliable measurement of this phenomenon.

The GoV poverty alleviation Programme 135II became the main focus for measuring access and participation of ABE beneficiaries from the Reflect and MOET / DOET courses. In addition to exploring impediments to accessing ABE resources impediments to accessing poverty alleviation resources were also examined. Throughout this research there was a focus on the main study question which investigated how differences in ABE approaches impact on how specific ethnic minority adults access specific poverty alleviation resources. In answering the main research question sub-questions relating to differences between ABE approaches and the impact of these approaches on participation in programmes after gaining access were addressed and outlined.

From a methodological perspective there was a reliance on qualitative data collected using structured and semi-structured interviews, observations, documentation and archival records. Following the advice of Yin (2009) a multiple case study approach concentrating on three remote ethnic minority communes with both ABE and P135II interventions was applied. While this increased the scope of the investigation prolonging data collection and analysis the robustness and possibilities for generalisation of research finding was significantly improved.

7.2 Major Findings
Major findings based on the study objectives and summary of the overall research findings outlined in table format in Chapter 6 will be highlighted below. In order to avoid repetition and to concentrate on significant findings that link directly to research questions major finding will be outlined in a succinct format under headings that lead to achievable recommendations.

7.2.1 Impact of ABE Approaches on Access to P135II
- ABE approaches that deliver good overall levels of literacy in Kinh provide a necessary platform for participants to understand the objectives and regulations of P135II thus improving access.
• ABE approaches that provide participants with an awareness of P135II and other poverty alleviation programmes enhance possibilities of access. Findings indicate that the Reflect approach provides better awareness.

• ABE teachers / facilitators who are trained in PRA methods and aware of and understand poverty alleviation strategy and community development are better equipped to create and develop awareness among participants.

• Trained ABE teachers / facilitators, who are from a local ethnic group, understand local languages and cultural sensitivities are more effective at integrating awareness of poverty alleviation interventions into ABE curricula irrespective of method used.

• ABE approaches that invest in teacher and facilitator training focusing on adult learning styles and adult teaching methodology linking curricula with community development issues are more likely to impact on access to P135II.

• ABE approaches that use participatory methodology such as PRA have the potential to impact access to P135II and other poverty alleviation interventions provided that these interventions embrace and promote participation.

• ABE approaches that deliver additional skills such as agricultural, animal husbandry, income-generation and credit management skills provide participants with additional basic knowledge that does not necessarily improve access to training courses targeting these skills conducted by P135II and other programmes. Findings indicate that Reflect is significantly better at delivering these additional skills.

7.2.2 Impact of ABE Approaches on Participation in P135II

• ABE approaches that deliver good levels of literacy in Kinh enhance participation and benefits from all 4 components of P135II. Literacy in Kinh is essential for meaningful participation in P135II meetings, training, capacity building, evaluation and improvement in socio-cultural living standards. Reflect in this study (CS2) when implemented in its pure form by a well trained and dedicated local facilitator proved equal to DOET in delivering good levels of literacy.
• ABE approaches can impact participation in the planning of P135II interventions by empowering participants to speak up and lobby for benefits. In this study Reflect was significantly more effective (CS2) when implemented by an aware and informed local facilitator.

• ABE approaches with motivated local teachers / facilitators who understand participants’ needs are more likely to encourage participation in planning and evaluation meetings of P135II than teachers / facilitators from outside the commune and ethnic group. Reflect in CS2 and to a lesser extent DOET in CS3 were more effective at encouraging participation.

• ABE approaches that provide PRA skills have the potential to improve participation in all aspects of P135II provided that P135II interventions are conducted using grassroots bottom-up principles. Reflect provided these skills to all participants in this study to various degrees. Evidence indicates that CS2 participants have sustained these skills and continue to utilise them.

• ABE approaches that include agricultural techniques and animal husbandry skills in their curriculum provide participants with a distinct advantage when taking part in P135II production development training. Reflect includes these skills when requested using PRA methods by participants.

7.2.3 Impediments to Participation in P135II

• Limited P135II funding at commune and especially village level impedes participation. All three case study locations had limited funding to fully incorporate all villages in P135II.

• Prioritisation of community infrastructure restricts limited funding for other components that include training and capacity building. All three case study locations prioritised community infrastructure. In CS2 Reflect had significantly higher participation levels in P135II training compared to CS1 and CS3.

• Limited use of needs assessments before planning impedes participation. All three case study locations used needs assessments but only in CS2 was this implemented with the meaningful involvement of villagers. CS1 and CS3 needs assessments utilised opinions from village leaders.
Methodology used in planning, training and evaluation restricts participation. No systematic use of participatory methods in all three case study areas for planning, training and evaluation of interventions.

Budget restrictions impede the use of PRA which could improve meaningful participation. Evidence from all three case study locations confirms this.

Use of Kinh for all communications, meetings, training and reporting excludes meaningful participation for illiterate villagers. The development of alternative methods of communication using local languages combined with a re-evaluation of strategies for conducting meetings, trainings and reporting would help to involve illiterate villagers in a more meaningful way. Use of PRA methods is a viable alternative according to findings in this study.

Location of participants in relation to P135II activities and interventions impacts levels of participation. The further families live away from commune centres the less likelihood that they will participate in P135II.

Mobility of villagers and lack of transport and roads to travel to P135II activities impedes availing of facilities and interventions. Findings in this study indicate that villagers who live in remote hamlets (Na Lun CS1) are particularly affected by mobility restrictions. Because of traditional residential locations of ethnic groups such as the H’mong and Dao these groups have been particularly disadvantaged in this regard.

7.2.4 Impediments to Accessing Adult Education Resources

Limited availability of resources and activities restricts access. All three case study areas have limited ABE resources. Ethnic groups who reside near to district and provincial centres have better access to limited ABE resources. In this regard the Tay and Thai ethnic groups are better located. However, in all three case study areas people are relatively poor and dependent on GoV support for resources.

Location of residence when outside commune and village centres impedes access as most available resources / activities are located in commune or village centres. In CS1 70% of Reflect participants were particularly disadvantaged because of residential location. These were from the
H’mong and Dao ethnic groups. Thai and Tay ethnic groups are better located to avail of ABE and general education resources as schools and learning centres are situated in commune centres.

- Complicated and expensive ABE management structures impede effectiveness diverting limited funding from essential ABE interventions. In this study *Reflect* in CS2 had the most efficient and cost-effective management structure while receiving sustainable support from the local NGO CCD. ActionAid in CS1 was evaluated as providing the least efficient and cost-effective management structure.

- Limited and effective use and location of CLC facilities impedes participation. Both CS1 and CS3 have large new CLC buildings with limited resources and located in commune centres that are difficult for participants who live outside the commune centre to avail of. In both CLCs activities were limited and the effective use of both CLCs is restricted by limited resources and funding.

- Time, motivation and incentives for adult villagers to take part in ABE activities are inhibiting factors that impact on participation. Findings indicate that all three case study participant groups are inhibited by these factors. However, *Reflect* in CS1 and particularly CS2 provide incentives linking micro-credit to ABE activities and the provision of small animals (chickens, ducks) and agricultural training to participants. In CS3 successful completion of DOET courses was rewarded with official DOET literacy and post-literacy certificates that could be used to prove literacy and produced to gain a place on DOET continuing and complementary education programmes. *Reflect* participants are particularly disadvantaged by lack of recognised accreditation.

- Limited literate environments impede the development of gains made by ABE interventions and increase the possibility of participants becoming re-illiterate. Findings show that all three case study locations have limited literate environments. *Reflect* participants in CS1 were more disadvantaged because of residential location, lack of stable electricity and inadequate support from *Reflect* management and local authorities. Again this disadvantage was exacerbated along ethnic lines and H’mong and Dao
participants because of the remoteness of their villages, hamlets and isolated farms are more likely to be living in areas with limited ABE resources and activities. Findings in all three case studies indicate that the development of literate environments are not calibrated and honed to include local perceptions and expectations.

Major findings as listed above directly address study objectives and research findings from the literature. The link between the major findings and the literature review will be briefly outlined in these concluding paragraphs. Studies conducted by researchers from the New Literacy Studies (NLS) school of thought advocate the development of literate environments based on the social and cultural interpretation of literacy by targeted communities. This idea of developing situated literacies based on literacy use as opposed to advocating one dominant model for all as the basis for improving the literate environments in ethnic minority communities is supported in this study. Ethnographic approaches to literacy in countries where there exists a dominant indigenous literacy and other suppressed literacies as promoted by the NLS and outlined in the literature (see Trudell and Klass, 2010; Wedin, 2008; Street and Lefstein, 2008; Barton, 1994; Street, 1994) are more likely to be sustained in the three case study sites investigated. Although the use of local ethnic language literacy would help to reinforce a social and cultural connection to ABE there is evidence in this study from interviews and observations that the resources and commitment needed to revive written ethnic scripts in Thai, Tay, H’mong and Dao languages are not present.

Recent research in Vietnam identifies education as a central pillar in the development of sustainable poverty alleviation strategy among ethnic minority communities. As gaps between the majority and minority groups grow, differences in education levels reinforce disadvantage leading to less mobility, less access to credit and from findings in this study less access to and participation in poverty alleviation interventions. In this study the importance of ABE for the achievement of GoV and donor development goals including the Education for All and Millennium Development Goals supports the literature and case study evidence confirms the prioritisation in education strategy on resources for primary and secondary education development at the expense of ABE. Investments in primary
and secondary education without parallel support for ABE and the development of culturally sensitive literate environments runs the risk of locating literacy in an exclusively school environment while neglecting its sustainable growth in the community as a whole.

7.3 Recommendations
Recommendations arising from having conducted this study are based on the implications of findings for ABE and Poverty Alleviation policies. Recommendations for ABE policies centre on the location of ABE activities, provision of material and human resources, development of CLCs and enhancing literate environments.

7.3.1 ABE Policy
- Locate all ABE activities including Reflect and DOET close to target groups and particularly isolated villages and hamlets. Instead of participants travelling long distances to attend ABE activities encourage the mobility of local ethnic minority trainers, facilitators and teachers to provide activities in villages and hamlets using local houses when satellite schools / CLCs don’t exist.
- Conduct needs assessments before developing ABE interventions. Support initiatives with the development of local ethnic minority human and material resources.
- Develop the CLC concept in line with local needs and expectations. Encourage efficient and cost-effective management and organisation of ABE. Provide adult libraries and equipment when establishing CLCs. Develop a concept of satellite CLCs utilising existing satellite primary schools or cultural houses when possible.
- Enhance literate environments with appropriate and culturally relevant reading and audio material. Link ABE activities to social, economic and cultural realities.

Implications of research findings for poverty alleviation policy centre on the scope and planning, funding for components and methodology used in planning, training and evaluation.
7.3.2 Poverty Alleviation Policy

- Develop P135 to be more inclusive in planning and prioritising activities by using a bottom-up approach starting at village level using needs assessments. Involve villagers in all aspects of planning and decision making including Monitoring and Evaluation (M+E) and Operation and Maintenance (O+M) activities.
- Increase funding and focus more on production development and improving socio-economic living standards. Include access to micro-credit and reduce funding spent on procuring free handouts of seeds, tools and equipment.
- Plan community infrastructure based on better access for isolated villages and hamlets.
- Develop training and capacity building based on literacy levels. Focus training on villagers and increase budgets and training days using trainers from local ethnic groups.
- Use PRA methodology for all aspects of P135 including planning, training, M+E and O+M.
- Utilise participants’ local indigenous knowledge, culture, language and skills to develop programme objectives.

7.4 Study Limitations

The limitations of a relatively small scale study located in three rural ethnic minority communes in two remote provinces in the Northern Mountainous Region of Vietnam are obvious. The region has thousands of communes and over thirty different ethnic groups spread out in ten provinces. While findings are limited and can only be considered applicable in the communes, districts and provinces where the study was situated, there are also aspects that reflect the general situation regarding ABE and poverty alleviation in the region as a whole. P135II, DOET and Reflect ABE approaches have been implemented in all ten provinces using similar management and implementation structures. However, findings may have been different if the study was conducted in different locations and therefore may not be generalisable to other contexts. This has been acknowledged in the development of the methodological framework and choice of using a case study approach. There has been a considerable effort to guarantee the validity and reliability of this
study and the potential for bias was counter balanced by methodological triangulation and adherence to strict ethical codes. It is therefore hoped that the limitations have helped to locate this study in the general context of other studies conducted in the region and among similar ethnic minority groups.

7.5 Suggestions for Further Research

Suggestions for further research based on major findings and recommendations centre on two interconnected areas. The first area relates directly to findings linking the importance of ABE with a particular emphasis on literacy in Kinh to accessing and participating in GoV poverty alleviation programmes. As most of these programmes are situated in remote mountainous areas targeting ethnic minority groups there is a need for further research on:

- The impact of illiteracy / limited literacy in Kinh on the overall effectiveness of GoV poverty alleviation interventions.
- The use of communication, planning, training and evaluation methodology that relies heavily on didactic methods that require high levels of literacy in Kinh to be effective.
- Comparative study on the impact of participatory approaches on community awareness, understanding of and involvement in GoV poverty alleviation programmes.

The second area is related to research on sustaining ABE gains and enhancing literate environments in ethnic minority communities in Vietnam.

- Ethnographic research on the understanding and use of literacy in Kinh in communities where indigenous languages are the first language used in the home and community.
- Development of self-sustainable village situated ABE models utilising local facilitators and approaches that match local expectations and ethnic sensitivities.
7.6 Reflections

Personal reflections on the ‘research journey’ are too many and subjective to include in a short paragraph. Considering the process involved and the four years of continuous learning and reflection there have been some important watersheds. In order to narrow down the research to suit an independent researcher working mostly alone there was a lot of time spent developing overall study objectives. Although this was eventually articulated on one side of an A4 sheet of paper the focus that resulted from its development acted as a roadmap for the completion of the study. In hindsight and reflection it was the most important page in the entire thesis and had it been developed at an earlier stage valuable time and effort might have been saved. Other lessons learned while conducting this study include the negotiation of complicated and bureaucratic procedures that were necessary to convince gatekeepers of the relevance and value of this study to the paradigms of ABE and poverty alleviation enquiry in Vietnam.

As a practitioner who has been involved at the ‘coalface’ of ABE and poverty alleviation development for over ten years in Vietnam it was not easy to adapt to full-time academic enquiry. From the literature and development of the methodological framework I have learned much about ethical approaches to research that consider aspects relating to improving robustness that are often understated while under pressure to implement project ambitions in the field. I believe that my research has contributed in a limited way to understanding the dynamics and relationship between ABE and implementing poverty alleviation programmes in selected ethnic minority communities in Vietnam and that it will hopefully help to encourage further research in this field.
References:
Adult Performace Level Study (1975) *Adult Functional Competency: A Summary.* Austin: University of Texas.


[Assessed October 6th, 2011]

[Assessed March 22nd, 2010]


UNESCO (1985) *Adult Education since the Third Conference on Adult Education, Tokyo 1972*. Round-up replies to the survey carried out by UNESCO among national Commissions with a view on gathering information on the


Available from:


Appendices

Appendix 1. The 12 Adult Literacy Benchmarks

The *International Adult Literacy Benchmarks* (2007) were developed by the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), UNESCO, ActionAid International and the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006.

*We hope the benchmarks will provide a starting point for policy dialogue between governments, funding agencies, NGOs, and those adults who have been deprived of their right to education. They might also be used as a checklist against which a government or donor might ask questions about an existing or proposed programme. However, they are not intended as a blueprint or a set of conditions. Our research affirms the widely shared insight of experienced practitioners that the success of any literacy programme depends on flexibility to respond to unique local needs and circumstances.*

**Writing the Wrongs: The 12 Adult Literacy Benchmarks**

1. **Literacy is about the acquisition and use of reading, writing and numeracy skills**, and thereby the development of active citizenship, improved health and livelihoods, and gender equality. The goals of literacy programmes should reflect this understanding.
2. **Literacy should be seen as a continuous process** that requires sustained learning and application. There are no magic lines to cross from illiteracy into literacy. All policies and programmes should be defined to encourage sustained participation and celebrate progressive achievement rather than focusing on one-off provision with a single end point.
3. **Governments have the lead responsibility in meeting the right to adult literacy** and in providing leadership, policy frameworks, an enabling environment and resources. They should:
   - ensure cooperation across all relevant ministries and links to all relevant development programmes;
   - work in systematic collaboration with experienced civil society organisations;
   - ensure links between all these agencies, especially at the local level; and
   - ensure relevance to the issues in learners’ lives by promoting the decentralisation of budgets and of decision-making over curriculum, methods and materials.
4. **It is important to invest in ongoing feedback and evaluation mechanisms**, data systematization and strategic research. The focus of evaluations should be on the practical application of what has been learnt and the impact on active citizenship, improved health and livelihoods, and gender equality.
5. **To retain facilitators it is important that they should be paid at least the equivalent of the minimum wage of a primary school teacher** for all hours worked (including time for training, preparation and follow-up).
6. Facilitators should be local people who receive substantial initial training and regular refresher training, as well as having ongoing opportunities for exchanges with other facilitators. Governments should put in place a framework for the professional development of the adult literacy sector, including for trainers /supervisors – with full opportunities for facilitators across the country to access this (e.g. through distance education).

7. There should be a ratio of at least 1 facilitator to 30 learners and at least 1 trainer/supervisor to 15 learner groups (1 to 10 in remote areas), ensuring a minimum of one support visit per month. Programmes should have timetables that flexibly respond to the daily lives of learners but which provide for regular and sustained contact (e.g. twice a week for at least two years).

8. In multilingual contexts it is important at all stages that learners should be given an active choice about the language in which they learn. Active efforts should be made to encourage and sustain bilingual learning.

9. A wide range of participatory methods should be used in the learning process to ensure active engagement of learners and relevance to their lives. These same participatory methods and processes should be used at all levels of training of trainers and facilitators.

10. Governments should take responsibility for stimulating the market for production and distribution of a wide variety of materials suitable for new readers, for example by working with publishers / newspaper producers. They should balance this with funding for the local production of materials, especially by learners, facilitators and trainers. 

11. A good quality literacy programme that respects all these Benchmarks is likely to cost between US $ 50 and US $ 100 per learner per year for at least three years (two years initial learning + ensuring further learning opportunities are available for all)

12. Governments should dedicate at least 3 % of their national education sector budgets to adult literacy programmes as conceived in these Benchmarks. Where governments deliver on this, international donors should fill any remaining resource gaps (e.g. through including adult literacy in the Fast Track Initiative).
## Appendix 2: Comparative Development Statistics between Vietnam and Ireland

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<td>2011</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>86 million</td>
<td>4.6 million</td>
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<tr>
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<td>GDP per capital ($)</td>
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<td>Adult literacy (%)</td>
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<td>Population using sanitation facilities (%)</td>
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<td>Population with access to potable water (%)</td>
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<td>Internet users per 1000 people</td>
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## Appendix 3: Data Collection Framework

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<td>09/10-05/12</td>
<td>Irish Embassy / Irish Aid, UNDP / P135II, UNESCO, VVOB, GIZ, RECENFED / MOET, ActionAid, CCD, AusAid, UKaid, World Bank, IFAD, Oxfam GB.</td>
<td>Ha Noi, Dien Bien, Ha Giang, Agency / Organisation Staff</td>
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<td></td>
<td>09/10-07/11</td>
<td>Structure and Organisation of MOET / DOET Adult Literacy Programme.</td>
<td>Ha Noi / Ha Giang / Dien Bien</td>
<td>RECENFED / MOET / DOET / BOET management</td>
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<td></td>
<td>09/10-07/11</td>
<td>Structure and Organisation of P135II</td>
<td>Ha Noi / Ha Giang / Dien Bien</td>
<td>P135II Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>01/11-07/11</td>
<td>BOET Dien Bien / Vi Xuyen: District AE staff. General information on ABE programmes in districts. Content of DOET literacy courses, teacher training, current and past courses (2000-2010). Local input into course design, content. <em>Reflect</em> programme in district. Use of CLCs to support AE and ABE. Link to P 135III.</td>
<td>Dien Bien / Vi Xuyen, BOET.</td>
<td>BOET management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>01/11-07/11</td>
<td>P135 II Management in selected communes. Information on activities 2006-2010. Use of training in component activities.</td>
<td>CS1, CS2, CS3</td>
<td>P135 Management Boards. APOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>01/11-07/11</td>
<td>Commune ABE activity including literacy, use of CLC and coordination with P135II and other poverty alleviation programmes. Identification of literacy class 2006-2007 with list of participants.</td>
<td>CS1, CS2, CS3</td>
<td>Commune head teachers, ABE teachers and CLC managers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In-depth</strong></td>
<td>03/11-</td>
<td><em>Reflect</em> Facilitators. Information on training as ABE</td>
<td>CS1, CS2</td>
<td><em>Reflect</em> facilitators (5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 03/11-07/11 | Reflect Facilitator Trainers. Information on development of TOT and facilitator training courses / methodology / support / follow-on training. Link to P135II / poverty alleviation. | CS1, CS2 | Reflect Facilitator Trainers (2)  
| 03/11-07/11 | DOET AL Teachers: Information on training as ABE teachers. Development of course content / curriculum. Management of course. Use of literacy environment and technical assistance from other sectors. Understanding of P135 II and poverty alleviation. Participant’s inputs and general outcome of programme. | CS3 | DOET Adult Literacy Teachers (4)  
| 03/11-07/11 | DOET AL Teacher Trainer. Information on development of TOT and teacher training courses / methodology / support / follow-on training. Link to P135II / poverty alleviation. | CS3 | DOET AL Teacher Trainer (1)  
| 03/11-07/11 | Reflect Participants: Investigate (1) pre-existing literacy (2) Curriculum : content, objectives and learning expectations (3) Use of CLC / literacy environment (4) Impact of course on literacy use in general (5) Impact of literacy on participation and access to P135 five outcome orientated objectives. | CS1, CS2 | Individual interviews (18)  
| 03/11-07/11 | DOET AL Participants. Investigate (1) pre-existing literacy (2) Curriculum : content, objectives and learning expectations (3) Use of CLC / literacy environment (4) Impact of course on literacy use in general (5) Impact of literacy on participation and access to P135 II five outcome orientated objectives. | CS3 | Individual interviews (12)  
<p>| 03/11-07/11 | P135 II Trainers / APOs. Investigate impact of literacy in activities related to (1) planning (2) production | CS1, CS2, CS3 | Individual Interviews (7) |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>01/11-07/11</th>
<th>Observe ABE activities / P 135 II interventions. Visit commune educational, health care and general public service facilities. Community infrastructure.</th>
<th>CS1, CS2, CS3</th>
<th>Researcher / assistant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>01/11-07/11</td>
<td>Observe Literate Environment. Books, material, libraries and audio / visual ICT available in commune / villages.</td>
<td>CS1, CS2, CS3</td>
<td>Researcher / assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>01/11-07/11</td>
<td>Use of local languages. Income-generation activities, culture, dress, habits.</td>
<td>CS1, CS2, CS3</td>
<td>Researcher / assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journals</td>
<td>09/10-05/12</td>
<td>Continuous recording of meetings, interviews and observations.</td>
<td>All locations</td>
<td>Researcher / assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recordings / Images</td>
<td>09/10-07/11</td>
<td>Record interviews, photo/video images of cultural / physical aspects.</td>
<td>Field sites. CS1, CS2, CS3</td>
<td>Researcher / assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Visits</td>
<td>01/11-07/11</td>
<td>9 separate Field Visits. Total of 38 days including trips to Quang Ba and Muong Cha (pilot) districts.</td>
<td>Field sites. CS1, CS2, CS3</td>
<td>Researcher / assistant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4: PRA Tools

Figure 1 Income-Expenditure Tree

Source: EU SLLCRDP Adult Education Component
Appendix 4: Figure 2 Village Mapping

Source: ActionAid Vietnam

Appendix 4: Figure 3 Animal Husbandry Matrix

Source: CCD Dien Bien
Appendix 4: Figure 4 Using PRA tools in ABE Awareness Raising Class

Source: EU SLLCRDP 2005
Appendix 5: In-depth Structured Interview Schedule

Reflect Circle Participants: In-depth Structured Interview: Location: 
Date:

Intro: Introduce study and main research questions

Occupation: Gender: Age: Ethnicity:

Main Body of Questions:

1. How long have you been involved in this Reflect circle?
   a) When did you take part in your first Reflect circle session?
   b) Where did this take place?
   c) How many people were involved?

2. Before you joined the Reflect circle what were your experiences of literacy learning?
   a) At school
   b) Taking part in other adult literacy classes
   c) Other

3. What was your main motivation (reason) for joining the Reflect circle?
   a) To become literate / learn to read and write
   b) To understand more about community development issues
   c) To improve your possibilities of income generation for yourself and your family
   d) To help younger members of your family with school work
   e) To communicate at the local market and with other ethnic groups

4. Have you completed Phase 1 and 2 of Reflect?
   a) Literacy based on needs of participants
   b) Literacy and community development
   c) Have you been assessed on the level of your literacy

5. How often do you attend Reflect circle sessions?
   a) Once a week, twice a month, once a month
   b) Irregularly

6. Who facilitates the Reflect circle sessions?
   a) A local person from your ethnic group
   b) A teacher from outside the commune and ethnic group
   c) What gender is the facilitator
   d) Has it been the same facilitator

7. How would you assess the effectiveness of Reflect as a methodology to teach literacy?
   a) V. Good, Good, Not so good, Bad
   b) Why

8. Are you familiar with poverty alleviation programmes in your commune?
   a) P135
   b) NGOs such as ActionAid
   c) Other
9. Have you and your family benefited from any of the poverty alleviation programmes in your commune?
   b) Other programmes related to health care, education / vocational training, sanitation, access to credit

10. Has your involvement in Reflect helped you to access and participate in P135II and other poverty alleviation programmes in your commune?
   a) Being able to read and understand about P135II
   b) Take part in meetings to plan P135II
   c) Participate in activities such as training
   d) To know your rights and entitlements
   e) Understand community development issues

11. Have you taken part in any training courses conducted by P135?
   a) What course (Agricultural production, animal husbandry, sanitation, irrigation etc?
   b) How were the training courses conducted?
   c) What language was used?
   d) Were the trainers from your ethnic group or did they use translators?

12. Are there possibilities to obtain books / audio visual material in your village commune?
   a) At a local school library / Community Learning Centre
   b) Through the mass organisations such as the Women’s Union
   c) In shops / market

13. On a scale of 1-10 how would you assess the level of adult education resources in your commune?
   a) 10 = Excellent
   b) What prevents you from accessing adult education resources?
   c) How could resources be improved?

14. How would you improve P135III to benefit your commune?
   a) Community level
   b) Personal family level

15. Has Reflect and literacy helped you to improve your life?
   a) Reading and writing
   b) Involvement in community development
   c) Increased your confidence

Closure of Interview:
Reflect Circle Facilitator: In-depth Structured Interview:  Location:  
Date: 

Intro: Introduce study and main research questions

Occupation:  Gender:  Age:
Ethnicity:

Main Body of Questions:

1. How long have you been a Reflect Facilitator?  
   a) When did you facilitate your first circle?  
   b) Where did this circle take place?  
   c) How many participants took part?

2. What training did you receive to become a Reflect Facilitator?  
   a) Different stages of the training?  
   b) Length of training courses?  
   c) Where the training took place?  
   d) Who conducted the training?

3. What methodology was used to conduct the training of Reflect Facilitators?  
   a) Can you outline some of the methods that you learned?  
   b) What tools and techniques did you use at the training?  
   c) Was training in needs assessment of learners included?  
   d) Are these methods, tools and techniques useful as an active Reflect Facilitator?

4. How does the methodology used in Reflect link to poverty issues and poverty alleviation in your commune?  
   a) Is the development of the curriculum directly related to poverty issues?  
   b) To community development issues  
   c) To everyday living issues of the participants

5. Are you aware of poverty alleviation programmes that have been implemented in the commune?  
   a) Can you name some of them and their objectives?  
   b) Is P135 one of these programmes?  
   c) Are you familiar with the structure and management of P135?  
   d) Are issues related to P135 discussed in your Reflect circle?

6. Does participation in your Reflect circle impact (help) people access poverty alleviation resources in the commune?  
   a) P135 components that include 1. Production Development 2. Infrastructure Development 3. Capacity Building 4. Improvement of socio-cultural living standards  
   b) Access to other government / non government programmes  
   c) Help them with income-generation and jobs  
   d) Create an awareness of poverty alleviation resources

7. In your opinion are there differences between Reflect and MOET / Ha Giang DOET adult literacy classes?  
   a) In curriculum development  
   b) In the training of facilitators / teachers
c) In the active participation of learners

8. How does Reflect impact on participants in the four outcome orientated objectives of P135?
   a) Production development
   b) Infrastructure development
   c) Capacity building
   d) Improvement of socio-cultural living standards

9. In your opinion what are the impediments (difficulties) to accessing adult education resources in your commune?
   a) Lack of resources and activities
   b) Coordination of education authorities and other organisations
   c) Use of Community Learning Centre (CLC)
   d) Time and motivation of villagers to take part in adult education activities
   e) Incentives to take part in activities

10. How would you improve the access and participation of adults in adult education activities in your commune?
    a) By the development of resources
    b) Through better training for adult education trainers
    c) Improvement of coordination between government and non-government agencies
    d) Raising awareness of the benefits of adult education among villagers

11. What are the main difficulties of learners in developing literacy skills?
    a) Can you describe the literacy environment in the commune?
    b) Do people use literacy in their homes, for work, to trade etc?
    c) Are there written scripts among the ethnic languages in the commune?

12. Can you speak any of the local ethnic languages in your commune?
    a) Are you a member of a local ethnic group?
    b) Did you receive training in any local language?
    c) Does knowing at least one other language help you to facilitate Reflect circles?

13. What support is needed to sustain the Reflect Circle in your commune?
    a) Financial support for facilitators
    b) Training of facilitators
    c) Material support

Closure of Interview:
Appendix 6: Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

P135 Management District: Semi-Structured Interview
Location: Date:

Intro: Introduce study and main research questions

Occupation: Gender: Age:
Ethnicity:

Main Body of Questions:
1. Can you outline the structure of P135 II management in the District?
   a) At District Level
   b) At Commune level

2. In which communes is P135 implemented in the district?
   a) All communes
   b) Selected communes
   c) Name the communes

3. What activities take place in P135 components?
   a) Production Development
   b) Infrastructure Development
   c) Capacity building
   d) Improvement of socio-cultural living standards

4. What meetings and training takes place for the implementation of the above 4 components?
   a) Planning of activities
   b) Training for production development
   c) Capacity building
   d) Improvement of socio-cultural living standards

5. How are the meetings and training conducted?
   a) Who conducts the meetings and training?
   b) Where do the meetings and training take place?
   c) What methods and language are used?

6. In your opinion is literacy important for accessing and participating in P 135 II?
   a) To understand programme objectives and regulations
   b) To participate in planning
   c) To take part in capacity building and training courses
   d) To improve socio-cultural living standards

7. How many different ethnic groups are involved in P135 II in the district?
   a) Are there differences in participation among the ethnic groups
   b) If so why

8. How can Phase III of P135 be improved?
   a) Activities / components
   b) Implementation
   c) Participation and access

Closure of Interview:
Reflect Programme Management: Semi-Structured Interview
Location: Date:

Intro: Introduce study and main research questions

Occupation: Gender: Age:
Ethnicity:

Main Body of Questions:
1. How is Reflect managed in the district?
   a) By ActionAid
   b) Local NGO (CCD)
   c) Government

2. What are the main activities that use Reflect in the district?
   a) Literacy training
   b) Community development
   c) Women’s rights
   d) Other

3. Are there differences between Reflect and DOET adult literacy classes?
   a) In curriculum
   b) In methodology
   c) In training of facilitators
   d) Other

4. How do Reflect adult literacy courses encourage participation in community development?
   a) Awareness of issues
   b) Practical use of vocabulary in development of curriculum
   c) Use of PRA methods such as mapping and diagrams
   d) Empowerment

5. Who conducts Reflect adult literacy courses?
   a) Local Teachers
   b) Local ethnic adults
   c) Other

6. Where are Reflect adult literacy courses conducted?
   a) In CLC
   b) In schools
   c) In local persons house

7. In your opinion what are the impediments to accessing adult education resources in the district?
   a) Lack of resources
   b) Management of CLCs
   c) Co-ordination between government and non government organisations
   d) Distance to district and communes

Closure of Interview:
Appendix 7: Study Objectives

Study title: An investigation of the relationship between Adult Basic Education (ABE) and accessing poverty alleviation resources in selected ethnic minority communities in Vietnam.

The following are the main study objectives:

- Investigate two approaches to ABE / literacy (Reflect and MOET / GoV Adult Literacy Programmes) with a focus on the following:
  1. Curriculum
  2. Methodology
  3. Teacher / facilitator training and methods
  4. Use of local languages
  5. Link to poverty alleviation
  6. Post-course use of literacy by participants and literacy environment

- Impact of approaches on participant’s access and participation in poverty alleviation programmes (including P135 II) and incorporating the planning and implementation of the following outcome objectives of P135 II.
  1. Production development
  2. Infrastructure development
  3. Capacity building
  4. Improvement of socio-cultural living standards.

- Explore the impediments to accessing adult education and poverty alleviation resources.

Study Questions

How do differences in ABE / Literacy approaches impact on how specific ethnic minority adults access specific poverty alleviation resources in Vietnam?

Study sub-questions include

- Are there differences between the Reflect and MOET Adult Literacy approaches?
- How do different approaches to literacy impact on ethnic minority adults' participation in poverty alleviation programmes in Vietnam?
- What are the impediments to accessing adult education and poverty alleviation resources for specific ethnic minority adults?
- Are there policy changes implied by the research findings? What are these?

Methodology

- Multiple case study of two approaches
- Both quantitative and qualitative data collection
- Sources of evidence to include: Documentation; Archival records; Interviews; Direct observation; Physical artefacts (Yin, 2009)