

# **EVALUATION OF THE LIVING WITH FLOOD POLICY: THE CASE OF THE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM IN VIETNAMESE MEKONG DELTA**

Vo Thanh Danh, PhD

*Cantho university, School of Economics and Business Administration, Vietnam.*

*Tel: +84 71 838831. Fax: +84 71 839168.*

*E-mail: vtdanh@ctu.edu.vn*

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Vietnamese Mekong Delta (VMD) is among regions affected by the calamities of global climate change, One of the impacts is the vulnerability to floods. People living in the VMD's increased flooding areas may have to be relocated. In the past, people in the VMD learned to live with the flood as the adaptation measure to avoid damages and get benefits from the flood. Currently, Living With the Flood (LWF) policy is popularly accepted in the VMD. Since 1996 the government has launched an ambitious LWF program. The objective of the program was build dwelling houses to reallocate for residents in the VMD's flooded areas. The program built more than 1,000 resettlement clusters (RCs) for 200,000 households with one million people living in the permanently flooded areas. Total investment capital was about \$US 200 million. There were many reasons that make the resettlement program both successful and unsuccessful. Identifying the factors affecting the effectiveness of the program will help local authorities to have appropriate measures to development the resettlement. The rationale of this study was to make a review analysis and qualitative analysis on the effectiveness of the resettlement program.

The study was conducted at Long An commune of Tan Chau district of An Giang province. Surveys were implemented at Tan Hau B2, Long Hoa, Long Hiep, and Long Thanh villages at Long An commune. The study used both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative data were collected by the in-depth interview (IDI) and focus group discussion (FGD). Three managers at the district, commune, and village levels were interviewed in the study; and three FGD surveys with the two for people living inside the RCs and another one for people living outside the RCs. There were three household surveys with the two for people living inside the RCs, and another one for people living in the eroded area.

In implementing the resettlement program, there were three stakeholders involved, namely provincial authority, district authority, and commune authority. The provincial authority was responsible for directing the district authorities to implement the policies such as planning the RCs, and selecting the target groups for the RCs. The province was also the one who directly received the financial source from the central government. The district authority was responsible for designing the RCs such as selecting the place for the RCs and determining the size of the RCs. The district authority is also responsible for managing the investment capital allocated for building the RCs. The commune authority took part in the monitoring and the allocation of the residents plots in the RCs. Once the RC completed, a new administrative unit is established and managed under the commune authority. The study showed that the resettlement program had problems of unsustainable financial, bad livelihood condition, and poor quality of infrastructures. The study also revealed that there was no change in income sources and employment since they relocated in the RCs. The resettlers' income was lower than before. The resettlers had more difficulties in getting jobs. Although the livelihood in the RCs was still not good, almost the respondents felt happy with living in the RCs, Survey also indicated that people who currently lived outside the RCs expected to move to live in the RCs.

In adaptating to the permanent flood situation, to cope with floods effectively, in the long run people need to adjust habits, social and economic activities towards living with floods and

getting benefits from floods rather than preventing floods. At the national level, planning economic development strategies in the VMD needs to be consistent with the LWF policy. At the local level, authorities needs to persuade people to change the realization towards adapting to the flood and choose the way to live with the flood.