

SOLUTIONS TO IMPROVE HUMAN CAPITAL TO SUPPORT DAO PEOPLE IN THANH HOA PROVINCE, VIETNAM, TO ESCAPE POVERTY SUSTAINABLY

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Abstract

Researching solutions to improve human capital to support the Dao people to escape poverty sustainably in Thanh Hoa province is limited by the author to the following aspects: the current status of the human capital of Dao households; the main principle in poverty reduction is the need to give trust to the poor; classify poor household into three groups: household with elderly and sick people; household groups have working workers but lack skills and experience; groups of households that refuse to work and are lazy; support policies and efforts of the poor themselves to improve the capacity of sustainable poverty escape of Dao household today in Thanh Hoa province.

Keywords

Human capital, sustainable poverty reduction, Dao ethnic household, mountainous Thanh Hoa

Introduction

Over the past decades, sustainable poverty reduction for ethnic minorities in general and the Dao people in particular has been one of the socio-economic issues that the Party and Government of Vietnam pay special attention to. Pay special attention and find appropriate solutions. To increase income, reduce poverty rates, and increase access to basic services for ethnic minorities, the Government has implemented the National Target Program for sustainable poverty reduction, and many programs and projects aimed at Support for ethnic minorities have been and are being implemented, such as Resolution No. 88/2019/QH14, approving the overall project for socio-economic development of ethnic minority and mountainous areas for the period 2021 - 2030; Resolution No. 12/NQ-CP on implementing Resolution No. 88/2019/QH14 dated November 18, 2019.

In Thanh Hoa, the Resolution of the 18th Provincial Party Congress identified the Rapid and Sustainable Poverty Reduction Program as one of the key programs with the purpose of "synthetic mobilization of resources and participation of the whole system; political system to carry out poverty reduction work; create strong and comprehensive changes in poverty reduction, especially in poor districts, communes, villages, and hamlets with special difficulties; ethnic areas, mountainous areas, and coastal areas, minimizing the number of households falling back into poverty, striving to have the poverty rate of households according to the province's multidimensional standards lower than the national average by 2025".

The ethnic group (Dao people) in Thanh Hoa is also called the Man ethnic group. According to a report by the Provincial Ethnic Committee, currently in Thanh Hoa province

about 6,894 people belong to two groups: Dao Quan Chet and Dao Do; the Dao Quan Chet group resides in the low mountains and the Red Dao resides in the high mountains. The Dao community in Ngoc Lac district and Cam Thuy district belongs to the Dao Quan Chet group, the most common of which is the Ban, Trieu, and Dang families. Families and branches have their genealogy and a system of middle names to differentiate between classes of different generations. Study contributing to helping poor households of the Dao ethnic group proactively strive to escape poverty, promoting socio-economic development in the mountainous areas of Thanh Hoa province in a sustainable way.

Study Overview

Research on mountainous development policies in Vietnam by the author group Jamieson, Le Trong Cuc, and Rambo (1998) shows that the cause of this situation comes from a lack of full awareness of the basic principles of building sustainable livelihoods. In 2005, Joseph Iloabanafor Orji studied the impact assessment of poverty reduction programs as a development strategy in Niger. The study concludes that any meaningful poverty reduction programs ought to be implemented properly. Thus, the government will cooperate with rural people to make program implementation easier and achieve greater success; from there, create economic autonomy, economic growth, and development.

Summary report of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) on the Integrated Rural Development Project for ethnic minority areas in the Central region, including Thanh Hoa and Nghe An (ADB, 2007) presented several key solutions to improve livelihoods and build sustainable livelihoods for ethnic minorities, focusing on improving infrastructure systems (physical capital) such as roads, irrigation systems, water supply, sanitation, and markets. The authors group Michael Cuddy, Liu Hongmei, and Paulos Gute researched the factors affecting the poverty level of rural households in the South of China (2008). The focus of this research is to understand the income level of rural households and the factors that affect income levels.

Vietnam Poverty Assessment Report (2012) pointed out that the cause of persistent poverty among ethnic minorities is that they are facing many difficulties in accessing education, credit, and land; difficulties in finding markets, as well as from the perspective of ethnic minorities; stereotypes and prejudices of the Kinh people about ethnic minorities. *Assessing the current situation and solutions for sustainable poverty reduction in the mountainous districts of Nghe An province (2016)* points out that poverty in the mountainous districts of Nghe An province comes from the opportunity to access health services. Health, education, and social assistance are limited, infrastructure conditions are weak, income is low, and production activities are fragmented and passive.

Research at home and abroad evaluates and analyzes poverty reduction policies in different countries for social groups such as ethnic minorities in mountainous areas. Many policies have been issued by countries to support the poor in general and poor ethnic minorities in mountainous areas in particular. However, in developing countries like Vietnam, the top-down approach and direct support are leaving the poor in a passive position. From there, they tend to wait for support from the State such as free health insurance cards, and money to go to classes for children of ethnic minorities. Many policies are built from the process of assessing the needs, expectations, resources, and potential of the poor themselves, especially poor people who belong to ethnic minorities.

Research Method

The study is based on the results of analyzing the current situation and factors affecting the ability to escape the poverty of the research topic "*Solutions for mobilizing community resources to support Dao households in Thanh Hoa province to escape poverty sustainably*" "*Sustainable*", according to the theoretical approach and sustainable livelihoods framework of the UK Department for International Development includes 5 capital sources that affect the ability to escape poverty: human capital, natural resource capital, financial capital, physical capital quality, and social capital.

The study analyzed the results of quantitative research (interviews with 200 representatives of poor households and those escaping poverty). *Solutions to improve human capital to support Dao ethnic people in Thanh Hoa, Vietnam to escape poverty sustainably* are limited to the following aspects: (i) the current status of human capital of households Dao family; (ii) the principle of subjectivity in poverty reduction; (iii) classification of poor household groups; (iv) support policies and efforts of the poor themselves to improve their capacity to escape poverty sustainably of Dao households today in Thanh Hoa province.

Research results

Current status of the human capital of Dao households

Research on the human capital of the household includes the number of workers in the household and the professional skills that the human resources in the household have, such as educational level, production expertise, ability to calculate and do business, ability to access and use new technologies in production, household economic management capacity, indigenous knowledge, type of occupation, health, learning capacity to receive new knowledge, the will to rise out of poverty. This is the physical capacity of the household.

***In terms of the number of workers who are healthy enough to work:**

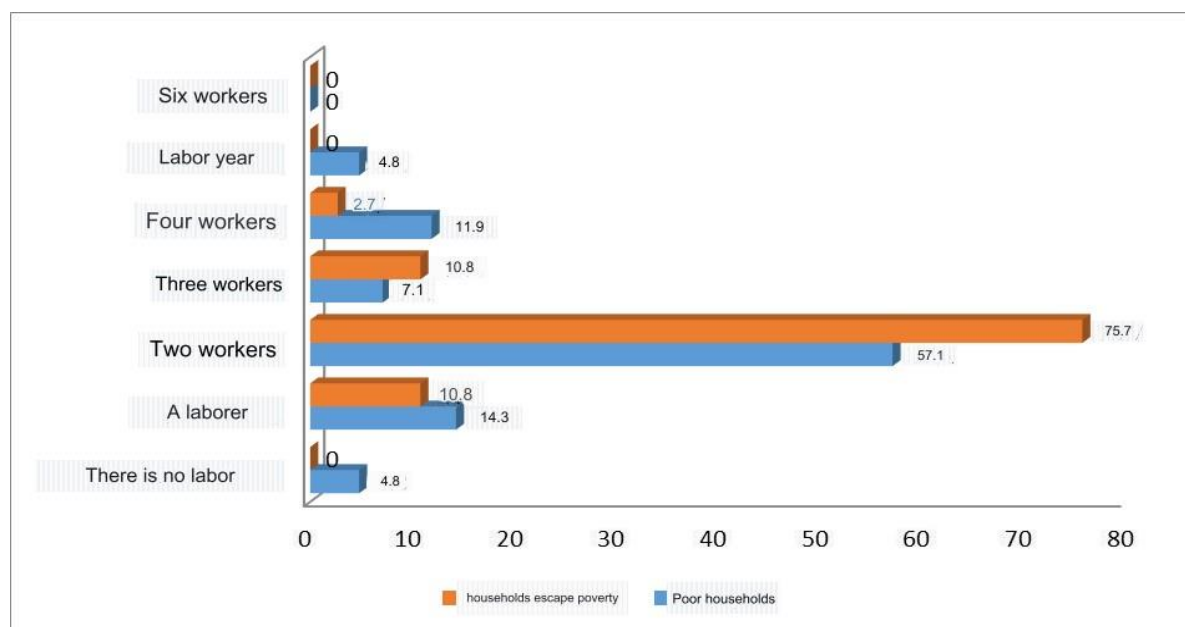


Figure 1. Rate of labor and labor capacity of households

Source: Survey results of the project, 2024

Regarding the number of workers who are still healthy enough to work in the household, **Figure 1** shows that the proportion of households with two workers accounts for a high proportion (75.7% falls into the group of households escaping poverty). At least 57.1% fall into the poor household group. Looking at the chart, we see that the proportion of labor in families of Dao ethnic farmers is quite high in most household groups; this contrasts with the Muong ethnic household group, where labor is only concentrated. In the group of 2 workers, this fact shows that the Dao people do not carry out population and family planning work well. In midwifery they give birth to many children; possibly having too many children is also a factor affecting the ability of people to escape poverty.

Lack of workers and workers healthy enough to work is one of the important factors affecting the ability of ethnic minority households in Thanh Hoa mountainous areas in general and Dao people in particular to escape poverty. The common characteristic of poor and near-poor households here is that most workers leave school early and do not take vocational training, so they do not have professional qualifications and cannot meet the needs of using modern machinery. This also limits the ability to update knowledge and apply advanced farming techniques.

***Dimension of the education level of workers in the household:**

Ho	Don't go to school	Graduated from elementary school	Graduated from secondary school	High school graduation	Graduated from high school, college, and university	Total
Poor households	43.8	30.4	22.1	3.7	0	100
Households escape poverty	8.1	43.2	37.8	8.1	2.7	100

Table 1. Education level of the head of household

Source: Survey results of the project, 2024

According to **Table 1**, there is a large difference in the education of Dao ethnic household heads between the poor group and the group of households escaping poverty. In the poor group, the rate of household head workers who have not gone to school or graduated from primary school is twice as high, compared to the group escaping poverty (the chi-square test gives Sig value = 0.003, with a significance level of 99%, proving that the educational factor is correlated with the ability of Dao ethnic households to escape poverty). This difficulty requires governments at all levels to strengthen unions, regularly organize primary vocational training, or put into practice effective crop and livestock farming models in other localities to attract workers.

Academic level	Your family can learn business experience					Total
	Not good	Not a good part	Partially good	Good	Very good	
Don't go to school	60.1%	30.0%	9.9%	-	-	100.0%
Graduated from elementary school	42.0%	33.0%	20.0%	5.0%	-	100.0%

Graduated from secondary school	18.0%	19.0%	11.4%	30.1%	22.0%	100.0%
high school graduation	11.0%	15.0%	24.0%	15.0%	34.0%	100.0%
Graduated from high school, college, university or higher	-	-	-	68%	32%	100%

Table 2. Correlation between education and the ability to learn business experiences of poor households.

Source: Survey results of the project, 2024

The chi-square test gives Sig value = 0.001, with a significance level of 99%, proving that the education factor of the household head is correlated with the ability to learn the business experience of poor Dao ethnic households in Vietnam, Thanh Hoa mountainous area. This result also supports the conclusions of research on sustainable poverty reduction in Nghe An and the Central Highlands of other ethnic minorities. **Table 2** shows that the group with no schooling and the group with primary education have very limited ability to learn business experience (accounting for 70.1% for the poor household group and 33% for the group with only primary education). Limiting education will limit the acquisition of skills, experience, and business knowledge to escape poverty.

*** Regarding the ability of households to escape poverty with education:**

	Your family can learn business experience					Total
	Not good	Not a good part	Partially good	Good	Very good	
Don't go to school	45.80%	30.90%	15.00%	8.3%	-	100.00%
Graduated from elementary school	40.10%	28.00%	22.00%	7.60%	2.30%	100.00%
Graduated from secondary school	2.80%	4.20%	36.90%	37.30%	18.70%	100.00%
High School Graduation	2.1%	5.0%	18.90%	30.90%	40.00%	100.00%
Graduated from Intermediate School, College, University or higher	-	-	29.30%	51.30%	19.40%	100.00%

Table 3. Households' capacity to learn business experience

Source: Survey results of the project, 2024

The chi-square test gives Sig value = 0.012, with a significance level of 95%, proving that education and business learning experience are correlated. **Table 3** shows that the ability to learn good and very good business experiences belongs to the group with high school education and the group with intermediate, college, and university degrees, in contrast to the groups with difficulties and limitations in working. Gaining business experience mainly falls in

the group of people who have not gone to school and have primary school level. This correlation confirms that to promote the ability to escape poverty, investing in education is the most necessary and sustainable for ethnic minority households.

* Regarding household health capacity:

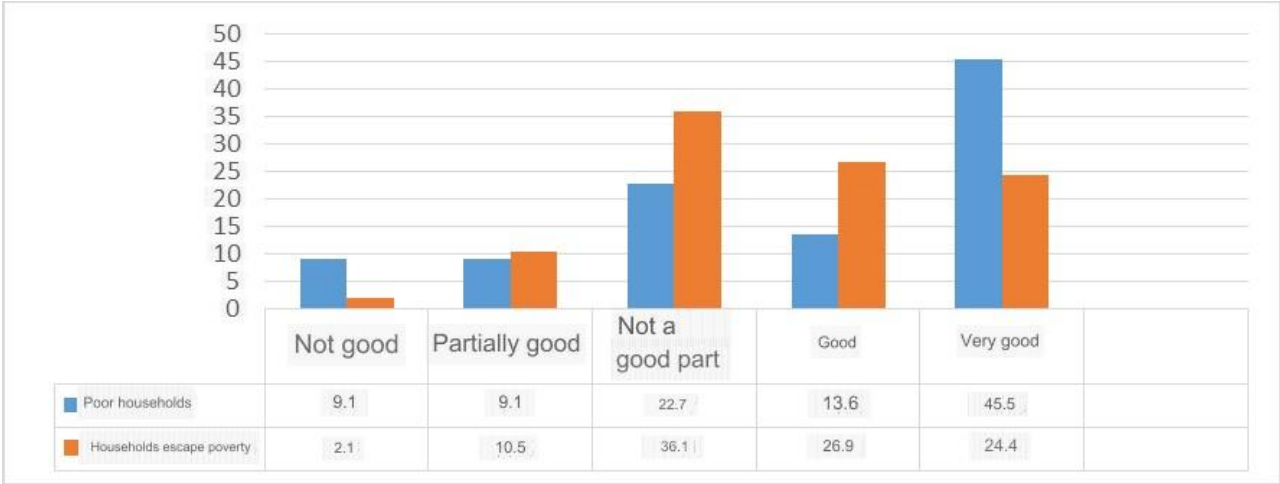


Figure 2. Assessment of health capacity of Dao ethnic households
 Source: Survey results of the project, 2024

More than 50% of respondents from poor households and households escaping poverty said they have *good health* and *are very good* at working. In contrast to this statement, it shows that the health capacity of Dao ethnic households *is not good, partly good*, accounts for a certain percentage, this fact will greatly affect the ability of households to escape poverty because they are not healthy enough to work; households even have to borrow to pay for medical examination and treatment, and must have a labor source to take care of people with poor health.

Figure 2 shows that there are significant differences in the health rate of poor households and households escaping poverty for each ethnic group and between ethnic groups. The group of households escaping poverty has a much smaller rate of poor health than the group of poor households. This confirms the initial hypothesis that illness affects the ability of households to escape poverty. This also supports the qualitative research that the research team collected on groups of poor households. They face great difficulties in health capacity; poor households have not yet escaped poverty and cannot escape poverty because they do not have enough money.

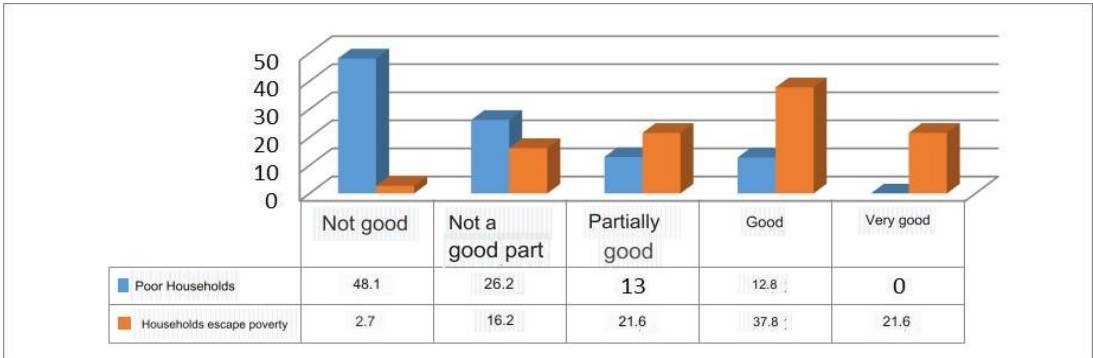


Figure 3. Capital mobilization capacity of Dao ethnic people

Source: Survey results of the project, 2024

Figure 3 shows that the Dao ethnic people's ability to mobilize capital is still limited, especially for the group of poor households, with up to 48.1% saying that households have poor mobilization capacity. Compared to 2.7% of the group of households escaping poverty, compared to the group of households that self-assessed their ability to mobilize capital as good or very good, on the contrary, up to 12.8% of respondents in the group of poor households could raise capital. Capital mobilization capacity is good compared to the group of households escaping poverty, accounting for 37.8%. 21.6% of representatives of households escaping poverty think they have good capital mobilization capacity, while the group of poor households has none. This is a relatively clear difference between the poor group and the group escaping poverty. This fact shows that the poor group needs to boldly access capital sources; this is an important and decisive factor for households to escape poverty.

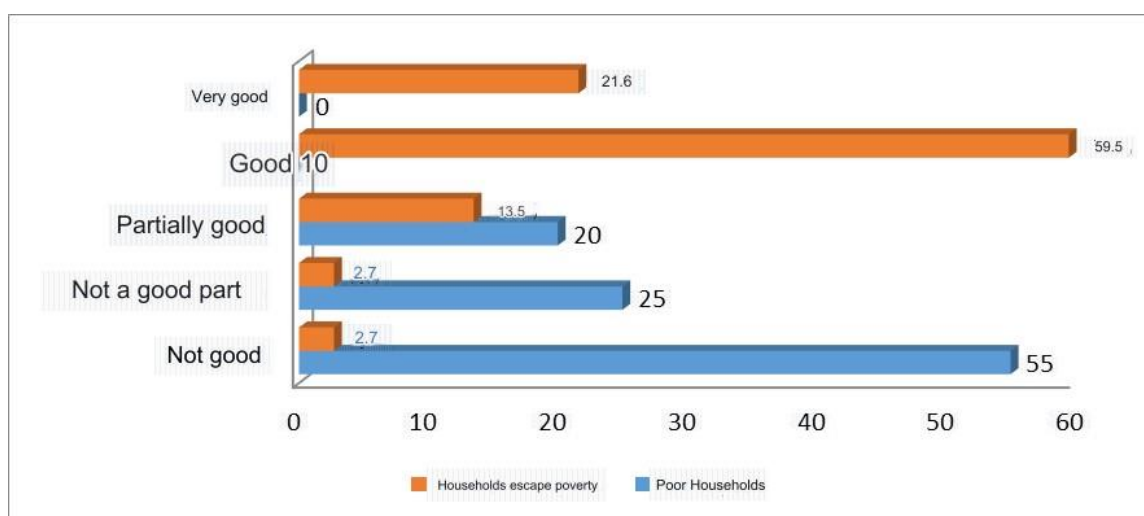


Figure 4. Capital use capacity of Dao ethnic people

Source: Survey results of the project, 2024

Figure 4 shows that in the ability to use capital, there is also a huge difference between the poor household group and the group of households escaping poverty. 0% of poor households compared to 59.5% of households escaping poverty think they can use capital. The ability to use capital is very good for 21.6% of the group escaping poverty, while in the poor group, there are no households that claim to have the ability to use capital very well. The proportion of households that self-assess their ability to use capital is not good, good, and only partly good. Looking for the cause of this current situation shows that the farmers themselves believe that they have no education, limited experience, and skills, and do not know how to do business, leading to not using their capital for the right purpose of economic development to make a profit, to buy a car, build a house, buy household equipment.

A small number of people believe that they have good and very good skills in mobilizing and using capital, which proves that limited socio-demographic factors greatly affect the ability to escape poverty. The proportion of farming households with the ability to mobilize capital and use capital well and very well is a modest proportion. Limited access and use of capital is one of two factors that directly affect the ability of farmers to escape poverty. In a market economy, the intersection of flows of people, goods, services, capital, and information is very

strong, many cultural values, indigenous knowledge, and traditional livelihood models are no longer suitable. On the contrary, new knowledge, new relationships, new consumer culture, and many new livelihood opportunities are introduced. Overcoming challenges and taking advantage of opportunities is a continuous movement process to test, form, spread, maintain, and develop effective practices, in each community.

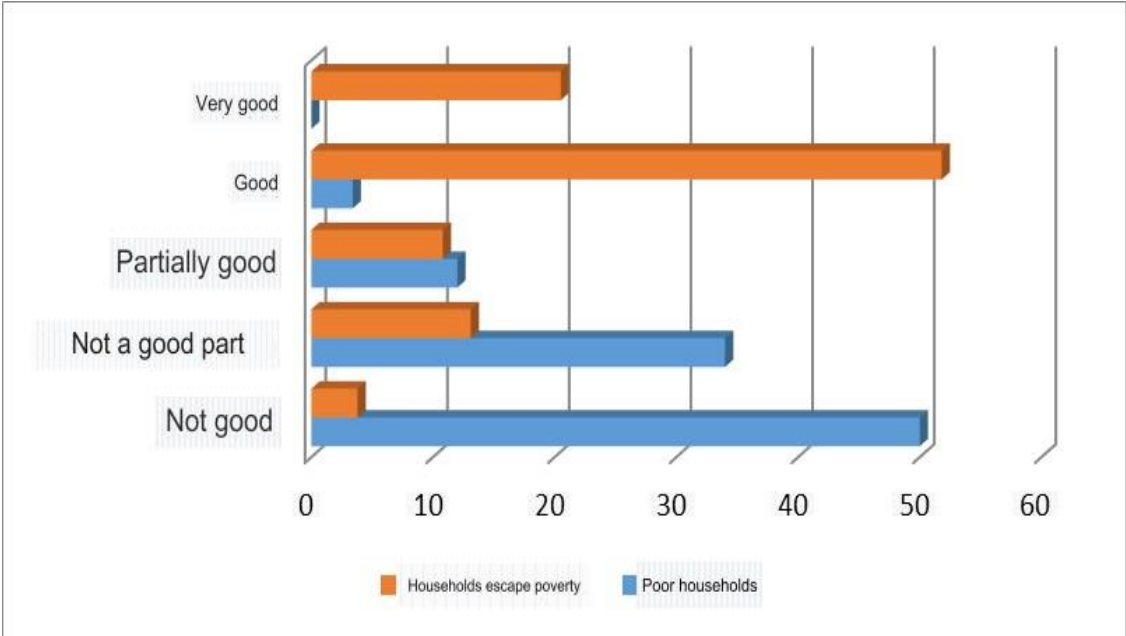


Figure 5. Household's ability to find outside jobs
 Source: Survey results of the project, 2024

Analysis of **Figure 5** shows that the ability of poor households to find jobs outside to escape poverty is more limited than that of households that have escaped poverty. Looking for the causes of these limitations shows that the characteristics of social demographics (education, occupation, and professional skills in production and business) affect the ability and capacity of households.

***Ability to find markets to sell products:**

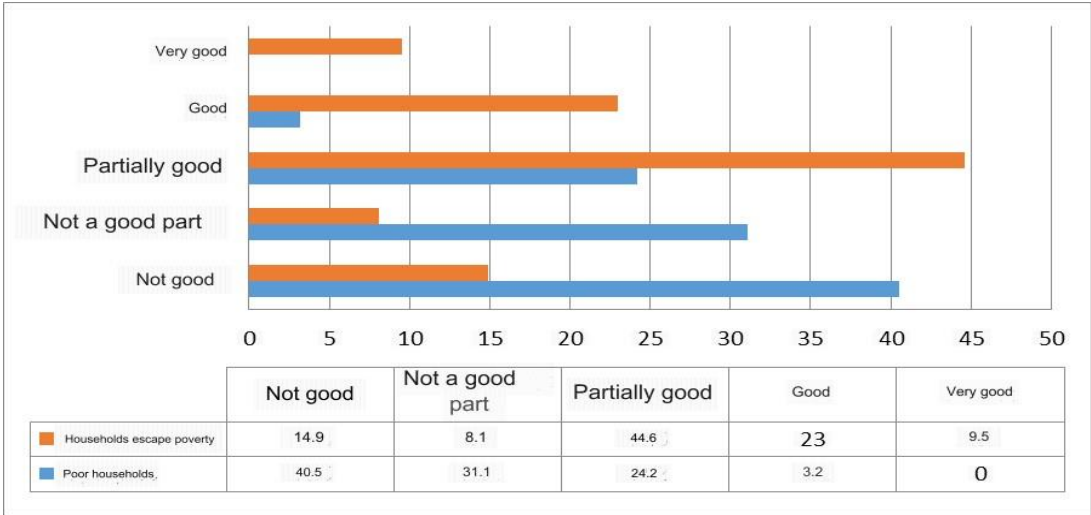


Figure 6. Capacity to find external markets to sell products

Source: Survey results of the project, 2024

In recent years, the issue of purchasing products for ethnic minorities has received a lot of attention from authorities at all levels through supporting the construction and development of mountainous transportation, turning products made by people into commodity products, or encouraging businesses to purchase products in the area for households. However, there is a difference in turning the products of their labor into commodity products for the two groups of households. The poor group of households has more limitations in finding markets to consume their products, this is also a factor. important influence on the household's ability to escape poverty.

Principle of subjectivity in poverty reduction

One of the main reasons why poverty reduction activities in ethnic minority areas in general and Dao ethnic groups, in particular, have not achieved the desired results is that poverty reduction activities have not paid attention to or considered ethnic characteristics. “Want to escape poverty, *We need to have faith in the poor, in their ability to escape poverty* instead of just focusing on the thinking of policymakers or government leaders in poor countries” (Deepa Narayan, Lant Pritchett, and Soumya Kapoor).

For poverty reduction in ethnic minorities to be effective in the context of achieving sustainable development goals, it is necessary to promote the internal resources of the poor; instead of just "giving fish", we need to aim for the principle of giving "fishing rods", and teach how to "fish". Special attention should be paid to improving the capacity of the poor to escape poverty, in addition to improving the capacity to evaluate poverty reduction policies/projects for local officials working on poverty reduction. These are the points that have not been done much and there are still limitations that need to be overcome in the current work of poverty reduction for ethnic minority groups.

Classifying groups of poor ethnic minority households to improve their ability to escape poverty

Among poor ethnic minority households, there are poor groups with different characteristics, which can be divided into 3 groups of poor households as follows:

The first group includes households with people who are elderly, sick, lacking labor, and have no/very little ability to escape poverty (also known as the "Long-term"/chronic poor group). This group accounts for a small proportion of all 6 ethnic minorities in the mountainous areas of Thanh Hoa. Mobilizing support and implementing social security policies is necessary to ensure daily life. In the long term, this group of poor households will be the group of households most unlikely to escape poverty and need to be supported by regular social protection.

The second group includes households with human resources and a need to work, but limited knowledge and skills in farming, animal husbandry, and lack of means of production leading to a lack of jobs. In general, they have a progressive spirit and a desire to learn to escape poverty. This is a group with a high ability to escape poverty. For this group of people, it is necessary to focus on improving "human capital", combined with capital lending, supporting means of production, creating jobs, labor migration, etc. to escape poverty.

The third group includes households that refuse to work, are lazy, do not know how to do business and organize their lives, and are also caught up in social evils, always having the mindset of waiting and relying on policies and programs, and state aid to the poor. For this poor group, it is necessary to propagate and advocate for them to change their thoughts and

perceptions before applying policies to support loans and means of production. Otherwise, the support will not be effective. When supported, people do not know how to do it, or sell it to get money to use, and they are still poor.

Support policies and efforts of the poor themselves to improve their ability to escape poverty

Policies that directly or indirectly support (facilitate) capacity building for households to reduce poverty and escape poverty

Continue to apply effective policies for poor households such as health insurance policies, supporting ethnic minority children to go to school, policies on lending capital for labor export, supporting seedlings, and construction. General social service projects for ethnic minorities. For households that have just escaped poverty, they should continue to benefit from the policies for a while longer, to avoid the risk of falling back into poverty.

Further promote propaganda and awareness-raising work on poverty reduction, especially for poor households in the third group mentioned above. Encourage individuals and households to invest in production and business to escape poverty. Reduce groups of poor households, individuals, and localities that still have the mindset of expecting and relying on the state, and do not want to escape poverty to enjoy mechanisms and policies.

Deploying vocational training projects and programs associated with job creation and improving technical qualifications for workers in the fields of agricultural production, forestry, livestock, farming, exploitation, and processing. Continue to implement Decision No. 1956 of the Prime Minister on vocational training for rural workers in Thanh Hoa province until 2020.

Developing the human capital of ethnic minorities to reduce poverty

For poor people and households, especially in the second group, it is necessary to focus on analyzing 5 sources of capital according to the sustainable livelihood diagram: natural capital, financial capital, social capital, institutional capital, and human capital. For ethnic minorities, human capital is the decisive capital source (and also their weakest link) in poverty reduction. Only by developing this capital will we be able to use opportunities for other capital sources (financial, land, social, physical, institutional).

Need to overcome psychological factors: laziness to study, low self-esteem, fear of hard work, fear of risks. They need to be proactive, explore ways to do business, learn to calculate, study to improve qualifications, gain experience in production, management, and experience tours; boldly develop non-agricultural jobs, services, and small businesses on the spot; changing customs, dependence, gender stereotypes, poverty; approach households and individuals providing services and production materials (such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, etc.) to borrow/buy on credit and repay when harvesting.

Poor households are gathered, learning to improve production and business skills, how to organize business and life, etc., thereby improving the quantity and quality of human capital. Only then can other sources of capital be well exploited to reduce poverty and escape poverty. Encourage participation in training courses to improve knowledge and skills in farming and animal husbandry (consulting in selecting seedlings, how to care for and protect, applying advanced science to the farming process, livestock), improve the quality and quantity of products to meet market needs to be able to consume products and turn production profitable.

Build and replicate poverty reduction models, specialized, intensive, and intercropping production models, and livestock, and poultry farming models for commodity production that the poor can easily access and participate in. Promoting social capital sources to create groups and communities to participate in production, processing, and product consumption, and

between poor households and businesses to receive support for production and investment costs, input, output, and technical transfer to labor.

In terms of policy, there is a need to improve both the quantity and quality of human capital; there needs to be intervention from the state and society: to improve the capacity of the mountainous Dao people in Thanh Hoa; to develop and implement a long-term *program to improve people's knowledge in the Dao community*. This program is interdisciplinary and synchronous and requires executive direction at the highest level of the province; continue to support and encourage Dao ethnic children to go to school for higher secondary education and vocational training. The state has had several policies in this direction. The province needs to set specific goals, create a roadmap, and allocate appropriate funding for implementation. For example, in the next 10 years, they must universalize lower secondary education for all school-age children and vocational training with practice certificates for at least 50% of 16-18-year-olds.

- pilot research on *bilingual teaching* (Mandarin and ethnic languages) for kindergarten and primary school children, to quickly improve the understanding and ability to integrate into society Dao ethnic children.
- increase the duration and quality of mass media programs (television, radio) in ethnic languages to *provide diverse information to the* Dao ethnic people in the province.
- integrate development programs and projects in the province *to increase diversity, duration, and funding for vocational training projects and business administration capacity training for* Dao ethnic people.
- coordinate industries and organizations to *encourage businesses, cooperatives, farm owners, and social organizations to participate in training, sponsoring, and attracting Dao ethnic people* into commodity production chains that bring higher income and improve production and business skills for people.
- promoting the solidarity movement in the community, *households join together to help each other develop*, such as "good households help poor households", "rich households help poor households", and "Kinh households help produce products", exporting and trading, growing crops, raising livestock, etc.
- guide and encourage people *to diversify their employment and* seek opportunities to develop non-agricultural activities, such as handicraft production, combining agricultural production with tourism services in places with good conditions. convenient conditions.
- develop and implement a special plan for *improving economic management and social organization capacity for grassroots staff*.

Discussion

It is possible to learn from the experiences of escaping poverty from poor ethnic minorities in mountainous areas in other places such as the Central Highlands or Northwest, but due to differences in regional, cultural, and ethnic characteristics, studying these characteristics of poor people in ethnic minority areas in Thanh Hoa is an important content.

Assessing the factors that impact the ability of poor ethnic minority households to escape poverty sustainably is very necessary because the proposed solutions need to be derived from our understanding of the problems. In other words, any factor that has a strong and positive impact on the ability of poor households to escape poverty sustainably should be prioritized for investment, and solutions will be sought from there.

In addition to general solutions to support improving the capacity to escape poverty sustainably, there are specific solutions suitable to the economic-social-cultural context of

Thanh Hoa province as well as of poor households in mountainous areas.

Conclusion

Solutions from the state's development policy, including specialized policies for ethnic minorities as well as general development policies of Thanh Hoa province for the development of ethnic minority areas and Mountainous areas have had a particularly profound impact on livelihoods. Still, there has not been a specialized policy dedicated to supporting the improvement of the ability of Dao ethnic households to escape poverty, which is essentially improving the quality of human resources of ethnic minorities. In the province's annual poverty reduction plan, poverty reduction targets are only set for each administrative unit; there are no poverty reduction targets for Dao ethnic households in districts with a large population.

Therefore, in the coming time, it is necessary to continue working on the following issues:

- Mountainous districts need to investigate, inventory, and review achievements in poverty reduction for ethnic minorities in the mountainous areas of Thanh Hoa province.
- carry out effective and targeted support to help poor households, ensuring natural capital is productive land - the most important means of production for farmers.
- continue to promote dharma and put faith in the poor themselves in implementing sustainable poverty reduction programs.
- classifying poor households into 3 groups helps managers provide support appropriate to people's needs and desires, promoting sustainable poverty reduction goals and achieving good results.
- continue direct and indirect poverty reduction support measures that are working well, especially focusing on developing human capital in sustainable poverty reduction for Dao ethnic households in mountainous areas of the province Thanh Hoa.

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