



## Research Article

© 2018 Nguyen Thi Mai Hong and Vu Hong Nhung.  
This is an open access article licensed under the Creative Commons  
Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs License  
(<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>).

# Poverty Reduction Work at Bavi Commune, Bavi District, Hanoi, Vietnam Today – Obtained Results and the Role of Social Workers

Nguyen Thi Mai Hong, PhD.

Vu Hong Nhung, B.A.

Social Work Faculty,  
Hanoi National University of Education,  
Vietnam

Doi: 10.2478/ajis-2018-0058

### Abstract

*The article presents the reality of Poverty Reduction work at Bavi commune, Bavi district, Hanoi city, Vietnam today, obtained results, difficulties, drawbacks and its causes, then, the article claims the essential role and specific strengths of social workers majoring in poverty reduction to enhance the effectiveness of poverty reduction on the basis of sustainable development goals today.*

**Keywords:** *role of social workers, social worker, poverty reduction work*

## 1. Introduction

Poverty is a socio-economic phenomenon permanently appearing and surviving objectively in the development process of any society all over the world. Although poverty grows and survives objectively, it is always a problem which needs solving by the government. Unless solved, the negative consequences of the gap between the rich and the poor will not be dismissed following the potential risk such as ethnicity, class gap, pauperizing a group of people along with social evils.

Any nation in the world has their own methods, approach to solving poverty differently which are suitable to their natural, social, political and economic characteristics. Moreover, every country has various methods to implement hunger eradication and poverty reduction at any stage. For instance, in the 1980s and early 1990s in Vietnam, the government's hunger eradication and poverty reduction work is mostly occasional or abrupt difficulty allowance for poor households in the form of money or assets in near – harvest months or natural disasters. Since 1993 up to now, the government's approach to hunger eradication and poverty reduction has innovated with the motto *Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime*. This approach helps the poor eradicate hunger and reduce poverty by themselves. This leads to a more sustainable environment for hunger eradication and poverty reduction in Vietnam today...

The following methodologies are employed in the study:

Documentary Analysis Method: A systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents – both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material. [9] The analytic procedure entails finding, selecting, appraising (making sense of), and synthesises data contained in documents. Document analyses yield like data, excerpts, quotations, passages that are then organized into major themes, categories, and case examples specifically through content analysis (Labuschagne, 2003). [9] For example, Luigi Cavestro (2003), "P.R.A. - Participatory Rural Appraisal: Concepts Methodologies and Techniques" [5] is an useful handbook published online and paperback for researchers to read or quote sentences, paragraphs as references, supporting

evidences, ideas for their scientific projects, experiments, particularly, an important method in community development in social work addressing poverty in Bavi commune, Bavi district, Hanoi.

Observational Method (i.e. watching what people do): an obvious method of carrying out research and take note in psychology. There are different types of observational methods and distinctions. In general, observation is relatively cheap to carry out and few resources are needed by the researcher. However, they can often be very time to consume and longitudinal. [9] The author uses this method in the thesis to observe the daily life of local people in the poor community, poverty reduction programs implemented at Bavi commune, then, suggest some solutions for current problems faced by poor people here, Bavi commune, Bavi district, Hanoi.

Focused Group Discussion (FGD): a good way to gather together people from similar backgrounds or experiences to discuss a specific topic of interest. The group of participants is guided by a moderator (or group facilitator) who introduces topics for discussion and helps the group to participate in a lively and natural discussion amongst themselves. The strength of FGD relies on allowing the participants to agree or disagree with each other so that it provides an insight into how a group thinks about an issue, about the range of opinion and ideas, and the inconsistencies and variation that exists in a particular community in terms of beliefs and their experiences and practices.

Among the above three methods, FGDs can be used to explore the meanings of survey findings that cannot be explained statistically, the range of opinions/views on a topic of interest and to collect a wide variety of local terms. In bridging research and policy, FGD can be useful in providing an insight into different opinions among different parties involved in the change process, thus enabling the process to be managed more smoothly. It is also a good method to employ prior to designing questionnaires. [9] In the community development project proposed in the thesis, there is a step before conducting the project plan which is evaluating the need of local people at Bavi commune, Bavi district, Hanoi so that group discussion plays an essential role in the process of recommending this project to local authorities, residents for the agreement to reduce poverty at this commune.

## 2. Results and Discussions

### 2.1 *The reality of implementing poverty reduction policies in multi-dimensional approach at Bavi commune, Bavi district, Hanoi today*

Methods for hunger eradication and poverty reduction in countries are different up to causes of hunger and poverty, opinions, potential economic investment for hunger eradication and poverty reduction. However, according to all nations, hunger eradication and poverty reduction include activities to support basic conditions for the poor's lives. Therefore, it can be summarized: Hunger eradication and poverty reduction is an overall direct or indirect activities at the aim of supporting basic needs (food, clothes, home, transport, studies, medication, sociocultural approach...) for the poor to survive, develop and gradually gain average living standard like other members in society.

#### 2.1.1 *The content of some poverty reduction policies implemented at Bavi commune, Bavi district, Hanoi, Vietnam*

According to Resolution No. 59/2015/TW on 19 November 2015, the Prime Minister promulgated the poverty line in multi-dimensional approach, applied during 2016 – 2020, contains main contents below:

- Income criteria: the poverty line is 700,000 Vietnam Dong (VND) per capita per month in rural areas and 900,000 VND per capita per month in urban areas; the next-to-poverty line is 1,000,000 VND per capita per month in rural areas and 1,300,000 VND per capita per month in urban areas.
- Criteria for levels of fundamental social services approach shortage:
  - + Fundamental social services (5 services): health, education, residence, clean water and hygiene, and information;

- + Measure index for levels of fundamental social services approach shortage (10 indicators): health service approach, health insurance, education level, school attendance status of children, housing quality, housing area per capita, drinking water, hygienic toilet, telecommunications services usage, and assets served for information access.

The standard of poor households, next-to-poor households, and average households applied during 2016 – 2020

- Poor households: in rural areas, households have income from above 1 million VND to 1.5 million VND per month (GPA); in urban areas, households have income from above 1.3 million dong to 1.95 million dong per month (GPA);
- Next-to-poor households: in rural areas, households have income from above 700,000 to 1 million VND per month (GPA) and lack of 3 measure indexes for levels of fundamental social services approach shortage; in urban areas, households have income from above 900,000 VND to 1.3 million VND per month (GPA) and lack of 3 measure indexes for levels of fundamental social services approach shortage;
- Average households: in rural areas, households have income from above 1 million to 1.5 million VND per month (GPA); in urban areas, households have income from above 1.3 million VND to 1.95 million VND per month (GPA).

### 2.1.2 Significance of poverty reduction policies

As a result of the above policies, poverty line in multi-dimensional approach has a significant meaning to hunger eradication and poverty reduction as follows:

Firstly, poverty standard level regulated at the mentioned Resolution is a basis to measure and supervise level of income shortage and basic social services approach of people; specify objectives to implement poverty reduction policies and social security; plan other socio – economic policies during 2016 – 2020.

Secondly, content of said Resolution also regulates the responsibility of Ministries, related departments: on the basis of universal basic social services approach shortage and each locality, propose to the State, the Prime Minister solutions to effect on programmes, particular and usual policies so as to enhance the capability of basic social services approach of people, especially low-approach-rated regions.

Last but not least, the Resolution contributes to propagating to enhance the cognition of governmental levels, people about the purpose, meaning of transforming single - dimensional poverty approach methods into multi-dimensional one; commanding to investigate to determine, classify objectives benefiting from annual poverty reduction policies; commanding to build database to take charge of poor households, next-to-poor households during 2016 – 2020 in localities; researching, implementing solutions to enhance the capability of basic social services approach of people in localities; supplementing into insufficient dimensions/index, adjusting measure level of insufficient index, applying multi-dimensional poverty measure approach methods adequately, raising income poverty line higher than nation's in the condition of self-balancing local budget based on law to support policies for the poor, the next-to-poor in locality owing to adjusting, raising poverty line, following conditions and real ability of each locality.

Hence, social workers have to comprehend path, undertakings, hunger eradication and poverty reduction in general, poverty line in multi-dimensional approach applied during 2016 – 2020 as a meaningful and practical way to bring hunger eradication and poverty reduction policies of the Party, the State of Vietnam into life.

### 2.2 The context of the study

Located 80 kilometers far from the center of capital Hanoi on the west, Bavi is the poorest mountainous commune of Bavi district in particular and capital Hanoi in general, where 98% of local people are from Dao ethnic minority. There are 505 households, 2230 people, 12.5 million VND per year per capita (GPA in 2016); the poor households rate is 37.4%, and the next-to-poor households

rate is 18.6%. However, as a mountainous commune far from the center, farming customs of local people still depend on natural weathers, especially due to lack of production land, jobs; projects used to support for promoting development in Programme 135 of the government have not been accessed by locals. Compared to the district and the city's general background, Bavi is still a poor commune. According to labor supply survey data in 2017, Bavi commune has 2236 people; among which, 1369 people are in labor age, 601 people are trained laborers including trainees with and without diplomas, taking up 43.9%. The laborers having frequent jobs are 410 (accounting for 29.9%).

Based on survey and review results of poor households, next-to-poor households in 2017, the statistics of poor households, next-to-poor households in Bavi commune are:

- Total household number: 505 households;
- Poor households: 189 households (37.4%);
- Next-to-poor households: 94 households (18.6%).

Resolution No. 12/QĐ-UBND on 13 April 2016 of the People's Committee of Hanoi promulgated the standard of a poor household, next-to-poor household and households with average living standard in multi-dimensional approach in Hanoi during 2016 – 2020. According to the Resolution, the following strategies are employed in the poverty reduction plan during the first 6 months of 2017:

- Preferential credit policy;
- Supporting education for poor households policy;
- Supporting electric bills for poor households policy;
- Supporting water for poor households policy;
- Supporting housing policy;
- Specific supporting policy.

The number of poor households in the beginning of 2017 was 189 (37.4%); as a result of the above strategies, this number at the end of 2017 was 145 (28.7%). The net reduction was 44 households, which achieved 88% of the proposed plan.

During the execution of said strategies, there were a number of advantages as follows:

- Care, support for the investment of multi-leveled government, a direct command from the Party, the People's Council, the People's Committee, active participation of Departments in Bavi commune;
- Policy propagation, promulgation of the Party, the State in general and poverty reduction in particular are undertaken in time adequately;
- Basic facilities are guaranteed for economic development;
- Law policy of the State about poverty reduction support such as direct support policy, credit policy, occupational training, home, electricity, drinking water, health, education, tax waiver, legal aid are commanded to implement timely, guarantee full quantity, exact beneficiaries and no loss or misappropriation in process of implementing policies;
- Basically achieved poverty reduction targets Bavi commune demanded.

Nevertheless, the following difficulties were also encountered:

- Bavi commune has the highest rate of poor households in Bavi district and Hanoi city;
- The rate of trained labor is low, unemployment is high;
- Programme 135: Bavi has been recognized as an extremely disabled commune since September 2013, facility investment support is undertaken by city capital via Plan 166. Main categories like traffic roads, community houses, drinking water, health stations, schools have been built and used. Though, the Component manufacture development support (concretely Resolution 5532 and Plan 138 in Hanoi city) has not been implemented yet. In addition to investing in infrastructure, most importantly supporting residents in farming productivity. Basically, the economic condition of Bavi is still low;
- Bavi has some advantages in climate, traditional culture, a vast majority of labor in working age, livestock and poultry farming, especially Vietnamese herbal medicines (*nghe thuoc nam*). However, as a poor commune, communal resources are still restricted so that those strengths have not been used effectively. The economic value of *nghe thuoc nam* has not been equal to many potentials. Travel in the community has not been developed.

Causes to the above difficulties are detailed as follows:

- Lack of land for farming: there are only 18 ha (1.8 kilometers squared) for agriculture;
- Education level is different, applying sciences and technology in cultivation and farming is still limited, not professional;
- Many individuals and households are not yet aware of getting rid of poverty by themselves, still wait to depend on the State support. They are not active in finding ways to have better life by working;
- A Project supporting economic development for Dao ethnic minority at Bavi commune in Resolution 5532 and Plan 138 of Hanoi city has not been implemented;
- As a poor commune, resources for poverty reduction at Bavi commune mostly come from Bavi district, Hanoi, the government's budget. Connecting and raising socialized resources for poverty reduction at Bavi commune is still under restriction;
- In management, commands from upper levels are still confusing sometimes.

Despite the difficulties, given the existing results, two main goals are set for the poverty reduction policies in the following year of 2018:

- Promote socio-economic development, improving gradually material and spiritual life of poor households, next-to-poor households. Increase the ability to approach and benefit from basic social services of local people in general, poor and next-to-poor households in particular;
- Strive to reduce 50 poor households in 2018, equally to the poor household rate 18.8%.

In order to successfully attain such goals, the below solutions are proposed, including general solutions, as well as social work solutions:

- Continue promoting communications, propagation for undertakings, policies of the Party, the State about poverty reduction, enhance the ability to access information and law awareness of the poor;
- Continue requesting Hanoi to promote the progress of undertaking the project supporting the productivity for ethnic Dao group at Bavi commune;
- Continue collaborating closely with Social Policy Bank at Bavi district in supporting poor households, next-to-poor households to approach low interest rate capital to increase productivity;
- Collaborate with Department of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs in Bavi district to open occupational training classes for all labors at Bavi commune in 2017.

### *2.3 The role of social workers in enhancing the effectiveness of implementing poverty reduction work at Bavi commune, Bavi district, Hanoi today*

#### *2.3.1 Social work, social workers take charge of poverty reduction work in general*

Social workers are professionally trained about social work. In occupational practice, they use working knowledge, skills at the level of individuals, families and communities in order to change attitude, cognition, promote capacity for each individual, family and community to be able to solve problems themselves. Social workers have to guarantee right – based approach method, focus on the client as the center, enhance capacity and empower, promote social changes, create equality for all objects.

To work with poor families, social workers perform the following tasks:

- Provide specific social services: introduce different activities such as giving advice, counseling, guide how to do business, develop household economy, organize recreational and cultural activities, support to connect with health care services, studies and other social services appropriate to ones' needs, equip them with skills so that they can use resources effectively;
- Connecting services: Social workers coordinate with their organizations, collaborate with other supporting resources to mobilize resources, connect (human resources, material resources, labor resources) in and out of the community to implement social welfare policies to meet the needs of the poor, poor households, address clients' matters;

- Education: Build belief in life, social workers directly educate poor people involved in social evils or having an attitude in accepting fate, lose faith, lacking of willingness to overcome difficulties; enhance the capacity for community-related staff, members of poor families to solve arising problems themselves, overcome difficult situation via communications at family groups and poor communities;
- Advocate policy: Social workers working with the poor must comprehend and update policies, the law in the aspect of poverty reduction timely together with the poor, their representatives, poor households ask organizations, units implement proper rights fully and legally in order to guarantee clients' rights;
- Support psychology: Together with individuals solve psychological, social, relationship affairs to help members recover and complete their functions well, support psychological recovery;
- Advise individuals and groups: help clients become independent and capable of self-deciding, suggest different solutions for them to consider, select ones to suitable to their problems or make right decisions in solving their own problems;
- Case management: work with poor households in many difficulties needing long-term support to escape from poverty. In this method, case managers will focus on coordinating, supporting connect resources to meet the needs, solve problems for families;
- Support enhance the capacity for poor communities: As social workers, they detect positive factors and invent innovative ideas enhance the capacity of local people by equipping them with the necessary knowledge, skills whenever working with the community, how to attract their participation in need such as verified activities, build plans and supervise activities of the community. Thus, community capacity is improved leading to a sustainably developed community.

### *2.3.2 Social workers and the role of social workers in enhancing the effectiveness of implementing poverty reduction work at Bavi commune, Bavi district, Hanoi today*

First and foremost, in the communications and policy propagation, it ought to be stressed that communications always plays a vital role in the social movement. Especially in social work, communications is a means of enhancing, increasing, preventing... difficulties that clients have to deal with. Propagating social policy for students is one of the most important roles of social workers for efficient work.

Secondly, regarding connecting and introducing services, social workers advise and provide juridical-related information, health care, nutrition, social interaction. Moreover, social workers advise and provide information about law, policy, projects, service models available at localities and upper levels. Social workers establish connecting network includes individuals, organizations supplying social services, social protection institutions, counselling, advisory centers, projects; NGOs in and out of Vietnam, official and unofficial social organizations...

One other important role of social workers comes from their ability to give exactly necessary and qualitative services to the clients whenever evaluation and supervision for services are needed. Social workers need to connect to know who already receive services, which service they could receive, who has not received those. Social workers is the bridge between clients and services. As a result, social workers know better than anyone else about who need services, how they need those services and for whom social workers provide services. Therefore, connection in network and communications will help prevent social workers from overlap in supply. Social workers need to store files about resources in the community to supervise their service supply as well as evaluate the process of service supply and adjust service supply for the right place.

School social workers also play the role in raising resources in clients, the living environment around clients to promote most of available and helpful conditions in their practices at school. Besides, raising related resources could support to solve clients' problems. Resources are evaluated as internal resources and external resources around clients to promote connection, the relationship between individuals, groups and related organizations.

Finally, social workers also help in counselling, advising, defending, and reviewing policy.

Counselling, advising help clients and their family have stable psychology; then, support them to find solutions for problems thoroughly. During professional practices at school, School social workers have to advise students, family and teachers, school managers, classmates to find how to support clients to solve their problems thoroughly.

### 3. Conclusions

The paper has explored the poverty reduction work at Bavi commune, Bavi district, Hanoi, Vietnam in its context, the employed policies, obtained results of their implementation, as well as future proposals of goals and improvements. The role of social workers has also been discussed in details, together with their potential roles in contributing towards the success of poverty reduction policies at Bavi commune.

### References

- Bergeron, R. (1995). *Against the development of liberalism's price*. Hanoi, Vietnam: National Politics Publishing House.
- Nguyen, T. M. H. (1998). Some cognitions about the gap between the rich and the poor & development. *The Journal of Theoretical Research*, 2, 39-41.
- Nguyen, T. M. H. (1999). The problems of industrialization and modernization of the agriculture and rural areas, in relationship with the problems of hunger eradication and poverty reduction in Vietnam today. *Hanoi National University of Education's Scientific Announcement*, 11, 142-151.
- Nguyen, T. M. H. (2000). Some experiences drawn from the process of solving the problem of differentiation into the rich and the poor in our country in recent years. *Hanoi National University of Education's Scientific Announcement*, 2, 92-98.
- Nguyen, T. M. H. (2016). Multiway exposed poverty standard in Vietnam today in the perspective of cultural diversity. *Journal of Science, Hanoi National University of Education*, 61(2A), 35-43.
- Nguyen, T. M. H. (2016). Developing the effectiveness of implementing education policy in high schools in Vietnam today- the reality and role of school social workers. *Journal of Science, Hanoi National University of Education*, 61(8), 166-173.
- Nguyen, T. M. H., & Vu, H. N. (2017). Role of school social worker in relationship with families, communities and schools system in Vietnam nowadays. *Journal of Science, Hanoi National University of Education*, 62(4), 174-182.
- Nguyen, T. T. (2008). *Gender mainstreaming method in poverty reduction in Vietnam*. Hanoi, Vietnam: Publishing House of Labor and Social Affairs.
- The People's Committee of Bavi Commune (2017, December 07). *Report: Poverty Reduction Work at Bavi Commune in 2017 – Directions, Missions in 2018*. Hanoi, Vietnam.
- The People's Committee of Hanoi (2016, April 13). *Issuance of the poverty line, next-to-poverty line, and middle-income line with multi-dimensional approach of Hanoi in the period of 2016 – 2020*, Resolution No. 12/2016/QĐ-UBND. Hanoi, Vietnam.
- Vietnam Prime Minister (2015, November 19). *Issuance of the poverty line with multi-dimensional approach*, Resolution No. 59/2015/QĐ-TTg. Hanoi, Vietnam.