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Social and Cultural Development in the Development Triangle (CLV) and the Role of ASEAN in This Area

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Abstract

In a period not longer than 10 years (2002 - to present), 13 provinces at the common border of Cambodia-Laos-Vietnam (CLV Development Triangle) have cooperated for common development and achieved a lot of successes in the socio-economic field. At present, the socio-cultural field is being preferably promoted for development, aimed at integration and sustainable development. This success is not only due to efforts of the three countries and local authorities but also contributions of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in backing, supporting the development of the Triangle. Achievements in social development of the Triangle area are expressed through education and training, health, labour-employment, hunger elimination and poverty reduction and culture. Whereby, we can see successes and limitations, opportunities and challenges of the development process as well as consider and orient development of the whole area in the near future. This paper mentions to social and cultural development in the Development Triangle (CLV) and the Role of ASEAN in this Area.

Biography

Ms HOANG Thi My Nhi was born in 1981 in Hue city, Vietnam. She graduated with a Bachelor's Degree from Hue University (2004) and a Master's Degree from Vietnam National University, Hanoi (2008). She is now a PhD Candidate in Vietnam National University, Hanoi. She is also a researcher in the Institute of Southeast Asia Studies (ISAS), Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences (VASS). She has worked for the Center for ASEAN and Japan Studies (CAJS) in Vietnam. Ms HOANG is a collaborator for the Southeast Asian Journal and Northeast Asian Journal. Her research focuses on social and cultural development in three Indochina countries, especially in the CLV Development Triangle. She is also interested in studying the relationship between ASEAN and Japan, the history of Vietnam-Japan relationship, Japanese literature and culture. She was awarded a research scholarship in the Department of Japanese studies, National University of Singapore in 2011 and was a junior fellow of the ASEAN-Canada Research Partnership 2012–2013.

Viewpoint, Goal and Development Orientation of the Development Triangle

In the new global context, cooperation in general development of society and culture between and among countries has become essential. From history to present, three Indochinese countries have co-operated in national protection, construction and selected development fields and integration way with the goal of rapid escape from poverty and backwardness, building prosperous countries in peace, prosperity for peoples and the region. Therefore, initiatives in high-level meeting between the Prime Ministers of three CLV countries, held in Viangchan in October 1999 by the Cambodia Prime Minister Hun Sen, about the establishment of the Development Triangle Region (Development Triangle) which received positive response of leaders of Vietnam and Laos. The Development Triangle cooperation is considered as a necessary choice and sufficient basis for three countries to realize development initiatives of each country as well as of all the three countries, especially the area with rich in potential but facing with difficult social factors. In 2004, the governments of three countries declared to establish the Cambodia-Laos-Vietnam Development Triangle Area (CLV-DTA). It is comprised of ten provinces. The area is including East Northern Cambodia, Northern Laos and Central Highlands of Vietnam. At a meeting of Joint Coordination Committee of the three countries of CLV-DTA, held in December 2009, the three countries decided to add three provinces (Kratie of Cambodia, Champasack of Laos and BinhPhuoc of Vietnam) to the CLV-DTA. The purpose of building the Development Triangle is in order to have economic growth, reduce poverty and promote cultural and social progress in the region on the basis of bringing into play the potential and advantages of each country, simultaneously contributing activities for peace, consolidation, stability, integration and development.

Development is a principle of life, inevitable principle of evolution which is and has happened in our planet since it was established. Development is a philosophical category which indicates nature of changes happening in the world. "Development is an attribute of material and it means that anything, phenomenon, system as well as the whole world in general not only changes but also switches to new states"[1]. Therefore "society development" is the simultaneous development of aspects belonging to various fields of life (economic, politics, education, culture, health, environment, security, national defense and international integration) to ensure comprehensive development for human and sustainable for society. In this paper, the author mentions development of cultural and social fields only, which is understood as a process of improving human's life conditions through improving social relations, increasing life quality both materially and spiritually. Hence, unlike old concept of "economic man", society development in recent time considers cultural and social factors as the content of development, which is shown in various extents in three criteria: sustainable development (human and environment), life quality and cultural character in society development. Besides that, referring to "Millennium announcement" of the United Nations 2000, cultural and social development is backbone of a developed society. Obviously, economic growth isn't the single decisive factor to ensure human life quality but it also depends on social regime, society organization and management way, cultural and moral foundation of a society.

Today, social development is more concerned in sustainable development concept. According to Brundtland report, sustainable development is the development to satisfy current demands but not to harm ability to meet demands of future generations. This issue is much mentioned by leaders in meetings of coordination committee, especially action plan in 2004 well defines the regional development goal is to forward to a sustainable society in accordance with general tendency of the world and to give a general orientation for development of the region: fast, effective and sustainable development, economic growth combined with implementation of social progress, society equality and environmental protection. In which, sustainable development is a basis for fast development; fast development creates resources for sustainable development. From there, it's required to

prioritize education development, human resource quality and science-technology improvement as key motive power of the development process for fast and sustainable society development. In addition, it's required to develop culture comprehensively, well solve relations between economy and culture in order that culture is really spiritual foundation of the society, driving force of socio-economic development and international integration. Furthermore, effectively implement social progress and society equality, ensure social security, well solve labour policy and employment and step by step improve, increase income, eliminate hunger and reduce poverty sustainably and increase people health care quality as well life environment.

Social and Cultural Development in the CLV Development Triangle

Improving education and training system and enhancing people's cultural standard

At present, with priority to education in remote areas of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, Development Triangle has been provided with support and preference. Therefore, in the last few years, Development Triangle's education system has been further improved than before. Implementing the Education Strategic Plan (2009-2013) and forwarding to the goal in 2015 that Cambodia Northeaster provinces have undergone comprehensive development of education system from primary education to high school education, vocational training schools are distributed evenly from districts to communes and villages. Teachers including ethnic minority group teachers are trained methodically in Phnompenh pedagogic universities, Especially, Central pedagogic school is located in Stung treng, there is boarding school for ethnic minority group people in Bang lung city, and private schools are also established. Currently, there are also schools training English or French for pupils from primary level. In addition, there has been an ethnic minority group development center in Mondul Kiri province to provide vocational training for juniors of ethnic minority groups in the area. Community educational centers (90%) have been established to enhance awareness of the people.

Although there has been much more progress in results of education and training activities in the past years, these results are still lower than those of other provinces in the whole country. Literacy rate in adults in the area is still low (60.5% compared to 73.9% nationwide) in which, Kratie province has the highest rate of 73.74%, the lowest rate belongs to Rattanak Kiri at 45.9 %. This is the lowest rate in the area and in the whole country)[2]; actual schooling rate of primary schools is low (88% (in 2009); the nationwide schooling rate was 94.4% in 2008 and 95.9% in 2010); finishing rate from class 1 to class 5 at primary schools in the area is low (52%, the nationwide rate was 69.4% in 2008); primary school graduation rate of the area is 58% while the nationwide rate is 83%. Education infrastructure such as schools and education tools are deficient and downgraded. There are over 50% schools in the area with substandard floor, roof and wall [3], over 85% schools without water closet for pupils who are mainly from rural and remote areas. Besides the provinces lack vocational training schools and short-term training courses, thus providing on-site human resources is still limited.

In the past years, Laos's government has classified investment policy, paid attention to education in remote areas and attained considerable results. Here, there is sufficient education system from nursery schools to high schools, junior high schools and vocational training schools. Schooling rate at stipulated age attains at 80% (2011 – 2012). Average graduation rate of primary schools is 58% (2009) and is still kept over 58% (2011-2012). 91.9% (2011-2012) pupils graduating primary schools continue study at junior high schools. There are 175 junior high schools; average junior high school graduation is 70.6 %. There are 60 senior high schools; average senior high school graduation is 70.6 %. For vocational training, there is 1 university, 11 technical and vocational training schools. However, provinces of Laos haven't had any pedagogic school to train teachers on the spot. Illiteracy

rate at the age of 15-40 was 83% (2009). Currently, the number of illiterate people is reduced to over 25,500 people (2012) compared to 2005-2006 (27,232 people) [3]; literacy rate at the age of 15-24 attains at 66.5% [4]. Until 2011-2012 school years, the education situation was a bit better. Thus, the most difficult issue in Northeast Cambodia and Laos provinces is that education quality is low, primary education can't be popularized, re-illiteracy rate is very high, university, college education and vocational training are still few, even there is no standard schools, gifted school. The question is how to increase ability to approach primary education and high school education for pupils and develop human resources at vocational training colleges.

For provinces in Vietnam, education-training system development situation is better in term of infrastructure as well as education quality. Pre-school education is improved relatively clearly such as: number of schools increases from 742 schools in (2009) to 814 schools in (2011), number of classes also increases from 7019 classes in (2009) to 7954 classes in (2011) to high increase in schooling rate and graduation rate at primary education, decrease in number of children leaving school, elimination of thatched, bamboo, neohouzeaua classes. Until now 98% primary schools and junior high schools have been popularized with junior high school graduation rate of over 98%[3]. Complementary classes for elimination of literacy are developed in villages, over 90% villages build cultural house as community educational place. Development of boarding ethnic minority schools for children of ethnic minority groups is interested, so number of ethnic group pupils at 3 education levels increases from 377291 (in 2009) pupils to 384732(until 2012) pupils [5]. Education quality of provinces is also higher than before, general education graduation rate increases from 77.8% (2009) to 98.7% (2012); number of high schools at 3 levels considerably increases from 1914 schools in 2009 to 2063 schools in 2012; there is also a high increase in students of colleges, universities from 21195 students (2009) to 22477 students (2012). Education socialization is also expanded through non-public schools system mainly for senior high school level. The noticeable thing is that provinces in Vietnam have developed university, college education system in DakLak, GiaLai, KonTum, trained a lot of fields such as agriculture and forestry, medicine, culture-arts. Furthermore, there is continuing education center and vocational training center in each province. With high effort and determination to make people in highland village literate, in recent years literacy rate at the age of over 15 in provinces is relatively high, increasing from 88.22%(2009) to 91.42% (2012) while the nationwide rate attain at 94.7% (2012) [5]. In the coming years, it's required to further develop education to improve infrastructure, quality for pre-schools and high schools; consolidate and develop boarding ethnic minority high schools; expand scale and diversify careers.

With better development in education, training, bringing into full play provinces' strengths, the Vietnamese side has helped other provinces of Cambodia and Laos to perfect education system such as: establishing vocational training schools system in Sekong province (Laos), Ratana Kiri and Mondul Kiri provinces (Cambodia). GiaLai province invests Attapeu province (Laos) with a 8-class primary school, Rattanakiri province (Cambodia) with BangLung boarding ethnic minority school. DakNong province has invested a vocational training high school at Senmonorum town, Mondul Kiri province. DakLak province has finished building hostels for students of Cambodia and Laos at Western Highlands University. Annually, many Vietnamese teachers are assigned to voluntarily teach in border provinces of Laos. GiaLai province will train for Laos 20 pupils 02 years [6] Furthermore, Triangle has invested for Champasak province to become an educational center of the area to affiliate with Vietnam and Cambodia in order to jointly develop training and education.

Therefore, education and training development in Development Triangle has been more considerably improved than before but it is lower when compared to each country and the Southeast Asia region. The reasons may be weak infrastructure because the area is mainly high mountains, population is sparse, economic life is poor, there is variety of ethnic people

groups, culture in the area, there is lack of teaching facilities, teachers are both deficient and weak in profession, awareness of education role at parents is limited. Therefore, to obtain the education goal in 2015, the Development Triangle should have strategic policies to further develop education to train human resources in order to meet integration, industrialization and modernization of the region.

Developing and improving human health care quality

In the past years, the local government combined with each country has promulgated and implemented policies for human health care, especially poor people in remote areas and ethnic minority groups in Development Triangle. In general, the policies may be divided into three groups: Solving health issues for people; strengthening ability to provide basic medical service; reduce health care expenses burden. Therefore, the medical network of the provinces has been expanded, strengthened and upgraded; medical quality has been more and more increased. However, medical current situation of the Triangle is in low level, in alarming level for some places.

In provinces belonging to Cambodia, medical system is still limited with diseases diagnosis and treatment facilities covering from communal level to provincial level at over 65%. Medical quality is still low; especially Rattana Kiri and Mondul Kiri are the two provinces with the lowest medical quality in the area and in the whole country. Each province has only one provincial hospital, 6 specialists. The hospitals haven't met the people's demand for diagnosing and treating diseases. In fact, a patient with broken arm must go to a hospital in provinces of Vietnam to treat. More serious diseases are too. Mother and children health care hasn't been concerned. The average death rate in mothers is relatively high at 960/100,000 cases, twice the nationwide rate. Death rate in newborn babies is 142 while the nationwide rate is 60 only (Mondul Kiri has the highest rate with 230 cases). Over 80% children below the age of five die of infectious diseases and parasite [3]. Health insurance system hasn't been deployed in these areas of Cambodia, especially for children. Poor people must suffer costly expenses to diagnose and treat diseases while medical facilities are distant, population is scattered, traffic is difficult, people's bad awareness as well shortage of clean water and domestic water also leads to serious diseases. Therefore, average life expectancy of provinces in the area only attains 50, much lower than that of the whole country (62). One arisen issue is that when the society is more developed, the roads are easier to travel; there are more serious traffic accidents, new epidemic diseases such as HIV/AIDS, H5N1, and H7N9 that the provincial hospitals can't cope with because qualifications of doctors and infrastructure are limited.

For provinces of Laos, health care system is better. Medical service network covers from provinces to districts, communes, villages (occupying 74.54% with 2.6% medical facilities meeting model). Provincial hospitals have modern equipment (4 provincial hospitals), experienced doctors (2.143 medical cadres (166 doctors, 21 masters), on average 1 doctor / 555 people. Diagnosing and treating diseases are clearly defined, medical stations only treat some basic diseases, and many district hospitals can't treat serious diseases or carry out surgery. In each village, there is a team of volunteers and first-aid medicine cabinet (1250 villages) and there is circulation medicine fund at levels (1188 funds). Number of medical cadres working at communal and village level only occupy 15.2% total medical cadres of the whole area, so it's not enough to meet demand of the people, mainly remote areas and ethnic minority groups. At present, medical insurance system has appeared here but it's still not popular but mainly for state cadres and a small number of the people. Insurance hasn't had good effect on majority of poor people, whose health is the most vulnerable. Although the system has been considerably improved but it hasn't met standard on diagnosing and treating diseases of the country and demand of the local people. In which, Champasak province has good diseases diagnosis and treatment facilities above all other. Here, there is a good provincial hospital, a medical university, a medicine manufacturing plant to meet on-

site demand of the people. In general, the medical system in provinces of Laos has been much socialized especially by contribution of foreign enterprises including the Vietnamese side. As a result, the medical situation is going up through human resources development, equipment allocation and information propagation.

Compared to provinces of Laos and Cambodia, provinces of Vietnam have much better health care system. As for provinces belonging to Western Highlands, 100% medical stations at communes, wards, towns have pediatric physicians or midwives and among 80% the communes, wards, towns have doctors to contribute to good implementation of initial health care for ethnic groups in the area. Over 66% the communes, wards meet national standard on medicine. In general, there was quick development in the period of 2009 to 2012 in the whole area: medical facilities: 769-777, sickbeds: 10047-12180, doctors: 2473-2680 [5]. Therefore, coverage of the medical system in the whole area is 92.9%. Newborn death rate decreases to 26%, nutritional deficiency rate also slightly reduces to 28% [3]. Although there has been investment for quick development both in quality as well as quantity of the medical system, the medical network is still deficient and weak in remote areas and can't meet the people's demand for diagnosing and treating diseases on the spot.

In general, health care in provinces of Development Triangle hasn't kept up with development speed of the society, especially in provinces of Cambodia. For provinces belonging to Vietnam and Laos, although there is quick development, it's still insufficient in providing medical service to the people. Uneven economic development between areas, regions has increased inequality in approaching and enjoying social service. One of the services is health care service that ethnic minority groups have big demand. Medical infrastructure, equipment in this area is short and asynchronous; there is still serious shortage of number of cadres with high skill, especially local cadres; there have been inadequacies in training, developing medical human resources. Preventing diseases hasn't met requirement because the awareness in compatriots of various ethnic origins is limited, customs and habits are still in backwardness. The noticeable thing is that frequency of diagnosing, treating diseases under medical insurance of the people in difficult areas is low due to lack of information about medical insurance policy. There is still gap in reproductive health care, thus it's required to have specific measures to raise life quality of the people.

In the context of current medical situation, to better care health for the people, relevant departments, ministries of each country should further invest and at the same time build characteristic health care policies for each group of subjects, specific areas. Effectively implement group of policy measures for finance; invest; train cadres, develop on-site human resources; have characteristic policies for health care, population and family planning in ethnic minority areas, mountains, especially difficult areas. Well implement medical insurance policy for the above subjects; create favorable conditions for patients when diagnosing, treating diseases on medical insurance, etc. Reduce medical expenses burden for poor people and ethnic minority groups.

To achieve that development goal, cooperation within the area is attached with much importance to improve physical strength of the people. Firstly, it's required to improve health of children and women; effectively prevent and timely control epidemic diseases; build a network of medical facilities; establish and develop teams of medical staffs who are qualified to undertake tasks of each locality and carry out co-ordination, cooperation among provinces in Development Triangle. In fact, Vietnam has upgraded hospitals in border districts and diagnosed and treated diseases for the people in border provinces of Cambodia and Laos. Coordinate with provinces of Laos and Cambodia in exchanging information, strengthening capacity, deploy controls and prevent epidemic, infectious diseases in the border area of the three countries.

Improving quality and creating more jobs for employees

Labor issue bears profound social nature, have big effects on society and sustainable development of each country. Solving labor issue must be combined with employment issue because employment not only contributes to improve and raise life, income for each individual, eliminate hunger, reduce poverty but it also creates politic – social stability. In general, the whole Triangle has small work force, most of which concentrate in Vietnam area. Because majority of the provinces have young population, over 50% total population of the area is in labor age. Provinces with high labor rate are (Attapeu (Laos): 69%, Saravan: 53% (Cambodia), DakLak (Vietnam): 56.7%. Provinces in the Development Triangle belonging to Vietnam have a high labor rate above all others: 55.65% (2012). There have been few changes to labor structure in the area in recent time. 80% laborers work in the field of agriculture and forestry, laborers in industry, mainly in small households take up 10%, labor belonging to commerce, service concentrates in small repair facilities. Quality of laborers is very low even in provinces of Vietnam, trained labor rate only attains 14.9%, much lower than average rate of the whole country (20.2%); illiteracy rate in provinces of Western Highlands, Vietnam is 11.1%, higher than that of the whole country (5.01%). Most laborers at the age of over 15 in this area participate into economic activities (79% in Western Highlands, 85% in Northeastern Cambodia, South Laos), this means that laborers from the age of 15 and over are little trained. Therefore, there is shortage of skilled labor, leading to failure to meet the demand for labour inside and outside the country. In 2009, there were 39,993 laborers in Saravan and Attapeu provinces exported to Thailand and 4,887 foreign laborers (most from Vietnam) came to work. Therefore, over the time, there will be shortage of labor in the area [3].

Facing the inadequacies of the labor force, Triangle has solved labor and employment issue as the highest priority in development in the past years, especially after building the development plan of 2009 for the area and applying a specific mechanism for labor development. Many laborers trained in farming have applied knowledge, new skills in production, contributing to increased crop yields and livestock. A part of labor in rural areas has found stable jobs after vocational training in industrial, handicraft, trade, services facilities, resulting in increased income, new establishment of series of industrial, handicraft, trade, services, forestry facilities, etc, creating jobs for local labor; thousands of loan projects have been approved to create jobs, especially for ethnic minorities in rural areas. Many solutions have been promoted to vocational training, employment introduction and assistance for workers. Mechanisms have been deployed to invest, facilitate construction and expansion of vocational training institutions. The provinces of Attapeu and Champasak have sent 3,247 laborers for training [3]. Western Highlands provinces created new jobs for 39152 workers in 2013, mainly for ethnic minorities in rural areas who got apprenticeship, mostly primary vocational training system and direct apprentice at production facilities. Approximately 60% -70% of laborers after apprenticeship had new jobs or continued their previous jobs but yielded higher efficiency [7]. For provinces of Laos, employment rate over total population is relatively high: Attapeu 83%, Saravan 82%, Champasak 80%, Sekong 77% [8].

However, building training and labor management systems is just beginning, incomplete and ineffective. The area faces with lack of high level labor training facilities, complex issues of cross-border labor, regulation of the labor market as well as ensuring labor demands.

Concentrating on hunger elimination and poverty reduction

Based on characteristics of the provinces in the Development Triangle, rapid and sustainable comprehensive poverty reduction has been identified as a top goal in the development guidelines and policies of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia in general and the development orientation of the CLV Development Triangle in particular. The implementation

of hunger elimination, poverty reduction to ensure human rights and to achieve the MDGs (achieved the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of the United Nations). Consequently, the programs and policies on poverty reduction of local governments have been built by focusing on three main strategies: promote production and livelihoods to increase income of the poor, enhance access of the poor to social services, strengthen capacity and raise awareness of people in poor areas. These strategies are implemented through national programs on poverty reduction and social development support, in which focusing on five policy groups: Credit, agricultural production development, infrastructure, education and health. Owing to that, the poor have access to resources (capital, production land, technology, markets) and basic social services (education, health, clean water, legal aids). Besides, in the last few years, thanks to economic growth the achievements and great efforts of the localities implementing social security policies, hunger elimination and poverty reduction of the Development Triangle has yielded good results, step by step changed the face of rural areas in the whole area. The northeastern provinces of Cambodia are provinces with the highest poverty rate of the whole country, poverty rate has been decreased but at very slow speed. The poverty rate was reduced by 5.5 percent in the period from 2009 (40.1%) to 2012 (34.6%). Meanwhile, according to the UN's MDGs, Cambodia targets to reduce the poverty rate in 2015 to 19.4%, which means that this country must help 4 million people out of poverty. In fact, the poverty rate in Cambodia decreased from 29% (2009) to 20% (2012) and further reduced to 19% (2013) [9]. Like Cambodia's provinces except Champasak province (10%-2008), three other provinces of South Laos still have poverty rates higher than that of the whole country. This rate decreased from 39.63% (33.5% nationwide) in 2002-2003 to 30.68% (27.6% nationwide) in 2007-2008 [10]. The poverty reduction rate reached 8.95 percent (2002-2008). The provinces of Vietnam aren't out of this situation; the poverty rate is relatively higher than that of the whole country but not as high as that of provinces in South Laos and Northeastern Cambodia. The poverty rate fell to 23.48% (2010), 20.8% (2011), 18.1% (2012), in which BinhPhuoc province has the lowest poverty rate (7.9% -2012) [11].

In general, poverty reduction in the Development Triangle provinces of the three countries has been improved significantly, which is considered the major achievement of the society in efforts of the government and people to improve in recent times. However, in the coming time, it's required to be more active in poverty reduction before challenges faced. Close cooperation between local governments, governments of the countries and international organizations, among the provinces and the regions should be needed to create great strength to quickly overcome poverty in future.

Focusing on comprehensive culture development

Culture is, said simply, the whole socio-economic values human has created. Culture is not only superficial but also implicit and profound. It is accumulated and composed, even if it is single, fragile. In the current context of market economy development, many values of life have been deformed, lost in oblivion, culture is a necessary factor to stabilize society. Based on remarkable features of a multicultural area, in the Development Triangle, cultural development is mainly considered at the community level. The core task of cultural development is to promote conservation, preservation and promotion of indigenous cultural values combined with tourism development, and construction of cultural institutions from provincial level to grassroots level, promote exchanges and cultural exchanges and maintain traditional relationship between the localities traditions, considering culture investment as investment in human, investment in sustainable development. Thus, culture is both objective and motivation of the development in the area.

Currently, with variety of ethnic people, mix of peoples, the acceptance of cultural diversity is an essential requirement. This expresses respect, indiscrimination as well as exchanges and absorbs positive elements of different cultures to enrich culture of each people. In fact, the

provinces of the three countries unanimously develop in the past time to express recognition of cultural diversity in the common community- Development Triangle. However, each region is in different cultural development states. Cambodian provinces focus on preservation and promotion of cultural values through the development of inner human resources and external collaboration. The conservation of relics is deployed in all four provinces: 36 archaeological relics, 23 temples, 190 ethnic traditional old houses, 245 kinds of arts performance and 142 handicrafts, languages, clothes, two arts galleries. In which, Samphuborak in Kratie province is an ancient city left from Angko kingdom with a lot of relics to be preserved and protected. Particularly, Mondul Kiri and Rattara provinces with beautiful and primitive mountain and forest landscape are an interesting sightseeing place which stores unique cultural beliefs. The question is how to build a sub-area museum to preserve and protect the precious cultural heritage from being compromised. For provinces in South Laos, facilities of Culture and Information have many ways to collect and preserve native heritage such as: language, customs, dance, music, folklore, mythology. The most outstanding achievement of the province is Watphou stone castle in Champasak, which has been recognized the second world cultural heritage of Laos.

Language is an important tool to store and express ethnic cultural identity, an important indicator for sustainable cultural development, contributing to convey current socio-economic development issues of the community. This content hasn't been emphasized by provinces of Laos and Cambodia. The provinces of Vietnam further develop ethnic minority language system. Currently, there are television stations specializing in ethnic language, there are schools teaching two languages, bringing many benefits to the whole society. Besides, conservation and preservation of cultural values are always properly invested. For example, annual festivals, world heritage cultural, space of Western Highlands gongs, Western Highlands epic, Rong house are outstanding cultural values here.

Thus, in the context of international integration, cultural is strongly impacted. Cultural change is an inevitable law, but it's required to preserve indigenous cultural quintessence in the process of change to adapt to new environment. The question is how the government does to arouse ethnic self-consciousness. The important issue is that which ethnic group each individual and community are self-conscious to belong. This is also an indicator to distinguish an ethnic group with another one. If they lose that consciousness, the ethnic group will no longer exist and indigenous culture character will be corroded by the unwanted fusion of culture.

Moreover, preserving value of the elements is not only for the culture itself but it also support economic development of the community in which a person is living. Accordingly, culture should contribute to increase income through cultural tourism. In the Development Triangle, cultural heritage and nature tourism, tourism linked to nature conservation, history and tradition have been deployed. Heritage connection: Hoi An-My Son-Western Highlands Gong culture space (*Vietnam*)-WatPhou-Van Dao (*Laos*)-Angkor Wat-Angkor Thom (*Cambodia*)" through 03 countries Vietnam-Laos-Cambodia is potential and meaning tourism tour, through which people, tourists in the area will better understand friends' culture, promote cooperation and exchange in the spirit towards the ASEAN Community by 2015.

Cultural institutions system of Development Triangle is generally incomplete and non-systematic. In the provinces of Laos and Cambodia institution building has not yet been focused. Here, there are centers of community cultural centers in almost the provinces. However, at communes, villages, hamlets, there is still lack of culture houses (the provinces of Laos and Cambodia reach less than 20%; the provinces of Vietnam attain approximately 30%). The fact is that cultural centers in residential areas haven't met needs of creativity, cultural enjoyment of the people strata. Although the cultural development in the Triangle in recent years has been invested both in width and depth, cultural development hasn't been commensurate with the socio-economic development of the whole area. Therefore, in the

future, it's required to step up construction of consistent cultural institutions system from the provincial level to the grassroots level, encourage socialization of investment capital for culture, and arouse solidarity through ASEAN connection program as well as cooperation program among the people of the three countries.

ASEAN's role for social and cultural development of the Development Triangle

ASEAN supports CLV Development Triangle to narrow development gap

Since its establishment, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has played a significant role in development, cooperation, multi-sided link of the member states as well as sub-regional organizations, including the CLV Development Triangle. Through content of narrowing the development gap of the Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV), ASEAN has had indirect impact on the development of the Development Triangle in recent years. The fact is that in November, 2002 in Phnom Penh (Cambodia) IAI plan was passed to narrow development gap, support new members, forward to economic integration in a wider region, promote economic development economic, justice and support poverty reduction in CLMV [12]. Four priority areas of IAI are infrastructure development, human resources development, information technology and communication and enhanced regional economic integration in the CLMV countries. Until 2009, the IAI Work Plan, Phase 2 (2009-2015) was carried out to comprehensively forward to building ASEAN Community by 2015. Thus, ASEAN has had a positive policy to impact the CLV Development Triangle in the relationship with CLMV as an area to be best invested to narrow development gap among regions of each country. To enhance cooperation in this mechanism, the CLMV countries have agreed to pass the list of 16 priority projects of the four countries and proposed to the ASEAN's Secretariat to seek funding from the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) and from other development partners. Since that proposal, ASEAN has mobilized resources to support development of the CLMV to enhance development capacity of each country. In particular, ASEAN has focused on less developed regions, sub-regions such as the CLV Development Triangle. The Master Plan for building ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) has had a direct impact on cultural and social development in the CLV Development Triangle. The development objective of the Triangle area is similar to the overall objectives of the countries in the region and the ASEAN's Socio-cultural Pillar is to ensure the development in balance and harmony. The fact that is that in recent years ASEAN has focused on development cooperation in order to improve life of the CLV's people, eliminate hunger, reduce poverty, improve access to development opportunities of the people, human resources development, welfare and social patronization, rights and social justice, ensure environmental sustainability and develop indigenous cultural characters. ASEAN has established responsible committees such as the Committee to protect and promote women and children's rights for disadvantaged cases and for social justice, solve human rights issues, create learning and working opportunities for youth - the core force of social development. Therefore, annually ASEAN has organized many youth summer camps, vocational training for youth, granted scholarships for students of ASEAN. ASEAN Committee has announced to protect and promote rights of migrant workers as established in September, 2008. This regulation has had somewhat affected provinces of the Development Triangle which are adherently remote mountainous provinces belonging to the border of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, given the people opportunity to work according to their ability and live in mutually protected and helped environment of the ASEAN people. Besides, ASEAN also has had many cooperative programs to promote health development through funding programs for learning and exchanging experience of health care for the people, especially the poor. So the provinces with bad capability and health care system in Laos and Cambodia have opportunity to access better health services. Especially through a special meeting between the Ministers of Health of the countries, ASEAN has implemented prevention and prevention of epidemic diseases in the localities. In addition, ASEAN countries have encouraged lifelong education development and used ICT

as a means to promote education in ASEAN and raised awareness of ASEAN. To achieve the common goal, ASEAN organized the Forum for principals of the schools in Southeast Asia for the first time in 2008 to promote networking and educational cooperation, coordination among the principals in the region. Particularly for the Development Triangle, with Vietnam's proposal, many volunteer programs, training courses in educational issues have been implemented here in order to improve the qualifications of teachers, create more opportunities for pupils to go to school and improve facilities for schools through human resource development policy of the ninth plan (2006-2010), including content: To implement measures to narrow development gap between urban schools and rural schools. In fact, the Development Triangle is a rural area in ASEAN, in which the best development priority should be given. In addition, with a commitment to build regional identity, ASEAN has made efforts to maintain and enrich indigenous cultural values in the Triangle area through the mechanism of the Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Culture & Arts (AMCA) to orient culture and arts cooperation among the countries. The fact is that the three countries of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia have had a lot of cultural cooperation programs within the framework of ASEAN cultural program held every two years. The major cultural exchange programs such as: Central Highlands gong culture festive day, Khmer cultural festive day, Central Heritage Road, contests for understanding ASEAN, cultural programs to enhance mutual understanding among regions, countries in order to push the countries to be closer in solidarity.

ASEAN is the center of the connection between the CLV Development Triangle and member countries and countries outside ASEAN

As an organization for regional cooperation, ASEAN recognizes 13 provinces of the CLV area as Development Triangle of ASEAN. Therefore, ASEAN promotes the member states as well as external countries to support the development of the Triangle. Through ASEAN, Japan, Australia, America, Canada, China, India, Russia, the United States of America has had long-term investment cooperation with the CLV Development Triangle. That cooperation is through sub-regional cooperation mechanisms related to the Mekong river cooperation mechanisms such as: Mekong River Commission (MRC) Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS), ASEAN Mekong Basin Development Cooperation (ABMDC), the Summit of Japan - CLMV, U.S. - Lower Mekong, etc. Collaboration focusing on areas of environment, health, education and training mainly in rural areas where there is scattered small-scale.

The fact is that the connection has been well maintained through economic corridors, transportation corridors in ASEAN which play the role of linking sub-regions, ASEAN countries with external countries, regions. (GMS) economic corridors such as: Southern economic corridor, East-West economic corridor, North-South economic corridor connects the mainland ASEAN countries with other countries such as China and countries in North East Asia, South West Asia and islands ASEAN countries. Connection in ASEAN region is considered as an important catalyst to expand and develop trade networks as well as promote social and cultural development of regions and areas inside and outside ASEAN. This connection creates opportunities for economic investment from outside, brings optimal economic benefits and development for the region. Besides, the deeper internal connection and stronger people-to-people cooperation between people in ASEAN will contribute to more influence on socio-cultural development of the Development Triangle, bringing disseminating effect and comparative advantage in socio-economic development between the lowly developed areas and highly-developed areas.

In summary, the presence of ASEAN for the Development Triangle is still too small compared with the overall objectives, but has contributed to improve material and spiritual life not only for the people of the CLMV but also those of the Development Triangle. Until now, the per capita income of the CLMV has increased steadily (over 5% / year), at relatively high GDP growth rates (5-8%). Particularly in the period 2011-2012, the Development

Triangle's GDP growth averaged 10% as planned (four provinces of Cambodia reached over 9% / year, provinces of Laos achieved 11.4% / year, provinces of Vietnam attained 10% / year). However, due to the low starting point and small economy scale as compared to each country, the GDP per capita in 2012 of the Development Triangle reached 980 USD only, about 77.5% compared to the common average rate of the three countries. Today, thanks to the efforts of each country and the Triangle together with support of external countries, the socio-cultural fields of the Development Triangle has been gone into rapid development. Health systems, education and training systems have been upgraded, thus leading to improved intellectual standards of the people and better access to education and health care of people. One specially impressive result is that poverty has been quickly reduced in recent years. Cultural life has been improved; cultural heritages have been further preserved and promoted than before.

However, there has been a big development gap between the Development Triangle and countries early joining ASEAN. A close cooperation should be maintained between ASEAN and each country or locality to coordinate actions for the common goal of narrowing the development gap between regions, ASEAN countries, regional and global integration and forwarding to the formation of the community in 2015.

Conclusion

On the basis of assessing basic objectives set forth in the Master planning for development of the VLC Development Triangle 2009, the Development Triangle has achieved considerable results in many socio-cultural areas in recent times. Education development has been enhanced in term of staffs, facilities, education quality. Training knowledge and skills for human resources has brought about positive effects and minimized limitations of the workforce. Besides, implementation of health development, health care for the people is more improved than before. However, the sluggishness and backwardness has significantly affected mortality rate, life expectancy, number of patients, specially poor patients, etc. Trained and employed labor has been increased, poverty rate has been decreased, and number of people out of poverty has been gone up. The material life has been better than before. Besides, cultural and spiritual life of the people has also been further focused. There have been projects for conservation and promotion of native culture, building cultural institutions from the provincial level to grassroots level to enhance the cultural life and social responsibility. The goal of social and cultural development has basically achieved the set forth plan, brought new expectations for sustainable social development in the future. To achieve that success mainly requires efforts of the three countries' government. In addition, ASEAN has played the role of central connection, motivation for the development, all for the purpose of narrowing development gap between regions of the member countries, aimed at building a cultural-social community of the ASEAN in particular and ASEAN community in general.

In general, the three countries of Vietnam-Laos-Cambodia have made great efforts to turn those ideas into reality, change the poor triangle into a developed, potential region. These results show that the choice of sustainable development is a right direction. In which, social and cultural development is a solid foundation to create internal linkages to promote advantages of the area, attract external investment, contribute to reducing the gap between regions in each country. Currently, Development Triangle is still in difficult situation. However, if well promoting advantages in the area, putting the Development Triangle in cooperation with the East-West Economic Corridor and the Greater Mekong Sub-region, we will have a positive view about development of the Triangle. However, challenges from inside and outside are still major obstacles, which require great efforts of the three countries' governments, local authorities as well as support of the international community. It's expected that with the close cooperation and the support of ASEAN, in the future, the VLC Development Triangle will have positive shifts in all aspects of economic, political, cultural-

social life, contributing to stability, peace and prosperity of the three countries and the ASEAN community.

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