

## Hai works in the mangrove nursery

**Mangrove forest is one of the most effective ways of protecting the coast from the effects of climate change. Hai takes care of the young mangrove trees in the nursery and this has proved to be an empowering experience to her.**

Mrs. Vu Thi Hai has been working in the nursery since July 2007. She was among the first to work with the project because she quickly understood that the villagers needed the nursery to produce mangrove seedlings. When she started working at the nursery she became even more interested.

“We produce the seedlings here and they are planted on the wetland in front of the dyke. The mangroves can prevent the storms and big waves from harming the dyke and flooding the houses and the fields. In general, it creates a better environment for people,” she says. For her personally, the extra income she gets from working here is small, 20.000 dong (1.1 USD) per day for lunch from the project. But she wants to do it anyway, because of the importance of the mangrove. It is also an encouragement for what she is doing, and for the small allowance she can buy chicken to raise.



The nursery was established after a decision of the Community Based Mangrove Management Board. The first seedlings were bought from a nursery in Thai Binh province. To save the cost and increase the knowledge about the mangrove forest, the representative from the villages decided to start the nursery in Yen Dong village. They had a village meeting about the group establishment and chose 23 people

who were the most active and willing to do the job. All group members in the nursery are female, only the leader is a man. They now have a meeting each month to decide who takes care of the nursery and what needs to be done.

Mrs. Vu Thi Hai says that now she feels capable of taking care of the nursery and the mangrove forest. She also feels more useful to the whole community and empowered because she knows how to handle the mangrove and is able to better protect her own life and that of her fellow villagers.

They grow two kinds of mangrove trees, Kandelia and Sonneratia which thrive in both sea water and river water. They prepare the land for the seeds and select the best quality soil to put in nylon bags for the seedlings. Together they collect seeds from older mangrove to plant in the nursery and all members help to plant the seeds in bags. For taking care of the seedlings they split into smaller units of 3-4 participants. They take turns to monitor pests, like barnacles and caterpillars and do weeding, each unit for 3 days. They never use any pesticides, only removal by hand and the seedlings are fertilised by the river water. They also make sure that the cows and buffalo don't eat the mangrove leaves.

“I would like to expand the nursery and sell seedlings to other coastal areas,” she mentions. “I feel confident that we can work together in the community to make it happen.”