Final Education and Public Engagement Report

29-006: People, Primates, Plants: Co-managing Biodiversity and Improving Livelihoods in Vietnam

This report provides a comprehensive overview of the education and public awareness components of the project, detailing the activities and interventions implemented to engage and collaborate with communities in these three years. It outlines the strategies employed, the campaigns developed, and the initiatives run in partnership with local stakeholders. Additionally, the report highlights key achievements, examines the measurable impacts of the interventions, and reflects on the progress made toward fostering greater community awareness and involvement in the project's goals. By documenting these efforts, this report aims to provide insights into the successes and lessons learned from our approach to education and public engagement.

Education and public engagement are part of the following project activities:

> **3.5. Undertake public awareness campaigns using local and national outreach channels on SUF biodiversity conservation needs and opportunities, and prevention of diseases from zoonotic transmissions (years 1-3).**
>
> Activity 3.5 contributes to OUTCOME 3: Knowledge of and capacities and capabilities of local communities in Tuyen Hoa district in forest restoration, sustainable and income generating agroforestry, small-scale farm businesses, and prevention of zoonotic diseases from close animal-human interaction, are increased

General Goals of the Education and Public Engagement strategy:

1. Increasing public awareness about the White-necked langur, its endangered status, and the importance of the conservation of this species and its habitat.
2. Educate the public about the risks of zoonotic diseases and promote good hygiene practices and responsible interactions with wildlife to reduce the risk of transmission.
3. Engage local communities and foster a sense of ownership and responsibility towards the conservation of the White-necked langur and its habitat.
4. Establish partnerships and collaborations: foster partnerships with local authorities, NGOs and volunteer groups working in the area, to work collaboratively towards the conservation of the Langur and its habitat.

Key messages:

- The White-necked langur and its habitat should be protected to preserve its existence for future generations.
- Adopting responsible behaviour and hygiene practices can safeguard the health and wellbeing of both people and langurs.
- By working together, we can ensure the long-term protection of the White-necked langur and its habitat.
- By forming strong partnerships with local authorities, NGOs, and volunteer groups, we amplify our efforts to protect the White-necked langur and its natural environment.

Overview of activities

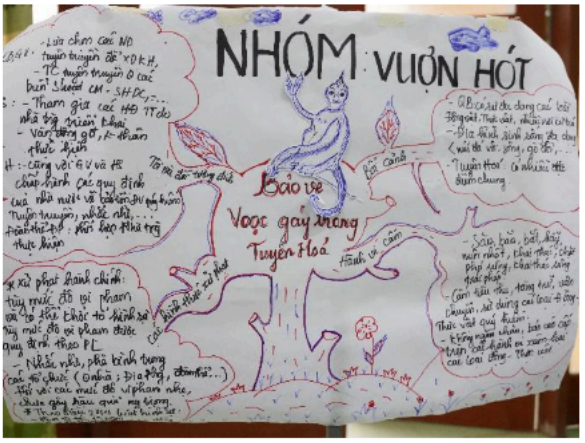
1. Training of Trainers (ToT) sessions

Date: December 28 and 29, 2023

Goal: To equip local communal and district officials, rangers, villagers, and voluntary conservation group with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively communicate and educate the community about langur protection and the risk of zoonotic disease transmission

TOT sessions were conducted in the communal hall of Dong Hoa commune in the Tuyen Hoa District to educate Forest rangers, Commune People's Committees, Village Heads, representatives of schools in project communes, and VCG members, on SUF conservation and zoonotic disease prevention measures (Annex 1). The ToT program covered topics like biodiversity, the risks of disease transmission from animals to humans, and practical communication strategies for raising awareness.





VCG group during a brainstorming activity in the ToT training

Activities included group discussions, field visits to observe the White-necked langur in the wild and hands-on communication exercises. 41 people, including 8 women, attended the training in December. Participants increased their knowledge about biodiversity and the White-necked langur in Quang Binh province and the risks of disease transmission between humans and wildlife. The participants had the opportunity to develop a communication plan and practice running a communication plan to gain skills in organizing communication activities in the community to raise awareness about wildlife conservation. The pre- and post-survey showed that participants were happy with the training course outcomes and gained confidence in the related topics.

Recommendations included developing a handbook on the White-necked langur population for future reference, offering more opportunities for trainees to practice communication activities in schools and communities, and creating a handbook on tourism and conservation activities based on local forest resources and the Whote-necked langur population in Tuyen Hoa.

2. School activities

Goals:

- To equip students with the necessary knowledge and raise their awareness about the White-necked langurs and their habitat in Tuyen Hoa district, Quang Binh province;

- To educate elementary and high school students in Tuyen Hoa district about protecting the White-necked langur in local areas and about potential disease transmission between humans and wildlife.

Throughout the project, several activities were implemented in schools to engage students and teachers in conservation efforts. In the second year, we launched a structured school program that was met with overwhelming enthusiasm from both students and teachers. To sustain this momentum, we introduced additional activities, including the development of a **Teacher Toolkit** filled with educational resources and interactive exercises to enhance learning. To further inspire creativity and engagement, we also organized an **art competition** as a culminating event, allowing students to express their understanding of langur conservation through artwork. These efforts not only deepened students' connection to local biodiversity but also provided teachers with long-term resources to continue fostering environmental awareness in their classrooms.

2.1 School's program

Date: May 23-25, 2024

Location: Thuan Hoa commune, Son Hoa commune, Dong Hoa commune, Thach Hoa commune of Tuyen Hoa District.

The school's program was highly successful with 766 students and 40 teachers from four secondary schools participating in the activities (see Annex 2). A photo exhibition was put up in each school to learn more about biodiversity in Quang Binh province, followed by a workshop. The 10 students who performed best during the workshop were chosen to become ambassadors and joined a field trip to observe the White-necked langur in the wild.





School children and teachers in Thach Hoa participating in the different activities

During the field visit, the students had the unique opportunity to meet and learn from members of the Volunteer Conservation Group, a dedicated team working tirelessly to protect the langur. The group shared insights into the challenges of wildlife conservation, the threats facing the langur population, and the critical role of community-led efforts in safeguarding endangered species. This was an eye-opening experience for the students—seeing the langurs in the wild and engaging with real-life conservationists made the issues they had studied in the classroom more tangible and urgent.

This hands-on experience was particularly impactful as it connected theoretical knowledge with real-world conservation work. The students did not only observe the langurs but also gained a

deeper appreciation for the complexities of protecting wildlife. Meeting role models actively working in conservation inspired them to take action, reinforcing the idea that young people can play a vital role in safeguarding their environment. At the end of the visit, the students channeled their newfound knowledge and inspiration into a call for action, reflecting on their role in protecting biodiversity and encouraging their peers to get involved.



VCG member Mr Tu showing the langurs to the students during the field trip

2.2 Teacher's Toolkit

Date: February 2025

Location: Thuan Hoa commune, Son Hoa commune, Dong Hoa commune, Thach Hoa commune of Tuyen Hoa District.

To support conservation education a **comprehensive Teacher's Toolkit** (see Annex 3) was developed in both **English and Vietnamese**. This resource includes a variety of activities designed to raise awareness about the importance of protecting the White-necked langur and its limestone mountain forest habitat. As part of the initiative, ecology lessons can be adapted to incorporate **local examples**, making conservation education more relevant and impactful for students.





Front page and one of the activities from the Teacher's toolkit

In February 2025, the Teacher's Toolkit was tested by a science teacher at a high school in Thuan Hoa, where it was trialed with 30 students (see Annex 4). The feedback from this pilot session was positive, demonstrating that the toolkit is an effective instrument and easy to implement. Teachers can now use it independently, without requiring additional support from project partners, ensuring its long-term sustainability in local schools.

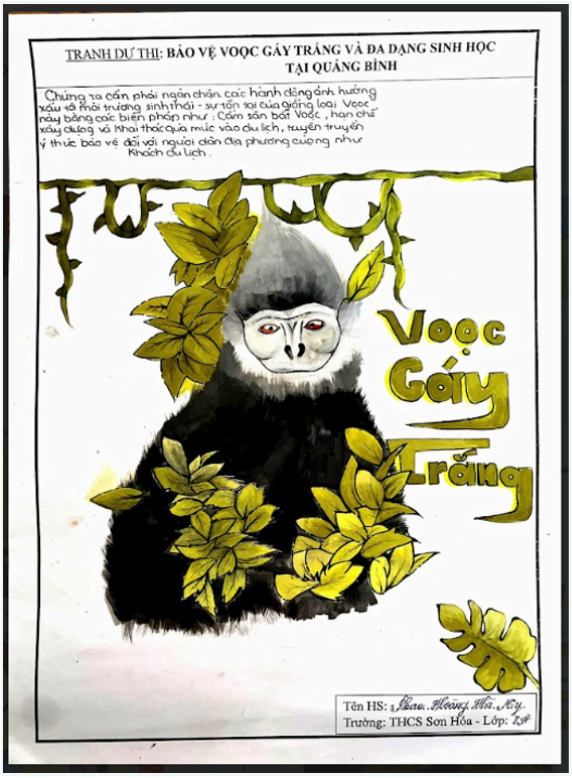
2.3 Art contest

Date: February and March 2025

Location: Thuan Hoa commune, Son Hoa commune, Dong Hoa commune, Thach Hoa commune of Tuyen Hoa District.

Four schools participated in the art contest. The teachers made a selection of the best artworks which were posted on the VCG Facebook page for everyone to vote and admire. The contest generated significant engagement, reaching over 1,000 people who participated by voting and admiring the students' work. Based on the number of votes received, 17 top artworks were shortlisted. A final selection was made by a jury comprising representatives from ICRAF, CEGORN, BGCI, and local leaders, ensuring a well-rounded evaluation. Ultimately, two outstanding artworks were awarded the top prizes, while three additional pieces secured third place.

During the project's final meeting, prizes were distributed to ten students—including those with the highest online votes and the five finalists chosen by the jury (1st prize, 2nd prize, and three 3rd-place winners). This contest not only celebrated students' artistic talents but also reinforced their commitment to conservation, fostering a sense of pride and motivation to protect the White-necked langur and its habitat.



First prize winner drawing



Second prize winner drawing

3. Volunteer Conservation Group (VCG)

Goal: to protect the endangered White-necked langur and its habitat in Tuyên Hóa District by engaging the local community in conservation efforts.

The Volunteer Conservation Group (VCG) is an integral part of the conservation efforts for the endangered White-necked langur in Tuyên Hóa District. The VCG is a group of local community members, often referred to as "local heroes," who play a vital role in both protecting the langur and raising awareness about biodiversity conservation.

The group's leadership includes figures such as Mr. Tú, a retired border guard who, after retiring, devoted himself to environmental protection. His experience in organizing and leading community efforts has made him a cornerstone of the VCG's work. He has worked tirelessly to engage and rally the local community to understand the importance of preserving the White-necked langur and its habitat. Mr. Hồng, a former hunter, also stands out as an example of a transformation in the community. He voluntarily gave up his hunting trade and embraced conservation efforts, working alongside other members to promote sustainable practices and protect wildlife. His journey from being a hunter to a conservation advocate demonstrates the significant potential for change and the power of local ownership in conservation initiatives.

The VCG's activities focus on community engagement, primarily through village meetings and patrols. These meetings serve as platforms for raising awareness about the langur, its endangered status, and the broader biodiversity of the region. The group also uses patrols to monitor wildlife and educate locals about conservation practices.

In Year 2 and 3 of the project, the VCG conducted 69 sessions, reaching an estimated 265 individuals. These sessions included discussions on the importance of protecting the White-necked langur, its role in the local ecosystem, and strategies for reducing human-wildlife conflict. The sessions also emphasized the prevention of zoonotic diseases, fostering a sense of responsibility among the community members to adopt sustainable practices that benefit both their health and the environment.

Each year of the project, the number of patrols conducted by VCG has increased, rising from 109 in Year 1 to 274 in Year 3. Their presence in the area, combined with a public awareness campaign, has contributed to a reduction in observed forest violations, which decreased from 42 in Year 1 to 19 in Year 3. These violations primarily involved animal traps but also included encroachment, bee honey harvesting, raising animals, and collecting wood from the protected area. This decline is a positive sign; for instance, the number of animal traps recorded during patrols fell from 21 in Year 1 to just 9 in Year 3. Detailed results on the number of patrols and observed violations can be found in Annex 5.

4. Printed awareness raising materials and media

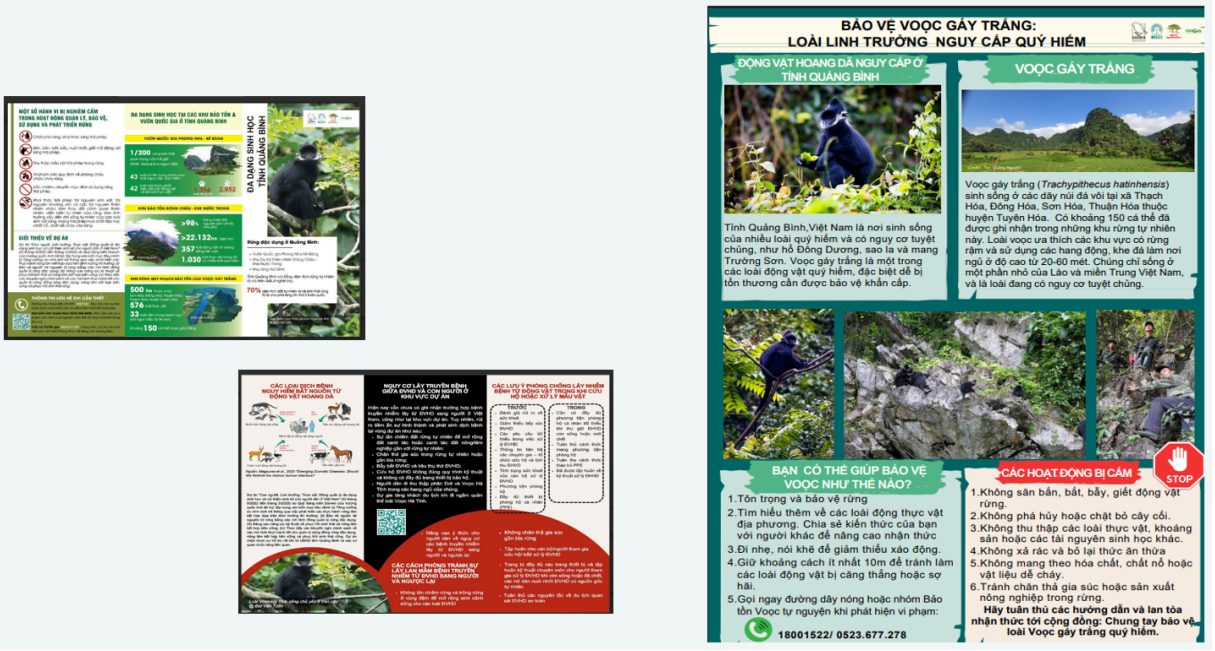
Goal: To further engage local communities and promote general awareness about the importance of protecting the Langur and taking preventative measures against potential zoonotic diseases.

A series of actions were carried out to promote biodiversity conservation needs, raise awareness of zoonotic disease transmissions and prevention. A brochure, two leaflets, a poster, and a field sign were designed and disseminated to local communities and schools.

4.1 Brochures, leaflets and posters

During year 1 project brochures were distributed to a range of audiences including the British Council, which has disseminated these further to their networks. In the second year of the project open letters and project highlights were sent to stakeholders including the British Embassy, MONRE, district meetings, local communes, and provincial departments of agriculture and rural development to solicit support and foster collaboration.

In the third year of the project two informational leaflets (Annex 6 and 7) have been designed; one covering the langur's ecology and habitat and the other leaflet informing about zoonotic disease prevention. The leaflets have been distributed in secondary schools in Dong Hoa, Son Hoa, Thuan Hoa and Thach Hoa communes and events



Screenshots of two of the leaflets and the poster

A poster was also developed to highlight the importance of the conservation of the langur and the habitat they live in (Annex 8). The poster is displayed in key public locations like public notice boards of community halls and schools frequented by both locals and tourists and were put up in December 2024. A field sign was created in January 2025, and 15 have been put up near the forest in 13 communes.

4.2 Broadcast media

Goal: Promote biodiversity conservation needs and raising awareness of zoonotic disease transmissions and prevention thereof.

- *Television Broadcast:*

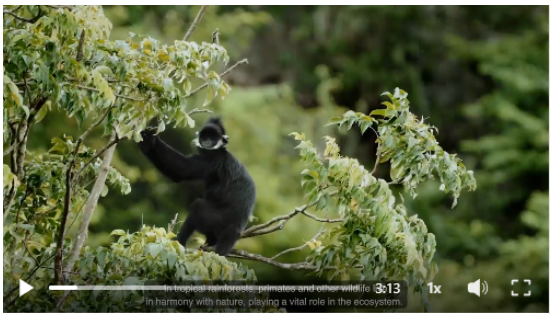
Information on the inception workshop was broadcasted on local TV channels such as Quang Binh TV (https://www.facebook.com/cegorn/videos/663446445004945) in year 1.

- *Videos:*

Three videos have been launched during the project. In year 1 a short video introducing the project and highlighting efforts to involve local communities in forest conservation and promote sustainable agroforestry practices was created and posted on ICRAF fanpage, YouTube and ICRAF Viet Nam Facebook page: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SJjd3TG8WCE

In the third year, we produced a video (link) emphasizing the importance of conserving the Langur and raising awareness about zoonotic disease transmission risks. Another touching film was also created, produced by Chăm Film, highlighting the efforts of the VCG and its volunteers. All videos have been shared on the social media platforms of ICRAF, CEGORN and BGCI.





4.3 Social media

At both national and international level, the project leveraged social media platforms in year 1-3, including accounts managed by ICRAF (2,300 followers), CEGORN (280 followers), SEABG (1,100 followers), BGCI (17,000 followers), and the VCG (1,000 followers), harnessing their substantial follower bases to promote the Project's objectives and show the project progress and activities.

Conclusions

The *People, Primates, Plants: Co-managing Biodiversity and Improving Livelihoods in Vietnam* project has made significant strides in raising public awareness and fostering community engagement around the protection of the White-necked langur and its habitat. Through a combination of well-structured activities, including training sessions, school programs, art contests, and media outreach, we have succeeded in not only informing local communities about the importance of biodiversity conservation but also inspiring tangible actions towards sustainable practices and zoonotic disease prevention.

Key achievements include the successful implementation of Training of Trainers (ToT) sessions, which equipped local stakeholders with the necessary knowledge and skills to educate others in their communities. The school program reached a broad audience of students and teachers, fostering a deepened understanding of local biodiversity and the critical need for wildlife conservation. The development and successful testing of the Teacher's Toolkit has provided teachers with long-term resources to integrate conservation education into their curricula. Additionally, the art contest was a creative way to engage students and amplify their voices in the conservation dialogue, while the

Volunteer Conservation Group (VCG) and their ongoing efforts have been instrumental in promoting community-led action.

The project also made impactful use of printed materials, broadcast media, and social media platforms, which reached a wide audience, both locally and internationally. These efforts have contributed to a wider conversation about the White-necked langur, the importance of the prevention of zoonotic diseases, and sustainable environmental practices.

The collaboration with local authorities, NGOs, and volunteer groups has strengthened the project's impact, building a network of partners dedicated to the conservation of the langur and its habitat. These partnerships have not only facilitated knowledge-sharing but also created a platform for collective action towards the long-term protection of biodiversity.

While the project has made considerable progress, ongoing efforts will be necessary to ensure the sustainability of the initiatives. Future actions should focus on strengthening local capacity, expanding community engagement, and ensuring the continued use of the tools and knowledge shared through the program. The experiences and lessons learned from this project provide valuable insights that can inform similar conservation and public engagement initiatives in other regions.

In conclusion, the *People, Primates, Plants* project has successfully contributed to the conservation of the White-necked langur and its habitat, enhanced community awareness around the importance of forest protection and restoration, and provided a platform for sustainable environmental action. With continued support and commitment from all stakeholders, the long-term protection of this iconic species and its habitat remains within reach.