

Thiên Chí selected!

The 12th July 2005

In June, the World Bank organized a competition for the most innovative projects for the environment. Thiên Chí, our local partner, submitted an entry and was selected! There were 250 candidates and 37 were chosen. As a result, the World Bank will now contribute 5500 euros for the implementation of this project. Thiên Chí was selected because its proposal consists of several activities which are all well tested in the field.

(1) Collection of wasted plastic bags by the primary school pupils

For the 4th consecutive year, on Earth Day (22 April), the pupils have been invited to collect all the wasted plastic bags flying around in the villages. Small enterprises specialized in recycling waste buy them from the schools. This time,

as early as December, a number of pupils and schools asked us whether we would run the program again, like previous years, so that they could start the collection earlier! The children accumulated their "harvest" at home and later at the their school, wherever they could! On top of this, Dung, in charge of the program in Đức Linh, managed to negotiate a better price, 0.03 euro per kilo (50% higher than last year). As a result, 98 tons were collected by the end of April, an average of 3 kilos per child, 2 times more than in 2004 ! You can see the difference in the villages, as they are much cleaner now. As a result, in total, the schools were paid an



Clean villages, extra income for the schools: recycling!

impressive amount of approximately 3000 euros. This money is being used for small repairs, to pay a few scholarships for the very poor etc. The schools have now proposed to continue the operation all year round. We aim to collect 200 tons. The psychological impact is huge, tens of thousands of pupils, with their teachers, all clean their community. This make people think!

(2) The wastes from the markets

Every day a huge amount of waste is accumulated in the market area and the local authorities are overwhelmed. 3 years ago they requested us to look into the matter: and asked if we could help to build a dumping ground? We answered by proposing a recycling program: 70% of the collected waste is organic, which can be processed into compost. Plastics amount to 10% and can be sold and recycled. Hùng (director of



Sorting the waste

the Tánh Linh program) has made a number of contacts and succeeded in finding buyers for our compost at 0.03 euros per kilo. The plastics, we will recycle ourselves and the best plastic (white in colour) will be sold for a price 10 times higher (30 cents).

The strong point of this program is that it combines the two activities listed above and the whole project is profitable and sustainable. There are also other positive benefits of the project:- the villages are cleaned, the mentality of the people changes, 80% of the waste are recycled and over a dozen jobs are created in each district!

The district of Dúc Linh is very happy and has provided some land for the project. The latest news is that the province has been impressed, as well, by Thiên Chí winning the World Bank competition and offers a 12,500 euros grant*... Thiên Chí runs before the wind!



One of the key people for this success:
Dung

Bernard Kervyn