

Land and Labor of Indigenous Peoples (IP)

LISO: A Rights-Based Approach

to Socio-Political and Ecological Capital Enrichment

(1986 – 1995 – 2005 – 2015 – 2026)

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I. Understanding and Valuing IP

Livelihood Sovereignty¹ (LISO) is a function of the following dependent variables: 1) *The biogeochemical cycling interactions* within the Forest-Upland-Paddy nexus, which serve as the core to generate the karmic/interdependent relationships among 3R Based Ecosystem: Forest (Rừng), Upland (Rẫy), and Valley (Ruộng), thereby driving the autotrophic nutrient flows that sustain the ecosystem and yield ecological livelihoods for the Hre people; and 2) *The energy flows* supplied to the 3R ecosystem and the Hre community, which are transformed into flows of consciousness to steward and nourish the 3R Ecosystem. These twin cyclical interactions cultivate 3) *the behavioral and relational dynamics* between the Hre people and their 3R Ecological Home, as exemplified by *the 12 annual rituals (the Festive Clock)* through which the Hre live and express their gratitude to nature, guided by their profound wisdom of Nurturing Nature.

Vietnam launched its Doi Moi (Renovation) policy in 1986, gradually phased out the subsidized economy, and opened up a 5-sector market economy. Natural resources were largely controlled by State-Owned Agricultural and Forestry Enterprises under an equitization model, with the state retaining a 51% stake. During this period, policies focused on centralizing authority to expand state-managed nature reserves and national parks, which significantly reduced the land and forest areas where ethnic minorities had lived for thousands of generations. Alongside promoting industrialization and modernization, numerous sacred forests and lands of ethnic minorities were requisitioned for mineral exploitation, hydropower construction, and the sedentary farming and resettlement programs for ethnic minorities. This gradually trapped over 14 million ethnic minority people across 53 distinct identity groups into three vicious cycles: 1) *Isolation* driven by differences in culture, lifestyle, language, geography, and value systems and leading to 2) *A lack of self-confidence*, and ultimately 3) *The loss of the right to self-determination* over their community's cultural, spiritual, and material values, particularly the right

¹ Reference detail at www.livelihoodsovereignty.org
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to inherit, own, and use land in accordance with their own wisdom of nurturing nature. Throughout the two decades from 1986 to 2005, the indigenous community—over 14 million people living across two-thirds of the mountainous and forested territory along Vietnam's borders with Yunnan (China), Laos, and Cambodia—fell into a severe crisis of community solidarity, faith in nature, and the culture of maintaining community ecological livelihoods, resulting in a loss of direction. Consequently, young people began leaving their villages to migrate to urban areas in search of daily livelihoods. This severed the intergenerational interaction within the community, as well as the connection between the community and their ecological home (*for a comprehensive analysis, see www.co2justice.org*).

II. SPERI - Learning by Doing and Participatory Action Research

SPERI's pathway to dismantling the structural integration of the three vicious cycles confronting IPs comprises: 1) A multi-dimensional integrated strategy leveraging a 9-step approach to comprehend IP wisdom, knowledge systems, and customary laws; 2) LISO-based community forest and land tenure rights; 3) Community customary law-based legitimacy; 4) Facilitating an Integrated 6 – Thematic Action Network; and 5) Connecting Key Farmers with Policymakers via Socio-Ecological Platforms for Policy Change.

<https://speri.org/eng/index4.php?act=popvd&vid=336>

III. Capacity Building for Organizational and Institutional Governance



IV. Integrating CBOs and CBIs into Regional Community Forestry Enterprises



The integration of specialized networks and the establishment of community-based enterprises serve as the foundation for the agroecological product and carbon credit markets for indigenous village forest owners.

IV. Strategic Consultation for Carbon Credit Supply Chains, Value Addition, and Co-Governance



V. Outcome Indicator

1. [MECO-ECOTRA \(1995-2025\)](#): 6,000 members (First generation).



2. [YIELDS-AGREE \(2015-2025 onwards\)](#): 327 members (*Second generation*).



3. [HEPA-ECO FARMING SCHOOL \(2005 onwards\)](#): 1521 Trainees & Experiencers



4. [Community Land Rights Titles \(2000-2023\)](#): 270 communities 270 communities, managing 139,820 hectares of forest and forest land across Vietnam and Northern Laos, now secured in the hands of indigenous peoples.



5. [Community Entrepreneurs \(2015 onwards\)](#): 7 Community Agro-Ecological Enterprises.



6. [Community Entrepreneurial Development Institute \(CENDI\)](#): Officially registered and operating in partnership with YIELDS-AGREE and a network of young leaders across the Mekong Region.



VI. Theory of Change

1. [Land Law No. 13/2003/QH11](#), Article 48, Clause 3 recognizes the equal right of a wife to have her name listed alongside her husband's on the Land Use Right Certificate.
2. [Forest Law No. 16/QH14/2017](#).



3. Publication:

3.1 Tran Thi Lanh, 2024. [Carbon Stock in Above-Ground Biomass](#) Tropical Rainforest in North-Central Vietnam. Knowledge Publishing House, Hanoi.



3.2 Tran Thi Lanh, 2022. Building Livelihood Sovereignty for the Mekong Region
Civic Engagement in Asia – Transformative Learning for a Sustainable Future.



3.3 Tran Thi Lanh, 2018. Livelihood Sovereignty and Village Wellbeing: H're People and the Spiritual Ecology: An approach to Biological Human Ecology Theory.

3.4 Tran Thi Lanh. 2017. From Community Forest Land Rights to Livelihood Sovereignty and Wellbeing.



3.5 Tran thi Lanh, 2015 . Nurturing Customary Based Wellbeing – An Approach to Biological Human Ecology Theory.

