



CHAPTER 3

Birth of the WIND programme





This chapter explains how the WIND programme was born in the Mekong Delta in Viet Nam. The improvement initiatives of the local farmers and sugar cane workers mentioned in the previous chapter convinced us that practical training programmes built on local experiences could further strengthen such initiatives and accelerate their improvement actions.

The WISE (Work Improvement in Small Enterprises) training programme developed by the ILO provided us with many ideas to develop such a practical training programme for farmers. The WISE programme had already assisted participating small enterprises to improve productivity and working conditions jointly. WISE was filling the gap between large and small enterprises and had extended basic protection to a large number of workers. Most importantly, WISE relied on simple, low-cost improvements carried out by local workers and employers and promoted participatory, local good practice approaches.

We felt the need to learn more from people's self-help initiatives and to develop practical support tools. The Toyota Foundation provided us with the timely financial assistance to realize these developments. Visiting local workplaces to find and collect existing OSH good practices became our important next step.

CHAPTER 3

3-1. Preparing the WIND programme

3-1-1. Learning from local good examples

The Viet Nam-Japan joint study team visited four hundred farmers' houses and their farms in Vi Thanh to learn from local good examples in their working and living conditions, and found a number of good examples devised by the farmers themselves (Fig 3-1). Good examples in their working conditions were, for example, easier ways to transport heavy agricultural products, safer passageways and bridges to reach their farms, safe use and storage of pesticides, protection from sunlight, and resting facilities in the farms. Typical good examples collected are shown in Figure 3-1 to 3-5. Improvements in living conditions were, for example, kitchen and eating facilities, nutritious foods, lighting and ventilation in their houses, and hygienic toilets. Some families had good plans for family income generation and expenses. We counted these also as good examples in their living conditions. The team took photos of these local good examples and classified them. The local good examples collected were later depicted on slides and widely used as presentation materials for the subsequent WIND training workshop.



Figure 3-1. Safer way to keep pesticide bottles



Figure 3-2. Keeping hand tools in good order



Figure 3-3. Resting place for farmers in the rice field



Figure 3-4. Well-organized kitchen with good ventilation



Figure 3-5. Recording family income and expenditure

3-1-2. Developing the first WIND checklist

Developing a safety and health action checklist for farmers was the next key step. We established the action checklist style from the WISE training programme developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO). WISE is a training package to support small enterprises in improving working conditions and productivity and adopted participatory approaches as the core methodology. The WIND checklist, adapted from the WISE checklist, aimed to assist local farmers to assess their safety and health risks for practical improvement actions. The previous direct observation study experiences with farmers gave many useful insights into how to design the action checklist.

We designed the WIND action checklist (Figure 3-6) as a support tool for farmers to find practical safety and health solutions that can be made at low cost. The WIND

checklist does not present a complete list of all their potential safety and health actions. Instead, the purpose of the checklist is to stimulate farmers' own ideas for improvements by showing basic improvement options. Participating farmers were expected to go beyond the items mentioned in the checklist for their own innovative improvement actions. For this purpose, thirty-two most common action points were selected for the checklist and referred to the collected local good examples. The selected 32 points covered materials handling, work posture, machine safety, physical environment and work-related welfare facilities which could be applied to improve both working and living conditions. Later, the number of checklist items increased to 42 as shown in Table 1-2.

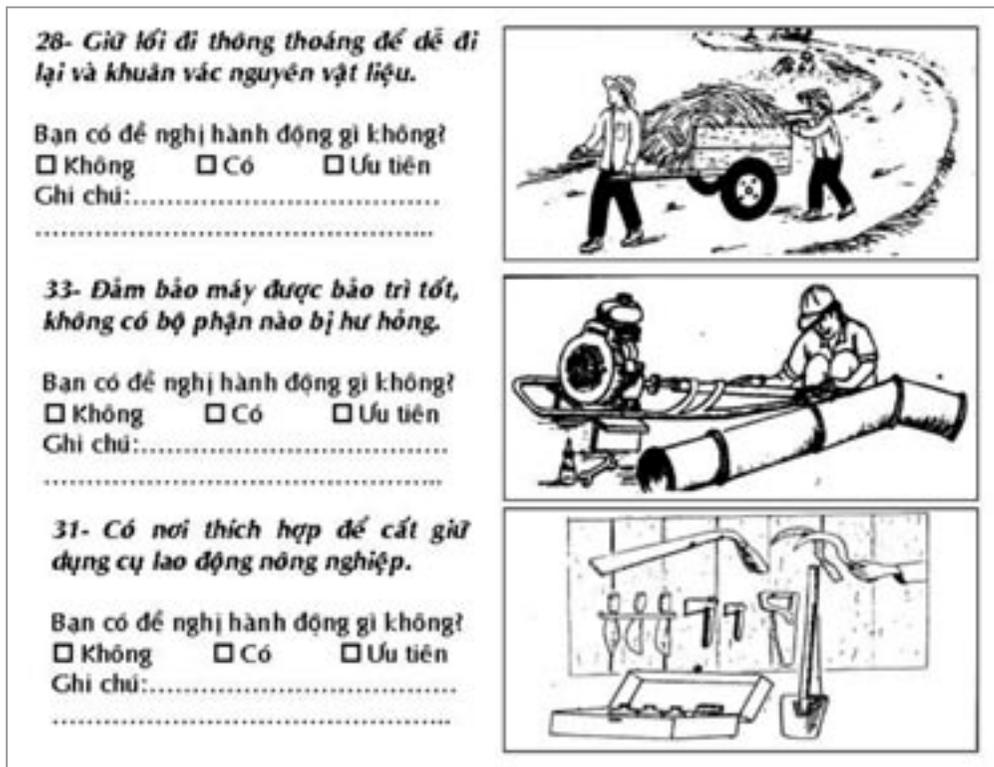


Figure 3-6. Part of the first version of the WIND checklist

3-1-3. Selecting the first target group and the way to assist farmers

The next step was to choose the target group for the pilot training. The team consulted the provincial departments of labour and health in Cantho province about this issue and selected average farmers earning a middle income as the first training target. The team planned to extend the coverage to poorer farmers after experiencing initial success with the middle-income farmers. The trained farmers were expected to gradually extend practical safety and health information to poorer farmers in the same communities.

A local government unit proposed to provide trained farmers with financial assistance to make improvements. They learned this idea from other income generation projects in Cantho province. After extensive discussions, we agreed that the WIND project would not provide financial assistance for farmers to implement improvements. Instead, the team decided to help farmers start with low-cost, practical solutions that could be made by using available local materials. We believed the best way to make the new training programme widely applicable and sustainable was to rely on the self-improvement initiative of local farmers.

3-2. First WIND training workshop

3-2-1. Failure of the first WIND training course

The first pilot WIND training workshop was planned and organized in the Vi Thanh Hospital School in 1995. Pairs of husbands and wives of farmers' families were invited from the nearby villages. A one-day training programme was prepared consisting of 4 sessions: (1) a farm visit with the action checklist exercise; (2) improving working conditions; (3) improving living conditions; and (4) developing improvement proposals. The action-checklist and the presentation materials using the collection of local good example photos were ready to be tested.

However, this first WIND training was unsuccessful due to the selection of the wrong training venue. Only male farmers came to the training venue. No women farmers attended due to the simple reason that the hospital was 20 minutes away by car from their village. Women farmers busy doing household work could not find the time to attend the training. Another important reason was that women farmers in the village were shy and unfamiliar with attending this kind of training and hesitated to go to the hospital located in the town.

3-2-2. Organizing the WIND training in the community - Learning from the lessons of the first WIND training

The organizers rescheduled the WIND training by choosing a venue that was close to participants, learning from the initial failed experience. They visited the target village and looked for an appropriate place for the training. There was a Buddhist temple located in the centre of the village. The monk from the village had helped the villagers and was respected by them. We asked the monk to permit us to organize the next WIND training workshop in his temple. He was pleased and allowed us to use the temple. The second pilot WIND training was thus conducted in this village temple (Figure 3-7) in Vi Thanh District in Can Tho province.

We invited an equal number of men and women farmers to participate in the



Figure 3-7. First WIND training held in a temple. Equal number of women and men farmers participated (left) and Participants going to the checklist exercise (right).

training. Twenty couples (husbands and wives) came to the temple for the training. We also invited two widows. They helped each other develop their own action plans. It was encouraging that many women farmers, although busy with household work, were able to come together with their husbands. This equal participation was possible because of the convenient location of the training venue.

As shown in Table 3-1, this initial WIND training programme was simple. After a short opening ceremony and an introduction session, participants visited a sugarcane farm and a farmer's house. They applied the 32-item WIND action-checklist and looked for good points and points to be improved there. This checklist exercise was carried out before trainers made technical presentations. This arrangement was to increase the participants' awareness that they were the centre of the WIND training and they could identify many practical ideas before receiving technical input from trainers. The subsequent group work sessions to discuss improvements became lively and had substance since all the participants visited the same farm and farmers' house and had common background experiences for the discussion. This was another advantage of organizing the checklist exercise before the technical presentation.

Table 3-1. Content of the first WIND training programme

07.00 – 07.30	Opening
07.30 – 08.00	Introducing the WIND programme
08.00 – 09.30	Visiting a sugarcane farm and a farmers' house with the checklist exercise
09.30 – 09.50	Tea break
09.50 – 11.20	Session 1. Improving working conditions
09.50 – 10.20	Trainer presentation

	10.20 – 10.50	Group discussion
	10.50 – 11.20	Group presentation
11.20 – 12.30		Lunch
12.30 – 14.00		Session 2. Improving living conditions
	12.30 – 13.00	Trainer presentation
	13.00 – 13.30	Group discussion
	13.30 – 14.00	Group presentation
14.00 – 14.20		Tea break
14.20 – 15.20		Developing an action plan by each farmer family
	14.20 – 14.50	Discussion
	14.50 – 15.20	Presenting action plans
15.20 – 15.40		Evaluating training programme
15.40 – 16.00		Closing

Two technical sessions on improving working and living conditions were conducted after the action checklist exercise. In each session, WIND trainers showed photos of local good examples and presented low-cost improvement ideas. These photos were the ones we had collected from many farms and farmhouses in Vi Thanh.

After the trainer input, farmers discussed in groups and identified three good points and three points to be improved in the farm and farmhouse they had visited with the checklist. Farmers discussed broad improvement needs in working and living conditions, covering materials handling, work environments, and welfare facilities. They also mentioned improvements in family life such as planning family income and expenses, safeguarding children, or increasing family communication. These proposals were born from the farmers' day-to-day working experiences and realized at low-cost.

In the last training session, the participating farmer families developed and presented their own action plans for improving their working and living conditions in their rice fields, farms and houses. They developed practical workplans similar to the proposals shown in table 3-2.

In the course of the training, WIND trainers paid attention to promoting and ensuring the equal participation of women and men. Women participants, although they were shy at the beginning, were encouraged to express their ideas during the group discussions and present their discussion results. Many women participants presented the group work results and increased their confidence and commitment for implementation. This equal participation between women and men became an important background to implementing improvements successfully. Since the first

WIND training, we have observed a number of initiatives and leadership by women to implement improvements in working and living conditions.

The first WIND pilot workshop carried out in a temple was completed with some positive outcomes. Easy access to the training was essential to facilitate the active participation of women farmers. The participatory training programme and tools developed facilitated farmers' active participation and assisted farmers in selecting practical action points which could be carried out at low cost. The subsequent WIND training workshop programmes and training tools and materials have been further improved based on these first WIND training experiences.

Table 3-2. Three improvement points in working and living conditions that participating farmers proposed after the group discussions

	Working conditions	Living conditions
Group 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wearing shoes when working in the rice field 2. Using long-sleeved shirts to protect farmers against strong heat from the sun 3. Storing pesticides safely 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing safety guards for children 2. Planning home economies (income and expenses) 3. Buying agro-machines together with neighbours
Group 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using a boat when carrying heavy agricultural products 2. Wearing long-sleeved shirts to protect farmers against strong heat from the sun 3. Building a resting facility in the rice field 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensuring food hygiene for children 2. Planning home economies 3. Increasing family communication
Group 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wearing long-sleeved shirts to protect farmers against strong heat from the sun 2. Building a resting facility in the rice field 3. Bringing safe drinking water to the rice field 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparing a family first aid kit 2. Washing utensils and clothes in a hygienic way 3. Having more openings in the house for better ventilation and lighting
Group 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Building a resting facility in the rice field 2. Bringing safe drinking water to the rice field 3. Constructing a toilet near the rice field 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keeping clothes in a proper and hygienic way 2. Planning home economies 3. Preparing a family first aid kit
Group 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Constructing a toilet near the rice field 2. Wearing shoes for working in the rice field 3. Storing pesticides safely 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Constructing a hygienic toilet 2. Preparing a family first aid kit 3. Washing utensils and clothes in a hygienic way

3-3. Evaluating the first WIND training

3-3-1. Training programme

The participating farmers evaluated the WIND training programme positively. They liked the technical content, the participatory presentation style, and found the farm visits with the checklist exercise practical. The length of the training was also appropriate for them. They proposed continuing support for their improvement actions and more frequent WIND training workshops to benefit more farmers.

Learning from this first WIND training experience, the project team agreed to upgrade the existing training materials and make them easier to use for participating farmers. The team started collecting more improvement examples made by the farmers through follow-up visits by the previous participant farmers. These new good examples by the WIND training participants were used for subsequent training activities. We also tried to collect more local good examples of working conditions as a priority. These examples were the most convincing training materials for new participant farmers.

3-3-2. Follow-up visits

The project team carried out a follow-up visit to the 20 households three months after the pilot WIND training workshop. Of the 20 households, 19 households had already carried out improvements (Table 3-3). The nature of the improvements covered basic needs of local farmers (Figures 3-8, 3-9, and 3-10) including hand-trucks for carrying heavy materials, safe use of machinery and pesticides, resting facilities, workstations with appropriate working heights, and sanitary toilet facilities.



Figure 3-8. Improvement of kitchen area

Before the improvement, cooking devices were placed on the floor (left) and After the improvement, they were placed on the table to improve the work posture (right)



Figure 3-9. After attending the WIND training, the participants worked together and improved the bridge

Many farmers started with easy-to-apply improvements in their living conditions and home environment such as lighting, ventilation, better cooking stations, or storing clean water, and extended their improvement actions to working conditions including materials handling, heat exposure, handling of pesticides and other work environment points. Some trained farmers extended their scope to improvements in their home economics by carefully planning and recording their income and expenses.



Figure 3-10. This family belonged to low-income group in the village. However, after the WIND training, she covered the wall by using plastic sacks to prevent dust coming from outside as the first step to the further improvements

Table 3-3. Number of improvements carried out by participating farmer families

Improvement areas \ Family	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	Total
Healthy food	2	2	3	0	1	2	1	3	0	0	0	1	2	4	1	1	0	1	0	2	26
Clean water	1	1	3	1	1	0	0	1	0	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	0	21
Home economics	3	0	0	2	1	3	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	14
Home environment	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	1	1	0	2	0	12
Carrying materials	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	11
Child safety	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Work environment	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total	6	5	7	5	3	5	4	6	0	3	3	6	6	7	3	4	2	6	5	2	88

Many improvements were carried out at low cost, as shown in table 3-4. 28 of the 88 improvements were implemented at no cost by using available local materials. For example, the trained farmers made a hand-truck to carry heavy materials, or made more openings in their houses for better ventilation. The farmers made many positive changes in their living and working conditions without external financial support. These self-help initiatives can continue to increase when they receive practical technical support and regular opportunities to exchange experiences with other farmers.

Table 3-4. Number of improvements carried out and level of expenditure

Improvement areas \ Costs (US\$)	No cost	Less than \$1	Less than \$5	Less than \$10	Less than \$50	More than \$50	Total cost
Healthy food	11	5	3	3	3	1	26
Clean water	8	4	7	2	0	0	21
Home economics	1	0	3	0	5	5	14
Home environment	4	2	0	2	4	0	12
Carrying materials	2	1	3	1	3	1	11
Child safety	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Work environment	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Total number of improvements	28	13	16	8	16	7	88



3-3-3. Initial spread of the WIND training to other villages

The next important step of our team was to help expand the coverage of the WIND programme to other villages by using existing people's networks. The local WIND trainers trained in the first WIND course were sent to the next target village and planned the second WIND training course with responsible village officials. The project team had a belief that this village-to-village collaboration would be the best mechanism for the long-term sustainability of the WIND programme. Though the WIND trainers from the first WIND village were not fully confident of conducting the second WIND course by themselves, the project team encouraged them to do so and promised our support. The head of the first WIND village visited the second village and helped to organize the second WIND training course.

Since then, the WIND training programme has spread spontaneously among farmers through their networks. Farmers trained by the WIND programme have disseminated practical low-cost ideas to their neighbouring farmers. Stimulated by their neighbours, some farmer families started improvement actions without attending any WIND workshop. The people's "informal" dissemination of the WIND programme from one village to another was a powerful method of widening the coverage of the WIND programme. These experiences later produced and materialized the idea of "Farmers can become best WIND trainers to other farmers", and led to the birth of "WIND farmer volunteers".

3-4. Conclusions

The WIND programme was born from the realities of the farmers' work and life in the Mekong Delta. Practical training tools such as the WIND action-checklist and local good example photo sheets were devised to support farmers' own self-help initiatives (Figure 3-11). Participatory training approaches applied in ILO's WISE training programme were the important basis of the WIND programme. The WIND programme facilitated lively discussions between both women and men farmers about their improvement actions. The farmers started real improvement activities after attending the training and demonstrated their initiative towards continuous improvements by using the local wisdom.

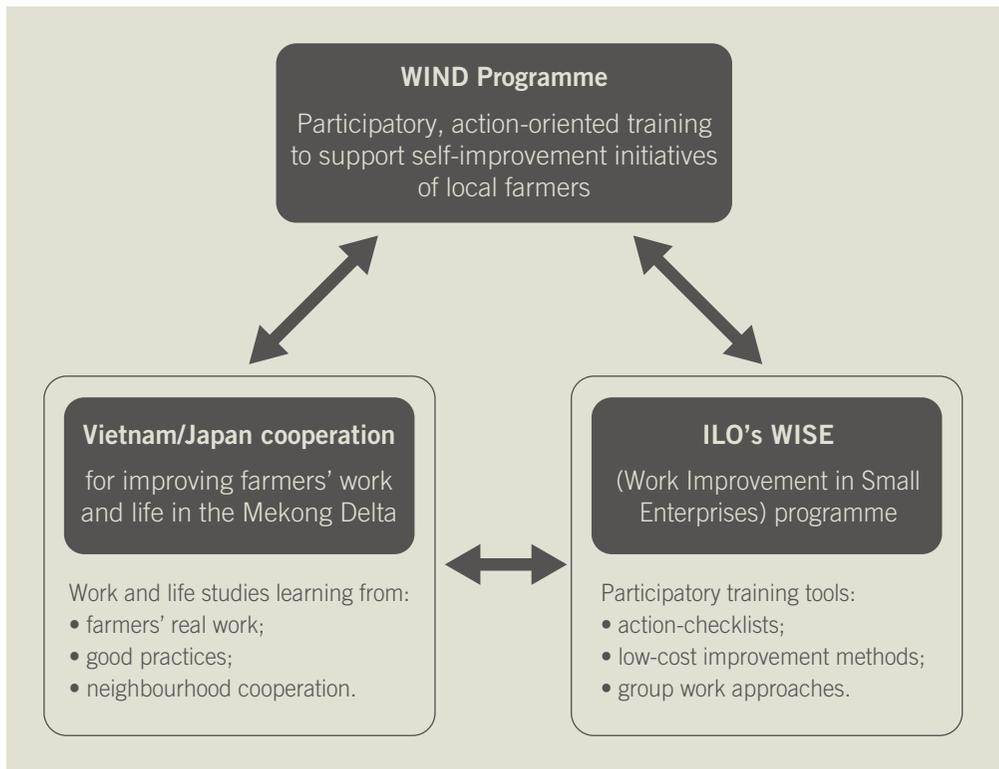


Figure 3-11. Technical backgrounds of WIND programme