

# Youth Connect

## Youth Community Resilience to Climate Change in the Mekong Delta (Y-CoRe)

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# Eco Youth Tour

## Project background

Hoa An Campus, Can Tho University, benefits from various natural ecosystems, including the Wetland Biodiversity Conservation Area, as well as agricultural experiment stations in crop cultivation, livestock farming, and aquaculture focusing on applied practices.

Additionally, an overview of international experiences and the opportunities and challenges for developing agritourism in Viet Nam highlights the urgent need for professional training and capacity building for individuals involved in the agritourism sector.

Agritourism is a popular form of tourism in many developed countries, including Viet Nam, bringing diverse benefits such as agricultural activity diversification, economic growth, cultural preservation, sustainable production, and pollution reduction. However, this model still faces several limitations.

Today, young people in Viet Nam and globally can bridge geographical and cultural gaps through various media, fuelling their passion for travel, exploration, and experiences. With the growing popularity of Bed and Breakfast (B&B) tourism, students are not only frequent travellers on such trips but are also beginning to take on roles as organisers of B&B tourism activities. More and more students are actively engaging in and contributing to the development of agritourism.

Students from Can Tho University are also contributing significantly to agritourism development through their academic knowledge, practical experience, and deep-rooted connection to the land and culture of the Mekong Delta.

This integration serves a dual purpose – community development and student development – by raising awareness of environmental protection, ecological conservation, and the preservation of the Mekong Delta's agricultural heritage, an urgent need for Hoa An Campus today.

## Project objectives

- Establish a club of 30 students trained in tour guiding, climate change knowledge, and provide hands-on experience while organising a pilot experiential tour at Hoa An Campus.
- Develop three to five model experiential tours designed and operated by club members at Hoa An Campus, Can Tho University, and surrounding communities in Hoa An Commune, Phung Hiep District, Hau Giang Province.
- Sustain and expand the club's membership while developing more experiential tours focused on natural and agricultural ecosystems in other localities.

## Project overview

The project was carried out in mid August 2024 at Can Tho University (Campus II, Can Tho City) and Hoa An Campus, Phung Hiep District, Hau Giang Province.

30 students participated in the training programme, drawn from the Faculty of Rural Development, Can Tho University, the Student Association of Can Tho University and the community of Hoa An Commune, Phung Hiep District, Hau Giang Province.

The project outcomes and community impact were as follows:

- **Awareness:** After the training, students gained a clear understanding of environmental changes caused by climate change, the importance of adaptation and how their actions affect this process. Through tourism-based experiential activities, students enhanced their knowledge of climate change and biodiversity conservation. The programme helped them shift their mindset and take individual actions, while using future club activities to spread awareness further.
- **Knowledge and Skills:** Through training sessions, individual project proposals, and community initiatives led by the club, students were equipped with essential environmental protection knowledge, as well as practical skills such as working as a team, delivering presentations, adapting rapidly, and persuasion.

The project formed a strong, connected community network through the following social connections:

- 30 students connecting over shared interests in climate change and biodiversity conservation
- the Youth Union of the College of Rural Development
- a network of eco-tourism household businesses.

## Outstanding outcomes

The Eco Youth Tour fan page was created, and a training schedule was developed that attracted 33 participants.

One training session was organised with guest speaker Le Thi Minh Chau, Operations Manager at Soha Travel International Tour & Event Joint Stock Company. She introduced students to essential knowledge and skills related to tourism, as well as methods for designing eco-friendly tours.

The objective of this thematic session was to provide young people with additional insights and perspectives on sustainable tourism in the current context. Following expert guidance, participants practised how to design sample tours, equipping them with the ability to independently build, manage, and operate tours.

The topic Green Tourism and Tour Development Guidance was one of the most important themes of this training, offering young people access to knowledge typically taught only to professional tour guides or tourism students.

These new insights not only enriched their experiences but also contributed to the success of the Eco Youth Tour initiative, which aims to provide youth with hands-on experiences in sustainable tourism and help them adapt to climate change in today's increasingly unstable natural environment.

Another training session was held with guest speaker Dr Le Tran Thanh Liem, a lecturer at Can Tho University, who delivered a training session on Environmental Knowledge and Climate Change Adaptation. Participants gained valuable knowledge about the environment and climate change phenomena, greenhouse gas emission standards, and types of ecosystems that help reduce emissions. The session emphasised sustainable tourism development and the critical role of youth adaptation to climate change in the context of global warming.

A further training session featured Nguyen Minh Cuong, Level I Trainer of the Central Committee of the Viet Nam Youth Federation, Standing Committee Member of Binh Minh Town Youth Union (Vinh Long Province), Party Committee Member, Deputy Secretary of Party Cell No. 3, Secretary of the School Youth Union, and Secretary of the Teachers' Youth Branch at Hoang Thai Hieu High School.

Sharing facilitation and game-organising skills helped young people develop creativity and critical thinking to design innovative, efficient, environmentally friendly activities aligned with green tourism practices.

A model eco-tour was successfully organised in the Hoa An area, with 30 young participants joining the experience. The tour included various activities related to tourism, biodiversity

conservation, and visits to integrated farming models (garden-pond-livestock), which help reduce waste and promote climate change adaptation.

## Team member's information

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