

**THE IMPACTS OF TOURISM ON
ETHNIC MINORITY INHABITANTS OF
SA PA DISTRICT, LAO CAI:**

Their Participation and Attitudes toward Tourism

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FOREWORD

Dr. Ph^om Th^e M^eng Hoa and Dr. L^om Th^e Mai Lan of the Human Geography Research Centre at the National Centre for Social Sciences and Humanities (HGRC-NCCSH) compiled this report, in collaboration with Annalisa Koeman and Nguy^on V^un L^om of IUCN Vietnam (The World Conservation Union). It is based on the results of the authors' field research by Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) in the district of Sa Pa. The surveys were undertaken by Mai Kim Oanh (field research manager) and Ph^om Th^e Qu^unh Ph^ung (field research assistant) with participation from members of the Sa Pa Women's Union and local tour guides.

The principal goal of the endeavour was to conduct in-depth research in the District of Sa Pa, L^uo Cai Province on the involvement in, impacts of and attitudes toward tourism within ethnic minority communities, as well as on the attitudes of tourists and Kinh business people in the town of Sa Pa toward ethnic minority communities and their awareness of the impacts of tourism. The research was commissioned by IUCN Vietnam's Sustainable

Tourism Project.

The research contains four focus areas:

1. four selected communes in the district of Sa Pa;
2. ethnic minority sellers in Sa Pa Market and ethnic minority "street children" in the town of Sa Pa;
3. Kinh business individuals in the town of Sa Pa and
4. domestic and international tourists.

The preliminary or final research findings will be an important part of an IUCN and International NGO initiative — a community tourism planning workshop to discuss sustainable tourism development and a sustainable tourism action strategy for Sa Pa, as specifically indicated in the terms of reference for this research project.

The opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of IUCN Vietnam or the Sustainable Tourism Project.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an economic sector which "depends for its very existence on quality natural environments as much as it equally does on the specific culture and society of the local inhabitants". Vietnam is a country in a process of socio-economic transformation with a young tourism industry. Though Vietnam's young tourism industry is full of potential and promise, there exists an urgent need to address a number of negative aspects, for the development of the industry in particular and the social and economic development of Vietnam in general. The protection and preservation of socio-cultural potentials and tourism's impacts on local communities and cultural resources needs to be paid due attention, just as the natural potential of tourism and its impacts on the conservation of nature already are being addressed. However, issues such as protecting the unique traditional cultural heritage of ethnic minority communities are still very new in Vietnam.

The goals of the two-year IUCN project entitled "Capacity-Building for Sustainable Tourism Initiatives" (1997-1999) have shown some objectives:

- to identify and raise awareness about the negative socio-economic, cultural and ecological impacts of tourism;
- to contribute to the development of sustainable community-based models of tourism which can generate sustainable income for some of the country's poorest and most disadvantaged communities;
- and at the same time to help maintain Vietnam's cultural and biological diversity.

One of the main issues which prompted the formation of this project was the increasing concern of many NGOs for the rapid change associated with tourism and the potential negative consequences of tourism on the ethnic minority communities of Sa Pa.

Some recent research conducted by Western researchers/scientists has shown that tourism can have a strong impact on ethnic minority communities, in particular the study of Michael DiGregorio, et al., entitled "The Growth and Impacts of Tourism in Sa Pa," (1996), and "Preliminary Study of Tourism in and around Sa Pa, Lựo Cai province" by Mark E. Grindley of Frontier-Vietnam (1997).

In the mentioned study, Michael DiGregorio concludes that tourism damages ethnic minority communities more than it benefits them. He argues that ethnic minority people are at the lowest end of the market chain, providing their own natural resources to tourism, and will likely suffer the greatest losses. In other words, they are the ones who directly gather forest resources and supply them to tourists through intermediaries such as restaurants, guesthouses, or shops of Kinh business townspeople in Sa Pa and that as a result they also are the first impacted if the environment is abused or if forest products become exhausted. Their direct participation in tourism activities such as the performance of traditional, cultural arts, and folklore, or permission for tourists to enter their villages, houses, or to stay overnight in their homes is not beneficial for them, says DiGregorio. Based on this, he assumes that as tourism comprises a larger share of the local economy, social

equality issues (as displayed in labour division as well as in benefit distributions between ethnic minority communities and Kinh people) are likely to become increasingly more important.

He proposes that a regulation mechanism to recalculate the benefits of tourism back into some long-term socio-economic and environmental improvement is needed, that minority people can retain rights over individual and community participation in the tourism economy and have more control over the access to their villages, ceremonies and home life. DiGregorio asserts that the commercialisation of some cultural elements of ethnic minority communities are inevitable along with the development of cultural tourism and that this can make the area less attractive to tourists, especially independent, adventurous, young foreign tourists who make up the majority of foreign tourists of Sa Pa. In their place less adventurous, wealthier foreign tourists, and domestic tourists will come and they will all be less interested in the culture of ethnic minority communities. He also predicts a tendency that Sa Pa will develop into an attractive and exotic entertainment resort.

Mark E. Grindley has sounded the alarm on what he calls the likely irreversible negative impacts of tourism, despite their current invisibility. He determines that tourism so far has not brought benefits to minority people, the communities who put the most strain on forest resources — which, according to him, "are inherently easier to manage, and more robust. Grindley has proposed that some measures are needed to manage Sa Pa's tourism so that it may bring more benefits for minorities, and by this, reduce pressures on the forest resources. He also proposes that there needs to be better organised tours from Sa Pa so that tourists stay in Sa Pa for longer periods of time. His conclusion is that tours must be developed focusing more on scenic beauty, the nature reserves, mountain climbing, etc.

The study of Dr. Trish Nicholson (October 1997) also shared the opinion that Sa Pa tourism at present brings little benefit to minority people. She particularly noticed that the time and skill required to produce embroidery and clothes is not compensated by cash values normally attached to a souvenir market, which further creates more of a burden on hard working minority women.

The recent research of Dr. Jean Michaud, conducted in May 1998, gives a brighter picture of the participation of ethnic minority communities in the tourism economy of Sa Pa, despite that he also supposes it is difficult for them to compete with Kinh "outsiders" and to keep control over their businesses. He asserts that they can only be small-scale traders and owners of inexpensive guesthouses. Further, according to his observations the current social practices of minorities seem not to suffer from tourism activities. He concludes that the concern over "the potential of immoral sexual intercourse with foreigners and the avoidance of compulsory schooling for street children" is largely unfounded.

The number of findings, opinions or views, common or distinguishing, regarding impacts of tourism on ethnic minority communities show the need to clarify the degree of impacts, including both positive and negative, on minorities. Particularly, it needs to identify their perceptions and attitudes toward tourism impacts. We hope backgrounds and goals set by IUCN in this project can contribute to the planned Community Tourism Planning Workshop, aimed at assembling people from broad sectors in the community to discuss tourism issues and outline a basic framework for a *Sustainable Tourism Action Strategy (STAS)*.

Project statement:

The aim of the project is to guide tourism development so that tourism activities do not harm possibilities for future generation's needs for the industry. In other words, the plan of tourism development is to avoid damaging or destroying its own resources, natural, human and cultural, so that tourism can develop continuously over a long period of time. Ultimately development should allow attractions to remain attractive to tourists, while also to bring more and more benefits to the local indigenous minority people, ensuring improvement in the quality of their lives and prosperity.

Addressing these issues, IUCN in particular, and NGOs in general, wish to contribute to the sustainable tourism industry in Sa Pa, based on community participation. *Community participation means that it must be based on the perceptions, attitudes and willingness of the local people toward tourism and their involvement in the sector.* Tourism development planning must rely on the participation of the local people, especially ethnic minority communities, who make up the majority of the district population.

I. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Besides the town of Sa Pa where tourism activities are concentrated, four other communes were selected, based on distances to the town, ethnic composition of population, and whether they are located within the

Hoàng Liên Sơn forest reserve. The first selection included Sìn Sộ Hạ, Lao Chội, Tộ Van and Bộn Hạ each with respectively increasing distances from the town of Sa Pa.

However, the initial result of the survey revealed that although only the commune of Bộn Hạ has Tày ethnic minority, and the remaining three do not, the tourism impact on the commune is rather limited and most of its population has very few activities related to tourism. Therefore, after consultation with IUCN, it was decided that Tộ Phin would be taken as an alternative. It may be said that these four selected communes are the communes which are the most involved in the tourism industry as well as the most impacted by it in Sa Pa (if excluding the town of Sa Pa), so they do suit the aims of the survey.

The main method adopted was the method of Rapid Rural Assessment (RRA), used for defining the issues, problems of tourism, and identifying the thinking and attitudes of ethnic minority communities themselves regarding tourism issues and their suggestions for solutions. The interviews, formal and informal discussions, were held with representatives from local authorities (provincial, district and commune level), provincial departments (Department of Commerce and Tourism of Lào Cai province, the Lào Cai Tourism Company, Department of Police and District of Sa Pa Women's Union), leaders of communes, villages, and ethnic clans, ethnic elders as well as representatives of different social groups such as youth, women, groups of tourists and business people in the town of Sa Pa.

The commune leaders group meeting usually consisted of 2-4 individuals (for example there were four individuals in the Lào Cai meeting group: the Vice Lead of Commune People's Committee, a Land Administration Cadre Leader, a Production Activities Cadre Leader and the Head of the Farmers Association) or a group of clan heads and ethnic elders from two to five individuals (there were two clan headers in Tộ Van meeting). Women's Groups also varied from two to 16 individuals (16 and 12 women participated in meetings at Tộ Phin and Sìn Sộ Hạ communes respectively).

The questionnaire survey method used intended to quantify preliminary results and findings or identify problems. A survey of 10% of the total population of each of four selected communes was conducted (carried out by local surveyors who spoke ethnic minority languages and were familiar with and were well known among locals in the surveyed areas). The size of the survey was 110 households (HHs), including 78 HHs of the H'mong ethnic group, 17 HHs of the Dao ethnic group and 15 HHs of the Giày, each sample corresponding to the respective ratios of the 10% ethnic composition of the communes. Similarly, the same method was used for 29 Kinh business people engaged in tourism in the town of Sa Pa, 27 ethnic street-sellers, 26 street children, and 28 international and 26 domestic tourists were interviewed. The selection of subjects for the survey was based on a random sampling but was modified or adjusted during the survey to be as representative as possible.

II. SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF DISTRICT OF SA PA

Sa Pa is a mountainous district, with nine ethnic groups living in the area. The most populous population in the district are the H'mong ethnic group, accounting for 53% of the total district population, followed by the Dao ethnic group making up 24%, then by the Kinh (also known as the Vietnamese) comprising 13.7%, the Tày 5.7%, the Giày 1.5% and the Xa Phã ethnic group — 1.2%. Other ethnic groups are in very small numbers. The cultivated land accounts for only 4.4% to the total natural area of the district, in which 45% is wet rice fields, 39% dry fields — mainly corn fields. Due to the limitations of temperatures of the local mountain climate, with its cold winter season, main grains can be planted in Sa Pa usually one harvest per year, while arable land is limited. On average for the number of HHs, local food is available for only six to ten months in the year.

During the remaining months of the year, they have to rely on forest products such as the trade of wood, forest foods such as mushrooms and young bamboo sprouts, game meat, medicinal herbs, and for tourism ornamental plants, orchids, or honey. As a result, the availability of these resources is being reduced and the forest is degrading rapidly along with an increase of demand from the outside and a natural population growth inside the district. At present, the Government has banned the collection of forest wood, particularly due to exhaustion of forest products, and has further banned the planting and trading of opium. As a result, the standard of living for the ethnic minority communities of Sa Pa, especially the H'mong, has been low.

The Government and local authorities have tried many measures to help the local population find ways to substitute opium and wood income, to stabilise and sedentarise their cultivation practices, to fight food shortages, and to upgrade income levels, especially those of the ethnic minority communities. Many investment projects of the State Sedentarisation

programme, forest development programmes, agricultural extension programmes and NGO programmes, both domestic, and mainly international, were or are being carried out in many communes of the district.

Besides the introduction of some food and cash crops Ò such as potatoes, vegetables, fruit (i.e. peach, plum, and persimmon), and the breeding of pig, chicken, and goat Ò the planting of cardamom under-forest growth has been a very important source of income for ethnic minority communities, especially the H'mong. For example, as it was reported by the local people and their officials that the commune of SĨn Sô Hả has almost 90% of its total HHs planting and harvesting the product, the commune Lao Chội Ò 30%, and the commune Tô Van also has many H'mong families engaged in the activity.

In particular, out of 110 HHs surveyed, there were 86 HHs (making up 78.2%) who said that sales and trade were an important source of income during food shortages. However, according to the report of the local communes' authorities, on average, there were 40 — 60% of poor HHs who suffer from food shortages, of which the H'mong are grouped as having the highest poverty ratio. Thus, in helping the local ethnic minority communities of Sa Pa, the need for the creation of new opportunities for employment and new sources of income generation is very important and acute. Contributions need to be made toward poverty alleviation and the protection and rehabilitation of local forest resources. In this context, the development of tourism in Sa Pa in upcoming years should be of particular significance to both local and international communities.

III. SA PA TOURISM POTENTIAL

Located at an altitude of 1,500-1,600 m, Sa Pa has a natural landscape and climate that has always been historically very attractive to tourists. At the beginning of the twentieth century, during colonisation, the French discovered the area's great resort potential. More than 200 villas were built for summer holidays, away from the heat of the Delta. After liberation from French rule, Sa Pa became a resort for high-ranking officials of the Vietnam Communist Party and Government. In 1979, during the Vietnam-China border conflict, Chinese troops destroyed almost all of the villas of Sa Pa, leaving only about ten intact. During the years 1992-1993, just after the construction of a number of State guesthouses, which mostly hosted Government staff, and the return of French visitors (both researchers and tourists), Sa Pa once again became an attractive tourist destination.

The number of tourists coming to Sa Pa has been rising steadily. According to the Department of Trade and Service, from 1995-1997, the number of both domestic and foreign tourists coming to Sa Pa was increased nearly by half (from 15,800 to 30,800), with the number of foreign tourists in particular more than doubling (from 4,000 to 9,000).

Sa Pa has enormous potential in the tourism industry, as the results of this survey, as in previous studies, again affirm the diversity and wealth of Sa Pa tourism resources in its ability to meet the demands of tourists.

Sa Pa continues to be a unique chance for tourists to explore new landscapes and cultures. The results of the survey revealed that there were some predominant reasons, for which tourists come to Sa Pa. The fresh mountainous climate, the culture of ethnic minority communities and the beautiful landscape were the most important reasons determining trips to Sa Pa for tourists. Of the total of 54 tourists interviewed (including 26 domestic and 28 international individuals), there were 37 individuals (68.5%) who choose the climate, 35 individuals (64.8%) who came to see the ethnic cultures, and 34 (62.9%) who said their reason for visiting Sa Pa was to enjoy the scenery.

Most of the tourists interviewed gave four to six different reasons for visiting Sa Pa (30/50 individuals or 55.6%).

Among foreign and domestic tourists, there were more differences between the reasons given by the two groups for visiting Sa Pa for half of the tourists surveyed (27/54 or 50%), in which the ratio of foreigners who displayed a knowledge of the differences was 15/28 (53.6%), higher than that of Vietnamese (12/26 or 46.2%). Among Vietnamese tourists, the ratio of people who had come to Sa Pa for the first time, recognised the differences between foreign and domestic motives less (3/14 or 21.4% of those who were visiting for the first time) in comparison to those who had come several times and did acknowledge that foreign and domestic tourists had different motives for travel to the area (9/12 or 75%). Most of the Kinh business townspeople (79.3%) further affirmed the existence of differences between these two types of tourists when asked (see Table 2).

Table 1: Main reasons for coming to Sa Pa

Value Label	Domestic tourists		Foreign tourists	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1. To enjoy the cooler climate	22	84.6	15	53.6
2. To see ethnic cultures	16	61.5	19	67.9
3. To see "Love Market"	13	50.0	3	10.7
4. To enjoy the scenery	11	42.3	23	82.1
5. To be in unpolluted and healthy environment	10	38.5	6	21.4
6. To be closer to nature	9	34.6	8	28.6
7. To relax	6	23.0	10	35.7
8. To escape from urban life	6	23.0	8	28.6
9. To learn about the living conditions of ethnic minority communities	5	19.2	14	50.0
10. To buy ethnic products	3	11.5	2	7.1
11. To exercise / walk	2	7.7	17	60.7
12. To do challenging hiking and climbing	1	3.8	5	17.9
13. To buy exotic products	1	3.8	2	7.1
14. To learn about the ecology and environment	1	3.8	1	3.6
15. To socialise with friends	-	-	3	10.7
16. Other	-	-	1	3.6
Total	26	100.0	28	100

Table 2: Recognition of differences among reasons for visiting Sa Pa between Vietnamese and foreign tourists

Interviewees	Number of individuals interviewed	No differences in reasons for visiting Sa Pa		Differences in reasons for visiting Sa Pa	
		Individuals	%	Individuals	%
Vietnamese tourists:	26	14	53.8	12	46.2
Who had:					
- Come to Sa Pa for first time:	14	11	78.6	3	21.4
- Come several times:	12	3	25.0	9	75.0
Foreign tourists	28	13	46.4	15	53.6
Kinh townsfolk business individuals	29	3	10.3	23	79.3

In general, the overall opinion gathered from the consistent answers of the above three groups interviewed was that there are differences between foreign and Vietnamese tourist interests in Sa Pa. Most of them also affirmed that the biggest difference is that most Vietnamese tourists come to enjoy the pleasant climate, while foreigners come to see the unique native cultures of ethnic minority communities. All of the groups interviewed agreed that foreigners largely visit because they want to see the famous landscape, to enjoy physical activities such as hiking and mountain climbing, or to be in a clean, unpolluted environment, while the majority of Vietnamese come to relax, enjoy the cool mountain air and escape from the urban heat of the Delta region, see the "love market", or to buy ethnic minority handicrafts.

Thus, the underlying motivations for Vietnamese tourists to visit Sa Pa were quite different from that of foreigners. The main motivation for coming of Vietnamese tourists appears to be relaxation and restoring physiological health, whereas foreigners aim to satisfy their desire to understand other cultures, explore new landscapes or to enjoy sporting activities.

Regardless of the difference between foreign and Vietnamese tourists in their reasons for coming to Sa Pa as determined before the start of their trips, both groups claimed to gain the same high appreciation for the culture of the ethnic minority groups once they explored Sa Pa. The ethnic minority cultures are considered to be among the most important factors attracting tourists to Sa Pa; 25/28 foreigners, and 25/26 Vietnamese tourists shared this opinion. The beautiful landscape was second among attractive factors by the ratio of answers among foreigners. This is in line with the comments of the business townspeople; 93.1% of them said that mainly the ethnic cultures attracted tourist, 82.8% of them mentioned the pleasant climate, and 79.3% mentioned the unpolluted environment as also being a large factor.

It is worth noting that ethnic minority communities are the most important factor attracting tourists to Sa Pa, even though there are only five main ethnic groups represented in the district. In reality, foreign interest has been placed only on the H'mong, Dao and Xa Phã ethnic minority groups, which are the poorest communities. These three ethnic groups, due to the characteristics of their isolated settlement, and their social and economic activities, they have been more or less separated from other groups or outsiders. Thus, up to now, they have retained their indigenous cultures, which are very unique and remain quite different from the cultures of more developed communities. Moreover, Sa Pa is the district where these ethnic minority communities live in large relatively concentrated numbers, with the H'mong ethnic group making up the majority of the population for the district of Sa Pa. Many Vietnamese tourists were not very interested in the characteristics of the various ethnic minority cultures initially. However after arriving in Sa Pa, the majority of the domestic tourists became highly appreciative of ethnic minority culture and found it very fascinating.

Since 1993 and 1994, the Lào Cai Provincial Committee Resolution has indicated that tourism should be developed as the spearhead economic sector for the province and promoted to all sectors of investment in tourism development for the province in general and Sa Pa in particular. Currently, the provincial authority is active in planning the development of tourism, a scheme in which Sa Pa is the most important site. The District of Sa Pa is also trying to make a plan of tourism development in the direction of satisfying as much as possible the needs of tourists, where ethnic minority communities and their traditions and original culture play a crucial role.

IV. SPATIAL SCOPE OF IMPACTS OF TOURISM INDUSTRY IN SA PA DISTRICT

Despite the fact that the growth of tourism in the district has reached high or very high levels in the last five years, the positive influence of tourism on the local people, in terms of its spatial scope and intensity, has been limited and mostly confined to the town. It is in the local town where almost all of the hotels, guesthouses, restaurants, snack or Karaoke bars, shops, and services are concentrated, and where the offices, essential services, and other business activities related with the tourism industry are operating. The majority of the urban population in the area is ethnic Kinh (Vietnamese) people. Thus, almost all tourism expenditures are likely to be spent in the town of Sa Pa, directly benefiting the Kinh, despite the fact that many of the activities of tourists (especially foreign tourists) are carried out in the vicinities which are populated by ethnic minority communities. In reality, the majority of the tourism actually takes place in and around ethnic minority villages, in areas of scenic and unique natural and cultural landscapes, such as at the Hoàng Liên Sơn Nature Reserve, etc.

The impacts of tourism on the surrounding areas where ethnic minority groups live, are mostly concentrated along established tourism routes such as Sa Pa Ồ Hầm Rạng (located within the town's boundary), Sa Pa Ồ Cắt Cắt Ồ Phanxipan, Sa Pa Ồ Lao Chội Ồ Tộ Van Ồ Bôn Hạ, Sa Pa Ồ Tộ Phin, and Sa Pa Ồ Thĩc BỐc. Generally, the degree of interaction between the tourism industry and the indigenous communities in the district territory tends to decrease, as the distance between the town and its surrounding localities increases. The close distances from the villages to the town centre and their convenient positions along main tourists' routes have contributed to the tourist demand for handicrafts from the communes. Sĩn Sộ Hạ, Lao Chội, Tộ Phin have guests visiting its villages and households almost every day of the week. According to commune officials and the local people, during the main tourism seasons (the winter for foreign and summer for domestic tourists), they have tourists visiting their villages and house every day. These tourists engage in different types of tourism such as visiting houses, hiking and climbing, and simply enjoying the scenery of the eco-cultural landscape.

There are tourism routes down along the valley of the Hoa Hạ river, in the east and south-east communes of Tộ Van, Hđu

Thồ, Sỉn Sộ Hạ and along the Sa Pa border commune of Lao Chội. Here, tourists may walk or hike along roads and trails to enjoy the scenic mosaic landscapes of the valley, with its restored natural green cover dotted with terraced rice and corn fields and villages.

In the boundary areas between Tộ Van and Hứ Thồ communes of the H'mong, there are large carved stone arrangements skirting the hills, which are considered to be the autographs of ancient peoples. So far the time period of the autographed stones remains a mystery to scientists, further peaking the curiosity of tourists. The H'mong ethnic composition of Lao Chội commune is complimented by Tộ Van commune, which has a Dao village and a famous suspended bamboo bridge crossing the Hoa Hạ river valley. It is an important site on the tourist route and is visited regularly. On the Southwest of the commune, there are villages of H'mong people in the forest of Hoằng Liễn SỪn. It is located on one of the paths up to Phanxipan mountain. Unfortunately, there are only about three or four occasions each year during which these villages actually receive tourists and the local people benefit very minimally from tourism.

Giỳ ethnic minority villages do not draw particular attention from foreigners but do occasionally interest curious Vietnamese tourists. Although the village of the Giỳ people is situated in an easily accessible area, foreign tourists usually pass by the village rather than stay to visit. The Giỳ are very small in number and have a more developed society and higher standard of living compared to other minorities, therefore foreigners may find them uninteresting.

Similarly to the Giỳ, the villages of Tỳ and Nĩng people in Thanh Kim, Thanh Phó, Nẹm SỈi, and Bộn Hạ communes also do not attract much attention from tourists. The long distance (more than 15 km) between the area and the town increases the constraints of travel for foreign tourists. According to Bộn Hạ commune's officials, people in the area receive visits from tourists only six or seven times each year. Most of them pass by the area on their way to visiting the Xa Phã people in Nẹm Cang commune. Some years ago, when tourists were permitted to stay overnight in the villages, they sometimes rested in the commune for one night, but almost only at some fixed households who had established relationships with Kinh business townspeople. The vast majority of the local villagers had neither any idea about tourism nor its impacts.

In vicinities nearby the town, the traditional culture of the ethnic minorities is in danger of commercialisation. Such changes drive foreign tourists further away from town in order to see more original and intact cultures of ethnic minority communities, bringing waves of tourist activity further out to more surrounding areas.

Tourism activities have not yet reached the northern part of the district of Sa Pa, except for Tộ Phin which has been a tourist location for a long time, together with the territory of the Silver Waterfall, situated near National Highway 4D. There is potential here to attract domestic tourists to the site. However, although Tộ Phin is easily accessible, the number of visitors to the villages and households is low, especially in comparison to areas along other routes.

The northern communes of Sa Pộ, Trung Chội and Tộ Giẻng Phẻnh do not have any special tourism resources to offer to tourists, especially to those who have been spending their time on main tourist routes of the area and have been satisfied with their experiences thus far. The distance of the villages to the town and tourists' unfamiliarity to guides makes it more difficult for tourists to explore and understand the northern part of the district.

The participation of these communes in the tourism industry has been restricted to selling hand-made embroidered clothes or other traditional handicraft products. Apart from the sale of these products, they also occasionally sell some agricultural or forestry products in the town of Sa Pa. So far, these communes do not have street children selling wares, but only adult females who street-sell local products.

Regular visits by tourists to the vicinities of the town may partly explain why Lao Chội, Tộ Phin, Sỉn Sộ Hạ, Hứ Thồ and Tộ Van have had the most, and increasing, number of the H'mong and Dao (both adults and children) directly participating in tourism activities among communes of the district.

It can be said that the main benefit that the tourism industry has brought to the district area has been economic. It has been unequally distributed between localities in the territory and between different ethnic groups. This conclusion corresponds to the common opinions of the communes' authorities, representatives of different organisations and the local ethnic people.

Almost all of the interviewees agreed that the town and its Kinh people were the ones who received the biggest share of benefits from tourism, and that minorities only gained a very small part. The absolute number and relative proportion of minority people directly involved in and benefiting from tourism was very small in comparison with those Kinh in the town. In addition, the proportion gets smaller if the comparison is made with the total district population.

The tourism industry likely has influenced only the H'mong and Dao groups, and in part the Gi'ly group, with almost no influence on other groups such as the T'uy and the Xa Phã. Correspondingly, the communes where tourism activities are abundant and tourists consume many products obviously benefit the most. Those communes were Lao Ch'oi, T'ô Phin, S'ĩn S'ô H'ạ, followed by H'đu Th'ỉo, T'ô Van, S P'ĩn, B'ôn H'ạ, Ban Khoang, and N'ẹm S'ĩ. The remaining vicinities of the area cannot participate in the tourism industry, with the exception of some of the villagers from remote areas coming to Sa Pa on the weekend to sell agricultural products (see Figure 1).

V. POSITIVE IMPACTS OR BENEFITS OF TOURISM

A. Town of Sa Pa and its Kinh business community

The benefits that tourism brings to the town of Sa Pa differ very little from previously known benefits of the industry. The successful development of tourism in Sa Pa has relied mainly on the increase of the number of tourists, which has stimulated investment in technical infrastructure and services, further accompanied with an explosion of new hotels and restaurants.

Over the last several years, the face of the town has changed dramatically in some places, unrecognisable from decades past, due to rapid change and development. At present, the concentration of profits gained within the town's boundaries and the steady increase in the number of tourists coming to Sa Pa has made investors consider it a very bright prospect. Not only the local townspeople but also many private, as well as outside state companies, have rushed to Sa Pa to invest in construction, trade activities and tourism services. This will result in the growth of investment capital and assets for the local community and the overall prosperity of Sa Pa.

Sa Pa has become animated, keeping pace with integration into the developmental and socio-economic transformation of the country. Thanks to the improvement of supply and demand conditions, goods imported from other areas are in abundance, and cheaper and easier to purchase in Sa Pa. Long-time residents of the town would not like to pass up the opportunity to gain a profit from the tourism industry. They will make every effort to participate in this promising and accessible industry. According to the Province's statistics, the number of family businesses and services in the district of Sa Pa has increased from 102 families in 1991, to 346 in 1995, or three to four times in four years. It may be said that most of this change has taken place in the town's territory.

To meet the needs of tourism development as well as to create favourable conditions for gaining benefits from tourism, the local authorities have made efforts in town planning, investment in basic technical infrastructure, and development of town roads, transportation systems and main tourist routes. They have also created and implemented some projects, aimed at the development of tourist sites in order to increase their convenience and attraction for visitors.

Thanks to these efforts, the provision of electricity and communication and postal services have improved remarkably in Sa Pa and have benefited the local community as a whole. As reported by district leaders, investment is also being aimed at solving the issues of water provision and garbage collection. Some precedents for cultural and economic services have been or are being constructed such as construction of the town's indoor marketplace, the inauguration of the district's Cultural House, and the planned renovation of the stadium.

Currently, scenic gardens, eco-tourism complexes, and an artificial lake and park construction are all in the investment process. The local authorities are also making efforts to implement measures to manage a healthy direction for tourism development.

B. Rural areas and ethnic minority communities

A large proportion of the profits from tourism have been concentrated in urban areas, directed to the Kinh

people, with a considerable amount of the profits being drawn out from the district's boundaries as tours are often organised from Hanoi (the surveys show that more than 20% of foreign tourists travelling with a guide in Sa Pa were using guides from Hanoi). However, relatively speaking, it may be said that tourism has had certain positive effects on ethnic minority communities and their territories.

1. Employment and Income

From the point of view of other 'stakeholders', i.e. tourists and Kinh business people, 77.8% (42/54) of the total tourists surveyed believed that the ethnic minority communities gained financial benefits from tourism (domestic 88.5%, international tourists 67.9%), while 44.4% (24/54: 61.6% domestic and 28.6% foreign tourists) thought that they gained in the form of employment opportunities. The opinions of Kinh business townspeople were similar; 93.1% (27/29) believed that tourism brought financial benefits and 69.0% (20/29) said it brought employment opportunities to ethnic minority communities.

Tourism development has increased the consumption demand of visitors on local products, both material and cultural, within and outside district boundaries. Meeting this demand has created valuable income for local ethnic minority producers.

The income generation from tourism by ethnic minority communities in Sa Pa, mainly by H'mong and Dao ethnic groups, may be divided into several areas.

a) Sale of cultural or handicraft products to visitors

The most profitable tourism activity by ethnic minority communities is *the direct or indirect sale of cultural or handicraft products to visitors*. Participants in this activity in Sa Pa are street-sellers, mostly H'mong and Dao people, comprised of female elders, young women, children and a very small number of males.

As some researchers have written, the tourist is not a completely new phenomenon to ethnic minority communities in Sa Pa, due to the appearance of the French and other Europeans in the area since the beginning of the twentieth century. Historically, outsiders often walked or rode on horses to visit villages and bought the handicraft products of ethnic minority people. However, the communication between tourists and the local people was very limited, so the impact of the former on the latter has not been very significant.

The number of tourists has increased in recent years, and as tourists (mostly foreign) are starting to express an interest in ethnic minority lifestyles and a willingness to buy local embroidered products and jewelry as souvenirs, the participation of the ethnic minority communities in tourism and its services continues to develop and grow.

In the beginning, minority people would sell anything they had (even items still in-use) which might be coveted after being noticed by a tourist. Later, after recognising the opportunity, some of the minorities, of their own initiative, made clothing and jewelry themselves or bought them from others to sell to tourists in the market.

As the production of embroidered products is very time and labour intensive, the availability of ready-to-sell pieces gradually decreased. Eventually, street-sellers quickly adapted by either purchasing handicrafts from people who either could not go to the market often or did not have the time and conditions to engage in the activity (such as lack of capital or familiarity with street-selling skills), and shifted the buying from one to another, to sell to tourists. Ethnic minority people would rather buy and directly re-sell their own products to tourists than sell them to the shops of Kinh business townspeople in the town to re-sell in turn. Other practices started, such as the selling of old collected pieces of family cloth which were refurbished to suit the tastes of tourists. In addition, as the demand for embroidered products increases, the more traditional patterns, which required considerable time and labour to produce, were modified and simplified to curb the rise of production costs.

Within only three to four years, the producing and selling of embroidered products and ethnic jewellery to tourists in Sa Pa has had both direct and indirect impacts on the ethnic minority people of the communes of Sa Pa. The people of other neighbouring districts such as Bĩt Xĩt, Mẽng Khũng, Bũc Hĩ, Mĩ Cũng Chũi and even some districts of Lai Chũu province have also been affected. The villagers from these mentioned districts often go to Sa Pa on the weekend to supply a portion of the handicrafts for Sa Pa street-sellers.

According to the results of this survey, as consulted with various information provided by local authorities and local people from different social groups in surveyed areas, there are currently are about 40 permanent ethnic street-sellers and 20-30 street children aged seven to fifteen in the town of Sa Pa.

Of the 27 street-sellers interviewed, there were 19 H'mong people mostly ranging in age from 40 to 70, seven Dao people from ages 26 to 60, and one was a Gi_y person.

According to the ethnic minority community people interviewed in the four surveyed communes surrounding the town of Sa Pa (which have the most street-sellers, especially, Tộ Phin and Lao Chội), most H'mong street-sellers are female elders, 50 years of age or older, who have children and grandchildren to do the farm work and housework at home. That also, in the opinion of community members and officials, is why the H'mong women often stay in town for the whole week, year-round. As they are old and used to working (not lazy), they are neither embarrassed nor shy of following visitors around and convincing them to buy their goods, as the younger women may be. The younger women often join the elders at the market on the weekends or on their leisure days.

The Tộ Phin women, both H'mong and Dao, were in agreement that the women can earn more money for their families from selling goods to tourists and therefore, many husbands are ready and willing to take care of all the farm work or housework to help while their wives engage in producing goods or street-selling.

Also according to them, compared to the H'mong women, the Dao women are more free because of several reasons. The Dao do not weave their own cloth on which to embroider, as the H'mong do. Moreover, the designs of the Dao are simpler and they use a faster embroidering technique in which they can pattern a design using only one side of the material. These reasons may contribute to the fact that among the commune's street-sellers, from the ages of 20 to 50, Dao women comprise the majority, numbering four to five times more as compared to H'mong street-sellers.

Also according to this survey, *the most common goods marketed by street-sellers* are embroidered items, including clothing, collars, belts, hats and bags, and other ethnic handicrafts such as jewellery, traditional pan-pipes, and flutes. There are individuals who sell old embroidered clothing, dye chemicals and loose embroidered pieces to be used as materials to produce more clothing for sales to tourists. There are others who sell forest goods, such as orchids, and other ornamental or medicinal plants. There are some merchants who meet the local demand for essential medicines such as deep heat oil and other health remedies, dyeing chemicals, bridal and other traditional head-dresses, etc.

In comparison with the adult street-sellers, street children have a more limited range of goods to sell; jewellery (mostly bracelets) and traditional musical instruments (flutes and mouthharps) were the most common ones. Among 26 interviewed there were 25 children (96.1%) selling jewellery (of which 20, or 76.9%, were selling bracelets) and 24 children (92.3%) selling musical instruments (of which 22, or 84.6%, were selling mouthharps). There were only five (19.2%) selling hats, four (15.4%) selling embroidered bags, three (11.5%) selling woollen embroidered shirt cuffs, and one selling pieces of embroidered cloth. (see Table 3)

Table 3: Common products sold

	street-sellers		street children	
	number (individuals) ($\Sigma = 27$)	percentage interviewed (%)	number (individuals) ($\Sigma = 26$)	percentage interviewed (%)
- Embroidered clothing	16	59.2	1	3.8
- Hats	17	63.0	5	19.2
- Embroidered bags	17	63.0	4	15.4
- Woollen embroidered shirt cuffs			3	11.5
- Jewellery	11	40.7	25	96.1
- Traditional musical instruments	8	29.7	24	92.
- Herbs	1	3.7		
- Old used clothing		3.7		

- Loose embroidered pieces	5	18.5		
- Dyeing chemicals		7.4		

Table 4: Best-selling products

	street-sellers		street children	
	Number (individuals) ($\Sigma = 20$)	percentage (%) of the total number answered	number (individuals) ($\Sigma = 20$)	percentage (%) of the total number answered
Embroidered clothing	10	50	1	5
Used old clothing	1	5	-	
Hats	8	40	2	10
Bags	6	30	1	5
Jewellery	4	20	14	70
Flutes and mouthharps	3	15	13	65

The street children only have two types of customers: foreign and Vietnamese tourists. Out of the 26 children interviewed, 24 (92.3%) said they have had foreign customers and 16 (61.5%) have had Vietnamese ones. The children said that the foreign tourists as customers have by far a much higher tendency to buy more expensive products and to buy in larger quantities in comparison to the Vietnamese. Therefore, 24/27 (88.9%) of the street-sellers said that they are able to sell products to foreign tourists, while only 13/27 (48.1%) successfully sold to domestic ones.

There were four street-sellers interviewed who represented an exception to the majority and mostly sold re-sold goods, combined only in part with wholesale sales. This included two individuals from Pha Long, in the district of Mêng Khe, who ran the retail sale of goods imported from China such as fabric, thread, herbs, medicine and mouthharps, one individual from Bít Xít district, collecting and selling old or used embroidered cloth, and one individual (of the Giáy ethnic group), who had recently moved to the area from the commune of Tô Văn, specialising mostly in the retail sale of jewellery made by Kinh in the Red River Delta in ethnic handicraft styles. This may describe why by the results of the survey revealed that these four sellers had a wider diversity of clients: Vietnamese tourists, local ethnic minority community people (who bought products for their own use or for re-sale), and also Kinh townspeople.

In answering the question regarding whether there was an increasing demand for any of their products in particular, there were only 9/27 (33.3%) street-sellers who answered yes, a majority of 14/27 (51.8%) who replied no and 4/27 (14.8%) who did not respond. Of the nine affirmative replies, four street-sellers indicated embroidered clothing (usually shirts, jackets, or vests) as being in increasing demand, two who said hats and mouthharps and one individual who sold more bags and jewellery than in the past. The latter was of the Giáy minority and she usually sold her products to other ethnic people and street-sellers.

So far, the sale of ethnic products, which are considered either exotic or depicting 'ethnic' ingenuity, is the most well-known way to earn income among ethnic minority people as it continues to involve a larger portion of the ethnic minority communities in the tourism sector. It contributes a considerable, even very important part, to the household income of many H'mong and Dao families in Sa Pa.

Questioned on the importance of the market income in relation to their total household one, except for two who did not respond, the remainder of 25/27 (92.6%) street-sellers acknowledged the importance or significance. Of the total number of respondents, 18/25 individuals or 72% considered it very important, 3/25 (12%) said that it was of moderate importance and only 4/25 (16%) stated that it was of little importance. The street children themselves recognised this significance, but they evaluated it lower than the adults did. Only one girl said it was very important, 15/22 (68.2%) children said that the sum that they earned was moderately important for their family income, and six (27.3%) others thought that it contributed a very small part to their household income.

The average income per week of a street-seller from this activity ranges from 10,000 VND to 200,000 VND per week, equivalent to about 50,000 VND to 800,000 VND/month. According to the sellers, sales vary because often it can take anywhere from a day to a week to sell only one or two products. On the other hand, sometimes they are lucky and may meet more agreeable customers, earning some hundreds of thousands of VND per week.

One young Dao woman of T₁ Phin commune told us, she has an average income of 30,000 VND per week, but there are some weeks when she sells more things, and can earn a revenue of 300,000 VND or more. Another Dao women from the same commune said that during the summer she may sell jewellery, bags and hats, and only earn an average of 30,000 to 50,000 VND per week, while at other times she sells other products such as bridal and other traditional head-dresses, embroidered clothing, or simply women's handkerchiefs, and she can earn up to 500,000 VND per week on rare occasions.

Of 26 (100%) respondents, ten (38.5%) had an average income of 10,000 to 25,000 VND per week (including nine H'mong group and one Dao), eight (30.8%) earned from 35,000 to 55,000 VND, and another eight (30.8%) earned more than 100,000 VND. In general the average income for the Dao was a little higher than that of the H'mong, correspondingly 72,800 VND per week for Dao as compared to 67,200 VND per week for H'mong (see Table 5).

Table 5: Average weekly profit

VND per week per individual	H'mong	Dao	Giay	Total	Percent
10,000 — 25,000	9	1		10	38.5
35,000 — 55,000	5	3		8	30.8
100,000 — 150,000	2	2	1	5	19.2
=> 175,000	3			3	11.5
Average income (VND per week per individual)	67,200	72,800	150,000	71,5000	100

Among the street-sellers, those who ran retail sales gained considerably more stable and higher profits than the average. Usually they earned from 200,000 to 600,000 VND per transaction, or an income of 150,000 to 250,000 VND per week or more.

There was an observable difference between male and female traders in income. While the average income for the total of interviewed street-sellers was 71,500 VND, the average income for males (three interviewed) was 150,000 VND. This can be due in part to the fact that two of the three individuals, besides selling traditional ethnic pan-flutes, also performed dances and traditional music for guests for money — a service which has almost no competitors and is always in demand. The third male is a young man who runs the retail sale of imported Chinese goods near the border area, earning substantial profits.

The money earned from sales to tourists is spent for purchasing daily household goods and necessities. Thus, 26/27 (96.3%) street-sellers reported that they spent this money for rice, salt, sauces and preserves, kerosene, etc. — the majority being spent for rice. Seventeen (63.0%) individuals spent some money on buying gifts for their children, nine (33.3%) on miscellaneous household goods, ten (37.0%) saved it, five (18.5%) bought fertiliser and seeds, and one (3.7%) said she hired labour to assist with fieldwork with the money. Also due to the sizeable income from some tourist sales, 23/26 street children interviewed (88.5%) said that they give their money earned in town to their parents; 17 (65.4%) said they use the money to pay for their daily expenditures from staying in the town, 14 (53.8%) saved the money, only a small number of the children bought sweets or treats for themselves (six individuals, 23.1%), and a few bought clothing or gifts (three individuals, 11.5%).

In fact, if comparing it to other sources of household income, *the income generated from tourist sales usually is higher or much higher than income of the past*, and the work is less strenuous. As reported by the authority of T₁ Phin commune, the living standards of all of the families engaged in tourist sales has improved significantly. Their commune has seven H'mong women elders who permanently stay in the town of Sa Pa to sell goods to tourists and all seven families have improved their living standards radically. They have progressed from often severely suffering from food shortages to having enough food with a more balanced nutritional diet. In addition, they have built new houses with fibre-cement roofs and bought furniture and other assets; they now can buy fertilisers, new seeds and even hire labour for fieldwork. Some of them own limited cultivated areas, but no

longer suffer from food shortages. So thus there are many other people in the commune who would like to go to the town to engage in such trade activity.

As estimated by the Women's Union of Tộ Phin commune, at present, the commune has in the total about 40 — 45 Dao and 7-10 H'mong women, or equally more than 20% of its total household number, acting as street-sellers in the town of Sa Pa. Among them, there are less than ten individuals (all of these are H'mong) who stay (all the time) in town to sell products. Also as estimated by the authorities and the Women's Union of the commune Lao Chội, the commune has more or less 10% of its total households having a woman or a daughter engaged in tourist sales. Currently, 1/2 of these households have improved their standard of living considerably thanks to the income derived from tourists sales. Those households engaged in this activity, who do not have regular income from tourism, accounted for about five to 10% of the total household income, while for those families engaged more heavily in the sector (their members go to market more often or some may stay in the town permanently) may contribute 40 — 50% of the total household income. For the commune as a whole, it in average makes up 25 — 30% of the total income per household engaged in the sector. Some elderly women who permanently stay in the market can earn an income higher than the total combined income generated by all the other members of their families.

According to the reports of some commune officials, thanks to the fact that women have been earning relatively high income as compared with the local standards, their role and status in the households has likely been improved. In addition, due to the time required to engage in the market, the division of labour in the families also somehow has been adjusted to save time for these activities in the town, males taking care of some of the work previously delegated to their wives.

b) Guided mountain trekking (to Phanxipan)

Another income-generating activity for households from tourism is guiding tourists around and up Phanxipan Mountain, the tallest peak in Viet Nam. It is not an especially popular activity in ethnic minority communities, but it brings considerable earnings to those who choose to engage in it.

Among tourists, mostly foreign, there are those who come to Sa Pa for hiking and climbing, the biggest attraction for some being conquering the peak of Phanxipan. The ethnic minority people, especially the H'mong, are the local indigenous communities who not only know the mountain territories and its forests but are also experts on climbing. Because the guides usually come from either the town of Sa Pa or other lowland areas, and they are all Kinh people who cannot independently satisfy the demand for tourism of this type, they have to call on local indigenous people for assistance.

At present, the number of the ethnic minority people engaged in trekking activities is low and may only be represented from some communes located close to the town and on routes leading to the mountains, such as Sỡn Sộ Hạ, Lao Chội and Tộ Vạn. Each commune may have a considerable number of individuals involved. Those people are hired directly or indirectly by the owners of guesthouses or restaurants, Vietnamese guides or other business people, to lead or carry tourist articles for a trip. It is hard work, but generates high revenue if compared with the local wage rate.

According to the ethnic people, as well as the Vietnamese guides interviewed, on average the daily wage of such H'mong guides is 100,000 VND or more. So with each trip lasting three to five days, an ethnic guide can earn at least 300,000 — 500,000 VND. Usually each Kinh guide, guesthouse or restaurant engaging in the activity, organises their own self-established group of minorities as guides. Therefore, the number of H'mong people involved in this type of tourism activity is limited. However, in our opinion the main reason that the participation is low is because the number of tourists demanding these services is also low.

According to local commune officials, all of the ethnic minority households who have members involved in trekking services have dramatically upgraded their standard of living and now are well-known within their own communities — all thanks to the relatively high income which can be derived from guiding treks.

For example, in the Cỡt Cỡt hamlet of Sỡn Sộ Hạ commune, there are two men who have been working as mountain guides since 1995. Before, these two village families were very poor, while now they have improved their quality of life substantially. They no longer suffer from food shortages anymore and also have built bigger houses with better roofs. Moreover, they also now can help their relatives when needed.

c) Vending stalls along tourist routes

Minority people can further benefit from tourism by opening vending stalls in the villages which are located along routes

leading to tourist sites. This activity has just recently come into practice within the minority groups of the H'mong and Dao, based on the tourist demand for certain items, such as refreshments, sweets or other everyday products. However, the total number of households involved in vending is not high. Frequency of involvement is mostly related to the advantage in terms of the location of the households. The income generated in this activity is not very high because tourist consumption is limited. According to many of the local people, tourists usually plan and take food and refreshments along with them for their whole trip. They only buy extra items along the way as they occasionally need them.

d) Hosting guests

Minority people could benefit more from tourists if the guests visiting the households were encouraged to give gifts or some entrance fee to see the households. 21/28 (75%) foreign tourists and 13/27 (48.1%) Vietnamese tourists reported that they had visited ethnic minority homes. Although this income is valuable, it is not important if you look at its economic value and at the number of tourists who engage in the activity. Only 2/27 (7.4%) Vietnamese and 4/28 (14.3%) foreign tourists said they gave money or gifts to households. Most of them, if they gave anything at all, gave only small gifts like notebooks, notebook paper, pens or sweets. The value of the gifts usually were from one to five thousand VND, and it was rare if the tourists gave money. Thus these items are of little help in improving the households' daily economic situation.

The profitable exception to hosting tourists is when ethnic minority households have tourists paying to stay overnight in their houses. In such cases, the tourists or their guides pay some money to the hosts, about 10,000 - 20,000 VND/guest/night. Overnight tourists may ask and pay for meals or refreshments, in which case the host may provide the guests with some of their family food supply, mostly their own products. The number of households who have tourists staying overnight at their houses in the communes is very limited. Only several in each village or in the whole commune located on tourist routes may have overnight guests. These households usually have formerly established relationships with the Kinh guides, or guesthouse/restaurant owners in town. However, 55.5% of households interviewed cited the attraction of tourists to overnight stays in villages as one of the ways to increase profits for ethnic minority communities.

e) Tour guiding

Due to the differences among the main reasons for coming to Sa Pa between the two types of tourists, the Vietnamese rarely hire guides during their stay in Sa Pa. Only 2/27 (7.4%) Vietnamese have used the service, while more than a half of the foreigners have (15/28 or 53.6%). Guides mostly come from Hanoi, if the tourists come to Sa Pa with an organised tour (21.4%), or they may come from the guesthouses or restaurants in the town (57.2%). Only three individuals (21.4%) among the guides interviewed lead treks with the assistance of the local ethnic people (among which two went with young H'mong girls and one with a H'mong villager he meets along the way). These statistics confirm the opinion of the local people, which is that there is very limited involvement of the ethnic people in these types of services. There are only a small number of youth, mostly the street children of some communes, who are involved in the service. However, it creates a certain income under varied forms, for ethnic minority families, albeit on a limited scale.

f) Photography

The traditionally dressed ethnic minority is a main subject of interest for Sa Pa tourists. Almost all of the tourists would like to have souvenirs or memoirs about the ethnic minority community people they encounter on their visit. They not only buy traditional ethnic minority handicrafts and original embroidered cloth, but also take photos of them or have photos taken with them. Recognising the demand of tourists to have their photograph, the ethnic people have begun to try to earn money by asking tourists to pay for opportunities to take photos. Payment is becoming a precondition to any photography, widely accepted among the ethnic minority people. Some officials of Lao Chòi commune also support this opinion. Being photographed by the tourists brings some considerable profits in an easy way, so that many girls of the Dao minority actively wear especially colourful dresses to come to town, expecting to earn some income.

g) Traditional ethnic cultural performances

The desire to understand the culture of ethnic minority communities includes the wish to learn about their traditional cultural activities. For example, the Green Bamboo Guesthouse in Sa Pa invites some people of ethnic minority communities to perform traditional music on Friday each week. Of the surveyed children, 3/26 (11.5%) had participated in a music performance. The income per performer from such a presentation for two to three hours is about 20,000 - 30,000 VND with free soft drinks. Besides this type of organised presentation,

several H'mong men come to town to give a music or dance show upon tourists' request. The fee for such a show is only 1,000 — 2,000 VND per individual, but the ethnic minority men can earn about 30,000 - 50,000 VND per weekend.

h) Marketing for hotels and restaurants

The street children, aside from selling goods, accompanying or guiding tourists on local trips, doing music performances, or just talking with tourists, also do marketing for hotels and restaurants by bringing tourists to particular business establishments. They can receive money according to the number of tourists they bring to these hotels and restaurants. Of the children interviewed, 24/26 (92.3%) said that they spent considerable time with tourists and 6/26 (23.1%) said that they engaged in marketing for restaurants and guesthouses.

i) Sale of agricultural products

The influx of tourists has increased the demand on food and agricultural products in Sa Pa. Although the Kinh people have shown a stronger ability to adapt quickly to this demand, the two ethnic minority communities in the neighbouring areas have also shown signs of adjusting.

There is evidence that the ethnic minority communities have been gradually changing their production structure in order to supply agricultural products, particularly foods, which suit the needs of tourists. For example, the current demand for fresh corn-on-the-cob by Vietnamese tourists has encouraged some people in Sìn Sô Hạ commune to shift the use of part of their land for cultivating this profitable crop. There is the same tendency with potato farming in some communes.

This agricultural transformation process has occurred along with the support of many development projects and programs such as the State's Sedentarisation Programme, the Agricultural Extension Programme, the Forestry Development Project, etc. Although these projects have different aims, the final goal is to improve the living standards of the local people so that they can try to link or integrate themselves with other branches of economy when possible, including most recently, tourism. Moreover, thanks to the increased demand for some products, the price for local agricultural products has grown and as a result, the local people are marketing their products more easily, with higher profits.

j) Collection and sale of forest products

The collection and consumption of forest products and the traditional natural resources used by ethnic minority communities, has been affected by the growth of tourism, though to what extent has been difficult to determine. The issues of the depletion and preservation of timber and non-timber forest products are very important, and thus is afforded some special consideration under section VII (The Environmental Impacts of Tourism) of this report.

k) Labour

The rapid growth of housing construction and technical infrastructure development in order to meet a rapidly increasing number of tourists, leads to an increasing demand on local workers, thereby extending employment opportunities for ethnic minority communities. Most of them are unskilled workers, but healthy and strong nonetheless. Usually, they are hired by Kinh townspeople to do simple but strenuous jobs, for relatively low wages.

2. Integration into the market economy

The rapid growth in the number of tourists coming to Sa Pa over a short period of time, accompanied with the development of hotels, restaurants and other services, thereby increasing opportunities for communication with outsiders, and the availability of information, is likely to allow the local people to recognise new worlds, completely different from their everyday lives. They also understand the alternatives of supplemental income to augment the quality of life during their long-lasting food shortages. In this context, the local people have been adapting to tourism development in particular, and to socio-economic development in Sa Pa in general. In the process alone, their perception and socio-economic vision has been changing radically so that, in some instances, onlookers may think that the ethnic minority communities and their cultures are becoming commercialised.

In reality, commercialisation is a factor encouraging local people to overcome the limitations of a subsistence economy, stimulating them to understand and undertake new economic opportunities, alternatives and ways to more effectively satisfy their material and cultural needs. Consequently, commercialisation may help them to better integrate into the common life of a society that is much larger than their own.

In this process, many products, normally used only for household consumption, gradually have become goods that are exchanged in the market. Thanks to the marketplace, the local ethnic minority communities have more opportunities to satisfy their every day needs. Therefore, their production and their products are gradually becoming more and more market-oriented, as they themselves integrate into the common system of division of labour.

Facing the tourist demand, the ethnic minority people have recognised that they can produce many traditional items to market to tourists. This, in our opinion, has more or less stimulated the development or restoration of local handicrafts of ethnic minority communities. For example, 23/27 (85%) street-sellers interviewed and 7/26 (26.9%) H'mong street children reported that they sold products made by their families, and 11/27 (40.7%) street-sellers and 1/26 (3.8%) children sold products bought by them directly from their communities' own village producers.

However, although many of these products, which are often produced by traditional handicraft methods, have an original and exotic quality, they are also time and labour intensive to produce. Under these conditions, the ethnic minority communities have found alternatives such as re-using their old clothes to make products. After a few alterations, an item can be re-made from old clothes which have few or no holes into new garments which suit tourists' tastes, and can be made available at the market for a reasonable price acceptable to both tourists and producers. Other pieces of old clothing may be used to make hats, bags, collars, belts or can serve as extra fabric to add to new embroidered clothes if needed.

As mentioned earlier, the high consumption of agricultural products including vegetables, fruit, and meat by tourists has encouraged some people to adjust their production structures.

Not only the way the ethnic minority communities think has been changed in their direct production or participation in marketing their own goods, but the local people also have recognised that the direct trade of goods is a good source of income. The work is considerably less difficult than traditional trade, while it is more hopeful and effective. Therefore, the number of local ethnic minority people involved in the direct sale of goods to tourists, goods which may be produced by others, bought in the town from Kinh shops or just sold for commission, has increased rapidly. This activity used to be carried out only by the majority Kinh population.

Besides the buying of goods for sale from producers, there were 9/27 (33.3%) street-sellers and 17/26 (65.4%) children who bought from wholesalers in the villages or town, one (3.7%) street-seller and 6/26 (23.1%) children who bought from town shops and one (3.7%) who sold goods for commission from Sa Pa shops. They have begun to keep accounts of their profits, make cost-benefit analyses of their market activities, and adapt overall to the market economy.

Thanks to increasing commercial consciousness, the ethnic minority communities in Sa Pa are continuing to find new opportunities to work and new sources of income, while at the same time diversifying their economic activities.

One example of an activity has been the service of selling refreshments to tourists. According to the Women's Union of Sìn Sộ Hạ commune, there are 13 families selling beverages to tourists, and many other families who would like to engage in this activity but up to now they have not had enough financial conditions to do so.

As reported by the Lao Chội commune authorities, they have also discussed finding ways to send the commune's children, especially the H'mong, to study English for tourism. Almost all of the commune authorities along tourist routes have expressed a wish to have more guesthouses as well, to further increase industry profits.

Of course in the process of integration into a market economy, the ethnic minority communities, with their little experience, suffer from many disadvantages in competition with other groups, predominately with the Kinh townspeople. However, objectively, Sa Pa market is only one of a number of representative examples, on a small scale where the usual market economy rules apply. By its very nature, it is similar to the competition within one ethnic group such as among the Kinh e.g. between urban and rural Kinh. It may possibly be compared with the competition between developing countries, such as between developing countries like Vietnam and developed countries on a global scale.

The majority of the ethnic minority communities, have recognised these issues and they themselves are strongly determined to strive for a foothold in the market economy of the region. This struggle is one of the major factors in their efforts for equality with other communities. The important thing here is to develop the appropriate policies and measures to facilitate the conditions necessary for equality to occur. Opportunities need to be made for the local people to improve their knowledge, skills and competitive capacity in the development process, for communities to assess the inadequacies and reduce inequality in information, financial and technical development, and for the overall process to reduce the negative impacts of the market while contributing equally to the welfare of all people.

3. Expansion of communication and knowledge

The growth of tourism in Sa Pa has brought more opportunities for communication and the expansion and broadening of the knowledge and way of thinking of the local ethnic minorities. These opportunities become a key factor for the continued development of ethnic minority communities in the region.

The results of the survey showed that for both groups of Vietnamese and foreign tourists their cultural interactions with ethnic minority communities, such as visiting minority villages, homes and families, talking with them in the streets, or making friends with them, are more predominate than material or economic exchanges. Among the types of material interactions their only communication during the buying of ethnic traditional handicrafts is significant. It may reveal that the degree of cultural interactions with ethnic minority communities is higher among foreign tourists than Vietnamese ones (see Table 6).

Table 6: Types of interaction with ethnic minority communities

Types of interaction	Vietnamese tourists		Foreign tourists	
	Number of individuals ($\Sigma = 26$)	%	Number of individuals ($\Sigma = 28$)	%
Non-material interaction				
• visiting hamlets of ethnic minority communities	18	69.2	24	85.7
• visiting houses of ethnic minority communities	13	49.8	21	75.0
• outdoor conversation	10	38.5	15	53.6
• making friends with young seller	3	11.5	10	35.7
• night-resting in the hamlets of ethnic minority communities	1	3.8	5	17.8
• paying ethnic minority people as guides	1	3.8	6	21.4
Commercial interaction				
• buying traditional handicrafts of ethnic minority communities	18	69.2	11	39.3
• buying orchids	3	11.5	1	3.6
• buying other forest goods	3	11.5	2	7.1
• purchasing food for ethnic minority people	2	7.7	3	10.7
• purchasing gifts for them	4	15.4	3	10.7
• giving them money	4	15.4	1	3.6
• other			2	7.1

The interaction between Kinh business townspeople with ethnic minority communities has mainly physical and commercial characters. Among such interactions, trading orchids and forest-products have the greatest frequency of 15/ 29 (51.7%) interviewed cases, followed by buying wood, firewood (8 cases, or 27.6%), hiring ethnic minority communities as guides, doing other types of work or trading ethnic minority traditional handicrafts or materials (7 cases, 24.1% for each type). The ratio of those buying agricultural products from the ethnic minorities is still low at 3/29 or 10.3%.

In some cases, the Kinh business townspeople assist ethnic minority communities considerably with their work, for example, by teaching them how to embroider motives that suit tourists.

In fact, Kinh relations with ethnic minority people are not simply commercial, but in some cases display a mutual, close, and co-operation aspect. In response to the question regarding the experiences of doing business with ethnic minority communities, 9/20 (45%) of those who answer said it is necessary to be friendly with them; seven (35%) said being faithful, clear and fair in economic relations was most important; five (25%) mentioned the same attitudes should be reflected when minorities are facing difficulties; and five (25%) said to be sincere and to trust them (4/20 or 20%).

Most of the ethnic minority people themselves really have a desire to communicate with tourists and broaden their horizons. They feel that when they communicate with tourists, their life is more interesting, exciting and more fulfilling. Of 110 ethnic households interviewed, 78 (70.9%) enjoy meeting foreign and 55/110 (50%) enjoy meeting Vietnamese tourists because they found that tourists bring them new ideas when they have opportunities to have cultural exchanges with them. Similarly, 82/110 (74.5%) preferred foreign and 55/110 (50%) preferred Vietnamese tourists because they found that their lives are more interesting and exciting from the interaction with these groups. The need expressed for social interactions has a higher frequency than that of materials ones. (See Table 7)

Table 7: Reasons that ethnic minority communities enjoy tourists and tourism

Value Label / Reasons	Foreign tourists		Domestic tourists	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
buy products	66	60.0	52	47.3
Make life exciting/interesting	82	74.5	55	50.0
new ideas	78	70.9	56	50.9
new forms of employment	55	50.0	44	40.0
get gifts and money	77	70.0	61	55.5
like having photos taken	74	67.3	52	47.3
Other	1	.9	1	.9

The desire to communicate with tourists stimulated the willingness of ethnic minority people to study foreign and Vietnamese languages to manage their business directly and to introduce tourists to their lives and cultures. Of households interviewed, 86.4% said they would be willing to learn a foreign language, of which 88.4% would like to learn English and 8.4% were interested in both English and Vietnamese. Almost all of the women interviewed said that they would like to learn Vietnamese, while children and youth would like to learn not only Vietnamese but also other foreign languages in order to communicate with foreign tourists.

There were 6/27 street-sellers who said that they used English when they sold their goods to tourists, despite their limited vocabulary. The interviews revealed that 20/27 of them used Vietnamese while 17 had to use their hands to communicate in trading.

Besides the need of selling goods to foreign tourists, most of the street children would like to communicate or talk and go on walks with tourists. The result is that they rapidly learn English, mostly from foreign tourists, and also understand more about the tourists and their countries. Of the street children interviewed, 16/26 said that they used English while selling goods to foreign tourists, 21/26 used Vietnamese, and 6/26 used their mother tongue.

The communication with tourists and the extending tourism market encourages the demand among ethnic minority people for new types of products. This subsequently has had an impact on stimulating the growth of production and goods exchange among ethnic minority communities to satisfy their new, growing needs.

The result of the survey shows, that 48% (13/27) of Vietnamese tourists and 34.5% (10/29) Kinh business townspeople believed that the minorities gain the benefit of assimilation into Vietnamese society and culture, while virtually no (1/28) foreign tourists believed that assimilation was a benefit from tourism. In contrast, the three groups were fairly in agreement with the belief that ethnic minority communities benefited from the new ideas brought by tourists from outside worlds to Sa Pa: 33.3% (9/27) Vietnamese, 32% (9/28) foreign tourists and 31% (9/29) Kinh business townspeople. Meanwhile, 11% (3/27) Vietnamese, 36% (10/28) foreign tourists and 21% (6/29) Kinh business townspeople said that tourists also bring education benefits for the local ethnic minority communities.

4. Strengthening investment

The boom of tourism in Sa Pa in the beginning of the 90s urged the government and local authorities to have a new vision and to re-evaluate the potentials and resources of Sa Pa tourism. Sa Pa has been evaluated as one of the important multi-objective tourism sites for tourism throughout the whole country. Sa Pa tourism is also considered one of the most important economic forces for the district and for Lào Cai province. Therefore, Sa Pa has been given priority for investment on infrastructure in order to develop the potentials of its tourism.

National Highway 4D, with its section from Lào Cai to Sa Pa, has been improved. It has been laid with asphalt, enlarged, with its dangerous curves minimised, and has been in good use year-round. The main tourist routes leading to the important tourism sites and the inter-commune roads have been improved (for example: Sa Pa-Tộ Phin, Sa Pa-Ban Den). Several walking trails inside the sightseeing sites have been improved, for example the sightseeing route of Hùm Rãng has been laid with concrete within the Mountain Hùm Rãng Park project and the route to the Hydroelectric Cắt Cắt dam has been built with funds from the Sedentarisation programme. The investment in tourism, including the above-mentioned road construction and urbanisation, the infrastructural development in telecommunication, power and water supply, sewage system, the building of a cultural centre, and the town's artificial lake project, all have directly or indirectly improved the quality of life and production of the local communities.

Thanks to tourism, individuals and many organisations, including governmental and non-governmental, have learned more information about Sa Pa, about its ethnic minority communities, and their ways of life and cultural traditions. Some of the characteristics that have been revealed are: the diverse and valuable tourism resources, the concerns with the negative tourism impacts on local natural resources as well as on the traditions and unique culture of the local ethnic minority communities; the warm feelings of foreigners to the honest and charming minority people, which came from their own short tourism trips to Sa Pa or through the stories of other tourists visited Sa Pa, and the awareness of their hard lives.

All factors have attracted the attention and concern of many tourists, individuals and organisations. The awareness has encouraged many groups to come to Sa Pa to conduct research, and especially important for the minorities, to come to directly invest in the local socio-economic development, capacity-building, and conservation of their original culture and traditional handicrafts.

Efforts include the Frontier-Vietnam Forest Research Programme, which not only facilitated the study of the natural forest heritage of the Hoàng Liên Sơn Reserve, but also the preliminary study of tourism of Sa Pa to contribute to the conservation of its unique nature and local original culture, in order to launch an environmental education programme.

Another notable effort is the current Embroidered Handicrafts Project, operated by the district's Women's Union in Tộ Phin commune, with the assistance of Oxfam Quebec and Craftlink as part of the Vietnam Sweden Mountain Rural Development Programme (MRDP). The aim of the handicraft project is to help preserve the traditional crafts of ethnic minority communities, improve the quality of products and to help local people to alleviate poverty. The project currently involves the participation of ethnic H'mong and Dao women in the commune.

Other examples are the Ethnic Minority Leadership Training Project, sponsored by CIDA and the Canadian Ambassador in Hanoi and the Nutrition Project to develop household animal husbandry, sponsored by BFDW, aimed at ethnic minority women of many communes within the district. Some representatives of various NGOs working with community-based health care and volunteers now are working in Sa Pa to help with health issues.

The improvement of the road system within the district and ones like it on the outskirts, partly as a component of tourism development, has positively pushed up the inter and intra-regional goods exchange allowing more goods to reach more

villages at a lower price. With new vending stalls opened on the improved routes, villagers can buy everyday necessity items easily without having to go ten kilometres out of their villages. Previously, they had to wait for the weekend to go shopping. They can also market their products more easily in their villages.

All these things certainly have brought and will continue to bring benefits to the local ethnic minority people, contributing to the improvement in the quality of living and in the efforts to conserve their indigenous nature as well as cultural heritage. According to the results of the survey, 14/29 (48.3%) of the Kinh business townspeople surveyed believed that the minorities benefited from an improved quality of life from tourism. But only 2/26 (7.7%) Vietnamese and 3/28 (10.7%) foreign tourists shared this opinion. There were four Vietnamese (15.4%), six foreign (21.4%) tourists and three Kinh business townspeople (19.3%) who said that the minorities benefit from modernisation overall.

The improvement of the traffic system in and around Sa Pa has positively stimulated the sale of goods to areas outside of Sa Pa as well as within Sa Pa itself. The quantity of goods available has increased and most prices have been lowered. Many shops have opened, making it easier for the local people to purchase the goods they want, while requiring neither extensive travel nor long delays until the weekend - as in the past. The products are more easily transported and sold overall.

VI. NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF TOURISM

Tourism development brings many benefits to ethnic minority communities, however the scale of benefits remains limited if it takes into account the ratio of individuals or households who can gain these benefits in comparison to the total district population. This also holds true if one compares the area positively impacted to the total district area. Besides, it produces negative impacts with possibly latent negative consequences, which may be difficult to prevent or correct.

1. Street-sellers / Vendors

Street selling is not something strange for the ethnic minority communities of Sa Pa. It is the old-world way of exchanging goods between the ethnic minority communities themselves and as well as to outsiders or tourists. One head of an H'mong clan of Lao Chội commune said that: "H'mong people of Sa Pa are only familiar with street-selling."

However, this phenomenon has negative aspects and, particularly, as it is more and more widespread, has raised the concern of many people, including tourists. Its negative side is reflected in the method of marketing goods to tourists by the ethnic minority street-sellers; many old women, and sometimes young children, follow closely and surround tourists constantly in Sa Pa in order to sell their goods. They implore and sometimes even ask for money indirectly through the sale of goods. Such trading practices cause troubles for tourists, creating feelings of discomfort, especially through restaurant windows during their meal times. There were 7/28 (25%) foreign tourists who complained about this issue. Many Kinh town's business people had this opinion too. The general opinion of the community and the authorities of the surveyed communes is the same, that they are ashamed of what their people do. They think that this practice should be controlled.

The concern for the negative aspects of the street-sellers is not only routed from the hassles and troubles created for tourists, but also is related to the concern of the degradation of local ethnic minority traditions and unique cultures. Some foreign tourists interviewed asked if it was true that the street-sellers leave their families, agricultural and housework duties to stay in the town under bad living conditions to seek easy tourist money and if this will destroy the socio-economic well-established and functional familial structure of the ethnic minority communities. Besides this, they were also worried that the increasing number of street-sellers may increase competition pressure among themselves and thus, when the goods supply is higher than the demand, it may lead to them becoming aggressive. Furthermore, some may not be able to sell anything, therefore their lives will become more difficult as they become accustomed to their out-of-home duties.

The issue of the street-sellers appears first of all, as a consequence of the pressure resulting from the difficult economic situations of the ethnic minority communities.

Thus, among 27 street-sellers interviewed, 11 individuals (40.7%) said they would rather rest at home with their children if their family did not suffer from food shortages. Many of them said that at the beginning, when they started being a street-seller

following tourists around, they themselves felt very ashamed. But because there were many others doing it and who could sell products well, they chose to do so, and over time became used to it. Some other street-sellers (15/27 or 55.6%) said that they will continue doing tourists sales even though they have enough food, because they would like to be able to purchase other necessities for their families or to save a certain amount of money as capital.

The general opinion on the issue of street-sellers, expressed by interviewed villagers, representatives of communes' Women's Unions, Youth, male elders of villages, heads of clans and communes officials were all agreed on the point that the way of marketing goods to tourists, currently practised by many street-sellers, is not welcome and embarrassing for the communities. But, to deal with the issue it needs not only education (the authorities and communes' social organisations have held meetings, described and tried to alert sellers to the issue individually and through their families many times with very little success), but also other means such as the provision of fixed places at the market in combination with strict measures, including enforcing people to market at stable sites. All people interviewed said that in order to solve the problem, measures need to be implemented in parallel for all the street-sellers.

In reality, among the street-sellers, many, especially young and middle aged women, usually less than 45 years of age, had a willingness to stay in fixed places to sell goods to tourists. In addition to the reason that they would neither like to be ignored nor the cause of complaint, they felt that it would be more pleasant overall. They could also benefit from fixed vending locations as they could sell their embroidery works collectively, which they cannot do wandering along the streets.

However, another issue likely to emerge with the minority sellers when they come to sell products in the market is that they worry about competitors with the Kinh town traders at a common market place. Many of ethnic minority people said they would like to have separate spaces from Kinh town traders to market their goods. Regarding the sales of embroidered and other traditional handicraft products, people said they could either stay on the ground or first floor, but for selling fresh crops, fruits or animal products they would prefer spaces on the ground floor. The best option would be if they could be provided with open-air spaces rather than in concrete buildings.

With regard to the reasons for their staying overnight in the town, most of them indicated the distance from home. It accounts for 12 out of the total 17 individuals who stayed in town. Six of 17 of these individuals said it was because they would like to stay longer at the market to earn extra money. Other reasons are secondary. This result is likely according to a positive regression between the ratio of the street-sellers staying overnight in the town and the distance from their home to the town, except in the case of Trung Chội commune (see Table 9).

Out of nine street-sellers who go home in the evenings, five individuals said it was because of the close distance from their homes, and four others stated they do not stay because of high costs or not having sleeping quarters.

In reality, among those street-sellers who stayed overnight in the town, there were many individuals who have very poor sleeping conditions. Some stayed at Kinh guesthouses for ethnic minority people with a fee of 1,000 VND a night. Even this very low price seemed unacceptable to many ethnic minority communities sellers. Many did not want to spend it, and some of them slept right along the side of the street, or on the verandahs of Kinh houses. In both cases, the people did not have enough warm blankets to cover themselves during cool nights. These sellers also were very thrifty in spending for meals. Thus the issues facing street-sellers can also include humanitarian ones, regarding the well-being of the people and taking into account the living and health conditions of these sellers in the town.

2. Street children

The issue of ethnic minority children strolling about the town of Sa Pa's streets is attracting the concern of many people of all different social groups. The number of these children is increasing rapidly.

Out of 26 street children surveyed, Lao Chội and Tộ Phin are the two communes where the highest number exist: ten and eight of the street children correspondingly.

They are followed by HÇu Thµo commune with four children and Tộ Van commune with two girls. All of the street children are of the H'mong ethnic minority group. Up to now, Dao people have been able to keep their children from going to town for street-selling.

The main reasons for the children coming to Sa Pa market and wandering in the town are: their parents ask them to sell ethnic minority products (18/26 or 69.2% of children interviewed), 10/26 (38.5%) children said they came because their friends encouraged them, and 6/26 (23.1%) of them came to the town voluntarily without any outsider's influence. Usually, the children came to the market with their friends, represented by 20 of 26 interviewed (76.9%). Only five children (19.2%) came to the market alone. In the other four remaining cases (17.4%), they came with other people from their village, and one went with her family.

The children spent most of their time in the town selling goods (25/26, 96.2% children do this activity) or spending time with foreign tourists (24 children, 92.3%). Selling goods is almost an obligation of the children to contribute to the household income and also to earn their own living in Sa Pa. But spending time with tourists is either a way of earning money or simply an attractive and fun activity for the children.

There were 23/26 (88.5%) children interviewed who said that they stayed overnight in Sa Pa (among which 12 individuals permanently stayed in Sa Pa and four individuals stayed some of the time), and three stated they do not rest there but go home. The main reason that they stay overnight in the town is the distance from home, accounting for 18 among 23 of those who stayed (78.3%).

There were other reasons that they would like to stay at the market as long as possible such as: to earn more money (15/23 children, 65.2%), because it is exciting (13/23 children, 50%), because they enjoy socialising or because they can get a good meal or stay with the tourists (8/23 children, 30.8% for each). The reasons for not staying overnight in the town of three such children (of which two girls were from Lao Chội and one was from Sa Pa commune) are that their parents do not allow it, they like to go home to attend classes (two cases for each), they simply do not like to stay there or because their home was not far (one case each).

Of the 23 children, 22 stayed overnight in Sa Pa at guesthouses of some Kinh townspeople, with a fee of 1,000 VND per night. There they sometimes can borrow money from the owner if necessary.

In spite of the positive roles of the street children in their contributions to household income, their education from tourists, and their learning foreign languages and new ways of thinking in the market economy, the accelerating number of the street children and, particularly, their soliciting about the town's streets also has a negative side. It is a cause for concern because it may likely have latent severe consequences in the long term.

a) Education

Almost all of them are from seven to fifteen years old, *of school age*. Only six of these 26 children went or go to school and their education is only of 1st or 2nd grade level. The fact that they leave their native home and village to come to the town so often will stunt their chances of proper schooling. It is worse that, as mentioned above, the number of younger children (seven to eight years old) coming to Sa Pa is increasing.

b) Family relations

Family is the nucleus of society, where children are raised and taught to be good individuals. The children leaving family to permanently stay in the town, strolling its streets without the control of adults, can harm and damage traditionally well-established family and clan relationships, destroying strong family traditions as well as those of the community. All of these issues may lead to latently bad consequences or deviant behaviour. It may also result in the devaluation of them by their own communities.

The results of the survey and discussion with local authorities, representatives of commune Women's Unions, elder village men, and leaders of clans showed a common opinion that there is much concern for the negative aspects of street children. The whole community needs to take actions and measures toward solving the problem and avoiding its spread.

Community members think the fact that H'mong young girls leave their homes, become separated from their duties at home and in the fields, and do not go to school, may lead them to lose the guidance of parents and their community, to become lazy, to lose the ability to do 'women's' work such as embroidering or housework. The people also have expressed concern about the situation of young ethnic minority women having sexual relations with Vietnamese or foreign men, which would result in devaluation of them by their community, and in no men wanting to marry them.

c) Community coherence

These street children may become used to soliciting in the streets and an exciting life in the town both in a material and non-material sense and consciousness. By Vietnamese standards, they are also becoming used to socialising with many highly educated tourists and/or western foreigners, who come from developed countries and are more 'rich and polite' than their village boys and men. In other words, they may become used to things that do not exist in their villages and are much better than they are used to having in their daily lives in the village. As a consequence, they may look away from their home and village, their family and community, and develop a dislike for their difficult, "uninteresting" life at home and their poor, hard working and 'dirty' brothers. Some foreign tourists said these H'mong young girls told them that they do not want to go home to the village anymore, and do not want in the future to marry their, in their own words, 'stupid, dirty' boys'. They would like to be "girls from western countries" such as America, Germany and Italy, and not be H'mong girls. Seven of 28 (25%) foreign tourists interviewed expressed their considerable concern for these unexpected changes among young H'mong girls. They expressed a need to do something to protect these girls from potentially harmful activities.

d) Social evils

The fact that the street children experience no control from family or society, means there is potential for some of them to be easily maltreated or misused, abused sexually, or even may get infected by AIDS and other diseases, things that the whole society is fighting against. The local ethnic minority people, including their authorities as well as their women, male elders, and heads of clans, have expressed a great concern for the possibility of AIDS infection among their street children. In reality, among tourists there may be ill-intentioned individuals, Vietnamese or foreign ones, and it may happen that some young innocent girls have been or will be abused in the future.

A few foreign males reported that H'mong female street children offered opium to them. In addition, in Sa Pa there was a rumour that a few H'mong girls had had sexual relations with foreign males in exchange for money and expensive gifts such as clocks or cameras which they later sold to Vietnamese.

In reality, the local authorities of district and commune levels have been aware of and alarmed of the issue of street children, and have already taken certain concrete measures to solve the problem, to avoid its spreading. Local officials, community members and representatives of different social unions have gathered in meetings to discuss the issue. They have called for community efforts to educate the people, to talk to the parents of the children to raise awareness about the risks facing their children and to find measures for community-based participation in dealing with the issues and other negative impacts of tourism.

The Women's Unions are among the most active members involved in this campaign. They have tried to launch a women's campaign to help families and mothers who have street children give attention to educating and controlling their children, to help avoid the possibility of a bad future for their children.

In the opinion of some heads of clans at present, their role within the clans is limited to the ability to convince and to educate by good moral examples and through religious procedures of the clan. However, they have limited power or influence over their clan's members, even in the case of ensuring they perform actions that the clan or the community consider necessary. In this context, they believe the authorities have more power, and a stronger influence over their residents as they can take strict administrative measures to make people observe laws and community regulations.

Particularly, leaders of the district have the intention of creating an inventory and classifying the street children, based on their concrete circumstances, to determine appropriate measures for each case. They plan to send the girls back to their families. In special cases, when the children have particular difficulties, they will be included in a list for the "Centre for Permanent Education" or the District primary school where they can be provided with an education. Those capable children will be given foreign language classes, trained in professional tourism skills and given a political education so that they may become future minority tourism guides or work for other tourism services.

3. The risk of commercialisation

As mentioned above, one of the current environmental and social problems in Sa Pa as a consequence of tourism activities is the risk of commercialisation.

The results of the survey show that 19/29 (65.5%) business townspeople in Sa Pa, 13/27 (48.1%) Vietnamese tourists and 14/28 (50%) foreign tourists recognised the problem of *commercialisation* as an impact of tourism.

Furthermore, the word 'commercialised' was used to describe the character of the ethnic minority communities of Sa Pa: 15/29 (51.7%) business people, 9/27 (34.6%) Vietnamese tourists and 6/28 (21.4%) foreign tourists shared this opinion.

The negative effects of commercialisation partly were demonstrated, as mentioned above, by the group of street-sellers or by street children wandering around the town, by the fact that they require money from tourists for taking photos. It is further displayed by the 'commercialisation' of several cultural activities like soliciting money for traditional dance performances.

It seems that the local people, slowly, are becoming vulnerable to the strong influence of money. Now, it is likely that not only has poverty forced the ethnic minority communities and their children to leave the villages and separate from everyday chores and responsibilities in order to go to Sa Pa, but it is very likely the attraction of an easy way of making money from tourists, which is much lighter work, also pulls many people to town. There are more than a few of them who lie about the originality or quality of their goods at the market in order to gain higher prices. All of these actions seem to create negative feelings and unrest among street-sellers, making them aggressive, and creating problems that did not exist before.

Commercialisation has influenced and could damage the coherence of the communities within ethnic minority groups. Before their relationships among themselves were predominantly regulated by neighbourhood and family security, by friendship, whereby the community and clan's opinions played crucial roles. Now they are becoming more influenced by the force of money and the tendency is likely pushing its way throughout all the aspects of their lives.

As mentioned above, although the officials of communes, village authorities, the male elders, the heads of clans, and the representatives of social associations have discussed and attempted to alert the families and parents of street children this phenomena, it is still likely expanding and becoming a more serious issue. Caught up by the short-term benefits, several families still continue to encourage their family members and children to do things which are considered bad by the community. Furthermore, some other families can neither control their children and their relatives, nor prevent them from these activities.

Looking at the tendency of 'commercialisation', some foreign tourists have expressed the opinion that many cultural traditions of the ethnic minority communities are under threat of degradation. This is demonstrated by the issue of street-sellers and children in the town of Sa Pa, and the ethnic minority communities 'exchanging' their culture for the income that tourists bring, possibly becoming too dependent on tourism and tourists lifestyles. They were concerned that the excessive commercialisation within the ethnic minority communities groups may reduce the possibility of the sustainable development of tourism in Sa Pa in general, and of the roles of the ethnic minority communities in tourism in particular.

However, the phenomena of commercialisation is one of the inevitable products of a market economy, and the Sa Pa tourism industry as one sector of its economy, cannot avoid the trend. The next step is to take action to limit the negative impacts of commercialisation.

In fact, the minorities are passively attracted by tourism development due to their limitations in finances, educational levels and working skills. Furthermore, they are neither being paid enough attention nor consulted in tourism development schemes. However, extensive and uncontrolled tourism growth is preventing the capacity of the local people to adapt to the sustainable development of the sector. To attain the goal of sustainable tourism development, education for them could play a very important role toward their understanding the tourism industry. They also need to understand that there are both positive and negative aspects and a need to protect their unique cultural traditions under the impact of tourism. The experiences and lessons from other countries could be considered.

Generally speaking, commercialisation, in terms of its negative impacts, in some instances, is an inevitable consequence of development in general, from which, the ethnic minority communities can hardly avoid in particular, being directly involved in the process. Therefore, in order to confront the challenge of commercialisation and the degradation of ethnic minority cultures, the participation of the community should be encouraged, and the role of authorities on all levels, the different associations, and the whole society should be promoted. Furthermore, the government could draw out sound socio-economic policies, appropriate measures, and technical and financial assistance to ethnic minority people and their communities, in order to develop this young, but hopeful industry.

4) Disappearance or modification of cultural activities

Besides the above-mentioned negative impacts, tourism has influenced some other socio-cultural activities such as possibly being responsible for the *disappearance or modification of several cultural activities*, among which is the disappearance of the "love market" as already mentioned in other studies.

As it is widely known, the market events are not only economic activities, but also social, cultural ones for the local ethnic minority people after their hard-working days. It is a chance for people to meet each other, for couples, young and old, unmarried or married, to exchange or share their feelings, emotions, news or sing folksong. The crowded presence of tourists, particularly the disrespectful or inappropriate actions of many tourists, have made them hesitant and resistant to being seen in public and wanting to avoid coming to market.

Moreover, the boom of the tourists to Sa Pa has led to extensive disordered construction, directly resulting in the scarcity of land and an increase of price for it. It seems that in this situation the local authorities have failed to protect the ethnic minority communities, maintaining appropriate places for them to conduct their economic and cultural activities without disturbing these long-standing traditions.

VII. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF TOURISM

Like ethnic minority communities, the natural environment is considered key when considering the impact of tourism.

The study of DiGregorio commented that natural degradation was a consequence of tourism development, due to the increasing demand for firewood and other forest goods such as orchids, ornamental plants, and the increase of unmanaged garbage in the town of Sa Pa. Frontier Vietnam emphasised the close inter-relationships between the benefits attained by ethnic minority communities from tourism and the conservation of forest resources in Sa Pa. It also reminds us that 'eco-tourism' is an effective measure for sustainable tourism development. IUCN has also posed the question of to what extent ethnic minority communities are destroying the remaining forests to meet the demands of tourism or not.

The results of this survey showed that the percentage of total tourists who complained about waste and water/sewage pollution is clearly higher than that of individuals who complained about forest degradation and the killing of wildlife (67.4% and 50.6% for the former in comparison with 34.9% and 16.8% for the latter). While for the Kinh business townspeople, the corresponding figures were 79.3% and 86.2% for waste and water/sewage pollution and 44.8% and 24.1% for forest degradation and the killing of wildlife.

Tourism in Sa Pa has contradictory impacts on local forest resources. On one side it leads to increasing pressures, but on the other side tourism itself also contributes to the reduction of pressures on these resources. Based on the results of the survey and on discussions with commune authorities, representatives from different commune organisation and social groups, the conclusion can be drawn that the impacts on forest resources in Sa Pa have tended to decrease over recent years.

The tendency may be explained in more detail as follows:

- Because firewood and charcoal have become more and more scarce and expensive, most restaurants and guesthouses in the town have shifted to using alternative energy such as milled coal, kerosene, electricity, or more recently, gas. This has led to the steady reduction of demand on firewood and charcoal in the town.
- Similarly, the use of wood in new construction has been clearly reduced, because, on one hand, prices for wood have increased a lot, while the use of alternative construction materials has become more available and cheap over time. All of these things have happened thanks to transportation route improvements. In addition, the demand for increasing the comfort of guesthouses may be easier satisfied with the use of new construction materials.
- Due to the strict implementation of the ban on wood collection and forest clearing, according to the policy for the conservation of forest resources during recent years, along with the scarcity of forest products, the quantity of people engaging in forest product collection as well as the quantity of the products gathered have been reduced radically. This opinion was supported by almost all people interviewed during the discussions in three communes located in Hồ́ng Liễn Sũn Nature Reserve.
- The increase in the number of people participating in tourism and gaining benefits from tourism, as well

as from the results of agricultural and forestry projects, have contributed to the reduction of the pressure of minorities on forest resources in Sa Pa, although the success remains limited. In reality, being asked about products that they marketed best in recent years, 31/72 (43%) HHs interviewed mentioned embroidery crafts; 32% (23/72) said cardamom; 20.8% (15/72) mentioned an aromatic mushroom called jewel's ear; but only 8.3% (6/72) mentioned ornamental plants, orchids and honey; and 2.7% (2/72) said rare wood, wild animals, medical herbs.

Answering the question regarding what the respondents do when there is a food shortage, 78.2% HHs said they sold cardamom, 58.2% sold agricultural products, and 51.8% sold forest products. The gathering and selling of forest products was the third most common new activity undertaken by HHs in recent years (after planting of new crops/ introducing new animals and producing more embroidery/handicrafts). Similarly, when asked how to attract tourists and increase benefits to the minorities, the group of individuals who mentioned collection and marketing forest products was the third largest, after the cultivation of crops and producing handicrafts and embroidery.

However, it needs to be emphasised that despite the fact that the relative role of forest products has decreased in HHs' revenue and living of ethnic minority communities, the main reason is related with the Government ban on main forest products and scarcity of its resources. The ratio of HHs' activities being related to forest resources or products remains considerably high. It can be seen in the following table, showing the selling products of 86/110 surveyed HHs (items four to thirteen are all timber or non-timber forest products and the cumulative sum of all these items shows a high level of forest use).

Table 8: Selling products of surveyed HHs

#	Value Label	Frequency	Percent/86	Percent/110
1	Clothing/embroidery	46	53.5	41.8
2	Jewellery	16	18.6	14.5
3	Agricultural products	31	36.0	28.1
4	Mushrooms	35	40.7	31.8
5	Forest products	24	27.9	21.8
6	Wood	23	26.7	20.9
7	Medical herbs	16	18.6	14.5
8	Orchids	15	17.4	13.6
9	Honey	14	16.3	12.7
10	Charcoal	7	8.1	6.3
11	Animals	5	5.8	4.5
12	Birds	2	2.3	1.8
13	Rattan	2	2.3	1.8
14	Other	37	43.0	33.6

This says that, psychologically, the ethnic minority communities still perceive forest products as being their main sources of HHs income, while in reality they still depend on forest products for survival. In particular, according to the opinion among 75.9% Kinh business townspeople and individuals, orchids and ornamental plants are still being collected in large numbers, so it has had considerable effects on the conservation of forest resources of *Hoàng Liên Sơn*. For actual reduction of minorities' pressure on forest resources, Frontier-Vietnam suggests promoting the increase of tourism benefits to ethnic minority communities in combination with other economic measures and policies. Planting forest trees is proposed by DiGregorio to be very practical. Besides, education and strict management can contribute to raising the awareness of the population on the protection and restriction of pressures on forest resources.

As was mentioned above, the issue of garbage and wastewater pollution was chosen by Kinh business townspeople and tourists as among the most important environmental issues resulting from tourism. Similarly, 29% HHs interviewed mentioned garbage and litter produced by tourists. As reported, the District authority has planned and is reconstructing the town's sewage system as well as trying to find better measures for solid

waste disposal. However, according to the opinion of Sa Pa townspeople, the pollution so far is concentrated in the town and caused by business activities related with tourism. In comparison with Kinh business people, the tourists themselves pollute the environment less, especially foreign tourists who are considered to be more environmentally friendly.

In general, the impact of tourism on the environment is a crucial issue in sustainable tourism development, on which little research has been done. This is the reason why a separate section in this report has been dedicated to this issue. The impacts of tourism on the forest through the collection of a wide variety of forest products, timber and non-timber, is worthy of further and stronger attention and research in the future.

VIII. ATTITUDES TOWARD TOURISM AND THE ROLE OF ETHNIC MINORITY COMMUNITIES IN TOURISM, AS PERCEIVED BY DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS

1) The stakeholders

a) Foreign tourists

The total number of foreign tourists interviewed was 28, including 12 females and 16 males, of the ages ranging from 17 to 72. The age distribution was that 39.3% were in the bracket of 17-25 years of age, 46.4% between 26 and 40 years, 10.7% between 41 and 55, and one was 72 years old. They came from 14 different countries (see *annex B*). Among them, 24/28 (85.7%) came to Sa Pa independently and only 4/28 (14.3%) came on organised tours.

b) Domestic tourists

The total number of domestic tourists interviewed was 26, including nine females and 17 males, of ages ranging from 19 to 55. Among them, 15.4% were from 17-25 years of age, 50% in the 26-40 age bracket and 34.6% were in the 41-55 age bracket. Thus, the domestic tourists were slightly more likely to be older than the foreign tourists. There were 11/26 who had come to Sa Pa on an organised tour, conducted mostly by their working organisations. The remaining 15/26 had come individually. Among 26 there were 14 individuals who were coming to Sa Pa for the first time.

c) Kinh business community

The total number of interviewed business people was 29, including one individual of Tjuy ethnic minority and 28 Kinh ones, representative of different businesses. Among them there were hotel or guest house owners (nine individuals), restaurants owners (three individuals), guest house combined with restaurant owners (three individuals), shops (one individual), souvenir shops (four individuals), Karaoke and snack bars (two individuals), tour guides (three individuals), and seller of medical herbs (one individual).

Of these 29 business people, 20 have lived in Sa Pa for 20 years or longer, from childhood; two individuals had lived there from 11 to 15 years; five for less than 5 years; and the two remaining had no reply. Most of the Kinh business townspeople had engaged in business in Sa Pa from four to ten years, two individuals for two years, one individual for three years and one had just opened business for four months. This was accorded to the development of tourism in Sa Pa.

2. Tourists opinions of tourism development in Sa Pa and attitudes toward the role of ethnic minority communities in tourism

a) Elements attracting tourists to Sa Pa

The points of view presented by different groups interviewed in the assessment of factors attracting tourists to Sa Pa were mentioned earlier. Among those tourists who had come to Sa Pa more than one time, there were 12/12 domestic and 1/4 foreign tourists who considered that there had been changes in the elements attracting tourists to Sa Pa. Besides, there also were three tourists who came to Sa Pa for the first time (2 domestic and one foreigner) and who shared the opinion, when comparing their experience with the information about Sa Pa they obtained before coming to the site. The assessment on the direction of changes is shown in the following (Table 9).

Table 9: The direction of changes of elements attracting tourists to Sa Pa

Direction of changes	Tourists come to Sa Pa more than one time		Tourists come to Sa Pa at the first time	
	Domestic ($\Sigma = 12$)	Foreign ($\Sigma = 4$)	Domestic ($\Sigma = 14$)	Foreign ($\Sigma = 24$)
1. No change	0	3		
2. Deterioration	7	1	2	1
3. Improved	1			
4. Both improved and deteriorated	4			
The total number of tourists who considered that changes occurred	12	1	2	1

It can be said that the positive changes that some domestic tourists have expressed all have the characteristics of changes that normally occur during the process of urbanisation. It is the improvement of transport, of services and the architectural styles in the town's construction.

The negative changes that both domestic and foreign tourists have expressed were related with the worsening of the culture of ethnic minority communities. Of those who replied, 9/12 domestic and 1/1 foreigner shared this point of view and were concerned with the issue of ethnic minority street children and the unhealthy aspects of their interaction with westerners. Some answers complained about having been asked by ethnic minority people for a fee for taking their photos, and others commented on the loss of friendliness and honesty in ethnic minority communities, especially those who were regretting the disappearance of the traditional "love market" event on Saturdays.

Apart from the negative changes occurring with the local culture, 3/12 tourists who were not coming to Sa Pa for the first time, mentioned forest degradation, the worsening of the environment and the visual pollution from construction.

b) Social, environmental consequences of tourism

People of all types interviewed, including tourists, both domestic and international, and Kinh business townspeople, have recognised the environmental and social problems that are consequences of Sa Pa tourism. They have a relatively similar negative evaluation of these issues, but the degree of the negative assessment of the majority of the above-mentioned problems presented by Kinh business townspeople were the most negative (see Table 10).

Table 10: Social and environmental problems of Sa Pa as consequences of Tourism

	International tourists (26 individuals)		Domestic tourists (28 individuals)		Kinh townsfolk business individuals (29 individuals)		Total (83 individuals)	
	individuals	%	individuals	%	individuals	%	individuals	%
1. Pollution-litter	15	53.6	18	69.2	23	79.3	56	67.4
2. Pollution-water supply/waste	7	25.0	10	38.5	25	86.2	42	50.6
3. Destruction of forest due to forest use	7	25.0	9	34.6	13	44.8	29	34.9
4. killing wild animals	4	14.3	3	11.5	7	24.1	14	16.8
5. Orchids, bonsai and other forest products	3	10.7	6	23.0	22	75.9	31	37.3
6. Visual damage from construction	12	42.9	11	42.3	20	69.0	43	51.8
7. Uncontrolled construction	10	35.7	11	42.3	19	65.5	40	48.1
8. Western cultural and behaviour influences	16	57.1	6	23.0	19	65.5	41	49.3

9.Drunkenness	8	28.6	2	7.7	2	6.9	12	14.4
10. Commercialisation	14	50.0	13	49.8	9	65.5	46	55.4
11.Prostitution	6	21.4	14	53.6	24	82.8	44	53.0
12.Drugs	3	10.7	11	42.3	19	65.5	33	39.7
13.Beggars	8	28.6	2	7.7	8	27.6	18	21.6
14.Noise	4	14.3	4	15.4	13	44.8	21	25.3
15.Lack of privacy	6	21.4	1	3.8	4	13.8	11	13.2
16.Crowding	6	21.4	2	7.7	8	27.6	16	19.2
17.Fake crafts	4	14.3			2		6	7.2

Table 10 above shows that for foreign tourists, western cultural and behavioural influences (57.1%), litter (53.6%) and commercialisation (50%) are the most pressing issues. For domestic tourists, litter ranks highest (69.2%), followed by prostitution (53.6%) and commercialisation (49.8%). For the Kinh business townspeople, water and waste pollution was the most important issue, followed by prostitution (82.8%) and litter (79.3%).

The Kinh business townspeople also highly rate the collection of orchids and bonsai by 75.9%. This should be seen in the context of the interaction between the Kinh business townspeople and the ethnic minority communities. As mentioned previously, the most frequent interaction (51.7% of the time) between the two groups occurs with the purchase of orchids. **This leads to the conclusion that though an environmental problem has been identified, at an individual level action is not being taken – there is no sense of individual responsibility.**

In general, the Kinh business townspeople group have a more pessimistic point of view to problems which are considered consequences of tourism, which can be explained by the fact that they are able to observe changes over time, on a daily basis. The high rating of problems indicates that several elements of carrying capacity — environmental, physical and social – are issues in Sa Pa. Investigations are needed in this area to try to determine basic threshold or benchmark levels for these three elements, and hence be able to evaluate the importance of impacts more readily.

The issue of drugs was recognised by 42.3% domestic tourists and 65.5% Kinh business townspeople, in contrast to only 10.7% of foreign tourists. This would appear to most likely to be related to cultural differences in the acceptance (and use) of drugs.

Similarly, both domestic tourists and Kinh business townspeople considered prostitution a much more important issue than foreign tourists did. As DiGregorio has pointed out, one possible reason for the difference may simply be due to language. It begs the question whether prostitution currently existing in Sa Pa is targeting/servicing the domestic tourist market rather than the foreign market. The above two results show the need for further research on these two phenomena. Both "social evils" appear to be fuelled by two different segments of the tourism market.

The issue of litter, which is ranked highly by domestic and Kinh business townspeople (and also at a higher level than foreign tourists), is a point of interest when compared to the comparison made between the behaviour of foreign and domestic tourists toward the environment – foreign tourists being considered more environmentally friendly than domestic. By inference then, domestic tourists should be less aware of litter. Again, this is an interesting contradiction that has implications for the success of environmental education and awareness-raising efforts.

A small trend that hints at the difference in the quality of the tourism experience of foreign and domestic tourists is shown by the tendency for foreign tourists to rate beggars, lack of privacy and crowding as issues more frequently than domestic tourists. This would appear to be related to the fourth component of carrying capacity – specifically, psychological carrying capacity which is the level at which the tourist feels their experience is being detrimentally affected by the behaviour or number of other tourists (crowding) and the quality of local conditions. This has already been touched upon in the context of the comments of tour operators and foreign tourists who consider Sa Pa too crowded and 'developed'.

At the most basic, the domestic tourist and the foreign tourist have different psychological carrying capacities, which will very likely have increasing implications for the future tourism market in Sa Pa. As per the idea put forward by Michael DiGregorio, Sa Pa may become a mountain recreation/resort for domestic tourists, and for a small number of upmarket foreign tourists (who will stay at the self-contained Victoria Hotel). Thus it can be

said with some certainty that Sa Pa, after a very short period of time, is already experiencing recreational succession as it rapidly progresses along the 'tourism life-cycle'.

c) The role of ethnic minority communities in the attraction of tourists

All groups, including domestic, international and Kinh townsfolk business individuals highly evaluated the role of ethnic minority communities in attracting tourists, considering it the most important reason that tourists come to Sa Pa. However, foreign tourists have a higher ratio than the others do: 22/29 (78.6%) foreign, 10/26 (37%) domestic and 15/28 (51.7%) domestic business people considered it very important.

Table 11: The role of ethnic minority communities in attracting tourists

	International tourists (28 individuals)		Domestic tourists (26 individuals)		Kinh business townspeople (29 individuals)		Grand total (83 individuals)	
	individuals	%	individuals	%	individuals	%	individuals	%
1. Very important	22	78.6	10	38.5	15	51.7	47	56.6
2. Important	5	17.8	15	57.7	13	44.8	33	39.8
3. No response	1	3.6	1	3.8	1	3.4	3	3.6
Total	28	100	26	100	29	100	83	100

d) Degree of involvement of ethnic minority communities in tourism

The differences in opinions on the degree of involvement of ethnic minority communities in tourism were relatively small. A 57.7% of domestic tourists considered minority involvement in the tourism industry to be small or minimal; the remaining 42.3% considered it good or considerable. This is compared with 42.9% of foreign tourists who thought the present involvement of ethnic minority communities to be minimal and weak, especially regarding to their income derived from the sector in comparison with Kinh business people working in tourism, 28.5% considered it good, and the same proportion believed it was considerable.

More than half of Kinh business townspeople considered ethnic minority communities involved in tourism passive, under the pressure of food shortages, and their present involvement as being minimal or small (51.8%). The remainder considered it good (29.6%) or substantial (18.5%).

e) Sustainability of ethnic minority role in attracting tourists

All these three groups had the opinion that if ethnic minority communities can keep their cultures, traditions and originality alive in the process of their participation in tourism, their role will be sustainable and be crucial in the future.

Conversely, regardless of whether their present role is minimal or strong, if they lost their cultural and traditional originality, their role in the future will decline and be taken over by other attractions. However the ratio of foreign tourists who evaluated it as important and sustainable is higher than that of Kinh business townspeople and domestic tourists. It could be explained that the former are more interested in ethnic minority communities and see them as a more important attraction for tourism than the latter. (see Table 12)

Table 12: Evaluation of sustainability of role of ethnic minority communities in tourism

	Foreign tourists		Domestic tourists		Business individuals	
	individuals	%	individuals	%	individuals	%
a) Role in attracting tourists						
Sustainable	17	60.7	9	34.6	15	51.7
Unsustainable	8	28.6	15	57.7	12	41.1

Other	3	10.7	2	7.6	2	6.8
Total	28	100	26	100	29	100
b) Change of the role						
Will remain central	11	39.3	7	26.9	12	41.4
Will decline	4	14.3	13	50.0	13	44.8
Other	13	46.5	6	23.0	4	13.8
Total	28	100	26	100	29	100

f) Elements hindering ethnic minority involvement in tourism

In evaluating elements hindering involvement of ethnic minority communities in tourism, their education level was selected as the greatest hindrance by all three groups: 93.1% of business people, 92.6% of domestic and 64.3% foreign tourists shared this opinion. Finance is in second place for business individuals (72.4%) and domestic tourists (51.9%), while more international tourists selected policy as their second hindering factor (39.3%). The third most important reason cited by domestic tourists (42.3%) was unfamiliarity with market economy, whereas for Kinh business townspeople, the quality of products ranked third, while for foreigners — finance and language (32.1% for each of them) were equally important in third place.

Competition with other ethnic groups was a more important issue according to domestic tourists and business people (26.8% and 20.7% respectively), than for foreign tourists — 10.7%. For foreign tourists, government policy (39.3%) and discrimination and prejudice (28.6%) were considered more important hindering elements than by domestic tourists (19.2% of domestic tourists considered only prejudice), while no Kinh business townspeople shared this point (see Table 13).

Table 13 - Hindrances in the greater involvement of minorities in tourism

Value Label	Domestic tourists		Foreign tourists		Business individuals	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Education level	25	96.1	18	64.3	27	93.1
Finance	14	53.8	9	32.1	21	72.4
Language skill	8	30.8	9	32.1	7	24.1
Technical skill	3	11.5	2	7.1	-	-
Quality of product	6	22.6	2	7.1	9	31.0
Familiarity with market economic	11	42.3	8	28.6	-	-
Work practices	2	7.4	5	17.9	7	24.1
Competition from other ethnic group	7	26.8	3	10.7	6	20.7
Government policy	1	3.8	11	39.3	1	3.4
Prejudice and discrimination	5	19.2	8	28.6	-	-
others	2	7.7	1	3.6	1	3.4

g) Identification of impacts of tourism on ethnic minority communities

The majority of business individuals (88.9%), domestic tourists (92.0%), and foreign tourists (77.8%) said tourism had cultural, social, economical and environmental impacts on ethnic minority communities. Negative

cultural impacts have the highest selected ratio of these three groups: 72.4%, 51.9% and 52.4%, respectively. Conversely, economic negative impacts had the lowest: 34.5%, 7.4% and 14.3%. In general, business people had a more pessimistic point of view than the others did. (see annexes A-Q16; C-Q16 and B-Q15)

h) Socio-economic, cultural and environmental impacts of tourism

Most people recognised that there were differences in behaviours toward the environment and ethnic minority communities between domestic and foreign tourists. Among them, 79.3% of business individuals, 61.6% domestic and 42.9% foreign tourists believed that there were differences. The main difference that was mentioned was that Vietnamese tourists are less interested in and less friendly toward ethnic minority communities. 32.7% of Vietnamese tourists and business individuals gave this reason, 17.9% of foreign tourists stated that Vietnamese tourists behaved badly, rudely, and discriminate against ethnic minority communities, while from the Vietnamese tourist point of view, only 3.6% considered that foreign tourists behaved like that. The general opinion on the behaviour of foreign tourists toward ethnic minorities was positive, with the majority of the three groups considering that foreign tourists are friendly and respectful to them.

In regard to how the ethnic minority people are described, the business people considered them uneducated (86.2%), friendly and hard-working (79.3% each) and poor (75.9%). This was followed by honest and dirty (58.6%). Three characteristics were given almost equal weight by domestic tourists – poor, hard-working and friendly (80%). In a similar trend to the business people, domestic tourists had equal amounts considering the ethnic minority communities honest and dirty (53.6%). As mentioned previously, 51.7% of business people considered ethnic minority communities to be commercialised, while only 33.3% domestic thought so.

Friendly, hard-working, and poor were the dominant words used by foreign tourists to describe the ethnic minority communities (89.3%, 64.3% and 60.7% respectively). This was followed by humorous and uneducated at 46.4% for each. Commercialisation was noted by 21.4% of foreign tourists.

It is interesting that, despite the tendency for more foreign tourists to consider Sa Pa too developed or commercial is not used to the same degree to describe the ethnic minority communities. It could be inferred therefore that it is the town of Sa Pa itself which is too developed and commercial, that the development and establishment of commercial enterprises by the Kinh, are to blame, rather than the actions (e.g. selling of crafts in the street) of the ethnic minorities themselves.

3) Attitudes of street-sellers and street children toward tourists

The overall opinion of both foreign and domestic tourists by the street children and street-sellers was that their behaviour was friendly: 92.3% and 84.6% respectively for street-sellers and 95.4% and 86.3% respectively for street children.

The street-sellers and street children differ in their second description. Funny was used to describe domestic tourists by 46.1% of street-sellers, but in contrast 53.8% described foreign tourists as rude, while only 15.2% described them as funny. For street children, 59% thought foreign tourists were funny (followed by generous at 27.2%) and the same 59% though domestic tourists were funny. The street children did not use the word rude.

Of street children, 7/26 liked both foreign and domestic tourists, while 12 liked/preferred foreign tourists compared with only five who preferred domestic tourists. Overall, 10/26 street children preferred female tourists.

The main reason why both street-sellers and street children like tourists is that they represent opportunities to improve their income and their standard of living. It follows that the selling of more products had the highest ratio of importance: approximately three quarters of street-sellers and 84.6% of street children. After this, 10/27 (37%) street-sellers like having their photos taken, 8/27 (29.6%) like receiving gifts and money and 4/27 (14.8%) enjoy having new jobs. The number of street-sellers who are interested in nonmaterial interaction tourists making life more exciting and bringing new ideas is low: 3/27 and 2/27.

In comparison, 16/26 (61.5%) street children believe tourists make life more exciting and interesting; 10/26 (38.5%) like tourists for their gifts and money; 8/26 (30.9%) like tourists as it means they have more money to buy food to eat. The differences in the statistics for the two sections of the minorities reflects the impartial trust and sincerity that the street children have which the street-sellers do not.

Among the characteristics of tourists making ethnic people dislike them, taking photos (mostly without payment) and the way that they bargain were the two largest dislikes about both domestic and foreign tourists (though only a small number of individuals mentioned these).

Thus, both street-sellers and street children like tourists predominantly because of economic reasons (street-sellers indicated a desire to see more tourists come to Sa Pa), though for street children, the non-material aspect of interaction with tourists is more rewarding. It would seem to indicate that the level of cultural interaction between the tourist and local ethnic minority peoples remains low, limited and superficial, and it is only through the street children that any chance of meaningful cultural exchanges are taking place. The vulnerability of these girls has been mentioned before, and the fact that only 53.8% answered with certainty that they had never had trouble with tourists (26.2% or 12 girls did not answer this question) could be cause for concern. However, the girls are currently acting as cultural representatives, bridges between cultures, and this important role should be acknowledged.

As to the question of how the market ('love market') has changed, 9/27 (33.3%) street-sellers replied that it was more exciting, 6/27 (22.2%) didn't know, and 10/27 (37%) did not reply. At the village level, 34.5% of those interviewed responded that the love market had changed and 61.8% did not reply. No one gave reasons for why or how it had changed, nor what the consequences were for changes in this cultural tradition. It is recommended that further in-depth research be done on this topic.

IX. MEASURES FOR INCREASING BENEFITS AND LIMITING NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF TOURISM ON ETHNIC MINORITY COMMUNITIES

As mentioned above, tourism in Sa Pa brings significant benefits for ethnic minority communities. Despite some of its negative impacts, it is likely there are more positive ones. The challenge now is to promote these positive impacts to create more benefits for ethnic minority communities and to put constraints, as much as possible, on the negative effects. Based on the 2-month research, we would like to summarise some of our suggestions regarding directions and specific measures as follows:

1. Production and marketing of embroidered products

The Embroidery Project of Tộ Phin women shows a number of initial successes and likely creates a new prospect for employment thus increasing income levels of the local ethnic people. The issue remaining still is the matter of "output".

According to the report of the Women's Union of District of Sa Pa, at the present, Tộ Phin women have been meeting a high demand for products, thanks to their beautiful styles of embroidery fashions. They, however, suffer from a lack of capital to purchase materials and especially, to buy equipment for a shop to introduce and sell their products in the town of Sa Pa.

The local authorities, at the provincial and district level, have implemented many measures to help them, such as supplying sewing machines and a provision of financial sources for literacy classes. It could be noted that in these classes, the women learn how to read through many useful lessons such as family diet structures, expenditures in family budgets, development of household's production and earning money. These lessons not only help them to become literate but also give them knowledge on how to take care of and manage family budgets and supply, and family planning as well.

The district has also supplied them with a place for running a shop in the town of Sa Pa, but as mentioned above due to a lack of capital, there is still no equipment for outfitting the shop. Therefore, they need further support to overcome the initial difficult stage and time for testing their products. If successful, it is hoped that it will serve as an example and may be expanded to other communes.

Almost all of the women interviewed said they would like to produce embroidery for sale. According to them, this work is very suitable for their abilities and conditions and all people can take part in production without a large amount of capital investment. Moreover, this work has no negative impact on others.

2. Selling goods in a permanent (fixed location) market / Arranging market place for ethnic minority sellers

As mentioned above, unorganised street selling of products by ethnic minority people has negative effects on the tourists. These effects are also recognised by the sellers themselves. During the discussions with different social groups, held in four selected communes, almost all of the people thought that being street-sellers and beggars to tourists was undesirable and shameful. Even some interviewed street-sellers said that "if we had enough to eat, we would not want to be street-sellers". They thought that the action made tourists look down on them.

All the initiatives showed that the local authorities should seriously implement clear and strict measures to organise all street-sellers to conduct business in a concentrated, fixed area. According to almost all the women interviewed, if such measures were implemented and there were no more street-selling, community members could easily sell their products in the regulated stable area.

However, if street-sellers still remain on the streets, even only one seller, they would not like to sell their products at regulated places because they believe the street-sellers would have more advantages to marketing products than those who stayed at fixed places.

Some women suggested an advertisement to suggest that tourists not purchase goods from street-sellers but from fixed places in market. It is important that, according to them, the sale on the spot helps them to sell and make embroidery at the same time. That saves time for them because as they stated, "If we sell goods along the street, we cannot do anything but run after tourists. We have to work hard and feel ashamed as well."

Being group vendors in a central location, in principle, will make them enjoy their work more while feeling better about it overall. The reasonable organisation of a stable market place for ethnic minority communities, and strict measures adapted to enforce limitations on selling in the streets, may be implemented and are acceptable to most of the people in the community.

Another important matter is the priority of arranging a favourable market place for everyone. There remains an abandoned place behind Sa Pa market, which was rumoured to be planned for building vending stalls for rent. We suggest that the district authority could save it for ethnic minority communities, to build an open market, similar to the one in B³/_c H_μ, for them to sell products there. Thanks to its openness, such a kind of market would be convenient for ethnic minority communities and customers to exchange goods. It would also make the existing market more colourful and keep the district of Sa Pa in close touch with the surrounding beautiful nature, reducing one more case of a building destroying the natural scenery which is one of the main attractions of Sa Pa.

The organisation of a fixed market place for ethnic minority communities is not only useful for selling embroidery, jewels and handicraft products, but it will also help them to sell agricultural and forestry products at higher prices. Being asked whether they want to have a stable place to sell agricultural and forestry products, some of them said that without a permanent place to sell, they have to sell fast in order to go home, so the price is always lower than Kinh prices, even lower by half. So this measure would be an active step supporting the minorities, while contributing to poverty alleviation and to the achievement of real equity between Kinh people and Sa Pa ethnic minority communities.

3. Tour guides and mountain-guide training

It is one of the important measures to create conditions for and attract ethnic minority communities to participate in the tourism industry more effectively. Subsequently, their participation as guides is not only a factor to attract tourists (89.3% foreign and 53.6% domestic tourists prefer ethnic minority guides to directly help them understand more about the culture and lifestyles of ethnic minority communities), it also meets their wishes and requirements to participate more in tourism activities (62/110 or 56.4% HHs interviewed said that participation as tour guides should be one of the measures to increase income for their communities).

The training of ethnic minority guides not only has economic significance but also helps them to expand their knowledge if they found some sponsorship. Some of the commune cadres and Youth Union members suggested that some village people who have finished their education to the fourth or fifth grade could attend tourism training courses, including foreign language or other tourist service courses.

This measure also creates conditions to attract present street children, who are used to communicating with foreign tourists, to attain some foreign language skills. It was reported that Sa Pa authorities are paying attention to this measure and have a plan to contact and attract some street children to attend a town school (some of whom may be recruited or forced).

In addition, the district authority should open training courses for tour guides as early as possible. For Sa Pa itself, it is very urgent, because in fact, there are no local tour guide certification programmes in Sa Pa (except for the staff who come from the Lào Cai Tourism Company which resides in Lào Cai town), where priority could be given to young ethnic minority community people.

The same holds true for mountain guides; young ethnic minority men need to be trained in order to gain the knowledge, techniques and tourism skills to help tourists climb safely and pleasantly.

To put this idea into practice, funds will be needed. It is likely there are organisations and volunteers who would be ready and willing to assist ethnic minority communities in this first, difficult period of development.

4. Construction of traditional style guesthouses in some hamlets along the main tourists routes.

There are many tour guides and guesthouse and restaurant owners who have reported that they have had demands by foreign tourists to visit and stay overnight in the villages of ethnic minority communities, away from Sa Pa. According to an estimation by the Director of Lào Cai Tourism Company, about 30% of foreign tourists make requests to stay overnight in hamlets. In reality, this figure may be higher.

Tourists staying overnight in ethnic minority HHs concerns local officials (commune and district level) on one hand, because of the sanitary aspects and lack of safety for guests. On the other hand, the officials cannot control tourists, which may result in problems of security. For example, there have been stories of religious proselytising in Lai Chầu, Than Uyển, Lào Cai, and Bõc Hì and it has been reported by the authority of Lao Chội commune that they have also found political and religious cassettes and video in their villages.

To meet tourists' reasonable demands on visiting and staying overnight, ensuring sanitary and individual safety conditions for tourists in villages, with the authority keeping control over tourists activities there, the building of guesthouses in ethnic styles in some villages of Sa Pa is a feasible idea.

Such a measure would satisfy hamlet officials and heads of the families surveyed. For example, in Tộ Van hamlet, male elders of villages and heads of clans have discussed and submitted similar proposals to the commune's authority. In Lao Chội, Tộ Phìn, being asked, the officials (including also women and young people) actively supported these initiatives. They reported that with government support, they would be ready to mobilise people to build houses, with ethnic styles, to serve as guesthouses for tourists.

The first guesthouses could be very simple, just for tourists to sleep and be served refreshments. Gradually, local people could learn to serve guests with meals and perform cultural activities of ethnic minority communities such as playing the pan-pipe, flute, and trumpet and also singing.

In the opinion of local authority and villagers, it is proposed that guesthouses be built in keeping with the ethnic styles in their villages. There would be no need for great capital investment and the hamlets could organise and manage the business of the guesthouses with the district's help.

It would also be a measure to expand tourism activities from the town to the villages, and from Kinh people to ethnic minority communities. As a result it would diversify their participation and sources of income in the industry, helping them to increase income and make use of opportunities to integrate into the majority Vietnamese society. They will also have opportunity to expand their viewpoints, knowledge and to develop rapidly.

5. Restoring, protecting and developing traditional culture

As mentioned, one of the cultural activities that was negatively impacted by tourism was the "Love Market", which was traditionally a cultural form of love and social exchange on the weekend market days of the Dao ethnic group. Nowadays it seems to have moved somewhere out of town. The question should be how to recover this traditional cultural activity.

The same as the above-mentioned opinions, we think that Sa Pa should have a large space for ethnic people

to hold an open market (as BỒc HÌ does). Such an open market space for tying horses is very important for ethnic people to attend a market event. The newly built Sa Pa market is suitable rather to Kinh people who occupy most of spaces on first floor, where it is most favourable to sell and buy.

In the interview, some ethnic people said that they feel uncomfortable, shy and lost. According to them, one of the important reasons why the old market has been dissolved has been because of the lack of privacy resulting from the crowded presence of Kinh people and tourists. So if they had an open and convenient place, they might feel more self-confident to come to the market in a dignified position.

On the other hand, it seems necessary to build some simple guesthouses for ethnic minority people with affordable charges to stay overnight easily in the town, during the "weekend market event". In this way, hopefully it contributes to rehabilitating Sa Pa's market event of ethnic minority communities, in their colourful and meaningful presence.

Unfortunately, it seems the "love market" for young couples will be difficult to restore in the town because the tourist crowds curiously watching will make the young people ashamed or uncomfortable.

One possibility is to turn this activity into a stage performance combining with traditional folklore dances, pan-pipe dances of the H'mong and folk dances of the Xa Phã, to be performed for tourist audiences for a charge. The People's Committee has put the organisation of such ethnic "art performances" for tourists into the Sa Pa plan of tourism development. It is an orientation that may be in line with the forms of cultural tourism which are on going in many countries.

However, except for the building of a "Cultural Centre", the difficulty is how to organise these activities so that their performances do not seem to be "staged". The control and ownership of such activities should be with the local people, so that they decide what aspects of their culture can be shared, and what is sacred. Such a cultural activity not only meets tourist demands to enjoy ethnic minority communities' cultural performances, but also increases the role of and the benefit for ethnic minority communities in tourism development schemes in Sa Pa in general.

Another important form of ethnic minority cultural activity that needs to be restored and promoted is festivals: 61.8% HHs interviewed said they would like to promote festivals as tourists attractions.

For example, there is the festival "Come down to the field" of the Giyy people, which is held yearly on the third day of the January Moon's (after "Tôt"). Before, in the festival, apart from burning joss-sticks and praying for families and hamlets, people used to hold horse races, vying with each other in cross-bow shooting and cloth-ball throwing. From 1992, the festival was restored but not in the full form as it once existed before.

The district authorities can co-ordinate with Giyy people to restore and develop this festival again, attracting other ethnic minority communities to participate. They could make this festival become an entertainment attraction as well as a happy day for ethnic minority communities after a hard-working year. It seems that if the festival is held comfortably, it will attract tourists and become a place for performing the cultural aspects of ethnic minority communities in Sa Pa.

6. Increasing local food and foodstuff production

The district authority may create favourable conditions and encourage the local, ethnic minority communities to develop agricultural production such as chicken and pig breeding, and especially cows for beef or milk. These resources could supply tourism demands *to increase the income and benefits to ethnic minority communities*.

According to Mrs. Sỹ, the Vice-Chief of Sa Pa People's Committee, if Sa Pa had dairy farms and milk products it would mean important products to tourists. If studies conducted on cow production for beef and milk showed positive results, its realisation would serve tourists, increase income, and also improve the diet for ethnic people. Therefore, it could contribute to the reduction of the living standard gap between different social and ethnic groups.

Besides animal breeding, the further development of grains and foodstuff crops such as rice, corn, tomatoes, and vegetables may become a strong food resource for tourists in Sa Pa. Presently, tourism food supplies almost exclusively come to Sa Pa from other areas. Sa Pa could take the advantage to develop appropriate agricultural products, suitable to its

natural conditions.

7. Street children

As mentioned above, one of the negative impact of tourism on ethnic minority communities which was mentioned first by almost all ethnic minority people interviewed was the issue of street children or H'mong teenage girls in Sa Pa.

For the ethnic people, it is not only the negative phenomenon of reduction in morality when many teenagers girls wander all the day with foreign tourists, but people also actually worry about their future. One of the active measures to restrict this trend, which was implemented by the district authority, is to persuade and assist the young girls to attend classes in district and provincial schools such as the "Usual Educational Centre and Ethnic Minority School".

To assist the children in continuing their education or training as tour guides, hostesses, or tourism service providers for the 'planned' ethnic minority guesthouses (if it gains permission to open) there needs to be financial support. Other activities could be trade of embroidery or ethnic minority-organised tourism vending stalls which would be opened in Sa Pa and even in HÌ Néi.

According to the survey, more than half of street children interviewed said that they would like to be traders, selling goods in the market, or become teachers. Only five of them would prefer to be tailors or farmers, staying in their villages. This somehow shows their close attachment to Sa Pa market and their relatively strong relationship to social community activities.

Assisting the children in their education and training are some of the most useful measures for their futures and will benefit all ethnic minority communities.

Besides, some of these ethnic young women can be selected to be included in the formation of a district performance art group for ethnic cultural activities.

Finally, parents of these children need to be persuaded to better control their children for their own future, allowing them to go to the town selling goods only on the weekend then coming back to sleep at home on other nights. The communes' authority, Women's and Youth Unions should be in tight co-ordination with heads of hamlets and clans to motivate children and to teach them that commercialisation brings negative impacts.

8. Minimising the impacts of commercialisation on social relations and cultural activities

The last thing that has attracted attention is the minimisation of the negative impacts of commercialisation on social relations and the cultural activities of ethnic minority people. As mentioned earlier, commercialisation has had negative impacts on the social relations and cultures of minorities.

The negative impacts can be mitigated only by strengthening education, such as encouraging the role of heads of clans and villages in the education of traditional ethnic morals. This phenomenon of such commercialisation is the same as occurred with the Vietnamese in the first period of adoption of a market economy. As a result social relations fell under the influence of "monetary terms" and some features of traditional culture were clearly changed.

Thus, activities are needed, in line with the philosophy of "the rich helping the poor", in which communities attempt poverty elimination and the carrying out of awareness-raising activities on the preservation of traditional cultures and lifestyles. Only by methods of regular and focused awareness-raising and education activities, along with good organisation of tourism services, will contributions help minimise negative tourism impacts, maximise positive ones, and help the ethnic minority communities in their development.

X. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN SA PA

Besides the above-mentioned proposals, we would like to suggest some recommendations for sustainable

development of tourism of Sa Pa:

1. Planning

First of all, in our opinion, there needs to be a good, long-term planning scheme of development for Sa Pa tourism, in which one of the most important things is to keep it in line with the visual natural beauty of the district/town. If the latter is lost, one of the most important factors attracting Sa Pa's tourists will be lost.

Thus, at present, the excessive and unplanned construction of houses and hotels has seriously damaged the beautiful natural landscape. Sa Pa needs to be allowed to have an open-to-nature image, keeping it as close to nature as possible. It could also allow the building of guesthouses and other 'ethnic' structures which are becoming more rare in town, as in surrounding communes and villages.

2. Issuing permission for tourists to visit and stay overnight at villages

The local authority should aim to organise issuing permission for tourists to visit and stay overnight in some villages (where they can ensure good control and individual safety for guests), satisfying foreign tourists' desires to learn about the life of ethnic minorities.

As the communes or villages do not have guesthouses yet, it is possible to select some, two or three, houses in villages which have conditions meeting at least the standards for tourists to stay overnight. So, in such houses the local authorities can keep control of tourist activities in the village, meeting the demand of tourists, especially foreign ones, while creating opportunities to diversify sources of income generation and extend the participation of the local population in the tourism industry.

The restriction of tourists to travel and stay overnight in the villages likely has reduced the attractiveness of the area for tourists, because the lifestyles and unique cultures of ethnic minority communities is one of the most important reasons that attracts foreigners, and potentially domestic tourists in future, to come to Sa Pa.

The issue of permission should be attached with detailed regulations which officially and clearly explain administrative procedures and fees needed for obtaining permission quickly, saving time for tourists. The system introduced should be oriented toward clearly benefiting the local ethnic communities, e.g. 50% or more of the fees should come back to ethnic communities for their benefit. These receipts could be put into a village development fund, with an annual plan of expenditure agreed on by the village. The expenditures should reflect the benefit of the whole village, e.g. new water supply, child-care establishment, terrace crop improvements, etc. Similarly, the money kept by the district should be directed to specific projects which improve the living conditions of those in the communes.

3. Travel organisation / Tourist management

As we know, Sa Pa's tourism started developing just recently but without any planned direction. Thus the organisation and management of tourism development is only in an early stage and will face many difficulties.

Above all, the District's authority and the L^lo Cai Tourism Company agree that there needs to be a State Organisation (which includes members of the concerned departments as Tourism Company, Police) that will be responsible for the management of tourism in Sa Pa.

Besides governmental management, a Non-governmental Tourism Association may be established. It could be a gathering of volunteers, including business individuals engaged in the sector, and representatives from NGOs, mass organisations, and communes who are interested in healthy, sustainable tourism development for Sa Pa. Such an organisation could promote efforts, hold discussions on tourism problems and issues, make recommendations and solutions, and ultimately contribute to the good administrative management of Sa Pa and allow for broad community participation in planning and decision making.

According to the survey of the business people involved in tourism, up to 86.2% of them said that it is necessary to establish a Tourism Association where they could discuss organisation and business issues of tourism development. This Association even can itself make efforts to organise transport for tourists, provide them all the necessary information about hotels, guesthouses, restaurants, bars and other tourism services of

Sa Pa, information of tours, tourism sites and routes. They could also provide environmental and cultural interpretation information, including a minimum impact code. The Association would need to organise tourism training courses and intensive courses for tour guides. It's role could be to put the tourism activities of Sa Pa in order, promoting healthy competition in tourism, aimed at maximising the benefits from tourism in an equal basis, while satisfying tourist demands.

There is an obvious need for interpretative information: the research found that 12/25 (48%) foreign tourists and 11/26 (42.3%) of domestic want to have more information about Sa Pa. These foreign tourists not only want to know more about the culture of ethnic minority communities in Sa Pa, but also are interested in history (12/15 or 80%). The foreign tourists are more interested in environmental information than domestic tourists are: 9/15 (60%) compared to 3/11 (27.2%). Meanwhile, domestic tourists are more concern about information on the ethnic community's religions: 10/11 (90%) as opposed to 9/15 (60%).

4. Opening new tourism sites and entertainment to meet tourists' demand

According to the survey, the Vietnamese tourists said that Sa Pa today only exists as a good place for relaxation and leisure, but that it cannot attract many tourists because it has no places for entertainment. In contrast, foreign tourists expressed the view that Sa Pa is too developed and no longer 'authentic'.

Due to the differences in reasons for coming to Sa Pa and tourist behaviour between foreign and domestic tourists, it appears to be somewhat difficult to harmoniously build and organise tourism activities in Sa Pa in order to meet the demands of both kinds of tourists.

For the foreigners, the main target is to be close to nature, a clean environment, to walk, climb, visit and learn about the original ethnic minority communities' way of life. Therefore, they would like Sa Pa to be kept in line with nature, avoiding encroachment to or damage of visual natural landscape as much as possible.

Meanwhile, the aim of most Vietnamese tourists to Sa Pa is to rest and be entertained. If for foreigners the maintenance as much as possible of intact natural settings is important for hiking, for Vietnamese, the desire is for more renovations and provisions for entertainment, making tourism activities more comfortable.

For example, comparing the views of foreign and Vietnamese tourists about *đỉnh Lát* and Sa Pa, many foreigners said that *đỉnh Lát* is too crowded and is not as "natural" as Sa Pa so they prefer Sa Pa over *đỉnh Lát*, while Vietnamese tourists said that Sa Pa is much less comfortable than *đỉnh Lát* and that there are not as many easy-to-visit sites in Sa Pa.

At present Sa Pa has a lack of signs and tourism guides along routes to points of interest. So, although a lot of money has been invested in roads and routes leading to tourist sites, the present collection of fees from tourists remains a complaint by most foreign and domestic tourists. They expect more services which help tourists in understanding the sites they visit as well as helping them to be safe. Foreign tourists are not interested in the laying of concrete foot paths, or encroachment of artificial objects in visit sites.

So, besides inter-commune road investment, money should be spent on the improvement of main special tourist routes, combined with the controlled establishment of some entertainment sites. Construction should keep in harmony with the natural surroundings, changing the existing natural scenic landscape as little as possible. In the town, the building of new objects needs now to stop, because too many guesthouses will likely damage the town's last remaining natural landscape.

In this case, the establishment of guesthouses in villages, besides other aims, can also contribute to the redistribution of not only human pressure on nature, but also profits to ethnic minority communities (if these guest house in villages controlled by the latter), helping them to integrate into Vietnam common socio-economic process. This will provide the opportunity for the foreign tourists to experience local ethnic culture. It may be that providing the opportunity for overnight stays is the only way to cater to that market segment.

The suggestion of Mark E. Grindley, Frontier-Vietnam to organise eco-trails in *Hồng Lĩnh Sừng* Nature Reserve to attract more tourists is notable also.

5. Awareness-raising and educational activities

All players involved in the tourism industry need to be involved in any process of education, including officials, tourists, business people and ethnic minority people (who actively participate in the process as well as other villagers actually or potentially impacted by tourism development).

For tourists, it may educate them to behave more respectfully toward ethnic minorities, respecting their original culture. In addition, they can be made to appreciate the environment. This can be done especially with domestic tourists, by teaching them not to litter using advertisements and panels in town, along tourism routes, sites, or using other tools such as including the information in books and guide-books on Sa Pa tourism.

For business townspeople, their awareness on pollution needs to be raised, as well as on environmental degradation and healthy market competition between themselves and ethnic minority people. Implementation of such an education programme would be based on the different education levels and social interests of these individuals, adapting appropriate techniques and methods, combined with their active involvement and discussion in the voluntary effective self-management of Sa Pa tourism development.

For ethnic minority people, they need to be educated in understanding the tourism industry, its positive and negative aspects, and the need to protect their unique cultural traditions under the impacts of tourism. They need to know how to actively be involved, directly or indirectly, in the sector, to diversify and develop their economy, to raise their income, and to reduce pressure on forest resources, which along with their original culture are the most important attractions for tourists.

6. Some conclusions

In *conclusion*, we would like to emphasise that the process of attracting ethnic minority communities to take part in and gain profits from tourism activities is very important and necessary. It will be reflected in increasing the income and improving the living standards of ethnic minorities and reducing their pressure on natural resources. Further, it will also improve their knowledge of how to deal with business, widen their understanding of the surrounding world, and create a base for further economic and social development.

It is very important that this involvement is a desire of the ethnic minority communities people themselves, as expressed in group discussions and by most respondents in this survey.

For example, the male elders of villages and clans in Tộ Van commune, have discussed and intend to invest in developing tourism by building guest houses in their villages, if the district authority would give permission. The local people would like to profit from tourism both materially and spiritually. So, the direction for development needs to try its best to create favourable conditions for extending their effective involvement in the industry, while recognising some social changes as inevitable consequences of a market economy.

Furthermore, they need to mitigate the negative impacts of tourism using public announcements and information dissemination. This can be done by implementing education programmes on the traditional morals of ethnic minority communities, for outsiders to respect and protect the original cultures. Local authorities, male elders, heads of villages and clans, different social organisations, and all women and men need to take an active role in the movement, especially in the case of taking strict administrative measures against people who do not observe community instructions or regulations. Measures to develop the educational levels of ethnic minority communities need to continue, in order to assist them to integrate into the Vietnamese mainstream society. Eventually, the gap in living standards between different national groups will be reduced and all local people will be aware of the need to protect Hoàng Liên Sơn Nature Reserve, the unique and natural beauty of Sa Pa./