

Country Brief: Viet Nam

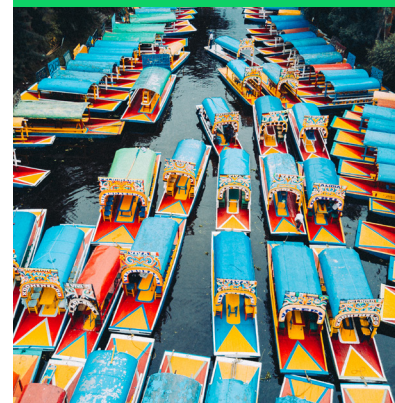
Viet Nam has strong economic dynamism and growing climate policy engagement, but the green skills picture remains fragmented. Training content is often too broad, too complicated, and insufficiently grounded in local realities. Ethnic minority communities in the Mekong Delta and northern highlands are highly exposed to climate impacts but face additional barriers of language, geography, and cultural distance from mainstream programmes. Climate-driven migration is reshaping rural areas as young people leave for cities, weakening local knowledge systems and agricultural traditions. NGOs are critical delivery partners, particularly in reaching communities that public services cannot, but their funding is short-term and fragile.

At a glance

- Viet Nam contributed the largest country sample (n=75) in the global survey, with two in three respondents female and around one in four from rural areas.
- Lack of local green jobs, limited training access, and financial constraints were cited as barriers with similar frequency, each by more than half of respondents. Information gaps and education-to-industry misalignment were also prominent.
- Renewable energy was associated with green jobs by nearly all Vietnamese respondents, the highest of any country. Agriculture was the second most cited sector, and manufacturing ranked notably higher than in other countries.
- Ethnic minorities were the most frequently identified vulnerable group. Financial support was the top request, followed by improved information on green jobs and digital learning tools.

Key Findings

- **Training content is abstract and disconnected from lived experience.** An educator described training as ‘too broad and too complicated for them to understand’ (Educator, Viet Nam). A youth diary noted: ‘If only focused on models and numbers, there would certainly be a gap’ between learning and real life (Youth diary, Viet Nam). Training ‘lacks the familiarity and the realised context’ that would make it usable (Educator, Viet Nam). Another youth framed the need plainly: ‘It is not just technical, but the ability to communicate, connect and empower each other’ (Youth diary, Viet Nam).
- **Ethnic minority communities face compounded, layered exclusion.** Youth described ethnic minorities as ‘affected by climate change but very hard to open their mind, to learn, to update new things’ (Youth, Viet Nam). A sector expert added: ‘The people in the rural area will be the first affected’ (Sector Expert, Viet Nam). Language, connectivity, and cultural distance from mainstream programmes create barriers before training even begins. Vietnamese respondents identified ethnic minorities as the most vulnerable group more frequently than any other category.
- **Climate migration is hollowing out rural communities.** An NGO representative described the pattern: ‘Youngsters are leaving the area for big cities, for better income, less agricultural work’ (NGO Representative, Viet Nam). A policymaker named it directly: ‘That’s what we call climate migration’ (Policymaker, Viet Nam). When youth leave, local knowledge of farming, water management, and ecosystem care goes with them.
- **Human skills proved as important as technical knowledge in the field.** A youth researcher described how sharing household stories rather than data transformed a training session: ‘The atmosphere became lively, everyone felt their voice had value’ (Youth diary, Viet Nam). During flooding, the same researcher motivated his team and ‘even borrowed small boats from people to approach households’ (Youth diary, Viet Nam), showing that adaptability and empathy drive effective fieldwork as much as technical competence.



“It is not just technical, but the ability to communicate, connect and empower each other.”
Youth researcher, diary, Viet Nam

Spotlight: Shrimp and rice: climate-smart livelihoods in the Mekong Delta

A private sector leader described a production model that combines shrimp farming with rice cultivation across seasons to reduce emissions and diversify income: ‘They raise shrimp in one crop and grow rice in another crop to reduce the amount of emissions’ (Private Sector Leader, Viet Nam). This locally grounded model shows how green skills training can build on existing livelihood systems rather than starting from scratch. Another private sector leader called for official certification that values local wisdom alongside formal qualifications, arguing for systems that professionalise the green workforce on local terms rather than importing standards that don’t fit.

Key Recommendations

Recommendation	Evidence basis	Who should act
Localise climate learning content: language, examples, regional framing.	Educators describe content as ‘too broad and too complicated.’ Youth diaries highlight the gap between abstract models and lived experience. More than half of Vietnamese respondents cited limited training access.	Ministry of Education and Training (MOET); provincial education departments; training providers; NGOs.
Target ethnic minority inclusion with tailored outreach and trusted intermediaries.	Youth and sector experts describe layered exclusion. Vietnamese respondents identified ethnic minorities as the most vulnerable group. Language, geography, and cultural distance create compounded barriers.	Ministry of Ethnic Minorities and Religions (MEMR); provincial people’s committees; NGOs (CARE, Oxfam, local partners).
Fund NGO-government delivery partnerships sustainably.	Interviews describe NGOs as key implementers where public reach is constrained. NGOs are described as ‘the connecting channel between large investors and the Ministry of Finance (MOF); bilateral donors (DFAT, GIZ, JICA); international NGOs (local population’ (NGO, Brazil, echoed in Viet Nam context).	Ministry of Finance (MOF); bilateral donors (DFAT, GIZ, JICA); international NGOs.
Strengthen youth networks and career navigation systems.	Youth describe being ‘left out’ of information networks. Information on green jobs was the second most requested support among Vietnamese respondents. Nearly half requested digital learning tools.	Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union; Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA); private sector; youth-focused NGOs.
Invest in local green livelihoods to reduce climate-driven migration.	Policymaker and NGO interviews describe climate-driven out-migration. Youth diaries describe loss of traditions and productive systems. Shrimp-rice model shows viable local alternatives exist.	Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE); provincial people’s committees; MOHA; rural development programmes.
Address gender dimensions: care burdens, flexible training, women in governance.	NGO data: ‘More than 90% of women have to do housework.’ Educators describe single mothers unable to attend. Care burdens were named as a structural constraint on participation.	Viet Nam Women’s Union; MOHA; training providers; local government.

Source: Country survey respondents: n=75. Supplemented by key informant interviews, youth diaries, and Innovation Launchpad discussions.

“Networks are very important because when we know more people, the more knowledge you will get.”
Sector Expert, interview, Viet Nam

