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Sustainable Poverty Reduction Governance in A Mountainous Ethnic Minority Commune in Vietnam: Integrating Livelihoods, Social Inclusion, And Environmental Sustainability

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Abstract
Sustainable poverty reduction remains a governance challenge in mountainous communities where livelihoods depend heavily on small-scale agriculture and forestry and where access to markets, public services, and productive resources may be constrained. This study examines poverty reduction governance in Thien Long commune, Lang Son province, Vietnam, through an integrated framework combining multidimensional poverty, sustainable livelihoods, and sustainable development. The case study draws on descriptive survey information from 80 households, semi-structured interviews with 10 local officials and community representatives, and administrative figures reported in the underlying research project. The analysis focuses on local policy coordination, livelihood support, access to social services, environmental sustainability, and digital administration. The administrative data report 1,235 households in 2025, including 60 poor households and 405 near-poor households. Survey ratings show comparatively positive assessments of locally appropriate production models (mean = 3.85) and education-related interventions (mean = 3.84), while market linkages (mean = 3.35), social resource mobilization (mean = 3.34), and digital infrastructure (mean = 3.24) received lower ratings among the selected items. These results should be interpreted as perceptions of feasibility rather than evidence of programme impact. The study argues that sustainable poverty reduction requires governance arrangements that connect productive support with market access, social inclusion, environmental management, and administrative capacity. It offers a context-sensitive framework for analysing how local institutions can coordinate these dimensions in resource-constrained mountainous communities.
Keywords*: sustainable poverty reduction; local governance; multidimensional poverty; sustainable livelihoods; ethnic minority communities; Vietnam.*

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I. Introduction

Poverty reduction is a core objective of sustainable development, but the meaning of poverty extends beyond low income. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development places the eradication of poverty at the centre of global development commitments and links it to improvements in health, education, decent work, reduced inequalities, and environmental sustainability (United Nations, 2015). This framing reflects a growing recognition that material deprivation often overlaps with limited access to services, insecure livelihoods, weak political voice, and exposure to shocks.

The multidimensional perspective is particularly relevant to rural and mountainous settings. Households may rely on agriculture and forestry while facing constraints in transport, technical knowledge, market access, and public-service provision. Even where household income rises, vulnerability may persist if livelihoods depend on a narrow range of products or are exposed to climate variability, illness, or price fluctuations. Chambers (1995) cautions that standardized income-centred views can overlook locally experienced dimensions of poverty, including vulnerability, isolation, seasonality, and powerlessness. Sen (1999) similarly argues that development should be understood through the expansion of substantive capabilities and freedoms, rather than income growth alone.

Vietnam has adopted multidimensional poverty reduction as a national policy priority. Decision No. 90/QĐ-TTg approved the National Target Program for Sustainable Poverty Reduction for 2021–2025, emphasizing inclusive and sustainable poverty reduction, access to basic social services, and the prevention of recurrent poverty (Prime Minister of Vietnam, 2022). Decree No. 07/2021/NĐ-CP established the multidimensional poverty standards for the same period (Government of Vietnam, 2021). The policy framework creates a mandate for local authorities to combine assistance with measures that strengthen livelihood opportunities and household resilience.

However, national policy objectives do not automatically translate into durable local outcomes. Implementation depends on local planning, coordination across agencies, the availability and targeting of resources, the quality of frontline administration, and the ability to adapt interventions to household circumstances. These challenges are particularly salient in mountainous communes with dispersed settlements and high proportions of ethnic minority residents. Research on livelihood vulnerability in northwestern Vietnam demonstrates that adaptive capacity, social networks, livelihood strategies, and household characteristics are important to understanding climate-related vulnerability (Tran et al., 2021).

Thien Long commune in Lang Son province offers a local case through which to examine these issues. The underlying research project describes a mountainous setting in which many households depend on small-scale agriculture and forestry, including activities such as cinnamon, star anise, acacia, and livestock production. The project also identifies continuing concerns related to livelihood stability, resource constraints, access to markets, social services, environmental risks, and the use of information technology in poverty reduction administration.

The article asks three questions: (1) What institutional and socioeconomic conditions shape poverty reduction governance in Thien Long commune? (2) How do households and local stakeholders assess the feasibility of proposed interventions related to livelihoods, social services, environmental sustainability, and administrative capacity? (3) What governance priorities may help strengthen the sustainability of poverty reduction in mountainous ethnic minority communities?

The article contributes by connecting three strands of scholarship—multidimensional poverty, sustainable livelihoods, and sustainable development—to the practical functions of local governance. Its contribution is analytical and context-specific rather than a claim to establish causal effects. The case illustrates how livelihood support, social inclusion, environmental stewardship, and administrative capacity need to be considered as interdependent components of poverty reduction.

II. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1. Multidimensional poverty and human capabilities

Income measures remain important for identifying material deprivation, allocating assistance, and monitoring changes over time. However, poverty also encompasses overlapping disadvantages that may not be captured by income alone. Alkire and Foster (2011) propose a method for identifying and aggregating multidimensional deprivation using dimension-specific cut-offs and a poverty threshold across dimensions. Their framework helps distinguish the incidence and intensity of deprivation and allows poverty profiles to be disaggregated across population groups.

The capability approach offers a normative explanation for why such a broader view matters. Sen (1999) defines development in terms of expanding the real freedoms people can exercise, including the ability to be healthy, educated, economically active, and involved in decisions that affect their lives. From this perspective, access to education, health services, social protection, and productive opportunities is not merely supplementary to income support; it is part of the substance of development itself.

For local poverty governance, these perspectives imply that the number of households crossing an official poverty threshold is an incomplete measure of sustainability. Monitoring should also consider the durability of livelihood improvements, access to basic services, and the risks that can push households back into poverty. The global Multidimensional Poverty Index similarly highlights the importance of overlapping deprivations, although its global measures should not be confused with local administrative classifications unless identical indicators and methods are used (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP] & Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative [OPHI], 2024).

2.2. Sustainable livelihoods and vulnerability

The sustainable livelihoods approach shifts attention from a single income outcome to the assets, strategies, and institutions through which households secure their well-being. Scoones (1998) identifies natural, economic, human, and social resources as important elements in livelihood strategies and emphasizes the influence of formal and informal institutions on livelihood outcomes. Ellis (2000) likewise shows that rural livelihoods are often diversified across farm and non-farm activities and that diversification can shape both income opportunities and vulnerability.

This approach is relevant to communities where agriculture and forestry are central to household economies. Productive inputs or credit may be necessary but insufficient if households lack technical advice, suitable infrastructure, market information, or reliable buyers. Chambers and Conway (1992) frame sustainable livelihoods in terms of capabilities, assets, and activities, while emphasizing that livelihoods must be able to cope with and recover from stresses and shocks without undermining the natural resource base.

The relationship between livelihoods and vulnerability is especially important in mountainous areas. Tran et al. (2021), studying two ethnic minority communities in northwestern Vietnam, found that vulnerability

to climate change was associated with adaptive capacity, livelihood strategies, social networks, and household demographics. Their results support a policy orientation that combines livelihood diversification with stronger adaptive capacity rather than relying exclusively on short-term transfers.

2.3. Sustainable development and environmental stewardship

Sustainable development links current improvements in well-being with the capacity of future generations to meet their needs (World Commission on Environment and Development [WCED], 1987). In rural communities, this principle requires attention to the interdependence of economic activity, social conditions, and environmental resources. Forests, soil, water, and biodiversity can support household production while also being vulnerable to unsustainable extraction and climate-related pressures.

Pretty (1995) argues that sustainability cannot be reduced to a universal technical prescription and emphasizes the value of participation and learning in the development of sustainable agricultural practices. This insight is important where local ecological conditions and traditional knowledge influence the feasibility of livelihood interventions. Environmental objectives should therefore be embedded in decisions about productive support, land and resource management, and programme evaluation, rather than treated as separate activities.

The three dimensions of sustainability—economic, social, and environmental—are used in this article as an organizing framework. Economic sustainability concerns income opportunities, productive capacity, market access, and resilience. Social sustainability concerns access to education, health, social protection, and participation. Environmental sustainability concerns responsible resource use and adaptation to environmental risks. These dimensions guide the interpretation of the case; they are not presented as a validated measurement scale.

2.4. Local governance, participation, and implementation

Local governance is the institutional process through which policy objectives are translated into plans, budgets, services, and monitoring arrangements. Effective implementation requires coordination among administrative bodies, clear responsibilities, access to information, and mechanisms for identifying and responding to household needs. The World Bank's work on poverty and ethnic minorities in Vietnam has highlighted the importance of understanding why improvements in aggregate welfare may coexist with persistent disparities affecting ethnic minority populations (World Bank, 2019).

Participation is also more than attendance at meetings or receipt of information. Arnstein's (1969) ladder of citizen participation distinguishes levels of participation according to the degree of influence citizens exercise over decisions. Pretty (1995) similarly cautions that participation can be interpreted in different ways, some of which do not meaningfully redistribute influence. Applied to poverty reduction, these arguments suggest that community members should have opportunities to help identify needs, shape priorities, monitor implementation, and provide feedback—not merely receive information about decisions already made.

In a resource-constrained commune, governance capacity includes the ability to coordinate national programmes, mobilize non-state resources, maintain accurate household records, link producers with markets, and monitor whether assistance produces lasting benefits. Digital tools may help improve record management and coordination, but their effectiveness depends on infrastructure, staff skills, data quality, and appropriate safeguards for personal information. Digitalization is therefore an enabling condition, not a substitute for institutional capacity or community engagement.

2.5. Research gap and analytical framework

The literature provides strong conceptual foundations for multidimensional poverty analysis, sustainable livelihoods, environmental sustainability, and participation. A practical gap remains in explaining how these dimensions can be coordinated through local administrative processes in a specific mountainous context. Studies of poverty outcomes do not necessarily explain how local planning, inter-agency coordination, resource mobilization, and monitoring shape the implementation of poverty reduction measures.

This article addresses that applied gap through an integrated framework with four components: (1) governance processes—planning, coordination, implementation, resource mobilization, monitoring, and evaluation; (2) livelihood interventions—productive support, credit, training, employment, and market linkages; (3) social and environmental interventions—education, healthcare, social protection, resource management, and climate adaptation; and (4) enabling conditions—administrative capacity, community participation, digital infrastructure, and institutional coordination. The framework is used to organize the case evidence and derive policy implications, not to test causal relationships.

III. Methodology

3.1. Research design and case selection

The study uses a case study design focused on poverty reduction governance in Thien Long commune, Lang Son province, Vietnam. The research combines descriptive household survey information, semi-structured interviews, and administrative figures reported in the underlying master's project. A case study is suitable for examining a policy process in its local institutional context, particularly when the purpose is to understand implementation conditions rather than estimate a causal effect (Yin, 2018).

The case was selected because the research project describes a mountainous commune with a high proportion of ethnic minority residents and livelihoods strongly connected to agriculture and forestry. These features make the integration of economic opportunity, access to social services, environmental management, and local administrative capacity central to the analysis.

3.2. Household survey

The research project reports a household survey of 80 households drawn from 14 villages. The intended respondents included poor households, near-poor households, and households that had recently escaped poverty. The questionnaire addressed local policy implementation, livelihood support, access to social services, environmental protection, digital administration, and the perceived feasibility of proposed interventions.

Selected intervention items were rated on a five-point scale, and the analysis used descriptive statistics, including response distributions and mean scores. The survey was not designed to estimate causal effects or produce nationally representative estimates. The article therefore interprets mean scores as respondents' perceptions of feasibility and does not treat them as measures of actual programme effectiveness.

3.3. Interviews and administrative data

The project reports 10 semi-structured interviews with local officials and community representatives. Interview topics included local policy direction, implementation arrangements, resource mobilization, livelihood development, monitoring, and barriers to implementation. Interview material was used to contextualize the descriptive survey results. Because the source project does not provide a complete transcript set or a fully documented coding protocol, qualitative evidence is summarized cautiously and is not presented as the result of a formal reproducible coding procedure.

Administrative figures reported in the project were used to describe the household poverty profile. The article preserves the distinction between households officially classified as poor and those classified as near-poor. These categories are not equated with a separately calculated multidimensional poverty index. The source project reports 1,235 households in 2025, including 60 poor households and 405 near-poor households.

3.4. Analytical procedure and research ethics

The analysis followed a descriptive and thematic procedure. First, administrative figures were organized to describe the reported poverty profile. Second, mean ratings for selected interventions were compared to identify relatively higher- and lower-rated areas. Third, survey patterns were interpreted alongside interview themes and the theoretical framework. Finally, policy implications were derived from the combined evidence.

The source material available for this article does not document an ethics approval number, a formal informed-consent procedure, or a detailed data-protection protocol. These details should be added by the authors if applicable and verifiable. No inferential statistics, regression coefficients, or causal claims are introduced in this article.

3.5. Limitations

The study is limited by its single-commune scope, a survey sample of 80 households, reliance on descriptive statistics, and the absence of a complete qualitative coding record in the source material. In addition, some administrative figures in the underlying project refer to different years and categories; they should be checked against the original official records before being used to estimate change over time. The findings are therefore context-specific and exploratory.

IV. Results

4.1. Reported household poverty profile

The administrative figures in the research project indicate that Thien Long commune had 1,235 households in 2025. Of these, 60 were classified as poor and 405 as near-poor. The corresponding proportions are 4.86% and 32.79%, respectively; together, the two groups account for 37.65% of reported households.

Indicator	Households	Percentage

Total households	1,235	100.00%
Poor households	60	4.86%
Near-poor households	405	32.79%
Poor and near-poor households combined	465	37.65%

Source: Administrative figures reported in the research project.

The distinction between poor and near-poor households matters for programme design. The poor-household figure reflects the official classification reported by the project, whereas the combined total identifies a larger group that may remain economically vulnerable. The combined percentage should not be described as a multidimensional poverty rate unless it is calculated using a defined multidimensional measure and its indicators.

4.2. Perceptions of governance and policy coordination

The source project reports generally positive assessments of local leadership and policy implementation. An item concerning the alignment of local poverty reduction plans with national policy received a mean score of 4.08. Items concerning revision of policies to fit local conditions and stronger coordination across agencies received mean scores of 3.79 and 3.74, respectively. The proposed integration of national target programmes and support resources received a score of 3.64.

These results indicate that respondents regarded local planning and coordination as relevant and potentially feasible. However, positive ratings do not demonstrate that policy coordination was consistently effective or that it produced lasting household-level impacts. Interview material identifies continuing constraints, including limited resources, difficult transport conditions, uneven awareness among residents, and challenges in connecting support programmes with sustainable livelihoods.

4.3. Perceived feasibility of selected interventions

Table 2 summarizes selected mean scores reported in the project. These scores are descriptive assessments of perceived feasibility, not measurements of implementation outcomes.

Intervention	Mean score
Revising policies to fit local conditions	3.79
Integrating national target programmes and support resources	3.64
Strengthening administrative decentralization and coordination	3.74
Mobilizing social resources for poverty reduction	3.34
Developing local production models (cinnamon, star anise, acacia, livestock)	3.85
Preferential credit and technical knowledge for production	3.69
Vocational training and employment counselling	3.50
Linking production and sales through cooperatives and enterprises	3.35
Improving education and learning conditions	3.84
Implementing social protection policies	3.79
Improving healthcare services	3.60
Linking agriculture/forestry production with environmental protection	3.79
Creating and updating electronic household poverty records	3.64
Investing in digital infrastructure and internet connectivity	3.24

Source: Descriptive survey results reported in the research project.

The selected items received mean ratings above the scale midpoint. Local production models (3.85) and education-related interventions (3.84) were among the highest-rated measures. By contrast, social resource mobilization (3.34), production-market linkages (3.35), and digital infrastructure investment (3.24) received lower ratings. These differences suggest that respondents were more confident about some direct interventions than about measures requiring broader coordination, external partnerships, or infrastructure investment.

4.4. Livelihood support and market linkages

Developing locally relevant production models received a mean feasibility score of 3.85, while access to preferential credit and technical knowledge received 3.69. The project identifies cinnamon, star anise, acacia, and livestock as potential areas for productive support. These activities may provide a starting point for livelihood development, but their contribution to sustained poverty reduction depends on production costs, household capacity, market demand, transport, product quality, and exposure to environmental risks.

The lower score for linking production with cooperatives and enterprises (3.35) is important because it points to a perceived gap between producing goods and selling them reliably. A household may increase output without achieving stable income if it has no dependable buyer or access to market information. The findings support a more integrated approach that connects productive inputs with technical assistance, credit, collective marketing, and market relationships. This interpretation is consistent with the sustainable livelihoods literature,

which emphasizes the interaction between assets, strategies, and institutional conditions (Chambers & Conway, 1992; Ellis, 2000; Scoones, 1998).

4.5. Social services and inclusion

Education-related interventions received relatively high ratings. Improving education quality and learning conditions received a mean score of 3.84, while support for students from poor and near-poor households received 3.79. Healthcare improvement received 3.60, and social protection combined with livelihood support and employment received 3.66.

These ratings align with the view that poverty reduction should encompass access to essential services and household capabilities, not only income. Education can expand future employment options, healthcare can reduce the financial consequences of illness, and social protection can help households manage shocks. However, the survey assessed perceived feasibility rather than observed changes in school participation, healthcare access, or household well-being. The findings should therefore be interpreted as evidence of stakeholder priorities rather than proof of programme impact.

4.6. Environmental sustainability and climate adaptation

The proposed integration of agricultural and forestry production with environmental protection received a mean score of 3.79. Environmental awareness and responsible resource use received 3.74, while sustainable forest and resource management received 3.63. By comparison, climate-adaptive production models received 3.45.

The pattern suggests general support for environmentally responsible production, but somewhat lower confidence in implementing specific adaptation measures. This matters in a setting where livelihoods depend on natural resources. Environmental considerations should be built into the selection of livelihood models and the monitoring of programme outcomes. The findings are consistent with the argument that sustainable agricultural development requires locally grounded learning and participation rather than one-size-fits-all technical prescriptions (Pretty, 1995).

4.7. Digital administration and local capacity

The proposed creation and updating of electronic poverty records received a mean score of 3.64, and the application of information technology to programme management received 3.51. Digital infrastructure investment received a lower score of 3.24, while digitizing administrative procedures received 3.38.

These results suggest that respondents recognized the potential usefulness of digital administration while viewing the infrastructure required for implementation as a constraint. Digital tools may improve household records, coordination, and monitoring, but they require reliable connectivity, staff competencies, data quality, and safeguards for personal information. Digitalization should therefore be treated as an institutional development process, not simply a technology purchase.

V. Discussion

5.1. Governance connects otherwise fragmented interventions

The case indicates that sustainable poverty reduction is not only a matter of selecting appropriate assistance measures. It also depends on whether local institutions can coordinate interventions and maintain continuity between planning and household-level implementation. Relatively positive ratings for local policy alignment coexist with lower ratings for social resource mobilization and market linkages. This pattern suggests that respondents viewed certain administrative actions as feasible while perceiving greater difficulty in building partnerships and connecting production with markets.

The implication is that governance should be understood as the mechanism that connects productive support, social services, environmental management, and monitoring. Credit may have limited value without technical advice; training may not translate into income without market access; and income improvements may remain fragile if households lack access to healthcare or are exposed to environmental shocks. This interpretation brings multidimensional poverty and sustainable livelihoods into a shared local-governance perspective (Alkire & Foster, 2011; Scoones, 1998; Sen, 1999).

5.2. From production support to sustainable livelihood systems

The difference between the relatively high rating for local production models and the lower rating for market linkages highlights a practical issue in rural development: production capacity is not the same as secure livelihood outcomes. Interventions should consider the full chain from household resources and skills to production, quality, processing, transport, market information, and sales. This does not mean that every household should be directed into the same production model. Instead, the choice of support should reflect household assets, preferences, labour availability, risk exposure, and the viability of local markets.

Chambers and Conway (1992) and Scoones (1998) emphasize that sustainable livelihoods depend on both assets and the institutional context in which they are used. For Thien Long, local authorities could therefore prioritize coordinated packages that combine technical advice and suitable finance with producer groups, cooperatives, and buyer relationships where feasible. The design of such packages should be informed by local market assessment rather than by assumptions that any locally available crop or livestock activity will necessarily reduce poverty.

5.3. Addressing vulnerability beyond the official poverty threshold

The reported household profile shows that near-poor households substantially outnumber poor households. This makes it important to distinguish poverty exit from sustained resilience. A household may cross the official threshold but remain exposed to income volatility, health expenditure, crop failure, or other shocks. A capability-oriented perspective suggests that policy should monitor whether households have meaningful access to education, healthcare, stable livelihoods, and opportunities to participate in decisions that affect them (Sen, 1999).

For local governance, this requires differentiated support and follow-up. Some households may need immediate assistance, while others may benefit more from skills, productive assets, market access, or risk management. Programme evaluation should therefore examine the durability of improvements and the recurrence of deprivation, not only annual classifications.

5.4. Environmental resilience as an economic condition

The survey ratings show stronger support for the general principle of linking production with environmental protection than for climate-adaptive production models. This may reflect the difference between endorsing a broad objective and identifying practical, affordable measures to implement it. Because natural resources are part of the productive base of rural livelihoods, environmental stewardship should be incorporated into decisions about productive support, forestry practices, land use, and adaptation.

The evidence from mountainous ethnic minority communities in northwestern Vietnam suggests that adaptive capacity, social networks, and livelihood strategies matter for climate vulnerability (Tran et al., 2021). Although that study is not evidence about Thien Long specifically, it supports the relevance of considering household-level adaptive capacity when designing local interventions. Practical measures should be selected according to local environmental conditions and technical assessments.

5.5. Digital governance requires institutional foundations

The lower feasibility rating for digital infrastructure compared with electronic household records suggests a gap between the perceived usefulness of digital tools and the conditions required to implement them. Digital systems can support more accurate records and more timely monitoring, but their benefits depend on reliable data, trained personnel, coordination, and safeguards. Investment should therefore proceed alongside capacity-building and clear responsibilities for maintaining information.

The broader lesson is that administrative modernization should be assessed by whether it improves the quality and responsiveness of public decisions, rather than by the number of procedures moved online. In communities where access to devices, connectivity, or digital skills is uneven, digital services should complement face-to-face communication and accessible channels for households.

5.6. Theoretical contribution

The study's theoretical contribution is an integrated, context-sensitive framework linking multidimensional poverty, sustainable livelihoods, environmental sustainability, and local governance. The case illustrates how economic, social, and environmental dimensions become actionable through local planning, coordination, resource mobilization, implementation, and monitoring. The framework does not establish causal effects and should not be interpreted as a universally validated model. Its value lies in guiding future empirical investigation of how local institutions coordinate multiple dimensions of poverty reduction under resource constraints.

VI. Policy Implications

6.1. Build integrated local poverty-reduction plans

Local plans should link livelihood development, social services, environmental management, and household vulnerability monitoring. Each intervention should specify the target group, responsible organization, resource requirements, implementation schedule, and indicators for follow-up. Coordination should be assessed not only by whether meetings or plans exist, but also by whether activities complement one another and respond to household needs.

6.2. Link productive assistance to markets

Productive support should combine suitable finance and technical advice with market information, product quality improvement, collective marketing, and buyer relationships where viable. Before selecting a production model, local authorities and technical agencies should assess market demand, production costs, transport, environmental suitability, and household capacity. This would reduce the risk of promoting production without a realistic pathway to stable income.

6.3. Monitor households at risk of falling back into poverty

Household monitoring should distinguish poor, near-poor, and recently non-poor households and should be sensitive to changes in employment, health, education, productive assets, and exposure to shocks. Follow-up after assistance is important because an annual poverty classification alone may not reveal whether a household can maintain improved living conditions.

6.4. Incorporate environmental and climate considerations

Environmental considerations should be built into livelihood selection, technical support, and programme monitoring. Local authorities should work with relevant technical agencies to identify locally appropriate production practices, resource-management priorities, and climate-related risks. Environmental objectives should be assessed alongside economic outcomes rather than treated as a separate awareness-raising activity.

6.5. Strengthen administrative and digital capacity

Digitalization should proceed alongside staff training, reliable connectivity, data-quality procedures, and safeguards for household information. A practical first step is to improve the consistency and timeliness of household records, then use those records to support programme coordination and monitoring. Digital channels should complement, not replace, accessible in-person communication with residents.

6.6. Create meaningful community participation

Participation should extend beyond information provision. Community members should have opportunities to identify priorities, comment on proposed livelihood programmes, monitor implementation, and raise concerns about beneficiary selection or service delivery. This recommendation follows the distinction between nominal participation and meaningful influence emphasized by Arnstein (1969). Local mechanisms should be adapted to the context and should ensure that poorer households and groups with less voice can participate.

6.7. Improve outcome-oriented evaluation

Monitoring should combine administrative indicators with evidence on household outcomes. Relevant indicators may include the stability and diversification of income, access to basic services, market participation, household vulnerability to shocks, and adoption of environmentally appropriate practices. These indicators should be selected carefully and measured consistently; they should not be reported as observed outcomes unless the necessary data have actually been collected.

VII. Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. First, it focuses on one commune and cannot be generalized to all mountainous or ethnic minority communities in Vietnam. Second, the survey includes 80 households and uses descriptive analysis; it does not estimate causal relationships or test the statistical significance of differences. Third, feasibility ratings represent respondents' perceptions rather than measured programme outcomes. Fourth, the source project does not provide a complete interview transcript set or a reproducible coding protocol. Finally, administrative figures reported for different periods and categories require verification against original official records before being used to establish trends.

Future studies could compare multiple communes, use longitudinal household data, and examine whether differences in administrative capacity, market access, and environmental exposure are associated with different poverty trajectories. Mixed-methods research could also investigate how community participation influences the targeting and implementation of support programmes. Where data permit, future work could test a clearly specified model linking governance capacity, livelihood diversification, access to social services, environmental resilience, and household poverty outcomes.

VIII. Conclusion

This study examined poverty reduction governance in Thien Long commune, Lang Son province, using an integrated perspective on multidimensional poverty, sustainable livelihoods, and sustainable development.

The reported administrative figures show 60 poor households and 405 near-poor households among 1,235 households in 2025. Survey respondents generally rated local production models, education-related interventions, and policy coordination relatively positively, while market linkages, social resource mobilization, and digital infrastructure received lower ratings among selected interventions.

These findings should be read as descriptive evidence about local conditions and perceptions, not as proof of causal programme effects. They nevertheless highlight a practical governance challenge: sustainable poverty reduction depends on connecting productive assistance with markets, social services, environmental stewardship, and capable local administration. Direct support can remain necessary, but it should be embedded in a longer-term approach that strengthens household capabilities and reduces exposure to future risks.

The article contributes an integrated analytical framework for examining how local institutions coordinate these dimensions in mountainous communities. Further comparative and longitudinal research is needed to test the framework and assess whether the proposed governance priorities are associated with more durable poverty reduction outcomes.

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