

**Forum: Forum on Inequalities****Thematic: How to reduce inequalities on different scales?****Name of the Citizen: Thao**

Marital status: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input checked="" type="radio"/> <b>Married/in a relationship</b></li><li><input type="radio"/> Single</li><li><input checked="" type="radio"/> <b>With children, if so, how many: 2</b></li></ul>	Level of education <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input checked="" type="radio"/> <b>Primary</b></li><li><input type="radio"/> Secondary</li><li><input type="radio"/> University</li></ul>
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**1. How does the theme of inequalities concern you?**

I am a 36-year-old female and a local of Vietnam's Mekong Delta. I am a rice farmer by trade and a profession that has been passed on generation after generation in my family. I am married, and my husband and I cultivate a small paddy field together. We have two kids, and despite arduous work, our income is meager and uncertain due to fluctuating rice prices and climate-related problems like flooding and saltwater intrusion. I got only primary education, since my family could not support me being at school. This has shaped my life chance and limited my ability to shift to other forms of work. I want better access to education and opportunities for my children than I got. Women like me in rural communities are greatly affected by disparities. For starters, the pay gap between rural farmers and urban workers is immensely broad. While people in the city may get better wages, technology, and healthcare, in the countryside we hardly match basic requirements.

There is also gender imbalance. Women farmers will work the same hours as men in the fields and take care of the homestead and the children. Nevertheless, our labor is never valued, and in most cases, the men have the land and the money.

There is also the issue of access to resources. Farmers like me are open to exploitation by intermediaries who buy our rice at extremely low prices. We lack bargaining power, and there are times when government or international policy gives priority to large agribusinesses over small farmers like me. Climate change has aggravated this inequality because we have the highest exposure without the same protection measures.

**2. What do you suggest at your level?**

For people like me, solutions to reduce inequalities would involve:

Improved access to training and education. If my kids can go past primary level and acquire new skills, they will stand to gain more than merely farming. Low-cost schooling and scholarships would assist poor rural families such as mine.

Small farmers' support. Fair prices for rice, state subsidies, and cooperatives that will not allow us to be cheated would boost our earnings. New farm equipment and water supply systems would also reduce losses from climate change.

Policies for gender equality. Female farmers must be recognized as landowners and decision makers. Rural women's empowerment, childcare, and women's unions' support would do away with the double burden of work.

Social protection and health. Affordability of health and social insurance would protect households from descending into poverty when they get sick or encounter disasters. A guaranteed minimum income or conditional cash transfer would secure our lives.

Climate adaptation measures. Expenditure on infrastructure like dikes, freshwater reservoirs, and sustainable agriculture would secure poor Mekong Delta farmers less at risk.

Inequalities are not only about finances but about opportunity, recognition, and security too. As a 36-year-old Mekong Delta woman rice farmer, I am speaking for many rural women whose labor underpins our communities but is not valued. Closing gender gaps, improving education, giving equitable treatment to small farmers, and protecting us from climate risks will aid in starting to reduce inequalities in our communities and globally.