

# THE IMPACT OF THE POLICY ON THE URBAN COMMUNITY OF HO CHI MINH CITY ON THE CURRENT ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACTIVITIES FROM A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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## **Abstract**

*Ho Chi Minh City faces many challenges of environmental pollution from economic growth, urbanization and population growth. Since the City Party Committee's directive and the determination of the implementation of the local government, the environmental sanitation situation in the city has improved; Models of community participation in environmental protection were formed, diversified in forms and gradually brought into play effectively, creating a positive change in people's awareness of environmental protection. Although there are still some shortcomings and shortcomings, it can be said that the implementation of the Party Committee's directive has had a great impact on the society, to solve the problem of environmental pollution and indiscriminate littering a job through, long term, requires the participation of the community.*

**Keywords:** *Environmental protection, Ho Chi Minh city, sociology.*

## **1. Introduction**

Environmental protection activities are activities to prevent and limit negative impacts on the environment; respond to environmental incidents; overcoming environmental pollution and degradation, improving environmental quality; rationally use natural resources, biodiversity and respond to climate change (National Assembly, 2020). Along with its achievements in socio-economic development, Ho Chi Minh City faces many challenges of environmental pollution from economic growth itself, urbanization and rapid growth population resistance, leading to great pressure on urban infrastructure, especially the current environmental protection problem.

In order to solve the city's environmental problems, the Party Committee and the city government have issued guidelines and policies to implement many key programs on reducing environmental pollution in the 2016-2020 period to improve the environment and increase the green area; renovate and embellish existing residential areas and build new urban areas with synchronous and environmentally friendly infrastructure; to form centralized waste treatment zones and step by step improve the quality of urban environment in the city.

However, environmental pollution still occurs frequently and alarming in residential areas, construction sites, on the streets and at public works. These restrictions stem from the

sense of environmental hygiene of a part of the city population. Therefore, in order to concretize the above key programs with practical actions to propagate and advocate for changes in people's behavior and habits, to limit indiscriminate littering in public places. The Standing Committee of the City Party Committee issued Directive No. 19-CT / TU dated October 19, 2018 on the implementation of the campaign “The people of Ho Chi Minh City do not litter the streets and canals, for a clean and clean city reducing flooding” (Directive 19) (People's Committee of Ho Chi Minh City, 2021). The article aims to objectively assess the current situation and propose solutions to help the government have more scientific basis to improve current environmental protection activities from a sociological perspective.

## 2. Method

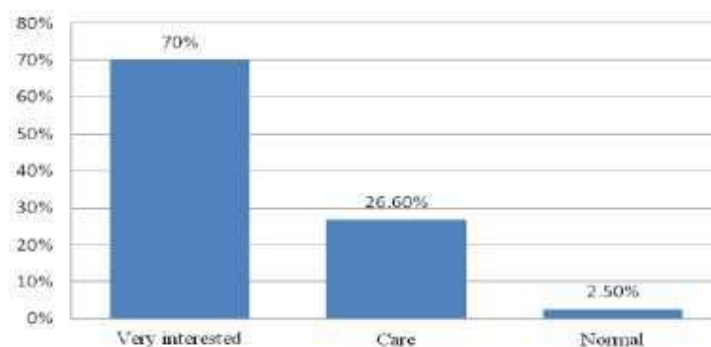
Qualitative data is used by the author and analyzed from documents of agencies and organizations of the City; Quantitative data was collected from sources of the Ho Chi Minh City Party Committee for Propaganda and Education conducted in June 2020 through a pre-designed questionnaire of response options, which was sent to respondents through applications using OTT (Zalo, Viber, Messenger), fanpage pages and handled by docs.google application for surveys and quick polls over the internet.

The survey results have 16,003 turns of respondents with the following characteristics: male rate is 30.6% and female is 69.4%; the young age (from 15-30) accounts for 22.2%, the middle age (31-60) accounts for 72.8%; in terms of education, under university is 27.63%, university is 63.13% and graduate is 9.24%; In the district, it is 86.4% and 15.6% in the district. Thus, more than two-thirds of women surveyed, most of them middle-aged, have a university or higher education, accounting for more than two-thirds and most of them live in the inner districts City of the City. Number of survey samples are selected at random, convenient, ensuring representative for the community.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Comment on the propaganda campaign "City people do not litter the streets and canals, because the city is clean and less flooded"

#### 3.1.1. People's interest in the campaign

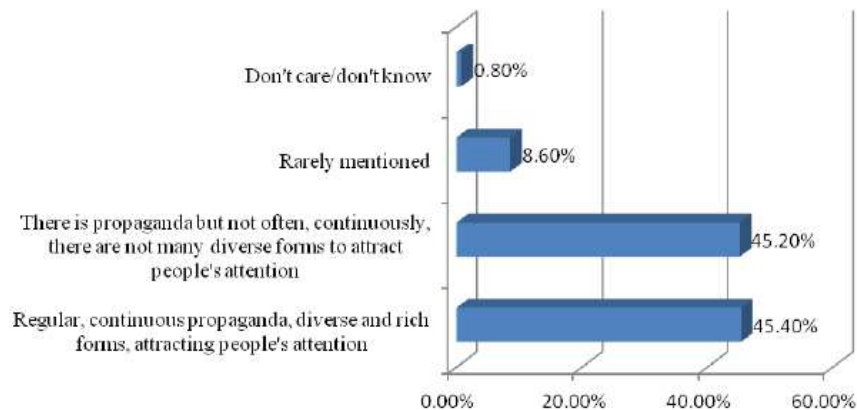


**Figure 1. People's interest in the campaign**

*(Ho Chi Minh City Party Committee Propaganda Department, 2020)*

The campaign has a direct and indirect impact on people's perceptions through propaganda channels from the media, local authorities to the Fatherland Front and socio-political organizations the spread of practical values in environmental protection activities of the city people. With the survey results in Figure 1 shows, the percentage of respondents answering "Very interested + interested" reached 96.6%, reflecting the majority of city residents' concern about this campaign. This is a good signal for the local authorities to have the basis to continue implementing environmental protection activities in the new period more favorable.

### 3.1.2. Local propaganda about the campaign



**Figure 2. Local propaganda about the campaign**

*(Ho Chi Minh City Party Committee Propaganda Department, 2020)*

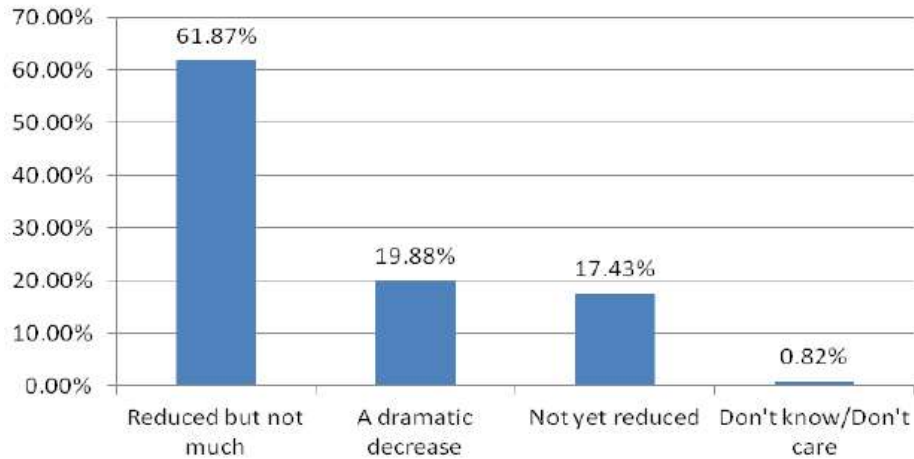
One of the key points of the campaign is the local propaganda to help people understand the rights and obligations of individuals, families and communities to environmental protection activities in residential areas and domestic waste management. Survey results in Figure 2 show that the people's perception of local propaganda activities is as follows: nearly half of the respondents said that the locality had "Regularly and continuously propagated, forms are diversified and plentiful, attracting people's attention" (45.2%). On the other hand, there are also half of the respondents said that "propaganda is available but not regularly and continuously, there are not many diversified forms to attract people's attention" (45.2%). Thus, in general, propaganda activities in localities have not been synchronous, yet effective is not high; In some places, which are interested by local leaders, propaganda regularly, continuously and diversely and richly, but there are places that have not attracted the participation of the people.

The concern or not of local leaders is very important to the success of the campaign. This issue poses for the city's advisory agencies to clearly define the responsibilities, obligations and rights of local leaders; at the same time, specifying the resources for the campaign to go into depth and form the "core" value in people's behavior standards for the

protection of the surrounding environment.

### 3.2. Changes in people's behavior and habits since the campaign is implemented

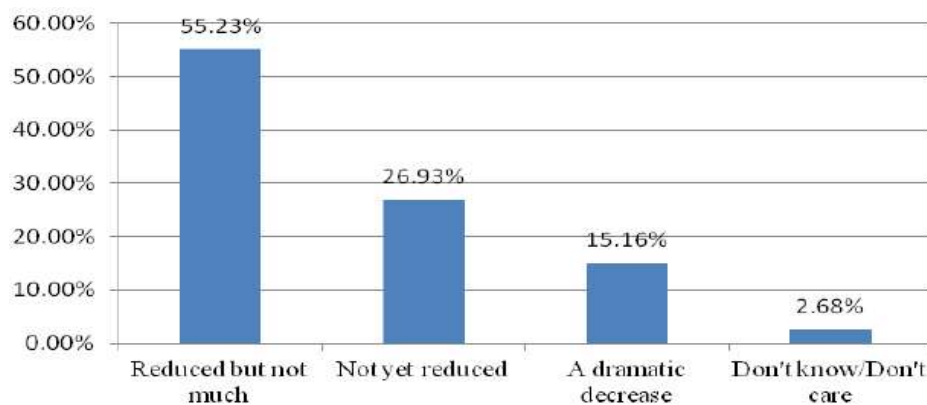
#### 3.2.1. People's comments on litter situation on roads, canals



**Figure 3. Changes in people's current littering on the street**

*(Ho Chi Minh City Party Committee Propaganda Department, 2020)*

According to people's perceptions, the current change in the situation of people littering on the streets has had many positive changes after two years of implementing the Directive 19. According to the survey results, figure 3: people think that The current situation of littering on the streets "Much reduced" (19.88%), "Reduced but not much", about 3/5 respondents (61.87%) and "not reduced" (17.43 %). Thus, the majority of people affirmed that the current situation of littering on the streets of the city people has decreased, but not much, and a part of the people believe that it has decreased significantly. Although the results are not as expected of the local authorities, but also shows a change in awareness and actions of the city people in a positive direction towards the current environmental protection.



**Figure 4. Changes in the current situation of people discharging garbage into canals**

*(Ho Chi Minh City Party Committee Propaganda Department, 2020)*

The survey results of Figure 4 show that: for the change in awareness and action on the current situation of littering into canals, people have noticed: "Much reduction" (15.16%), "Already Decreased but not much "(55.23%), about half of the respondents," No reduction "(26.93%), about 1/4 of the respondents. Thus, the majority of people believe that the current situation of littering into canals in the city tends to decrease, but not yet in the afternoon; The proportion of people agreeing with the point of view "not yet reduced" accounts for a higher rate than the "Much reduction" point of view.

3.2.2. *The change of people since the city started the campaign*

**Table 1. Changes in citizens since the City started the campaign (N = 16,003)**

	N	%
1. Be more conscious, offload the use of plastic waste.	11074	69,2
2. To put garbage in the right place as prescribed, do not dispose of garbage indiscriminately in public places, residential areas.	9826	61,4
3. Limit the use of plastic bags.	8338	52,1
4. Prioritize the use of environmentally friendly products.	8018	50,1
5. Participate in activities aimed at preserving environmental sanitation, movements to collect and classify used products made from plastic, packaging, and plastic bags.	7041	44
6. Proactively collect garbage after attending activities (watching music, watching soccer, ...) held in public places.	5889	36,8
7. To classify waste into inorganic and organic waste.	5617	35,1
8. Remind others when they see their violations such as not to put garbage in the prescribed place, put garbage in canals, roadbeds, gas tunnels, discharge doors, put garbage at the manholes...	5345	33,4

*(Ho Chi Minh City Party Committee Propaganda Department, 2020)*

From the people's point of view in Table 1 shows that, since the city started the campaign up to now, the habits and positive behaviors of the people tend to change for the better, specifically: people "Yes be more aware, reduce the use of plastic waste "(69.2%)," Keep garbage in the right place, do not throw garbage indiscriminately to public places, residential areas "(61.4%), "Limit the use of plastic bags" (52.1%) and "Prioritize the use of environmentally friendly products (50.1%). Survey results show that the majority of people have positive changes from awareness, attitude to behavior in environmental protection activities and this is gradually being improved;

Among the comments about the change, the viewpoint "Be more conscious, reduce the use of plastic waste" is highly appreciated by the people, accounting for more than 2/3 of the respondents. This reflects a positive trend of social life into people's perception because of the action of replacing disposable plastic products into those made of glass,

natural materials that are easy to digest eco-friendly and destructive is widely available; the activity "Leaving garbage in the right place, not disposing garbage indiscriminately in public places, residential areas" received more attention, about 2/3 of respondents affirmed the practical effect from the replacement people's exchange for this activity;

The remaining activities, according to the survey results, have 4 activities that people have changed since the city started the campaign such as: "Participating in activities to preserve environmental sanitation, collection and classification of used products made of plastic, packaging, plastic bags "(44%)," Actively collecting garbage after attending activities (watching music, watching soccer) ...) organized in a public place "(36.8%)," Sorting waste into inorganic waste, organic waste "(35.1%)," Remind others to see their violations as do not put garbage in the right place as prescribed, put garbage down canals, curb bed, gas tunnel, discharge door, put garbage at the drainage gates ... "(33.4%). Although these rates are not high, about one third of the respondents, the process of changing awareness, habits and behavior of the people has been marked over 2 years of implementing Directive 19. This is also the case. Cause many thoughts for the city government to consider new and more effective solutions to stimulate the participation of people to join hands with the government to implement well the campaign towards the goal of a clean city. and reduced flooding.

*3.2.3. The reaction of people when seeing other people dispose of garbage in the wrong place, litter it indiscriminately*

**Table 2. Reactions of people when they see other people dispose of trash in the wrong place, litter garbage on roads and canals (N = 16,003)**

	N	%
1. It is very annoying, frustrating, and immediately reminded when other people have the above behaviors.	9042	56,5
2. Very annoying, pressing, but not reminded and ignored.	2705	16,9
3. To collect rubbish by himself at the right place.	2096	13,1
4. Immediately report to the local authority / hotline / area person... when such behavior is observed.	1264	7,9
5. Normally, this situation occurs every day, so there is nothing frustrating and annoying.	768	4,8
6. Not interested, not paying attention.	128	0,8

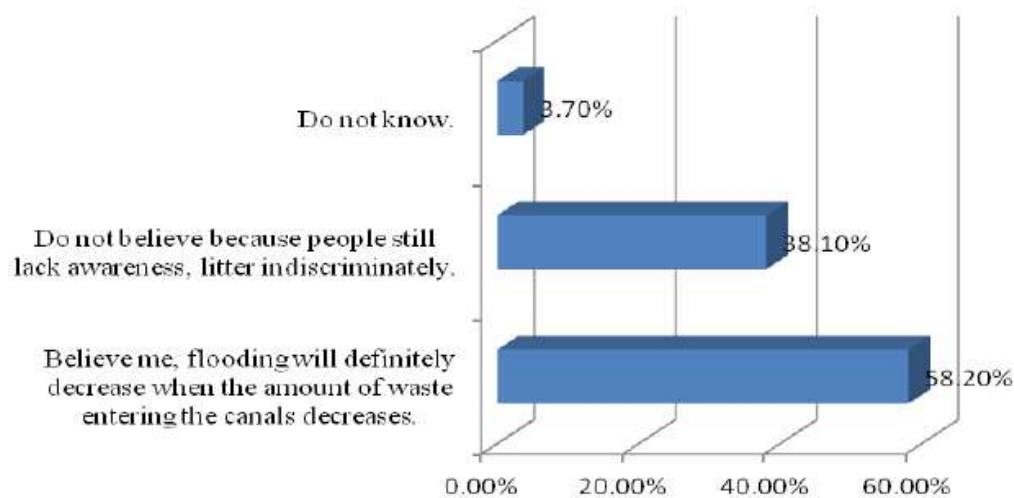
*(Ho Chi Minh City Party Committee Propaganda Department, 2020)*

To measure changes in people's perceptions, behaviors and habits after 2 years of campaigning by measuring people's reactions to seeing other people misplacing trash, littering yards. Survey results in Table 2 showed that more than half of respondents said that "It is very annoying, frustrating, and immediately reminded when they see other people commit the above behaviors" (56.5%). This is one of the great successes of the city

government and people, which has created a common standard value of "not indifferent, indifferent to one's own community". That will help change people's bad habits to form new standard values of "community cohesion" and these values are recognized by the society;

For other people's reactions such as: "Very annoying, frustrated but not reminded, ignored" (16.9%), "Waste is collected at the right place" (13.1%). These two companions describe the "indifference, ignorance" characteristic of a part of the people, expressing a lack of faith in the social values of common standards, affected and negatively affected by their lifestyle urban areas, making urban population communities tend to live in closed-loop areas, appear individualism. Although the proportion of people agreeing with this view is not high, it has appeared and existed in the perception and action of a part of the population.

*3.2.4 Citizens' perceptions of flooding will decrease compared to before when the city implements measures from the campaign*



**Figure 5. People's perception of the flooding situation compared to the past when the city implemented solutions from the campaign.**

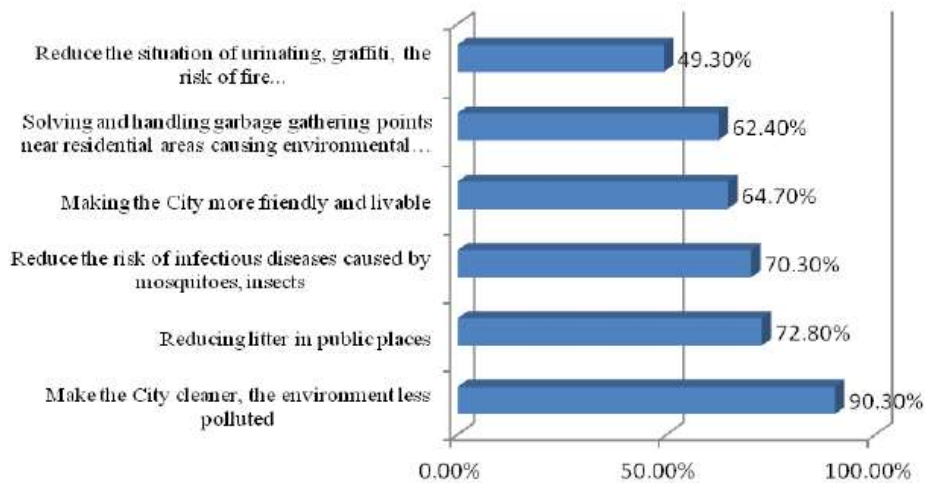
*(Ho Chi Minh City Party Committee Propaganda Department, 2020)*

One of the reasons for the city's waterlogging worsening is the domestic waste filling the canals and drains, making water inaccessible. The campaign for the implementation of Directive 19 has promoted the participation of the entire political system in mobilization to raise awareness; create good habits for people and communities to join the government in environmental protection activities that indirectly reduce flooding compared to the past. Survey results in Figure 5 show that nearly 3/5 respondents affirmed the viewpoint "Trust, surely the flooding will decrease when the amount of waste discharged into the canals decreases";

Besides, there is still a part of the people who feel "Not trusting because they still see lack of awareness, littering indiscriminately" (38.1%), with more than 1/3 of the respondents answered. Although, the amount of domestic waste in the canals and sewer systems is

cleaned through mass movements. However, in order to maintain and broaden these movements, it requires the participation and close supervision from the communities in which the people are living, the effectiveness of this action will bring about sustainability.

### 3.2.5. Comment on the effect of the campaign



**Figure 6. Comments on the effects of the campaign**

*(Ho Chi Minh City Party Committee Propaganda Department, 2020)*

Survey results in Figure 6 show that: most of the people believe that the campaign "makes the city cleaner, the environment less polluting" (90.3%). This statement is also the message that the government has sent to all city residents during the past 2 years and has been spread to all classes of people to join hands to make the city cleaner, environment less. more pollution; On the other hand, the campaign's effect also reduces the number of indiscriminate waste in public places (72.8%), "Reduces the risk of infectious diseases caused by mosquitoes and insects" (70, 3%). These two comments have a relatively high rate of people agreeing, accounting for more than 2/3 of the respondents. This proves the real effects and benefits from environmental protection activities that people, communities and authorities have done during the past time;

Besides, the effect of implementing the campaign is also significant: "Making the city more friendly and worth living" (64.7%), "Solving and handling gathering points. garbage near residential areas pollutes the environment, causing bad smell "(62.4%). Both of these statements account for a relatively high rate, with about 3/5 respondents affirming this. The campaign is also an opportunity for people to express their personal views and practical reflections on the surrounding environment so that the government and people work together to commit to effective coordination; Comment on the issue "Reducing the situation of graffiti, graffiti, the risk of fire and explosion, ... (49.3%), nearly half of the respondents. The movement as an invisible life has affected and crept into every corner of the urban environmental protection in the residential area and spread to other fields.



**3.3 Evaluate the local government's solutions to the campaign's implementation from the people's perspective**

**Table 3. Solutions for the campaign to be effective in the coming time (N = 16,003)**

	N	%
1. Continuing to propagate and mobilize people to have a sense of responsibility in environmental protection	13635	85,2
2. Strictly handle acts of littering into the environment	12546	78,4
3. Arranging and organizing the regular and irregular inspection of garbage gathering points in residential areas to ensure environmental hygiene, urban beauty and synchronous connection of the time of garbage delivery by people - people. collection - a transporter, not to concentrate garbage and scraps and gather many garbage collection vehicles at the same time.	11010	68,8
4. Arranging more garbage cans with the function of garbage classification at public places and residential points.	9858	61,6
5. Praise, reward, and replicate good models and practices of neighborhoods, residential groups ... in implementing the campaign.	9586	59,9
6. Advocating at points of sale, small businesses, consumers ... to limit the use of plastic bags.	9442	59
7. Installing security cameras in combination with monitoring the quality and environmental sanitation in residential areas.	9074	56,7
8. Research and propose products to replace plastic bags and disposable plastic products.	8978	56,1
9. Launch emulation and constitutional movements to protect the environment.	8114	50,7
10. Implement a system to quickly and effectively receive and process people's opinions by many flexible and diversified methods.	7601	47,5

*(Ho Chi Minh City Party Committee Propaganda Department, 2020)*

For the campaign "City people do not litter the streets and canals, for a clean city and reduce flooding" to be effective in the coming time, it is shown through the question of selecting 10 solutions. Table 3's results show that there are some solutions with high response rates (3/10 solutions), specifically:

- According to the people, in order for the campaign to be effective in the coming time, the local government should "continue to propagate and mobilize people to have a sense of responsibility in environmental protection" (85.2 %). This is one of the solutions to be most appreciated and confirmed by more than 4/5 respondents; When propaganda and advocacy play a key role, it is necessary to have a more rigid support solution, that is "strictly

handling acts of littering the environment" (78.4%) more than three-quarters of respondents. This treatment demonstrates the strictness and deterrence of the law to educate people to raise their awareness and responsibility towards the community, society and the surrounding environment, and at the same time helps people to take shape into a good habit; Solution "Arranging and organizing regular and irregular inspections of waste gathering points in residential areas to ensure environmental sanitation, urban beauty and synchronous connection of garbage delivery time of people, Collectors, transporters, do not let the concentration of waste, scrap and many trucks gather at the same time "(68.8%) had a high response rate but lower than the two solutions before. This solution is related to technical factors and state management of waste gathering point, waste delivery process between people, collectors, transporters. Theoretically, the legal provisions have been clearly shown, but in practice there are still many shortcomings causing environmental pollution and urban beauty loss from these activities. State management agencies need to arrange and organize regular and irregular inspections to reorganize these activities in accordance with the provisions of law;

- Solution "Arranging more garbage cans with the function of separating waste at public places and residential areas" (61.6%) to form a habit of disposing of garbage in the right place and know how to classify Garbage at the people's source is an action contributing to the responsibility of local authorities in environmental protection activities. Therefore, when the local government allocates more public trash, it is necessary to research scientifically to create convenience for people to participate in keeping the general hygiene.

In addition, Table 3 shows that there are 4/10 solutions with the rate of more than 1/2 of the respondents confirmed to be effective in the coming time, specifically:

- Praise, reward, replicate good models and practices of neighborhoods, residential groups ... in implementing the campaign (59.9%); Advocating at points of sale, small traders, consumers ... to limit the use of plastic bags (59%); Installing security cameras in combination with monitoring on the quality of environmental sanitation in residential areas (56.7%); Research and introduce products to replace plastic bags and disposable plastic products (56.1%).

- These solutions aim at activities calling for the participation and promoting the role of the people, the community participating in solving problems related to environmental protection activities in the locality to create motivation sustainable development community. In addition, people propose additional technical assistance solutions from local authorities to improve the effectiveness of the campaign. However, these solutions need to be deployed and coordinated synchronously between state management agencies, people and businesses to achieve the highest efficiency in the implementation process.

On the other hand, the "Launch of emulation movements, constitutional to protect

the environment" has about half of respondents agree. This is one of the activities to attract social resources and knowledge teams to contribute to the design of new and effective solutions that contribute to the overall success of the whole community; Besides, "Implementing a system to quickly and effectively receive and process people's opinions by many flexible and diversified methods" (47.5%) is also interested by many people. 1/2 of the respondents confirmed. For this solution to be really useful and effective, the government needs to research it to be convenient and easy to use for everyone.

### **3. Discussion and Conclusion**

Based on the survey and analysis and assessment of the impact of the Policy on the urban population of Ho Chi Minh City on the current environmental protection activities from a sociological perspective, we can see the conclusion. The results are as follows:

The campaign has a direct and indirect impact on the awareness of the people and reflects the majority of city residents' interest in this campaign. Propaganda activities in localities have not been synchronous, effectiveness is not high, in some places are interested by local leaders but also in places that lack attention. Therefore, it is necessary to clearly define the responsibilities, obligations and rights of local leaders and specify the resources for implementation to deepen the campaign and form the "core" value in the standards of conduct people for environmental protection activities.

We see that the relationship between the local government and the people is not really closely linked with each other. The vast majority of people are interested in learning about the activities carried out by local authorities, only a part of the population lacks attention and a few are indifferent to the environmental protection work that local authorities has been and is being implemented; Currently, the change in the situation of people littering the streets has many positive changes. However, the government should consider new and more effective ways to stimulate the participation of the people.

The survey results show that the common standard values in the society appear as "people are not indifferent, indifferent to their own community", this will help change the poor habits of people and forming new standard values to help "bring the community together" in the context of the city's strong urbanization. However, in the urban residential community of the city also appears a part of the population with the attitude of "Indifferent, ignoring", showing a lack of faith in the values of common standards of the society, which are influenced and is negatively affected by the urban lifestyle, making the community more inclined to live a closed individualist life.

The campaign has promoted the participation of the whole political system in public mobilization to raise awareness, create good habits for people and communities to participate in contributing to reducing flooding. On the other hand, the campaign is like an impact wave, creeping into every corner of the urban life in the residential area and the campaign is the

message to help spread good values to the people and also opportunities for people to express their personal views and practical reflections on the surrounding environment.

When propaganda and advocacy play a key role, it is necessary to have provisions of law to educate people to raise their awareness and responsibility towards the community and society on security activities environmental protection. In theory, the regulations on environmental protection activities have been clearly shown, but in practice there are still many shortcomings from these activities. Therefore, state management agencies need to organize regular and ad-hoc inspections to reorganize these activities.

Solutions calling for participation, wanting to promote the role of people, communities directly solving problems related to environmental protection combine technical solutions from local authorities to improve operational efficiency and towards sustainable development for the surrounding environment.

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