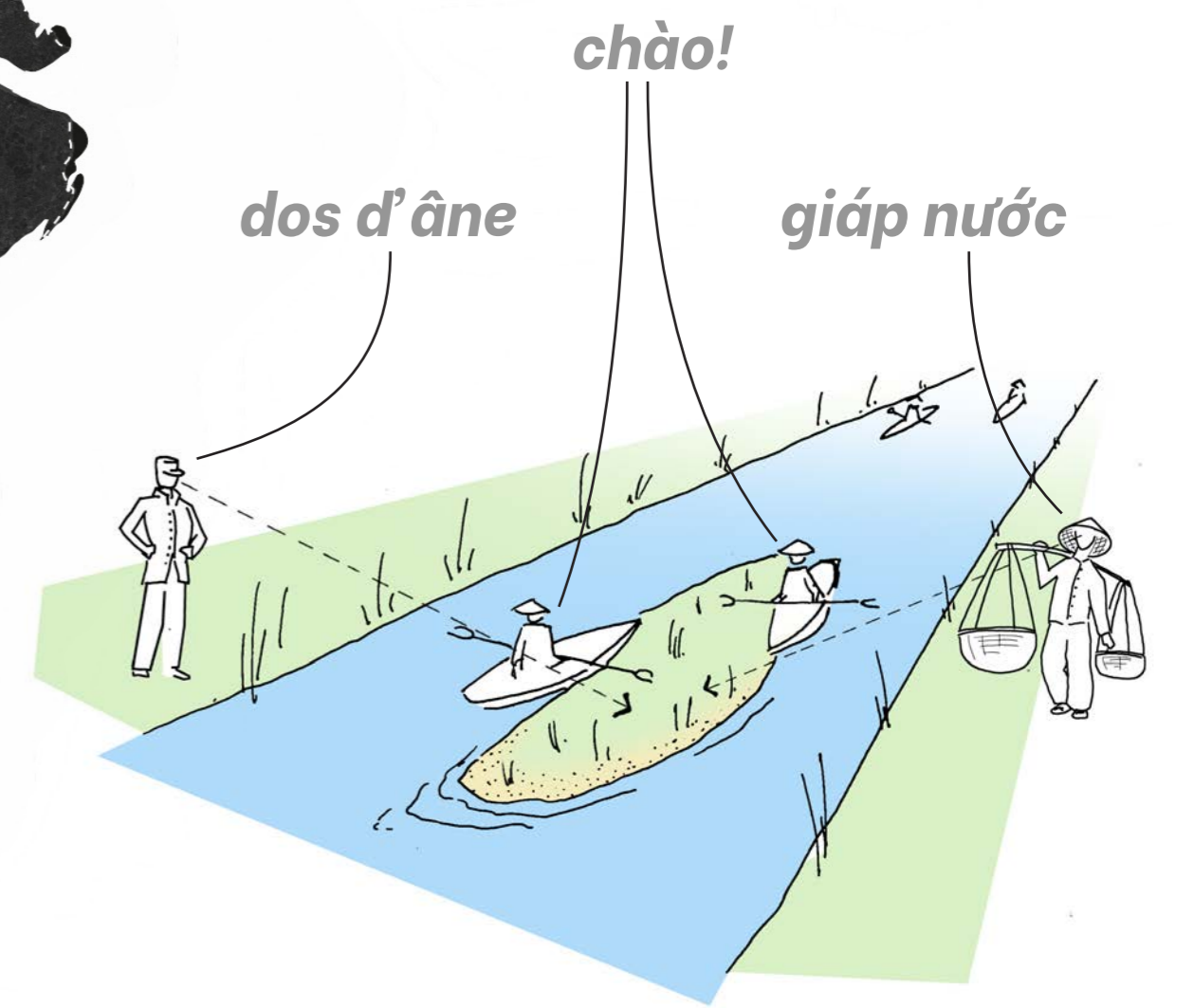
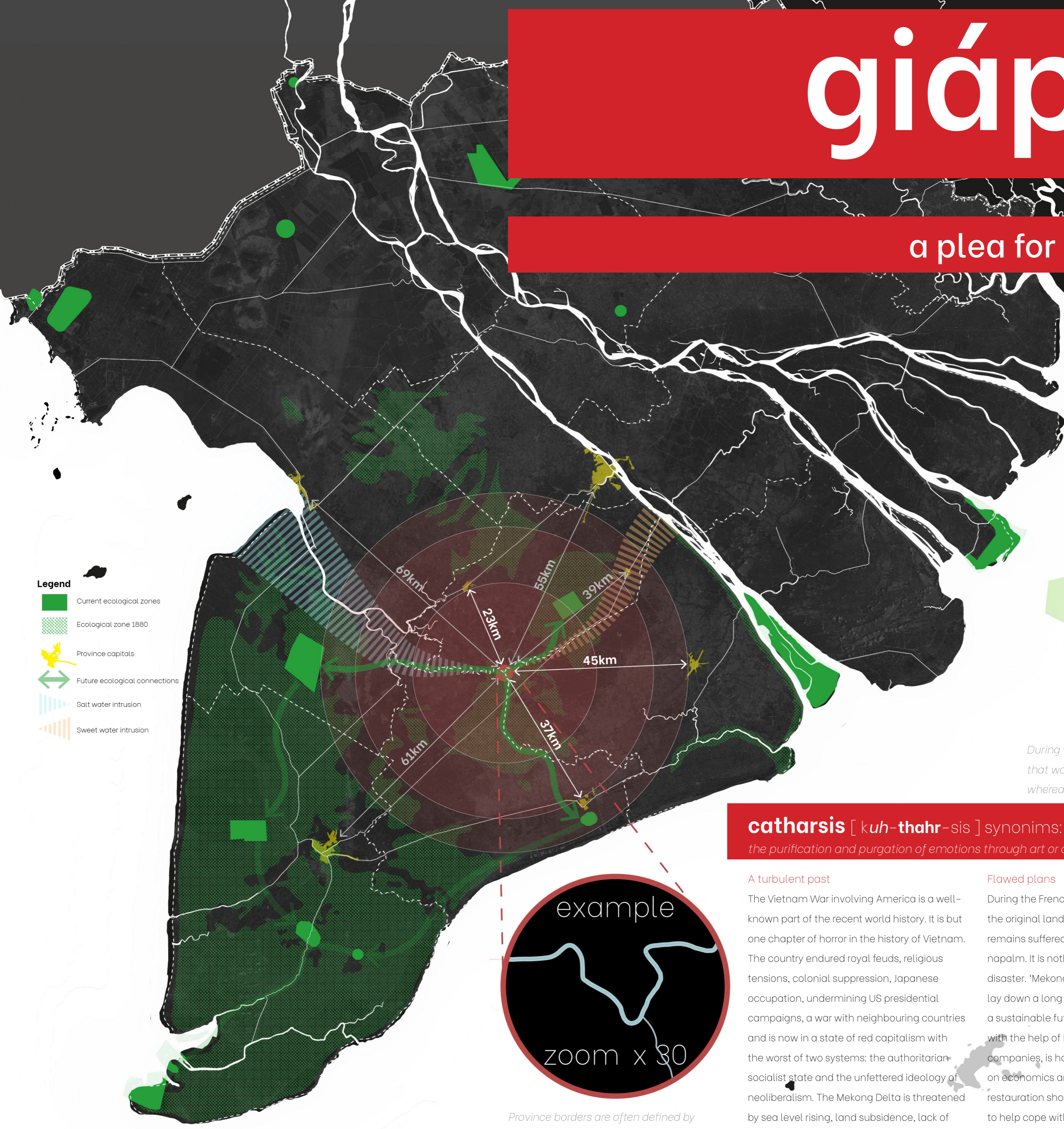
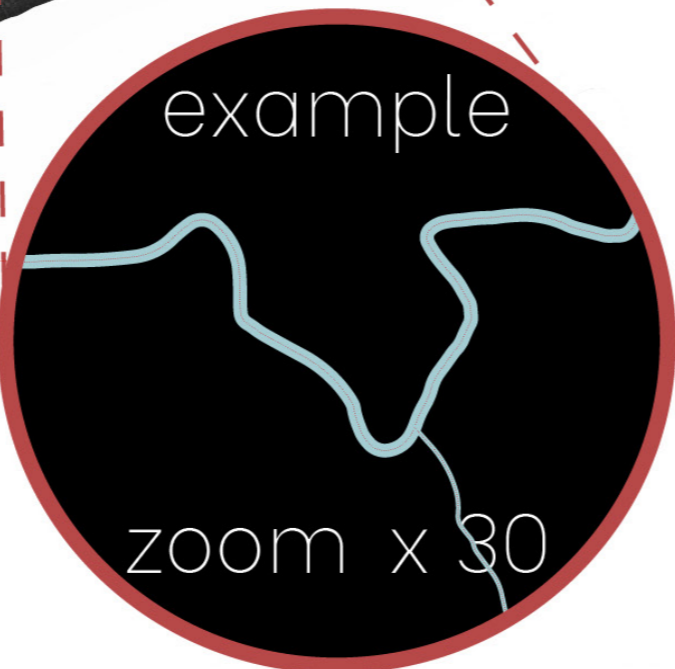


# giáp nước

a plea for a landscape of catharsis



During the colonial era the French had a different perception of the sediment banks that would form in the water. The French considered them 'dos d'âne', death points whereas the Vietnamese called them 'giáp nước', a meeting point.



Province borders are often defined by original Mekong Delta streams meandering through the landscape.

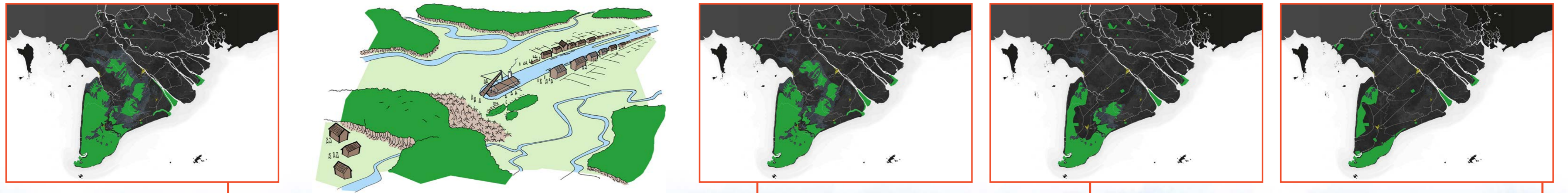
**catharsis** [ kuh-thahr-sis ] synonyms: purification, cleansing, clarification  
the purification and purgation of emotions through art or any extreme change in emotion that results in renewal and restoration

**A turbulent past**  
The Vietnam War involving America is a well-known part of the recent world history. It is but one chapter of horror in the history of Vietnam. The country endured royal feuds, religious tensions, colonial suppression, Japanese occupation, undermining US presidential campaigns, a war with neighbouring countries and is now in a state of red capitalism with the worst of two systems: the authoritarian socialist state and the unfettered ideology of neoliberalism. The Mekong Delta is threatened by sea level rising, land subsidence, lack of fish and sediment due to dams upstream. It's future is bleak.

**Flowed plans**  
During the French colonial regime much of the original landscape has disappeared, the remains suffered from American bombs and napalm. It is nothing less than an ecological disaster. 'Mekong Delta Plan' attempts to lay down a long term vision and strategy for a sustainable future. The vision, formulated with the help of Dutch government and companies, is however very much focussed on economics and industry. Landscape restoration should be part of the process to help cope with future threats much like the restoration of ecology on the Loess plateau. The operation focussed on restoring the ecology but improved the economy and society in the process.

**Opportunities**  
Restoring the landscape is a chance for catharsis. Harmonized planning is lacking due to the turbulent history. By choosing a strategic location cooperation between provinces can be organized and a start of landscape restoration can be made. By restoring the landscape local people are provided with jobs and working side by side creating a landscape for all. Along with cultural and health care programs social capital can be improved, new jobs can be created and access to health care can be improved. Landscape restoration can so help improve a traumatized landscape as well as a traumatized culture and create a sense of ownership of the landscape.

**Proces of deforestation**



1880 1890: introduction of steamdredger 1900 1915 1930

**A timeline of terror**



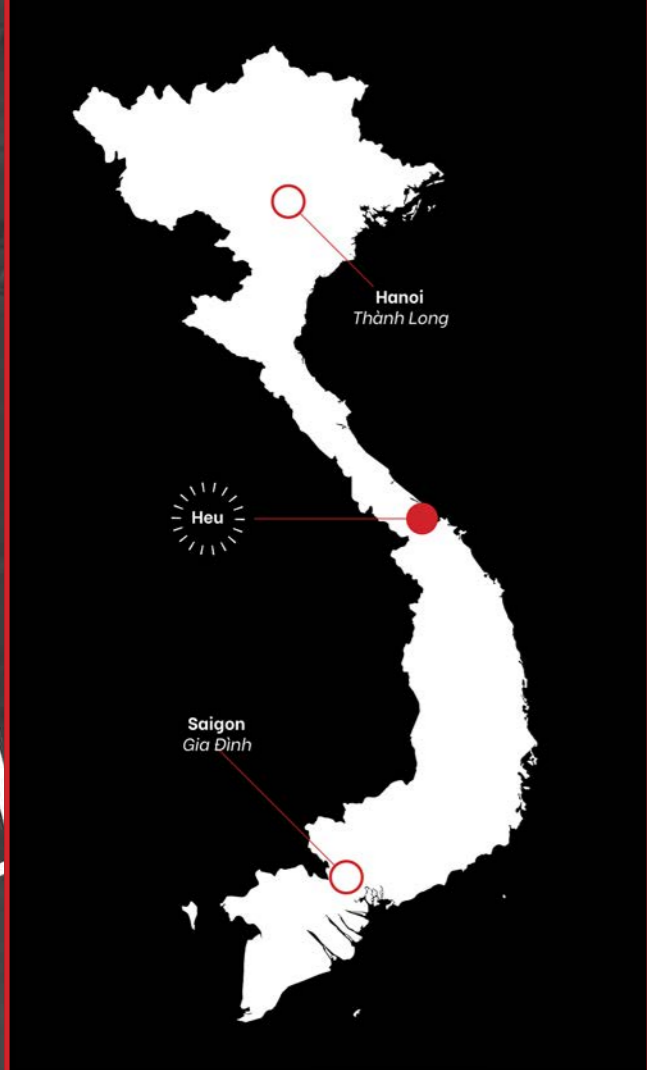
**WORLD PRESS PHOTO**



The Vietnamese monk Thich Quang Duc sets himself ablaze in protest against the persecution of Buddhists by the government of President Ngo Dinh Diem.  
A mother and her children wade through a river in Loc Thuong in the South Vietnamese province of Binh Dinh to escape US bombing.  
American troops drag the body of a Viet Cong fighter.  
The commander of an M48 Patton looks through his lens.  
On 1 February 1968, the South Vietnamese police chief Nguyễn Ngọc Loan summarily executes Viet Cong prisoner Nguyễn Văn Lém on a street in Saigon with a bullet to the head.  
The young Phan Thị Kim Phúc and other children flee with severe burns caused by napalm, mistakenly dropped by South Vietnamese planes.



A Royal strategy



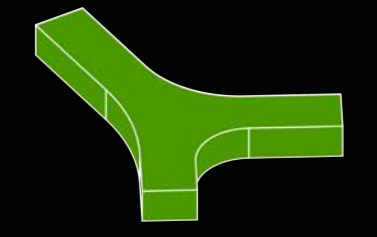
When Vietnam is established in 1802 by Emperor Gia Long the country is divided due to competing dynasties. In an attempt to unite the country Gia Long makes Hue the residency of the Nguyen dynasty right between Hanoi and Saigon. He's reigning name is a derivation of the Vietnamese names of these cities. Following this strategy a 'giáp nước' is created exactly at the point where three provinces in the heart of the Mekong Delta meet.

Hậu Giang talent

Bạc Liêu talent

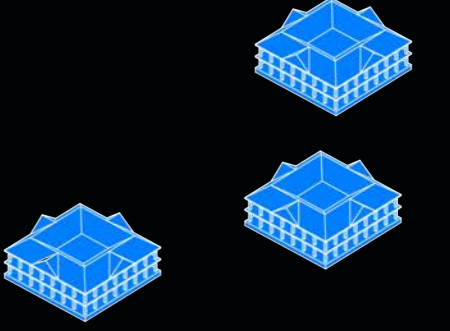
Sóc Trăng talent

Supporting structures



House of knowledge

Where knowledge is gathered from different institutes and landscape restorers.



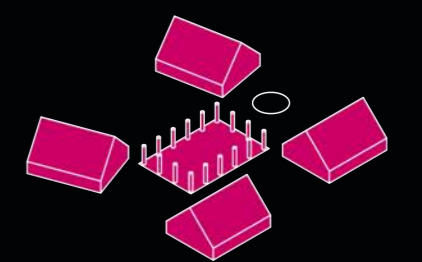
Place of care

Where landscape restorers are being provided with health care.



Place of culture

Where art & performance guides the process of landscape restoration and cultural healing.



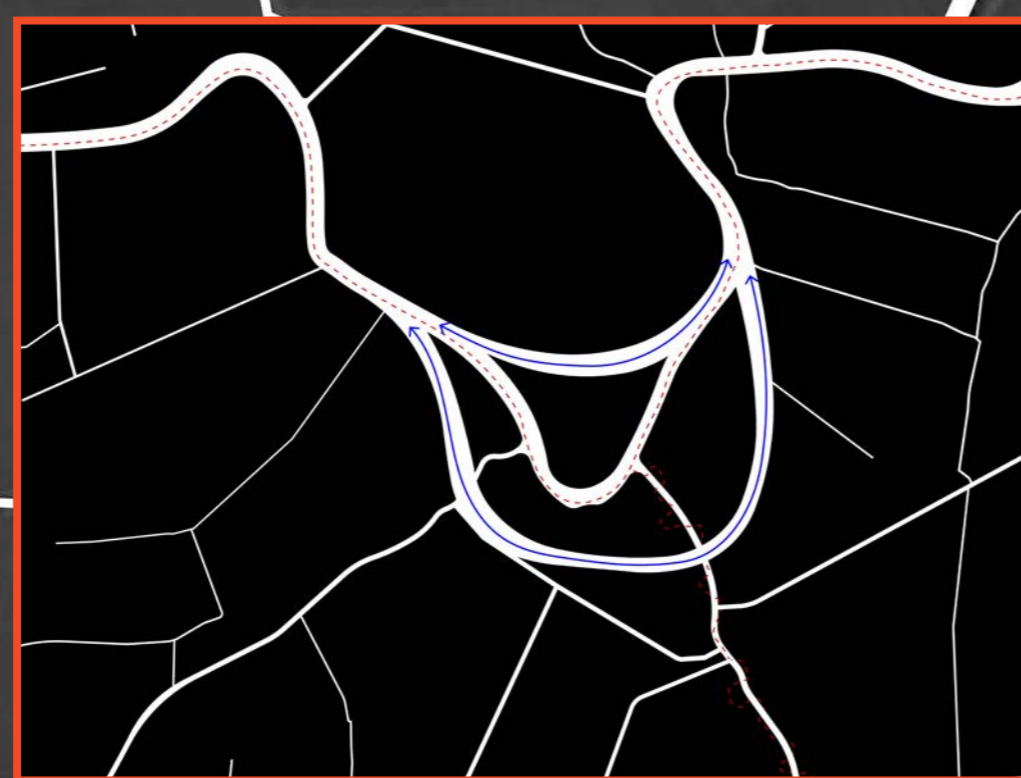
Place of contemplation

Where participants of the 'giáp nước' project can reflect on the past and future.

Creation of giáp nước



The three provinces meet



Create bypasses



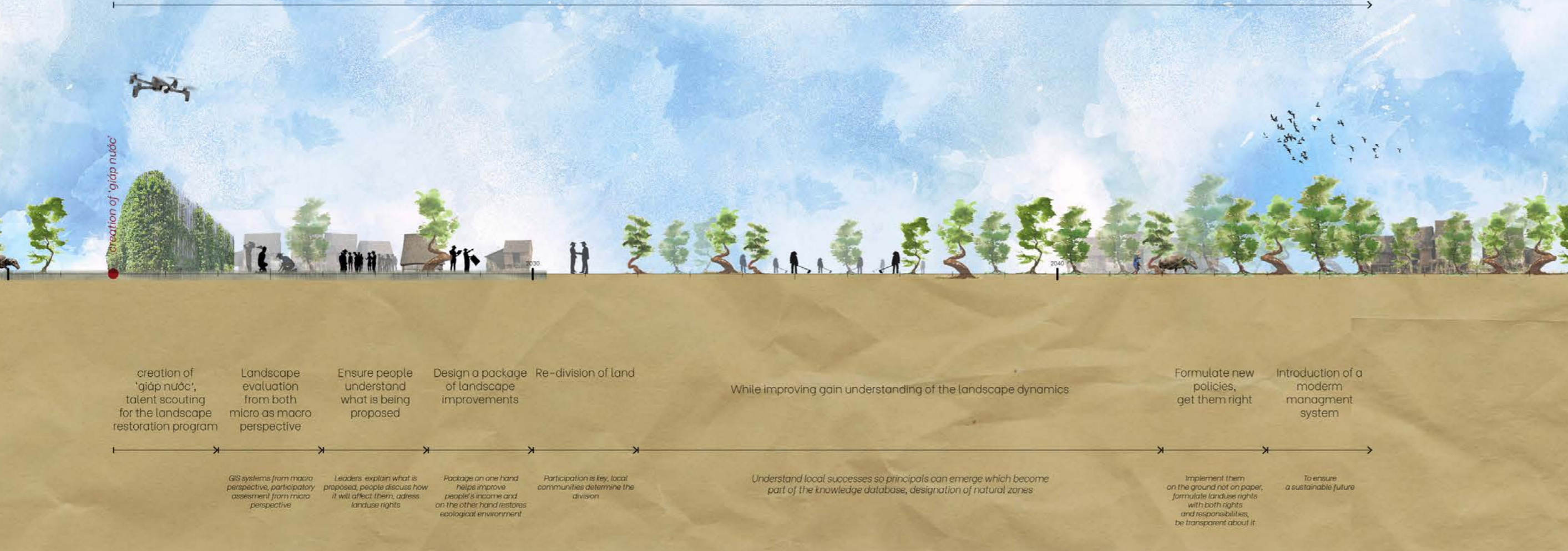
Push and pull the islands



Create central island 'giáp nước'

Green future

roadmap to ecological restoration



'Lessons from the Loess Plateau'

Due to overgrazing the landscape of the Loess Plateau the area the size of the Mekong Delta turned into a desert. Experts did not know how to restore it nor the inhabitants that worked the land in a destructive manner for generations. The highly ambitious project made the people part of the solution. By restoring the landscape step by step, knowledge was gained, the economy improved and more sustainable practices were discovered. People began to see the benefits of the project. In about 15 years the landscape was restored.

Inspired generation

Today's Mekong children will have to deal with the threats of tomorrow. They have dreams and ambitions of their own. Their inspiration is useful energy for the improvement of the future of the Mekong Delta and should have a role in the process.



Silk

"I want to become a doctor!"



Little

"I want to become a merchant."



Sea

"I want to become a singer."



Brocade

"I would love a dog and a cat and a bird!"



Chi

"I want to go to school."



matrix of change

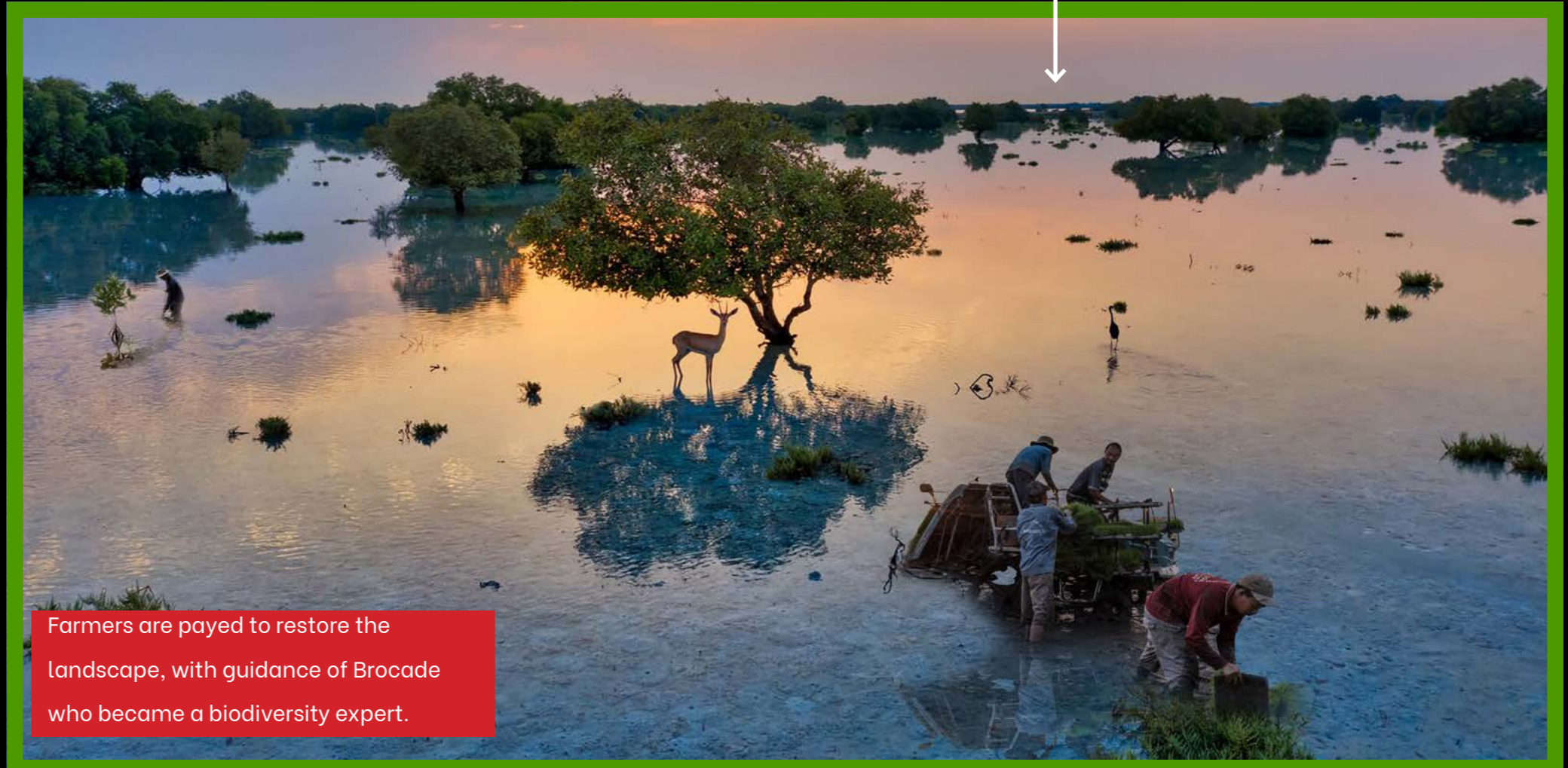


Gain knowledge

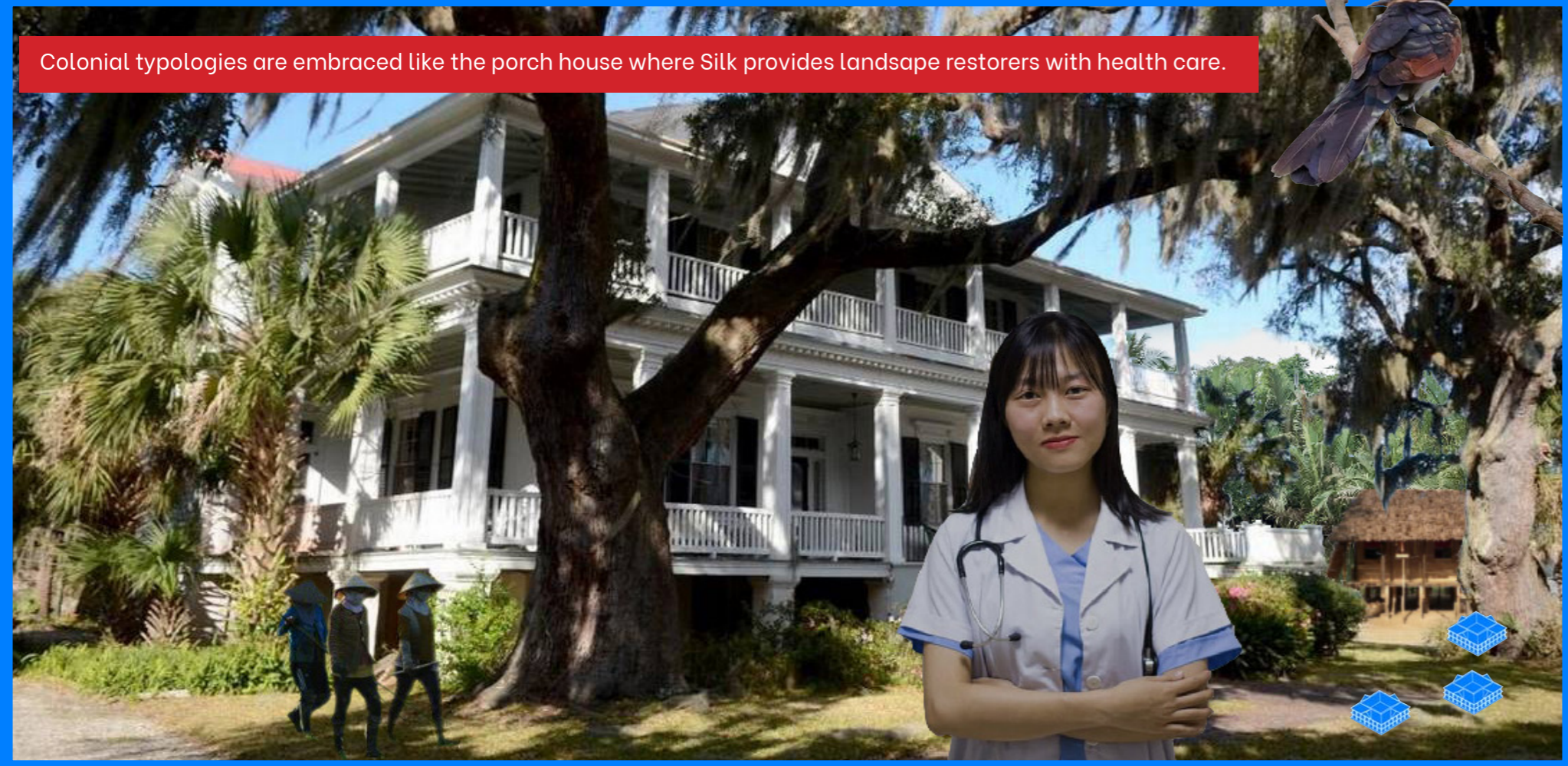
At the 'giáp nước' both sweet and salt water infiltrates which makes the conditions suitable for mangrove trees. These trees could be the bases of landscape restoration. The canal system forms a grid that could be of use in restoring the landscape block by block. At the 'giáp nước' headquarters both knowledge from the existing institutes as knowledge gained from landscape restoration are collected creating a database for further landscape improvement. Working in various directions will lead to knowledge about various conditions.



At the 'giáp nước' headquarters knowledge is concentrated for landscape renovation.



Farmers are payed to restore the landscape, with guidance of Brocade who became a biodiversity expert.



Colonial typologies are embraced like the porch house where Silk provides landscape restorers with health care.



Sea takes part in art and performance, like 'Hội An Memory Show', so culture and landscape restoration merge.



Chi helps people to reflect on the proces and supports them spiritually.



Little takes care of the fruit trees on the island and sells the fruit in the area.



Inspire

Commonland, expert in landscape restoration found that every restoration project has to address the 'four points of return'. The Mekong Delta Plan only addresses economy properly. Inspiration however is crucial. Without the energy of the locals any project is doomed. The best way to inspire people is by tapping into their own hopes and dreams and giving them the chance to realize them within the context of landscape restoration. By creating inspiring images the potential future can be visualized so the people understand what is being proposed and they can picture themselves being part of that process. A healthy landscape is one part fully ecological, one part economical and one part a mix of both.



ECONOMIC CAPITAL



INSPIRATION



ECOLOGICAL CAPITAL



SOCIAL CAPITAL



LAND DIVISION

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