

A chalkboard with two pieces of pink chalk and some faint white chalk markings. The chalkboard is green and has some white chalk markings, including a large 'V' shape and some other faint lines. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green.

Preparing young Vietnamese for the changing labour market

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The context

- Multi-ethnic and multi-cultural population, with diverse spoken and written languages (Vietnamese language is official languages)
- The population growth has slowed down, demographically entering 'golden age'
- Shifting from agriculture-forestry-aquaculture into more sophisticated industries and services
- Cheap labour is no longer main attractive point for investment in Vietnam
- Moving from a low income country into low middle income group

The context

- Education seen as right of all young people
- The “love for learning” as tradition of Vietnamese
- Perceived values of education
- Education has been a policy priority in the development process and contributions of education to the development
- Education for all accomplished, but What next?



The system

- Serving over 4 million preschool children, almost 15 million school children, over 1 million in TVET and more than 2 million college and university students
- Employs more than 1 million teachers, educators, trainers and care takers
- The largest employer in the public sector
- Spending about 20% of the national public budget
- Present in every commune, hamlets throughout a country with more than 90 million population

Accomplishments

- Complete system of education from nurseries to higher education
- Conditions for education has been improved
- Coverage has improved as well as quality
- 20% of public budget has been allocated for education
- Universal primary education in 2005, universal lower secondary education in 2010
- Improved access to education, especially for ethnic minorities and disadvantaged groups

Education is behind development needs

- Compulsory are primary and lower secondary education
- Preschool education used to be outside of the thinking about compulsory part, to be taken care mainly by the parents and communities
- Quality assurance conditions not up to the expectations
- Quality of education is still a concern of the whole society, especially that of vocational and higher education
- Graduates are not up to the desired levels



Preschool education

- Was not of high priority, seen as optional
- Not linked to school education and the needs of children, especially those with ethnic minority and disadvantaged background





→ Enhancing kindergarten education

- Priority: Universal kindergarten education for 5 years old by 2015, gradually improving quality
- Preparing the children to be ready for the mainstream education by helping children to develop physically, emotionally, cognitively, ethically before going to Grade 1
- Helping children from ethnic minorities to get acquainted with the official languages of instruction Vietnamese and basic skills in reading and math
- Conditional cash transfer to support preschool children from poor backgrounds

School curriculum and textbooks

- The current curriculum is in place for 13 years, geared towards academic knowledge, less on practical application, no longer fit into the recent development
- Lacking of links, connections between levels and forms of education;
- Outdated assessment, focusing on rotten learning rather than understanding and creativity





→ Reforming school curriculum and textbooks

- The new school curriculum shall develop the new generation of Vietnamese who are intelligently, physically fit to the new social changes; developing civic and academic qualities
- Ensuring grade 9 students to have basic knowledge, having choices into various career paths instead of just academic development into higher education
- By 2020 80% of the cohort will have upper secondary and equivalent qualifications



→ Reforming school curriculum and textbooks

- More integration of teaching in lower levels, more optional topics/subjects at higher levels
- Aiming to develop skills rather than transmission of knowledge
- Linking education in schools with the real world through 'experience activities'
- New ways to assess students' skills and achievements

Higher and vocational education

- Higher and vocational education not aligned with the development needs
- Lack of practical application of knowledge and proper career preparation
- Missing links between training, research and business realities
- Poor quality of educational programs: refusal by employers – high unemployment rates among graduates





→ Innovating higher and vocational education

- Diversifying technical and vocational programs, providing transfer options for workforce to develop themselves
- Design courses based on requirements from employers and new market trends
- Involving practitioners in design, delivering and assessment of courses
- Focusing on new skills: transferable and soft skills, creativity and adaptability
- Seeking to integrate to the regional and international educational landscapes, ensuring mobility for the young workers

→ Innovating higher and vocational education

- Shifting public financial support from averaging to more focus on covering in full specializations considered as important for the national development and use of market mechanism to fund the other specializations
- Paying more to the development of technical skilled labour though free to subsidized technical and vocational courses to underprivileged groups



Non-formal education

- Complementary education tends to be second choice for those missing the academic pathway from schools
- Quality is behind that of formal education programs
- No proper career guidance for students who are academically poor





→ Expanding lifelong learning options

- Ensuring opportunities for all population groups
- Helping adults and all those who want to pursue education to develop themselves
- Creating new learning paths for people to update their knowledge and chances to make better changes in career and life
- Reaching further to remote places and underprivileged groups

Connecting the dots

- All the efforts are to be concerted, i.e. linked together
- Ultimate goal is to equip the young people from Kindergarten to higher education with a set of necessary social/behavioral (communications, critical and creative thinking and problem solving), cognitive (numeracy, literacy) and technical skills which enable them to compete even internationally
- Connecting through 'reference points' to be set in the national qualification framework compatible with the ASEAN qualification framework

