

TRAINING MANPOWER FOR SOUTHERN FOCAL ECONOMIC REGION

by NGUYỄN HOÀNG THỤY

The country has 67 industrial parks (IPs), export processing zones and high tech IPs including 14 in the north, 13 in the central region and 40 in the south. To date only 12 IPs are deemed successful (that is, half of their area has been rented out), most of them are located in southern provinces (Đồng Nai: 4, Bình Dương: 4, HCMC: 3 and Cần Thơ: 1). It is estimated that more 8 IPs (north: 1, central: 2 and south: 5) will be listed as successful ones. (1)

The Party's eighth congress decided to enhance the national industrialization and modernization and strive to transform our country into an industrialized one. HCMC, Bình Dương, Đồng Nai and Bà Rịa-Vũng Tàu are developed into the southern focal economic region which plays an important role in the regional and national economic development.

The Party Central Committee's second plenum affirms that science and technology are foundation and dynamic for industrialization and modernization. There is a close relation between education-training and science-technology. Education is a prerequisite for fast technological advance. These sectors should be closely combined for fast and sustainable economic growth as well as civilized and modern society.

Given situation to improve the human resource for the southern focal economic region is a must. In this article, the writer wishes to mention only higher education.

1. The number, scale and distribution of universities

The higher education was not developed evenly in the north and south due to war. It was better in the north under the Party's leadership. Twenty five years after the country's unification, although the Party, the Government, especially the Ministry of Education and Training has paid much attention to southern education, more great efforts are needed to solve existing problems.

The southern universities are smaller in terms of quantity and scale, but their training tasks larger than the southern universities. For example, in HCMC, there is only an economics university with the enrolment of 4,000 students per year, while in Hà Nội there are 4 economics universities with 7,000 students per year. In technical training, HCMC has only one technical university with 2,500 students annually accepted while Hà Nội has 4 universities with 7,000 students per year (see Table 1). The small scale (although multi-disciplinary universities are compatible with the region and global academic model) becomes a big obstacle to the Ministry of Education and Training that it cannot allocate the criteria of enrolment and budget in line with the requirements for regional economic development while this region makes the largest contribution to the national budget. This obstacle could have been removed as soon as the country entered the first stage of its industrialization and modernization. This fact has had effects on the country's development. As a result, the Government is re-

quired to find solutions to this problem soon.

2. Education and training for socio-economic development

After 12 years of reformation, Vietnam higher education has attained significant achievements and helped to enhance the national industrialization and modernization: Diversifying training forms and methods; diversifying ownership of universities and colleges; increasing to 92 universities and 98 colleges in 1998-1999 academic year from 62 universities in 1985-1986; increasing the number of students to 798,857 in 1998-1999 from 121,191 in 1985-1986 (3).

In addition to encouraging results, there are still some deficiencies. Had these results been combined with socio-economic development requirements of each region, they would have generated more benefits.

In the past 10 years, HCMC, Đồng Nai, Bình Dương and Bà Rịa-Vũng Tàu have made remarkable progress: gaining a growth rate of 1.5 times the country's average, accounting for 60% the total export value, contributing 60% of the whole state budget, producing 50% of the total industrial output. However, the Government's investment in this region has not yet been in line with its contributions. (see Table 2)

Table 2 indicates the residents of this focal economic region have great needs for schooling. Their desire is more schooling to work better, contribute more to their homeland, and improve their living standard. This is exhibited in establishment of

Table 2: Student enrolment in 1997, 1998 and 1999 by regions (4)

Region	1997	1998	1999
A. University and junior college			
(1) The whole country	146,328	147,987	149,982
(2) HCMC, Đồng Nai, Bình Dương and Bà Rịa-Vũng Tàu	20,340	22,551	23,736
(2) compared with (1)	14%	15%	16%
B. University			
(1) Southern universities	47,135	44,483	44,757
a. Government-funded	34,177	32,542	32,944
b. People-funded	12,958	12,301	11,813
(2) Northern Universities	51,321	51,687	50,075
a. Government-funded	41,413	42,676	42,021
b. People-funded	9,908	9,001	8,054
2a compared with 1a	1.2 times	1.3 times	1.3 times
1b compared with 2b	1.3 times	1.4 times	1.5 times

people-funded universities and colleges (9 compared with 16 across the country), more students in people-funded schools than those in Hà Nội. These figures are 1.3 times (in 1997); 1.4 times (in 1998) and 1.5 times (in 1999). In contrast, the number of state-funded students of this region is lower.

Table 1 also gives clear facts in economics and technique training. As for economics training, the Hà Nội enrolment was 1.7 times HCMC in 1999, and increases to 1.8 times (in 2000) and the state budget for training was 1.7 times (in 1999) and up to 2.7 times (in 2000). Regarding technique training, the disparity is much wider. The Hà Nội enrolment was 3.1 times HCMC in 1999 and up to 2.7 times in 2000 and the budget was 4.1 times in 1999 and rises to 4.9 times in 2000.

In the national industrialization and modernization, the Party Chief Lê Khả Phiêu has instructed HCMC to start first and arrive first. To fulfil this decisive task, the supply of human resource plays the most important role. As such the Government is required to change its strategy of educational development and investment into larger investments in manpower for better developed regions.

3. Solution to the southern focal economic region's manpower training

The Government should take following measures:

- Making its relevant agencies learn that investment in education is for development. As a result, it should focus its investments to any region, city or province which develops higher and avoid the concept of even or partial distribution.

- Concentrating its investment to universities in HCMC which is the country's most dynamic and bustling area with a view to expanding scale, improving quality, and thus securing qualified workforce for the city industrialization and modernization earlier.

- Expanding the Cần Thơ University and establishing new community colleges in the Mekong Delta provinces. First, it restores the former functions and name of the Tiền Giang Community College (currently called Interprovincial Training Center of Long An, Tiền Giang and Bến Tre).

- Giving autonomy to universities as regulated by law. The Ministry of Education and Training implements the role of state management and

strengthens its inspection in line with legal regulations.

- Allowing HCMC universities to hire outside lecturers in addition to existing staff with the aim to expand training scale and quality because they are facing a serious shortage of teaching staff. ■

References

- (1) Vietnam IP Authority
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- (3) Ministry of Education and Training - The Board

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(4) Ministry of Education and Training, documents

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Table 1: Comparison of training scale, state budget for training and tasks of selected universities in HCMC and Hà Nội (2)

Universities	HCMC				Hà Nội			
	Enrolment		Enrolment		Enrolment		Enrolment	
	In 1999	In 2000	In 1999	In 2000	In 1999	In 2000	In 1999	In 2000
1. Economics University under the National University-HCMC	Total student enrolment	State budget spared for training (students)	Total student enrolment	State budget spared for training (students)	Total student enrolment	State budget spared for training (students)	Total student enrolment	State budget spared for training (students)
	4,200	800	3800	1100	3,000	350	2,800	1,075
Comparison between HCMC and Hà Nội in economics training	4,200	800	3800	1100	1,100	200	1,100	500
Technique University under the National University-HCMC	2310	550	2730	970	1,800	300	1,650	850
Comparison between HCMC and Hà Nội in technique training	2310	550	2730	970	1,300	200	1,200	500
					7,200	1,050	6,750	2,925
					(1.7 times)	(1.3 times)	(1.8 times)	(2.7 times)
					3,500	1,000	3,500	2,400
					1,740	400	1,700	970
					800	450	960	520
					1,200	430	1,300	900
					7,240	2,280	7,460	4,790
					(3.1 times)	4.1 times	(2.7 times)	(4.9 times)