

JOB TRAINING A MEASURE TO ENHANCE THE HUMAN RESOURCE QUALITY IN THE MEKONG DELTA

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The Mekong Delta is the country's largest rice basket and one of focal region in the Party and the State's socio-economic development strategy. With its natural area of 4 million hectares and 12 provinces, the Delta provides the country with above 80% of total rice output and 60% of total aqua-products for export (the region's food output reached 17 million tonnes, and its GDP in agriculture, forestry and fishery 36% of the total in 2000). Nevertheless, the quality the region's human resources remains a great

According to the survey until April 1, 1999, the Mekong Delta's population was 16,184,200 including 8.5 million in the working ages (an annual growth rate of 1.57%). As a result, its labor is abundant. However, most laborers have not yet been trained (the percentage of trained workers was only 7.5% in 2000). They have less knowledge about agriculture, biology, processing industry. This is just a great obstacle to the regional industrialization and nationalization.

In respect of training structure, we have so far

resource training, indicated in the following table:

According to above figures, the ratio of university education is far higher than that of vocational training (it was 49.07% in university as compared to 32.79% in secondary vocational education and 18.14% in job training). In the meantime, the region's economy requires a large quantity of skilled workers. The experience from developed countries shows the proper ratio for economic development is thirteen workers must include 3 graduated from univer-

technical workers. In 2000, the ratio of trained workers is 1 graduated from university or college against 1.65 from secondary vocational school and 1.75 from job training school. Most of trained workers live in cities and towns while remote and rural areas are badly in need of technical workers. The Educational Research Institute of the Ministry of Education and Training reveals given situation, the country will have 10 persons graduated from university and college against only 3 from job training school.

Regarding the system of educational institutions, until 2001 the Mekong Delta provinces have 14 universities and colleges (including private institutions). Cà Mau Province has no university and college. Meanwhile, the number of job training schools dropped sharply from 16 in 1996 to 10 schools in 2000 and their annual enrollment is not over 1,000 students. As such, the region's network of job training schools remains very meager and incompatible with its population size and economic potentials.

The above-mentioned educational scale and structure has led to following effects: the Mekong Delta is in surplus of white-collar workers, but

Year	1996-1997		1997-1998		1998-1999		1999-2000		2000-2001	
Level	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%
Job training	4,748	11.30	7,820	15.57	7,978	14.48	7,723	14.69	11,233	18.14
Secondary vocational education	13,435	31.97	17,856	35.55	20,024	36.33	18,282	34.77	20,296	32.79
College, university	23,844	56.73	24,554	48.88	27,108	49.19	26,576	50.54	30,376	49.07
Total	42,027	100.00	50,230	100.00	55,110	100.00	52,581	100.00	61,905	100.00

Source: Vietnam Employment Statistics 1996-2001, Thống Kê Publisher

concern, especially in rural areas.

I. FACTS OF JOB TRAINING IN THE MEKONG DELTA

applied the educational and training model of inverse pyramid, not paid full attention to job training. At present, the Delta is facing the irrationality in the structure of human

sity and secondary technical school and ten skilled workers.

The large number of students rushing into colleges and universities will result to the shortage of

shortage of blue ones. It lacks seriously high-skilled workers but faces a redundancy of unskilled labor in such industries as agriculture, mechanical

engineering, processing, biology...

II. CAUSES

First, on the one hand, the system of job training schools has not yet been planned and restructured. In addition, students are not given assistance in career orientation after they leave junior or senior secondary schools to meet the region's requirements for socio-economic development. Some state agencies have loosened control over education and training. As a result, many schools focus on fashionable subjects including foreign language, information technology, economics...to satisfy the learners' preference. In the meantime, schools training for agriculture and mechanical engineering are encountering a danger of dissolution or recession. According to current statistics, the provinces having no job training schools include Cà Mau, Kiên Giang, Trà Vinh...The whole region has only 9 technical training schools and 12 job training centers. Most of districts have no job training for young people in rural areas. The facilities and equipment for job training are both inadequate and obsolete.

Second, on the one hand the budget for job training is very modest; but on the other hand, the region has not yet utilized state funds invested in job training fully and effectively. For example, previously the State granted VND700,000 to 800,000 for training a technical worker in a year. VND3,600,000 for a head of cooperative but the real figure is VND3.6 million and VND12 million respectively. While in many countries, the budget for training a technical worker amounts to thousands of US dollars, for example, US\$10,000 in Switzerland. From 2001 until now, in addition to the

state budget (accounting for 50% of total training costs), the rest will be balanced by students' payment. Nevertheless, this payment is not large and insufficient, especially in rural and remote areas. The lack of training budget has caused bad effects on the scale, structure and quality of training. Therefore, the persistent shortage of teachers in tens of years has not been settled. Teachers' capacity is on the whole low as compared to requirements. They have less opportunities to make access to refresher courses. Only 50% of teachers in job training schools have degrees of university and college. On the other hand, teachers have to do additional jobs due to their low wages while they want to be deeply attached to the educational career. Therefore, the quality of training is not high.

Third, the combination between job training and employment is still loose. The number of trained workers is not large but they are also redundant. The psychology of respecting diploma and white-collar job pushes high school graduates into universities and colleges, so they do not want to learn jobs to become manual workers. This causes a paradox that enterprises and rural areas are now in great demand for skilled workers while those graduated from colleges and universities fall into unemployment.

The experience from NICs shows capital and skilled labor are determinants to the success of the national economic development strategy. South Korea has positively trained high-skilled workers and at the same time install modern equipment and machinery. Contrarily in Vietnam, due to restricted investment capital and budget, most of the equipment and machinery in job training schools are outdated, the training pro-

grams are not in accordance with real conditions of the working environment. Therefore, workers cannot adapt themselves to job requirements.

Since the government's reformation, the region's job training has made good progress. Nevertheless, it is still inadequate in terms of training scale, structure and quality as compared to the requirements of industrialization and modernization. This is just a reason for the Mekong Delta's curbed growth rate and danger of lagging further behind in the next years. As a result, to intensify the job training and promote the human resource quality are urgent problems to the Mekong Delta.

III. SOME MEASURES

The resolution of the ninth Party's congress points out: "To continue to renew curricula, contents, and teaching methods in order to train high-quality workers, especially in major and hi-tech industries. To combine the establishment of industrial parks and hi-tech parks with job training schools. To develop fast and distribute properly the network job training schools across the country and diversify job training forms in a flexible and positive manner." (*Documents of the Party's Ninth Congress*, the Chính Trị Quốc Gia Publisher, page 293).

Based on above realities and decisions, the following solutions should be implemented uniformly to help promote the human resource quality for the regional rural industrialization and modernization.

(1) To reform state management apparatus in job training

Ministries and sectors should establish their agencies specialized in job training. The state management function in job training between ministries, sectors, and localities must be distinguished to avoid overlapping tasks

or loose control. The training of technical workers in provinces must be under state management. The job training institutions' objectives, plans, curricula, contents, training method and quality, certificates and diplomas should be closely supervised and inspected.

(2) To perfect the structure of job training and establish the technical training system with three levels: semi-skilled, skilled, and high-skilled

The system of job training could be divided into: job training centers founded by local governments and social organizations to provide short-term training for workers; on-the-job training in enterprises; private job training institutions; public vocational schools with long-term courses; and job training through international cooperation.

The job training system must have an open structure, connecting the training of technical workers with that of practical engineers so that learners may have opportunities to improve their knowledge and skill for social development. In particular, the job-training network should be evenly distributed across the Mekong Delta on the basis of exploiting local occupational advantages. The plan is targeted at establishing a vocational school at least in each province and a job-training center in united districts. Cà Mau, Kiên Giang and Trà Vinh Provinces are required to soon establish vocation schools.

Labor in rural areas should be trained in fish breeding and catching, processing agro-forestry-fishery products, mechanical engineering, electronics, handicrafts and other service careers (tailoring, repairing motorcycles...). Attention should be given to traditional careers such as: manufacturing machinery and tools for farming

(plough, hoe, paddy husking machine, etc.); processing rice-based products (rice vermicelli, rice cake, dried catfish...), and making paper, fabric and silk. Local governments should build an army of technical workers who are able to apply technological achievements in industry and agriculture to serve industrial parks, export processing zones, handicraft establishments, farms, enterprises and farmers. It is expected to increase the percentage of trained workers to 25% in 2005 and 30% in 2010.

Short-term job training should be assigned to job training centers in towns and districts and institutions set up by socio-political organizations including women association, trade union, youth federation, and association of fish breeders. These forms will give chances to workers to be trained or retrained if they have no enough conditions for long-term or official courses. Long-term job training is implemented in official vocational schools.

In our opinions, the trainees should be classified for building proper training models, for example, unskilled or skilled workers...

In addition, job training forms should be diversified such as: on-the-job training in enterprises and production units, training in regional educational centers, short-term refresher courses for technology transfer. Local governments should combine job training with general education, implement the career orientation training, or take measures to diffuse necessary knowledge to young people before they work for agricultural, industrial and service units. In addition, training and retraining courses should be given to managers of new-style agricultural cooperatives, major officers of village governments,

farm owners, skilled worker.

(3) Training orientation and connection

Training orientation: Relevant authorities have to attract high school graduates to job training and technical schools, or on-the-job training courses organized by the employer. They should improve the career orientation so that students' parents understand and help select proper careers for their children in accordance with capacity and preference. Therefore, students need not go to university after leaving high schools.

Training connection: To connect training forms and levels, we should take the following measures:

- To build a job training system with many levels. These levels must be connected by curricula so that workers can make access to training opportunities and enjoy training results;

- To design connected curricula between levels in the job training system. The connection is implemented vertically between training levels and horizontally between careers or career groups. In addition, the job training curricula must be in accordance with the career orientation in high schools and may be connected with the colleges and universities in the same industry.

To accomplish these tasks, curricula must be designed into credits (this is a current trend of many countries in the world and our short-term job training courses are applying it). The army of teachers and administrators shall be prepared to meet requirements of job training connection.

- To build the accreditation system for quality, diploma and certificate to evaluate and acknowledge trained levels, and make guidelines for changing diplomas and certificates in the region's job training.

- To establish a legal framework for the develop-

ment of training connection program including regulations on trained levels, standardization of skill for each level, and conditions and resources for the construction of connection programs.

(4) To promote the capacity of the job training system by the following measures:

- To rearrange the network of job training schools, centers and units in the region.

- To build an army of job training teachers and create motivation for them in the direction:

- + To plan the enhancement of existing teachers' levels in vocational schools and centers so that their qualifications soon reach the standard in such fields as: specialized knowledge, level, skill, teaching method, foreign language, information technology, knowledge about society, humanity, and psychology...

- + To devise policies and give preferences to job training teachers, especially for volunteers from big cities to provinces and remote areas as well as good teachers.

- To renew training contents and curricula so that trained careers must comply with requirements of the regional economic sectors, industrial parks and export processing zones.

- To invest in advanced and modern technical infrastructure facilities for major job training schools and units; and to draw up partnership regulations and mechanisms to attract resources and assistance from universities, colleges, secondary vocational schools, factories, enterprises having modern machinery and technology lines for job training.

- To plan cooperation in human resource training: to soon establish cooperative relations in training high-level workers between regional provinces,

domestic and foreign provincial governments.

- To make policies and programs on attracting artists to teach in traditional career courses.

- To set up a department in charge of advising and forecasting for the regional strategy of job training strategy.

(5) to earmark more investment capital for job training by mobilizing funds from the following sources:

- To increase the state budget for job training and make proper budget allocation to this task.

- To attract funds from enterprises which employ workers graduated from vocational schools, call for supports to training centers from industrial parks and export processing zones; and cooperate with enterprises to make plans on training workers in accordance with enterprises' requirements for quantity and quality.

- To encourage and stimulate contributions from the public and individuals (school fees, private investments, overseas Vietnamese...).

- To socialize and privatize different vocational schools;

- To take loans and call for foreign aids for job training via projects and send workers to be trained abroad.

- To set up funds for education, learning encouragement, and training credit.

(6) to combine job training with production and employment

This is a very essential task to help trainees make access to practical jobs. The research and application of this model in selected vocational units and centers reveals the schools should be permitted to establish production and service units in accordance with trained careers. This will create both a place for students' practice and additional funds for the school's development. ■