

MEASURES TO PROVIDE HCMC ECONOMY WITH MANAGERS OF POSTGRADUATE AND GRADUATE LEVELS

by Dr. LÊ BẢO LÂM. MEcon. ĐOÀN THỊ MỸ HANH & MEcon. NGUYỄN THÀNH NHÂN

For the years 2001-2005, the HCMC set an 11% growth rate as a main target. To achieve this target, more managers of graduate and postgraduate levels are needed. According to experts, the army of well-trained managers must increase by 130% in those years to meet the demand by governmental bodies and the public sectors alone.

1. Situation

There are some 3,000 students who graduate from the HCMC University of Economics and other economics schools in HCMC every year, around 30% of them are HCMC residents and 60% are residents of other provinces who get jobs in HCMC. In short, some 2,000 graduates in economics are added to the HCMC working population every year.

A survey of 100 economics students who graduated in the past five years conducted within the framework of the study "A Program to Train Graduates and Postgraduates for the HCMC Economy in the Years 2001-2005" undertaken by Prof. Dr. Trần Chí Đảo and his assistants shows that most graduates could find jobs within three months after graduation. More details are in the following table.

Table 1: Time taken by graduates to find jobs

Time	Employed graduates
From three to six months	75%
From six to 12 months	12%
More than a year	11%

The survey also reveals that some 80% of the graduates found jobs appropriate to their skills and knowledge. Details are as follows:

These data show that HCMC economy needs many trained managers and could provide graduates with

Table 2: Graduates and their jobs

Quite appropriate	32%
Rather appropriate	50%
Not appropriate	18%

appropriate jobs. In recent years, however, attractive offers given by governments of many provinces in the Mekong Delta and Eastern South have succeeded in persuading graduates into leaving HCMC for jobs in provinces. This means that the number of graduates who are provincial residents and stay in HCMC after graduation will decrease, and moreover, many graduates who are HCMC residents would leave HCMC for jobs in other provinces when they find no opportunities or attractive offers here.

schools and 70% are trained only in the centrally-planned economics. That is why they have to take more courses in the market economy.

Many efforts have been made to promote training of managers for the HCMC economy, such as the program to send graduates to take doctor and master courses abroad. This program gives priority to graduates in management and IT. However, the program attracts only a handful of graduates because of some reason or another. The number of graduates who want to take postgraduate courses, however, is rather big. The following table providing data about graduates and those who took exams for postgraduate courses in the HCMC University of Economics shows that more and more graduates want to attend postgraduate courses.

As for postgraduates, most of

Table 3: Graduates and examinees for postgraduate courses in the HUE

Year	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	Total
Graduates	1,581	3,297	3,854	3,685	2,701	15,118
Postgraduate examinees	442	458	936	1,067	1,481	4,384

Regarding the quality of these graduates, it shows worrying signs. Their skills and knowledge didn't meet requirements posed by the HCMC economic activities because of the obsolete education system. A lot of graduates in previous years need intensive refreshing courses. According to a study financed the Sweden SIDA of distant learning process applied in HCMC and some other provinces, 87.9% of graduate respondents said they needed refreshing or postgraduate courses. In a report by the Government Personnel Board in February 2000, 89.2% of key officials at ministerial level and 75% of officials at provincial level are graduates and postgraduates but only 15% of them are graduates from economics

them could spend limited time on learning because they are employees. Some of them couldn't finish courses on time or had to give up learning. Another reason affecting their effort is the fact that they get no better treatment after receiving higher degrees.

2. Solutions

a. Closer relation between universities and local authorities: The two parties could cooperate in carrying out a high-quality training program which is as follows:

- Every year, HCMC authorities can (1) send lists of students who are planned to be officials (understudies) and have passed entrance exams to universities, and (2) contribute



money to open intensive courses designed for these students in which stress is put on foreign language, computing and other practical skills needed for their future positions and jobs. Students could be transferred to normal classes if they fail to follow these intensive courses while excellent students from normal classes could be admitted to these intensive classes.

-Universities with financial support from local authorities carry out program to train personnel demanded by the local governments, such as the program to train 1,000 officials from local authorities in economic management, that has been carried in recent years.

b. Better finance: There is no denying that it's impossible to train qualified managers with limited budget. The HCMC government must

spend more money for better officials. Moreover, part of HCMC population with high income is ready to pay more for better education if they know that their children could find well-paid jobs in private or foreign-invested sectors.

Besides contribution to funds for better training, the local governments could invest in facilities for study that can be used for both normal and intensive classes.

c. Student credit fund: High-quality education service couldn't be bought at low price. To help all students enjoy better education and force them to think more of their learning, the HCMC government had better establish a student credit fund to provide them with loans and scholarship. This fund could be assigned to a state bank controlled by the HCMC government or estab-

lished as an independent banking institution under the HCMC Personnel Board. Its working capital could come from HCMC budget, contributions from private persons and organizations, and foreign aid.

d. Teacher participation: Within a framework of cooperation between the universities and HCMC government, including companies under its control, local authorities allow teachers to take part in their programs and daily operations in order to help them compile more practical textbooks. The HCMC government could allow universities to retain some excellent graduates from intensive courses to beef up their teaching staff. This practice could apply to the program to train 300 doctors and masters in foreign universities undertaken by HCMC-based universities.

e. Cooperation between universities and the public sector: The HCMC government could ask local authorities and state companies in HCMC to receive students as apprentices, part-time workers or short-term researchers in order to improve their practical skills.

f. Better treatment for skilled laborers: At present, the official salary scale fails to encourage skilled laborers to work in the public sector. Before it is amended, the HCMC should adopt a policy to offer preferential treatment to skilled laborers. Moreover, giving right jobs to right men in right places is a decisive factor in employment of the human resource. It will be a waste when full attention is paid to training and then well-trained personnel aren't employed properly. ■

