

HARMONY: Internationalisation and virtual exchange: Borderless between EU and Asian countries - ERASMUS+ Project, capacity building in the field of Higher Education - 617223-EPP-1-2020-1-ES-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP.

Country profile on Internationalisation of Higher Education

INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN VIETNAM



Globalization and internationalization can be analyzed along four main dimensions: *technological, educational, economic and political*. Fully aware of the important role higher education plays in the development process, as well as the limitations and shortcomings apparent in the status quo, the government of Vietnam has promulgated and implemented a number of plans, projects and policies to reform its higher education system. **According to the Decision No. 201/2001/QĐ-TTg dated December 28, 2001 of the Prime Minister approving the "2001-2010 educational development strategy"**, the goals defined for the higher education sector are to *i) meet the demand for high quality human resources for industrialization and modernization; ii) enhance Vietnam's competitiveness in the process of international economic integration; iii) facilitate the expansion of higher education through diversification of training programs on the basis of a pathway system, suited to the development framework, employment conditions, local and regional human resource needs and the training capacities of educational institutions; iv) increase the appropriateness of training to the employment needs of the society; and finally, v) empowering the workforce to develop entrepreneurial skills.*

The Plan also set specific targets for the Vietnamese higher education sector, such as increasing the ratio of students in tertiary education per 10,000, from 118 in the 2000-2001 school year to 200 by 2010, and increasing the enrollment of master students from 11,727 in 2000 to 38,000 by 2010, and of doctoral students from 3,870 in 2000 to 15,000 by 2010 (Ministry of Justice, 2001). In order to achieve these goals, a number of solutions have been proposed, some of which have already been carried out.

Among these, **internationalization** is one of the most important approaches adopted to ameliorate the higher education system in Vietnam, especially if better integration in the region and the world is to be achieved.

I. National strategy for international cooperation and integration

1. In term of government

The Government's orientation to internationalization in higher education has been expressed from Resolution No 14/2005/NQ-CP dated November 2, 2005 of the Government on Fundamental and comprehensive innovation of Vietnamese education period 2006–2020, which clearly states the goals of basic and comprehensive innovation in education. To Step by step innovating in this direction, university administrators have made important decisions that bring certain effectiveness to the internationalization process. Projects and programs are launched centrally mainly on internationalizing teaching staff, training programs and building universities international level.

Specifically, since 2000, with the launch of the Project on Training scientific and technical staff at foreign establishments with state budget such as: Project 322, Project 599 or Project 911. However, Project 911 cannot achieve the planned goal of training about 23,000 PhDs for universities. universities and colleges in the period 2010–2020, so since 2017, this project has stopped enrolling students.

In addition to investing in the construction of the international universities, the Prime Minister also requested to focus on investing in building Hanoi National University and National University Ho Chi Minh City and **the University of Danang** become excellent and leading higher education institutions in Vietnam, and also gradually become regional and international-class universities. Accordingly, the Government Office has issued the Prime Minister's direction to assign the Ministry of Education and Training to handle the suggestions of Danang city, including the policy of developing the University of Danang (UD) to Vietnam National University – Danang (VNU, Danang) with a vision of becoming into one of the three largest university centers in the country and ranked in the top 50 universities leading in Southeast Asia.

2. In term of institutional level

Internationalization, as a strategy for the development of higher education, is quite a new concept in Vietnam. The term has been used in several policy documents at both the national and institutional level, as well as in academic papers. However, Vietnamese officials have not yet provided a specific definition for this process. Generally, the internationalization of higher education in Vietnam is interpreted as an enhancement of international and regional cooperation and integration in the field of education. This process is considered indispensable to improving the higher education system in Vietnam. To this end, the Strategy for Education Development 2001-2010 and the Vietnam Higher Education Renovation Agenda 2006-2020 outline policy targets

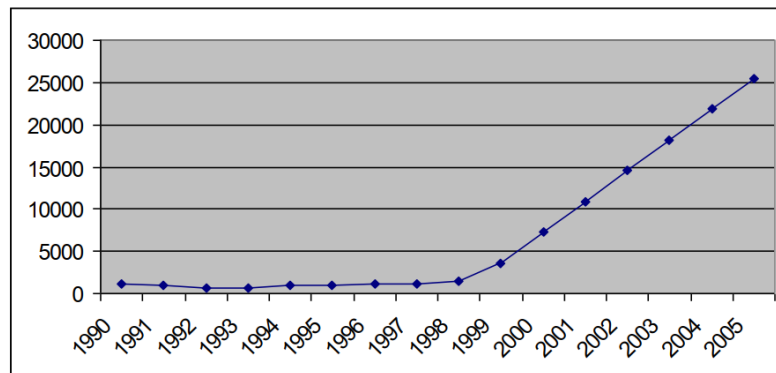
Some universities in Vietnam have innovated educational methods based on the educational model of several countries around the world. **the University of Danang** has been implementing the development strategy to 2025 with a vision to 2035 (under the adjustment to 2035, with a vision to 2045) with the goal of “becoming one of the three prestigious training and scientific research centers of the country.” The UD also aims to become a national university. Successfully implement the UD's International strategy to 2025, vision to 2035 (with the attention from central and local ministries), enhance the mission of communication and introduction to raise awareness on the

International strategy implementation, as well as attract the interest of domestic and foreign agencies, organizations and partners.

II. Staff and student mobility

1. Study abroad

There has been significant growth in the number of Vietnamese students studying abroad in recent years. These students fall into three categories: i) those who receive scholarships from foreign countries, institutions or organizations; ii) the Vietnamese government scholarship recipients; and iii) self-financed students. From 1990 through 2005, the number of students studying overseas has increased sharply from 1,139 to 25,505



(This number is much lower than actual figures, because MOET cannot keep records of large numbers of self-financed students and recipients of foreign scholarships who go abroad to study without reporting to MOET.) Source: MOET

Nowadays, more and more Vietnamese students pursue studies abroad without outside financial help. An increase in living standards and family incomes has allowed for more individually financed students to study abroad. From 1991 to 2000, about 3,600 Vietnamese self-financed students studied abroad, a figure that reached 7,133 between 2001 and 2005 (MOET, 2005c). Many of these students chose to study in Asian countries like Singapore, Japan, China, Korea, Malaysia, or Thailand, where educational quality has been upheld and recognized by universities worldwide. Competitively low tuition fees, affordable living, as well as close geographic proximity and better opportunities for employment after graduating, are but a few advantages attracting foreign students to these higher education destinations. Since 2000, 'Project 322' (Training Scientific and Technical Cadres in Institutions Overseas with the State Budget) was implemented to train and cultivate leading science and technology staff for key sectors. Each year, VND 100 billion of the national budget is spent to send some 450 students overseas, of which 200 cadres will study in doctoral programs, 100 in master degree programs, 60 to become engineers and 40 to become scientific trainees.

This policy combines two training methods, including full-time courses in foreign countries and 10 'sandwich courses'. This is the first time Vietnam has used part of the state budget expenditures to send its staff overseas for training. Priority training sectors are telecommunications, information technology, biological technology, and new materials. MOET has promulgated a project to train 20,000 PhDs by 2020, in order to provide universities and colleges with qualified lecturers. Project 322 is seen as one way to realize this target. These newly trained professors will make up 25 percent of the total lecturers in the higher training network, meeting 50 percent of the country's demand for lecturers at this level. Up to 2007, 3,212 students and cadres had been sent to study abroad on state funds, of which 2,050 were postgraduate students and 1,162 were undergraduates (MOET, 2007a).

Looking at the 2005 and 2007 data of the 322 Project, we note changes in the host countries where Vietnamese students enrolled. Specifically, Thailand and Japan have flourished in the higher education market, attracting more and more Vietnamese students to their higher education sectors. According to a decision issued by the Prime Minister in 2005, the second phase of Project 322 will run until 2014, during which time VND 260 billion will be spent each year to send students abroad. MOET will sign contracts with foreign countries enabling 10,000 junior faculty members to study abroad. Among those countries selected, MOET will send 2,500 faculty members to the United States; 1,000 to the United Kingdom; 1,000 to Germany; 1,000 to Australia; 1,000 to Japan and 700 to France, as well as a host of other countries.

2. Foreign students in Vietnam

In the past few years, Vietnam has also welcomed an increasing number of foreign students to its higher education sector. Between 1998 and 2000, 600 students from 12 countries came to Vietnam to pursue their studies and research under bilateral agreements. According to the Global Education Digest 2007 (UNESCO, 2007), the number of inbound mobile students in Vietnam in 2005 is 2,053, of which 2,016 students are from East Asian and the Pacific countries.

The Vietnamese government recognizes the need to enhance the presence of foreign students in their higher education sector. The potential exists for educational institutions to generate increased revenues by levying international tuition fees from foreign students. In addition, with an increased number of foreign students passing through Vietnam, one consequence will be the spread of Vietnamese culture throughout the world. However, in order to attract more foreign students, it is necessary to increase the number of educational programs offered in English so that these students will be able to study not only Vietnamese and Vietnamese studies, but other specializations as well.

For the 2022-2023 school year, the number of international students studying at universities in Vietnam is distributed according to the nationality structure as follows:

- Hanoi National University (74 nationalities);
- Ho Chi Minh City National University (47)
- Hanoi University (44) Hue University (38)
- Thai Nguyen University (29)
- The University of Danang (19 nationalities: Laos; UK; Belgium; Cambodia Korea; USA; Malaysia; Russia; Japan; Nigeria; France; Switzerland; China; Australia; Myanmar; Republic of Lithuania; Hungary; Sweden)

The UD has accepted and trained 717 foreign students and trainees, out of the total number of UD students of 42,316 students, equivalent to: 1.69%,



III. Foreign education programs

Since 2000, there has been tremendous development in the establishment of foreign operated education programs, run either entirely by foreign universities or through some form of joint venture. Two policies were instrumental in enabling this progress, Decree No. 06/2000/ND-CP (March 6, 2000) and especially, the issuance of Decree No. 18/2001/ND-CP (May 4, 2001) on the —Establishment and Operation of Foreign Cultural and Educational Agencies in Vietnam.

In order to protect domestic learners and assure the quality of educational services provided through foreign education programs, MOET issued a circular in 2004, which required foreign organizations wishing to operate in Vietnam to submit an establishment license from their home country to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and MOET. This was done to prevent the establishment —ghostll organizations, educational institutions that in fact have no real existence outside of Vietnam. MOET also encouraged foreign institutions to develop training programs for scientists, technicians, managers and experts in economics, technology, natural sciences, the environment and culture (IIE, 2005)

IV. Internationalization of curricula

Curriculum development is an important ingredient in improving the overall quality of higher education. Cognizant of this, in 2004 the government of Vietnam issued document No.1269/CP-KG, which assigned leading higher education institutions the task of designing —advanced curricula. Advanced curricula refer to curricula which are —properly designed and 14 established by universities on the basis of the curricula currently used at prestigious universities in the world, including the content, teaching methods, organization and training management processes and are taught in Englishll (MOET, 2008, p.3). In academic year 2006/2007, MOET allowed 9 universities to offer 10 advanced programs as pilot projects. These universities include the College of Science, Vietnam National University (VNU), Hanoi, College of Science, VNU, Ho Chi Minh City, College of Technology, VNU Ho Chi Minh City, Can Tho University, Hue University, **the University of Danang**, National Economics University, Hanoi University of Technology and University of Agriculture.

After two years implementing the pilot projects in nine universities, MOET decided to implement these programs in a larger number of Vietnamese universities. As of November 2008, there were 17 universities nationwide, offering 23 advanced programs as shown in Table 1. In 2008, MOET officially proposed the project —Training by advanced programs at some Vietnamese universities in period 2008-2015ll which was then approved by the Prime Minister in Decision 1505/QĐ-TTg dated October 15, 2008. The overall target of this project is to —put into operation some advanced programs at higher education level in order to establish and develop a number of fields, faculties and universities which reach the regional standards and international ranking; contribute to enhancing the quality of and carrying out fundamental and comprehensive renovation programs of Vietnam's higher education; endeavor to have some Vietnamese universities being ranked in the top 200 of the world universities by 2020ll (MOET, 2008, p.2)

V. Conclusion

Since 1986, Vietnam's higher education sector has made tremendous progress. However at present, the system is still faced with a wide range of problems and challenges. It can be seen that although there have been a lot of efforts in management and implementation, Our country's internationalization of higher education still has many limitations, both in terms of policy and policy Practice. Accordingly, many internationalization policies have not been applied consistently and effectively The results in reality, especially the activities of each level in higher education institutions, are also not real systematic after internationalization.

Internationalization is considered an important policy approach to secure the development and progress of Vietnam's higher education sector, while striving to achieve international standards and greater regional cooperation. It is necessary for Vietnam to :

- Improve the training quality of the domestic higher education system;
- Create a high-quality labor source to meet socio-economic development in the period of revolution industrial network 4.0;
- Meet the needs of learners in training programs that meet international standards at Vietnam;
- Attract foreign investment capital for higher education;
- Create a change in social awareness of the role of higher education;
- Enhance Vietnam's reputation in terms of international training./.

