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■ Improving Educational Leadership and Management Capacity of Quang Tri Teacher Training College in Vietnam

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The social context of the project

Quang Tri province in central Vietnam was badly destroyed during the Vietnam War. It is also where JAMK's development cooperation project is situated. Quang Tri was heavily bombed and is still affected by the explosive remnants of war. Although Vietnam has in general made remarkable socioeconomic progress during the last 25 years, Quang Tri province is one of the poorest regions and still needs external support.

In 1986, the Vietnamese government moved from planned economy to a policy of doi moi, which can be roughly translated as economic renovation. This process toward a "market-oriented socialist economy" unleashed the entrepreneurial spirit of the local population and serves as a powerful magnet for foreign investment from a number of countries (McCornac, 2009). In 1991, five years into the "Doi moi", Vietnam started to emphasise investment in education as investment for development. During the late 1990s, the idea of human resource development was clearly defined in the Educational Development Strategy for 2001–2010: "A high quality human resource is one of the primary driving forces to enhance industrialization-modernization processes; it is an essential factor for social development, rapid and sustainable economic growth." The strategy was also clear about the need to develop teaching staff and to foster innovative educational methods to enhance educational quality and effectiveness. In order to do this, the strategic plan recognises the urgent need to improve teacher training in the country.

In order to meet the socio-economic demands, Vietnam invests significantly in renovating its higher education sector.

The Socio-economic Development Plan 2006–2010 similarly argues that improving the quality of human resources is essential in enhancing the development of knowledge society (National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, 2006). Improved teaching is essential if national development objectives are to be met. The needs of the industry for competent, creative and adaptable problem solvers must be reflected in the way teachers

are trained. This requires new approaches, as many teachers continue to teach in ways in which they themselves were taught. Through pre- and in-service training, teachers must be exposed to thought-provoking and student-centred teaching.

In order to meet the socioeconomic demands, Vietnam invests significantly in renovating its higher education sector. According to the Higher Education Reform Agenda 2006–2020 (HERA), Vietnam aims for an advanced higher education system by international standards by 2020 (Government of Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2005). The specific objectives of the Agenda include curriculum development, quality assurance and accreditation development, improved quality of teaching and its relevance to societal needs.

Higher education is still evolving in Quang Tri province. The project beneficiary institution Quang Tri Teacher Training College (QTTTC) serves as the leading education centre, and is the only higher education institution in the province. Currently there is no university in Quang Tri, but QTTTC is planning to apply for an upgraded status to become a university by 2015. Hue University College of Education – a long-term co-operation partner of QTTTC – is in the neighbouring province.

Vietnam has 21 universities supplying teachers for upper secondary schools, and about 50 teacher training colleges supplying teachers for lower secondary, primary and pre-primary levels. One challenge is that many teachers are still unqualified. Standard-targeted training is provided by the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) for under- or unqualified teachers to reach the minimum level of education set by the MoET. All training programmes will be gradually accredited. In the future, higher education institutions without accredited training programmes will not be entitled to grant degrees.

Teachers at vocational colleges possess mostly a diploma from a vocational training college. Currently there are 10 higher education-level institutions that provide training for future vocational teachers. Most of the vocational teacher education institutions are located in the Red River Delta area (in or close to Hanoi), such as the HungYen University of Technology and Education. Another significant vocational teacher training institution is located in Ho Chi Minh City (Ho Chi Minh City University of Technical Teachers' Education). All these institutions are far from the province of Quang Tri, and only Hue Agriculture and Forestry University has a Teacher Training Faculty that provides training for vocational teachers.

Raising the quality of vocational training instructors at all levels is currently emphasised by the Minister of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs. Furthermore, the Minister of Education and Training Nguyen Thien Nhan has recently urged the north-central regions to boost vocational training (including college level) to meet the increasing demand for high-quality human resources in the region. This is connected to shifting the labour structure of the rural areas from the agricultural sector toward science, technology and service sectors (tourism in particular). These plans set considerable challenges for QTTTC, as it is the only higher education institution in the province, covering both teacher education and vocational higher education.

Objectives, purpose and results

The purpose of the HEI ICI project “Improving Education Leadership and Management Capacity of Quang Tri Teacher Training College” was the following: “QTTTC administration and teaching staff have acquired new educational leadership and management skills in order to better respond to the challenges of the on-going higher education sector reform in Vietnam.” The project purpose was approached from two perspectives. First, the project enhanced capacity of administrative staff to direct and support the change in terms of a new credit-based curriculum system and related quality assurance work. Second, the teaching staff’s capacity was supported by new pedagogical methods and implementation of a credit-based curriculum.

Figure 1 summarises the objective, purpose and results of the project. The overall objective describes the long-term development goal to which the HEI ICI project contributed. The project purpose defines the goal of the HEI ICI project, and the results tell the expected outcomes.

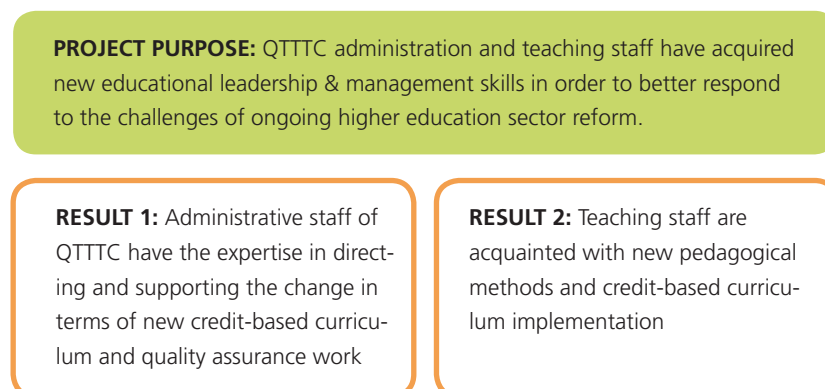


Figure 2. Objectives, purpose and results of the project

During the project, three training programmes (Educational Management, Pedagogical Training and a small-scale Training of Trainers programme) were implemented. The participation rate was as high as 80–100% among the administrative and teaching staff of the college. During the planning phase of the project, one of the indicators of successful project implementation was agreed to be the participation rate, which was set at 70% for the whole staff. So, the project got good results in this respect. The commitment of the partner was strong. Also, the gender balance was expected to be 43% women in the educational management programme, 56% women in the pedagogical training programme and 50% in the training of trainers programme. The majority of the participants were women.

Regarding the teaching staff's capacity to plan diverse courses and use a variety of methods, 17 teachers have planned and also piloted e-learning courses with their students. In addition, 36 teachers have created e-learning courses, which were not yet piloted during the project, but were going to be implemented during the next academic year. About ten courses were of very good quality in terms of pedagogy and technical implementation. Diverse learner-centred methods have been used by 47% of teachers and 37% have made written plans to use them. Project-based learning was introduced as an approach to strengthen working life relevance of education. During the first phase, 25 teachers piloted the model of project-based learning. Thanks to the project, the whole teaching staff is acquainted with new pedagogical methods that support credit-based curriculum implementation. In practice, this means implementation of more learner-centred and active teaching/learning methods; improved skills in planning, leading and assessing learning (including peer assessment and student assessment); participation of teachers in institutional development, emphasising new learning environments (learning at work, working life connections); as well as drawing up credit-based course descriptions with working life relevance. Working life connections and working life relevance of the courses were on the whole still rather weak.

Management and leadership capacity was strengthened on change management and development of QTTTC through strategy work, group development discussions, a bottom-up feedback system and by outlining the competence framework of staff. Strengthened strategic thinking and action planning were one of the most important results according to the QTTTC's representatives. In addition, involvement of the teaching staff in strategy work and planning strengthened commitment and participation. The administrative staff also had a workshop in which students from different programmes were present and

they had a chance to voice their opinions regarding development of QTTC and education. According to the above examples of monitoring data gathered, the results of the project were achieved as planned.

The project was evaluated by external evaluators from Vietnam. Also according to their report, the project has reached its objectives (Nguyen Phuc Nghiep & Nguyen Phu Vinh, 2012). However, further support for institutional development is still needed, especially in relation to:

- Facilities to create a modern learning environment which can help students self-study; teachers should have enough teaching equipment such as multi media, visual aids, rooms, tables and chairs for discussions
- Continue training in research and development methods
- Improve teachers' abilities to assess students in a modern way
- Continue training teachers to develop courses that satisfy social needs (relevance of education)
- Create a career guidance system to students
- Further support for training students in Soft Skills in order to improve the employment ratio and working life skills.

Capacities developed at QTTC

When looking at the results from a capacity development point of view, it is necessary to go back to the basic concepts. Discussing definitions of capacity development, Bolger (2000) has found that some consider capacity development as an approach or a process while others see it as an objective. There are also many definitions between these two. "Capacity" is defined as: abilities, skills, understandings, attitudes, values, relationships, behaviours, motivations,

resources and conditions that enable individuals, organisations, networks/sectors and broader social systems to carry out functions and achieve their development objectives over time. The definition includes the core of **what** is to be developed. When stressing the **how**, "capacity development refers to the approaches, strategies and methodologies used by developing country, and/or external stakeholders, to improve performance at the individual, organisational, network/sector or broader system level". At root, capacity development is about change and transformation – individual, organisational, societal. Capacity development as an approach to development is based on a set of principles such as broad-based participation and a locally driven agenda; building on local capacities; ongoing learning and adaptation; long-term

Capacity development refers to the approaches, strategies and methodologies used by developing country, and/or external stakeholders, to improve performance at the individual, organisational, network/sector or broader system level.

investments; and integration of activities at various levels to address complex problems (Bolger, 2000).

Capacity development is thus a multidimensional and multi-level concept. As a phenomenon, it is a complex whole impacted by diverse factors, dynamics and inter-relationships. Bolger (2000) introduces a capacity development framework which consists of four levels of capacity: individual, organisational, network/sector levels and the enabling environment.

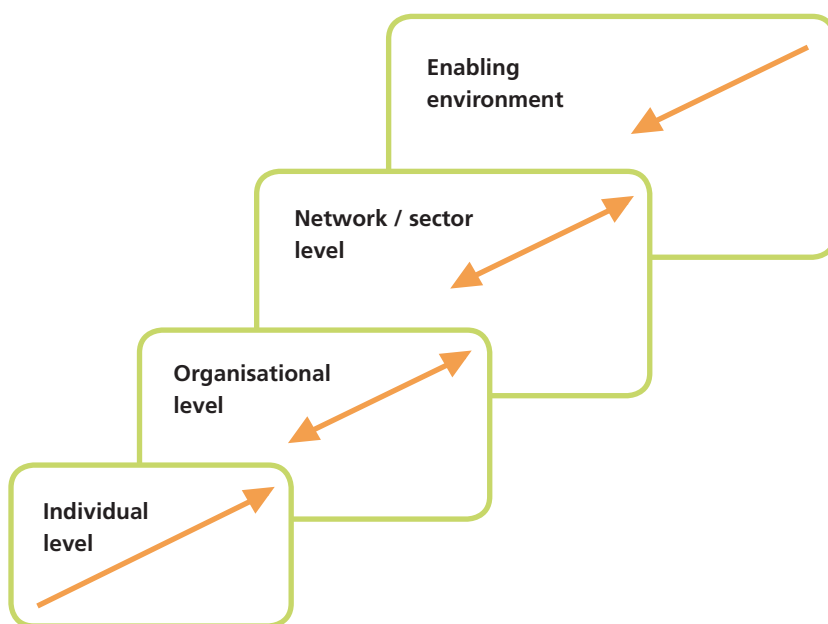


Figure 3. Conceptual framework of Capacity Development (Bolger 2000)

When the main results of the project are placed into the framework of capacity development, a more holistic summary comes across than when introducing separate outcomes. Capacity development is a systemic whole.

On an individual level, the administrative and teaching staff of QTTTC gained new knowledge and skills through the training programmes. The programmes included different development tasks, which aimed at piloting learnt things in practice. The training also influenced attitudes, as the knowledge and experiences had an impact on the personnel's mindset toward changes.

The project boosted networking between Finland and Vietnam as well as between the partner organisations in both countries. Learning to collaborate effectively and gaining good results is an important achievement regarding long-term commitment and future collaboration.

As an organisation, QTTTC strengthened its self-assessment capacity in various ways: the baseline study process and report provided a model of how to start the self-assessment process. The online feedback system and the ques-

tionnaires gave experiences of new tools for self-assessment, and feedback was gathered in the group development discussion of departments and faculties. The ways of strengthening student involvement in the institutional self-assessment were practised and the students' voices encouraged by, for example, inviting them into the workshop.

QTTTC established new ways of working and new learning possibilities for the students. The teaching staff developed e-learning courses (53), which continue their life after the project. Altogether 17 e-learning courses were ready for use already in the academic year 2012–2013. About 10 of those courses were of high quality and can be regarded as model courses for future development. New pedagogical methods and approaches were also used. Such methods as gallery walk

were well-rooted in practice. Project-based learning was piloted by 25 teachers, while 23 teachers made a plan of using it. As a result of these developments, the teachers' planning, pedagogical leadership and assessing skills as well as practices were improved.

QTTTC similarly developed its leadership and management tools and practices. Tools and processes rooting the strategies of QTTTC were changed by strategy maps, competence framework for staff and faculty and departmental development discussions and plans in order to get all staff members to understand and be involved in the changes taking place in the college. The development plans for the near future were relevant and realistic.

Communal learning at the QTTTC took place in many forms. First, there was a lot of working in small groups with diverse tools of developing and sharing ideas and experiences, but also for presenting ideas to the whole personnel and goal setting as a work community. Second, the study guides of the three training programmes and the related materials (Management programme, Pedagogical programme and Training of Trainers programme) are there to be used further after the project.

On the level of the education sector, QTTTC strengthened its role in teacher education in particular by piloting new teaching and learning approaches and

gaining new knowledge on the basis of them. A publication was produced of development work at the QTTC to disseminate the outcomes in the Vietnamese education sector. Information about the development actions and the published book were disseminated through the Ministry of Education.

The project boosted networking between Finland and Vietnam as well as between the partner organisations in both countries. Learning to collaborate effectively and gaining good results is an important achievement regarding long-term commitment and future collaboration.

Both the administrative reform as such and the regional integration needs were considered to be very much linked with the contextual challenges of educational management and pedagogical methods. By choosing the two needs areas to be addressed in the project, QTTC as an institution will be able to better respond to the challenges of the ongoing higher education reform in Vietnam. The project has also enabled QTTC to be better equipped for the accreditation process which is closely linked to the HE sector reform, as well as for the goal to be upgraded to a university by 2015.

The broader context and the operational environment of this project are first the Quang Tri Province and then the whole country. The authorities of the province were committed to support the development at QTTC. There was good communication between the local authorities, the representatives of the QTTC and the Finnish experts. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs were also kept up-to-date about the actions.

Development co-operation and institutional mandate of higher education in Finland

The Finnish Development Co-operation Plan for Vietnam 2013–2016 states that Finland is committed to supporting poverty reduction efforts in the poorest areas of the country according to the national target programme of the Government of Vietnam. Thematic focus areas of co-operation are water and sanitation, forestry and climate change, as well as promotion of good governance and development of an information society and knowledge economy.

According to the Polytechnic Act (351/2003) article 5, Finnish universities of applied sciences are expected to collaborate with national and international higher education institutions and other educational institutions. In its mission

and vision, the JAMK University of Applied Sciences highlights its willingness and the goal to be an internationally oriented institution with strong evidence of international actions. HEI ICI projects enable Finnish higher education institutions to take global responsibility and be active members of international higher education networks. The project has also strengthened national networking as it was implemented together with the HAMK University of Applied Sciences. Further, HEI ICI projects develop capacity of Finnish higher education to work in diverse environments and with diverse people. They have increased organisational awareness and interest in collaboration possibilities with developing countries. The projects therefore have a meaningful impact on human resource development of Finnish higher education institutions.

The Finnish partners' academic development shows in practice as development of contextualised training programmes and materials for beneficiary organisations. Improved pedagogical processes, strategies and teaching and learning methods are similarly a crucial part of academic development. In addition, small-scale research was conducted separately from the projects, and the outcomes were presented in an international conference. Thus, the project has provided a context to study different phenomena even though research as such has not been a project activity.

The HEI ICI project has provided a learning environment for teacher students of the Teacher Education College of JAMK and HAMK University of Applied Sciences to act as junior experts. This is significant from the teacher students' professional development point of view. Furthermore, HEI ICI projects have made it possible to involve academic personnel and other staff who have expertise required in the project but not much international experience. The projects have opened a route to international action.

Ngee (2011) found positive outcomes in civic engagement, competence skills and development of a sense of self of students who participated in in-service projects in developing countries. The JAMK personnel and students also identified similar experiences of working in the project. The categories of learning experiences (Ngee, 2011) are described in the left column of Table 1, while the right column outlines the organisational viewpoint on the basis of the HEI ICI project experiences.

Organisational learning took place in many ways. First, the planning phase of the project involved about ten to fifteen persons, who did some background study to better understand the partner's context and needs. Second,

| Personal learning (Ngee, 2011) | Organisational learning, HEI ICI experiences |
|---|---|
| Shaping civic attitude <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic action • Political awareness • Social justice • Diversity attitude | Shaping global attitude <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global action • Political awareness • Social justice • Diversity attitude |
| Developing competence skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-personal and problem solving skills • Leadership skills • Sensitivity | Developing competences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking and inter-organisational skills • Leadership skills of development processes |
| Building self-capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening self • Pursuing academic goals | Building capacity of organisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening humanitarian capacity • Communal know-how • Academic development |

Table 2. Learning within development cooperation project(s)

the project was introduced and discussed regularly in the personnel meetings of the Teacher Education College of JAMK and HAMK. The teacher educators at JAMK recognised that the project has made them more interested in the political and economic situation in Vietnam as well as in Vietnamese culture and history. Awareness of and collaboration with developing countries have increased in the Finnish organisation, and have made general attitudes more positive than before the project. The actual work in the partner country has strengthened leadership skills in complex development processes. The used approaches, methods and tools are applicable into other contexts. In addition, development of training programmes in the project have contributed to academic development at JAMK and HAMK. The HEI ICI project has supported growth of humanitarian capacity, fostering a communal sense of global responsibility, ability to work with people who live in challenging circumstances or come to Finland from such circumstances.

Role of southern higher education partner in the development of society

The Quang Tri Teacher Training College (QTTTC), in central Vietnam, is a public higher education institution under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam. Its mission focuses on training and developing human resources and conducting scientific research in order to meet the demand for educational administrators, teachers, cadres, civil servants and technicians, and to serve the cause of socioeconomic development of the region. QTTTC is not the only teacher training college in Vietnam to grants degrees also in fields other than education. This arrangement is common in the poor/remote provinces with no universities. The QTTTC serves as the leading higher education institution in the province. Currently there is no university in Quang Tri, but QTTTC will apply for a community university status in 2015.

QTTTC has currently a staff of 170 (60% female) consisting of teaching staff, administrative staff and staff of functional departments and centres. A majority, about 60%, are under the age of 35. QTTTC offers three-year Associate Degrees in education (pre-school, primary and lower secondary school teachers) and in different professional fields (e.g. IT, accounting, tourism, office administration) as well as four-year Bachelor Degree in-service programmes in co-operation with Hue University College of Education (HUCE, partner in the second project phase) and other universities in Vietnam. The total number of students at QTTTC is currently around 3,000; 200 students represent ethnic minorities and one student has special educational needs. The proportion of female students is as high as 80%.

The Quang Tri Teacher Training College faces several challenges in the coming years. These challenges are partly connected to the higher education reform being carried out at the national level and partly to the regional socioeconomic development plans that refer to structural economic transition, increased number of trained labour force and the role of enhanced training quality to support these objectives.

As the main and only higher education provider in the province, QTTTC is considered a catalyst for change by local authorities. The challenges QTTTC faces are well articulated in their own development strategies (Overall Development Scheme for 2009–2010 and Vision to 2020). There are big challenges in meeting the needs of the operational environment; the fact is that the students' employment rate is rather low. Only 45% of the students get a job in the field that they are trained for (Report of Department of Training and Education,

Quang Tri Province). Postiglione (2011) maintains that quality is a problem of the higher education sector, in particular in terms of how university education aligns with the needs of the labour market. Working life relevance of education has clearly to be improved.

At the moment QTTTC operates mainly in the Dong Ha capital area of Quang Tri Province. In the near future QTTTC should address more the needs of remote areas of the province and develop open and distance learning structures, methods and processes. Those living in the mountain areas represent different minority groups which are very poor and therefore have limited possibilities to educate themselves. The credit-based curriculum reform would provide a basis for innovative solutions, but the reform concentrates on action at the campus. To be a real dynamo of development, QTTTC should establish and strengthen its connections with the world of work. Current partnerships are very limited, and there is limited understanding of the needs of companies and working life.

The Finnish universities of applied sciences have a strong emphasis on regional development. They want to be reformers and draw on continuing learning and open dialogue to enhance professional know-how and the region. The societal effectiveness of these institutions arises from working life-based education, research and development, and innovation action that supports companies' competitiveness (Seppälä, 2013). Finnish higher education institutions can provide various models and strategies of all of these for benchmarking in addition to training and academic support.

Means of institutional co-operation in societal development

Education and educational institutions should not act in a vacuum. This is particularly relevant in Vietnam, where connections between higher education institutions and the world of work are rather weak. The following aspects appeared to be important steps toward better linkages between education and society in the HEI ICI project.

Toward strengthened societal awareness: The role of education and educational institutions can be promoted by raising awareness through training programmes. The personnel of an educational institution need to be socially aware in order to develop education, curricula, structures, methods and practices. During the project, the participants discussed their own roles and responsibility regardless of position. In Finland the role and function of education

is relatively widely understood by teachers, and co-operation encourages the flow and promotion of ideas. During the training of administrative staff and teachers the question “why” was constantly brought up.

From vision to action – strategy work: The project included plenty of strategy work. There were big gaps between ideal views and concrete actions, which is why strategy work and action planning were crucial in order to link societal goals with real QTTTC action.

From courses toward education services: New ways of implementing education, such as web-based courses, open new routes to study and can simplify access to education in a long run. The improving of course and teaching planning impacted on the quality of education.

Toward possibilities to impact: A bottom-up approach showed how one can make a difference and develop one’s work and environment. The project made use of group development discussions, different possibilities to give feedback and opinions, and many forums for sharing ideas.

Toward widened collaboration and networking: Partnerships and networks are an important part of societal effectiveness of higher education institutions. They contribute to development of education, research and development projects and innovation actions. The HEI ICI project strengthened and widened the QTTTC’s networks within the country and internationally.

Toward informing, communication: The dissemination of the project supported provision of information from QTTTC to different stakeholders and public. Articles in newspapers and in the Educational review journal, conference presentations and interviews on local TV, the book, etc., are concrete means of informing the operational environment about work done at the QTTTC. Two-way communication between educational institutions and the operational environment is a key in development.

Academic values and development co-operation

HEI ICI collaboration was based on the premise that both administrative reform and regional integration were considered to be very much linked with the contextual challenges of educational management and pedagogical methods of QTTTC. Therefore, the project aimed to develop QTTTC’s educational management toward an idea of shared leadership, a bottom-up feedback system,

quality orientation and organisational self-evaluation. In terms of pedagogical development the project aimed to support teachers' planning, leading and learning assessment skills. In particular, implementation of more learner-centred and active teaching/learning methods and development of e-learning courses was emphasised. Differences between the Finnish and Vietnamese organisational and learning cultures posed some challenges during the project.

In contrast with many other developing countries, Confucian philosophy strongly influences the way that Vietnamese society views education (Oliver, 2004; Pham, 2010). In Confucian philosophy, teachers should always know better than students. Teachers select, interpret, analyse and explain information to the students. Confucian students are passive receivers of information without processing, questioning and producing their own opinions. Individuality and uniqueness are relatively unimportant, and the students are not encouraged to provide personal interpretations of content or find alternative knowledge and interpretations on the contents to be learnt. The focus of teaching is not how students can create and construct knowledge, but on how extant authoritative knowledge can be transmitted and internalised in a most effective and efficient way (Brick, 1991; Jin & Cortazzi, 1995). Confucian philosophy and student-centredness seem to represent two extremes. Student-centredness, co-operative learning and traditional Vietnamese assumptions about the roles of the teacher and students do not meet in these opposing philosophies about the nature of teaching and learning (Pham, 2008).

Knowledge of Confucian principles is an asset in working with Vietnamese organisational culture. Respect is a guiding principle of all relationships in Confucian Heritage Culture, pertaining also to teachers' community and work culture. People are treated with the respect that their age, social status or authoritative position commands. Society is based on unequal relationships: "The father is the leader in the CHC family; the teacher is the leader in CHC class. There is also a class prefect, several unit leaders and sub-leaders for small groups. There are strong hierarchy rules. If there is a group, there is a leader. Without a leader, the group is not stable in this view" (Nguyen et al., 2006). Vietnam is a nation with a high Power Distance Index (70), and accordingly there is greater emphasis on hierarchical relationships (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). Pham (2010) discusses some aspects regarding educational reforms in Vietnam.

Knowledge of Confucian principles is an asset in working with Vietnamese organisational culture.

First, Vietnamese education reforms and educators are eager to import and follow Western approaches. Second, from the basis of Western research, new teaching and learning approaches have potential for higher student achievement. Third, student-centred, rather than teacher-centred, learning should be culturally quite appropriate, as Vietnam is culturally oriented toward collectivism rather than individualism. However, a credit-based curriculum and a student-centred learning approach are still new. While educators are familiar with some of the concepts, pedagogical practices have not changed accordingly. Many reforms have failed because new approaches are hindered by various local infrastructure conditions and cultural barriers (Pham, 2010). Conversely, Hung Van Dang (2006) reports how learner-centredness is successfully employed to get the students actively involved in learning.

Globalisations, economic competitiveness in global markets and effectiveness of education systems, have pushed developing countries to take advantage of modern technologies and to apply the newest approaches developed mainly in Western countries. Cultural issues in, for example, web-based learning are not yet paid much attention to. Hue & Ab (2013) have found that the integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) into the curriculum has not been adequately considered by higher education administrators and lecturers in Vietnam. Although it is known that ICT has a crucial role in the advancement of society, and everyone has to be able to use modern technology, lecturers do not necessarily integrate ICT into their practice. Hue & Ab (2013) stresses the point that “ICT alone will not improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning; they need to be integrated into the curriculum through a systematic approach.” Teaching and learning processes, the cultural heritage of the country and viewpoints of culturally appropriate pedagogy have often been neglected in modernising an education system (Nguyen et al., 2006). There is thus a need to further study cultural issues regarding use of new technology in pedagogical processes.

Lessons learned

Planning together:

The Goal-Oriented Project Planning (GOPP) method was used in the preparation phase of the project. The strength of the method is a participatory way of working, a logical and precise model of progress. In particular, the method supported finding the real needs of the partner institution, which is a basis for everything. Also, the two-day GOPP workshop supported commitment to common development action.

Participation of whole personnel:

Given the short time span of the project, institutional capacity development required broad commitment and contribution from the personnel of the institution. It was crucially important that the whole personnel of QTTTC participated in the training programmes and development actions. The high participation rate assured that the direction of development was known by all people of QTTTC, good pilots were implemented, and capacity of QTTTC was improved.

Use of facilitating tools:

Active participation in the workshops was ensured by using tools such as forms, models, structures and assignments to facilitate internalising the content and applying the content into the context. Everyone got tasks to develop their work, and the development process was supported.

Translation and interpretation:

The materials were translated and the workshop discussions were interpreted by QTTTC's English language teachers. This arrangement not only improved the teachers' language skills but also encouraged others to communicate in English. The project made a visible change in foreign language learning.

Working in pairs:

The Finnish experts found it beneficial to work in pairs in the workshops. Pair working supported reflective practice and enabled a better understanding of the context, culture and people. Also, it increased flexibility during the workshops.

Conclusions

This article arose from the idea of CIMO and HEI ICI project co-ordinators to publish an academic reflection on the projects, their role in development co-operation, and their meaning and benefits for the participating Finnish higher education institutions. The article conveys only a fraction of the rich and multidimensional experiences in the project. The glimpses into different aspects of co-operation draw a picture which is necessarily incomplete. Development co-operation is always a reciprocal learning process. Some of the learning outcomes can be seen already during the project implementation. Some are carved out gradually.

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