

## Global partnership or global challenges: Higher education in Vietnam in transition

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In the beginning of the 21st century the international politics witnesses three different sometimes controversial phenomena, namely globalism, regionalism, and nationalism. The complexity of coping with these phenomena is daunting in itself. For Vietnam, as a country with a special history and a country in transition, a full integration in the new world order through achieving membership of the world organizations like World Trade Organization (WTO) or involving in the inter-regional dialogues like Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) is now of top priority for the government.

In doing so, in November 2001 the Politburo of the Communist Party of Vietnam issued the resolution 07/NQ-TW which emphasizes that "the Party will step up Vietnam's integration efforts by harnessing all internal strengths and resources". This ambitious national agenda requires a vision of how Vietnam will continue the integration and globalization process in a way that could sustain human development.

In this process, higher education can contribute to building human resource capacity that has to be addressed for reducing deficiencies in trade-related expertise and negotiation skills. Partly responding to the higher demands resulting from Vietnam's expanded international relations, Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) perceived the need to introduce a standardization of international relation/studies education. Under the chair of Institute of International Relations, representatives from different universities, researching institutes, as well as from government agencies responsible for the country's international relations, the new curriculum, which aims to train experts in international relations with high quality, was submitted to MOET.

Facing both higher demands and expectations from the labor market and the limited class time, higher educational institutions in Vietnam may find it necessary to invest more time and effort to teach methodologies and organize internship programs that will help students succeed in their careers. In this concern, Vietnam needs further help and assistance from international community in (re)training faculty, textbook and teaching material preparation, and methodological and pedagogical renovation. The Summer School that was co-organized by GTZ, Humboldt University and Vietnam National University in August 2004 in Hanoi was an excellent example.

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