

Global Partnership or Global Challenges:

Higher Education in Vietnam in Transition

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A Challenge for Global Higher Education”**

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I. A NEW WORLD ORDER

* Globalism, Regionalism and Nationalism

1. Strength of each country: Economy, “soft power”
2. Global interdependence
3. Increase in the number of actors in international politics
4. Market economy and democracy as common values

❖ *New opportunities and challenges*

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II. VIETNAM BEFORE RENOVATION (DOI MOI)

- 2,000 years existence as a nation, 1,200 years under foreign domination
- Maintenance of identity, culture thanks to traditional values:
 - ❖ *Spirit of national independence and self-strengthening*
 - ❖ *Home-village-country community character*
 - ❖ *Cult of ancestors*
 - ❖ *Tradition of love and respect for learning*
- Temple of Literature: “Virtuous and talented people comprise the nation’s vital force” (1442) and “Knowledge is the greatest property of a nation” (1466).
- Ho Chi Minh: “An ignorant nation is a weak nation” (1946)

III. VIETNAM SINCE RENOVATION

- Sixth Communist party congress (1986): Policy of doi moi (renovation)

- ❖ *Adoption of socio-economic reforms: From central planning to market-oriented economy*
- ❖ *Transformation in foreign policy: From a model heavily structured by ideological considerations to a model emphasizing national interest and realpolitik*

- Emphasis on integration into regional and global economies

- ❖ *1995: Normalization with the US, ASEAN membership, framework agreement with the EU*
- ❖ *1996: Membership in Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM)*
- ❖ *1998: Membership in Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)*
- ❖ *2005: Membership in World Trade Organization (WTO)?*

- Some challenges facing Vietnamese education:

1. *Contradiction between quantity and quality*
2. *Irrationality of training structure*
3. *Problem with equality in education*
4. *Low quality of teachers' education and training*

IV. THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION – an international relations training program

- Contribution to building human resource capacity for reducing deficiencies in trade-related expertise and negotiation skills
- Advantages of new curriculum for international relations:
 1. *Common basic knowledge: History of International Relations (IR), Theory of IR, International Public and Corporate Law, International Economic Relations, History of Vietnamese Diplomacy, Vietnam's Foreign Policy, and Foreign languages*

2. Certain level of flexibility in designing specific courses

3. Common framework for cooperation in teaching and training

- Disadvantages of new curriculum for international relations:

1. Remains very “traditional”, in term of emphasis on “political international relations”

2. As a discipline: Neglect of key courses like IR Theory, International Political Economy, Security Studies and Social Sciences Methods

3. As sub-fields: No attention for policy analysis, strategic studies, peace and conflict studies, comparative studies of international regimes and organizations, international governance, development studies, team work and problem-solving skills

V. RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. More investment to teach methodology and organize internship programs
2. Long term: Further help and assistance from international community in (re)training faculty, preparing textbooks and teaching materials, and providing methodological and pedagogical guidance
3. Short term: Summer school by GTZ, Humboldt University and Vietnam National University in August 2004 in Hanoi

Thank You!