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Principles and general objectives of education

In accordance with the Resolution of the 4th Plenum of the Central Committee of the 7th Party Conference (1993), the main educational goal in Vietnam is improving people's general knowledge, training human resources, and fostering talent. In the late 1990s, this concept was further specified, and the Educational Development Strategy 2001-2010 (being updated as the Education Sector Strategic Development for 2011-2020) clearly indicates that a high quality human resource is an essential factor for social development, rapid and sustainable economic growth, and is one of the primary driving forces to enhance industrialization and modernization processes.

Article 2 of the Education Law of 2005 states that the goals of education are to: “educate the Vietnamese into comprehensively developed persons who possess ethics, knowledge, physical health, aesthetic sense and profession, loyal to the ideology of national independence and socialism; and shape and cultivate one's dignity, civil qualifications and competence, satisfying the demands of the construction and defense of the Fatherland.” “The Vietnamese education is a socialist education with popular, national, scientific, and modern characteristics, based on Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's thoughts. Educational activities must be conducted on the principles of learning coupled with practice, education linked to production, theories connected to practicability, and education at school combined with education in the family and in the society.” (Article 3).

The contents of education must ensure the basic, comprehensive, practical, modern, and systematic characters; with importance attached to ideological and civic conscious education; preserving and developing the good traditions and the national cultural identity, absorbing the essence of the mankind culture; and conforming to the psycho-physiology development of various age groups of learners. Methods of education must bring into full play the activeness, the consciousness, the self-motivation, and the creative thinking of learners; foster the self-study ability, the practical ability, the learning eagerness and the will to advance forward. (Article 5).

Educational development is the first national priority with a view to improving people's knowledge, training manpower, and fostering talents. Educational development must be linked with the requirements of socio-economic development, to the scientific-technological advances, and to the consolidation of national defence and security; must implement standardization, modernization, and socialization; must ensure the balance in terms of qualifications, professional and regional structure; must expand scale on the basis of quality and efficiency assurance; and must link education with employment. (Article 9).



Laws and other basic regulations concerning education

According to the **Constitution** of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (1992) all citizens have the right to education. Article 59 stipulates that “Education is a right and an obligation of citizens. Elementary education is mandatory and free. Citizens have the right to pursue their general education and to learn a profession under various forms. Gifted students shall be encouraged by the State and society to develop their talents. The State shall adopt policies on tuition fees and scholarships. The State and society shall create conditions for handicapped children to pursue general education and to learn appropriate professions.”

The **Law on Universal Primary Education** (UPE) was adopted by the National Assembly (VIII Legislature) on 12 August 1991. Article 1 stipulates that: “The State implements the policy of compulsory universal primary education (UPE) for all children aged 6-14.”

In accordance with the Law on Education entered into force on 1 June 1999 primary education (grades 1-5) is compulsory for all children aged 6-14. The law also contained provisions concerning preschool care and education, and non-formal education. Article 7 stipulated that Vietnamese is the official language in schools, and that ethnic groups have the right to learn by and use their own language and writing systems to create a basis for the preservation and development of their culture.

On 15 November 2002, the Prime Minister issued the **Decision 161/2002/QĐ-TTg** on early childhood education (ECE) development policies. In this Decision, the Government confirms some fundamental issues in relation to the following: tasks and orientations towards various types of ECE institutions; curriculum development and teaching staff development; investment policies and ECE development planning. The Decision also regulates the responsibilities of line ministries and People’s Committees at various levels on the fulfillment of ECE development objectives. On 20 October 2005 the Minister of Education and Training issued **Decision 31/2005/QĐ-BGD&ĐT** concerning the minimum operations conditions of crèche/kindergarten classes and children groups in places where preschools cannot be established. The MOET **Decision 23/QĐ-BGD&ĐT** of 22 May 2006 refers to inclusive education for people with disabilities. (MOET, 2007).

On 15 June 2004, the Communist Party’s Politburo issued the **Instruction 40/CT/T** on the development and quality improvement of teachers and educational managers. The Instruction identifies the tasks to be fulfilled, including the deployment of teachers, sufficient quantity, rational structure, improved professional/pedagogical skills, renovated contents, curriculum, methodologies, improved management quality, and refinement of several other policies. (*Ibid.*).

In January 2006 the **new Education Law** came into effect after its approval on 14 June 2005 at the 7th session the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Legislature XI. Article 7 reiterates that Vietnamese is the official language to be used in schools and other educational institutions. The State shall enable ethnic



minority people to learn their spoken and written languages in order to preserve and develop their ethnic cultural identity, helping pupils from ethnic minorities easily absorb knowledge when they study in schools and other educational institutions.

Article 10 states that learning is the right and obligation of every citizen. Every citizen, regardless of ethnic origins, religions, beliefs, gender, family background, social status or economic conditions, has equal rights of access to learning opportunities. The State shall undertake social equity in education and enable everyone to get access to education. The State and the community shall help the poor have access to education, enabling gifted people to develop their talents. The State shall give priority in enabling children of ethnic minorities, children of families in areas with special socio-economic difficulties, targeted groups of socially prioritized policies, disabled and handicapped persons and beneficiaries of other social policies to realize their learning rights and obligations.

In accordance with Article 11, primary education and lower secondary education are universal education levels. The State shall make decisions on plans of universal education; shall assure conditions to implement the universalization of education throughout the country. All citizens within the defined age group shall have the obligation to learn in order to obtain the level of universalized education. Families shall have the responsibilities of facilitating or their members in the defined age group to pursue learning in order to obtain the level of universalized education.

Article 63 stipulates that the State shall establish and encourage organizations and individuals to establish schools and classes for disabled and handicapped people to enable them to restore their functions, to receive education and vocational training and to integrate into the communities. The State shall give priority in allocating teachers, infrastructure, equipment and budget to schools and classes for disabled and handicapped people established by the State and give incentives to schools and classes for disabled and handicapped people established by individuals or organizations.

Administration and management of the education system

The **Ministry of Education and Training** (MOET) oversees the education sector and is responsible for setting broad policy directions for all levels of education. However, management responsibility for school buildings, staffing, and distribution of financial resources has been progressively decentralized, with universities being directly managed by MOET, upper secondary education schools and professional secondary schools being managed at the provincial level by the **Departments of Education and Training**, and lower secondary schools and primary schools being managed locally in the districts or communes by **District Bureaus of Education and Training**. Service provision has become increasingly decentralized through the removal of controls from the center and the increase in revenue-raising powers at the local level (ADB, 2009). Departments of Education and Training are under the joint supervision of the MOET and the provincial People's Committee. At the district level, a separate division of the People's Committee takes responsibility for educational management in the district.

The **Centre for Curriculum Development and Methodology of General Education**, under the National Institute for Educational Science, is the main agency



responsible for curriculum research and development in the country. The **National Institute for Educational Science**, the **Educational Publishing House** (an agency of the MOET), and the **Councils of Subjects** of the MOET jointly select a list of authors which is then approved by the Ministry. The Educational Publishing House organizes the process of preparation of textbooks, and the Council for Evaluation and Approval of Textbooks evaluates the drafts and submits them to the Minister for approval.

The majority of formal education and training is publicly provided through state-run schools, colleges, universities, and training centers. There are, however, a number of nonpublic institutions operating at each level. The Government has established a policy of encouraging the development of nonpublic or private schools, although the education law states that private, people-funded, and semipublic schools all belong to and contribute to the national education system. Nonpublic schools therefore benefit from incentives related to facilities, land, taxes, fees, credit, insurance, and commendation and reward systems. The same expectations and laws apply to both nonpublic and public schools in the implementation of the objectives, contents, curriculum, textbooks, teaching methods, and regulations relating to enrollment, teaching and learning, examinations, completion requirements, diploma certification, and other matters. The nonpublic school system has been established at all education levels, from early childhood care to higher education. However, what is apparent is the lack of quality control across all schools and of national standards for the quality of facilities and for the competencies and professional skills required for effective teaching, as well as an improved curriculum (ADB, 2009).

According to the 2005 Education Law, the Government submits decisions on major guidelines affecting learning rights and duties of citizens to the **National Assembly**. It also has to submit any revised curriculum for review and approval, and it reports on the education budget and operations every year. The Law also states that the People's Committees at various levels are responsible for: ensuring financial conditions, infrastructure, teachers and teaching equipment for public educational institutions under their management; meeting demands for expansion and improving the quality and efficiency of education in their localities. The **Provincial People's Councils** set tuition and admission fees for public educational institutions in each province according to proposals of the People's Committee at the same level. The Law also sets out the responsibilities of the **Viet Nam Fatherland Front Committee** and its member organizations to mobilize people in the cause of education. The **Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union** is charged with coordinating with schools in the education of youth and children and mobilizing its members and young people to set examples in learning, training and participation in education. (UNICEF, 2010).

Article 14 of the 2005 Education Law stipulates that the State shall carry out the unified management of the national educational system in terms of goals, programmes, contents, educational plans, teachers' standards, examination regulations and system of degrees/diplomas; focus on the management of educational quality, exercise decentralization on educational management; strengthen the autonomy and accountabilities of educational institutions. Article 51 specifies that the authority of giving permission for establishment of people-founded (supported by the local community) and private schools are as follows: (a) the chairman of district People's Committee shall make decisions for crèches, kindergartens, primary schools, lower secondary schools, and semi-boarding general education schools for children from



ethnic minorities; (b) the chairman of provincial People's Committee shall make decisions for upper secondary schools, boarding general education schools for children from ethnic minorities; professional upper secondary education schools under provincial administration; (c) ministers, heads of ministry-equivalent agencies shall make decisions for professional upper secondary educational schools under the concerned agency's administration. The Minister of Education and Training shall make decisions for colleges and pre-university schools; the Head of the State agency in charge of management of vocational training shall make decisions for vocational colleges. The Prime Minister shall make decisions for universities.

The **School Council** of public schools or **Board of Directors** of people-founded and private schools is the body responsible for making decisions on the directions of school activities, mobilizing and monitoring the use of resources for the school, linking the school with community and society, ensuring the realization of educational objectives. The **school head** is appointed or recognized by the competent State managerial authority, and is responsible for managing the school's operations. An **Advisory Board** in school is set up by the school head in order to gather opinions from educational managers, teachers, representatives of organizations at the school in realizing tasks under the duties and rights of the school head. The organization and activities of the advisory board are stipulated in the **school charter**. (Articles 53-55 of the Education Law).

On the basis of Article 111 of the 2005 Education Law, the **Educational Inspectorate** shall implement inspection rights within the State management of education, in order to ensure law enforcement, promotion of positive elements, prevent and handle violations, protect interests of the State, legitimate rights and interests of organizations and individuals in education. The Inspectorate shall have the following functions: inspecting of compliance with educational laws; inspecting the implementation of educational objectives, plans, programme, contents and methods, professional regulations, the compliance with regulations on examinations, diploma and certificate issuance; the completion of necessary conditions of educational quality assurance at educational institutions; performance of complaint and denunciation settlement in education according to regulations of laws on complaints and denunciations; handling of administrative violations in education in accordance with the law on administrative violation handling; performance of corruption prevention and anti-corruption in education in accordance with regulations of laws on anti-corruption; proposal of measures to ensure educational law enforcement; amendments and supplements to the State's policies and regulations on education.

The government has also established the **National Council of Education** as an advisory body for policy making and to collaborate in the definition of plans for educational development.

In November 2007, the MOET adopted the Provisional Higher Education Quality Accreditation regulation, which represents the beginning of a higher education quality assurance and accreditation system for. The 2005 Education Law also makes reference to a new quality assurance and accreditation system. The General Department for Educational Testing and Accreditation of the MOET is responsible for this system. As regards higher education, the **Center for Education and Quality Assurance and Research Development** has been established at the

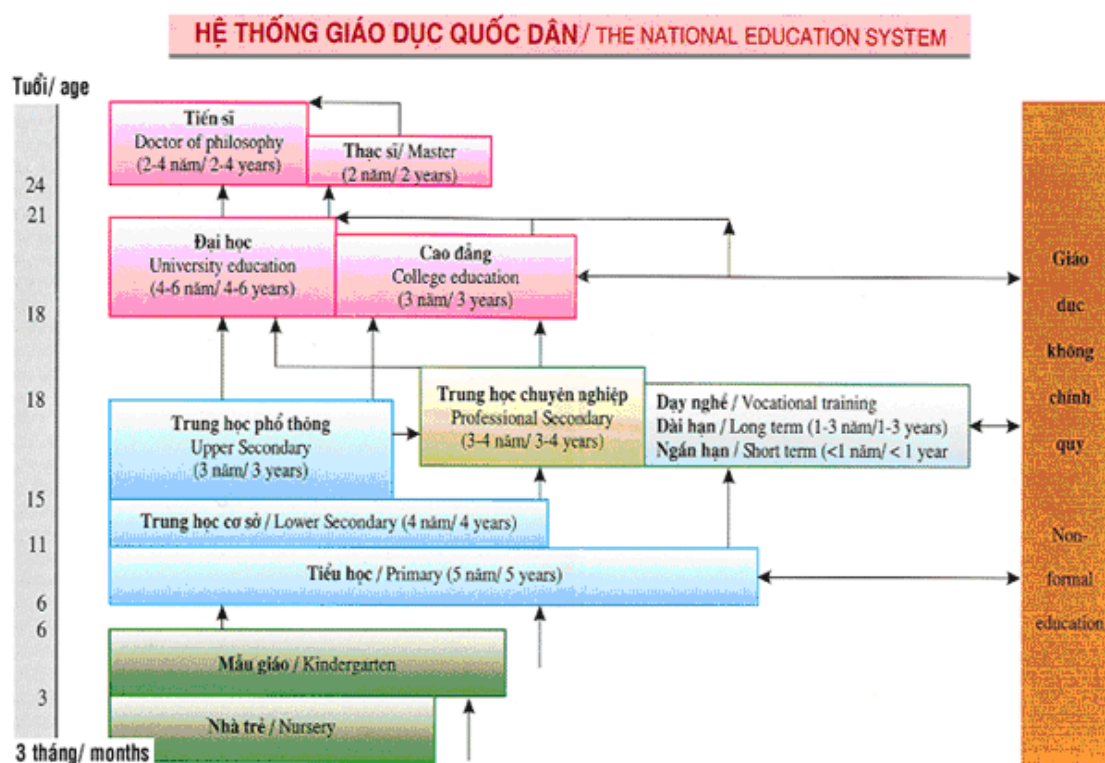


Vietnam National University, Hanoi, and the **Center for Educational Testing and Quality Assessment** (2004), at the Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City.

According to the Government Decree 186/2007/ND-CP of 25 December 2005, the **Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs** (MOLISA) performs the State management function in the areas of: employment, vocational training, labour, salary, social insurance, occupational safety, social protection, children protection and care, gender equality, and social evil prevention in the whole country. MOLISA duties regarding vocational training include: (a) organizing, directing, monitoring, coordinating and cooperating with related ministries and sectors to provide guidelines on policies, schemes of vocational training and learning; (b) planning of network of secondary schools, colleges and centres of vocational training within the Ministry's authority; stipulating conditions of establishment, organization and operation of vocational training institutions; stipulating model regulations of secondary schools and colleges of vocational training; stipulating model structure of vocational training centres, standards of physical foundation and training equipment; (c) stipulating frame programmes of skill levels of vocational colleges, secondary schools, list of training occupations; procedure for student recruitment, exams, testing, acknowledgement of graduation, format of graduation certificate, occupational certificate; regulations of graduation certificate and occupational certificate issue; (d) stipulating principles, processes, procedures and conducting the setting up of national standards of occupational skills; managing the evaluation, issue of certificate for national standards of occupational skills; (e) stipulating standards, procedure for evaluation of training quality; and (f) making decision of establishment of colleges of vocational training; acknowledgement of Board of Directors and Board of Management of private vocational training schools within the Ministry's authorities.

Structure and organization of the education system

Viet Nam: structure of the education system (2007)



Source: Ministry of Education and Training, 2007.

Pre-school education

According to the Education Law of 2005, early childhood education (ECE) caters to children from 3 months to 6 years of age. It is not compulsory, and is offered by both the public and the private sectors. ECE institutions include crèches for children from 3 months to 3 years of age; kindergarten schools and classes for children from 3 years to 6 years of age; and young ‘sprout’ schools, combining crèches and kindergartens, for children aged 3 months to 6 years.

Primary education

Primary education is part of general education and lasts five years (grades 1-5); it is intended for children in the age group 6-11 years and is compulsory. Pupils having successfully completed primary education receive a certificate issued by the principal of the school.

Secondary education

General secondary education is divided into two cycles: basic or lower secondary education, lasting four years (grades 6-9); and general or upper secondary education

(grades 10-12). Students having successfully completed lower/basic secondary education receive a certificate issued by the head of the Bureau of Education and Training in the district, precinct, town or city under the provincial administration (district level). Admission to upper secondary education is normally subject to passing an entrance examination. Students having successfully completed upper secondary education are eligible to take the final examination and those who pass are awarded the diploma of secondary school graduation issued by the director of the Department of Education and Training in the province or city (provincial level). Pupils having completed primary education can also enrol in vocational training courses of one to three years' duration at vocational training schools. Basic secondary education graduates can enter (professional) vocational education lasting three to four years; for students having completed upper secondary education the duration of the programme is one to two years (three years for some technical specializations). Successful students are awarded the diploma of vocational secondary education. Both the diploma of secondary school graduation and the diploma of vocational secondary education grant access to higher education (subject to entrance examinations); students from the professional/vocational track usually enrol in junior colleges.

Higher education

Higher education institutions include universities, colleges and academic research institutes. Junior colleges offer three-year professional programmes (short-term higher education) with a practical focus leading to the award of a college diploma/degree (also referred to as 'associate degree'), mainly in medical, administrative and financial professions. Junior colleges graduates can pursue a bachelor's degree, for which a maximum exemption of one to two years can be given, depending on the type of programme. At the university level, programmes leading to the award of a bachelor's degree normally last four years on a full-time basis (five years in the case of engineering, veterinary, pharmacy and architecture; six years in the case of dentistry and medicine). At the postgraduate level, master's degree programmes last two years for bachelor's degree holders (full-time). Doctoral degree programmes typically last two to three years for master's degree holders (four years when taken after a bachelor's degree).

The school year consists of thirty-five working weeks. The academic year is divided into semesters and consists of thirty weeks on average.

The educational process

Article 6 of the 2005 Education Law stipulates that the 'educational programme' (possibly used as an equivalent of 'curriculum') "shall reflect the goals of education; set the standards for knowledge, skills, scope and structure of educational contents, for methods and forms of organizing educational activities, for evaluation methods of educational outcomes for each subject of every grade and level or educational qualifications. The educational programme must ensure the modernity, stability, consistency, and inheritability among different levels and different educational qualifications, facilitating the streaming and transferability among educational qualifications, specializations and forms of the national educational system. Requirements on knowledge and skill contents defined in the educational programme must be concretized in textbooks used for general education, in syllabi and teaching



materials used for professional education, higher education, and continuing education. Textbooks, syllabi and teaching materials must meet the requirements on educational methods. The educational programme shall be implemented based on school year for early childhood education and general education, and based either on school year or on credit accumulation for professional education and higher education.”

As regards professional education, the contents must focus on the training of vocational abilities, paying attention to moral and physical education, as well as improving skills as required by each profession, improving educational qualification levels as required. The methods of professional education must combine practical skill drilling and theoretical teaching, enabling learners to practice and to develop profession as required by each profession. The educational programme of professional education reflects the objectives of professional education; setting standards for knowledge, skills, scope and structure of the contents of professional education, methods and form of training, ways of evaluating training results for each subject, field, profession, training qualification of professional education; ensuring the demand for transferability with other educational programmes. The Ministry of Education and Training, in coordination with other relevant ministries and heads of ministry-equivalent agencies, based on the appraisals of the Sector Review Council for Programme of Professional Upper Secondary Education, shall define the core programme for professional upper secondary education which includes content structure, number of subjects, duration of the subjects, proportion of theory and practice, ensuring the objectives for each subject and profession to be trained. Professional upper secondary education schools shall define their own training programmes based on the core programme. The Head of the State agency in charge of management of vocational training, in coordination with other relevant ministers and heads of agencies equivalent to ministry, based on the review of the Sector Review Council for Programme of Vocational Training, shall define the core programme for each vocational training level, including content structure, number of subjects, duration of the subjects, proportion of theory and practice, ensuring the objectives for each subject and profession to be trained. Vocational training institutions shall define their own vocational training programmes based on the core programme. Syllabi of professional education shall concretize requirements on contents of knowledge and skills defined in educational programme for each subject, field, profession, and training qualification of professional education, meeting the requirements of methods of professional education. The preparation and approval of textbooks for official use as teaching and learning materials in professional educational institutions are to be organized by the head of school or director of vocational training centre based on the review of Textbook Review Councils appointed by the head of school or director of vocational training centre. (Articles 34-35).

The development and the initial pilot implementation of the National Curriculum of Basic Education (covering primary and lower secondary education) took place during the period 1996-2000. On 9 December 2000, the National Assembly issued a directive aimed at revising the curriculum for general education (primary to upper secondary education), specifying that the new basic education curriculum was to be implemented throughout the country starting from the school year 2002/03. The objectives of this revision were: to enhance the quality of all-round education for the young generation; to respond to the need of developing human resources for the industrialization and modernization of the country; and to approach the general



education level of the developed countries in the region and the world. The revision of the curriculum and textbooks up to grade 12 of general education has been completed in 2008/09.

With the assistance of the Asian Development Bank, a new curriculum and syllabi for grade 6 (lower secondary education) were developed and piloting started in 2000, followed by the finalization and piloting of curricula for grades 7, 8, and 9 during 2001–2006. Nationwide application of the new textbooks for grade 6, 7, and 8, and the piloting of grade 9 textbooks, has been implemented. The new curriculum was embodied in the successful development and introduction of 15 kinds of textbooks, teacher books, and workbooks.

The development of the lower secondary curriculum proceeded in five stages. Stage 1 was from July 1997 to March 1999 and involved the following steps: (a) targets for lower secondary education (LSE) level curriculum were defined; (b) an education plan for LSE was developed; (c) agreements were reached on the requirements to be ensured when developing curriculum and related activities at LSE; (d) the existing curriculum of LSE was evaluated and a study made of the curriculum of primary education; (e) experience of the processes of developing curriculum in other countries was gained, and contributions sought from study tours in several countries; (f) an overall framework and syllabi for subjects were designed; (g) seminars were held to obtain the informed views of a wide variety of stakeholders (including education experts, education managers, and teachers) on the future curriculum. For stage 2 a national review committee assessed, revised, and completed the curriculum. The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) took the decision to temporarily accept a pilot curriculum so that the authors could develop pilot textbooks in a timely manner. For stage 3 the new curriculum was piloted using the pilot textbooks. For stage 4 a conference of stakeholder representatives was convened and an official notice was gazetted in order to obtain a broad range of comments on the new curriculum. For stage 5, after being officially verified by MOET, the curriculum was implemented nationwide. A comprehensive view was taken of the curriculum including the objectives, content (standards of knowledge and skill), methods, and organization of education, and the assessment of student learning outcomes. While the old curriculum and textbooks concentrated on a narrow range of learning outcomes, the new one focuses more on forming the skills of individual learning, researching issues, and problem solving. The new curriculum focuses on the renovation of teaching methodology, the establishment of self-initiated student learning, adaptive learning behaviors, and increased communicative competence through critical thinking and self evaluation. For example, the old curriculum for literature and Vietnamese language focused on writing skills while the new one covers all four aspects of language (listening, speaking, writing, and reading competence). Teachers are, therefore, required to pay attention to the aural and verbal abilities of students as well as their ability to read and write. (ADB, October 2007).

The (general) secondary education curriculum has been undergoing revision since 2006. The grade 10 curriculum took effect in 2006/07. The curriculum for grades 11 and 12 was expected to take effect in 2007/08 and 2008/09, respectively. (UNESCO Bangkok, 2007). The regular review and upgrading of the secondary education curriculum is the subject of the MOET Decision 7436/QD-BGDDT issued in 2008. MOET will create a task force to improve the curriculum upgrading system.

The curriculum will be reviewed regularly and revised every 5–10 years to match content to the actual learning needs of society. (ADB, 2009).

Pre-primary education

According to the Education Law of 2005, early childhood education (ECE) carries out the nurturing, caring, and educating children from 3 months to 6 years of age (article 21). The objectives of ECE are to help children develop physically, emotionally, intellectually and aesthetically, in order to shape the initial elements of personality, as well as to prepare children for school.

The contents of ECE must be suited to the psycho-physiological development of children, balanced between nurturing, caring and educating, with a view to helping children develop a harmonious, healthy, and active body; know how to respect, love and regard grand-parents, parents, teachers, and elderly persons; be attached to brothers, sisters, and friends; be frank, forthright, natural, aesthetically sensitive and intellectually inquisitive. The main method in ECE is to help children develop comprehensively through organizing play activities while giving special attention to example posing, encouraging and promoting (article 23). The programme (curriculum) of ECE shall reflect the above-mentioned objectives; concretizing requirements on nurturing, caring, and educating children at different age groups; regulating the organization of activities in order to facilitate children to develop physically, emotionally, intellectually and aesthetically; providing guidelines to evaluate the development of children at early childhood age. The Ministry of Education and Training, based on the appraisals made by the National Review Council for Appraising Curricula of Early Childhood Education, shall make decisions on the issuance of ECE programme (article 24).

As mentioned, ECE institutions include crèches for children from 3 months to 3 years of age; kindergarten schools and classes for children from 3 years to 6 years of age; and young 'sprout' schools, combining crèches and kindergartens, for children aged 3 months to 6 years. Preschool education is not compulsory, and is offered by both the public and the private sectors. The ECE renovation (integrated theme-based curriculum) has been started in 1998. The main points of the new curriculum are: taking child's development as foundation; keeping a balance between teacher-initiated and child-initiated activities; integrating subjects; adopting process assessment as the main method of evaluation; and implementing curriculum flexibility. The renovation concentrates on: child-oriented activities; children's experiences; the importance of play; the process of activities; individual differences; and the creating of learning environment for children. The MOET Decision 5205/QD-BGD&DT dated 19 September 2006 concerns the pilot of ECE curriculum. On 7 May 2007, MOET issued Decision 2322/QD-BGD&DT on the implementation plan for piloting the ECE curriculum during 2006-2008. The plan identifies eight major activities to be carried out in order to draw conclusions on the piloted curriculum advantages, disadvantages and feasibility, forming the basis for the refinement, finalization and official issuance of the renovated ECE curriculum. (MOET, 2007).

The ECE's administrative system is divided into three levels: (i) the Department of ECE of MOET; (ii) the Bureau of ECE and the provincial Service of Education and Training; and (iii) district ECE units in charge of crèches,



kindergartens, pre-schools, home-based day care centres and parental education. (UNICEF, 2010).

Due to a number of difficulties, the ECE network can only meet, to some extent, the demand and lacks stability. Although there are only four communes without ECE provision nationwide, more than 10 provinces still have not developed their ECE school/class plan. And 1,640 communes only have 1-2 ECE classes attached to primary schools or located in the commune centers, and no classrooms in remote villages. The network-related weaknesses have widened the ECE gaps between rural and urban areas, and various regions. The schooling opportunities for children in mountainous, remote and isolated areas are still limited. There are great variations in ECE quality among urban, ethnic minority and very disadvantaged areas. The structure of ECE teachers and managers reveals inappropriateness in both qualifications and distribution in various regions; one fourths of teachers are under-qualified. The proportion of teachers and managers with college and university degrees is very low and the percentage of ethnic minority teachers in ethnic minority areas is very small (5.1%). Pre-service and in-service training of ECE lecturers, teachers and managers is slow in renovation and of poor quality. ECE teacher training institutions are facing various constraints with the requirements for size expansion and quality improvement on the one side, and limited capacities of the system on the other side. The massive opening of ECE teacher training faculties, which offer college and university degrees, in several teacher training institutions without necessary conditions have revealed a number of mismatches, especially in lecturer qualifications. The content of ECE teacher training programs lacks its relevance to the real leadership of ECE management bodies. The placement, deployment, assessment, policy and incentive mechanisms for ECE teachers and managers are inappropriate and not able to create momentum for teachers to improve their qualities and capacities. As for ECE institutions, the current mechanisms and policies prevent them from the effective use of staff. (MOET, 2007).

According to official estimates, in 2005/06 the gross enrolment ratio was 13% for the age group 0-2 years (crèche), 58% for the age group 3-5 years (kindergarten), and 88% for 5-year-olds. Ethnic minority children represented 13.7% of the children enrolled. An estimated 86.7% of pupils in grade 1 had previously attended preschool. Some 60% of the children were enrolled in non-public ECE programmes. Enrolment ratios vary across regions, provinces and districts. (MOET, 2007).

According to the Early Childhood Education Department School Year Report 2008/09, the gross enrolment ratio of children less than 3 years of age is 20%, for 3-5-year-olds it is 79%, and for 5-year-olds it is 99%. More than 80% of children from the wealthiest families attend preschool, while the rate among children from the poorest families is as low as 36%. (UNICEF, 2010).

According to national estimates (General Statistics Office), in 2009/10 the kindergarten education network comprised over 12,200 institutions providing ECE services to some 3 million children.



Primary education

On the basis of the Education Law of 2005 (article 26), general education consists of primary, (basic) lower secondary and (general) upper secondary education. The objectives of general education are to help pupils develop comprehensively by acquiring morals, knowledge, physical health, aesthetic values and other basic skills, develop personal ability, flexibility and creativeness, with a view to forming the socialist Vietnamese personality, to building the civic conduct and duty, to preparing them for further studies or entering the work force, participating in the building and defending of the Fatherland. Primary education aims to help the pupils form initial foundations for a correct and long-lasting moral, intellectual, physical and aesthetic development, along with the development of basic skills for them to enter lower secondary education. (Article 27).

The contents of general education must ensure the popular, basic, comprehensive, career-orienting, and systematic characteristics, linking or with the realities of life, appropriateness to the psycho-physiological characteristics of pupils, and meeting the objectives of education at each level. Primary education must guarantee pupils to acquire simple and necessary knowledge about nature, society and human being; with basic skills in listening, reading, speaking, writing and calculating, with habits of physical exercise and hygiene; and with initial understanding of singing, dancing, music and arts. The methods of general education are to promote the activeness, consciousness, initiatives and creativeness of pupils; to be appropriate to the characteristics of each grade and subject; to nurture the methods of self-study and the ability to work in team, to drill the ability of applying learned knowledge into practice; to have impact on pupils' emotional development, to bring them joy and pleasure of learning. (Article 28).

As mentioned, primary education lasts five years (grades 1-5) and the admission age is 6. Pupils having successfully completed primary education receive a certificate issued by the principal of the school.

The new primary school curriculum is considered as a comprehensive pedagogical action plan including: educational goals, scope, level and structure of educational content; method and form of organizing educational activities; and evaluation of educational achievements. The programme must be followed by all schools nationwide.

The teaching of compulsory subjects lasts not more than four hours per day and is divided into periods lasting about thirty-five minutes. Between two class periods there is a ten-minute break. In addition, twenty-five minutes per day are spent on playing activities.

The new basic education curriculum is unified, but the national guidelines provide for a flexible application at the local level. In principle, schools can adapt the guidelines and include local contents up to 15% of the total amount of time. Schools can also offer foreign language teaching and informatics (optional subjects), and special regulations are prepared for different types of schools. The lesson timetable

(the minimum teaching plan) of the new basic education curriculum, is showed in the table below:

Primary education: weekly lesson timetable (national guidelines)

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade				
	I	II	III	IV	V
Vietnamese language	11	10	9	8	8
Mathematics	4	5	5	5	5
Moral education	1	1	1	1	1
Natural and social studies	1	1	2	–	–
Science	–	–	–	2	2
History and geography	–	–	–	2	2
Arts	3	3	3	–	–
Music	–	–	–	1	1
Drawing	–	–	–	1	1
Technology/Handicraft	–	–	–	2	2
Physical education	1	2	2	2	2
Other activities	1	1	1	1	1
Total weekly periods	22	23	23	25	25

Source: Luong Viet Tahi, 2002.

Note: Each teaching period lasts about 35 minutes. Health education is integrated into Natural and social studies in Grades I–III, and into Science in Grades IV and V. In Grades I–III, the subject ‘Arts’ includes music, drawing and technology/handicraft. Schools are encouraged to adapt the guidelines to the local situation and to include local contents suitable to pupils’ characteristics. Some schools offer foreign languages and informatics (optional subjects), two periods per week in Grades III–V. There are special regulations for primary schools attended by pupils from ethnic groups (i.e. increased emphasis on the teaching of Vietnamese), schools offering foreign languages, full-day primary schools, and schools under particular circumstances.

On 30 October 2003 MOET issued Decision No.50/2003 QD-BGD&DT, concerning the introduction of an optional English language programme. Pupils in primary schools should study a foreign language as an elective subject in grades 3-5 for two 40-minute periods per week, provided that there are adequate teaching conditions as well as demand. In principle, since 2006 studying English is compulsory (four 40-minute weekly periods should be allocated to foreign languages).

Pupils’ assessment must be objective, comprehensive, and fair, and be based on the knowledge, skills and attitudes standards defined for each subject and educational activity in a specific grade and the entire level. It should include the regular evaluation and periodical appraisals, the evaluation of teacher and self-appraisal of the pupil, and use multiple choice testing and other scoring methods. Subjects such as Vietnamese, mathematics, science, history and geography are evaluated by grading. The primary school graduation exam at the end of grade 5 was phased out in 2004/05.

The MOET has issued various documents on the national standards and fundamental school quality levels (FSQL), which are considered as measures on the improvement of primary education quality and relevance.

According to 2005 survey data, there were about 1 million children with disabilities, (accounting for 1.18% of total population) with about 700,000 primary



school-age children. In 2005/06 a total of 6,900 pupils were in special education and some 223,700 children were attending classes in regular schools (inclusive education policy).

In 2005/06, the gross enrolment ratio was estimated at 103.1% and the net enrolment ratio at 98.3%. The average repetition rate in grades 1-5 was about 1% (2.7% in grade 1). In 2004/05 the survival rate to grade 5 was 83.5% and the transition rate to lower secondary was 98.5%. In 2005/06, the pupils/teacher ratio was 20.7:1. (MOET, 2007). The 2006 MICS (Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey) did find significant regional disparity in the completion rate of primary education. The rate was lowest in North West with 50%, followed by Central Highlands with 65%. There was nearly 40 percentage points' difference between the Red river Delta (90%), and North West (49%). A study on grade 5 pupils' performance in Vietnamese and mathematics, conducted in 2006/07, found considerable differences between Kinh and ethnic minority students. While three-quarters of Kinh students met the standards in Vietnamese, less than half of ethnic minority students could do the same. The study also showed that nearly twice as many ethnic minority pupils (37%) performed below standard in Vietnamese than Kinh students (14%). Similar differences were found in the pupils' performance in mathematics. (UNICEF, 2010).

According to official data (General Statistics Office), in 2009/10 there were 15,172 primary schools in the country; there were also 611 combined primary and lower secondary schools. The total enrolment was 7.02 million of pupils, of whom 3.23 million were girls. The total number of teachers (direct teaching) was 349,500, of whom over 98% had the required qualifications and 275,600 were women.

Secondary education

As mentioned, general secondary education is divided into two cycles: basic or lower secondary education, lasting four years (grades 6-9); and general or upper secondary education (grades 10-12).

According to the Education Law of 2005, lower secondary education is directed towards the pupils' consolidation and development of the outcomes of primary education, provision of a general and basic knowledge along with initial understanding on techniques and career orientation to enter upper secondary education, professional secondary education, vocational training or the workforce. Upper secondary education is directed towards the pupils' consolidation and development of the outcomes of lower secondary education, completion of the general education and common understanding on techniques and career orientation, provision of conditions for pupils to develop their personal ability in order to choose their development direction, to enter universities, colleges, professional secondary education schools, vocational training schools or the workforce. (Article 27).

Lower secondary education must consolidate and develop the contents learned in primary education, guarantee pupils the basic general knowledge in Vietnamese, mathematics, national history, other knowledge in social sciences, natural sciences, law, informatics, foreign languages; with necessary minimum understanding on techniques and career-orientation. Upper secondary education must consolidate and develop the contents learned in lower secondary education and complete the contents



of general education. Besides guaranteeing the general, basic, comprehensive, career-orienting knowledge for all pupils, there shall be advanced teaching in some subjects for developing the pupils' abilities and satisfying their needs. (Article 28).

Students having successfully completed lower/basic secondary education receive a certificate issued by the head of the Bureau of Education and Training in the district, precinct, town or city under the provincial administration (district level). Admission to upper secondary education is normally subject to passing an entrance examination. Students having successfully completed upper secondary education are eligible to take the final examination and those who pass are awarded the diploma of secondary school graduation issued by the director of the Department of Education and Training in the province or city (provincial level). The diploma grants access to higher education (subject to entrance examinations).

On the basis of Article 33 of the Education Law of 2005, the objectives of professional education are to educate potential labourers who will be equipped with knowledge, professional skills at different levels, with morals, professional ethics, discipline awareness, industrialized habits and physical health, thus providing working people with employability, self-employability or ability to further study to improve professional qualifications, meeting the needs of socio-economic development, national defence and security. Professional upper secondary education is directed towards the training of working people with basic knowledge and practical skills of a profession, having ability to work independently and creatively as well as to apply technology into work. Vocational training is directed towards the training of technical workers directly participating in production and service to have the practical ability of a profession adequate to the relevant training qualification. Institutions of professional education include: professional upper secondary education schools; vocational training colleges, vocational upper secondary schools, vocational training centres, and vocational training classes (referred to as vocational training institutions). Vocational training institutions could be organized independently or linked with production units, businesses or other educational institutions. (Article 36).

Pupils having completed primary education can also enrol in vocational training courses of one to three years' duration at vocational training schools. Basic secondary education graduates can enter (professional) vocational education lasting three to four years; for students having completed upper secondary education the duration of the programme is one to two years (three years for some technical specializations). Successful students are awarded the diploma of vocational secondary education, which grants access to higher education (subject to entrance examinations); students from the professional/vocational track usually enrol in junior colleges.

The table below shows the lesson timetable for (basic) lower secondary education according to the new basic education curriculum:

Viet Nam. Lower secondary education: weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade			
	6	7	8	9
Vietnamese language and literature	4	4	4	5
Mathematics	4	4	4	4
Biology	2	2	2	2
Physics	1	1	1	2
Chemistry	–	–	1	2
History	1	2	1.5	1.5
Geography	1	2	1.5	1.5
Civics	1	1	1	1
Foreign languages	3	3	3	2
Physical education	2	2	2	2
Technology	2	2	2	2
Art	1	1	1	0.5
Music	1	1	1	0.5
Optional subjects	–	–	2	2
Class activities	1	1	1	1
School activities	1	1	1	1
Total weekly periods	25	27	29	30
Vocational-oriented activities (three periods per month in grade 9)				
Extra-curricular activities (four periods per month in all grades)				

Source: Asian Development Bank, October 2007. Each teaching period lasts about 35 minutes.

The subject 'technology' now tries to show the link between theory and practice and how it has close links to maths, physics, chemistry, and arts. There are three parts to the new technology curriculum: home economics is introduced in grade 6, agriculture-forestry and aquaculture in grade 7, and industry in grade 8. Grade 9 includes optional modules (each covers 35 periods over one school year) from which students can choose. Each part of the new technology curriculum includes both compulsory and optional sections. The compulsory sections provide students with basic knowledge, techniques, skills, and technology which are essential for students in all regions of Viet Nam. For the optional part, students are able to choose from topics which are based on specific features and conditions of the schools in the region. In general, the new curriculum for technology is more practical than the old one (e.g., home economics provides students with skills of sewing, household decoration, cooking, and managing household income and expenditure).

There are several different types of institutions offering general secondary education: lower secondary school, upper secondary school, and multi-level general school, which can be further divided into (i) combined primary and lower secondary school, (ii) combined lower and upper secondary school, and (iii) combined primary,

lower and upper secondary school. Institutions offering education at the upper secondary level are under the authority of the provincial Departments of education and training (DOET), whereas the rest fall under the district-level Bureaus of education and training (BOET).

There are three options for admission to upper secondary education (grade 10), which are to be decided by the Provincial People's Committee (PPC) on the basis of local conditions and context, namely: (i) admission examination that takes place annually around June, in which students sit for three subjects (mathematics, language and literature and another subject that is decided by the DOET Director 15 days before the end of the school year, at the earliest); (ii) a review of student's school performance over four years of lower secondary education; or (iii) a combination of both admission examination (in which students sit for two subjects, mathematics and language and literature) and a review of student's school performance over four years. The second option is adequate for provinces which are confident in the quality of education provided for student over four years of lower secondary education, and believe that review is enough to screen students without carrying out the admission examination. The third option can be used by provinces which are confident but still need an examination to make sure that their screening is appropriate. (UNESCO Bangkok, 2007).

The table below shows the lesson timetable for general upper secondary education in the mid-1990s, before the introduction of the new curriculum:

General upper secondary education: weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade		
	X	XI	XII
Literature	2	2	2
Vietnamese language	2	2	1
History	1	1	2
Geography	1	2	1
Civics	1	1.5	1.5
Mathematics	4	5	5
Physics	3	3	3
Chemistry	2	2	2
Biology	1	1	2
Foreign language	3	3	3
Technology	2	2	2
Sports & military education	2	2	2
Art education	2	2	2
Other activities	13	10.5	10.5
Total weekly periods	39	39	39

Source: Ministry of Education and Training, 1995. Each teaching period lasts 40 minutes. In each grade there is one period for collective activities, one period for vocational orientation and one session—three periods—for technical practice and general vocational training.

There are two major issues related to curriculum reform: (i) there is no regulatory framework for the periodic review and upgrading of the secondary curriculum, and (ii) the curriculum content still mainly emphasizes rote learning and



does not help secondary students develop more problem-solving skills and analytical abilities. As the curriculum is the starting point of all other educational inputs, a system for the constant supervision of curricular content, relevance, and application in schools must be established. Curriculum reform will thus shift from the ad hoc updating of subject content to the periodic, comprehensive improvement of student learning outcomes through cognitive development and more-innovative teaching. (ADB, 2009).

According to the MOET decision dated 5 October 2006, students' annual promotion in secondary schools is decided by classroom teachers and school principals, based on the assessment of student's academic and moral performance. Specifically, students will be promoted to a higher grade if their academic and moral performance is at a satisfactory or higher level, and their absence from school does not exceed 45 days during the school year. For academic performance, the average scores for all subjects must be at least 5.0 (maximum 10), with no subject under 3.5.

Final examinations which had been administered at the end of primary and lower secondary education have been phased out, leaving one final graduation examination at the end of upper secondary education conducted nationwide. For the upper secondary graduation examination, the MOET introduced in 2006 a multi-choice testing method in foreign language as part of the reform of grade 12 assessment practices. MOET decisions issued in 2002 and 2006 stipulate graduation requirements for lower and upper secondary students. According to the decisions, students' graduation in lower secondary schools is decided by BOET District Heads, based on the assessment of student's academic and moral performance in grade 9 (the final grade of lower secondary education). More specifically, students will be recognized as lower secondary graduates if their academic and moral performance is at a satisfactory or higher level, and the number of absences does not exceed 45 days during grade 9. A student's academic performance is regarded as satisfactory when the average scores for all subjects is at least 5.0 (maximum 10) and no subject is under 3.5. In upper secondary education, students are required to sit for the final graduation examination administered by the provincial DOET, and their eligibility for the upper secondary diploma is decided based on this examination result. Specifically, students must achieve at least 5 marks on average, in which no subject is a 0 mark.

The management of teachers falls under district-level authorities for lower secondary education and provincial level authorities for upper secondary education. The Department of Internal Affairs at each level is responsible for the overall administrative management; the Personnel Division for recruitment and deployment; the Planning and Financing Division for salary/allowance payment; and the Secondary Education Division for professional/academic management. (UNESCO Bangkok, 2007).

As of March 2008, about 12.8 million persons have physical or mental disabilities in Viet Nam. While the Government has provided financial support programs to the disabled, they remain restricted in accessing education opportunities leading to lack of life skills and job opportunities. Provision of schooling at secondary level is particularly limited. Until 2000, there was only one lower secondary school in the country which was able to accept disabled children and provide integrated education. In 2007/08, Viet Nam had 99,941 disabled students receiving schooling;



80,187 students at primary schools, only 17,329 at lower secondary school and 2,425 at upper secondary school. One of the remaining inequalities in secondary education in the country is the disparity between female and male enrollments at all general secondary levels, and professional secondary education. While gender disparities in education have declined in recent years, it persists in all ethnic groups and geographic regions. The percentage of students in secondary school is generally the same for Kinh and ethnic minority males (roughly 73% for both), but there is a 10 percentage point difference in female enrollment by ethnicity (71% for Kinh and 61% for ethnic minorities). This gender gap varies between ethnic groups and geographic regions, but several study findings and consultations identify ethnic minority females as the most disadvantaged group in secondary education. Sustained efforts by the Government and development partners have resulted in relatively solid performance in education. In 2007/08, the gross enrollment ratio was 92% for lower secondary and 56.7% for upper secondary. (ADB, 2009).

For 2005/06, MOET reported a gross enrolment ratio of 84.5% at the lower secondary level, ranging from 75.7% in the Mekong River Delta region to 90.3% in the North Central region. The net enrolment ratio was estimated at 76.1%. The students/teacher rate was 21.1:1. The overall average repetition rate was estimated at 1.2% (2.2% in grade 6), and the survival rate to grade 9 was 83.3% (68.5% in the Mekong River Delta). The transition rate to upper secondary education was estimated at 74.9%.

According to national data (General Statistics Office), in 2009/10 there were 10,064 lower secondary schools, 2,267 upper secondary schools, 611 combined primary and lower secondary schools, and 294 combined lower and upper secondary schools in the country. The total enrolment at the lower secondary level was about 6.15 million students (of whom 2.66 million were girls), and at the upper secondary level it was some 3.07 million students (of whom 1.54 million were girls). At the lower secondary level, the total number of teachers (direct teaching) was 314,900, of whom over 97% had the required qualifications and 213,300 were women. At the upper secondary level, the total number of teachers (direct teaching) was 125,200, of whom over 98% had the required qualifications and 82,100 were women. In 2008/09, nationwide 83.2% of the candidates graduated from upper secondary education (75.1% in the Mekong River Delta, 78% in the Central Highlands, 78.2% in the Northern Midlands and Mountain Areas, and 91.9% in the Red River Delta). As regards professional education, according to the General Statistics Office in 2008 there were 282 schools (of which 203 in the public sector) with some 18,000 teachers. The total enrolment was some 699,700 students (including professional secondary education students enrolled at colleges and universities), of whom about 580,600 students on a full-time training basis.

Assessing learning achievement nationwide

Article 17 of the Education Law of 2005 states that educational quality accreditation is the major measure to define the level of achieving educational objectives, programmes, and contents for schools and other educational institutions. Educational quality accreditation is conducted regularly throughout the country and for every educational institution. Results of the educational quality accreditation are publicly announced for the information and monitoring purposes of the whole society. The



Minister of Educational and Training shall be responsible for directing the implementation of educational quality accreditation.

The concept of 'learning outcomes' is new to Viet Nam. Learning outcomes are often seen as amounts of memorized knowledge rather than the acquired ability to think analytically, solve problems, and take a suitable attitude to learning required to compete successfully in the international labor market. MOET has established an assessment monitoring and management system for all levels of education including the provincial departments of education and training (DOET) and the district bureaus of education and training (BOET). A valid and reliable system and standard for students' performance and attainments is still being developed, although The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) has been monitoring student performance through national tests and examinations. New assessment instruments are being developed under the national achievement monitoring (NAM) programme for primary education, but so far there has been no such initiative for secondary education. To improve the assessment of learning outcomes, MOET has made plans to participate by 2012 in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Fundamental school quality level (FSQL) is one of three quality standards for public schools in Viet Nam; the other two are national standard and international standard. FSQL guarantees a minimum level of service delivery, and is applied mostly to poor schools. FSQL for lower secondary has been developed. MOET has been using outdated national school standards (NSS) for secondary education, which are of insufficient quality or relevance to allow students to acquire the skills and knowledge they need to compete in modern society. The Government issued a directive for the updating of the NSS for secondary education in 2005, but limited financial and human resources have delayed this upgrading. NSS that will equate better with international best practice but also recognize local circumstances are needed. These NSS will not only promote world-class education but also address issues of equity for all students. (ADB, 2009)

Limited capacity of education authorities and the lack of an accountability framework are key obstacles to effective service delivery. In the context of decentralization of responsibility and resources, there is an emerging need to strengthen the institutional capacity of MOET, the DOETs, the BOETs and other MOET-affiliated agencies. More strategic policy on utilization of information and communication technology (ICT) is needed, particularly for the effective management and planning of service delivery. (*Ibid.*).

Teaching staff

On the basis of article 77 of the 2005 Education Law, the standardized educational qualifications of teachers are as follows: (a) preschool and primary education teachers must possess an upper secondary pedagogical diploma; (b) lower secondary education teachers must possess a pedagogical college diploma or a college diploma and a certificate of pedagogy training; (c) upper secondary education teachers must possess a pedagogical university degree and a certificate of pedagogy training; (d) teachers guiding practice at vocational training institutions must possess a diploma from professional upper secondary school, vocational training college or be qualified



artisans, high skilled technical workers; (d) professional upper secondary teachers must possess a pedagogical university degree or a university degree and certificate of pedagogy training; (e) teachers at colleges and universities must possess a university degree or higher and a certificate of pedagogy training; a master's degree or higher for teaching specialized subjects or supervising master thesis, a doctoral degree for teaching specialized subjects or supervising doctoral thesis. The Minister of Education and Training and heads of the State management agencies for vocational training, according to their competence, shall stipulate further education and training for teachers who have not met the required standards.

Ninety-five institutions currently offer pre-service training of teachers. These include 14 teacher training universities, 56 teacher training colleges, six junior teacher training schools and 19 faculties of education at various universities. Except for 19 faculties of education that are under the direct management of various universities and/or government authorities, 15 institutions are under the direct management of MOET and 61 of them are managed locally. Lower secondary teachers are normally trained in locally-managed teacher training institutions (three-year programmes), whereas upper secondary teachers are trained at the university level (normally four-year programmes). During the in-service training, students are required to undertake a two-month practical training (practicum) in schools. The in-service training for secondary teachers follows the cascade training mode. There are seven institutions providing this training: Hanoi University of Education; Ho Chi Minh City University of Education; Foreign Language Teacher Training University under Hanoi National University; University of Education under Thainguyen Regional University; University of Education under Hue City Regional University; Quinhon University; and the Faculty of Education under Cantho University. Teachers are required to participate in in-service training 30 days out of a year, and this participation is considered for the teachers' career development and advancement. (UNESCO Bangkok, 2007).

The academic qualifications, knowledge, and teaching skills of secondary teachers must be systematically assured and managed. MOET has approved the new standards for secondary school teachers through circular 30/2009/TT-BGDĐT. The new standards identify the knowledge and skills that teachers must have to teach more effectively. Three areas have been explored: (i) the subject knowledge required to teach effectively, (ii) the teaching skills needed to motivate students to learn, and (iii) the attributes required of teachers to be highly effective. MOET will start assessing secondary teachers on the basis of the new standards, and will issue professional certificates to qualified teachers who meet the standards. The teacher standards describe different levels or standards of excellence, from those that apply to a beginning teacher to those that define an excellent teacher, and will be used to reward excellence and to guide the professional development of teachers. They should replace promotion and reward systems based on years of service with a competitive system of promotions and rewards based on the capacity of teachers to demonstrate excellence and effectiveness. Teaching standards must also be continuously developed, as educational systems recognize the centrality of teacher performance in high-quality outcomes of students. These new national standards establish a clear policy framework for assessing teacher effectiveness. The first nationwide teacher quality assessment will be undertaken and the first professional teacher certificates issued to qualified teachers by 2012. (ADB, 2009).



Currently, adequate numbers of teachers are being trained, although demand exceeds supply in some subject areas such as English, music, and ICT. There is no shortage of graduates qualified to teach, but few can be induced to teach in rural and isolated areas. The incentive system set up by the Government to attract teachers to rural areas, (particularly remote, ethnic-minority areas) needs to be refined and expanded. As full-day schooling becomes more accessible and more is expected of teachers, their salaries and circumstances will have to be reviewed and improved to keep teaching jobs competitive with other forms of employment. While more than 80% of the present secondary teachers have the required academic qualifications and adequate subject knowledge, some lack practical teaching skills to motivate students to learn. Current teacher standards center on academic qualifications and not actual teaching skills. Besides, there is no professional teacher certification. While teachers are required to participate in some in-service teacher training programmes, once they graduate from a teacher training college (TTC) or a teacher training university (TTU), their professional status as teachers is secured. (*Ibid.*).

At the school level principals are trained under the National Training Programme for School Principals. MOET organize diversified and flexible training programmes for principals to meet the national standards. These programmes are intended to help enhancing professionalism, and updating knowledge and skills in school leadership. All principals are expected to go through the National Training Programme for School Principals.

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