



Asia South Pacific Association
for Basic and Adult Education
Learning Beyond Boundaries

VIETNAM REPORT

Voluntary National Report (VNR) Review from Adult Learning and Education (ALE) Perspectives

Vietnam, officially the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, is a nation of geographically, ethnically and culturally diverse. Its economy has been mainly based on agriculture. However, Vietnam is one of the countries mostly suffered by climate change, natural disasters, drought, salinity intrusion, complex environmental pollution that are affecting sustainable agricultural production.

Over the last 3 decades Vietnam has been experiencing rapid demographic and social change. Its population reached 97 million in 2018 while 70% of the population is under 35 years of age.

From a low income country, in 2012 Vietnam has joined the low-middle income group. The GDP growth is expected to reach 6.2 percent yearly from 2018 - 2022. However, Vietnam is still facing overlapping challenges. The quality of social-economic development and competitive capacity of the economy remain low while there is shortage of high quality human resource in all sectors and professions. Therefore, education is a sustainable way to respond to the urgent and increasing needs for a well trained workforce both in terms of quality and quantity.

The country has shown strong commitment in improving education through affirmation: "Developing and improving the quality of human resources, especially high-quality workforce is a

strategic breakthrough". (*Vietnam Social Economic Development Strategy 2011-2020*). In 2013 issuance of Resolution 29 on Fundamental and Comprehensive Education Reform aimed at developing its education to become an advanced system that meets international standards and responds to the requirement to supply high quality human resource for development. The Education Strategic Development Plan 2011-2020 (ESDP) sets the direction, targets and highlights reforms needed for the education sector. Revised Education Law approved in Jun 2019 switched the narrow academic development focus to the expanded competency development for learners.

In 2018 Vietnam developed VNR to assess the progress made and of the challenges in SDGs implementation. It has mentioned remarkable issues of education as inclusiveness, quality and delivery of lifelong learning. Adult education and learning or non-formal education is a big gap as Vietnam's education has focused on formal education with academic results and qualification.

The VNR Review from Adult Learning and Education (ALE) Perspectives aims at **screening** incorporate concerns relating to the education of adults- youth, women and men; and **addressing** how ALE is reflected in different SDGs in the VNR - not only in SDG4 but also in other SDGs.



ALE referred in SDG 4 – Quality education

Though VNR was developed based on the U.N guidelines, terms as “adult learning and education (ALE)” is not mentioned in the Vietnam report. However, terms such as 'literacy,' 'vocational and skills training,' 'awareness raising' and 'lifelong learning' are written depending on the target groups.

Vietnam has promoted the elimination of illiteracy for adults, especially for ethnic minorities. Currently, the literacy rate of ethnic minorities is 72% (statistics by CEMA in 2015) much lower than the whole country. According to the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) SDG4 Plan of Action, literacy rate of people from 15 years up reach 98.8% in 2025 and 99.6% in 2030. Rate of illiterate people from 15 to 60 years old participated in literacy courses (3rd grade equivalent) is 50% in 2025 and 70% in 2030. People aged 35-60 years old can become literate, through participation in literacy classes in Continuing Learning Centres.

However, at present, due to the lack of regular and adequate statistics, it is impossible to assess in depth the level of equal access for disadvantaged groups including people with disabilities and ethnic minorities.

Women make up to 48.4% of the social workforce, of which 68.8% are female in rural areas but only 19.3% hold vocational degrees (General Statistics Office, Quarter 3/2016). They confront high risk of unemployment, being fired, especially for women at the age of 30-35.

The percentage of trained workers has steadily increased over the years but the data does not cover the ratio of the marginalized groups, the ability to apply knowledge and skills that they have learnt in work and ratio of the trained people who can successfully get a job.

Adult education or non-formal education is a big gap in Vietnam's education: Though there is a well-developed system of non-formal education

institutions with over 11,000 community learning centers, only 5% of the centers really function.¹ Specific training on non-formal/adult education is not available.

The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) - following the issuance of the National Plan of Action for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - has issued in June 2017 the Implementation Plan for SDG4. The NAP for SDG4 has shown the indicators for the literacy. Nevertheless, previously in 2015 came circular No. 39/2015/TTLT on merging the continuing education centers (under Minister of Education and training (MoET) and Technical Vocational Training centers (under MOLISA) in framework of Lifelong learning. After merging it becomes a Center for Vocational Education-Center Continuing education (abbreviated to the Center for Vocational Education and Training) providing more technical training than continuous education/ adult education.

In 2013 the government issued Decision 89/QĐ-TTg on building a learning society 2012-2020 There have been 7 projects towards building a learning society facilitated and monitored by 6 ministries and 1 professional association, but each ministry and the professional association is only responsible for the mainstreaming within their own sectoral activities.

In Jun 2019 the Ministry of Education and Training is drafting a circular "Regulation on assessment and classification of" Learning units for organizations and agencies at provincial and district level". Many experts gave recommendations to make it practical, ensure ease of implementation and applicable.

Vietnam VNR mentioned: **“There are no programs and policies to promote lifelong learning, ensure learning needs, and improve capacity and skills for the elderly population” (page 37).** However it does not clearly identified who will take responsibilities and how to fix the issues.

¹ Report on improving the effectiveness of Community Learning Centers, 2018, Center for Education and Development (CED)

Reference to adult learning and education (ALE) in other SDGs



SDG 4.1 (Quality Education)

Comparing the multidimensional poverty line with the national income poverty line shows the difference: in 2016 the national income poverty rate is 5.8% while the multidimensional poverty line is 9.2%. This shows that when access to all basic social services is counted in the aspect of poverty, the non-income aspects of poverty need to be improved. In a survey conducted by the Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA) in 2015 the multidimensional poverty rate of the ethnic minority was 35.7%, it means 3.5 times higher than the multidimensional poverty rate for the whole country of 9.9%. This situation puts girls at risk of child marriage and has difficulty accessing educational opportunities as well as having a heavy burden of housework and limited livelihood options. It can be seen that disadvantaged groups such as ethnic minority communities, especially ethnic women and girls, need to pay closer attention to help them out of poverty sustainably, while reducing disparities in poverty among regions different throughout the country.

Figure 2 (page 27 in VNR) shows a multi-dimensional access gap among the poor across the country - Adult education was 19.61% in 2016.

Educating the adults, especially the disadvantaged groups (women, girls, and ethnic minorities) is a way to escape poverty and develop sustainably.



SDG 2 (Zero Hunger)

The facts of climate change, natural disasters, drought, saline intrusion, and environmental pollution are complicated are affecting sustainable agricultural production. In addition, Vietnam's population continues to increase and migration flows are not well managed. This situation requires the Government to have a timely and quick sustainable strategy including raising awareness and equipping knowledge on climate change and coping with natural disasters, enhancing living skills for migrants, especially women.



SDG 3 (Good Health and Well Being)

Though population quality is gradually improved and the health indicators of Vietnamese people are much higher than the average of the countries with the same per capita income, the country still is facing with a fact that maternal mortality rate among ethnic minority women is 4 times higher than that of Vietnamese Kinh women.

Maternal and child mortality in some mountainous areas is three to four times higher than in the delta and urban areas and nearly 2 times higher than the national average.

The sex imbalance at birth is still high (110 boys per 100 girls).

For disadvantaged groups such as ethnic minority women, special attention needs to be given to improving knowledge on maternity health, and access to health care so they will not be left behind.



SDG 5 (Gender Equality)

There have been great efforts to ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health services, but more than a third of adolescents lack access to appropriate contraceptive methods and information.

Access to family planning services is still limited, especially for unmarried young women, migrant women and women in remote and mountainous areas.

Therefore, education on gender equality, gender-based discrimination issues, and sexual and reproductive health care for young women and unmarried young women, and women inhabited in mountainous and remote areas.



SDG 8 **(Decent Work and Economic Growth)**

Employment in general is still unsustainable when a lot of jobs are not long-term with low productivity and income. Disparities in remuneration between men and women for the same type of work exist. Women are still heavily concentrated in the informal sector, with low incomes, inadequate and unstable working environments.

Vocational training and education and post-training support like introduction, coaching, bridging to decent job need to be strengthened.



SDG 10 **(Reducing Inequalities)**

Vietnam has paid special attention and conducted many specific projects and policies to close the socio-economic gaps between ethnic groups. However, there are still gaps in SDG-related policies that need to be improved: Lack of policies in addressing inequality and promoting equitable access to basic and quality services for ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, single elderly people and migrants.

What is apparent from above is that while the VNR enumerates the progress made with regard to each of the SDGs in quantitative terms, there is a realization that educational needs of the vulnerable groups were not adequately addressed. As a result, it is envisaged that attention would be paid to address these challenges in the future.



SDG 13 **(Climate Action)**

Climate change factors and natural disasters are mainstreamed into development strategies and plans, but it is not yet consistent. Legal framework to address these issues are not comprehensive. Specific guidelines, especially those for vulnerable groups. The current development of policies and strategies on climate change and risk management is not based on the gender analysis needed to identify the impacts of climate change on men and women, vulnerable groups and specific solutions for each group.

Capacity building activities are based on gender analysis, especially the capacity of managing and responding to climate change for the community, especially vulnerable communities. Vulnerable groups at a local level needs supporting policies as well as resources allocation.

How/what are the ALE delivery mechanisms reported in the VNR?

The issuance and enactment of the National Action Plan on Sustainable Development (NAP on SDGs) followed by the National Action Plan on the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal on Education (NAP on SDG4) is the very important first step in securing official commitment and engaging different sectors and stakeholders for the achievement of the SDGs targets in Vietnam.

Specifically, the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) has been assigned as the focal point on the implementation of the NAP on SDGs. The Planning-Finance Departments of other ministries and related agencies and provincial Departments of Planning and Investment are the focal agencies to implement the NAP on SDGs.

In January 2019, Ministry of Planning and Investment issued Circular No 03/2019/TT-BKHDT on the 158 SDG indicators of Viet Nam to monitor the progress of the 17 goals/115 targets in the NAP on SDGs. The Circular assigned responsibilities of specific Ministries and agencies in reporting on specific indicators and the required frequency of report. In addition, in June 2017, the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) in Vietnam issued the Plan of Action on Sustainable Development Goal on Education until 2025 with vision until 2030 (NAP on SDG4).

Accordingly the MoET's monitoring index (updated according to Decision 2258 prolonged in 2019) includes 4.3; 4.4 and 4.6. For other SDGs there is no monitoring index.

Each line ministry is tasked as the focal point for specific SDG. While local administration is engaged in implementation and monitoring of the various SDG inputs, it has not identified yet any department or an unit within each ministry that is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the ALE perspectives in different SDGs. VNR mentioned the MoET is responsible for SDG4 implementation including ALE indicators, however there is not a stable person in charge (the focal point person changes from year to year). Ministry of Labor, Invalid and Social Affairs is responsible to manage vocational education and training. There is no regulation on how to distract data for ALE report.

After 30 years of implementing the renovation policy, Vietnam's continuing education has both developed, renewed and has contributed to promoting the State's promulgation of some policies on adult education.

On February 20, 2014, the Prime Minister issued Decision No. 281 / QĐ-TTĐ approving the Project "Strengthening the movement of lifelong learning in families, clans and communities until 2020" with a goal to promote models of "Learning family" "Learning community" and " Learning unit" for supporting and building a learning society.

The revised Education Law approved in Jun 2019 regulated "Continuing education aims to create conditions for people to work, study, continue and learn throughout their lives in order to promote their personal abilities, improve their personalities, expand their knowledge and improve their educational and professional levels".

Financing and resources for ALE

Every year the Government spends around 20% of the budget revenue on education, including ALE.

In VNR 2018 of Vietnam it is specified the percentage for ALE. However, it can be said that the budget for ALE is very small compared to the real needs.

Director of the Centre for Vocational education and training is assigned by local authorities and often it was a vice-chairman of the district who is always busy with the different administrative tasks and

almost insufficient attention to continuous education.

of the insufficient capacity of Centre for Vocational education and training leads to ineffective function.

Annually, the higher education institutions plan their budgets. After being approved, they will be provided with funding by the Provincial Finance Department. There is no mechanism for reporting on ALE financing.



Conclusion

ALE has not been fully mentioned in VNR 2018 of Vietnam. ALE is not only the mission of the MoET but also integrated in the tasks of ministries, mass organizations and social organizations. ALE has achieved some results. Great efforts are needed from the Government, the Ministry of Education and Training, the Ministry of Labor, Invalid and Social Affairs, other ministries and agencies.

Suggestions to promote SDG 4:

- Integrating sustainable development goals in the annual socio-economic development plans, development strategies, and policies and planning of ministries, branches, localities and agencies
- Raising awareness of the whole society about sustainable development and Vietnam's sustainable development goals
- Promote coordination among stakeholders, especially between government agencies, businesses, socio-political organizations, socio-professional organizations and the international community
- Assigning representatives to be responsible in units and agencies; strengthening coordination and links SDG4 with SDG 5, 6, 10 and 13
- Developing and promulgating a system of statistics and data collection for monitoring and evaluation of SDG4 in general and lifelong learning in particular.

Suggestions to promote ALE:

- Development a law on lifelong learning that will more extensively address the learning needs of youth and adults, the vulnerable groups and communities
 - There should be a coordinating government-level agency that will monitor the implementation of ALE's perspectives in different SDGs.
 - Professional development and capacity building for the ALE teachers (both pre-service and in-service)
 - Bottom-up approach in curriculum development and ways of accessing
- Sufficient budget and resources for ALE.

About ASPBAE

The Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) is a regional association of more than 200 organisations and individuals working towards promoting quality education for all and transformative and liberating, lifelong adult education and learning. It strives to forge and sustain an Asia-Pacific movement dedicated to mobilising and supporting community and people's organisations, national education coalitions, teachers' associations, campaign networks, and other civil society groups and institutions in holding governments and the international donor community accountable in meeting education targets and commitments, ensuring the right of all to education, and upholding education as an empowering tool for combating poverty and all forms of exclusion and discrimination, pursuing sustainable development, enabling active and meaningful participation in governance, and building a culture of peace and international understanding. ASPBAE publications form an integral part of ASPBAE's information, education, and advocacy activities and efforts, and seek to support sharing and learning among education stakeholders, advocates, practitioners, analysts, and policymakers. The reader is therefore encouraged to write to ASPBAE if they wish to use the material contained herein for reproduction, adaptation, and translation and to provide feedback that could help in further improving these publications.



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