

Summary of Evaluation Result

1. Outline of the Project	
Country: Socialist Republic of Vietnam	Project Title: Project for Strengthening Cluster-based Teacher Training and School Management
Issue/Sector: Basic Education	Cooperation Scheme: Technical Cooperation Project
Division in Charge: JICA Vietnam Office	Total Cost: 2.9 hundred million yen
Cooperation Period	3 years from September, 2004 to September, 2007
	Partner Country's Implementation Organization: Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) and Bac Giang Department of Education and Training (DOET)
	Supporting Organization in Japan: None
1-1 Background of the Project	
<p>The Government of Vietnam identifies the improvement of education as the most important policy objectives in its socio-economic development strategy (2001-2010) and sets the strategy to achieve 99% in the net enrollment rate for primary education and realize comprehensive/inclusive education by 2010 in the Education Development Strategic Plan (EDSP: 2000-2010). In line with this effort, the “the new curriculum” was introduced in 2002 to shift the traditional education focusing on memorization/lectures to “child-centered” education. The current three-year Project was launched in September 2004 upon the request by the Government of Vietnam to support the national efforts toward the goal. Through preparatory discussions between the authorities concerned of Vietnam and JICA, as an implementing body of Japanese technical cooperation programs, the framework of the Project was elaborated with three components: (i) development of a system of cluster training and school-based training for teachers, (ii) development of a system of cluster training for strengthening school management, and (iii) enhancement of the planning and management capacity of local education officers in the Bac Giang Department of Education and Training (DOET) and Bureaus of Education and Training (BOET) in districts in the province.</p>	
1-2 Project Overview	
(1) Overall Goal:	
A developed Model through technical cooperation project will be applied to other provinces as the national model.	
(2) Project Purpose:	
An effective Model to apply new curriculum will be developed in the pilot province.	
(3) Outputs:	
Output 1: A system to improve teaching method will be developed in the pilot province. (Target: teachers)	
Output 2: A system to support improvement of teaching method will be developed in the pilot province. (Target: principals and local education officers)	
Output 3: The preparation to apply the Model to other provinces is made.	
(4) Inputs:	
(Japanese side)	
Placement of Experts: 9 experts (81 M/M)	Provision of Equipment: US\$36 thousand
C/P Training in Japan: 20 C/Ps	Local Cost Support: JPY39million (As of March 2007)
(Vietnamese side)	
C/P allocation: 18 C/Ps as Bac Giang Working Group and 9 C/Ps as central Working Group	
Buildings and Facilities: Project office in Bac Giang and Hanoi	
2. Evaluation Team (Japanese side)	

Team Members	(1) Leader: Hiroaki Nakagawa, Resident Representative, JICA Vietnam Office (2) Training Evaluation: Chisa Hara, Team leader, Basic Education Team 1 (Group 1) Human Development Department, JICA (3) Evaluation Planning: Naoki Nihei, Staff, Basic Education Team 1 (Group 1) Human Development Department, JICA (4) Evaluation Management: Minoru Yamada, Deputy Resident Representative, JICA Vietnam Office (5) Evaluation Analysis: Keiko Kita, Global Link Management Co., Ltd	
Period	15 April – 27 April, 2007	Type of Evaluation: Final Evaluation

3. Summary of Evaluation

3-1 Result of Cooperation

(1) Activities and Inputs

Activities and inputs were generally implemented as planned except that some of the allowances planned to be borne by the Vietnamese side in the R/D were actually borne by the Japanese side.

(2) Achievement of Output

The achievement level of Output 1 is high enough at the time of the Final Evaluation with success in the development of the “comprehensive” system by utilizing and strengthening what they have already had, i.e. (a) the existing method of training (key trainer training and cluster training) and (b) the existing framework of in-school training (PTMs). The achievement level of Output 2 is not as high as that of Output 1, but results of school visits and focus group discussions discovered significant differences in teaching between a pilot school and non-pilot schools (e.g. enhanced leadership of principals and stronger cooperation between teachers and principals). The achievement level of Output 3 is least among the three Outputs as it took only 10 months since the Output was included in the revised PDM.

(3) Achievement of Project Purpose

The level of achievement of the Project Purpose is not high enough at the time of the Final Evaluation in the light of objectively verifiable indicators set in PDM. The result of interviews revealed that an increased number of teachers have understood the concept of the new curriculum and that some teachers, especially those in five pilot schools, are recently in the process of practicing the concept. Yet results depend on individuals and subjects. It is indicated in results of interviews with target groups and key stakeholders that the training manuals developed by the Project is good enough to make teachers understand the concept of the new curriculum but that more detailed instructions are necessary to enable all teachers regardless of their background/experiences to practice their knowledge.

(4) Achievement of Overall Goal

At the time of the final evaluation, no systematic efforts were found for making use of the training model developed in Bac Giang as the national model. However, it was confirmed that some signs that would contribute to the achievement of the Overall Goal were emerging. For example, MOET has a plan to include the case of Bac Giang in their training material under preparation.

3-2 Summary of Evaluation Results

(1) Relevance

The relevance of the Project is high as it practices one of the three priority areas of the Education Development Strategic Plan, “improvement of quality of teachers and teaching methods” and is also consistent with the official development assistance (ODA) policies of Japan that emphasize the importance of improving the quality of primary education. Also, the Project’s objectives addressed the needs of the target group (teachers), but the level of relevance is uncertain mainly because core needs in the local context were not specified among parties concerned in the introduction of the new curriculum. With regards to relevance of the Project design, the path to realize the Overall Goal was not clearly identified at the preparation stage as well as in the course of project implementation, without appropriate important assumptions for the achievement of the Project Purpose to lead to the Overall Goal.

(2) Effectiveness

The evaluation result on effectiveness is rather mixed and surely critical challenges are left toward the end of the Project. On one hand, the Project has successfully developed a “comprehensive” training model, which targets three groups (teachers, school management, and local administration), and covers the overall level of the training (key trainer training at the provincial level, cluster training at the district level and the PTMs at the school level). It is reasonable to conclude based on observations and reports that the model developed by the Project effectively functions in five pilot schools for which the Project has provided intensive inputs since June 2006. Yet it may be too early to ensure that the model is truly effective and applicable because the pilot practice has yet to be extended enough to non-pilot schools in the target/non-target districts due to a lack of the sustainable mechanism/channel to make it happen.

(3) Efficiency

Overall, the level of efficiency of the Project is adequate. As for Japanese inputs, placement of experts, provision of equipment and C/P training are adequate in terms of numbers and contents. School-based activities with block grants (provision of small amount of cash based on the proposal made by schools) did not contribute to improvement of quality of education as originally expected, and therefore the practice was replaced by support for PTMs in the middle of the Project period. As for Vietnamese inputs, adequate number of C/Ps with appropriate background was selected to formulate Bac Giang Working Group for the implementation of the Project in proper timing. It should be noted, however, that the allowance to the C/Ps was not covered by the Vietnamese side as agreed in R/D.

(4) Impact

Some positive impact was acknowledged, but its level was limited. With regards to the objective verifiable indicators for the overall goal set in the revised PDM, the developed model was introduced through workshops and demonstration classes in five other provinces since June 2006, but the activity has not resulted in application of the model in these provinces, partly due to the lack of the institutional arrangement for its dissemination. On the other hand, encouraging signs for contributing to the achievement of the Overall Goal have been seen in the facts that Bac Giang DOET plans to organize teacher training by themselves this coming summer in three other provinces; that the official documents were issued by MOET, which allow teachers/schools to organize lessons focusing on contents, not strictly following the timeline; and that MOET plans to distribute a series of books and videos on the new teaching method, in which the case of Bac Giang is included. As unexpected impact, an increased number of non-pilot schools in Bac Giang have put their voluntary efforts to apply the methods of organizing PTMs, which they have learnt during the school-visit to pilot schools which are open to other schools.

(5) Sustainability

The training system developed by the Project recently has functioned in five pilot schools, but key challenges are left to make the system sustainable, specifically with the issue of (i) how to utilize the resource persons trained during the Project implementation (i.e. 18 members of Bac Giang Working Group and approximately 150 teachers at five pilot schools) and (ii) how to ensure sufficient budget for extending pilot experiences to non-pilot schools after the end of the Project.

Besides institutional and financial sustainability, there is also concern over technical sustainability as the resource persons are not confident enough to handle the Project activities without external support after the end of the Project.

3-3 Promoting Factors

(1) Factors related to Planning

None.

(2) Factors related to Implementation Process

- The revision of PDM in June 2006 contributed to achieving the Project Purpose by: (i) clarifying mutual relations among three target groups for training (teachers, principals, and local educational administrators) and enhancing strategic orientation of the training courses for these groups, and (ii) replacing block grant activities with PTM activities to make a concrete linkage between the training and school-based activities to improve the quality of teaching.
- In two districts (Hiep Hoa and Viet Yen) out of five target districts, the linkage between the Project

and two other Japanese ODA schemes (grant aid and placement of JOCV) were promoted. Especially, two volunteers who were assigned to school in the two districts (one volunteer for each school) are reported to have contributed to improvement of quality of teaching by organizing demonstration class (math and social science) at school which were videotaped and distributed to the schools at the Project's target districts.

- Capacities of Bac Giang Working Group have strategically developed toward the end of the Project, especially in the process of developing training manuals and planning/implementation of the training/workshops. Inputs to these activities by the Group have been gradually increased by year, which has increased their ownership.

3-4 Hampering Factors

(1) Factors related to planning

- The original PDM did not address an appropriate scenario about how to reach the Overall Goal. The important assumption to reach the Overall Goal from the Project Purpose was overlooked. With regards to pre-conditions, the pre-conditions, "MOET and DOET in the pilot province have an effective capacity on handling the implementation of the Project," was what should have been handled within the Project. If the issue of capacity development of the government, especially the central government, had been carefully considered to be handled by the Project, the step to involve MOET to the process of Project implementation might have been initiated at an earlier stage of the Project.
- Ambiguity of the definition in the PDM might have hampered the progress of the Project. Firstly, ambiguity with the definition of what is an effective model invited uncertainty in terms of what the intended outcomes of the Project should be. Secondly, ambiguity with the definition of "school management" targeted by Output 2 might have become a reason why school-based activities with block grants were selected as a measure to improve teaching method of teachers.
- The objectively verifiable indicators did not set the level of achievement, which may have prevented the Project from building consensus among key stakeholders on its goal.

(2) Factors related to implementation process

- Inclusion of Output 3 in the revised PDM correctly reflects the recognition among stakeholders that the project activities will lead to the development of the national training model. However, as the strategic change in the project orientation towards intensive focus on the five pilot schools took place at the same time, practical difficulty in practicing the project design might have emerged.
- The Central Working Group was formulated for the second year of the Project, expecting its function to nationalize the model in future. Yet the involvement of the Central Working Group has yet to be successful enough (in general, it can be pointed out that MOET does not have clear strategy for making use of the local achievement brought about by donor-supported projects at the national level).

3-5 Conclusion

While consistent with the overall policies of both Vietnamese and Japanese governments, to ensure a higher level of relevance, the Project could have been designed paying more careful attention to (i) the actual needs of the target group and (ii) the path for achieving the Overall Goal of developing an effective national model for introducing the new curriculum. The Project successfully developed the comprehensive training model and significant achievements are seen, particularly at pilot schools. However, effectiveness of the Project is limited in the sense that further work is needed for fully institutionalizing the training model highly applicable to a wide range of schools. Efficiency of the Project was satisfactory except for the facts that (i) school-based activities at the beginning were not very efficient and (ii) some of the inputs from the Vietnamese side were not provided as planned. While naturally the impact of the Project is limited at the time of the final evaluation, but it is worth noting that some encouraging signs are emerging such as issuance of the official document by MOET consistent with the thrust of the Project. So far the sustainability of the Project activities seems rather limited, main reasons being (i) unclear prospects for the institutional settings taking over the role of the Bac Giang Working Group, (ii) insufficient financial arrangements to continue various activities the Project has introduced, and (iii) limited confidence of the Bac Giang Working Group members trained in the course of the Project

3-6 Recommendations

- (1) All the Vietnamese stakeholders in the education sector (i.e. MOET, DOET, principals, teachers etc.) should bear in mind what are the “core needs” for good quality of primary education in taking concrete measures for quality improvement.
- (2) The Project should make further effort to make the training model applicable to non-pilot schools within and outside Bac Giang without intensive external inputs after the completion of the Project.
- (3) MOET should formulate a clear strategy for making use of the achievements of donor-supported projects, including the JICA Project, and share it with the donor community. Respecting flexibility of localities, MOET should carefully analyze various models developed by the donor-supported projects and adapt the models in response to the local needs.
- (4) MOET should participate in the Project activities more actively by participating in Central Working Group meetings with clearer objectives and more frequently making field trips to observe classes, including PTMs in the pilot schools.
- (5) MOET and DOET should elaborate the framework to sustain and expand the training model developed by the Project in terms of technical, institutional and financial aspects. Special consideration should be given to the organizational arrangement for sustaining Project’s outcomes and a mobilization plan of resource persons (18 Bac Giang Working Group members and around 150 teachers at the five pilot schools). Other issues for consideration include: (i) teacher evaluation standards and their working conditions which influence their motivation and (ii) coordination with the existing training framework of MOET and teaching institutions including Teacher Training College.
- (6) The Japanese side (JICA and Japanese experts) should take a further step to advocate the essence of the training model developed by the Project to MOET and other development partners as part of efforts to disseminate the model in the future.

3-7 Lessons Learned

- (1) In order to build consensus on what is the “effective” training model among key stakeholders, what is necessary is to carry out capacity assessment at individual, organizational, and institutional levels and form consensus on the needs for developing such a mode. Also, development of the model at a pilot area should go hand in hand with the consideration on its dissemination paying due attention to its applicability.
- (2) A clear scenario from the achievement of Project Purpose to the achievement of Overall Goal should be carefully considered when designing a Project framework. It is necessary to explicitly set appropriate important assumptions (that are likely to be met) in PDM and/or internalize potential obstacles to realization of the Overall Goal in the Project activities to the extent possible.
- (3) While the counterparts were assigned on a contract basis for this Project, in order to ensure high institutional sustainability after the end of a Project, it is appropriate to use the existing framework where applicable.
- (4) To enable block grant activities to contribute to the achievement of the Project Purpose, issues such as local needs, objectives, management capacity of recipients and implementation methodologies should be carefully examined before introduction.