

LIFELONG LEARNING AND THE OPEN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM IN VIETNAM

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Main points

- Needs for open education system
- Policy and direction for life-long learning
- The role of Open University system
- Conclusion

Needs for open education system

- Education for the people in rural and remote areas has been paid much attention to by the Government
- Open and distance learning (ODL) has been used as an effective solution to improvement of human resources
- The market oriented economy requires skilled workforce, which emphasizes the role of the education system
- The traditional education system with limited resources and provision cannot meet the growing demand for education of the people, especially in higher education.

Needs for open education system

- As the population grows and the human resources develop, over one million new students need education and training from the system.
- The conventional universities and colleges are able to enroll only 350,000 out of 1,200,000 school-leavers every year.
- Distance education has been introduced to Vietnam since 1993 to meet the demand of the country for human resources
- Millions of working people need retraining and upgrading

National Policy and Direction for Lifelong Learning

- Distance education (DE) was officially recognized by Education Law 1998 and reconfirmed by Renewed Education Law 2005
- The Prime Minister's Decision coded 201/2001/QD-TTg points out *“Development of distance education should be regarded as a measure to mobilize the whole country to build a learning society, creating opportunities for education to all people; priorities will be given to the open universities including technologies, equipment, materials, so that distance education could be improved and developed”*.

National Policy and Direction for Lifelong Learning

- Distance education can be seen as a method appropriate for the pursuit of various educational objectives, including professional skills improvement, enhancement of hobbies, and self-actualization
- The concepts of *lifelong learning* and *education for all* stress that every person should have the opportunity to study and to receive a *lifelong education*

The Open University System

- In 1993 the Government established two Open Universities: Hanoi Open University in the North and HoChiMinh City Open University in the South of the country
- The Prime Minister's Decision coded 164/2005/QD-TTg on Approval of the MoET's "Proposal on Improving Distance Education 2005-2010" notes that "Hanoi Open University and Hochiminh City Open University to be invested for improving distance education"
- The Government's Resolution coded 14/2005/NQ-CP on "Overall Renovating the Higher Education System" with a vision to 2020 directs "Consolidating the open universities to improve capacity for better enrolment".

Hanoi Open University (HOU)

Mission

Hanoi Open University (HOU) commits create learning opportunities for all people with good quality, serving diverse learning needs with numerous types of training, multi-disciplinary, multi-level, to meet the requirements of the national construction and international integration.

Hanoi Open University

Vision and Goals

- HOU is a higher education institution of mixed mode, multi-areas of different levels, and a leading provider of ODL in Viet Nam. HOU aims at upgrading the people's knowledge, training the human resources, meeting diversified needs for education of the people, providing the labor market with qualified products, contributing to build a learning society.
- HOU will improve and diversify the media and technologies, keeping up with the international standards to meet the learners' needs, and for international collaboration.
- By 2015, the number of distance students will reach 100 thousand; millions of people throughout the country including rural, mountainous, remote areas and islands will be beneficial from the HOU's programs broadcasted via radio, television and the Internet.

Hanoi Open University

Technologies and Teaching media

HOU has been developing three generations of technologies:

- **Print based self-learning materials**
- **Audio/video products, and**
- **Modern ICT based learning**

ICT applicant and web-based courses are given priority for development for international collaboration and open educational resource sharing. E-learning is a new system at HOU, which is known as TOPICA scheme, taking advantage of advanced technology and other institutions' experience

Staff, Faculties and Students

- 10 academic faculties have been established, including Economics and Business Management, Tourism, Information Communication Technology, Electronics and Tele-Communication, Laws, Bio-technology, Foreign Languages, Industrial designing, Finance and Banking.
- In early 2008 the Government gave the permission to HOU to operate postgraduate courses.
- HOU employs full-time personnel of 300 members and 1,500 part-time lecturers and tutors.
- Currently, over 65 thousand students are taking courses offered by HOU, 70% of which are distance students.

HoChiMinh City Open University

Mission

HCMCOU is an institution of higher education offering a variety of programs from undergraduate to postgraduate ranging from distance learning, on-site, learning at satellite academic centers, aiming at meeting various learning needs of society and contributing to the enlargement of the human resources for the country.

HoChiMinh City Open University

Vision and Goals

- Through forms of distance learning, on-site, learning at satellite academic centers, to organize many kinds of training programs such as:
 - Postgraduate programs (Master degree)
 - Undergraduate programs (Bachelor degree)
 - Diploma programs (Diploma)
 - Fostering courses (Certificate)
- To organize science research and hand over industry activities, popularize information about science and technology, propagate and preserve the national cultures, etc.
- To associate with and help many local training centers .
- To organize training collaboration activities with many companies, science research organizations, and educational institutes

HoChiMinh City Open University

HCMCOU aims to:

- encourage the students' spirit of studying
- enhance the ability of self-learning
- undertake to promote the knowledge level of people
- train the human resources and to foster the talent for the country.

Faculties and Students

HCMCOU has set up 9 academic faculties:

Business management, Accounting, Finance and Banking, Law and Economics, Construction, Information technology, Social sciences, ASEAN studies, and English Language.

- 40 thousand students taking distance courses and
- 25,000 taking full-time or part-time face-to-face courses.

Technologies and Teaching media

- Print is the main medium for self-learning, supplemented by CD, VCD, and CD-ROM. HCMCOU is in collaboration with HoChiMinh City Radio and Television broadcasting educational courses.
- Web-based courses are new programs, using Mega e-meeting software. The interaction between the tutors and students and student - student can be performed online. However, this program is just in the initial stage and experimental phase.

Conclusion

- Open and distance learning in Vietnam has continued to make an important contribution to education and training provision in particular and sustainable development of the country in general.
- The establishment of Hanoi Open University and HoChiMinh City Open University has been significant in progressing the use and status of ODL and in parallel, traditional universities are increasingly adopting more flexible and varied modes of course delivery

- The contribution made by ODL in general and by the two Open Universities in particular to the development of the country, which has been mentioned above, can be generated for the following reasons:
 1. The wide range of learning needs caused by the transition to a market economy. Many people need education for employment, adaptability with job requirement; others strive for advancement or change of occupation. The system of traditional institutions could not meet the demand for human resources and the needs for life-long learning.
 2. Open Universities were established as an initiative in the renovation of ODL. The key priorities have been defined as increasing quality and improving the curriculum, training and teaching methodologies to enhance learning.

3. The Government policy has been the most important factor to the development. In line with the renovation in socio-economy policy, the Government has released series of directions and decisions to improve the education system. In many official documents, priorities have been given to ODL development.

A new renovation in education is now beginning in Vietnam. The Government' Strategy of Education and Training identifies the goals among others of quality improvement, increased levels of education and training, the creation of skilled and flexible workforce

Recognition of the importance of lifelong learning. It includes ODL as one means of achieving these goals. Therefore, ODL and the two Open Universities will continue to make significant contributions to the development of the country and the learning society.

thank you!