

Dear readers,

In this first newsletter of the year of Cat, on behalf of programme team, we are sending our best wishes for a happy, healthy and prosperous new year to all our readers. This year also marks the beginning of phase 2 of our 6 year programme between VVOB and the five provinces Thai Nguyen, Quang Ninh, Nghe An, Quang Nam and Quang Ngai.

The final planning for the second phase of education programme was done during the planning workshop for 2011 in November, 2010. In this workshop we were honoured with the presence of Mr. Nguyen Vinh Hien- vice minister of MOET and Mr. Truong Dinh Mau- vice director of teachers and Educational Managers Department. We are grateful for their expression of support and for their suggestions on the orientation of the second phase.

In January each of the five provinces organised a meeting to report on the results of the cooperation during the first phase of the VVOB programme. We are happy to report that the operational partners in five provinces highly appreciated the programme results. All partners expressed their enthusiasm to continue the cooperation and as a result partners and VVOB agreed to officially extend the MoU of the first phase until end of 2013.

At the start of this new phase we looked back at phase 1 and saw a lot of good things have been accomplished and a lot of lessons can be learnt. Our cooperation with partners in the five provinces will become even closer, our common activities more effective and efficient. We also want to further strengthen our cooperation with MOET to improve our impact and sustainability and our chances to contribute to the educational quality in our 5 partner provinces and hopefully to contribute to the quality of educational system of Vietnam as well.

We are hopeful and excited looking forward to three more years of cooperation with all of our Vietnamese partners.

Wilfried Theunis
Country Programme Manager of VVOB Vietnam

Dear reader,

We are happy to invite you to contribute to this newsletter. Is there an activity in your province, in your organisation, in your institute that you would like to report about or that you would like to announce to the readers? The reported events should be related to innovative education and should also be interesting for people outside the institute and possibly outside the province.

Because of the limited space we cannot guarantee your contribution will be printed but we will add it to our website for sure. Please send your contributions to our head office preferably via e-mail to vvobnewsletter@gmail.com

VVOB PROGRAMME 2008-2013

(FLEMISH ASSOCIATION FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE - VVOB)

STRATEGIC PARTNERS:

- MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND INVESTMENT (MPI)
- MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING (MOET)
- MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (MARD)
- VIETNAM NATIONAL WOMEN'S UNION (VWU)



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Quarterly NEWSLETTER



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VVOB is a Belgian non-profit organization. Our core business is to provide technical assistance in educational programmes contributing to the quality of education. We support capacity building leading to sustainable development and poverty reduction.

education for development

What?

- develop learning contents
- improve learner centered teaching methods
- promote efficient learning environments
- support policies for quality education
- strengthen teacher training

How?

- align with policy
- guide/support learners, teachers, lecturers, support staff, parents, communities
- strengthen capacity of partner institutions
- partner decides course and is responsible
- technical assistance (national and international)

Facts:

- budget of about € 9 million/year
- 9 partner countries
- 40+ international associates
- 90+ national associates
- 14 staff at head office

ICT TOOLS OF THE QUARTER

Yammer is a social network which was launched in September 2008. Unlike Twitter of which the communication is public, Yammer is used for the private communication within an organization (from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yammer>). In Yammer, users are able to communicate, share links and photos, make a poll and create an event. The most interesting feature of Yammer is that by clicking on a symbol in the right menu, it allows to show again the links, topics or files that participants shared. Somehow, it is a combination of Twitter and Facebook. In addition, it also allows users to participate in different discussion communities with only one Yammer account.

For login the yammer, please visit: <https://www.yammer.com/>

Links of the quarter

VVOB Vietnam online list of materials

<http://www.vvob.be/vietnam/?q=vi/downloads>

UNEXPECTED OUTCOME

The internet makes us stupid?

Although the World Wide Web has been around for just 20 years, it is hard to imagine life without it. It has given us instant access to vast amounts of information, and we're able to stay in touch with friends and colleagues more or less continuously.

In a new book, "The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains", Nicholas Carr has dared to be critical towards this evolution: "our dependence on the internet has a dark side. A growing body of scientific evidence suggests that the net, with its constant distractions and interruptions, is turning us into scattered and superficial thinkers."

Carr says that he was inspired to write the book after he realised that he was losing his own capacity for concentration and contemplation: "Even when I was away from my computer, my mind seemed hungry for constant stimulation, for quick hits of information. I felt perpetually distracted. Could my loss of focus be a result of all the time I've spent online? In search of an answer to that question, I began to dig into the many psychological, behavioural, and neurological studies that examine how the tools we use to think with — our information technologies — shape our habits of mind."

The picture that emerges is troubling, at least to anyone who values the subtlety, rather than just the speed, of human thought.

People who read text studded with links, the studies show, comprehend less than those who read words printed on pages. People who watch busy multimedia presentations remember less than those who take in information in a more sedate and focused manner. People who are continually distracted by emails, updates and other messages understand less than those who are able to concentrate. And people who juggle many tasks are often less creative and less productive than those who do one thing at a time.

So do we have to keep our children away from the internet?

Carr thinks it is wise to limit the use of the internet. Of course it is impossible to completely keep them away from it. Because the technology will not disappear of course and it will be essential for their work in the future. But we have to teach them how to use it well. And especially for younger children it is important that at home and in the school they can also escape from the technology, because otherwise it is everywhere. Carr thinks that children have to be encouraged to be able to use the technology to scan fast and shallow information, but that they also should know how to think at ease and in depth.

So what about computers in the schools?

Schools and parents are very eager to integrate ICT in education. Because technology is smart and can improve learning processes. But research also shows that cognitive overload might be a problem: if you give children too much information, they will remember and understand less. Carr concludes that computers should not be banned from schools, but that schools should also be a place where children can escape for a moment from technology and that children should have the opportunity to use their brains in all ways. They need a broad mix of learning experiences.

What do you think ...?

Please send your opinions to us via: vvobnewsletter@gmail.com

PAPERS AND PUBLICATIONS

*The ICT4ATL manual and toolkit developed by VVOB was complete and published (Education Publishing House, 12/2010). Download the softcopy of the toolkit at <http://www.vvob.be/vietnam/?q=vi/node/971>

Communication manual on family and community mobilization to support active teaching and learning.

Download the softcopy of the manual at

<http://www.vvob.be/vietnam/?q=vi/downloads>

A communication event of the Education Club IN CAI DAN WARD, SONG CONG TOWN, THAI NGUYEN PROVINCE

The Education Club is the first model to support parenting skills for parents with children in adolescence. The pilot model was initiated by the Provincial Women's Unions (WU) of Thai Nguyen, Quang Ninh, Nghe An, Quang Nam, Quang Ngai with technical support from the VVOB education program. Starting in 2009 in 10 communes in five provinces, this club model serves as a glass of fresh water for the people to relieve their thirst for knowledge and parenting skills and support their children's active learning.

"Each monthly club activity is like a training session for each of us, providing us with specific knowledge and skills to educate our children in general, and to support their learning at home. We then recognize the necessity to share between spouses on child education. We feel less reluctant and uneasy when talking to or calling the teacher to discuss about school activities"

Realizing the effectiveness of this model, from 2 pilot clubs initially in each province, the Provincial Women's Union has replicated the model to other districts and communes, bringing the total number of Education to 76 clubs by the end of 2010. Clubs organize communication activities monthly, covering a variety of themes regarding parenting skills.

On March 18th, we were invited to attend a club activity in Cai Dan Ward, Song Cong town, Thai Nguyen province. This month, the club promoted a communication booklet developed by the Vietnam Ministry of Education (MoET) in collaboration with the United Nations called "Facts on Children and HIV / AIDS."

It was a cold and rainy day. 03 VVOB officers together with 2 guests from Save the Children went on a trip to Cai Dan Ward, non-stop worrying whether such gloomy weather would affect the club activity. But contrary to our disheartened worry, about 50 club members came to the meeting hall with enthusiasm and excitement.

The communication event began with a warm-up activity called "Toss the ball" game where the person that caught the ball would give an introduction about his/herself. Then club members were asked about their opinion related to a number of HIV/AIDS issues. When the instructor read out a statement, the members could had to choose whether they agreed with the statement (these people would move to the left of the MC) or disagreed (these people would move to the right of the MC) or were not sure (these people would stand still at the original location). Just a simple game based on facts



and figures, however, under the facilitation of the MC, also the vice president of the club, the room was filled with laughter and excitement. The MC introduced several facts related to HIV / AIDS that can create confusion and let the club members themselves give judgement. During the second half of the event, club members did a reflection on a moment in the past when they felt lonely or marginalized, from which they discussed about stigma and discrimination against children and people with HIV/AIDS. The booklet Facts on Children and HIV / AIDS then was introduced. This material developed by MoET is conceived as a communication material for educational administrators, teachers, parents and the community, providing some facts regarding children and HIV / AIDS, to help eliminate the misconceptions and reduce stigma and discrimination against children affected by HIV / AIDS.

During the break, we interviewed a number of club members. They shared that the club has male members also, accounting for 50% of total members. Unfortunately, due to Communist Party's Meeting and People's council election, most of the male members were excused. The Club president emphasized the importance of the activities of the Education Club in Cai Dan ward. Please change in the Vietnamese too; we are not Mother Theresa!

The club not only provides the knowledge local people are lacking, yet eager to learn, but also is the place they can use a participatory approach. Participatory methods allow to give club members an active role involving members in activities with resulting in enthusiasm and excitement.

Having lasted only for 2 hours, at the communication event's provided some basic knowledge about children and HIV / AIDS through participatory communication such as the warm-up activity "Toss the ball"-game, group discussion, question-answer techniques, case study analysis, etc. At the end of the event, each member made a specific commitment to contribute to reducing discrimination and stigma against HIV / AIDS affected people. Despite the murky air and screaming wind, the club communication event had successfully ended. In the meeting hall were more than 50 shiny suns, promising to be a dynamic advocate in the community.



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING



Following the Training-Of-Trainers training in November, in January, Quang Ngai and Quang Nam DOET organized **multiplication workshops in Soft skills**. Similar workshops were also organized by Nghe An DOETs in March while Thai Nguyen and Quang Ninh DOETs chose to organize them in December. In total, **74** multiplication workshops were organized, reaching more than **2,000** educational managers, providing them with necessary skills in the process of educational innovation.

March was a busy month. During this time, in cooperation with Teacher Training (TT), an expert to develop the course in facilitation skills and peer coaching was selected based on the widely advertised TOR. The participation of VVOB staff in the series of Professional Teacher Meetings organized by Bac Giang DOET as part of JICA's post-project activities was really useful, providing much input for EM and TT further operation. In the end of March, a **one-day meeting** was organized with the five PPU members. During the meeting, important issues, namely, Open Resource Centres (ORCs), in-service training for teachers, and bridging the gap between theory and practice were discussed in detail.

At the end of **April**, together with the TT and Social Participation (SP) team, a two-day workshop was organized where issues such as vision, mission making and planning was discussed. For the EM team, the workshop was extended to two days and a half, where apart from the above mentioned topics, the topic of M&E was addressed in detail with the PPU members.

Also in April, DOETs further developed their ORC with support from VVOB and prepared for the upcoming trainings for in-service teachers in summer.

During the whole period of time, the training materials on **ATL for School managers, Innovation in Evaluation and Soft skills** were further developed and they are all expected to be finalized in the second quarter of the year. Together with experts, EM team is developing a **set of criteria of good ATL school**, an important part in bridging the gap between theory and practice.



TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTES

In January, the second **Steering Committee Meeting** of the **Education Innovation Plans** was hosted by the teacher training college in Vinh, Nghe An. The meeting was attended by all members of the Education Innovation board consisting of senior management of VVOB's 5 partner institutes. Back-to-back with this meeting, the first meeting of the **Monitoring & Evaluation Core Group** took place, which included the assignment of the members for each institute.

During this time, the complete **ICT4ATL toolkit and manual** were delivered to the ICT core group members of all the TTIs. The lecturers who received the toolkits were requested to fill out the **online ICT4ATL survey** on the evaluation of ICT professional development training programs and on the toolkit itself.

In February, after Tet holiday, all teacher training institutes prepared their proposal for the extended Education Innovation Plan for the school year 2010-2011.

During March VVOB participated in the preparation and organization of the workshop "Sharing experience and facilitating a network to support **Climate Change Education in Vietnam**" which was co-organized by the Ministry of Education and Training, Live & Learn, Save the Children, Plan International and VVOB, and in which a number of other international and national partners participated. The workshop, which took place on 29 March in Hanoi, were opened by **MOET Vice Minister Nguyen Vinh Hien** and **Dr. Qian Tang, Assistant-Director General for Education of UNESCO**, who was just visiting Vietnam at the time of the workshop.

The VVOB coordinators conducted a small **research** on the roll-out of teaching practice in the 5 partner provinces. The results will guide the further interventions on mentoring **teaching practice in ATL** this year.

Also in March the first activities started at some institutes that were planned under the extended Education Innovation Plans.

In April, a **training for managers** was co-organized with the social participation result. Managers of 5 provincial women's unions and teacher training institutes worked during 2 days together around themes such as **change management, vision making and planning skills**. The training took place in Da Nang.

The organization of **multiplication trainings** reached 'cruising speed' both for lecturers and student teachers. Some of the topics covered were **environmental education, corner work and ICT for ATL**.



MASS ORGANIZATIONS

In March a workshop "In-depth facilitation skills for club meetings" was organized for 26 participants from provincial core-group and extended districts in order to strengthen the capacity of women's union related to the community mobilization in education support in general and facilitating meetings of "Education and Life" clubs in specific. The workshop consisted of 2 parts: the first part focused on coaching practical skills of facilitating topics that were identified for club meetings; the second part focused on M&E issues including the introduction of the M&E framework of VVOB Vietnam.

March 2011 also saw the transversal theme of HIV/AIDS protection being taken up by the WU through introducing the booklet "Facts on children and HIV/AIDS" during club meetings in the 5 provinces. On 18 March 2011 some staff of VVOB and Save Children made a field trip to observe such a club meeting session in Cai Dan wards, Song Cong Township, Thai Nguyen province.

Activities planned for the next quarter

Activity	Date	Location	Participants
Further development of ORC	May-August	TBC	DOETs' staff
TOT training on facilitation skills and peer coaching	June	TBC	The core group
Joint workshop on social participation	July-August	TBC	DOETs educational managers + WU managers
Multiplication workshop on facilitation skills and peer coaching	July	In five provinces	In-service teacher
Multiplication workshop for ICT for ATL	July-August	In five provinces	In-service teachers
Development of criteria of good ATL school	April-July		VVOB staff + experts
Finalization of all the existing materials on educational management	May-July	Ha Noi	VVOB staff + experts

Activity	Date	Location	Participants
Multiplication training on methodology and ICT modules	May-August	In TTIs	Lecturers in TTIs Methodology group members
Consultation workshops module 'Facilitating & Coaching ATL'	May	Hanoi - Quang Ngai	Methodology core group
Training-of-trainers on Teaching and Learning for a Sustainable Future	June	Quang Ninh - Quang Nam	Selected EE experts
Follow up workshop ICT curriculum development	May	Hanoi	Selected lecturers and managers who are involved in developing ICT curriculum in TTIs
Participation in conference 'Redesigning Pedagogy: transforming teaching, inspiring learning'	30 May - 1 June	Singapore	Selected methodology core group members Provincial Women's Union representatives
TOT training workshop on E-learning	June	TBC	Selected ICT4ATL experts in TTIs
Teaching and Learning for a Sustainable Future workshops	July	5 provinces	Lecturers
Introduction workshop module 'Facilitating & Coaching ATL'	June-July	TBC	Methodology core group
Consultation workshop module 'Contract work'	June-July	TBC	Methodology core group
Steering committee Meeting	July	Thai Nguyen	EIP steering committee member in each TTI

Activity	Date	Location	Participants
Workshop on management skills for the management groups of the 5 provinces (in cooperation with TT and EM)	May	Danang	management group/core group
Multiplication of a workshop "In-depth facilitation skills for club meetings"	April-June	5 provinces	WU members at district and commune levels, club leaders and members of Commune Education Support Boards (CESBs)
4-day workshop "In-depth facilitation skills for club meetings" - Part II	July	Hanoi	WU provincial core groups and extended districts

Educational game Corner

Name: Knots of People

Duration: 15 minutes – 20 minutes

How to play:

- Divide the participants into 2 teams of 15-20 members.
- Ask for a person to be the leader in each team.
- Have each person joining right hands with another person in the group, but it has to be someone who is NOT standing immediately to the left or right.
- Then have each person joining left hands with another person in the group, but it has to be someone who is NOT standing immediately to the left or right and someone other than before.
- Now the teams have to untangle themselves without letting go of hands. They may have to loosen their grips a little to allow for twisting and turning. They may have to step over or under other people.
- * Team 01: only the leader can speak, and tell the team how to move to untangle. No one else is allowed to speak.
- * Team 02: the leader is allowed to discuss with the team
- The first team managing to untangle its knot without violating the rules is the winner.

Questions for thought after the game:

- How did the members of each team feel when untangling the knot? Any differences between the two groups? If yes, which one and why?
- Which team seems to be more efficient? Why?
- What do you think the meaning of the game is?

Conclusion

- In working, team work and 2-way communication rather than playing Mr./Mrs. Lonely is important.
- In supporting ATL & Social Participation in education, community involvement is useful. Involvement rather than stand-alone-sector

TRANSVERSAL THEMES

USING THE IMPACT CHAIN MODEL IN CLIMATE CHANGE

The impact chain model is used to analyze the causes and the proposed solutions for adaptation and mitigation of climate change impacts. This model (along with the problem tree) supports researchers and planners to clarify the elements of climate change, direct and indirect impacts, vulnerable groups and response measures.

Below is an example of the impact chain analysis about: Signs and effects of Climate change in a specific region (The sea)

Climate change elements	Direct impact	Indirect impact	Vulnerable groups	Response measures
Rised sea level	Salt Affect	Aquaculture Agriculture Salt production	Fishermen Farmers Salt workers	Change the production structure and production method
	Residing area	Increase migration Lose infrastructure quality	Coastal habitants (especially poor people)	Planning with integration of climate change Diversification of livelihoods
	Cultivated area	Livelihoods (as above) Other livelihoods	Farmers	Mangrove forest plantation / protection
	Flood-tide	Urban planning Drainage		Constructing dike / saline dam
	Increase level	Underground water pollution Changing the coastal ecosystem Health (shortage of clean water, underground water pollution, diseases)	Coastal habitants (especially poor people)	Communication, awareness raising and capacity building Providing clean water, sanitation Policy (supporting) Building models to predict the different scenarios

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STAKEHOLDER IN THE PICTURE

In this stakeholder in the picture, we are going to have a conversation with Mr Nguyen Dinh Duc, the PPU member of Pham Van Dong University, Quang Ngai, about his thoughts and feelings on the Educational Program of VVOB.



1. How do you evaluate the cooperation between VVOB and TTIs, particularly with Pham Van Dong University?

The collaboration between VVOB and the 5 TTIs to implement education projects in the past academic years has brought concrete benefits to the managers, teachers and students. The program has directly promoted the effective implementation of the teaching & learning innovation, teaching that integrates ICT and Environmental Education (EE). For Pham Van Dong University, VVOB has created great opportunities for teachers to participate in the workshops and training courses in various fields, to share experience of teaching methodology innovation. We have benefited many ATL theory and practices, teaching with ICT and EE integration. The support from VVOB for teaching & learning facilities also contributes to solve the initial difficulties of the school, and this approach also has fostered the university to continue to equip and upgrade the computer network etc ... for the teaching and learning activities in schools.

2. Can you share the most maximized impact / most significant activity of VVOB education program to the teachers and students in the university?

In my opinion, the teachers have mastered the ATL theory and ICT application. But the shift from the theory to the teaching practice is a very long way. The trainings organized by VVOB give teachers the opportunity to experience and apply theory effectively. The training and workshops have a strong impact on the school leaders, teachers and students. Perhaps it is the most significant impact in the education program of VVOB.

3. As a coordinator, what advantages and disadvantages do you meet when participating in and implementing the activities of VVOB?

In the first phase of the program, the leaders of Pham Van Dong university appointed Mr. Pham Nghi, head of the training department to be the PPU for Teacher Training – Environmental education and me, head of the scientific management and international relations, to be the PPU for teacher training-ICT. With our tasks and responsibilities, it is convenient for us to advise the university managers about the implementation plan, relevant documents, mobilizing teachers and students to participate in the activities. In addition, we have enthusiastic colleagues and faculty staff to support us in organizing workshops and training courses at university and the trainers are capable. However, in the implementation process, we have encountered difficulties in the organizational stage, especially the implementation of ICT for ATL training. For example the number of participants in reality is only half of the number of initial registration. This makes the organizational plan passive, for example, 2 training classes had to be combined into a class, changing the number of trainers, etc ...

4. Can you tell us the most memorable experience in the process of working with VVOB?

The most memorable experience during my work with VVOB was the workshop held in Hanoi at La Thanh Hotel on 30/10/2008. With the heaviest rain ever in the history, that morning Hanoi was flooded. We went through the water with our umbrellas, to the Hall (on the 1st floor) to attend the workshop. Meeting Toon, he said in Vietnamese:

-Hello. Today it's too sunny! ...

Seeing us smile, Toon also laughed and told:

- Sorry, I was confused. Today it is too rainy.

The workshop lasted till 10 am then the water went in the hall. The hotel receptionist came to notify:

-Can all teachers hold their legs up to avoid electric shocks because the power socket in the lower rooms has been flooded!

However, the workshop continued as planned and the result was a developed work plan for 2009.

Thank you very much.