

ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN ETHNIC MINORITY AREAS

**SUMMARY OF SURVEYS IN LAO CAI, HOA BINH,
NGHE AN, QUANG TRI, DAK NONG, NINH THUAN
AND TRA VINH PROVINCES, VIETNAM**

Hanoi, January 2017





TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS	ii	
TABLES, FIGURES, BOXES.....	v	
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	1	
1. Introduction.....	3	
1.1. Research background	3	
1.2. Research objectives and methodology ..	3	
2. The situation of short-term vocational training for rural people in the past three years (2014-2016)	7	
2.1. The vocational training policy framework ..	7	
2.2. Implementation of vocational training in the survey provinces, 2014-2016.....	9	
3. Effectiveness of short-term vocational training in ethnic minority areas.....	20	
3.1. Equity.....	20	



3.2. Efficiency.....	26
3.3. Effectiveness.....	32
4. Recommendations.....	44
Recommendations for Central Government	44
Recommendations for Provincial Authorities.....	45

ANNEXES 48

Annex 1. Some characteristics of the 15 villages in the Pro-poor Policy Monitoring Project	48
---	----

Annex 2. Summary of typical vocational training classes in survey villages	53
---	----

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 58

REFERENCES 60

ABBREVIATIONS

CEMA	Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs
CLC	Community Learning Centre
CPC	Commune People’s Committee
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (provincial level)
DivARD	Division of Agriculture and Rural Development (district level)
DivoLISA	Division of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (district level)
DoF	Department of Finance (provincial level)
DoFA	Department of Foreign Affairs (provincial level)
DoIT	Department of Industry and Trade (provincial level)
DoLISA	Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (provincial level)
DPC	District People’s Committee
DPI	Department of Planning and Investment (provincial level)
FFS	Farmer Field School
Irish Aid	Irish Agency for Cooperation and Development
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MoET	Ministry of Education and Training
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoIT	Ministry of Industry and Trade
MoLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
NA	National Assembly
NTP-NRD	National Targeted Program on New Rural Development

NTP-SPR	National Targeted Program on Sustainable Poverty Reduction
PPC	Provincial People’s Committee
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
Program 135	The infrastructure and production development program for communes facing extreme difficulties, border communes and villages facing extreme difficulties (according to the Prime Minister’s Decision 551/QĐ-TTg dated April 4, 2013)
Program 30a	The rapid and sustainable poverty reduction support program for 61 disadvantaged districts (according to Government Resolution 30a/2008/NQ-CP dated December 27, 2008), now covering 64 districts
Project 1956	Project for vocational training of rural workers during the period until 2020 (according to the Prime Minister’s Decision 1956/QĐ-TTg dated November 27, 2009)
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
VTC	Vocational Training Centre





TABLES, FIGURES AND BOXES

TABLES

Table 1.	Survey sites	4
Table 2.	New contents in Decision 971 lacking implementation guidance	8
Table 3.	The budget structure for vocational training support via Project 1956 in the seven study provinces (%)	11
Table 4.	Total funding for vocational training in the seven survey provinces (2014-2016)	12
Table 5.	Budget structure for Project 1956 in the survey provinces (2010-2016).....	13
Table 6.	Vocational training participants, 2010-2014 (%).....	21
Table 7.	Gendered participation in short-term training courses	25
Table 8.	Effectiveness of vocational training as reported by the survey provinces, 2010-2014 (%)	32

FIGURES

Figure 1.	Concurrent measures to enhance effectiveness of vocational training in ethnic minority areas...	2
Figure 2.	Monitoring and evaluation procedures for short-term vocational training	18
Figure 3.	Perceptions of the effectiveness of vocational training in survey villages (%).....	33
Figure 4.	Proportion of people in the survey villages increasing productivity and income as a result of vocational training (%).....	34
Figure 5.	Applying the FFS approach within agricultural vocational training	37
Figure 6.	Proportion of people in survey villages having new jobs after completing training (%).....	38

BOXES

Box 1.	Delegating the entire NTP-NRD recurrent funding to the commune level resulted in low priority given to vocational training.....	12
Box 2.	Quy Chau district VTC shows flexibility while dealing with slow delivery of vocational training funds	14
Box 3.	Using vocational training funds to train village agricultural extension workers in Dak Nong province.....	17
Box 4.	Increasing employment opportunities for migrant workers through provision of vocational training certificates	26
Box 5.	Linking vocational training with livelihood modelling in Quang Tri	27
Box 6.	Inefficient utilisation of district-level VTCs that have made considerable investments in infrastructure and equipment	28
Box 7.	Difficulties in integrating vocational training funds with funds from Program 30a and the NTP-NRD in Quang Tri	29
Box 8.	One woodworking course is not enough to be a carpenter	31
Box 9.	Improving livelihoods and escaping poverty through training on livestock farming.....	35
Box 10.	Differences between rich and poor households and between ethnic minority and Kinh people in capacity to invest in expanding production	36
Box 11.	Applying the FFS approach in agricultural vocational training.....	37
Box 12.	Creating jobs and increasing income for Muong women of a bamboo broom making class	39
Box 13.	The pioneering and snowballing effect: a factor in the success of vocational training classes...	40
Box 14.	Workers face unstable employment following vocational training classes on production of handicrafts.....	42



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the past three years (2014-2016), the policy framework on short-term vocational training for rural workers in Vietnam has been progressively improved, covering training on basic subjects for less than three months. Decision 971/QĐ-TTg, dated July 1, 2015, sets out principles and requirements for standardising support policies for trainees, on-the-job training at production sites, and employment generation matched with the needs characteristics of the production process for crops or animals, and with the demand from trainees. However, this decision and related policy documents still lack specific guidelines, procedures and manuals for implementation.

Vocational training has provided jobs for many young people and contributed to reduced poverty in rural areas. However, as assessed by grassroots officials and vocational training participants in areas having a substantial ethnic minority population, this survey finds that the effectiveness of vocational training has not yet reached the desired level. Approximately one-third of vocational training courses are rated as having low efficiency, with non-agricultural vocational classes rated significantly lower than agricultural classes. Nearly half of trainees interviewed experienced no job or income improvements after training. Only around one-fifth of the trainees found new jobs, while the remainder continued in their existing jobs.

Based on the lessons learned from successful and unsuccessful vocational training courses in the survey areas, the survey identifies key messages with the aim of improving the effectiveness of vocational training for sustainable poverty reduction in localities with a substantial number of ethnic minority people, as follows (Figure 1):

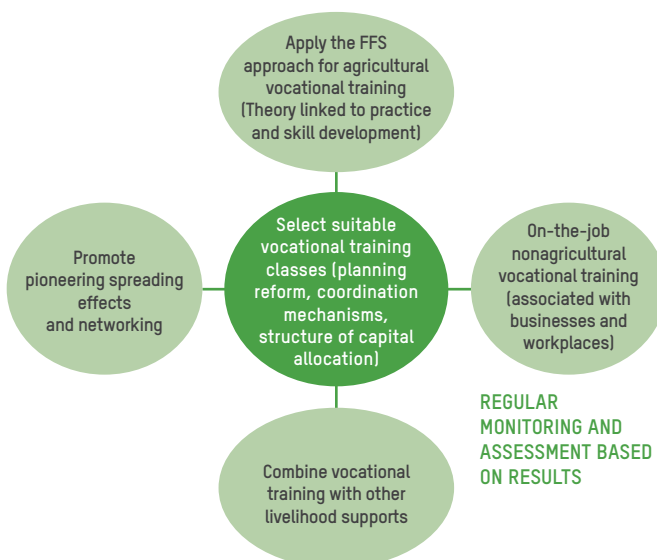
- Provinces should reform the planning of vocational training linked to the commune-level planning through a participatory approach. Provinces should select suitable vocational training classes relevant to people's needs, characteristics and actual or potential livelihoods, to the orientation of developing key crops and specific products, and to the labour market both within and beyond the locality. Concurrently, it is necessary to specify mechanisms for coordination of vocational training among different levels, such as the agencies belonging to the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MoLISA), the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET).
- The structure of budget allocations for vocational training requires adjustment, reducing the allocation for infrastructure investments in public vocational training centres (there are currently many inefficient investments), and increasing the budget (to at least 10 percent of the total budget) for recruitment and consultation (through face-to-face meetings, the use of images, group meetings and dialogues), developing the capacity of teachers and vocational trainers, and monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of vocational training.
- Departments of Agriculture and Rural Development should apply the Farmer Field School (FFS) approach for agricultural vocational training, assisting farmers to sharpen their skills through practice, observation, feedback and group learning at production sites, linked to local crop and animal production calendars.
- Departments of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs should apply on-the-job non-agricultural vocational training, with the aim of strengthening the connection between vocational training and employment opportunities in enterprises, cooperatives and workplaces. Supportive policies on taxes and risk insurance should encourage enterprises to hire workers who have completed vocational training courses, particularly poor workers, women, ethnic minority people and people with disabilities. Policies should give priority to improving skills for migrant workers to assist them to have better jobs and incomes.



- Provinces should combine vocational training with other forms of livelihood support such as agricultural and industrial promotion, model development and replication, loans, support for production linkages, and market development. The foundation for linking vocational training with other forms of livelihood support is a project-based approach that integrates resources by thematic area and by location, together with participatory planning at the commune level.
- Provinces should give priority to vocational training for core farmers (good producers and skilled workers) and agricultural extension workers so that they can provide vocational training and technical instruction for farmers, thereby creating a 'pioneering and spreading' effect and networking within the community.
- MoLISA, in coordination with MARD, should provide specific guidance on monitoring and evaluation of vocational training with a focus on the ongoing monitoring of commune-level vocational training by mass organisations and local officials. The role of community learning centres (CLCs) should be promoted in vocational training recruitment and counselling, as well as in the organisation and monitoring of vocational training courses at commune level. A system for the evaluation of vocational training should be developed based on the measurement of results and outputs, objectively measuring

the following two indicators: "the percentage of vocational trainees that have new jobs" and "the percentage of vocational trainees continuing in existing jobs with improved productivity and income". It is important to conduct in-depth surveys and assessments on the efficiency and effectiveness of successful vocational training models in ethnic minority areas, so as to identify the most appropriate mechanisms, methods and practices, and to avoid over-diversification and inefficient utilisation of resources.

Figure 1. Concurrent measures to enhance effectiveness of vocational training in ethnic minority areas



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Vietnam has attained significant achievements in poverty reduction. However, many members of Vietnam's 53 ethnic minority groups still face numerous difficulties in their livelihoods. According to the 2011-2015 income poverty line, the poverty rate in 2015 among ethnic minority people was about 3.3 times higher than the national poverty rate.¹ According to the multidimensional poverty line for the 2016-2020 period, the poverty rate in late 2015 in 64 poor districts under Program 30a with substantial ethnic minority populations was 50.43 percent, whereas the national poverty rate was 9.88 percent.² Poverty rates and causes vary among different ethnic minority groups and between communities of the same ethnic group living in different areas.³

In the period from 2010 to 2015, the Vietnamese Government devoted significant resources to the implementation of the project "Vocational training for rural workers" (Project 1956), pursuant to Decision 1956/QĐ-TTg dated November 27, 2009. The implementation of Project 1956 at the local level has achieved important results. However, difficulties and limitations remain, including low participation rates of people from poor and near-poor households, and from ethnic minority people in particular, compared to the general population. Ethnic minority workers with vocational training only account for three percent of the total working age ethnic minority population.⁴ Other challenges include low efficiency in generating new jobs (80 percent of poor vocational trainees were still in their existing jobs after the training), weak linkage between vocational training and labour market demands, and the limited effectiveness of many vocational training activities despite the substantial investment of resources.⁵

In 2015-16, the Government issued a series of documents aiming to improve the quality of the

rural workforce, and support increased incomes, sustainable poverty reduction and accelerated rural development. These include Decision 971/QĐ-TTg dated July 1, 2015 revising Decision 1956/QĐ-TTg, and Decision 1600/QĐ-TTg dated August 16, 2016 approving the National Targeted Program on New Rural Development (NTP-NRD). These decisions provide orientation for the reform of vocational training in the future.

To provide inputs for policy discussions for sustainable poverty reduction, Oxfam has undertaken a series of policy analyses on vocational training for rural people (under Project 1956) within the framework of the *"Pro-poor policy monitoring and analysis project"* funded by Irish Aid and SDC for the period from 2014 to 2016. This report is the third of a series of three iterative annual assessment reports carried out in 15 rural communities in seven provinces across the country, namely Lao Cai, Hoa Binh, Nghe An, Quang Tri, Dak Nong, Ninh Thuan and Tra Vinh.

1.2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The **objective** of this study was to *"analyse policies on short-term vocational training for rural people, in order to provide findings and recommendations for the design and implementation of short-term vocational training policies for sustainable poverty reduction, especially in ethnic minority areas."*

The study employed a **participatory qualitative research methodology** to explore stakeholder perceptions, effective vocational training practices and models, and reports and statistics on vocational training work in the survey locations. Comparative analysis between different sites was also conducted during the synthesis of findings from the fieldwork.

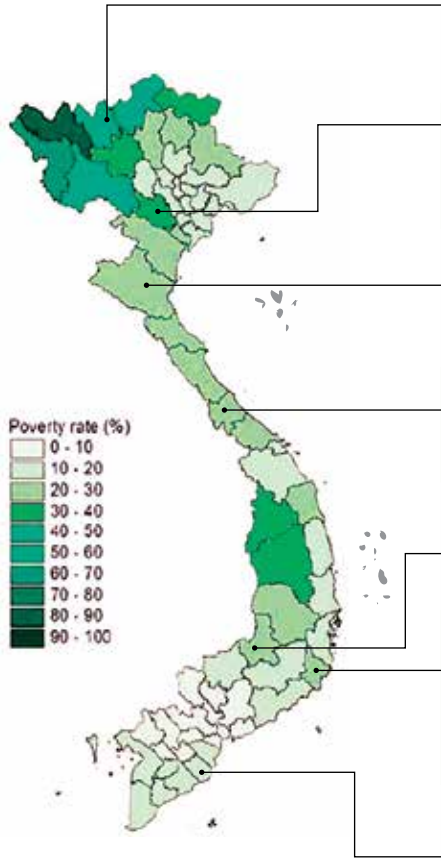
Major research questions:

- What changes have occurred in mechanisms, policies and organisation of short-term vocational training for rural workers at the central and local levels over the period from 2014 to 2016?
- What have been the strengths and weaknesses of vocational training (in terms of fairness, frequency and efficiency) for poor and vulnerable groups in ethnic minority areas?
- What are the recommendations to improve the efficiency of vocational training for rural people for local development and sustainable poverty reduction?

Survey sites: The Pro-Poor Policy Monitoring Project does not aim to provide representative statistical data for the whole country, but rather to provide empirical evidence from a set of survey sites that is representative of poor districts and provinces nationwide. The survey sites were chosen based on this purpose. They represent the livelihoods and poverty conditions found in each of the selected provinces, while also reflecting the diversity of conditions in poor districts and provinces throughout the country. (Table 1).

Table 1. Survey sites⁶

Province	District	Commune	Major ethnic groups	Distance to district centre (km)	Under Program 135, phase 3	Under Program 30a	Rate of poor households (%)		
							Late 2013	Late 2014	Late 2015
Lao Cai	Muong Khuong	La Pan Tan	Hmong, Dao	32	Yes	Yes	55.7	48.59	77.62
		Ban Xen	Nung, Day, Tu Di	35	No	Yes	20.1	13.45	29.76
Hoa Binh	Da Bac	Tan Pheo	Tay, Dao, Muong	45	Yes	Yes*	53.0	46	72
		Hien Luong	Muong, Tay, Kinh	4	No	Yes*	33.0	26.7	43.74
Nghe An	Quy Chau	Chau Thang	Thai	10	Yes	Yes*	46.1	40.1	56.86
		Chau Hanh	Thai	1	Yes	Yes*	47	43	25
Quang Tri	Dakrong	Mo O	Kinh, Van Kieu	2	No	Yes	28.0	15.6	39.2
		Dakrong	Van Kieu	8	Yes	Yes	36.3	31.07	62
Dak Nong	Dak Glong	Dak Som	Ma, Kinh, Hmong	18	Yes	Yes*	67.1	61.19	69.99
		Quang Khe	Kinh, Ma	51	No	Yes*	42.0	35.7	54.65
Ninh Thuan	Bac Ai	Phuoc Dai	Raglai, Kinh	1	Yes	Yes	33.0	23.3	53.6
	Ninh Phuoc	Phuoc Hai	Cham, Kinh	15	No	No	12.5	10.57	18.49
	Ninh Hai	Vinh Hai	Kinh, Raglai	25	No	No	2.9	2.42	9.97
Tra Vinh	Cau Ke	Chau Dien	Khmer	5	No	No	25.3	11.53	11.92
		Tam Ngai	Khmer	8	No	No	5.1	4.12	3.47



Source: People's Committees in the 15 survey communes

[*] Communes in disadvantaged districts that receive infrastructure development support equal to 70 percent of the support to poor districts in Program 30a (according to Decision 615/QĐ-TTg dated April 25, 2011 and Decision 293/QĐ-TTg dated February 5, 2013 by the Prime Minister).

Oxfam and its local partners⁷ selected one district in each province for pro-poor policy monitoring and analysis. Two communes were selected in each district: one better-off commune located near the district centre, and one poorer commune located away from the district centre and with less favourable conditions. In each commune, one village with a high concentration of ethnic minorities was selected. The exception to this was Ninh Thuan province, where three districts were selected, but only one commune in each district. In total, **seven provinces, nine districts, 15 communes and 15 villages** participated in the monitoring of rural poverty reduction policies. Among the 15 participating communes, seven communes are covered by Program 135, five communes are in poor districts covered by Program 30a, and six communes are in disadvantaged districts which enjoy the same policies as poor districts under Program 30a. Annex 1 describes basic characteristics of the 15 survey villages in 2016.

A **Core Group** was established in each province to participate in the Pro-Poor Policy Monitoring Project. This core group consists of five to seven members, including:

- Representatives from provincial-level agencies such as the Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, the Department of Planning and Investment, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, and the Ethnic Minority Council, and from district agencies.
- Representatives from Oxfam's local partners.

The core group is responsible for carrying out research in each of their respective survey sites. They are in control of the entire process, including planning, collection of information, and writing field reports⁸. The core groups received training, capacity building and technical assistance from Truong Xuan (Ageless) Consulting Company and from Oxfam program officers.

Annual survey: Oxfam's Pro-Poor Policy Monitoring Project conducts iterative annual surveys on multiple research topics. Annually, the core group returns to selected locations and conducts discussions with local officials

working for different agencies and at different levels, as well as group discussions and in-depth interviews with local people who participated in the previous rounds. Outstanding cases who were interviewed in the first round in 2014 and the second round in 2015 were again interviewed in 2016 as part of the third round. As a result, the core group was able to compare changes in livelihoods as well as transformations in access to and effectiveness of production support and agricultural promotion policies from year to year.

The third round of Poverty Reduction Policy Monitoring and Analysis was conducted between **April and June 2016**. The fieldwork lasted for seven days at each of the survey sites.

Information was collected using the following tools:

- Group discussions were conducted with representatives of provincial, district and commune authorities, with key informants, and with local people, in order to gain a better understanding of advantages and difficulties encountered in the implementation of poverty reduction policies at different levels of governance, and to collect people's feedback on service access and delivery. In total, there were **187** group discussions conducted with **689** local people and government officials. **441** people in the group discussions were male and **248** were female. **308** were from the Kinh ethnic group and **381** were from ethnic minority groups. During group discussions, participants discussed key issues with facilitation provided by the researchers. Participatory visual tools were applied during these group discussions, such as timelines, problem trees, grading, listing and ranking.
- In-depth interviews were conducted with representatives of provincial, district and commune authorities, with key informants and with local people to better understand people's opportunities to access policies, and the effectiveness of this access. In total, **177** in-depth interviews were conducted with local people and with government officials at provincial, district, and commune levels. **105** of the interviewees were male and **72** were



female. **23** were from the Kinh ethnic group and **154** were from ethnic minority groups. Repeat interviews were conducted among **76** outstanding cases from 2015, including **40** males and **36** females. **12** of these interviewees were from the Kinh ethnic group and **64** were from ethnic minority groups. In-depth interviews were based on a list of open questions, and were often conducted at the interviewee's house together with direct observation of household conditions.

- Photographs: The research team took photographs of household living conditions, livelihood activities and facilities at the survey sites (asking for permission where necessary) with the aim of collecting additional visual information.
- A desk review of legal documents, reports, and statistics collected at the central and local levels was conducted to provide an overview of the different research topics.

- Consultations with ministries and sectors were conducted through conferences and workshops on reforming commune-level planning. Technical assistance was provided to MPI on amending the management regulations of the NTPs, and to MoLISA and MARD on the preparation of a planning manual for the implementation of the NTPs.

The information collected through qualitative research methodologies was verified during information analysis and reporting through triangulation of different data sources, including local reports, group discussions, in-depth interviews, and observations by the research team.

2. THE SITUATION OF SHORT-TERM VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR RURAL PEOPLE IN THE PAST THREE YEARS (2014-2016)

2.1. THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING POLICY FRAMEWORK

In 2009, the Government issued Decision 1956/QĐ-TTg approving the “Project on vocational training for rural labourers up to 2020” (hereinafter referred to as Decision 1956 or Project 1956).

Over the past three years (2014-2016), the policy framework on vocational training has been progressively improved. The National Assembly (NA), the Government, and line ministries have issued many legal documents related to short-term vocational training (basic level courses and other vocational training of less than three months’ duration). Specifically:

- In 2014, the NA adopted the Law on Vocational Education, which regulates all continuing education programs (including vocational training of less than three months’ duration), the organisation of the operations of vocational education institutions, standards for teachers, and the rights of enterprises in vocational education activities.
- In 2015, an array of new documents were issued, including: Decision 971/QĐ-TTg providing amendments and supplements to Decision 1956/QĐ-TTg; Decision 46/2015/QĐ-TTg regulating vocational training support policies; Joint Circular 39/2015/TTLT-BLDTBXH-BGDDT-BNV guiding the

merging of vocational training centres (VTCs), continuing education centres, and district-level public technical career counselling centres; Circular 42/2015/TT-BLDTBXH regulating elementary-level training; and Circular 43/2015/TT-BLDTBXH on continuing education.

- In 2016, the Prime Minister issued Decision 1600/QĐ-TTg approving the NTP-NRD from 2016 to 2020, with Project 1956 integrated into the NTP-NRD. The MoF issued Circular 152/2016/TT-BTC regulating the management and use of support funds for vocational training.

However, some of the new guidelines on vocational training still lack guidance on implementation. Decision 971 (effective from July 1, 2015) sets out important guidelines and directions for the reform of vocational training. However, as of mid-2016, provincial authorities remained unclear about how to implement these new guidelines due to a lack of guidance. Typically, there was a lack of implementation guidance on the guidelines on the integration of funding sources, on the allocation of funding, on the reform of vocational training methods, on the combination of agricultural and industrial extension activities with vocational training, and on monitoring of the vocational training activities organised in the commune by mass organisations. Decision 971 sets out the goal of “at least 80 percent of trainees having new

jobs or continuing existing jobs with higher productivity and incomes”, which is much better than before (Decision 1956 only stipulated that “at least 80 percent of trainees are employed”),

however there has not been any guidance on measurement methods and the preparation of assessment reports. (Table 2).

Table 2. New contents in Decision 971 lacking implementation guidance

New contents in Decision 971	Lack of implementation guidance
The vocational training goal for 2016-2020: “at least 80 percent of trainees have new jobs or continue to do existing jobs with higher productivity and incomes”.	There is no guidance on the assessment methods or reporting mode for the two indicators “having new jobs” and “continuing to do existing jobs with higher productivity and incomes”.
Integrating different capital sources and integrating gender, environment, culture and society into vocational training.	There is a lack of specific guidance on the mechanisms for integrating different capital sources.
Allocating funding for localities on the basis of the size of the rural workforce and the real demand for vocational training; prioritising the equitable distribution of vocational training funding for disadvantaged and ethnic minority localities.	There is a lack of guidance on the process of planning and allocating vocational training funds, linked to the participatory planning process for NTP-NRD implementation (following the integration of Project 1956 into the NTP-NRD, pursuant to Decision 1600).
Linking vocational training to practice at production facilities. Matching the duration of the training with the occupations for which training is being provided, with the characteristics of the production process for crops or animals in each region and locality, and with the demand from students.	There is no guidance on the FFS approach as an official approach that should be widely applied in agricultural vocational training.
MARD is responsible for organising vocational training in agricultural fields for the rural workforce, and for directing the agricultural extension system to link agricultural extension activities with vocational training activities.	There is a lack of guidance on the procedures and on the roles of relevant stakeholders (DoLISA, DARD and other parties) in budgeting and planning for vocational training budget during the process of integrating Project 1956 into the NTP-NRD. There is also a lack of specific guidance on the mechanisms and procedures to link agricultural extension programs with vocational training.
MoIT is responsible for directing the industrial extension system to link industrial extension activities with vocational training.	There is a lack of specific guidance on the mechanisms and procedures to link industrial extension programs with vocational training.
Mass organisations (the Farmers’ Association, War Veterans’ Association, etc.) are responsible for recruitment, consultation and supervision of the organisation of vocational training in the commune.	There is a lack of guidance on the content, plan and funding for mass organisations to implement recruitment, consultation, monitoring and supervision of the organisation of vocational training in the commune.

Decision 46 is a step forward in integrating eight previous vocational training support documents into a single document⁹ and raising the level of support for trainees. Decision 46 categorises five target groups¹⁰ and indicates maximum training support costs for vocational training for these groups, demonstrating the prioritisation of support for disadvantaged groups. However, according to local officials, applying this classification is difficult in practice, because it is impossible to apply different support cost levels for different trainees in the same class. It would only be feasible if separate vocational training classes were to be organised for specific target groups (which is feasible only for ethnic minority people and people with disabilities). In fact, of the seven survey provinces, only Ninh Thuan province allocates special funding support for the five target groups indicated in Decision 46. Quang Tri province allocates support for vocational training to three target groups: rural labourers, people with disabilities, and ethnic minority people. The remaining provinces only allocate support for vocational training for two target groups: rural labourers and people with disabilities.

“It is difficult to implement Decision 46 fully. Providing support for meals and travel costs is all right, but it is impossible to provide different training cost support levels to trainees in the same class, because they have the same trainer and textbook. Unless the entire class is people with disabilities, the quota must be different because of the fewer number of people with disabilities per class.”

(Man, staff of DoLISA, Nghe An)

“If a class with 30 trainees has just two or three people with disabilities, the same training costs are applied. If there is a separate class for people with disabilities, then it will receive the higher level of training support. The level of support depends on the type of vocational training class, but it is difficult to find a class that only has people with disabilities.”

(Woman, staff of the DivoLISA, Dakrong district, Quang Tri)

Project 1956 only provides vocational training for rural labourers “of working age”, whereas many people who are older than the official working age still want to pursue vocational learning. Decision 46 allows “the Provincial People’s Committee (PPC) to decide on support for different subjects depending on the capacity of the local budget and other legal funding sources.” So, in principle, the PPC can provide support for people outside of the working age through the local budget. However, it is difficult for poor provinces to do this due to the limited allocation of the local budget for vocational training.

The abovementioned obstacles have contributed to a delay in implementing Decision 46 (which was effective from January 1, 2016) in the survey provinces. By June 2016, only two of the seven provinces (Quang Tri and Tra Vinh¹¹) had issued guidelines on implementing Decision 46. By August 2016, four of the seven provinces (Hoa Binh, Quang Tri, Ninh Thuan and Tra Vinh) had issued guidelines, while two of the seven provinces (Dak Nong and Lao Cai) had just completed the draft guidelines and submitted them to the PPC for approval, and one province (Nghe An) was yet to provide full guidance on implementing Decision 46 (guidance had only been provided in relation to people with disabilities).¹² Therefore, payment of meal and travel allowances to vocational training participants in courses held in early 2016 did not take place according to the new support levels set out in Decision 46.

2.2. IMPLEMENTATION OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN THE SURVEY PROVINCES, 2014-2016

Planning of vocational training

Planning of vocational training has not yet been integrated with participatory planning at the commune level. Over the past three years, planning of vocational training continued to be conducted in a vertical manner, from provincial

DoLISAs to district Divisions of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (DivoLISA) and then to the commune level. DivoLISAs often worked with the district VTC to visit communes and to survey the vocational learning needs of local people in order to develop their plans. Meanwhile, many province-level vocational training institutions (for example, the VTCs of the Women's Union, Youth Union and Farmers' Association) also visited communes to assess training needs and develop their own vocational training plans (using funding from Project 1956 and from other sources), leading to overlaps and a waste of human and financial resources for planning.

"There are many VTCs arriving at the commune to survey local vocational training needs, not to mention that they all compete against one another for students. In my opinion, it is quite overlapping, wasteful and unreasonable. It would be much better to appoint DivoLISA as the managing agency on vocational training. It would be even better if vocational training planning could be integrated into commune-level socio-economic development planning, and implemented well."

(Man, staff of Da Bac district, Hoa Binh)

At present, all seven survey provinces have reformed participatory commune-level planning on a provincial scale, creating the opportunity to record and synthesise the priority needs of villagers in the commune plan¹³. However, none of these provinces has issued guidance on the integration of vocational training planning into the participatory commune-level planning process.

Medium-term planning for vocational training lacks feasibility. In early 2015, MoLISA requested provinces to prepare a medium-term public investment plan for vocational training from 2016–2020.¹⁴ By mid-2016, MARD asked provinces to prepare a vocational training plan for 2017–2020.¹⁵ Due to the different planning schedules and formats, the data in these two medium-term plans did not match.

The medium-term vocational training plan has low feasibility due to changes in demand for training, the unstable labour market and the lack of a medium-term financial framework.¹⁶ In particular, Project 1956 has been integrated into the NTP-NRD since 2016, making it difficult to ensure sufficient funding for the implementation of the medium-term plan, because the NTP-NRD recurrent funding covers many other activities in addition to vocational training.

"The vocational training office of DoLISA advised the PPC to develop a medium-term vocational training plan, and the province approved funding of 9.4 billion dong (US \$413,000) for 2016. However, when the plan was submitted to DARD, they said the annual funding could not meet the approved figure, and they only allocated 2.5 billion dong."

(Woman, staff of DoLISA, Hoa Binh)

"Even for annual planning there are changes and constant adjustments, not to mention for five-year planning."

(Woman, staff of DoLISA, Ninh Thuan)

Allocating the budget for vocational training

There is no guidance on the allocation criteria and structure of recurrent budget on vocational training under the NTP-NRD since the integration of Project 1956 since 2016. In 2014 and 2015, most survey provinces focused on delegating the vocational training budget to the district level (delegating more than 60 percent of the funding). In 2016, due to the lack of guidance on the allocation criteria and structure of recurrent funding in the NTP-NRD (including funding for vocational training), each province allocated the vocational training budget differently (Table 3). Some provinces continued to strongly increase the delegation of vocational training funds to the district level (Lao Cai, Ninh Thuan and Tra Vinh); one province still had not delegated any vocational training funds to the district level (Dak Nong); and other provinces significantly reduced the delegation rate to the district level (Hoa Binh and Quang Tri).

Table 3. The budget structure for vocational training support via Project 1956 in the seven survey provinces (%)

Province	DoLISA			DARD			Direct allocation to the provincial VTCs of mass organisations (Women’s Union, Farmers’ Association, Provincial Labour Federation, etc.)			District and city authorities		
	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016
Lao Cai	22,8	32,8	16,7	14,5	24,7	0	0	0	0	62,7	42,5	83,3
Hoa Binh	24,3	38,4	17,6	12,6	10,7	37,8	0	0	7,6	63,1	50,9	37
Nghe An (*)	19,8	14,7	-	7,6	7,4	-	3	4,4	-	69,4	73,5	-
Quang Tri	15	15	54,3	15	15	10,2	0	0	0	70	70	35,5
Ninh Thuan	3,5	5	0	7	7	0	0	0	0	91,5	86	100
Dak Nong	73	67	69	27	33	31	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tra Vinh	21	4	19,4	19	29	3,2	0	0	0	60	67	77,4

Source: Decisions on the allocation of vocational training funding for 2014-2016 in seven survey provinces
(*) As of September 2016, in Nghe An province, there was no official data on the total NTP-NRD funding for vocational training.

In Ninh Thuan and Nghe An provinces, NTP-NRD recurrent funding (including funding for vocational training) was allocated to most communes in 2016. This mechanism helped communes to proactively integrate resources at the commune level. However, the disadvantage was that many communes prioritised production support activities while disregarding vocational training (Box 1). In interviews, most officials at all levels of province, district and commune

supported the acceleration of delegation to the commune level, however they stressed the need to retain part of the NTP-NRD recurrent funding at the provincial and district levels for vocational training and other activities, due to the responsibility of the provincial and district levels for ensuring that activities are implemented according to the province’s approved development strategies and plans.



Box 1. Delegating the entire NTP-NRD recurrent funding to the commune level resulted in low priority given to vocational training

In Ninh Thuan province in 2016, the PPC allocated the entire recurrent funding of the NRD program to the district level. Districts then allocated the entire funding amount to the commune level. The PPC’s Decision 103/QĐ-UBND dated January 19, 2016 on the assignment of funding for the NTPs in 2016 did not specifically mention vocational training;¹⁷ so many communes only prioritised production support activities and neglected the issue of vocational training in planning for the use of NTP-NRD recurrent funds.

For example, in Ninh Phuoc district, DivoLISA officials said that at the beginning, seven out of the eight communes in the district that submitted the implementation plan for the NTP-NRD only mentioned the production support component, without addressing vocational training. After reviewing the common situation in the communes, the steering committee of Project 1956 in Ninh Phuoc district held meetings with the communes, leading to an agreement on the need to prioritise vocational training as well. Later, all eight communes included vocational training in their revised NTP-NRD implementation plans.

In most of the survey provinces, funding for vocational training decreased in 2016 compared to the two previous years. Declining recurrent funding for vocational training from the central NTP-NRD budget, difficulty in mobilising additional external resources, and an inability to arrange local funding for vocational training all made allocating the vocational training budget in 2016 increasingly difficult. Table 4 shows

that most of the survey provinces had lower vocational training expenditures in 2016 than in 2015. In particular, Tra Vinh and Lao Cai provinces recorded the highest levels of reduction in their vocational training expenditures (roughly 50 percent). This situation created difficulties in reaching the annual and medium-term vocational training targets of Project 1956.

Table 4. Total funding for vocational training in the seven survey provinces (2014-2016)

Unit: million VND

Province	2014		2015		2016	
	Central budget	Local budget	Central budget	Local budget	Central budget	Local budget
Lao Cai	8,500	0	11,805	0	6,000	0
Hoa Binh	5,550	0	6,353	0	4,000	0
Nghe An	13,035	0	7,200	8,100	(*)	10,000
Quang Tri	3,600	0	5,000	0	4,900	200(**)
Ninh Thuan	3,730	0	5,230	0	(***)	0
Dak Nong	5,722	0	4,590	0	2,900	0
Tra Vinh	6,705	0	7,280	0	3,100	0

Sources: Decisions on funding for vocational training in 2014-2016 in the seven survey provinces

Notes:

(*) As of September 2016, there was no official data on central budget funding for vocational training in Nghe An province.

(**) As of August 2016, Quang Tri’s DoLISA was asking for an additional 2 billion VND from the local budget for the project “Vocational training for rural workers”.

(***) The Ninh Thuan PPC decided not to allocate detailed funding for vocational training, but rather to allocate the total NTP-NRD recurrent funding to the district level so that they could allocate funding for the implementation of Project 1956.

The annual “soft” budget for recruitment, monitoring and evaluation of vocational training and teacher development remains low. According to Project 1956, the anticipated national budget allocation from 2010 to 2020 is 15 percent for strengthening infrastructure for public VTCs, 78 percent for vocational training of rural labourers, and seven percent for other activities. In fact, from 2010 to 2014, the budget for infrastructure construction and purchasing equipment for public VTCs accounted for more

than 60 percent of the total Project 1956 budget. In 2015 and 2016, the funding for infrastructure investment decreased sharply (some provinces did not allocate any funds for this category), however “soft funds” (for recruitment, monitoring, evaluation, textbook development, teacher development, etc.) were also allocated at a low level (below 5 percent), despite the important contributions of such activities to effective vocational training. (Table 5).

Table 5. Budget structure for Project 1956 in the survey provinces (2010-2016)

Province	2010-2014			2015-2016		
	Strengthening infrastructure and equipment for public VTCs	Support for vocational training of rural labourers	Other activities (recruitment, monitoring, evaluation, textbook development, teacher development, etc.)	Strengthening infrastructure and equipment for public VTCs	Support for vocational training of rural labourers	Other activities (recruitment, monitoring, evaluation, textbook development, teacher development, etc.)
Lao Cai	40	54	6	23.6	64.6	11.8
Hoa Binh	76.5	21.4	2.1	0	95.3	4.7
Nghe An	62.6	33.9	3.5	-	-	-
Quang Tri	-	-	-	24.4	74.6	1.0
Ninh Thuan	61.6	34.7	3.7	-	-	-
Dak Nong	-	-	-	0	97.6	2.4
Tra Vinh	68.7	27.7	3.6	0	99	1

Source: Preliminary reviews of vocational training in 2010-2014 and budget allocation decisions for vocational training in 2015-16 in the survey provinces.

Particularly in 2016, four out of the seven survey provinces did not allocate any budget for recruitment or for monitoring and supervision of vocational training; three out of the seven provinces made separate budget allocations for these activities, however the budget declined sharply compared to 2015.¹⁸ This was mainly attributed to the sharp decline in overall funding

from the central budget for vocational training in 2016 compared to the previous years, to the increase in the support provisions for trainees as well as the support funding for vocational training (according to Decision 46), and to the reduced cost of managing, monitoring and supervising vocational training activities when Project 1956 was merged with the NRD program.¹⁹

“This year, the budget for vocational training is still insufficient to meet people’s demands, so the funding for recruitment, monitoring and supervision has been cut.”

(Man, officer of DoLISA, Quang Tri)

“According to the plan submitted to the PPC, the fund for monitoring and supervision was more than 100 million dong annually, but in 2016, the province only allocated a little more than 30 million dong. DARD explained that the fund for monitoring and supervision was to be no more than one percent of the total budget of the NTP-NRD.”

(Man, officer of DoLISA, Hoa Binh)

The slow allocation of the annual vocational training budget has caused difficulties for vocational training institutions. In 2014, the annual vocational training fund was delivered to the district level in around March and April; following preparatory steps, vocational training courses opened in May at the earliest. In 2015 and 2016, the delivery of the vocational training funding was even slower than in 2014, because localities had to develop medium-term vocational training plans for 2016-2020, and balancing the funding for vocational training budget and other NTP-NRD livelihood activities also took time. In 2016 in the survey provinces, the decision on allocating funds for vocational training from the central budget was received in May at the earliest (in Quang Tri, Hoa Binh, Tra Vinh and Nghe An provinces), and as late as June or July in other provinces. The organisation of vocational training classes in the later months of the year causes many difficulties, such as: (i) courses coincide with the rainy and stormy season, affecting participation and the quality of outdoor training activities; (ii) courses coincide with the farmers’ harvest season, making it difficult to attract students; (iii) it is not possible to organise agricultural vocational classes for the initial crops of the year; (iv) it is difficult for vocational training institutions to hire external teachers because they are busy at the end of the year; (v) disbursement pressure at the end of the financial year results in classes with low efficiency; and (vi) local vocational

training needs are surveyed in the previous year, so when classes are only provided nearly one year later, many people have already shifted to other livelihood activities, forcing vocational training institutions to enrol additional students or change class locations.

To address the situation of slow capital allocation, the district VTC in Quy Chau (Nghe An province) boldly organised vocational classes prior to the delivery of the funds. However, not all areas were willing to organise early vocational training courses, because this also causes difficulties in relation to the payment and liquidation procedures. (Box 2).

Box 2. Quy Chau district VTC shows flexibility while dealing with slow delivery of vocational training funds

In previous years, fund allocation decisions for vocational training in Quy Chau district (Nghe An) were issued by the province in February or March, allowing training institutions to open classes by May. In 2016, due to the bungled allocation of vocational training funding from the NTP-NRD’s total recurrent budget, as of September, vocational training institutions still did not know how much funding would be allocated to them from the NTP-NRD budget.

In 2016, people from the Thai ethnic group in Quy Chau wanted to participate in two vocational classes, garment making and mushroom cultivation right from the beginning of the year. To prevent those in need of vocational training from having to wait for too long or risk dropping out, the district VTC asked for permission of the District People’s Committee (DPC) to open classes from February to April. The director of the district VTC decided to advance three months of his wages to support students in the garment class. To avoid difficulties in payment and liquidation, the dates of all invoices, vouchers and teaching plans had to be left blank for later completion to legitimate the financial procedures.

Stakeholder roles in the management and organisation of vocational training

In the first six months of 2016, the steering committees of Project 1956 in the survey areas were virtually inactive due to organisational changes. As reported in the first and second round reports from 2014 and 2015, steering committees at the district and commune levels existed only on paper and were yet to clearly demonstrate their roles of “directing” and “regulating” vocational training activities.

In 2016, in the spirit of incorporating Project 1956 into the NTP-NRD according to NA Resolution 100/2015/QH13,²⁰ Hoa Binh province decided to dissolve the Project 1956 steering committees at provincial, district and commune levels, effective from March 2016.²¹ Dak Nong province merged the Project 1956 steering committee with the steering committee of a social affairs, vocational development and vocational training project to 2020, with DoLISA as its standing agency.²² The Project 1956 steering committees in the remaining five survey provinces (Lao Cai, Nghe An, Quang Tri, Ninh Thuan and Tra Vinh) continued to exist, but were almost completely inactive as vocational training budgets in 2016 were allocated to NTP-NRD steering committees. On October 10, 2016, the Prime Minister issued Decision 41/2016/QĐ-TTg on the management and regulation of NTPs, which clearly stated that only one NTP steering committee should exist at provincial and district levels, and that communes should establish a single NTP management committee. Since then, the Project 1956 steering committees at all levels have been officially dissolved.

Coordination between DoLISAs and DARDs in the survey provinces was confused when Project 1956 was merged with the NTP-NRD. Prior to 2016, DARDs in the survey provinces (with the exception of Dak Nong) did not play a role in directing and comprehensively managing agricultural vocational training, following Decision 971.²³ In 2016, with the incorporation of Project 1956 into the NTP-NRD, the agriculture and rural development sector took charge of allocating the budget for vocational training

(as part of NTP-NRD recurrent funding). This created a challenge, as the labour, invalids and social affairs sector still played a presiding role in the synthesis of vocational training plans, but was no longer responsible for allocating the budget. Meanwhile, the agriculture and rural development sector was in charge of allocating the budget, but was not involved in the synthesis of vocational training plans, and did not yet have a mechanism for coordination with DoLISA in allocating the budget for vocational training.

“Every year, DoLISA organised at least two inter-sectoral conferences to discuss the allocation of the vocational training budget to different units, inviting DPI, DOF and DARD to attend. This year, however, we didn’t receive any invitation from DARD for this event.”

(Woman, staff of DoLISA, Hoa Binh)

“If vocational training is incorporated into the NTP-NRD, the district will be the intermediate level, but it is not clear which agency will have overall responsibility. The standing agency will either be DivoLISA or DivARD. I find it very confusing. It is impossible that one agency keeps the money, while another takes charge of management. The coordination mechanism is still unclear.”

(Man, staff of DivoLISA, Muong Khuong district, Lao Cai)

Difficulties remain in the management of vocational training at the district and commune levels. Four out of nine survey districts (Ninh Phuoc, Ninh Hai, Bac Ai and Dak Glong) had already assigned officials to be in charge of managing vocational training activities, while the remaining five districts (Muong Khuong, Da Bac, Quy Chau, Dakrong and Cau Ke) were yet to have specialised staff for the management of vocational training. In most of the survey communes, the managers of vocational training courses were officials from the CLC, the agricultural sector, the Women’s Union, the Farmers’ Association, the Youth Union or the commune office. Due to the involvement of many different units in agricultural and non-agricultural vocational training (some signing contracts with the DPC, some signing contracts

with provincial-level agencies, and some signing collaboration contracts with each other), the DivoLISA and the CPC had difficulty in regulating, planning, synthesising data, and monitoring and evaluating vocational training activities.

VTCs lack full-time teachers. In principle, public VTCs at the district level must ensure at least one full-time teacher²⁴ for each occupation. In fact, public VTCs are currently short of full-time teachers. In Quang Tri, for example, VTCs only have between one and three full-time teachers each (while each VTC is licensed to provide training on five or more occupations). In Tra Vinh, each VTC only has an average two full-time teachers on average, while some VTCs do not have any full-time teachers. In Dak Nong province, eight out of 13 VTCs do not have full-time teachers. The main reasons indicated by the VTCs are the lack of people with suitable qualifications and skills, and the downsizing requirements. Because of the lack of full-time teachers, the district VTCs mainly invite teachers who are working in other agencies in the district or province (“part-time teachers”). Inviting part-time teachers often limits the class schedule (i.e. the schedule depends on the free time of the part-time teachers). Some part-time teachers are weak in teaching expertise and hands-on skills in a number of the training occupations, resulting in low equality vocational training. The relatively low level of tuition fees under Project 1956,²⁵ with no assistance for travel costs, also makes it difficult for vocational training institutions to invite qualified teachers to visit the communes and villages to provide mobile training.

There is no coordination mechanism between commune CLCs and vocational training institutions. The commune CLC network has been established across the country. In some survey areas (Lao Cai, Hoa Binh, Nghe An and Tra Vinh), commune CLCs actively cooperate with vocational training institutions to assess local demand for vocational learning, prepare enrolment plans and support the organisation of vocational training classes. However, there are still no specific regulations on collaboration between CLCs and vocational training institutions.

According to Decision 971, commune CLCs can directly provide continuing basic-level and short-term vocational training if they meet the requirements. Actually, this rule is very difficult to implement, even with the lowest level of training of less than three months’ duration. Staff of commune CLCs mostly come from the educational sector and do not have professional qualifications or vocational training certificates (they only have teaching certificates). In interviews, most commune officials said that if the conditions were loosened for licensing continuing short-term vocational training on agriculture and small handicrafts, commune CLCs could organise the teaching. Commune CLCs could mainly hire part-time teachers for on-site teaching, and could call on good producers, skilled workers and part-time teachers to develop textbooks in accordance with Decision 971²⁶).

“It is all right for CLC staff to take charge of vocational training management, but not feasible for them to directly get involved in training work, because they have no expertise in vocational training. If the number of teachers is increased, or part-time teachers are hired, the CLC can also organise vocational training.”

(Man, staff of Chau Dien commune, Cau Ke district, Tra Vinh)

“If the CLC hires teachers or artisans to teach, it can be a vocational training institution. Textbooks can be developed by artisans. My commune also has embroidery artisans. The advantage of hiring local teachers is that they will provide more regular training over a one- or two-month period. Meanwhile, artisans from other areas only provide training for a few days.”

(Woman, staff of Chau Hanh commune, Quy Chau district, Nghe An)

There are policy barriers against encouraging core farmers to participate in training and imparting vocational skills to other people. Artisans, skilled workers, agricultural extension workers, village veterinarians, farm owners and good farmers already live in local communes. They are very knowledgeable about the

production conditions, occupational practices, culture and languages of ethnic minority people, and are well-suited to train others. At present, the regulation that vocational trainers must have vocational training certificates or qualifications²⁷ is a barrier against calling on these core farmers to participate in vocational training. In some survey areas, for the purposes of accounting and paperwork, teachers from schools or provincially-recognised artisans are indicated as trainers for small-scale and

handicraft production, but in reality, the trainers are mainly skilled workers from the communes and villages.

In 2016, Dak Nong province came up with an initiative to use the vocational training budget to provide professional training for village agricultural extension workers, aiming to promote the role of these core farmers in local extension work. However, this plan is also facing budget constraints. (Box 3).

Box 3. Using vocational training funds to train village agricultural extension workers in Dak Nong province

The Dak Nong PPC issued Decision 1598/QĐ-UBND dated October 16, 2015 on the training plan for agricultural extension staff and collaborators in 2016-2017. Accordingly, the province will train 72 commune agricultural extension workers (at the intermediate level) using the local budget and 770 village agricultural extension workers (at the elementary level) using the Project 1956 budget. In 2016, the province planned to open 10 vocational training courses for 346 village agricultural extension workers.

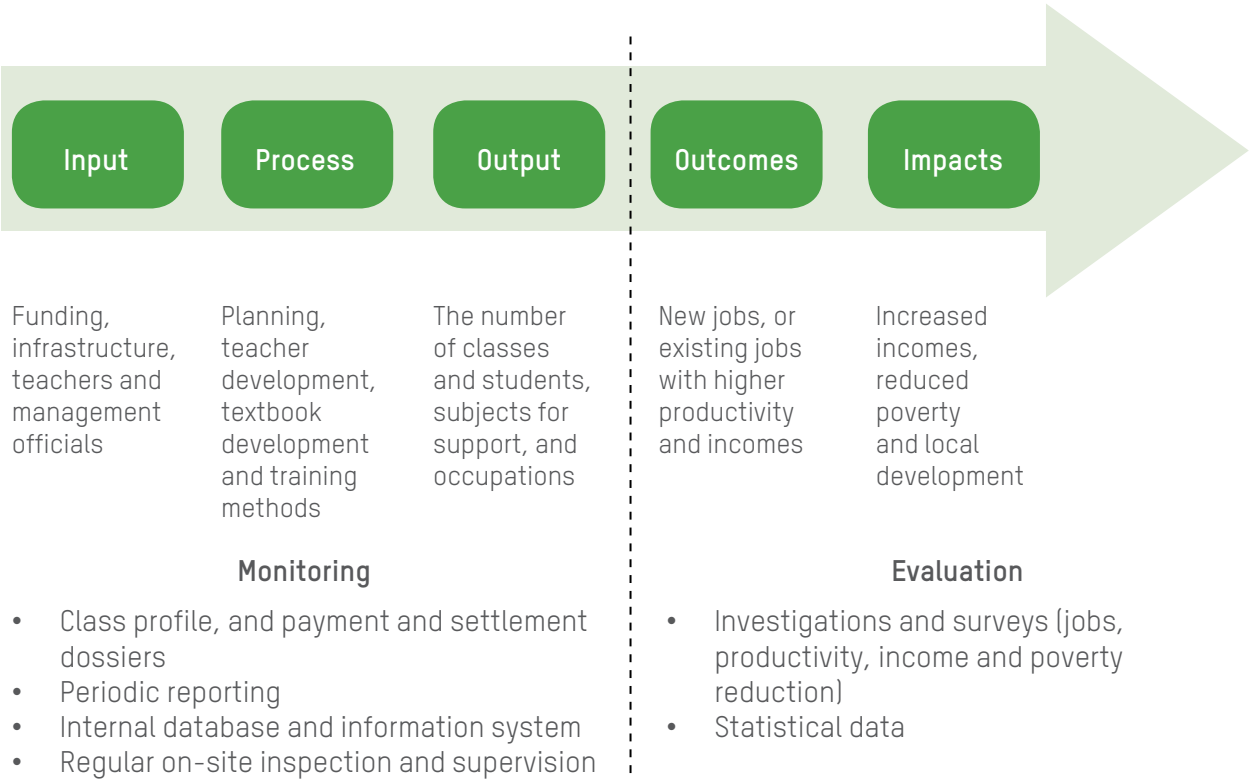
The current difficulty in implementing this plan is the budget. In 2016, the provincial budget for agricultural vocational training was estimated at 900 million VND, of which 600 million VND was to be spent on training agricultural extension workers, so only 300 million VND was allocated to VTCs to provide agricultural vocational training for rural workers. Thus, the VTCs in the province significantly reduced the number of classes (there were even some VTCs that didn't open any agricultural vocational training classes in 2016). Therefore, the province is trying to identify the most reasonable measures to ensure that all district VTCs have classes.

A system for assessing the effectiveness of vocational training is lacking. Localities mainly supervise “input” and “output” indicators for vocational training. Funding for the management of vocational training remains very limited, and is mainly concentrated at the provincial level, prioritising the activities of reviewing, reporting and inspecting localities and vocational training institutions on their compliance with regulations and procedures (on vocational learning subjects, class profiles, payment/settlement vouchers, etc.). The steering committees at the district and commune levels have frequently not been allocated with separate funding but have had to use the regular budgets of each agency or unit. When Project 1956 was merged into the NTP-NRD, the budget for the management of vocational training in 2016 was significantly reduced compared to 2015. No specific guidance has been provided on the monitoring role of

mass organisations in relation to vocational training organisations within the communes, so they have not yet carried out monitoring in the survey communes.

Meanwhile, due attention has not been paid to the assessment of the results and effects of vocational training due to a lack of a results framework, evaluation methods, measurement tools, and attached detailed guidance, as well as due to a lack of task assignments, personnel, funding, and enhancement of the monitoring and evaluation capacity of the commune staff (Figure 2). The data on vocational training effectiveness in local reports is still synthesised from the evaluation forms after the completion of each vocational class by the vocational training institutions, and is not yet based on independent and objective assessment data collected by a third party.

Figure 2. Monitoring and evaluation procedures for short-term vocational training



Some localities have made efforts to develop a database and management software for vocational training. Lao Cai province has developed and implemented a database and management software to link data on vocational training from the district level to the province level.²⁸ Quang Tri provincial Women’s Union has developed management software for vocational students. Databases and software make it easier to monitor and synthesise vocational

training input and output data, avoiding the duplication of trainees in cases where there are many facilities recruiting students in the same locality. However, the databases and management software do not yet cover data on vocational training effectiveness or data on the two significant indicators mentioned in Decision 971: “the percentage of trainees with new jobs” and “the percentage of trainees doing existing jobs with higher productivity and incomes.”





3. EFFECTIVENESS OF SHORT-TERM VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN ETHNIC MINORITY AREAS

This section evaluates the effectiveness of short-term vocational training policies for rural workers based on an analysis framework covering equity, efficiency and effectiveness (the “3E framework”).

3.1. EQUITY

The allocation mechanism and funding norms of Project 1956 prioritise disadvantaged areas and vulnerable groups. Localities in disadvantaged and ethnic minority areas are prioritised in the allocation of vocational training budgets from central sources.²⁹ VTCs in poor and disadvantaged districts have higher investment levels than those in other areas. Teachers and managers in charge of vocational training in areas “facing special difficulties”, in “isolated, remote”, border and island areas, and in ethnic minority communities have mobile allowances and/or are provided with official housing support.³⁰ The level of support for study expenses and food and travel allowances for rural labourers in vocational schools is higher for vulnerable groups than for other groups. The purpose of these policies is to improve the access of the poor, ethnic minority people and disadvantaged groups to vocational training support.

Regulations specify that the number of trainees in vocational training courses for disadvantaged groups will be lower than in courses for other groups. Circulars 42 and 43 stipulate the smallest class size is for trainees who are blind, followed by classes for people from ethnic minority groups with limited populations, persons with disabilities, and then for other trainees.³¹ This provision provides underprivileged people with difficulties in receiving and processing

information with an opportunity to acquire necessary knowledge and skills (fewer trainees in a class means that teachers can provide additional direct instruction to each trainee). In Quang Tri province, an additional regulation sets the number of trainees for ethnic minority groups with larger populations at the same level as that for ethnic minority groups with limited populations.³²

“Dakrong has almost no interaction with Kinh people. This year, according to Decision 14, classes with ethnic minority people have higher training costs. If the cost for normal labourers from downstream areas (lowland districts) averages 1.7 million dong/person/course, the cost for ethnic minority labourers will be 2.1 million dong/person/course. Classes with ethnic minority students also have a maximum of just 20 people. Through this move, the province aims to train fewer people but with higher quality.”

(Man, staff from Dakrong district, Quang Tri)

The number of women attending vocational training is equivalent to or higher than the number of men. Table 6 shows that the number of women attending vocational training is higher than that of men in some survey provinces (for example, Hoa Binh, Dak Nong and Nghe An). These provinces offer many training courses related to on-site handicrafts production (making bamboo brooms, making bamboo blinds, brocade weaving, etc.), beauty care, and cooking, or related to occupations in industrial zones with many garment and footwear enterprises that mainly attract female workers. Lao Cai province alone has a low rate of female trainees (38 percent). There are many barriers for Hmong and Dao women³³ in Lao Cai to participate in vocational training classes,

such as language barriers, limited access to education, and gender-related community norms. Lao Cai province, like other provinces in the northern mountainous areas, does not have many industrial zones (especially those with

garment and footwear factories) to attract on-site female workers, and migration for industrial jobs is still uncommon among Hmong and Dao women.

Table 6. Vocational training participants, 2010-2014 (%)

Province	Vocational training participation		Participants			Specific groups								
	Agri	Non-agri	Group I	Group II	Group III	Poor people			Women			Ethnic minority people		
						Including			Including			Including		
							Agri	Non-agri		Agri	Non-agri		Agri	Non-agri
Lao Cai	58	42	92	2	6	61.4	57	43	38	69	31	78.5	56	44
Hoa Binh	44	56	92	0.4	7.6	8.2	58	42	65	40	60	82	46	54
Nghe An	50	50	36	9	55	10.8	42.5	57.5	58.3	51.4	48.6	10.5	42.5	57.5
Quang Tri	66	34	16	1	83	3.9	89	11	50.7	66.5	33.5	9.8	85	15
Ninh Thuan	66	34	54	6	40	13	79	21	48.3	58	42	41.5	67	33
Dak Nong	35	65	72	2	26	16	32	68	60	24	76	26	36	64
Tra Vinh	36	64	45	24.5	30.5	17.7	21	79	45.5	21.5	78.5	24	50	50

Source: Reports on the results of vocational training support to rural people between 2010 and 2014 in the seven survey provinces

Note: Group I: Rural people with revolutionary background, poor households, ethnic minority people, people with disabilities, and people who have lost agricultural land to investment projects; Group II: Rural people from near-poor households; Group III: Other rural people.

Many agricultural and handicraft courses were attended by significant numbers of ethnic minority women seeking to gain additional work and income close to home. Compared with the former thinking that women only do housework and care for children, women in the survey areas have become more involved in social activities, including vocational training. After the trainings, many of them improved their productivity and income, thus improving their voice and position in the family.

“In our village, women have learned how to grow vegetables and mushrooms and raise pigs. Men only clear land for farming and plant trees. I earn

money, so my husband respects me. The wife and the husband both make money.”

(Van Kieu woman, Phu Thieng village, Mo O commune, Dakrong district, Quang Tri)

“After the training, both women and men apply what they have learned. When symptoms are detected in their cattle, women who have learned about breeding techniques tell their husbands what needs to be done, and their husbands must follow this.”

(Khmer woman, Ngoc Ho village, Tam Ngai commune, Cau Ke district, Tra Vinh)

The proportion of poor and ethnic minority people attending vocational training class is still low. Table 6 shows that in most survey provinces (Quang Tri, Nghe An, Hoa Binh, Ninh Thuan, Dak Nong and Tra Vinh) the percentage of poor people attending vocational training is less than 20 percent.³⁴ The percentage of ethnic minority people participating in vocational training in some provinces (Nghe An, Quang Tri, Dak Nong and Tra Vinh) is also low. Most local officials and ethnic minority people who were interviewed said that poor and ethnic minority households are less likely to attend vocational training for several reasons:

- There are few opportunities to find work in local enterprises.
- Labourers in poor households are often the main economic support for their families, so it is difficult for them to attend vocational training courses for an extended period of time (1 to 3 months or more).
- Ethnic minority people are quite cautious when applying for training, as they have not seen successful cases of employment following vocational training.
- Language limitations (people not being fluent in Vietnamese, and classes not available in local languages except some handicraft classes using local ethnic trainers) are a disadvantage for ethnic minority people participating in vocational training, particularly for women.³⁵
- Villages are large, making travel difficult, so even if the class is held in the centre of the village or commune in the evening, many households do not want to attend, or drop out after the class commences.
- The majority of poor and ethnic minority people are poorly educated. Some have not identified the way in which they can develop their household economy, so they do not want to pursue vocational training.
- Poor households lack physical and financial conditions (land and capital) to apply new skills following the completion of training.

The abovementioned difficulties and limitations faced by poor and ethnic minority people are not new. The problem is that these difficulties have not been fully taken into account in the implementation of vocational training at the local level.

Some commune-level officials and village heads still have prejudice against selecting poor or ethnic minority people for vocational training. There is a prevalent view in the survey areas that poor people and ethnic minorities living far from commune centres are mostly not aware of information on vocational training. Village heads sometimes fail to inform all households, giving priority to informing some “literate”, “quick” and “knowledgeable” households “with favourable conditions for production” (i.e. households that are not poor) in providing information on applying for training.

A common perception of commune officials and village heads is that vocational training should be provided to larger-scale producers rather than disadvantaged small-scale producers (who only raise one or two pigs or a few dozen chickens). No training or guidance has been provided to local leaders on how to advise and promote the participation of poor people in vocational training, with an understanding of their limitations and difficulties.

“I encouraged those with understanding to join the vocational training courses, but I paid less attention to mobilising those who lack understanding. When poor households did not join after one or two times of trying to mobilise them, I stopped encouraging them.”

(Woman, staff of Dak Som commune, Dak Glong district, Dak Nong)

“They often select people aged from 25 to 27 to join the classes on raising chickens and ducks. If they choose elderly trainees, they will acquire knowledge slowly and will not be able apply this knowledge after the training. Literate young people are selected to go to training, and they then pass the knowledge on to other households.”

(Raglai woman, Ma Hoa village, Phuoc Dai commune, Bac Ai district, Ninh Thuan)

Vocational training classes tend to be concentrated in communes located near to the district centre. Over the past three years (2014 – 2016), the majority of short-term vocational training courses (especially agricultural and handicraft course) were mobile courses organised in villages or commune centres in order to facilitate local people, especially poor and ethnic minority people, to participate and to create favourable conditions for local monitoring. Many vocational classes were held in the evening (apart from the daytime practice sessions) in order to suit the needs of local people (so that they can carry out farming activities during the day and attend vocational training classes in the evening). During harvest times, vocational training classes were sometimes interrupted and then resumed later to avoid the situation where trainees drop out to harvest crops.

“At the beginning of the class, the teachers and the trainees agree on the timetable. The trainees are given the opportunity to choose a suitable time to attend the classes. They only need to raise their hands to choose the time for the class.”

(Male staff of Ban Xen commune, Muong Khuong district, Lao Cai)

However, there are still significant disparities between the number of vocational classes organised in better-off communes located close to the district centre and those organised in disadvantaged communes located far from the district centre. In fact, in some survey districts (for example, Muong Khuong district in Lao Cai, Da Bac district in Hoa Binh, Quy Chau district in Nghe An, and Dak Glong district in Dak Nong), the majority of vocational training classes have been concentrated in communes with favourable conditions. As a result, people in disadvantaged and remote communes are less likely to be aware of and been consulted on training, and thus less likely to attend.

“With limited budgets, some vocational training institutions find convenient places where it is easy to organise courses, because if trainees have to go too far, monitoring is difficult. It is also difficult to hire teachers to teach in remote

areas because there is no allowance for the transportation cost of the trainers.”

(Woman, staff of Provincial Women’s Union, Hoa Binh)

“The commune is located far from the district centre, so few teachers come here. There must be enough payment to attract teachers. They should be brought here by hired vehicles instead of traveling by their own motorbikes as their travel costs are not covered. The road from here to the district centre has deteriorated, making travel difficult. Trainers should be extremely enthusiastic to come here to teach. However, with support of only 30,000 dong per person for going down to the district for classes, no one wants to go to the district as one bus trip already costs 100,000 dong.”

(Woman, staff of Tan Pheo commune, Da Bac district, Hoa Binh)

In 2016, under direction from the central level,³⁶ the highest priority for the NTP-NRD funding (including funding for vocational training) was given to poor communes and “extremely difficult” communes. The NTP-NRD targets having 50 percent of communes meeting NRD standards (a set of 19 diverse criteria set by the central government³⁷) by 2020. In that context, local authorities have prioritised the allocation of resources to communes registered for the NTP-NRD. For example, in 2016 Lao Cai province allocated 1.5 billion VND out of the six billion VND central budget allocation for vocational training under the NTP-NRD to carry out vocational training in communes that are expected to reach NRD standards during the period from 2016 to 2020. In fact, prioritising vocational training budgets for communes expected to reach overall NRD standards has limited access to vocational training for people from communes with more difficult conditions.

Most poor people and ethnic minority people lack information and have not yet received counselling on vocational training. Over the past three years, two of the survey provinces (Lao Cai and Quang Tri) have paid attention to recruitment and the provision of counselling



on vocational training.³⁸ However, in general, the coverage, frequency and effectiveness of recruitment and counselling on vocational training are still low. The content of recruitment activities simply focused on disseminating State regulations, announcing the occupations that would be taught, and providing information on support policies for students. Most commune officials still have limited capacity to advise local residents, especially poor people and ethnic minorities, on vocational training linked to livelihood development models and employment opportunities within and outside their communities. In particular, local Farmers' Unions have not been allocated funds, and there is no plan to put into practice their role of "coordinating recruitment and mobilisation of farmers to attend vocational training," as set out in Decision 971.

The lack of a launching phase at the beginning of vocational training classes, where the needs of the students can be assessed, means that the classes do not meet the specific needs of the poor and ethnic minority people. In the survey areas over the past three years, vocational training institutions did not pay sufficient attention to analysing the real production situation and understanding the needs of students in order to design appropriate teaching contents and methods before opening classes. This situation reduces the effectiveness of vocational training, especially for poor people and ethnic minority people who have specific difficulties, limitations, and needs.

Recently, Circulars 42 and 43 have been issued to regulate the compulsory testing of trainees (on knowledge, soft skills, and professional skills)

prior to and during the classes, so that teaching and practical activities can focus on knowledge and skills that students do not yet know or have not yet mastered. However, as 2016 is the first year of implementation of both Circular 42 and 43, many vocational training institutions have not actually done this in practice. In particular, the Farmer Field School (FFS) approach has not yet been widely applied in agricultural vocational training. The FFS approach is very suitable for poor people and ethnic minority people, as it focuses on a launching and preparation phase for each class, the analysis of current production activities, empowering people to identify the key learning contents they need to master, and selecting practice sites.

There is gender prejudice evident in recruitment and mobilisation for vocational training. In planning vocational training courses, commune officials in some survey areas prioritised occupations considered "suitable" for women (for example, bamboo weaving, broom making, weaving with ethnic patterns, sewing, and cooking, that are considered to require "ingenuity and hard-working" characteristics and can be carried out in the family while taking care of children). The commune Women's Union staff assigned the village level Women's Union members to mobilise local women to join the training courses for these occupations. Occupations requiring "technical skills", such as electrical and machinery repairs, were assigned to Youth Union and Farmers' Union officials to assign to their male members. Gender stereotypes limit vocational training opportunities for both men and women in occupations that are seen as suitable for only one gender. (Table 7).

Table 7. Gendered participation in short-term training courses

Courses with full or majority female participation		Courses with full or majority male participation
Lao Cai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Home-based and industrial sewing, skills for household services, and embroidery with ethnic patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repair of agricultural machines and motorbikes, production of construction materials, mining, soldering and mechanics
Hoa Binh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Garment making, production of bamboo brooms for export, production of bamboo blinds, weaving with ethnic patterns, and production of supermarket bags 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electrical soldering, industrial electricity, motorbike repair, plastering, and interior electrical engineering
Nghe An	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embroidery, production of rattan products, weaving with ethnic patterns, seafood processing, food processing and preservation, industrial sewing, cooking, incense-stick making, and pig raising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mechanics, automobile technology, fishing, soldering, civil carpentry, steel reinforcement soldering, repair of mobile phones, repair of electronic products, electrical and mechanical appliances, civil electric engineering, construction, construction plastering, and motorbike repair
Quang Tri	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embroidery, production of conical leaf hats, and hair styling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operation of excavators, agricultural mechanics, mechanical soldering, shrimp raising, and horticulture
Ninh Thuan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industrial sewing, home-based sewing, office computer skills, seafood processing and preservation, cooking, and tourism services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction, automobile and motorbike repair
Dak Nong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industrial sewing, weaving with ethnic patterns, cooking, cake-making, flower arranging, silk painting, and make-up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repair of agricultural machines, civil electrical engineering, electrical soldering, and home interior services
Tra Vinh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industrial sewing, child care, cooking, and bamboo weaving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repair of agricultural combustion machines, motorbike repair, construction, and civil electrical engineering

Source: Reports on the results of vocational training support for rural people in the seven survey provinces (2010-14, and 2015).

Vocational training for migrant workers in the informal sector has been neglected. The survey provinces are not oriented towards recruitment, counselling and providing vocational training for migrant workers in the informal sector. Local authorities are only interested in migration flows in the formal sector, for example through linking

with enterprises in other provinces to arrange post-training jobs. Meanwhile, informal sector jobs, such as domestic work, construction, or sales, account for a large proportion of migrants. There should be more focus on vocational training for migrant workers in the coming period to help them to have the necessary skills to find

a job after migration. For example, localities can open short-term vocational training classes for migrant workers in the construction sector in the cities to help them have a better chance of earning higher incomes. (Box 4).

Box 4. Increasing employment opportunities for migrant workers through provision of vocational training certificates

From 2009 until now, Cau Ke district (Tra Vinh province) has organised many vocational training courses on construction for local workers (mainly from the Khmer ethnic group). Vocational training classes on construction are considered quite successful in creating jobs and increasing incomes for many workers after their training.

Due to the opportunity to earn a higher income in the construction industry, many people want to go and find work in the cities. Having vocational training certificates makes it easier for them to find a job and to earn a higher income. In fact, in Chau Dien and Tam Ngai communes, most of the graduates from the vocational training classes on construction went to cities to seek jobs. Once arriving in the city, they formed groups, going to work together and sharing work with others in the team. Commune officials said: *"The majority of the trainees from the construction classes went to the city to find work after receiving their certificates. They did well in the city, earning increased wages."*

3.2. EFFICIENCY

Policy interventions aim at increasing the efficiency of the use of vocational training funds. Integrating vocational training support policies into Decision 46 helps to reduce transaction costs. The merging of district-level vocational education centres helps to reduce management costs by combining the strengths of the facilities (of vocational

education centres) and the teaching staff (of continuing education centres and technical and career counselling centres). This has served to link vocational training with continuing education programs. Although there are difficulties in arranging teachers (an oversupply of teachers on theoretical topics, and a lack of vocational trainers) and differences in the support policies for teachers in the same unit (theoretical teachers are provided with a teaching allowance whereas vocational teachers do not, and theoretical teachers are entitled to a three-month summer vacation whereas vocational teachers do not), officials at all levels support the merger of the vocational centres. The reason for this is that the merger creates opportunities to increase efficiency in the use of resources, to identifying students immediately after they complete junior secondary school, and to increase the number of students enrolled in vocational classes.

Realising cost savings by organising mobile courses in communes and villages. When mobile vocational courses are held in villages or communes, the vocational training institutions may use village community houses or commune CLCs. The cost of buying on-site materials for practical sessions is also cheaper. Agricultural classes can use local livestock farms and fields for practical sessions. For local trainees, there are no additional costs when joining classes in their own village or commune, unlike when they go to the district centre.

In some provinces (Lao Cai, Hoa Binh, Dak Nong and Nghe An), vocational training institutions hire teaching assistants who are skilled local workers or local agricultural officials, veterinarians, or commune-level staff from Program 30a to provide in mobile vocational training in brocade weaving, bamboo weaving, making bamboo brooms, making bamboo blinds, animal husbandry, veterinary training, and construction. Hiring lecturers and on-site assistants helps to reduce costs compared to outsourcing. At the same time, lecturers and on-site assistants can convey practical knowledge and skills that are suitable to local conditions.

Some classes on livelihood model development help trainees earn more income. Over the past three years, some vocational training institutions in Hoa Binh, Quang Tri and Ninh Thuan provinces have paid

attention to the use of materials procurement to support trainees in livelihood model development. Apart from the purpose of increasing people's

business experience, business modelling also helps them to have more products and income at the end of the class. (Box 5).

Box 5. Linking vocational training with livelihood modelling in Quang Tri

In Dakrong district in recent years, the district VTC and the VTC of the provincial Women's Union have linked vocational training with the development of business models. Training institutions have spent a part of the course funds for each household or group of households to buy materials for developing livelihood models. Support can be provided at either the beginning or the end of the course. The main purpose of the assistance is to enable local people to practice and to compare the results achieved before and after the training. This method is particularly effective for Van Kieu and Pa Co ethnic people who are illiterate.

In a mushroom production class in Phu Thieng village in Mo O commune, for example, the district VTC spent part of the course budget on materials to build a mushroom-producing facility, and on buying straw mushrooms, seedlings, and watering equipment. Every week, 23 Van Kieu trainees took turns to water the mushrooms three times a day. At the end of the course, the mushrooms that were collected were divided equally between the trainees. To take another example, for a pig raising model in Mo O commune, the trainers bought two female pigs so that two selected households could develop the model. Trainees drew lots to ensure fairness in the selection of the households that received the assistance. The course lasted for four months. At the end of the course, the weight of each pig reached around 70 kilograms, from an initial weight of 7 to 8 kilograms.

In some survey areas, efforts have been made to integrate vocational training with other forms of livelihood support. In Quy Chau District, Nghe An, the local Women's Union has collaborated with the Industrial Promotion Centre to organise brocade weaving for Thai women and to purchase their products. Bac Ai district of Ninh Thuan province has integrated vocational training activities under Project 1956 with the production development support components of Program 135 and the Tam Nong project in order to provide training on wet rice cultivation and support in building a rice cultivation model. In Cau Giay village, Ninh Hai district, Ninh Thuan, the DPC, the CPC, the Nui Chua National Park, and the Department of Industry and Trade (DoIT) have cooperated in producing handicraft products from forest tree seedlings. This has not only created local jobs for Raglai women, but has also supported them through promoting and purchasing their products.

In Hoa Binh and Nghe An, some workshops and enterprises directly involved in vocational training receive support from the State for their training costs. There is a commitment that

trainees will be offered work at relevant facilities after their training, and they can earn additional income during the course if their products are purchased by businesses.

"While learning to weave bamboo, I sold my products to those companies. After finishing the course, some people in Na Ca village earned over one million dong, while the lowest income was 200,000 to 300,000 dong. In addition to making products during class time, we could also bring products home to finish them. Those who worked faster earned more money. I even earned 650,000 dong when studying and taking care of my grandchildren at the same time."

(Thai woman, Dong Minh village, Chau Hanh commune, Quy Chau district, Nghe An)

"The department supported businesses by training workers, and the businesses committed to take on those workers. During the training period, the workers learned and worked concurrently, receiving about 2.5 million dong per month."

(Man, staff of DivoLISA, Bac Ai district, Ninh Thuan)

“Vegetable growing classes last for two months, and mushroom growing classes last for one month. A common mushroom farming facility was built to cultivate mushrooms collectively. The mushrooms that were produced were divided equally. The vegetable growing model was the same. After the course finished, the vegetables were ready to serve.”

(Man, staff from Mo O commune, Dakrong district, Quang Tri)

However, there are many limitations on the efficient use of vocational training funds. **Most notably, the investment budget for the district-level VTCs is rather high whilst the utilisation rate is low.** In the survey provinces, many district VTCs have invested tens of billions of dong on infrastructure development, but the facilities are still not complete (for example, they lack student dormitories,

electricity and water supplies). VTCs have invested heavily in equipment for non-agricultural vocational training but still lack adequate trainers. Meanwhile, the annual training cost of each centre is set at only 150-200 million VND (meaning that they can only organise two or three classes per year) or even lower, not to mention that districts have to pay employee salaries and other regular expenses. Paradoxically, while these centres have invested heavily in infrastructure, they mainly organise mobile training courses in the villages and communes (Box 6). In order to make use of infrastructure and equipment, some VTCs seek to make links with vocational schools, technical schools, colleges, and universities within and outside their province to find teachers for their centres. In this case, the role of the VTCs is mainly to facilitate the use of infrastructure and equipment and to coordinate enrolment, while the remaining training activities are undertaken by other schools.

Box 6. Inefficient utilisation of district-level VTCs that have made considerable investments in infrastructure and equipment

As of May 2015, the VTC of Da Bac district in Hoa Binh province had received 12 billion VND for investing in building facilities and purchasing training equipment. However, the facilities do not function properly due to water shortages and inadequate electricity supplies, making it impossible to organise courses on garment making and soldering. There is a lack of accommodation for trainees and offices for teachers. In 2016, the centre continued to receive funds for investing in electricity and water supply systems. However, the centre has not held any short-term courses in its main facility. All of its courses have been mobile.

The centre for continuing education, vocational training and career counselling in Ninh Phuoc district, Ninh Thuan, received nearly 20 billion VND between 2010 and 2014 to build physical facilities and to purchase training equipment. In 2016, the centre expanded its operation to Thuan Nam district. However, since its establishment the centre has not held any courses at the facility. All of its courses have been organised at the commune or village level, or at businesses (in the case of industrial sewing courses).

Ninh Son district's centre for continuing education, vocational training and career counselling was allocated nearly 16.5 billion VND for the period from 2010 to 2014 to build physical facilities and to purchase training equipment, however it has only used some of these facilities and equipment for providing training on certain occupations, such as industrial sewing, cultivation techniques, livestock production and veterinary services, office computer skills, and civil electronics. Equipment has been provided for seven other occupations (mechanics, handicraft and small industries, industrial electricity, civil electronics, electro-refrigeration, repair of automobiles and motorcycles, and construction engineering), but this equipment has not been used as the centre has not had suitable staff trainers or standard curricula.

In Quang Tri province, Dakrong district's VTC received funding of 14.5 billion VND. A new main building was completed in May 2014, however as of April 2016 only one course on goat raising has been held at the centre, due to a lack of training equipment and because ethnic minority people do not want to travel long distances to attend courses.

Linking vocational training with agricultural and industrial promotion and other policies and projects on support for development of livelihoods is still limited. Over the past three years, most of the study provinces have used agricultural promotion staff as a core workforce for agricultural vocational training.³⁹ In 2016, agricultural promotion centres in five of the seven provinces (Hoa Binh, Quang Tri, Nghe An, Ninh Thuan and Dak Nong) were granted certificates allowing them to carry out agricultural vocational training. However, there is no coherence between the agricultural and industrial promotion program and the vocational training program, despite the guidelines in Decision 971.

“There is no integration between agricultural and industrial promotion and vocational training.

At different conferences, there were directions on integration, but it was difficult to put these directions into practice as there was no concrete guidance, so each sector has approached this in its own way. Integration must be planned from the beginning to allocate the related budget. For example, agreeing that I will support vocational training, and you will support seedlings.”

(Man, staff of DoLISA, Nghe An)

Attempts in some localities to link vocational training with other programs and projects have only been made on an individual basis and are unsustainable. There is poor cohesion in many cases, due to challenges in mobilise funding, different support periods, and lax coordination between stakeholders. (Box 7).

Box 7. Difficulties in integrating vocational training funds with funds from Program 30a and the NTP-NRD in Quang Tri

In Dakrong district (Quang Tri province), the first annual study report prepared in 2014 mentioned “Option 39” (Option 39/PA-UBND under Decision 461/QĐ-UBND dated May 16, 2012 of the Dakrong DPC)⁴⁰ in relation to integrating support for poverty reduction. In 2015, based on the premise of successful implementation of Option 39, the district continued to support households to build models of lemon grass cultivation in Mo O and Huong Hiep communes, integrating the Project 1956 funds with the production support component of the NTP-NRD, and developed a goat raising model in A Ngo, Ba Long and Trieu Nguyen communes by integrating the Project 1956 funds with the production support component of Program 30a.

For the lemon grass cultivation model in two communes of Mo O and Huong Hiep, by the end of 2015 the CPCs in collaboration with MTV Limited Company (a company promising to purchase the products of trainees) provided seeds in combination with the organisation of classes providing guidance on lemon grass cultivation. However, when the fieldwork took place for the third annual study report (June 2016), almost all of the supported lemon grass varieties had died. The main reason for this failure was because local people were not trained in lemon grass cultivation (it was expected that vocational training class would occur in 2016), and the lemon grass varieties were not provided at the right time for cultivation. This indicates a number of shortcomings in the integration of resources, which requires synchronised support, the development of a specific integration plan, and close coordination among stakeholders.

Vocational trainees have limited access to loans from the Bank for Social Policies. Although the regulation on offering student loans for rural workforce apprenticeships has existed for a long time,⁴¹ this policy has not been implemented in survey areas. The main reasons are: (i) commune officials do not know about the policy of offering

student loans for apprenticeships, so they don’t disseminate information about this to local people; (ii) mostly there is just short-term continuing vocational training (with a duration of two to three months), with very few facilities providing basic vocational training, so people do not need to borrow money while undertaking training.

After completing vocational training, people also find it difficult to access loans from the National Employment Fund ("120 Capital"). The common causes are: (i) people have already taken a loan from the Social Policy Bank and have not yet paid it back, so they are not able to borrow again; (ii) the loan application procedures are complicated, while the loan period is short (a maximum of 12 months for cattle and poultry raising, crop cultivation, services, or small businesses);⁴² (iii) the National Employment Fund has limited funds, so local authorities prioritise offering loans to production units rather than to personal borrowers.

The view of a majority of local officials in the survey areas on vocational training is still narrow, focusing on developing skills for job creation, rather than on vocational training as part of an overall development strategy for sustainable livelihoods. In the survey areas over the past three years, a project-based approach⁴³ has not been applied to combine vocational training with other forms of livelihood support, so it is difficult to attract the participation of the poor in vocational training and to ensure the effectiveness of vocational training. From 2016, Project 1956 has been incorporated into the NTP-NRD, resulting in better opportunities to integrate vocational training with other forms of livelihood support, and helping to facilitate the production development and rural services model of the NTP-NRD. However, at both central and provincial levels there has been no specific direction or guidance on coordination among stakeholders or on the integration of different funding sources by theme or location throughout the project cycle, beginning with the planning and budget allocation phases.

"Vocational training is not linked to post-training support. At first, trainees were excited to join Project 1956, but now they are not excited at all as the training did not change their lives. As for the trainees from the rice cultivation class, their production yields are not much higher because they have not changed their cultivation or investment methods. They have knowledge, but they do not apply it due to a lack of resources. It is also difficult to move from agriculture to

non-agricultural activities because there are no businesses [to hire trainees]."

(Man, staff of Dakrong district VTC, Quang Tri)

"After the training courses are completed, loans should be offered to trainees to immediately put into practice what they have learned. Others will follow if they see that it is effective. If trainees just have to manage by themselves, it can take them a long time to apply the knowledge they have learned, and the knowledge will be gradually lost, so that people do not want to apply it anymore."

(Man, staff of Tam Ngai commune, Cau Ke district, Tra Vinh)

The training period for some agricultural occupations is too long, and many of the contents do not match people's needs. The agricultural classes are usually held over a period of two or three months, with a variety of "standard" curricula such as breed selection, cultivation, prevention of pests and control of diseases, harvesting, and preservation. However, people normally just need to learn some of these stages or techniques because most of them have already been working as farmers. The prolonged duration of training makes people bored, and in some courses in the survey communes, many people dropped out after attending for just two or three days. Due to the organisation of classes with long days mainly focused on theory and practicing simulations in the classroom, some people did not retain the information they had learned. In addition, with classes of extended duration, households sometimes sent different family members to attend different training sessions, resulting in limited efficiency in developing skills.

"Vocational training for three months is too long. Many of the more experienced people do better than those people who join the vocational training classes. The more they learn, the more information they don't remember. They may forget everything after returning home."

(Muong woman, Dung village, Hien Luong commune, Da Bac district, Hoa Binh)

"We do not have time to take a course lasting for a few months. Courses lasting less than 12 days are possible."

(Thai man, Khe Han village, Chau Hanh commune, Quy Chau district, Nghe An)

"The class was dominated by women, accounting for 80 percent of the trainees. Enrolment was in the form of household registration, so wives attended the class more often. There were cases where the husbands registered but their wives attended the classes, or even their mothers or children joined on subsequent days. The class had 30 students but a session might only have 20, 10 or even six people attending. There were only three people that fully participated in the whole course."

(Kinh man, Village 7, Quang Khe commune, Dak Glong district, Dak Nong)

In contrast, the training time for some non-agricultural occupations is too short, making it difficult for workers to master the relevant skills. Rural labourers joining non-agricultural vocational training courses (for example, welding, repairing motorcycles and agricultural machines, or carpentry) have never previously worked in those occupations. They require more time to master the requisite basic knowledge (for example, the operating mechanisms of machinery, or the principles of engines) and practical skills. Some non-agricultural courses were organised over a period that was too short (just two to three months), with a lack of training on practical skills, so many people were not qualified to work in the occupation after finishing their training. (Box 8).

Box 8. One woodworking course is not enough to be a carpenter

The report for Round 1 in 2014 referred to the case of Mr C., a Thai man from Khe Han village, Chau Hanh commune, Quy Chau district, Nghe An. He was one of the first three pioneers in the commune to participate in a carpentry course held in 2011. According to Mr. C., the three-month course was not sufficient to equip him with adequate skills. Although the practical component accounted for two-thirds of the training time, individual practice was very limited as the course had 20 trainees but only one machine on which to practice. The new skills in which he was trained were too simple for him to be able to take on independent work orders after the course. Following the course, he still worked at home on his farm.

In early 2015, he went to Hanoi to take a door-painting job, but low income and difficult work hours forced him to quit after three months. He returned home to work and is occasionally hired to work on local acacia plantations. He said that he had applied for a place in a carpentry workshop in the commune a couple of times, but failed as the employer said his skills were not good enough. Two other people from his commune who participated in the carpentry course with him were also not working as carpenters. In 2016, when the survey team returned to Khe Han village, the team was informed that Mr C. was working for a plastic pipe company in Hanoi, in an occupation unrelated to carpentry.

Monitoring of vocational training courses at the commune level is still limited, leading to difficulties in discovering resource losses. Some commune officials and villagers at the survey sites advised that several instructors had agreed with their trainees to reduce the study time (although still completing the class

paperwork), meaning that vocational training resources were lost. On the other hand, regular monitoring of vocational training at commune level by local officials and mass organisations (as stated in Decision 971) is limited, due to the lack of funds for monitoring and the lack of a plan and specific assigned monitoring tasks.

It is noteworthy that while funds for supervising vocational training at the grassroots level are limited, there are still many courses with considerable funding but low efficiency. In 2010 (when Project 1956 was launched), provinces typically spent up to several hundred million VND on a large-scale survey on the demand for vocational training. However, the results of this survey were difficult to use due to a lack of connection between the data on demand and career counselling. Some people filled out the questionnaires according to their subjective feelings or following the choices of others, or had their answers imposed by the surveyors. Vocational training demands were limited to the number of occupations that the vocational training institutions were qualified to teach (that is, based on supply side factors). The period between filling out the questionnaires and beginning the courses was too long, and people’s needs had changed. In subsequent years, most provinces ceased conducting surveys on demand for vocational training due to ineffective performance.

3.3. EFFECTIVENESS

As stated in Decision 1956, the target for vocational training in the period from 2011 to 2015 was “the post-training employment rate reaches 70 percent.” According to reports, most of the study provinces achieved this goal (Table 8). However, only relative statistics are provided in the review reports on vocational training at the local level, as the indicators for the effectiveness of vocational training under MoLISA’s Decision 1582 are difficult to measure,⁴⁴ and an objective monitoring and evaluation system for vocational training effectiveness is lacking. At the same time, no data is available for assessing the effectiveness of vocational training under the objectives set out in Decision 971 of “creating new jobs” and “continuing in existing occupations but with higher productivity and incomes”.

Table 8. Effectiveness of vocational training as reported by the survey provinces, 2010-2014 (%)

Province	People have jobs after training	People have jobs after agricultural training	People have jobs after non-agricultural training	Em- ployed	Businesses guarantee purchase of products	Self- employed	Establishing cooperative groups or cooperatives	Households that have escaped poverty	People with good incomes
Lao Cai	77	74	80	16	3	57	0.7	3.1	19
Hoa Binh	73	72	74	13	21	38	0.2	4	0.9
Nghe An	74	70	78	18	7	47	2	5.6	2.3
Quang Tri	87	88	84	8	2	74	2	1	13
Ninh Thuan	73	73	74	18	3	47	5	5.5	5
Dak Nong	68	80	62	4.5	0.9	63	0.1	4.4	0.7
Tra Vinh	78	68	84	7	28	43	0.3	0.5	3.5

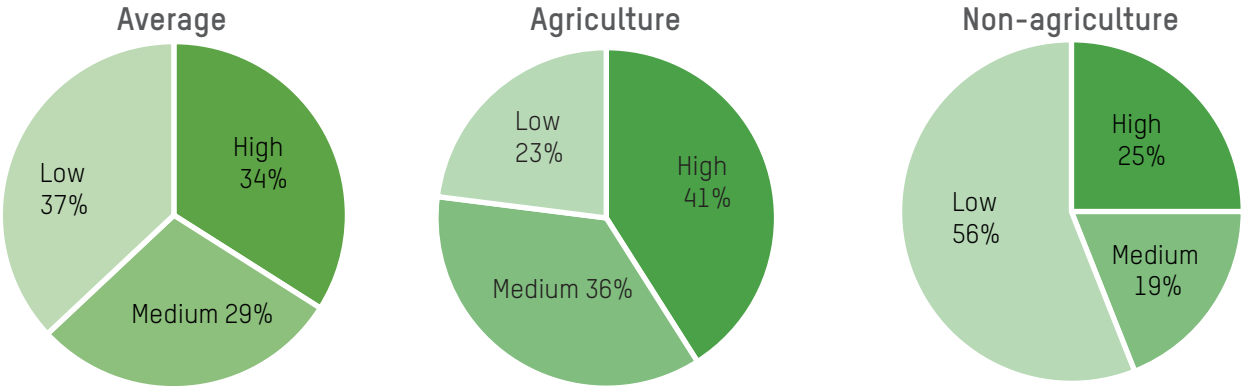
Source: Reports on the results of vocational training support for rural people in the seven survey provinces, 2010-14

To clarify the effectiveness of vocational training courses in the survey areas, the research team synthesised comments from citizens and village key informants on the effectiveness of 38 typical training courses that have been held since the launch of Project 1956 (that is, from 2010 to 2016) in 23 villages in the survey communes⁴⁵. (Annex 2).

These results show that *nearly two-thirds of the vocational training courses in the survey villages are recognised as having had positive effects on the local population*. Of these, 34 percent of the vocational training courses in

the survey villages were considered to be highly effective, and 29 percent were considered to have average effectiveness. Agricultural courses are considered to be more effective than non-agricultural courses in areas with a high proportion of ethnic minority people: 41 percent of the agricultural vocational training classes were highly effective for students, whereas the equivalent figure for non-agricultural courses was only 25 percent. In contrast, only 23 percent of agricultural classes were rated low, compared to 56 percent of non-agricultural courses. (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Perceptions of the effectiveness of vocational training in survey villages (%)



Source: Assessment of 38 training courses in 23 survey villages by citizens and village key informants

The sample size does not permit the disaggregation of survey data on effectiveness of vocational training classes by provinces or by ethnic groups, as 38 surveyed classes were scattered across 7 provinces with participation of trainees from more than 10 ethnic groups. Nevertheless, some patterns are as follows:

- Vocational training classes on livelihood activities basing on specific strengths of each ethnic group in each location are often considered highly effective, such as growing and processing tea by Nung and Day people in Ban Xen commune (Lao Cai); fish farming, broom and toothpick making by Muong people in Hien Luong commune (Hoa Binh); cow, goat and sheep raising by Cham people in Phuoc Hai commune (Ninh Thuan), and

grape and garlic growing by Kinh people in Vinh Hai commune (Ninh Thuan).

- Vocational training classes on non-agricultural activities are regarded as highly effective when they are suitable to the local employment market as well as to the migration practices of each ethnic group in each location. For example, the class on construction is considered highly effective for Khmer people in Chau Dien commune (Tra Vinh province) but is considered ineffective for Thai people in Chau Thang commune (Nghe An province). The main reasons are that the local demand for housing construction is rather high in Tra Vinh, and Khmer people there often go to cities like HCMC to find construction jobs,

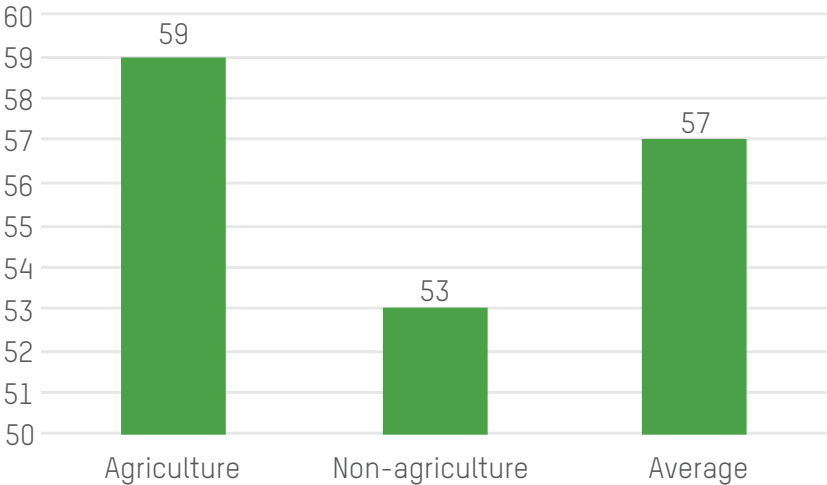
thanks to the short distance and convenient transportation from their villages. By contrast, the Thai people in Nghe An live in traditional wooden stilt houses, thus the local demand for construction using bricks and cement is limited, and few Thai people in survey communes migrate to cities to find construction jobs, due to the long distance and less convenient transportation from their villages in western Nghe An.

The effectiveness of vocational training classes in the survey villages is analysed further below according to the two criteria of “increased productivity and income” and “creation of new jobs”.

Increased productivity and income

Following the completion of training, many people applied the knowledge and skills they gained during their training, resulting in increased productivity and income. About 57 percent of trainees interviewed in the survey villages reported increased productivity and income after completing training. The proportion of people with increased productivity and income after agricultural training was nearly the same as for non-agricultural training (59 percent versus 53 percent). (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Proportion of people in the survey villages increasing productivity and income as a result of vocational training (%)



Source: Assessment of 38 training courses in 23 survey villages by citizens and village key informants

Agricultural trainees often cultivated the plants or raised the livestock covered by their vocational training courses, so they were more likely to apply certain skills they learned. Some people were confident to invest in production, and their productivity and income rose sharply,

thus they were able to escape from poverty in a sustainable way and improve their capacity to take care of their children’s health and education. (Box 9).

Box 9. Improving livelihoods and escaping poverty through training on livestock farming

Chicken raising. The second round report in 2015 referred to the case of Mrs B., a Nung woman in Village 7 of Quang Khe commune (Dak Glong, Dak Nong) in promoting effectiveness of training classes on livestock raising in 2013. Starting with only 20 to 30 chickens, in 2014 she expanded her flock to 250 chickens as well as hatcheries to produce chicks to sell in her village. In 2015, her family moved out of poverty as a result of her effective application of the knowledge she had learned and her confidence to expand her farming scale. Part of the income from her livestock farming was used to build a spacious new house to replace her former sub-standard house.

In 2016, having gained further experience on raising chickens, Mrs B. further increased the size of her flock to 500 chickens. Thanks to good husbandry, she was elected to the position of head of the village's chicken raising group under Project 3EM⁴⁶ to share with and support others in the village on chicken farming. In addition to escaping from poverty, she said that her family life had improved since vocational training.

Goat raising. Mrs T., a Muong woman in Dung village, Hien Luong commune (Da Bac district, Hoa Binh) has gradually improved her family situation since she completed a goat raising training course. About 10 years ago, her family was classified as the household in the village with the most difficulties, as she had recently married and was living with her husband's parents and his two siblings, who both had disabilities. In 2013, she joined a training class on raising goats. After finishing the course, she took the bold step of applying for a bank loan worth 10 million VND to buy two female goats. After two years, her total number of goats had increased to 12. She sold four to repay the bank. In 2015, she again borrowed 40 million VND to buy a cow and five female goats. Her total annual income from goat raising is now at about 40 to 50 million VND. Her income from goat raising has helped her to cover her household expenses, schooling costs for her children, and treatment for her husband's siblings.

Mrs T. said that goat raising had been an opportunity for her to change the life of her family. Initially knowing nothing about goat-raising (for example, about issues such as inbreeding), following the training she gained a lot of experience on caring for and treating goat diseases (none of her goats have died, and she can inject the goats with medication by herself). She plans to save money from raising goats so that her son can go to college and will not have to struggle like his parents did.

Some non-agricultural vocational training classes (for example, garment making, construction, making brooms and blinds, and bamboo weaving) have contributed to increased income for trainees due to links with businesses. In Ninh Thuan province, for example, a class on industrial garment making for 30 trainees from the Cham ethnic group was held in 2012 in Thanh Tin village (Phuoc Hai commune, Ninh Phuoc district). After completing their training, the majority of workers went to work for garment companies, with an income of 3 - 3.5 million VND per month.

"The garment class is effective for local people. Only two or three people are making clothes at home after the course. The rest have joined companies and receive higher salaries. Those with certificates are now paid 3.5 million dong per month. Their salaries will be even better if they take overtime work. Some workers in Ho Chi Minh City can earn five million dong per month."

(Cham woman, Thanh Tin village, Phuoc Hai commune, Ninh Phuoc district, Ninh Thuan)

Poor people and ethnic minorities in the most disadvantaged communes have limited abilities to invest in livelihoods improvement after completing training. The majority of poor and ethnic minority households in the most difficult communes borrowed from social policy banks before undertaking vocational training courses, so they are not eligible for further loans after completing vocational training. Loans from revolving savings funds within the village have the advantage of simple loan procedures, however they also have the disadvantages of short loan terms and small loan amounts. Some poor people have not yet borrowed capital from the Social Policy Bank, but they are not confident to invest as they are risk-averse. Conversely, better-off and Kinh households with favourable economic conditions are more inclined to take risks and to invest and apply the

knowledge they have learned immediately after completing vocational training courses (Box 10). This situation shows that for poor and ethnic minority households, it is necessary to have other concurrent forms of support to promote the effectiveness of vocational training.

“We joined a class to grow bonsai trees, but it requires large capital to be effective. Buying trees is difficult, because the price for a single tree is several million dong. Then we have to wait several years to cover the cost of caring for the trees and buying pots. Several poor households joined the class, but after completing the course they could not afford to invest and only carried out small-scale farming activities.”

(Khmer man, Ngoc Ho village, Tam Ngai commune, Cau Ke district, Tra Vinh)

Box 10. Differences between rich and poor households and between ethnic minority and Kinh people in capacity to invest in expanding production

In Phu Thieng village, Mo O commune (Dakrong district, Quang Tri), four women (three Van Kieu and one Kinh) attended a pig raising course in 2014, but only two of the women later invested in stalls and biogas pit construction, buying breeds and adding industrial feed (one Van Kieu commune official, and one better-off Kinh woman). The other two Van Kieu women were from poor households and could not apply this knowledge after the course due to a lack of money to buy breeding stock; these households have not yet changed their farming practices.

Prior to the training course, Mrs P. (the Kinh woman) had only one or two pigs, and she did not raise sows because she did not know the correct techniques. After completing the vocational training course, she had sufficient knowledge on raising sows, and her techniques for preventing pig diseases were improved. She also built biogas pits to produce gas for cooking and to keep the pens clean. Currently, she raises two sows. Twice a year, each sow gives birth to 10–12 piglets. She sells two litters and keeps two litters to raise for meat. Her household income from pig raising is around 20–22 million VND each year for the two litters that she raises, plus eight million VND for the two litters that she breeds and sells.

Mrs L. (the Van Kieu woman) is vice president of the commune Women’s Union. Prior to the training course, she only raised one or two pigs, applying a free-range method and making use of leftovers or vegetables in the garden for feed. Through the course, she learned how to keep pigs in pens and to feed them with protein, flour, vegetables and cassava. The rearing period was shortened but the productivity increased. Previously, it took her six months to raise each pig to a weight of 30 to 40 kilograms, but now the rearing time has reduced to three months and the weight of each pig reaches 50 to 55 kilograms. Through raising pigs, she has been able to earn additional income for her family expenses. She deposits 100,000 VND per month into a savings fund run by local women.

Provinces have not paid much attention to agricultural vocational training method of Farmer Field School (FFS). Of the seven study provinces, Hoa Binh is the only one to apply the FFS approach in agricultural vocational training, and this was very effective in ethnic minority

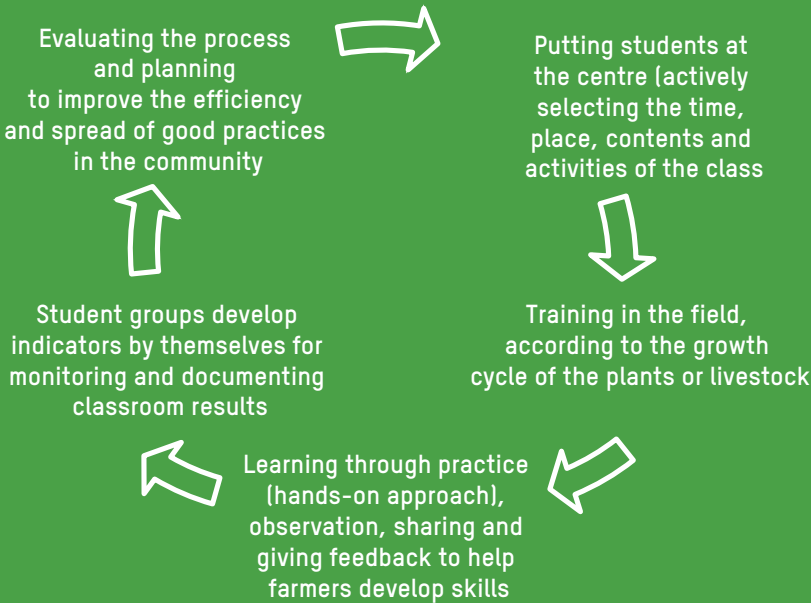
areas (Box 11). No guidance on the application of the FFS approach in vocational training has been provided from the central level or in other provinces, and there has not been any capacity building program for FFS trainers.

Box 11. Applying the FFS approach in agricultural vocational training

The Farmer Field School (FFS) approach is a group-based learning approach that starts with the identification of farmers’ needs as a basis for designing learning activities. The learning process is linked to the growth cycle of plants or livestock. The class takes place at the production site. The FFS approach focuses on fostering the process for people to improve their own skills through practice, observation, discussion, sharing and giving feedback.

The widespread adoption of the FFS approach is appropriate for agricultural vocational training, in line with Decision 971, which states the following: “*The vocational training process must ensure that teaching practical skills is the main focus, and it should be carried out at the production site. The training time should be suitable with the occupation being trained, with the characteristics of the production process, the growth process of plants or livestock in each region and each locality, and the needs of the students.*”

Figure 5. Applying the FFS approach within agricultural vocational training



In Hoa Binh, the FFS method was piloted in 2005 and expanded to the whole province in 2008. Hoa Binh PPC’s Document 1780/UBND-NLN dated November 18, 2009 regulates the use of FFS as an official approach in agricultural extension in the province.

Recognising the effectiveness of FFS in agricultural extension, Hoa Binh DARD instructed the provincial Agricultural Extension Centre to apply the FFS approach in agricultural vocational training. Hoa Binh DARD’s Official Letter 1226/SNN-KHTC dated November 14, 2014 reported that the province had organised 51 FFS training courses for 1,723 trainees in 2010-2014 period. According post-training evaluation results, 90 percent of the students applied the knowledge they had learned in practice.

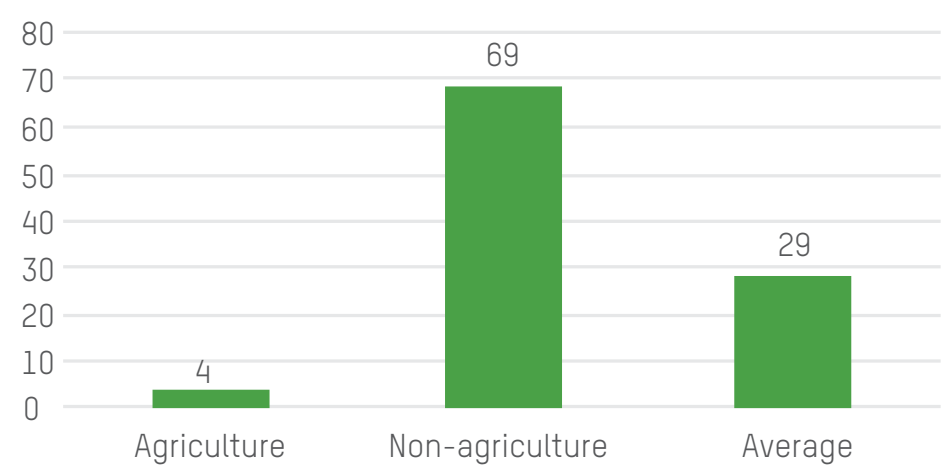
In addition, *many vocational training classes have not resulted in higher productivity or income for trainees due to production risks.* During the past three years of repeated annual surveys (from 2014 to 2016), effective classes were identified that initially helped to increase productivity and income for trainees immediately after they completed their training. However, during subsequent years many of these trainees were forced to leave these occupations or had unstable incomes due to many reasons, such as unfavourable weather conditions, pests, or low prices. For example, the wet rice farming class in Phuoc Dai commune (Bac Ai district, Ninh Thuan province) in 2013 was considered to be a successful model that helped to increase the Raglai trainees’ rice production, but a drought from 2015 until now has meant that the local people have had no water for cultivation. The

pineapple cultivation class for Van Kieu trainees at Dakrong commune (Dakrong district, Quang Tri province) also failed because pineapples were cultivated in remote areas, allowing monkeys to damage the crop. Helping local people to prevent or mitigate risks needs to be an important content of vocational training classes, alongside the introduction of new knowledge and skills.

Creating new jobs

Based on comments from citizens and village key informants, 29 percent of trainees have found new jobs after completing training. The percentage of non-agricultural trainees finding new jobs was much higher than that of agricultural trainees (69 percent versus 4 percent). (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Proportion of people in survey villages having new jobs after completing training (%)



Source: Assessment of 38 training courses in 23 survey villages by citizens and village key informants

In the survey areas, some handicraft courses such as bamboo weaving, making bamboo blinds, making bamboo brooms, etc. have created new occupations for the trainees because these activities can make use of raw materials, local

labour and their leisure time, and the products they produce after completing the training courses are purchased by local enterprises and production facilities. (Box 12).

Box 12. Creating jobs and increasing income for Muong women of a bamboo broom making class

Making bamboo brooms appeared as a new occupation in Hien Luong commune (Da Bac district, Hoa Binh province) around four years ago. In 2013, the provincial DoIT opened two training classes with 60 Muong women in Hien Luong commune on making bamboo brooms, and invited Mrs N. (a Muong woman, owner of a bamboo broom producing unit in Roi village) to join as a trainer. After the courses finished, Mrs N created jobs for several female trainees at her workshop. Each person undertakes a different broom making process.

In 2014, the operations of Mrs N's broom making unit were limited due to a lack of capital to expand production, difficulties in the output market (the Chinese market ceased buying her products in early 2014) and a lack of new broom models (to export to other markets such as Russia, Hungary, South Korea, Japan, Thailand, and Australia). By the end of 2014, Mrs N. had expanded her production scale thanks to a loan worth 58 million VND through the AFAP-funded project⁴⁷, a loan worth 30 million VND from the Social Policy Bank, and a loan of 30 million VND from the Vietnam Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development.

In 2015, she provided jobs for around 30 to 35 people from her village and neighbouring villages. Each full-time worker earned around three million VND/month, while those who made brooms during the farming off-season earned 1.2 - 2 million VND per month. Many women came to her workshop for apprenticeships and to apply for jobs.

When the survey team returned in 2016, Mrs N.'s broom making enterprise was still maintaining its normal activities despite facing increased difficulties compared to 2015 due to less orders. Currently, around 25 people regularly make brooms at the workshop, while others occasionally bring materials home to make brooms. One of the workers, Mrs C., 58, said: *"Because of my age, I only earn around 20,000 to 30,000 dong per day. Previously, I did farming work. Since completing the training course, I make brooms in my spare time. It is fortunate that I can earn money from this job rather than earning my living from the lake, because life on a boat is precarious, and also I am afraid of water."*

Pioneering and snowballing effects in the community help to increase job creation following vocational training.

Linking vocational training and established cooperative groups under the leadership of the core farmers as the pioneers can produce positive results for the trainees following training. Most successful vocational training courses include a significant role for "pioneering and snowballing" aspects in the community. In Hoa Binh, people who joined a goat raising class provided guidance to people from households that did not participate in the course. In Quang Tri, people who attended classes on cultivation of vegetables and mushrooms and on raising chickens shared their knowledge with their neighbours. In Tra Vinh, some trainees in the animal husbandry and ornamental plant classes

shared their knowledge with those who did not join. In Dak Nong, information from the training course on mushroom growing organised by the provincial Women's Union spread to people who did not have the opportunity to participate in the course, through the creation of a small mushroom-growing model to help villagers to develop a new occupation and increase their income.

Aside from agricultural occupations, some non-agricultural occupations also show a clear snowballing effect. Successful non-agricultural vocational training models with a pioneering and snowballing effect over the past three years in the survey areas include the bamboo weaving cooperative group of Khmer people in Chau Dien

and Tam Ngai communes (Cau Ke district, Tra Vinh province) and the broom making cooperative

group of Van Kieu people in Dakrong commune (Dakrong district, Quang Tri province). (Box 13).

Box 13. The pioneering and snowballing effect: a factor in the success of vocational training classes

Dakrong commune (Dakrong district, Quang Tri province). In 2014, Compassion International, a Taiwanese NGO, provided a training course on making bamboo brooms. Only Mr N. and another person from the commune joined the course. After the course, Mr N., who is from the Van Kieu ethnic group, shared the skills with his fellow villagers who wanted to produce bamboo brooms, helping them to earn additional incomes and to make use of the off-farm season (male and female members of a family can go through different steps to make a bamboo broom). The production of brooms under Mr N.'s guidance produced better-quality products. The price increased compared to the previous year (to 40,000 VND per piece from 35,000 VND per piece). In addition, household productivity also increased (reaching 20 pieces per day compared to 15 pieces per day before the guidance was provided). With an aim of linking broom making households together to share their experiences and making it easier for them to access bank loans, a broom cooperative led by Mr N. was established in November 2014 with the agreement of Dakrong CPC, with 11 Van Kieu household members including five poor households. In 2015, one household escaped poverty (reducing the number of poor households from five in 2014 to four in 2015). In 2016, the group continued to be as active as in 2015.

Chau Dien and Tam Ngai communes (Cau Ke district, Tra Vinh province). Local vocational training courses on bamboo weaving have been held for Khmer women since 2009. Since that time, some bamboo weaving groups in Ngoc Ho village (Tam Ngai commune) and Rum Soc village (Chau Dien commune) were founded by local people, bringing together female trainees from the vocational training courses and unskilled female workers who have not yet joined any training courses, for the purpose of learning and sharing experiences. These women also instructed their children or neighbours on how to do the weaving. Having seen that weaving work can bring in additional income, taking advantage of the off-farm season, many people in the two communes have come to these groups to learn more about this occupation.

As mentioned in the second round report in 2015, Mrs P., a Khmer woman in Rum Soc village of Chau Dien commune participated in a bamboo weaving vocational training course in 2009. After the training, she formed a weaving group and developed linkages with businesses in order to bring in orders for her group. Through joining this group, female workers gained employment during their free time and learned from each in order to improve their skills and to increase their household incomes. In 2016, the income of 17 female workers in the group increased significantly (in 2015, the highest monthly income was 1.1 million VND, whereas in 2016 the highest monthly income was 2.2 million VND) due to improved skills and to changing to new models with higher prices. The group received regular orders in 2016, helping the group members to have stable occupations.

There is no effective mechanism for linking trainees with enterprises to create employment following vocational training. Over the past three years, the survey provinces have been interested in developing linkages with businesses for training and job creation ("on-the-job training").

Five of the seven provinces (including Hoa Binh, Nghe An, Quang Tri, Ninh Thuan and Tra Vinh) have allocated a portion of their budget from the 1956 Program to support some companies with VTCs to organise training courses for job creation for rural workers. All seven survey provinces have

contracts between vocational training facilities and companies on the recruitment of workers after they graduate from vocational training. However, these linkages are often unsustainable. The central and provincial levels do not have mechanisms and policies to support linkages between enterprises and trained workers (such as policies to attract enterprises to recruit workers who have been trained through the vocational training programs; insurance policies for risks faced by enterprises and workers, etc.).

The ability to sustain non-agricultural employment of rural labourers after vocational training remains low. In the annual reports on the results of vocational training from the survey provinces, the rate of workers undertaking non-agricultural vocational training courses that “have jobs” immediately after the training is quite high, at 70 to 80 percent or more. However, the reality in survey communes with a large proportion of ethnic minority people is that occupational stability is not high. The percentage of people continuing to work for a period of one to two years after vocational training is low. There are several main reasons for this situation:

- It is difficult to generate new jobs for participants in non-agricultural vocational training in the fields of personal services (such as repairing motorbikes, cell phones or agricultural machines, hairdressing, etc.). The reason is that the demand for such services is not great in these locations, the skills of trainees are not sufficient due to short-time training, and they lack capital to invest in these services.
- Those following non-agricultural training courses for occupations with an industrial nature (such as garment making, mechanics, product processing, etc.) face difficulties in maintaining stable jobs in relevant enterprises for various reasons, both due to factors related to the enterprises (such as low wages, and harsh working conditions) and to the workers (such as wanting to change jobs or return home to take care of family affairs).
- Some handicrafts classes have created new jobs for trainees, but these jobs are uncertain as they depend on the number of orders placed by enterprises or production units. (Box 14).



Box 14. Workers face unstable employment following vocational training classes on production of handicrafts

Hoa Binh Province: It is difficult for vocational trainees to continue in their new occupations if enterprises do not purchase their products. The Round One report prepared in 2014 mentioned that making bamboo blinds had been rather effective for people in Hien Luong commune, as local bamboo materials were available, and local people could utilise their off-farm season for this occupation. In 2013, the VTC of the Provincial Women's Union held two courses for Muong women that engaged Ms I., a Muong woman owner of an establishment making bamboo blinds within the commune, to join teaching. After these courses, Ms I. purchased products from local people, reassuring them on the demand for their products. The average daily income of these trainees was 40,000 VND per person. Many women were able to get out of poverty by making blinds.

In 2015, Ms I. said that the skills of the workers had improved, and the quality of their products was better able to meet the requirements of the orders she received. As a result, the workers' income also increased compared to 2014 (to a daily average of 50,000 VND per person). Making bamboo blinds had become an occupation that was providing good incomes for many women.

However, when the survey team returned to meet Ms D.T.I. in mid-2016, she said that her blind making unit was in trouble as she had not received new orders. She was not purchasing further products from the female workers and was mostly just selling products from her existing stock.

Nghe An province: A lack of skills and orders creates difficulties for trainees to find work. In Quy Chau district, Duc Phong company has cooperated with Oxfam⁴⁸ and the Vietnam Cooperative Alliance since 2013 to organise vocational training courses for local residents. In 2014 and 2015, the company opened 10 bamboo weaving classes in Chau Hanh and Chau Thang communes for participants from the Thai ethnic group. During the training period, the company provided materials for trainees to learn and practice their skills, then bought their products. However, up to now, courses on weaving are not as effective as expected, due to the limited skills of local people, the slow pace of production, and the low quality of completed products when the company changed the design and increased requirements. From the beginning of 2016 until the survey team visited in May 2016, no one had done any weaving work, as the company had ceased to purchase their products.

The survey team re-visited Ms H., a Thai woman in Dong Minh village, who participated in both the basic and advanced weaving classes in 2014 and 2015. She was one of the two best trainees in her class, and her income reached one or two million VND per month. She said: *"At the end of last year, the company collected products two to three times each month. The company received the products and paid for them right away. Later, the company required us to make new products, with higher requirements. The products we made were not good enough. Many were returned to the workers. Since the Tet holiday, the company has not collected any further products. Our weaving products have become mouldy because there is no dryer in which to dry them, and the people have become bored."* Currently, Ms H. is moving to expand her geese, pig and chicken raising.



4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysis in this report, the research team has identified the following recommendations to improve the effectiveness of vocational training for sustainable poverty reduction and inclusive development in the period from 2016 to 2020:

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

1. MARD and MoLISA should issue guidance on the implementation of the new policies on vocational training for rural workers set out in Decision 971, with a focus on the following aspects:

◆ *Planning and allocating the budget for vocational training:*

- Guide annual planning for vocational training, linked to the participatory planning for the NTP-NRD and commune-level Socio-Economic Development Plans, based on review of mid-term vocational training plans, agriculture restructuring plans, and local NTP-NRD program plans, training needs for employment generation in companies, cooperatives or workplaces.
- Adjust the structure of vocational training budget allocation to reduce investments in infrastructure for public VTCs (which in many cases are ineffective) and to increase the budget (to at least 10 percent) for recruitment and counselling on vocational training, for the development of teachers and trainers, and for monitoring and evaluation of vocational training.
- Clarify the roles and coordination mechanisms between the agriculture and rural development sector, the labour, invalids and social affairs sector, and other agencies during planning, budget allocation, and provision of guidance on vocational training.

◆ *Reforming vocational training methods:*

- Apply the Farmer Field School (FFS) method for agricultural vocational training for the poor and for ethnic minorities, helping farmers to sharpen their skills through practice, observation, feedback, and peer learning in groups directly at production sites, linked to the development cycle of the specific crop or livestock species.
- Use on-the-job vocational training for non-agricultural jobs, based on close linkages between vocational training topics and job opportunities at the companies, cooperatives or workplaces. Provide more support to companies that employ workers who have completed vocational training courses, especially workers who are poor, ethnic minorities, women, or people with disabilities.
- Prioritise capacity building on vocational training for core farmers (good farmers and high skilled workers) and local agriculture extension staff who provide further training and technology transfer to local farmers, creating spill-over impacts and linkages between communities and commodity production areas, thus bringing into play the strengths of each locality.

◆ *Integration of vocational training into other livelihood support activities:*

- Guide and direct the application of a project-based approach for vocational training. Develop “vocational training and job generation, efficiency and income improvement” projects, including vocational training as well as other support activities such as agriculture extension, industrial extension, business model development and expansion, market development, subsidised loans, and support for production linkages.

- Integrate vocational training activities according to specific target groups (for example, by selecting trainees from groups defined as beneficiaries of national target programs or other projects), and/or integrating vocational training activities by location (for example, by focusing resources on the most disadvantaged localities to create a springboard for change in people's livelihoods), linked to participatory planning.

◆ *Recruitment and counselling on vocational training:*

- Develop instruction manuals and coordination mechanisms between organisations and agencies on recruitment and counselling on vocational training.
- Apply a training of trainers (TOT) methodology to develop a contingent of vocational training recruiters and counsellors at the local level, linked to mass organisations such as the Farmers' Association, the Women's Union, the Youth Union, and the Veterans' Association.
- Promote the use of effective communication methods such as face-to-face discussion, visual aids, group meetings, dramatisation and dialogues, especially in ethnic minority and poor areas.

2. MoLISA and MARD should work together to revise Decision 1582/QĐ-LĐTBXH and issue a monitoring and evaluation manual for vocational training:

- Develop a results framework for vocational training, oriented towards streamlining the monitoring and evaluation system to focus on some specific input indicators (e.g. costs, teachers, and managers), process indicators (e.g. planning, and vocational training methods), output indicators (number of classes, number of trainees, and provision of support) and results indicators (jobs, efficiency, and incomes)
- Provide detailed guidance on the two most important indicators, namely "the percentage of workers having a new job after vocational training" and "the percentage

of workers continuing in the same job with increased efficiency and incomes after vocational training". Apply a household survey methodology with those who have undergone vocational training (one year after completing the training), comparing the situation before and after training, and verifying this data through proper community channels.

- Conduct an in-depth survey and assessment of the efficiency of successful vocational training models in ethnic minority areas, in order to identify the most appropriate and cost-effective methods.
- Provide additional budget resources for the monitoring and evaluation of vocational training. Provide detailed regulations on the roles and responsibilities of different levels, sectors and organisations in monitoring and evaluation, and detailed guidance on the evaluation contents, planning and budgeting for mass organisations (the Farmers Association, the Veterans Association, etc.) on vocational training.
- Provide guidance to different localities on establishing a database and management software for entering data on vocational training participants and on the effectiveness of the training activities, compiling data from provincial and district levels as well as from all vocational training facilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES

3. Management, planning and budget allocations:

- Within each province, DoLISA should coordinate with DARD to establish a list of occupations for which training will be provided (focusing on priorities set out in local planning); cost norms for training on each occupation that are suitable to the target groups and locations (including delta, mountainous, and ethnic minority areas) and vocational training methods (mobile and classroom).

- DoLISA and DARD should advise the provincial steering committees for the National Targeted Programs and the PPC to issue budget allocation criteria and mechanisms for vocational training (under the recurrent budget of the NTP-NRD), and decide on budget allocations to relevant stakeholders as the basis for annual planning for vocational training.
- DARD should guide the integration of identification of demand and planning for vocational training into the implementation of National Targeted Program implementation and annual participatory commune level planning.
- DoLISA and DARD should advise the PPC to provide vocational training support to households that have recently escaped poverty and to women and men over the working age who have a demand for vocational training (utilising the local budget and other resources).
- DoLISA should coordinate with DARD to evaluate the operations of vocational training facilities that have received funds to invest in upgrading their facilities and to purchase equipment, to ensure appropriate and cost-effective investment and avoid waste.

4. Coordination with relevant stakeholders in the implementation of vocational training:

- DoLISA and DARD should advise the PPC to issue guidance to related agencies such as agriculture and industrial extension services and the Social Policy Bank to integrate their activities with vocational training, applying a project-based approach.
- DoLISA and DARD should instruct communes to integrate vocational training with other activities including production development and model development, preferential lending and other forms of livelihood support in the NTP-NRD, NTP-SRD and other projects and programs, based on participatory planning. Guide coordination between Community

Learning Centres and vocational training facilities in recruitment, counselling, and management of vocational training classes.

- DoLISA should advise the PPC to set up a mechanism for enterprises to place orders for vocational training and establish linkages between local companies and vocational training institutions in training and job creation. Focus should be given to recruitment, counselling, and job placement for migrant workers.
- DARD should provide detailed guidance on agricultural vocational training using the Farmers Field School method and establish a capacity building plan for FFS trainers.
- Establish a training and capacity building plan for core farmers groups and local agricultural extension staff so that they play a positive role in vocational training and technology transfer to other farmers in the community.

5. Monitoring and evaluation:

- The Farmers' Association, in coordination with related agencies, should take charge of developing plans, budget estimates, and content for recruitment and counselling (using their local network with diversified communications methods for poor people and ethnic minorities) for approval by the PPC. The Farmers' Association should build the capacity of communicators and coordinate with the Veterans' Association to monitor vocational training at the commune level.
- DoLISA, in coordination with related agencies, should take charge of developing a database and management software to connect all vocational training facilities and levels within the province.



ANNEXES

ANNEX 1. SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE 15 VILLAGES IN THE PRO-POOR POLICY MONITORING PROJECT

Province	Lao Cai		Hoa Binh		Nghe An		Quang Tri		Dak Nong		Ninh Thuan			Tra Vinh	
District	Muong Khuong		Da Bac		Quy Chau		Dakrong		Dak Glong		Bac Ai	Ninh Phuoc	Ninh Hai	Cau Ke	
Commune	La Pan Tan	Ban Xen	Tan Pheo	Hien Luong	Chau Thang	Chau Hanh	Mo O	Dakrong	Quang Khe	Dak Som	Phuoc Dai	Phuoc Hai	Vinh Hai	Chau Dien	Tam Ngai
Village	Tin Thang	Phang Tao	Bon	Dung	Xet 2	Khe Han	Phu Thieng	K'Lu	Thon 7	Thon 3	Ma Hoa	Thanh Tin	Da Hang	O Mich	Ngoc Ho
Under the second phase of Program 135?	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Topography	Mountain	Mountain	Mountain	Low Mountain	Mountain	Mountain	Valley	Valley	Highlands	Highlands	Delta	Delta	Delta	Delta	Delta
Number of households	50	86	78	50	118	64	98	137	188	186	200	967	73	453	822
Main ethnic group	Mong (100%)	Day (25%), Nung (75%)	Dao (90%), Muong, Tay	Muong (85%), Tay, Dao, Kinh	Thai (100%)	Thai (97%) Kinh (3%)	Van Kieu (97%)	Van Kieu (96%)	Kinh, Ma	Ma, Kinh, Tay, Muong	Raglay (95%), Kinh (5%)	Cham (100%)	Raglai (96%), Kinh (4%)	Khmer (99%)	Khmer (63%)
Distance to the commune centre (km)	1.7	1	6	3.5	2	6	0.5	2	5	0.5	2	3	3	3	3

Province	Lao Cai		Hoa Binh		Nghe An		Quang Tri		Dak Nong		Ninh Thuan			Tra Vinh	
District	Muong Khuong		Da Bac		Quy Chau		Dakrong		Dak Glong		Bac Ai	Ninh Phuoc	Ninh Hai	Cau Ke	
Commune	La Pan Tan	Ban Xen	Tan Pheo	Hien Luong	Chau Thang	Chau Hanh	Mo O	Dakrong	Quang Khe	Dak Som	Phuoc Dai	Phuoc Hai	Vinh Hai	Chau Dien	Tam Ngai
Village	Tin Thang	Phang Tao	Bon	Dung	Xet 2	Khe Han	Phu Thieng	K'Lu	Thon 7	Thon 3	Ma Hoa	Thanh Tin	Da Hang	O Mich	Ngoc Ho
Distance to the nearest all weather road (km)	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
Distance to the nearest clinic (km)	3	1	6	3.5	3	7	2	3	5	0.3	2	3	3	3	1.5
Distance to the nearest primary school (km)	1.7	1	2	0	2	3	0.5	2	4	0.3	0.5	0.1	0	3	1
Distance to the nearest lower secondary school (km)	3	1	6	3.5	2	6	2	2	5	0.3	1	3	3	3	1
Distance to the nearest secondary school (km)	3	1.2	11	9	13	6	4	10	5	20	1	10	37	6	1.5
Distance to the nearest market (km)	4	1	6	9	4	6	4	10	4	20	2	0	3	6	1

Province	Lao Cai		Hoa Binh		Nghe An		Quang Tri		Dak Nong		Ninh Thuan			Tra Vinh	
District	Muong Khuong		Da Bac		Quy Chau		Dakrong		Dak Glong		Bac Ai	Ninh Phuoc	Ninh Hai	Cau Ke	
Commune	La Pan Tan	Ban Xen	Tan Pheo	Hien Luong	Chau Thang	Chau Hanh	Mo O	Dakrong	Quang Khe	Dak Som	Phuoc Dai	Phuoc Hai	Vinh Hai	Chau Dien	Tam Ngai
Village	Tin Thang	Phang Tao	Bon	Dung	Xet 2	Khe Han	Phu Thieng	K'Lu	Thon 7	Thon 3	Ma Hoa	Thanh Tin	Da Hang	O Mich	Ngoc Ho
Main sources of income		Corn, tea, animal husbandry	Rice, corn, cassava	Corn, cassava, aqua culture, forestry	Rice, working away from home	Rice, forest, animal husbandry	Rice, cassava, peanuts	Rice, corn, cassava	Coffee	Coffee, cassava, corn	Corn, beans, rice, working away from home	Rice, working away from home	Rice, Dairy and Beef production contract work	Rice, working away from home	Rice, cow, working away from home
	Poverty rate by the end of 2013 (%)	55	30	45	57	43	59	41	60	45	34	12	36	25	7
	Poverty rate by the end of 2014 (%)	51.02	10.46	43.58	47.91	37.74	41.97	29.5	54.92	48.66	27.5	8.37	28.67	11.73	5.96
Poverty rate by the end of 2015 under the new multi-dimensional poverty rate (%)	54	29.4	44.5	-	54.6	65.1	44	56.49	31.37	51.87	61.8	20	70.51	11.39	5.6
% of households with electricity (*)	100	100	100	98	100	100	100	100	75	100	100	100	100	100	95
% of households with tap water (*)	100 (running water)	100	60	98	50	0	30	84	30	0	70	60	56	96	36

Province	Lao Cai		Hoa Binh		Nghe An		Quang Tri		Dak Nong		Ninh Thuan			Tra Vinh	
District	Muong Khuong		Da Bac		Quy Chau		Dakrong		Dak Glong		Bac Ai	Ninh Phuoc	Ninh Hai	Cau Ke	
Commune	La Pan Tan	Ban Xen	Tan Pheo	Hien Luong	Chau Thang	Chau Hanh	Mo O	Dakrong	Quang Khe	Dak Som	Phuoc Dai	Phuoc Hai	Vinh Hai	Chau Dien	Tam Ngai
Village	Tin Thang	Phang Tao	Bon	Dung	Xet 2	Khe Han	Phu Thieng	K'Lu	Thon 7	Thon 3	Ma Hoa	Thanh Tin	Da Hang	O Mich	Ngoc Ho
% of households with hygienic latrines (*)	10	35	86	98	90	100	85	88	23	90	25	70	41	80	70
% of households with a TV set (*)	40	35	50	98	90	100	85	88	100	85	75	100	90	99	95
% of households with motorbikes (*)	70	93	70	80	60	95	70	91	100	100	80	80	41	80	70
% of households with telephones (*)	60	100	90	50	100	100	90	93	100	100	90	99	100	100	100
Production area per capita (m²)	N/A	2,213.3 (corn, cassava, rice)	5,250 (corn, cassava, rice)	7,767 (corn, cassava)	9,034.3 (sugar cane, cassava, rice)	10,502 (corn, cassava, rice)	1,566 (corn, cassava, rice, green bean, peanut)	740 (rice, corn, cassava)	2,188 (coffee)	6,400 (coffee, cassava, corn)	2,774 (corn, cassava, rice)	589.7 (rice, vegetable)	1355.3 (rice, vegetable)	1829.5 (rice, vegetable)	915.4 (rice, fruit, vegetable)

Province	Lao Cai		Hoa Binh		Nghe An		Quang Tri		Dak Nong		Ninh Thuan			Tra Vinh	
District	Muong Khuong		Da Bac		Quy Chau		Dakrong		Dak Glong		Bac Ai	Ninh Phuoc	Ninh Hai	Cau Ke	
Commune	La Pan Tan	Ban Xen	Tan Pheo	Hien Luong	Chau Thang	Chau Hanh	Mo O	Dakrong	Quang Khe	Dak Som	Phuoc Dai	Phuoc Hai	Vinh Hai	Chau Dien	Tam Ngai
Village	Tin Thang	Phang Tao	Bon	Dung	Xet 2	Khe Han	Phu Thieng	K'Lu	Thon 7	Thon 3	Ma Hoa	Thanh Tin	Da Hang	O Mich	Ngoc Ho
% of households with sales in the past year (*)	100	100	100	100	100	100	95	100	100	100	100	90	100	90	100
% of households with remittance in the past year	0	0	13	24	17	6	3	4	10	0	25	40	22	10	35

Source: Village questionnaires, 2016

ANNEX 2. SUMMARY OF TYPICAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING CLASSES IN SURVEY VILLAGES

Province	Commune	Village	Year	Theme		Number of participants	Number of workers with better skills after training	Number of workers with better income and efficiency after vocational training	Number of workers with new jobs after vocational training	Effectiveness	Notes
				Agriculture	Non - agriculture						
Lao Cai	La Pan Tan	Tin Thang	2011	Forestry		6	6	NA	0	Low	Graduates could only use hole planting and digging techniques. There is about a 20-year gap between planting and harvesting, so it is difficult to measure effectiveness and income difference.
	Ban Xen	Thinh Oi	2014	Tea planting and processing		30	30	30	0	High	Participants also joined tea planting classes.
Hoa Binh	Tan Pheo	Phang Tao	2012		Construction	7	7	7	4	Average	
		Xom Bon	2010		Textiles	6	0	0	6	Low	Salaries are low, so many participants quit.
		Xon Phon	2015		Brocade weaving	30	10	10	10	Average	
	Hien Luong	Xom Dung	2012	Caged fish		NA	NA	NA	NA	High	
			2013	Goat raising		9	9	9	0	High	
	Hien Luong	Xom Roi	2013		Broom making	40	25	25	40	High	Two classes.
					Toothpick making	30	0	30	30	High	

Province	Commune	Village	Year	Theme		Number of participants	Number of workers with better skills after training	Number of workers with better income and efficiency after vocational training	Number workers with new jobs after vocational training	Effectiveness	Notes
				Agriculture	Non - agriculture						
Nghe An	Chau Thang	Ban Xet 2	2009		Construction	4	3	3	4	Low	Three workers with occasional work.
					Textile	3	0	0	3	Low	Low salary so they moved to shoe making.
			2015		Weaving	26	16	16	26	Low	
	Chau Hanh	Khe Han	2010		Motorbike fixing	2	1	1	1	Low	One worker with occasional work.
			2013		Textiles	4	0	0	4	Low	Salaries are low, so many people quit.
			2012		Woodwork	3	0	0	3	Low	Low skills so no one can learn the trade
Quang Tri	Mo O	Phu Thieng	2013	Vegetables		10	10	10	0	Average	Mostly for household use. Only two to three people sell vegetables.
			2014	Pig raising		4	2	2	0	Average	
			2014	Mushroom planting		15	15	15	15	High	
			2015	Banana planting		20	0	0	0	Low	Banana trees died.
	Dakrong	K'lu	2014	Free range chicken raising		30	0	0	0	Low	Free range chickens are not suitable with local cultivation customs

Province	Commune	Village	Year	Theme		Number of participants	Number of workers with better skills after training	Number of workers with better income and efficiency after vocational training	Number of workers with new jobs after vocational training	Effectiveness	Notes
				Agriculture	Non - agriculture						
Dak Nong	Quang Khe	Thon 7	2013	Animal husbandry	30	4	4	4	0	Low	Only four people have applied the new knowledge.
		Thon 9	2015	Planting and plant protection	30	30	15	0	Average		
		Thon 2	2013	Planting and plant protection	10	10	NA	0	Average	No data available on people with higher efficiency and incomes after vocational training.	
	Dak Som	Thon 3	2014	Planting and plant protection	7	7	2	0	Average		
Ninh Thuan	Phuoc Hai	Thanh Tin	2014		30	28	28	28	28	High	
				Rice planting	30	10	NA	0	Average	The productivity of special rice strains is no different from normal rice. People only plant rice for household consumption.	
				Cow raising	30	30	30	0	High		
	Phuoc Dai	Ma Hoa	2015	Cow, goat and sheep raising	33	32	32	0	High		
			2013	Duck and Chicken raising	8	2	0	0	Low	People just raise ducks and chickens for household consumption, so they are not interested in applying new knowledge	
			2015	Cow raising	14	14	8	0	Average		

Province	Commune	Village	Year	Theme		Number of participants	Number of workers with better skills after training	Number of workers with better income and efficiency after vocational training	Number of workers with new jobs after vocational training	Effectiveness	Notes
				Agriculture	Non - agriculture						
Ninh Thuan		Ta Lu 1	2013	Wet rice planting		35	1	NA	0	Average	Affected by drought since 2014 so no rice plantation. Participants know who has better incomes or productivity.
				Garlic planting		30	30	30	0	High	Participants also joined garlic planting classes.
	Vinh Hai	My Hoa	2014	Grape planting		30	30	30	0	High	Some participants also joined grape planting classes.
		Thai An									
		Vinh Hy	2014		Tourism	33	15	15	0	Average	
					Tourism	25	0	0	0	Low	Graduates couldn't get jobs
Tra Vinh	Tam Ngai	Ngoc Ho	2013	Ornamental trees		10	10	10	1	Average	
			2014		Knitting	30	10	10	30	Low	
			2015	Cow raising		25	20	20	0	High	
	Chau Dien	0 Mich	2010		Construction	4	3	3	4	High	

Source: Assessment of 38 training courses in 23 survey villages by citizens and village key informants.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The report is authored by the team led by the Oxfam Advocacy and Campaign team. The team includes Hoang Xuan Thanh, research team leader, Dang Thi Thanh Hoa and Truong Thi Nga from Ageless Consulting Company, Hoang Lan Huong, Vu Thi Quynh Hoa, Nguyen Tran Lam, Nguyen Dieu Linh, Nguyen Thi Thuy Linh and Pham Quynh Anh from Oxfam⁴⁹.

We would also like to express our sincere thanks for the approval and favourable conditions created by the People's Committees and the departments of External Affairs, Agriculture and Rural Development, Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, and other relevant agencies at both provincial and district levels in Lao Cai, Hoa Binh, Nghe An, Quang Tri, Dak Nong, Ninh Thuan and Tra Vinh provinces where the research was carried out. We are grateful to the core group members and commune officials in the survey sites for their close coordination, time and efforts to finalise the field trips in each province. Our special gratitude goes to the village leaders who accompanied us and provided active support to our field trips in the 15 participating villages in the Pro-Poor Policy Monitoring network. The active participation and arrangements made by Oxfam's local partners were indispensable to the success of the research.

Our deep appreciation goes to the local residents of the visited villages for the time they spent with us, sharing their advantages and difficulties in life, as well as their thoughts and experiences, during the group discussions and in-depth interviews. This research could not have been completed without their active participation.

Sincere thanks are extended to Oxfam colleagues for their valuable comments and inputs: Babeth Ngoc Han Lefur, Country Director and Andrew Wells-Dang, Senior Governance Advisor. Further gratitude is also extended to Nguyen Hong Ngan who provided an excellent translation from Vietnamese to English language of this report and David Payne for the support with copyediting the English version of this report.

This project would not be possible without generous funding from Irish Aid, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Oxfam in Vietnam.



REFERENCES

1. Report dated 29/9/2016 by the General Statistics Office (GSO), Vietnam on “Key findings of the survey on the socio-economic status of 53 ethnic minorities in 2015”.
2. Decision 1095/QĐ-LĐTBXH dated 22/08/2016 of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), approving the general survey of poor and near poor households in 2015 using the multidimensional poverty line for the 2016-2020 period.
3. World Bank, 2012, ‘Well begun, not yet done: Vietnam’s remarkable progress on poverty reduction and the emerging challenges’, Washington DC; Oxfam and ActionAid Vietnam (AAV), 2012, A synthesis report of five-year participatory poverty monitoring in rural Viet Nam (2007-2011), Hanoi.
4. Report 581/BC-HĐDT13, dated October 25, 2013 by the NA Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs, on the supervision of the implementation of vocational training policies for rural people in ethnic minority areas.
5. Report 660/BC-UBTVQH13, dated May 19, 2014 of the NA Standing Committee, on the supervision of the implementation of legislation and policies on poverty reduction in the 2005-2012 period. According to this report, 114 vocational training facilities have not yet finished work according to their investment projects, including 36 centres that are not yet operational due to the large funding requested (40 to 60 billion VND per centre) and the insufficient amount actually received from the local budget and other sources.
6. The attached map is a poverty map produced in 2012 using the Vietnam Household Living Standards Survey (VHLSS 2012). The darker the colour, the higher the poverty rate in a province. Source: World Bank, 2012, ‘Well begun, not yet done: Vietnam’s remarkable progress on poverty reduction and the emerging challenges’, Washington DC.
7. Oxfam has established the partnership with the key government led agency in each province for this project, Lao Cai Province with Department of Agricultural and Rural Development, Hoa Binh Province with Department of Labors, Invalids and Social Affairs, Nghe An Province with Department of Foreign Home Affairs, Quang Tri Province with Department of Labors, Invalids and Social Affairs, Daknong Province with Department of Labors, Invalids and Social Affairs, Ninh Thuan Province with Department of Planning and Investment and Tra Vinh Province with Provincial Office of Poverty Reduction.
8. Women represent 32% (14/44) in the core groups of the seven survey provinces. Members of the core groups are mostly Kinh people (except in Hoa Binh there is one member from the Muong ethnic group, and in Nghe An there is one member from the Hmong ethnic group). Language barriers emerge mainly in Hmong/Dao populated villages (in Lao Cai). These barriers were overcome by mobilising commune staff and village key informants who are fluent in Hmong or Dao languages during fieldwork.
9. The Prime Minister’s Decision 42/2012/QĐ-TTg, dated October 8, 2012, on support to ethnic minorities people in mountainous provinces and areas facing particular difficulties; Prime Minister’s Decision 52/2012/QĐ-TTg, dated November 16, 2012, on support to labourers whose agricultural land has been acquired; Prime Minister’s Decision 755/QĐ-TTg, dated May 20, 2013, on support to poor ethnic minority households, and poor households in communes and villages facing particular difficulties; Prime Minister’s Decision 1019/QĐ-TTg, dated August 5, 2012, on support

- to people with disabilities; Prime Minister's Decision 295/QĐ-TTg, dated October 26, 2010, on vocational training for women; Prime Minister's Decision 103/2008/QĐ-TTg, dated July 21, 2008, on support to vocational training and job creation for young people; and Prime Minister's Decision 29/2013/QĐ-TTg, dated May 20, 2013, on support to poor ethnic minority people in the Mekong Delta.
10. The maximum payment levels are as follows: support for people with disability: six million VND; support for poor ethnic minorities or those from specially disadvantaged communities: four million VND; support for ethnic minorities and those assisting the revolution, those from poor households, those whose agricultural land has been acquired, female workers losing jobs, and those who work in fishing: three million VND; support for people from near poor households: 2.5 million VND; and others: two million VND.
 11. Decision 14/2016/QĐ-UBND dated April 16, 2016 by the Quang Tri PPC on issuing the list and cost norms to support elementary vocational training and short courses of under three months' duration for rural workers and people with disabilities in the province, and Decision 586/QĐ-UBND dated March 21, 2016 by the TraVinh PPC on issuing the list and cost norms for elementary vocational training and short courses of under three months' duration for rural workers and people with disabilities in the province.
 12. Decision 27/2016/QĐ-UBND dated March 7, 2016 of the Nghe An PPC on issuing the list and cost norms for basic vocational training and short courses of under three months' duration for rural workers and people with disabilities in the province, and has not issued a decision for other groups. However, the Nghe An DoLISA has instructed localities to provide support for meals and travel costs under the cost norms set out in Decision 46. Training cost norms have not yet followed Decision 46.
 13. Oxfam in Vietnam, 2017, Beyond national targets: Implementing commune-level planning reform, delegation of investment decisions, and community empowerment for poverty reduction - Synthesis report of surveys in Lao Cai, Hoa Binh, Nghe An, Quang Tri, DakNong, NinhThuan and TraVinh provinces, Vietnam.
 14. Document 32/LDTBXH-TCDN dated January 6, 2015 of MoLISA to guide the mid-term investment plan for vocational training for the five-year period from 2016 to 2020.
 15. Document 5044/BNN/KTHT dated June 17, 2016 of MARD on the development of the agriculture sector's vocational training plan for rural workers for the 2017-2020 period.
 16. In the 2011-2015 period, during the first two years (2011, 2012) many localities established annual vocational training plans based on the mid-term plan that was developed in 2010. However, since 2013, as resources for vocational training did not match demand, localities based their new plans on the implementation of previous year's plan and did not rely much on the mid-term plan.
 17. On July 5, 2016, NinhThuan PPC issued Decision 1706/QĐ-UBND on the revision of the Budget Allocation for the NTP-NRD for 2016.
 18. Three out of seven provinces (Hoa Binh, Lao Cai, TraVinh) allocated budget for management, monitoring, communications for vocational training from the national target program budget. Two provinces (Hoa Binh, Lao Cai) have reduced budget for communications and monitoring compared to 2015 (450 million VND for Hoa Binh in 2015 and 38 million VND in 2016; 1.68 billion VND for Lao Cai in 2015 and 320 million VND in 2016.); TraVinh's budget for monitoring and communicators was the same as 2015 (50 billion VND). Four out of seven provinces (Nghe An, Quang Tri, NinhThuan, DakNong) didn't have budget for monitoring, evaluation

from the NRD-NTP. Nghe An province has counterpart funding for the vocational training program for rural labour, which was 10 billion VND, out of which 800 million VND was for communications, monitoring and inspection under Decision 1956.

19. According to Document 02/BCDTW-VPDP dated January 8, 2016 by the Central Steering Committee for implementation of the NTP-NRD for 2016, the budget for management, inspection and monitoring was one percent of the total budget for the National Targeted Program and the rest would come from the local budget.
20. Resolution 100/2015/QH13 dated November 12, 2015 of the NA of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, approving the investment policy for the National Targeted Program for the 2016-2020 period.
21. Document 139/UBND-NC dated March 1, 2016 by the Hoa Binh PPC on rearrangement of steering committees and councils at the provincial level.
22. Decision 689/QĐ-UBND dated May 4, 2016 of the DakNong PPC approving the proposal to rearrange cross sectoral coordination mechanism.
23. In the seven study provinces, only Dak Nong assigned its DARD to take full charge of rural vocational training (providing policy advice and analysis, coordinating plans, managing the agriculture vocational training budget, signing contracts with vocational training facilities, monitoring and evaluation). In two of the seven provinces (Quang Tri, Ninh Thuan), DARD has not been assigned the comprehensive management role in agriculture vocational training, but have played the role of advisor and coordinator with DoLISA in developing policies, plans and budget for agriculture vocational training. In four of the seven provinces (Lao Cai, Hoa Binh, Nghe An, Tra Vinh), DARD only implemented the portion of the budget for agriculture vocational training assigned to them by the PPC, and have not been involved in planning or budgeting for agriculture vocational training for districts and for vocational training facilities.
24. In-house trainers are paid according to the official salary scales, and receive insurances. They may be long-term staff or short-term staff.
25. Point 2, Paragraph III, Article 1 of Decision 1956 stipulates that “vocational trainers (technicians, engineers, skilled workers at companies and production facilities, or agricultural, industrial and or aquaculture extension centres participating in vocational training) are paid for their lecturing with a minimum amount of 25,000 VND per hour. The exact amount is to be decided by the vocational training facilities.” Due to limited budgets, most vocational training facilities only pay the minimum amount stipulated by the Decision.
26. Point 1, Article 6 of Decision 971 states: “To attract scientists, technicians, engineers and highly skilled workers at companies and production facilities, or agricultural, industrial or aquaculture extension centres to develop curricula and materials for vocational training for rural workers.”
27. Article 7 in the Inter-Ministerial Circular 30/2012/TTLT-BLDTBXH-BNV-BNN&PTNT-BTC-BTTTT dated December 12, 2012 guiding the implementation of Prime Minister’s Decision 1956/QĐ-TTg, dated November 27, 2009, approving the project on vocational training for rural people until 2020.
28. In 2015, Lao Cai DoLISA allocated 100 million VND to build a vocational training database and management software. By early 2016, this software has started operation.
29. According to Decision 971, funding is prioritised for areas in the midlands, the northern mountainous region, the central highlands, the Mekong river delta, offshore islands, areas with more than 100,000 ethnic

- minority people or those with less than 100,000 ethnic minority people but where ethnic minority people account for more than five percent of the total population, and areas where 80 percent of trainees find new jobs or have better incomes after attending vocational training.
30. According to Decision 1956, trainers and managers from vocational training facilities should conduct regular visits to villages in specially disadvantaged areas for at least 15 days or more per month to be eligible to receive travel allowances, with a coefficient of 0.2 compared to the basic salary, similar to teachers who are based in villages to eradicate illiteracy. Trainers from vocational training facilities in mountainous, remote, border and island areas with a high percentage of ethnic minorities receive accommodation allowances similar to teachers from the pre-school to secondary school level.
 31. According to Circular 42 and Circular 43, for normal workers: a maximum of 35 participants per class for soft skills and 18 participants for hands-on activities; for ethnic minority participants (from ethnic minority groups with populations of less than 10,000, including the Si La, Pu Peo, Ro Mam, B'rau, O Du, Pa Then, Co Lao, Lo, Mang, Lu, Cong, Bo Y, Chut, Ngai, La Ha, and La Hu ethnic groups, as set out in Document 1208/UBDT-DTTS by the Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA) dated October 30, 2015 on the list of ethnic minorities), and people with disabilities: a maximum of 20 participants per class for soft skills and 10 participants for hands-on activities; for blind people: a maximum of 10 participants per class for soft skills and eight participants for hands-on activities.
 32. In Decision 14/2016/QĐ-UBND dated April 16, 2016, Quang Tri PPC stipulates that the maximum number of participants with disabilities per class is 20, and the maximum number of participants who are blind is 10.
 33. In Lao Cai, the Hmong ethnic minority accounts for 23.78 percent of the total population, and the Dao ethnic minority accounts for 14.05 percent. <http://laocai.gov.vn/sites/bandantoc/Tin%20t%E1%BB%A9c/cachuatdong/Trang/20141031100731.aspx>
 34. Please note that the statistics on the participation of poor households in vocational training are only approximate. Four of the seven provinces (Ninh Thuan, Tra Vinh, Quang Tri and Lao Cai) count the participation of all poor households from ethnic minorities and from the Kinh group (the majority ethnic group) in vocational training. However, the remaining three provinces (Hoa Binh, Nghe An and Dak Nong) don't have accurate numbers for poor people attending vocational training, because they are either listed according to their ethnic minority group or as poor households attending vocational training (because the statistics collected in these provinces serve the purpose of supporting the poor with per diems and travel allowances).
 35. World Bank (2009), Country Social Analysis - Ethnicity and Development in Vietnam.
 36. Document 02/BCDTW-VPDP of the Central Steering Committee for the NTP-NRD dated January 28, 2016 on implementing the program in 2016.
 37. Decision No. 491/QĐ-TTg dated April 16, 2009 of the Prime Minister on issuance of the national NRD criteria. The criteria comprise 19 aspects of rural development: master planning, transportation, irrigation, electricity, schools, cultural infrastructure, markets, post office, residential houses, income, poverty reduction, labour structure, production organisation, education, health care, culture, environment, socio-political system and public security.
 38. Lao Cai has organised training for 224 staff at the district and commune level on the New

Law on Vocational Training, related new legal documents and the cost norms for vocational training participants, and organised mobile communications activities at 114 sites in villages. Quang Tri province has integrated new contents into Project 1956 through Women's Union and Youth Union meetings.

39. Document 1537/BNN-TCCB, dated May 14, 2014 of MARD, providing guidance on agricultural vocational training for rural people in the period from 2014 to 2015, states: "The aim is to implement the policy on building the capacity of local agricultural extension services and to ensure that provincial agricultural extension centres are qualified to provide vocational training according to MoLISA's criteria, so that these centres will become a key force in agricultural vocational training in local areas in the long run."
40. The model uses funding from Program 30a, Project 661, Program 134, and Program 135 together with funds from the district's recurrent budget for economic development to support 30 households who commit to sustainable poverty reduction on joining the model (including support for cows, veterinary services, training, and allocation of forest land for protection by the households).
41. Document 3182/NHCS-TDSV dated December 21, 2010 of the Bank for Social Policies.
42. According to Prime Minister's Decision 71/2005/QĐ-TTg, dated April 5, 2005, the Prime Minister's revised Decision 15/2008/QĐ-TTg, and Inter-Ministerial Circular 14/2008/TTLT-BLDTBXH-BTC-BKHDT, the eligibility criteria for a household loan include household registration in the project area, a guarantee of at least one new job, and verification of the project by the local authorities. A household or an individual wishing to apply for credit must prepare a project proposal with clear information on the objectives, contents, and economic feasibility of their plan, and must pledge to use the credit according to their stated objectives, and to employ the stated number of workers. This proposal must be appraised by various stakeholders from the CPC and DivoLISA.
43. The nature of the "project" approach is to collect all similar activities by related stakeholders to achieve certain detailed targets within a limited timeframe, using specified resources (for a specific group and location).
44. Decision 1582/QĐ-LDTBXH dated December 2, 2011 by MoLISA on issuing some indicators for the monitoring and evaluation of the rural workers' vocational training program until 2020 under the Prime Minister's Decision 1956/QĐ-TTg dated November 27, 2009. Some indicators of Decision 1582 were found to be too ambitious, hence they were difficult to measure, for example "the number of households with participants in vocational training that escape poverty after one year", "the number of households with participants in vocational training that become better off after one year", "the number of communes with 10 percent or more of the households participating in vocational training becoming better off after one year", and "the number of workers in the commune shifting from agriculture to non-agriculture work after completing vocational training".
45. The research group has conducted research in 15 villages in the list of annual survey sites and eight villages with ethnic minorities participating in vocational training.
46. The project for sustainable economic empowerment of ethnic minorities in DakNong province (funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development - IFAD), abbreviated as the "3EM project".
47. The project "Capacity building for the ethnic minorities in accessing information and ensuring food security in Da Bac district, Hoa Binh province", funded by the Australian Foundation for the Peoples of Asia and the Pacific (AFAP).

48. The Oxfam project supported the establishment of material areas for rattan and lung bamboo. Duc Phong Company supported vocational training for local people together with the establishment of craft areas in some Thai ethnic villages (through Program 1956).
49. Please address comments to Hoang Lan Huong, Advocacy and Campaign Officer, Oxfam in Vietnam, Tel: +84 24 3945 4362, ext: 713, email: huong.hoanglan@oxfam.org.

**HONG DUC PUBLISHING HOUSE
VIETNAM LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION**

Address: 65 Trang Thi street, Hanoi
Email: nhaxuatbanhongduc@yahoo.com
Tel: 04.3 9260024 Fax: 04.3 9260031

RESPONSIBLE FOR PUBLISHING

Director
BUI VIET BAC

RESPONSIBLE FOR CONTENT

Editor-in-chief
LY BA TOAN

EDITOR

NGUYEN THI PHUONG MAI

DESIGN

LUCKHOUSE GRAPHICS

Print 94 units in English, dimension (cm) 29.5 x 20.5 at Luck House Ltd.Co.,
Address 276 Lang street, Thinh Quang, Dong Da, Hanoi
Publishing registration plan No.: 1740-2017/CXBIPH/29-27/HĐ
Publishing permit No.: 964/QĐ-NXBHĐ, issue on 5 June 2017
ISBN: 978-604-955-960-0
Completed and archived in quarter II of 2017

Oxfam in Vietnam's Pro Poor Policy Monitoring Project (2014 - 2016) works in partnership with local officials to research how pro poor policy is implemented and what impact it has on people's lives.

Our research is conducted annually in 9 provinces and cities in Vietnam. The voices and stories we collect are used to produce a series of comprehensive reports, organize policy meetings and dialogues and work with national and local officials, development partners, and the media, to advocate for stronger, more sustainable pro poor policy.



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

☎ 84 243 945 4448 – ext 713.

✉ ppm@oxfam.org.uk

🌐 vietnam.oxfam.org

📘 facebook.com/oxfaminvietnam



Irish Aid
Government of Ireland
Rialtas na hÉireann

All photos used in this report are contributed by programmes and projects of Oxfam in Vietnam. This publication is distributed to interested stakeholders only, not for commercial purpose.