

Project Name and Approximate Project Value : Vietnam Canada Community College Project (VCCCP)		Country: Vietnam
Project Location Within Country: Tra Vinh province		Professional Staff Provided: No. Of Staff: 34 Person-Months: 138
Client: Canadian International Development Agency Wendy Miller, Senior Development Officer, CIDA T: (819) 994 5418 WENDY_MILLER @acdi-cida.gc.ca		
Start Date: April 2001	Completion Date: March 2006	Approx. Value of Services: Fees: CDN\$1,550,000 Reimbursable Expenses: CDN\$1,220,000
Name of Associated Firm, if any: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institut de technologie agroalimentaire de la St. Hyacinthe (ITA) • Malaspina University College (MUC) • Fisheries and Marine Institute of Memorial University (MI) 		Professional Staff Person-Months Provided by Associated Firm: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ITA: 10 • MUC: 24 • MI: 43 • SIAST 61
Senior/key staff involved and functions performed: <u>David Harvey</u> , Project Manager/Strategic Planning Specialist <u>Nigel Allan</u> , Extension Services Specialist <u>Laura Halfyard</u> , Aquaculture Specialist <u>Quang Trung Luu</u> , Post Harvest Specialist <u>Mary Abbott</u> , Train the Trainer Specialist <u>Grant MacTavish</u> , Curricula/Learning Resources Specialist		
Detailed Narrative Description of Project: <p>The goal of the VCCCP is to contribute to poverty reduction in Tra Vinh province through the development of a workforce with skills relevant to local and regional employment and self-employment opportunities. These skills include technical expertise related to agricultural production, extension, and small-scale processing. As recognized by the Tra Vinh People's Committee (TVPC) the institution central to achieving this goal is the Tra Vinh Community College (TVCC), established under the auspices of the project.</p> <p>The TVCC is a unique institution in Vietnam. While there have been tremendous economic and social changes in Vietnam since the implementation of the <i>doi moi</i> policy of renovation, the public formal and non formal skills training system has remained relatively unchanged from the structure that was designed to serve state owned enterprises and collectivized farms. The TVCC, however, is designed in response to the customized demands of rural communities in Tra Vinh province.</p>		

More than any other skills training institution in Vietnam, the TVCC emphasizes accessibility. Special support is provided to students in order to qualify and subsequently succeed within training programs at the college. This is particularly important for Khmer students who often struggle linguistically in their basic education program and, as a result, find access to employment or self-employment skills training severely restricted. Furthermore, the TVCC offers outreach formal and non formal training at four of its current extension centres in the Duyen Hai, Tieu Can, Cau Ke and Cau Ngang districts. The TVCC is planning, in the short-term, to extend its services to the Tra Cu and Cang Long districts with the outreach services of Chau Thanh district to be met by the TVCC campus in Tra Vinh town. Non-formal outreach skills training is the only avenue for improving income generation – especially for Khmer and women in rural areas who are unable to access the formal skills training system. Furthermore, the non-formal programs are certified by the TVCC which provides value to rural learners, service providers and employers.

For example, the certified completion of customized courses creates for rural learners greater access to micro-credit and employment opportunities. Using a lifelong learning model, completion of learning modules at rural extension centres count towards the certification of short- and long-term MOLISA vocational programs (and even college and university level certification in selected programs such as Agriculture and Aquaculture). This model, unique to the TVCC, allows learners open entry and exit to skills training programs and serves to motivate rural learners traditionally shut out of the formal education and training system.

Relevance to learners and their communities is a central attribute of TVCC's outreach programming. Learning outcomes are determined by employers and other key stakeholders. In outreach programs, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) and the Department of Fisheries play a central role in determining the overall thrust of the sector's extension training. However, it was noted in the project as a lesson learned that the participation of the learners was vital to ensuring extension training relevance. Significant effort was extended to create an enabling environment where farmers felt comfortable in voicing their opinions in a participatory process. Generally, the poorer the learner the more reluctant the active participation in the process. The project was very careful to empower farmers within the Party-approved and legal avenues – primarily the Farmer Association and Women's Union at the provincial, district and commune levels. Significant time and effort was required before learners were able to effectively articulate their needs and only then was the training system adjusted to a truly demand-driven process.

As per the Tra Vinh People's Committee's (TVPC) original design, the TVCC has serves as a central coordinating institution for outreach training in Tra Vinh, drastically improving service delivery efficiency. Other Vietnamese skills training institutions are focused on specific economic sectors (i.e. industry, construction, transportation, commerce, etc.). The TVCC outreach programming is unique in that its mandate is not restricted by sector but is required to meet all the skills training needs within the province's geographic area. Significantly, the TVCC operation is financially and legally responsible to the TVPC and not the central sectoral ministries (i.e. industry, construction, etc.). As a result, the TVPC is able to coordinate extension training services and reduce duplication.

For example, the TVCC agriculture, aquaculture and post harvest learners conduct their practical field placements as extension trainers in rural districts as per the needs of the DARD and Department of Fisheries. Training conducted by the TVCC outreach centres is coordinated with other extension training. Most importantly, outreach training in Tra Vinh is able to utilize the facilities, equipment, modularized learning resources, certification processes and technical and pedagogical skills of the TVCC at a very low marginal cost. The result has been a model for a vastly improved outreach skills training system in terms of both effectiveness and efficiency.

Another lesson learned is that although agriculture (predominately rice production) consists of close to 80 percent of the provincial economy, the real demand for training lies in areas outside rice production. Rice production in Tra Vinh, like other costal areas in the Mekong, is severely hindered by soil made relatively unproductive by silt and salt. The potential to increase production in a sustainable fashion through technology transfer is insignificant compared to other relatively untapped sectors such as aquaculture, fisheries, post harvest processing, animal husbandry, dairy, fruit and vegetable production and processing. In these sectors, markets are strong both domestically and internationally but the quality to date is very disappointing. In addition, tremendous opportunities exist for commercial service off-farm income particularly in the Chau Thanh and Cang Long districts nearer to larger populations. Despite the opportunities in the new sectors, the rural poor (including the landless poor) in these districts still see the key to increasing their incomes and social condition as an increase in traditional production yields. While the project maintained its participatory processes for assessing training demand, it was recognized that significant effort was required to demonstrate the potential of non-traditional modes of income generation. Furthermore, the TVPC recognized the need for the project to be more active in mitigating risk and helping poor households make the transition to more non-traditional agricultural methods.

While women in formal education and training programs enjoy strong participation rates in formal vocational and college level programs at the TVCC campuses, women and girls face many barriers to their full participation in the economic and social development of their communities. Many rural girls drop out of the basic education system by grade eight or earlier. Households headed by single women are most at risk of falling into poverty as they are unable to access education and training because of family duties, geographic remoteness and/or the lack of academic pre-requisites. Furthermore, women and girls are often restricted in their employment and education opportunities in larger population centres for fear they will fall prey to “social evils”. In some employment and self-employment sectors such as aquaculture production women face social taboos and superstitions that rigorously restrict their participation.

The project developed over 30 formal training programs. Programs are based on local and regional labour market analyses and reflect employment and self employment opportunities in the following critical sectors: agriculture, aquaculture, post harvest, mechanical, electrical, business administration, and garment. Programs have certification levels at six months, one year and two years. Most programs have options up to the college (3 year) and the agriculture and aquaculture programs are finalizing articulation programs to allow TVCC vocational and college learners to progress to the Bachelors level.

The TVCC is now able to develop curricula in accordance with both national standards set by MOET and MOLISA and the skills requirements of local and regional employers. Management is able to develop its own strategic plan and monitor results. The teacher training unit is able to plan and delivery professional development (pedagogy and technical).

Detailed Description of Services Provided:

SIAST leads a consortium of colleges and technical institutes including MI, MUC and ITA. SIAST is contracted by the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC), the project’s Canadian Executing Agency (CEA) for the following:

- Lead the development of the Project Implementation Plan (PIP) inclusive of gender, sustainability and risk mitigation strategies;
- Lead the development of the Annual Work Plan (AWP) for approval by Canadian and Vietnamese stakeholders in the Joint Project Steering Committee (JPSC);
- Conduct the initial environmental assessment of the college construction site;
- Sourcing Canadian and Vietnamese specialists as required by the approved Annual Work Plan;
- Provide technical assistance to support the development of the TVCC Strategic Plan;
- Provide training related to: i) effective college management and community based governance, ii) employment and self-employment driven curricula development processes, and iii) technical and pedagogical training for teachers;
- Provide equipment specifications for TVCC laboratories; and Reporting by activity

The college consortium also recently assumed a leadership role on the project’s reporting on results requirement.

In accordance with the project’s sustainability and risk management strategy, the nature of the consortium’s relationship with the TVCC and TVPC has changed substantially since the beginning of the project. Initially, the Canadian inputs assumed a more prescriptive role. This was required because the community college concept is not well understood in Vietnam. However, as understanding grew, more Vietnamese concepts were merged with existing processes and the “Vietnamese Model” community college emerged. The Vietnamese partners have a tremendous sense of project ownership from the project’s inception – fostered by their CDN\$2.7 million in-kind contribution for the college site, facilities and human resources.

However, as the TVCC’s management capacity and conceptual understanding of a community college in Vietnam grew, the consortium’s inputs grew more consultative in nature. Approaching the final year, the TVCC has taken the lead role in AWP development and Canadian inputs at a technical or project management level are focused on ensuring compliance with the contribution agreement and the JPSC.

Funding Agency: CIDA

Firm: SIAST