



Corporate social responsibility promotes disability inclusion, expand businesses

Promoting job opportunities for people with disabilities is not only the key for this group to participate in the community but also contribute to business development. This was the topic of a special event organized by Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) and the ILO in collaboration with Hoi An People's Committee on 30 November to celebrate the International Day for People with Disabilities (3 December).

The event was the first in the series that the ILO in Viet Nam will organize to promote new perspectives to change enterprises' attitudes, build infrastructure, use products made by people with disabilities, and promote employment for this group.

"This will not only benefit people with disabilities but also the entire community and result in positive changes to business development and corporate culture," ILO Viet Nam Country Director Gyorgy Sziraczki said. "Creating job op-

portunities for them and promoting disability inclusion is corporate social responsibility of companies."

The ILO estimated that Viet Nam loses about 3 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product as the result of the exclusion of persons with disabilities from the labour market. Disabled persons can and desire to become productive members of society but most of them are facing barriers when accessing to vocational trainings, employment as well as participating equally in all aspects of Vietnamese society.

Participating in the event were a number of companies in the hospitality industry including major hotels and restaurants.

About 150 businesses, 5,000 business households and 11,000 people are in the tourism industry in Hoi An City.

Addressing the event, Vice Chairman of Hoi An People's Committee, Truong

SPOTLIGHT

ILO, UNAIDS join force to improve working conditions for sex workers

A new ILO-UNAIDS project is expected to strengthen HIV prevention and treatment programmes in Viet Nam through better working conditions for entertainment workers.

The project, which uses the One UN Fund, will make its debut in early 2014.

The joint initiative targets sex workers, who are exposed to sexual and other forms of violence, exploitation and discrimination.

According to the UNAIDS, the national HIV prevalence among female sex workers was 2.7 per cent in the country by the end of 2012.

The project aims to help Viet Nam develop policies and programmes that address the roots of HIV vulnerability of entertainment workers. It will also support the national networks and organizations of entertainment workers in advocating for improved working conditions.

Innovative workplace approaches will also be piloted to promote voluntary, confidential testing and early uptake of HIV treatment for sex workers.

Van Bay, said that "persons with disabilities working in tourism not only contribute to the society development but also promote the accessible and friendly tourism, especially in our heritage and cultural city".

New projects

to boost rural employment in central region

The ILO in Viet Nam launched three new projects in the central provinces of Quang Nam and Thua Thien – Hue on 10 December to help promote sustainable rural employment.

The Luxembourg-funded Rural Youth Employment programme works on career guidance, ICT-based communication platform and decent work-based modules in entrepreneurship development for rural young people.

The Skills for Trade project, which is funded by the Russian Government,



focuses on improving the competitiveness of tourism sector in the two provinces by enhancing the quality of vocational training activities.

As a joint effort between the ILO and

the UNESCO and using the One UN fund, the Sustainable Tourism Development project aims at bridging rural communities with the tourism industry by creating markets linkages, improving hospitality services and producing and selling locally made products.

At the event held in Quang Nam Province, the ILO, provincial authorities and other stakeholders explored opportunities to raise and implement initiatives for tourism development and rural youth program in the two provinces.

Private sector tipped in fighting sexual harassment at workplaces

A total of 80 enterprises from across the country have been trained by the ILO and VCCI in preventing and addressing sexual harassment at the workplaces.

The participants, who are company managers, communications and human resources staff, and trade union members, learned the definition, types and consequences of sexual harassment, the legal framework at the national level and how enterprises can prevent and address this sensitive issue. The trainers were expected to train other managers and workers on this topic within their enterprises' training and communication framework.

The series of training which took place between June and December 2013 was an activity of the ILO project on Awareness Raising on Preventing and Addressing Workplace Sexual Harassment which uses the One UN fund.

Started earlier this year, the project supported targeted enterprises on how to integrate sexual harassment provisions in the new Labour Code into their work reg-

ulations, collective bargaining agreements and specific policies.

The ILO and VCCI have co-published a guide on "Preventing and Addressing Sexual Harassment at the Workplace" in December 2013. The ILO also supported the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs to formulate legal definition of workplace sexual harassment and to include sexual harassment provisions into relevant decrees such as Decree on Domestic Workers, Sanctions for Labour Violation and Employment Contracts.

Master trainers get ready to train millions of farmers in business

The final training for the 18 masters trainers for the Million Farmers' Initiative was completed in November 2013.

The potential master trainers will get accredited by the ILO in 2014 before being able to train other trainers of vocational schools, using the ILO package Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB). They are key human resources to implement the national programme aiming to train 1 million rural workers per year by 2020.

The training of master trainers started in 2012 by the ILO and the General Directorate of Vocational Training.

Rural residents to learn safe migration

A series of public events promoting access to re-

liable information on costs and legal recruitment channels for safe overseas employment will be organized in several northern and central provinces where many people seek jobs outside the country.

The exchange programmes aim to enhance self-protection skills and understandings of safe migration and support services to prevent migrant workers from falling victim to labour exploitation and human trafficking.

Co-organized by the ILO, the Ho Chi Minh Central Youth Union and a non-profit campaign to end trafficking and exploitation MTV EXIT, the events will start in Phu Tho as part of the celebration of the International Migrants Day (18 December) before taking place in different communes in Bac Ninh, Quang Ngai and Thanh Hoa provinces between December 2013 and February 2014.



New Law focuses on young workers, disadvantaged groups

As the National Assembly has passed the Employment Law, ILO Viet Nam talks to Chairwoman of the Committee for Social Affairs, Truong Thi Mai, about this important legal document.

What does the passing of the Employment Law mean to the labour force and the economy? Who would benefit the most from the Law when it becomes effective?

The Employment Law is critically important in promoting job creation, and ensuring social protection and economic growth. One of the most important goals of the Law is “creating an environment and conditions for workers to have better jobs with higher income”. The formation and development of the labour market requires the Government to focus on labour relations in the formal sector and also all the human resources that can readily work and enter the labour market.

The issuance of the Employment Law is necessary to standardize all elements of the labour market. For those who work in the formal sector, which are already covered by labour standards and industrial relations in the Labour Code, the Employment Law will support them in vocational training, labour market information and unemployment insurance policies.

Those who work in the informal sector, which the Employment Law focuses on, will receive support through policies on job creation, vocational training, temporary jobs, labour market information and job consultation and unemployment insurance. All of these efforts would help develop the quality of the human resources for the economic restructure and the implementation of the national socio-economic development plan until 2020.

The process of making the Employment Law was not easy. Which aspects do you consider the most difficult?

Covering a wide area, the Employment Law covers all social relations in the labour market, both in the formal and



informal sectors. This is different from the amended Labour Code, which only covers workers in the formal sector (accounting for only 33 per cent of the labour force, equivalent to about 15 million workers).

However, we understood that the Employment Law could overlap other technical laws in terms of target groups and scope of coverage. As a result, we worked hard to make sure that it would focus on supporting young and vulnerable workers, female workers, workers in agriculture and rural areas and informal workers to increase the quality of their jobs. This is because they are subjected to many risks in their unstable and low-income working environment.

In addition, the feasibility of the Law when it comes into force was also taken into account.

The National Assembly Committee for Social Affairs will also soon be occupied with the amendment of the Law on Social Insurance and the pension reform among others. Why is it important at

this time to put these legal documents on the table?

Viet Nam became a middle-income country in 2010. This is the turning point for many emerging economies, which means it's critical to improve the competitiveness of the economy, develop synchronously all aspects of the labour market in regards to changes in salaries, wages, social insurance, unemployment insurance, labour contracts, working environment and conditions, accordingly to requirements of a market economy.

Besides, it's important to improve our social protection policies to minimize the risks for workers. Therefore, in the 13th National Assembly, many important law projects in labour and employment – Law on Social Insurance (amended), Law on Occupational Safety and Health and Law on Minimum Wage – will be studied and hopefully given a green light. These all contribute to a strong legal framework required in a market economy.

How can the ILO support the Committee in these projects?

The ILO is an important partner of the Committee in making laws on labour, employment and social protection. Many ILO experts have effectively participated in this process.

The fact that about 67 per cent of Viet Nam's labour force, or more than 30 million workers, are in the informal sector, is a major challenge in restructuring the economy and the labour force and ensuring social security. Therefore, Viet Nam values international experiences in developing policies related to labour, employment and wage.

However, it would be more effective if the Committee and the ILO agree on and sign a memorandum of understanding on the areas where both sides show strong interests.



The link between education and training and export growth, economic diversification and the creation of more and better jobs should be strengthened while another set of policies, such as career guidance, job counseling, labour market information and employment services could ease the transition from school to work. The preliminary findings of the survey showed that the most popular job search method for the young people is now through “asking friends, relatives and acquaintances”.

“Unless Viet Nam takes advantage of its huge young labour force that will soon pass their prime, it will have to pay long-term costs,” said Mr Sziraczki.

The Viet Nam school-to-work transition survey was introduced as part of the global Work4Youth partnership between the ILO Youth Employment Programme and The MasterCard Foundation. The US\$14.6 million project, which will run for five years to mid-2016, aims to strengthen the production of labour market information specific to young people and to work with policy-makers on the interpretation of data in 28 target countries.

Job quality undermines youth potentials and national growth

The quality of jobs available for young people aged between 15 and 29 is ringing an alarm in the youth labour market in Viet Nam, shows the first national school-to-work transition survey, which will soon be launched.

The preliminary findings of the survey, carried out by the ILO and the General Statistics Office in early 2013, indicated that the impact that low-productive employment among the large youth population has on the growth prospects of the country is a primary concern.

The nation-wide survey showed that poor quality employment impacts more than half of young workers. Nearly eight in ten are in informal employment and half of them are in irregular employment, meaning own-account work or temporary contracts.

According to the survey, which looks at the passage of the young people from end of schooling to the first stable (with work contract duration of more than 12 months) or satisfactory job, over education – or the fact that a degree holder takes up work for which she or he is overqualified – is the other side of the problem. Three in every ten 15-

to-29-year-olds is overeducated for their job, making them likely to earn less than they otherwise could have and fail to use the most of their productive potential.

ILO Viet Nam Country Director Gyorgy Sziraczki said young people in Viet Nam need supports to make their labour market transition smoother, which will help the whole country “unleash their full potentials”.

Upcoming events

- Singapore study tour of National Minimum Wage Council, January
- Workshop on tourism development and rural youth programme in Thua Thien – Hue and Quang Nam provinces, Hue, January
- Training on trade union pilot initiatives, Hai Phong, January
- Launching of initiatives to improve capacity of employers’ organizations, Hanoi, January
- Workshop on the Labour Code Guidebook, January
- Reviewing workshop on the pilot MRC Operation Manual, January
- Award ceremony for winners of ILO Viet Nam Media Award 2013, Hanoi, 20 February
- Training on forced labour, anti human trafficking and debt bondage for MOLISA, VGCL, VCCI and provinces, February
- Agreement signing ceremony with VCCI for the second phase of SCORE (Sustainable competitive and responsible enterprises) project, March
- Study visit to migration resource centres in Malaysia for the Department of Overseas Labour and target provinces, March.