

USAID/IRPP March monthly report

In the first part of March, project staff focused on activities in the area of industrial relations (IR) education. In the first week, the project coordinated a meeting among representatives of University of Labor and Social Affairs (ULSA) and Vietnam Trade Union University (VTU) to plan the first draft outline of industrial relations textbook. The Vice Rector of ULSA presented the first draft outline of the textbook developed by him. Although representatives from Ton Duc Thang (TDT) University from HCMC were not present, they were briefed on the outcomes of discussion in which a revised outline of the textbook was developed and the universities allocated responsibilities in terms of producing specific chapters. This meeting was also in preparation for an IR education program the following week that a US labor educator team which included the IR education consultant, Kent Wong from the UCLA Labor Center, and three resource persons from labor studies programs at UCLA, CUNY and Harvard.

The US labor educator team were the primary resource persons a two-day workshop on “Sharing Best Practices on IR Education” organized by Vietnam Trade Union University. The participants of the workshop included leaders and lecturers of three major IR institutions. In the workshop, four professors presented on trade union skills, comparative industrial relations and global movements (Elaine Bernard, Harvard), innovative labor education programs including how to develop postgraduate and undergraduate programs (Greg Mantsios, CUNY), new forms research as the basis labor policies (Abel Venezuela, UCLA), and IR education initiatives and labor movements (Kent Wong, UCLA). Representatives from the US universities also provided extensive material relating to curriculum development and guidance on how these might be used by the participants. In addition the US labor education team held individual sessions with each university to provide specific technical assistance in areas requested by the universities such as curricula strengthening and textbook development.

Apart these planned activities, the project worked with the US labor educator team to develop three areas of follow-up: strengthening the national network of labor scholars in Vietnam and building linkages with US labor education associations; developing a study tour of U.S. labor studies centers for faculty from the three Vietnamese universities; enhancing the understanding of best practices of U.S. labor education through follow up workshops and educational seminars in Vietnam facilitated by labor relations faculty from the U.S. The project coordinated a meeting with the U.S. Embassy to explore the study tour proposal, which received encouraging initial feedback. The director of the Harvard Trade Union Program also indicated that they will explore raising funds to support a representative of the Vietnam Trade Union University to participate in their program in 2012. In addition, the project will continue to arrange with the three universities for seminars or workshops on targeted with visiting labor relations resource specialists who are traveling to Vietnam in the coming months.

To continue the work of strengthening labor inspection, a team of US DOL specialists returned to Vietnam for third time in the middle of March. One of labor inspection specialists, E.J Murtagh, came out first to participate in activities during the National Week on Occupational Safety and Health (this year focusing on prevention of fires) held in Quang Ngai province. Mr. Murtagh was the resource person at the National Workshop on Labor Inspection for Improved Compliance on OSH Laws and Regulations organized by the MOLISA Inspectorate in which he presented on U.S approaches to work safety and his recommendations for the supporting the Labor Inspectorate in this area.

He was joined later by another US DOL specialist, Jeff Wheeler, and both worked closely with the MOLISA Inspectorate on three targeted areas: management information system development, training of trainers (ToT), and creating a handbook and other educational materials. After a series of meetings with individual committees in each area, a workshop on improving information management system for labor inspection was organized in Hanoi. A detailed scope of work for the MIS committee, timeline, and

proposals to MOLISA leaders in terms of developing such system was finalized at the end of the workshop.

Project staff also worked with main the project stakeholders (MoLISA, VCCI and VGCL) in other on-going activity areas:

- Legal Capacity survey – translation and review (Legal Department)
- Labor Law Education – planning for upcoming activities (Legal Department)
- Collective Bargaining multi-employer model – development and initiation (VGCL)
- Labor Arbitration Center model – review and comment (VCCI)
- Legal Aid Services – development of report and planning (VGCL and VCCI)

The project also prepared for an intensive program of dispute resolution trainings to be held at the beginning of April – including translation and development of training curricula and finalizing policy options and other documents.

At the end of the month, two project staff joined a DAI Training on Field Operations.

Upcoming activities in April

Dick Fincher, a mediation and arbitration specialist as well as an associate professor of Cornell University, will travel to Vietnam for two and a half weeks to conduct four trainings and one national consultation on development of ADR systems.

Katie Quan, collective bargaining specialist, from UC Berkeley Labor Center, along with two professors from Penn State University and Sun Yat Sen University, China will travel to Vietnam for the second trip to follow up on collective bargaining activities such as pilot textile CBA in Binh Duong, training for tripartite stakeholders.