

USAID/IRPP October 2011 monthly report

In the first two weeks of the month, the Project staff focused mostly on cooperating with the Labor Inspectorate to implement the planned pilot self-assessment activities. With support from the Project, the Labor Inspectorate conducted a series of instructional sessions for 400 enterprises in Hanoi and 500 enterprises in HCMC on the self-assessment process. In addition, the Labor Inspectorate supplied the self-assessment questionnaires either during the sessions or by post.

In the third week of October, Timothy Ryan, Asia Regional Program Director of the Solidarity Center based in Washington and official of the AFL-CIO, traveled to Vietnam to work with VGCL. The main purpose of his trip is to explore the potential for cooperation between the VGCL and the AFL-CIO, the Solidarity Center, and the National Labor College. Mr. Ryan also met with representatives of the three universities to exchange knowledge and experience on IR education and discussed possibilities to arrange meetings and visits between these universities' VOLVIS (see below) participants and the National Labor College.

In October, the Project office worked with Labor and Wage Department of MoLISA to discuss the detailed plan and timeline to conduct the in-depth survey on IR situation in 3 cities: Hanoi, Binh Duong, and Ho Chi Minh City. The Project's representative attended and presented at a workshop organized by UNIDO on Corporate Social Responsibility, which includes the improvement of labor living and working conditions. In addition, the Project office also had a meeting with the USAID Economic Growth Program Manager to brief her on the Project's main activities and focal points in the coming period.

At the beginning of the final week of October, upon the invitation of VCCI and ILO, the Project's representative attended the VCCI-hosted National Conference of Employers' Organizations on the assessment of the current situation of industrial relations and comments on the latest draft labor code. The information and documents from this will be used later as when planning activities to labor law education. Also in this week, the Project staff attended several meetings with the Project's partners, including VCCI, VGCL, and LWD to discuss and plan for the coming activities. During a meeting with VCCI to prepare for the workshop on legal advisory services, the Project and VCCI agreed to reschedule this workshop to early November 2011. In order to follow up on the development of a Legal Aid Service Handbook for VGCL, the Project worked with VGCL to select with national consultant.

At the end of October, the Project staff attended in the VGCL workshop on Binh Duong Textile and Garment Industry CBA, which was facilitated by the Project to create a forum for 9 participating enterprises to share and discussion the plans of action to implement the Binh Duong Textile and Garment Industry CBA.

Throughout the month, the Project Office helped coordinate the logistics for the VOLVIS (International Voluntary Visitor Program on labor education). Working with PAS of US Embassy, MOLISA, VGCL and three universities, the Project provided guidance on preparation of personal dossiers of participants and helped them to get passports, dip notes, air tickets, etc., as well as worked closely with the PAS, US Embassy to deal with nomination changes from MOLISA. In addition, the Project worked with the US university planners in WDC, NYC and LA to create the program on the ground.

Lastly, the project began the process of lining up international technical assistance for the coming months:

- Katie Quan from UC Berkeley Labor Center who would coming to Vietnam in late November/early December to conduct work on Labor Law Education and Collective Bargaining.
- Mark Anner of Penn State University who will be indentifying supplemental materials the IR textbook being developed in cooperation with three Vietnam universities (this is non-travel STTA).
- Richard Fincher, labor arbitrator and adjunct professor of Cornell University, who will be conducting follow on capacity building in dispute resolution based on his previous work here. He would come out in January (before Tet).
- Jeff Wheeler, from USDOL, who is to provide technical assistance to the labor inspectorate in December (non-STTA).

Upcoming activities in November

Follow up activities with the following counterparts will be carried out:

- VCCI: follow up with a workshop on development of both legal services and assist with development of a labor arbitration center and labor arbitration-training program offered by Cornell University.
- VGCL: follow up on LAC and LAO handbook development including finalizing the proposal for national consultancy for development of VGCL LAS handbook
- LWD: follow up planning on PIRC development activities as well as planning for continuing IR strategy work and eventual in-depth survey
- Universities: follow up on the textbook project and the US-based comparative IR specialist on developing supplemental materials.
- Labor Inspectorate: monitoring the progress of pilot self-assessment activity and lining up the US DOL consultant to come in December
- Legal Department: carrying an labor law education review and assessment workshop in late November.
- Pilot CBA: follow up training by a US-based specialist in late November
- Facilitating VOLVIS participants to get US visa and final preparations.