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Education for Development

Strategic Plan

2008-2010

Glossary of important terms used in this document

Curriculum: A plan of instruction that details what students are to learn, how they are to learn it, what the teacher's role is, and the context in which learning and teaching will take place.

Disadvantaged children: defined as children up to age 16 who do not attend formal school or who attend formal school but are unable to participate/progress due to their individual circumstances.

Disadvantaged youth: defined as youth aged 16-24 years who did not graduate from level 9 and/or who are attending a vocational training centre or small skills training centre but are unable to participate/progress due to their individual circumstances.

Disability categories: Including mentally retardation, physical disabilities, vision and hearing impairments, deafness, blindness, learning disabilities, autism, and multi disabilities and disabilities resulting from Agent Orange syndrome.

Educational needs: The disadvantaged children and youth that EFD wants to support have the same right to quality education as all the other children and youth in Vietnam. These disadvantaged children and youth must, however, receive special attention because they have circumstances that make it difficult for them to learn in the same way as most children and youth of the same age.

Disadvantaged children and youth: The EFD strategic review conducted in 2006 identified the following groups as the specific disadvantaged groups that EFD will focus on:

Children and Youth

- Working to support their family and they are therefore not able to attend school.
- Not in school because they have disabilities or they have special educational needs
- Separated from their families and live in shelters, orphanages, half ways houses and reform schools.
- Separated from their families and live on the streets to support themselves, or living with their families but in migrant status and unable to attend school, vocational training centre or small skills training centres.
- Separated from their families and living or working under extreme conditions (bonded labour, prostitutes, etc)

Formal education: structured, regular and unabbreviated national educational curriculum that is provided and supported/certified by the government. The government can also allow or certifies private curricula, which provide a comparable education to government curriculum. Main focus of formal education is basic literacy and numeracy.

Informal education: the lifelong process by which every individual acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from daily experiences and exposure to the environment – at home, at work, at play: from the example and attitude of families and friends; from travel, reading newspapers and books; or by listening to the radio or viewing films or television. Generally informal education is unorganized, unsystematic and even unintentional at times, yet accounts for the great bulk of any person's total lifetime learning – including that of a highly 'schooled' person.

Quality education:

EFD believes that all children and youth deserve a quality education that is based on both equality and equity.

Equality for EFD refers to the elimination of all discriminatory factors that prevent some children and youth in Vietnam to have equal access to the full range of educational services available.

Equity for EFD refers to an education that is:

- ensuring equitable opportunity and **benefit** to achieve ones full potential;
- recognizing that to be treated equitably some students may need more or different supports;
- delivered through curricula and teaching practices that ensure equity and fairness;
- recognizing the value of different ways of learning;

Many different sets of criteria can be used to assess the quality of education. UNESCO¹ asserts that a good education should be based on the following four pillars:

- Learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn and supported in learning by their families and communities; and facilities;
- Content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the area of literacy, numeracy and skills for life and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV and AIDS prevention and peace;
- Processes through which trained teachers use child-centred teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities;
- Outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills, and attitudes and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society.

Quality education criteria that EFD will aim to support are:

- Quality learning environments: Physical elements including being accessible and safe;
- Quality content: Learner-centred education focusing on literacy, numeracy and life skills education;
- Quality teaching and management processes: including knowledge of students, knowledge of content and curriculum, efficient resources;
- Quality outcomes that are focused on what the children and youth know and what they can do but also on their attitudes and expectations;

Small skills training centre:

(Also referred to as unregistered vocational training centres) Example is Hoan Tam Sewing Centre. These centres:

- Offer short training courses (3months – one year) that are emphasising practical learning.
- Are not registered as vocational training centres because they have a small number of students and their curricula are informal and not recognised by the national authorities.
- Cannot issue a certificate to students upon course completion.
- Are allowed to have an income-generating component because they generally do not charge tuition fees.

Local social organizations that EFD will support belong to one or more of the following broad groupings:

- VN Government: examples MOET, CPFC, MOLISA and their subsidiaries

¹ EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2005

- Primary and Secondary School & Voc. Training Centers: examples Tri Tri, Cay Bang, DELISA schools
- Orphanages, Rehabilitation centres, Prisons, Reform Schools
- Local charitable organisations: examples Than Dat, Nhan Tam, Hy Vong, Cau Han, Green Bamboo, etc.

Non-formal education: any organized, systematic educational activity, carried on outside the framework of the formal system, to provide selected types of learning to particular subgroups in the population. Non-formal education is not compulsory, does not lead to formal certification, and may or may not be government-supported.

Rights-based approaches: EFD will use the Statement of Common Understanding among UN agencies² to underscore its reference to a rights-based approach. First, it states that all programmes of development cooperation, policies and technical assistance should advance the realisation of human rights as declared in international human rights instruments. Second, that human rights standards contained in, and principles derived from these instruments, should guide all activities in all development sectors and in all phases of the programming process. Third, that the development activities should contribute to the building of capacities of ‘duty-bearers’ to meet their human rights obligations and to the strengthening of the capacities of ‘rights-holders’ to claim their rights.

Vocational training: training for a specific vocation in industry or agriculture or trade

² The Human Rights Based Approach to Development Cooperation, UN, 2003

Vietnam Education System

General Information

Duration of compulsory education: 9 years, pupils start in their 6th year of age.

Primary education (compulsory)

Primary education lasts for 5 years (grade 1 to 5). Pupils take an exam at the end of grade 5. Upon completion of primary education pupils can continue to lower secondary or enroll on to a one-year vocational course.

Secondary education

General education:

General secondary education is divided into two cycles, of which only the first four years are compulsory.

Basic (lower) secondary: 4 years (grades 6 to 9) After basic secondary, students can either go to specialized secondary upon completion of an entrance exam or proceed to technical and vocational education.

Specialised (upper) secondary: 3 years (grade 10 to 12)

Technical and Vocational education

Students enroll upon completion of either lower secondary or upper secondary. Courses last for up to 4 years.

Source: UNESCO EFA Country Report 2000 - Vietnam

1. Introduction

Education for Development (EFD) is a small international non-governmental organisation that was founded in 1996 with the aim of supporting education to disadvantaged children in Ho Chi Minh City.

The current strategic period is coming to the end in December 2007. This narrative aims to give direction and guidance to EFD staff and volunteers in Vietnam, Holland and Belgium on the priorities for the 2008–2010 strategic period. It is also hoped that this document will inform possible donors and partners on the reasons why EFD is working in Vietnam, the way it chooses to operate and the particular priorities it has for the next three years.

2. Overview of the development context of Vietnam

2.1 Positive development trends

Various authors have commended on the exceptional growth that has taken place in Vietnam over the last few decades. The Vietnamese economy continuously experiences high growth rate with an average of 7.51% in the last 5 years of 2001-2005. In 2006, the growth rate stood at 8.17%. Average per capita income also increased from US\$ 485 in 2003 to US\$ 723 in 2006³. Another indicator that increased sharply is the Human Development Index (HDI). In 2001 was on 0.688 and in 2004 it stood on 0.704, giving Vietnam a ranking of 108 out of 177 countries⁴. According to the Vietnam Development Report, the remarkable growth in Vietnam is directly linked to the reduction of poverty levels⁵ that came about as a result of business development, redistribution of agricultural land and the broad coverage of social services⁶. It is estimated that the incidence of poverty in Vietnam has dropped from 58 percent to 20 percent between 1993 and 2004⁷.

The United Nations Human Development information also confirms that Vietnam has made faster progress in achieving the universal primary education targets for 2015 than most low-income countries in the world. This continued development is underscored by Vietnam's adoption of a national Education for All (EFA) strategy through which the country has achieved a primary education enrolment rate that currently exceeds 93%⁸. According to documents from the MoET⁹ the impressive situation of primary enrolment in Vietnam came about as a result of the governments commitment to education, which over the last few years, can be seen in increased government spending related to education and the adoption of progressive policies changes.

2.2. Development concerns in Vietnam

No one can deny that the Vietnamese authorities have initiated significant change and growth over the last few decades. It is, however, also undeniable that Vietnam continues to face enormous challenges. One such challenge is the growing inequality that is evident in most sectors in Vietnam¹⁰.

Aggregated numbers used to reflect positive growth do not highlight the significant variation in progress across different segments of the Vietnamese society. The Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences Poverty Report (2006) states that there are considerable differences in poverty in its multiple dimensions between;

- The rural and urban population

³ Session 37, CEDAW Committee, New York, 17/1/2007, INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT By Mme HA THI KHIET, Chairperson of the National Committee for the Advancement of Women in Vietnam, Head of the Vietnamese Delegation.

⁴ Human Development Report 2006- Country Fact Sheets - Vietnam

⁵ Measured by per capita consumption

⁶ Vietnam Development Report 2006

⁷ Vietnam Poverty Update, 2006, Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences

⁸ See (2)

⁹ <http://en.moet.gov.vn/>

¹⁰ Vietnam Inequality Report, 2005: Assessment and Policy Choices, Mekong Economic Ltd

- Different regions and
- Ethnic minorities and vulnerable groups vs. the rest of the population;

The same report also comments on the rise of relative inequality as measured by the Gini coefficient¹¹. Although the rise is modest, the report argues that the absolute income/expenditure gap between the richest and the poorest has been growing considerably. This assertion is supported by findings from the Country Evaluation Review of 2007 of the Department for International Development (DFID) in the United Kingdom (UK), which suggests that by 2020 there are still likely to be 12-15 million Vietnamese living below the \$1 per day threshold of extreme poverty.

3. Education in Vietnam: Major challenges

The education system in Vietnam also reflects the same inequalities as is evident in the general development of the country. Primary and secondary enrolment figures for children from disadvantaged backgrounds are significantly different from children who belong to rich families¹². There are also significant differences between regions and urban and rural centres¹³.

With this in mind, the next section aims to reflect on some of the major challenges that are still being faced in the provision of quality¹⁴ education to all children in Vietnam. The section will outline which of the issues EFD will address in its programs to try and contribute to an increased number of disadvantaged children and youth accessing quality education. The issues that are examined are:

- Unequal access to education, which means a large number of disadvantaged children still, do not attend public school.
- High drop-out rates which mean less than 86% of children enrolling for primary education complete grade 5 and less than 60% of children enrol for general secondary education. The Mekong Economics Ltd study indicates that in 1993, 72% of poor children gained access to school. Five years later only 32% of them gained access to Lower Secondary school and in 2002 17% gained access to Upper Secondary school. It is clear that there is a significant difference between initial enrolment and enrolment to upper levels of education.
- The need to providing training to teachers to improve teaching and learning. Specifically we will look at the lack of adequate training provided to teachers/educators to address the educational needs of disadvantaged children and youth.
- High need to improve the quality of school¹⁵ management;
- Lack of awareness on all levels (teachers, parents, other students, community members, etc) related to needs and rights of educationally excluded children and youth.

3.1 Unequal access to education that means a large number of disadvantaged children¹⁶ still do not attend public school.

Firstly, most children who do not have access to education belong to poor families, who are living in the remote rural areas or in cities like Ho Chi Minh City. The urban primary enrolment rate for 2002 was 94 percent¹⁷ compared to the rural enrolment rate of 84.5 percent¹⁸. The enrolment rate for poor children in the same year was 84 percent compared to 95 percent for the richest children. It is suggested that poor

¹¹ Gini Coefficient – number between zero and one, where zero corresponds with perfect equality and one corresponds with perfect inequality

¹² Vietnam Development Report 2004

¹³ See 10

¹⁴ Please see definition of quality as outlined in the glossary. According to EFD quality education provision is firmly rooted on the principles of equity (creation of learning conditions that will enable all children to learn effectively, regardless of their individual circumstances) and equality (access to the education system regardless of personal circumstances).

¹⁵ Broad term referring to formal, informal, non-formal and vocational education settings

¹⁶ See definition in glossary

¹⁷ Figure does not include unregistered migrants living in urban areas

¹⁸ See 12, p. 62

children do not attend school because poor families generally do not have positive views of the comparative value of education¹⁹. According to an Education for All Review document poor families consider children's labour as more valuable than school attendance²⁰. This according to Henaff (2005)²¹ is an attitude that is much more evident in the Northern Uplands and Southern Vietnam where parents consider the cost of schooling to be high.

The second reason why certain groups of disadvantaged children do not have access to education is because they do not have the necessary documents that would allow them access to public schooling. Even though the official criteria linked to enrolment at primary school do not strictly require these documents, it is well documented that in practice children in Vietnam do get excluded from entering education because they do not have proper birth registration documents. In Ho Chi Minh City exclusion is also linked to temporary residence status of families or street children who have moved to Ho Chi Minh City in search of better socio- economic opportunities²²

Thirdly, specific groups of children are excluded from public education because they have disabilities or special learning needs or they live in difficult social conditions – such as street children, working children, children of migrants and children who are in correctional institutions. According to official statistics there are three million children with disabilities²³²⁴ in Vietnam. Slightly more than 10 percent of children with disabilities were enrolled in school in 2005 but no reference was made to the quality of education they received²⁵. No official statistics are available for children of migrant families but a World Bank Project brief²⁶ focusing on primary education in Vietnam indicates that children of migrant families frequently have low rates of school attainment. A Terre Des Hommes report on Street Children in Vietnam²⁷ also estimates that less than 2% of these children are attending any form of classroom-based education.

EFD's response:

- Provide training and funding support to local social organizations (LSOs) that are offering alternative basic education classes to disadvantaged children and youth who cannot reintegrate into formal education without this support. The main aim will be to ensure that this alternative education is complementing formal education and is of high quality.
- Provide small amounts of money to LSOs to make educational institutions more accessible to especially disadvantaged children and youth
- Through training and funding encourage LSOs to invest in income generating activities through which they would be able to raise money to support poor families to send their children to school.
- Through proactive awareness raising to develop the understanding of educators and care-givers of the rights to education of all children and youth regardless of their personal circumstances;

3.2. High drop-out rates

¹⁹ Education and Poverty in Vietnam, Nolwen Henaff, centre de recherche d'Ile de France, 2005

²⁰ Education for All in Vietnam. Young Lives. Policy Brief 4; An International Study of Childhood Poverty,

²¹ See 17

²² See 12, p. 30

²³ Please see EFD disability categories as outlined in the glossary

²⁴ Please see 7

²⁵ Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, Vietnam - 2006 Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor March 6, 2007 – <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78796.htm>

²⁶ World Bank Project Brief, April 2003

²⁷ A Study on Street Children in Ho Chi Minh City, Terre Des Hommes Foundation, 2004

Although primary education enrolment rates are currently more than 90 percent, only two-thirds complete the fifth grade²⁸ and even less gain access to secondary education²⁹. It is estimated that secondary school enrolments were at less than 75 percent of eligible students for lower secondary and less than 50 percent for upper secondary³⁰. Two main reasons namely the cost of tuition, books and uniforms and the need to supplement family income are cited for children dropping out of school³¹. Other factors also mentioned are the quality of education, community and families' educational values and public finance for education³². In the Terre Des Hommes study on Street Children³³, it was pointed out that many street children drop out of school because they find the classes boring and not practical enough. This could also be a reflection on the low skills level of the teachers/educators.

EFD's response:

The link between high drop-out rates and lack of equitable practices in educational settings is well documented³⁴. It is argued that the lack of attention to the educational needs of children/youth with special learning needs, leave such children and inevitably also their parents/care givers frustrated to the point of giving up.

EFD's response:

- Provision of training to educators/care-givers that will enable them to understand the educational needs of disadvantaged children and youth better and therefore provide better teaching and learning.
- Financial support to LSOs to enable them to obtain necessary resources to address the educational needs of disadvantaged children and youth.
- Provide support to vocational training centres (VTCs) to improve their curricula by making it more responsive to the demands of the economic situation of Vietnam;
- Support LSOs and VTCs to include and develop enterprise development initiatives for disadvantaged youth;
- Awareness raising activities to develop greater appreciation for education amongst children, parents and educators and to develop greater understanding of the educational needs of children and youth.

3.3 The need to providing training to teachers/educators

The World Bank and UNESCO asserts that there is a need to build the capacity of teachers (and educators) to ensure schools and other teaching sites can meet the increasing demand for better quality education³⁵³⁶. The MoET agrees by stating that although the number of teachers meeting training standards is increasing, their professional skills and methodologies are still weak³⁷. This concern also applies to teachers/educators who provide education³⁸ to different groups of disadvantaged children outside the public school setting, i.e. alternative basic education (ABE). In a participatory assessment discussion³⁹ conducted to gather information for this strategic paper, participants from government

²⁸ Summary of Education in Vietnam- see appendix 1

²⁹ Please see outline of Vietnam Education Appendix 2

³⁰ See 26

³¹ APEC Awareness Raising Campaign: Eliminating the Worst Forms of Child Labour and Providing Education Opportunities, Chapter 4, 2005

³² Can Vietnam achieve one of its Millennium Development Goals? An analysis of schooling dropouts of children, Paper to be presented at the 6th Annual Global Development Conference, 2005, Vo Tri Thanh.

³³ See 20

³⁴ Leaving School empty handed –A Report on Graduation and Dropout Rates for Students who Receive, Special Education Services in New York, 2005

³⁵ UNESCO Report: Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2005 - The Quality Imperative

³⁶ See 16

³⁷ See 7

³⁸ See definition on education as outlined in glossary

³⁹ 2008-2010 Strategic Planning Project – Education for Development, 2006

schools and non-formal educational centres expressed frustration because they lack the skills and knowledge to effectively address the particular educational needs of the children and youth.

EFD's response:

- To work with local training providers and other stakeholders to provide high quality training opportunities to the staff, volunteers and community supporters (including parents/care-givers) of LSOs;

3.4. High need to improve the quality of school⁴⁰ management

One of the priorities of the MoET of Vietnam in view of meeting the 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDG) is the improvement of education management systems at all levels⁴¹. A recent MDG review found that educational managers were not adequately prepared to implement educational reforms, nor were they skilled in areas of planning, administration and staff supervision and quality control⁴². In an EFD interview, managers of the local organisations have expressed concern about the sustainability of their organisations because they do not feel they have the skills to secure financial and human resources to effectively provide quality education.

EFD's response

- To work with local training providers and other stakeholders to provide training opportunities to managers;
- Provide management and advisory services support to managers of LSOs aimed at improving organisations and the educational services that are provided;
- Through the small grant scheme provide managers with financial support to improve learning environments;

3.5. Lack of awareness of the needs and rights of educationally excluded children and youth

All children, regardless of their social, physical or economic situation have the right to quality education. The group of disadvantaged children targeted by EFD have special educational needs, which should however not prevent them from accessing and receiving quality education. Parents are sometimes ashamed of their children with disabilities and therefore the children are kept away from the general public⁴³. As was mentioned above poor families also keep their children out of school because they do not see the value of education and perhaps they do not know that their children have the right to education. Teachers do not know how to teach children with special needs, so in most cases, when such children are in a classroom, they get ignored or they do not get sufficient attention that would help them to learn⁴⁴. Education authorities at school or organisational level also do not provide adequate resources to ensure children with special needs are offered quality education. This could be due to general ignorance related to the needs of children with special learning needs or it could be ignorance related to their responsibilities as 'right-bearers'. The children themselves lack the knowledge and understanding to demand their right to quality education.

EFD's response

- Support LSOs to provide training to educators and caregivers on the educational rights of children and youth;

⁴⁰ Broad term referring to formal, informal, non-formal and vocational education settings

⁴¹ MDG Progress Report 2003

⁴² Millennium Development Goals, Closing the Millennium Gaps, United Nations 2003

⁴³ Inclusive Education. Initiatives for Children with Disabilities, March 2003

⁴⁴ See 33

- Support LSOs to conduct awareness raising events aimed at increasing the knowledge and understanding of parents and community members;
- Support local and international volunteers and disadvantaged children and youth to organise awareness raising events;

4. Education for Development (EFD) programs in Vietnam – 1996- 2007

EFD has been operating for 11 years as international non-governmental organisation, registered with the Vietnamese authorities. The organisation has changed significantly since its inception and over the last few years the main focus was on supporting LSOs by providing funding through the Small Grants Scheme and training services through the Social Development Training centre (SDTC).

The current strategic plan is about to come to an end in December 2007. Preliminary indications are that EFD has made a significant contribution to developing the capacity of LSOs to provide access to and quality education for disadvantaged children and youth.

The Small Grant Scheme of EFD is a widely appreciated and respected program. There has been unanimous praise for its professionalism, integrity and speed of implementation compared to other similar programs. Since inception, 15 grants totalling \$142,000 have been awarded to local partner organizations.

Specific challenges for the new strategic period related to improving the monitoring and evaluation of grant-funded projects. EFD will also aim to expand the type of LSOs accessing the small grant funds. At the moment it appears that most funding is targeted towards disadvantaged youth and not disadvantaged children⁴⁵. Most approved grants have also been allocated toward equipment for vocational training centres. The new strategic direction will be to target LSOs that provide a variety of educational activities to one or more of the disadvantaged children and youth groups specified by EFD.

At the moment EFD is also only working with LSOs in Ho Chi Minh City. Taking in consideration findings related to inequalities in educational provision in Vietnam and specifically the differences between urban and rural areas, EFD has decided to expand its focus to some provinces of the Mekong Delta. The exact provinces will be confirmed after the completion of an extensive needs assessment that will take place in the beginning of 2008.

The Social Development Training Centre (SDTC) is a joint-venture project between EFD and Ton Duc Thang University. Since its establishment in 2004 the SDTC has offered approximately 30 scheduled training courses and 21 tailor-made training courses. As the goal of the SDTC is to provide affordable training courses to local social organisations, it is satisfying to note that more than 50% of participants has been from LSOs serving disadvantaged children and youth. Training courses are well attended and evaluations feedback has been consistently very positive.

After having reviewed the SDTC training project EFD will give consideration to the following main issues:

- Continuing development of a broader EFD training program vs only the SDTC project.
- Expand training services to selected provinces in the Mekong Delta by working with the SDTC and other training providers.
- Strengthening and reviewing the current partnership with Ton Duc Thang University to ensure that there is a shared vision for SDTC;

⁴⁵ Please see definition in glossary

- With TDT University give consideration to the future of SDTC with the possibility of complete independence by 2010. This would include building the capacity of TDT in developing and expanding the types of training courses on offer and recruiting, managing and retaining highly skilled local and international trainers.

5. Strategy direction 2008-2010

a) EFD Vision:

EFD is committed to creating a world where all children and youth can develop themselves to their full potential. EFD has a vision of a strong grassroots network of LSOs that are able to effectively address the educational needs of disadvantaged children and youth.

As development organisation, EFD sees itself as a small independent NGO that has the necessary financial and organizational capacity to ensure its own stable operation in the long term. The organisation wants to be flexible to respond to changing needs in a rapidly changing context and it wants to be able to seek the highest return to its limited financial investments through operating in a highly cost-effective way. EFD wants to be true to its values and principles and it would like to build on and promote proven best practices as well as develop and pilot innovative approaches.

As an international NGO, EFD will continue to have administrative council units in different countries - such as is currently operating in The Netherlands and Belgium. These different units will operate freely to develop their activities but they will share a commitment to the EFD goal, mission and principles. The administrative council units will closely collaborate with and support one another and it will promote solidarity without borders by drawing on the support from volunteers and donors across the globe.

b) EFD's approach to supporting education development in Vietnam

EFD will endeavour to employ a rights-based approach⁴⁶ in all its operational and program activities. This approach is rooted in the organisation's unequivocal support for international declarations such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. As non-governmental development organisation working in Vietnam, EFD will endeavour to empower disadvantaged children and youth by encouraging non-discrimination and participation in project activities at all levels.

EFD will also encourage volunteerism as a means for the youth of Vietnamese to effectively contribute towards the sustainable development of their country.

c) EFD's guiding principles:

- Sustainability: EFD's activities should have a lasting impact that can be continued once EFD's support has ceased.
- Participation: EFD strives for maximum involvement of all stakeholders, especially disadvantaged children and youth.
- Information sharing: EFD shares learning and best practices.
- Child Rights: EFD raises public awareness of the Rights of the Child, especially their right to education.
- EFD supports organisations regardless of their political and/or religious affiliation.

⁴⁶ Please see glossary for details

d) Intervention methods

In line with the above guiding principles EFD will continue to provide training and funding as proven intervention methods that can stimulate significant and lasting change. For the new strategic period EFD will also focus on providing management and advisory support (MAS) to the management of LSOs to increase the sustainability of such service providers and/or their capacity to benefit more disadvantaged children and youth.

e) Stakeholders that EFD will work with

i) Main beneficiaries – Children and Youth:

Disadvantaged children and youth in the following groups will be the main beneficiaries for EFD's interventions: Children and youth who are:

- Working to support their family and they are therefore not able to attend school.
- Not in school because they have disabilities or they have special educational needs or they are in school but they do not receive quality education
- Separated from their families and live in shelters, orphanages, half ways houses and reform schools.
- Separated from their families and live on the streets to support themselves, or living with their families but in migrant status and unable to attend school, vocational training centre or small skills training centres.
- Separated from their families and living or working under extreme conditions (bonded labour, prostitutes, etc).

In line with the rights-based approach mentioned above, EFD will work closely with the rights-holders (disadvantaged children and youth) to raise awareness of their educational needs and rights.

ii) Direct Beneficiaries - Local Social Organisations

EFD will work directly with LSOs to build their capacity to respond to the educational rights of disadvantaged children and youth. In Vietnam local organisations participate actively in education service provision by offering formal, non-formal, informal and vocational education/training to children and youth who are not able to attend public school.

EFD is of the opinion that LSOs provide an important service to disadvantaged children and youth. The specific groups targeted for support will include organisation in the following categories:

- VN Government: examples MOET, CPFC, MOLISA and their subsidiaries
- Primary and Secondary School & Voc. Training Centers: examples Tri Tri, Cay Bang, DELISA schools
- Local charitable organisations: examples Than Dat, Nhan Tam, Hy Vong, Cau Han, Green Bamboo, etc.
- Orphanages, Rehabilitation centres, Correctional Centres, Reform Schools

iii) Decision-making partners – National, Regional, Provincial and local authorities:

EFD currently operates in Vietnam with a Permit for Operation. The permit is the official recognition and permission to conduct needs assessment, assistance planning, and implement development and/or humanitarian projects/programs in Vietnam in collaboration with a Vietnamese partner. This Permit of

Operation is issued by The People's Aid Coordinating Committee (PACCOM) as the focal-point agency bridging foreign NGOs and Vietnamese partners.

According to government regulations EFD has to receive approval from Ministers or Chairs of People's Committees of province and/or centrally-administered cities for all programs or projects up to 50,000 United States dollars (USD).

EFD is also part of a growing network of International Non- Governmental Organisations that are based in Ho Chi Minh City. These INGOs are consulted and they provide formal and informal feedback on EFD's programs.

iv) Partnerships with other development agencies:

EFD is a registered and active member of NGO Resource Centre (RC) based in Hanoi, Vietnam. The NGO Resource Centre was established because international NGOs recognised the need for better sharing of information about their development aid programs between themselves and with their Vietnamese partners. As member of the Ho Chi Minh City core group, EFD participate in monthly planning meetings and three-monthly discussion group meetings. In 2008, EFD will also actively participate in the newly established working groups that are to enhance the role of the RC.

f) Geographical focus for EFD programs

Many people are drawn to Ho Chi Minh City because they think they can get better job opportunities, better chance to gain access to services such as schools, medical care, water and electricity, more reliable sources of food, etc⁴⁷. It is estimated that between 30-40 percent of the Ho Chi Minh City population do not have permanent residence status which, based on the Vietnam governance system, means they do not have equal access to education, health and other social services. It is also estimated that the number of very poor people in Ho Chi Minh is on the increase⁴⁸.

EFD was established in Ho Chi Minh City in 1996. Most of EFD's work initially concentrated on District 1. Over the last few years EFD's activities covered local social organisations working in all districts of the city. It is envisaged that this will continue over the next few years.

EFD has recently decided to expand the geographical focus of EFD's programmes to provinces outside of HCMC in order to target more areas with concentrated numbers of disadvantaged children and youth. Based on this decision EFD will initiate contact with LSOs in selected provinces in the Mekong Delta. For EFD's purposes the Mekong Delta can roughly be divided into the upper and lower Mekong provinces. EFD will aim to work within the upper Mekong Delta provinces. Suggested provinces are: Long An, Tien Giang, Dong Thap, Vung Long, Ben Tre and Tra Vinh. Final selection of Mekong Delta provinces will be made following extensive needs analysis that will provide information on the proportion of disadvantaged children and youth and the needs for support expressed by LSOs.

6. EFD programs for 2008-2010

Introduction:

The development of this strategic plan involved extensive research and consultation with local partners. In September 2006 EFD recruited a consultant to do a review of EFD's activities and achievements. A comprehensive report was finalised at the beginning of 2007. Much of the findings of that review informed the strategic direction outlined in this document.

⁴⁷ Vietnam Development Report 2004, Poverty, 2003

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.110

In June 2007, EFD started to work towards gathering more specific supporting information to complete the strategic plan for 2008 – 2010. Several stakeholder meetings were called and participants gave input on various issues. Well-attended consultative meetings, focusing on the following issues, were conducted over a period of three months (June-August):

- Meeting with EFD partners and other individuals working in the field of education and social services provision⁴⁹ to brainstorm and try to clarify main terms/phrases used in mission statement and other EFD documents.
- Meeting with EFD partners and other individuals working in the field of education and social services provision to develop a detailed list of possible EFD partners and beneficiaries
- Meeting with EFD partners and other individuals working in the field of education and social services provision to clarify and confirm the intervention methods to be used by EFD
- Meeting with SDTC PO and individuals working in the field of education and social services provision to develop vision and possible activities for next 3 years
- Meeting with SGS PO and individuals working in the field of education and social services provision to develop vision and possible activities for next 3 years
- Meeting with EFD staff and volunteers to discuss new Program Area - Technical Guidance⁵⁰
- Meeting with PO's and volunteers to discuss mainstreaming of volunteering and to develop possible activities for next 3 years

The minutes of these meetings are available for review. The specific content will also inform the development of the annual plans of the various programs.

a) Overall Goal:

In line with its vision, EFD's long-term goal is to contribute to efforts aimed at improving the access to and quality of education for disadvantaged children and youth living in Ho Chi Minh City and selected provinces in the Mekong Delta.

b) Specific Objectives:

As organisation EFD's main purpose will be to work proactively towards the following specific objective:

To improve the quality of formal, non-formal, informal education and vocational training services provided by local social organisations to an increased number of disadvantaged children and youth;

c) EFD Expected results:

At the end of 2010 EFD, through the provision of funding, training and MAS support, will aim to have achieved the following results:

1. LSOs will have more appropriate infrastructure and educational equipment to support formal, non-formal, informal and vocational education;
2. LSOs will have improved capacity to plan for and manage their formal, non-formal, informal and vocational educational services;
3. Educators/teachers and significant others (parents, community members, etc) will have improved understanding of, and skills to address, the educational needs of disadvantaged children and youth;

d) Main activities for the period 2008-2010

⁴⁹ Attendance sheets are available for perusal

⁵⁰ Technical Guidance was considered to be misleading. This new program will now be called management and advisory service (MAS)

Funding Program

1. EFD will continue to provide the opportunity to LSOs to access funds between 2000US\$-15000UD\$ to improve their ability to provide access and quality education to disadvantaged children and youth.
 - It is envisaged that an increased number of grants will be allocated to projects initiated by young people.
 - Inline with the general strategic direction of EFD, the SGS will also be available to LSOs based in the Upper Mekong Delta provinces as identified by EFD. An extensive awareness and networking campaign, specifically targeting the Mekong Delta, will take place during the first three months of 2008. This will culminate in an official meeting that will explain the guidelines of the SGS and the application process.
 - There will be two deadlines for the submission of applications for 2008 Small Grant Funding. The first will be in October 2007 and it will be open to applicants based in Ho Chi Minh City. The second deadline will be in April 2008 and applicants based in the Mekong Delta and Ho Chi Minh City will be encouraged to apply.
 - It is expected that allocated funding for the SGS will increase by 20% per year (subject to EFD's actual fundraising results).
2. Recipients of grants will continue to receive project development and implementation support from EFD. This support will be delivered through organising participatory project planning, implementation and evaluation meetings;
3. LSO providing educational services will be supported to encourage disadvantaged children and youth to consider entrepreneurship as an alternative to unemployment or standard employment.
 - Through the social entrepreneurship project the SGS will work with a selected group of social organisations to support young entrepreneurs to start-up innovative social enterprises that aim to make a contribution to the social development of Vietnam.
 - Through the youth entrepreneurship pilot project one small VTC will be supported to include entrepreneurship training as part of its curriculum and to support potential young entrepreneurs to develop business plans and to start-up possible business enterprises. Pending the success of this pilot the entrepreneurship project will provide similar support to other relevant LSOs

Training Program

1. EFD will continue to focus on building the capacity of local social organisations through training provided at the SDTC.
 - EFD will be an active member of the governing board
 - EFD will focus more on providing technical support to the SDTC staff in organizing training courses. It is envisaged that this support will mostly be for tailor-made training courses.
 - Financial sustainability of SDTC and how that links with the SDTC objective to provide affordable training courses to LSOs in HCMC and the Mekong Delta will be a prime focus over the next few years.
2. EFD will explore and embark on other methods to strengthen the provision of training and learning opportunities to local social organisations.
 - Investigate the possibility of supporting the plans/initiatives of existing Vietnamese institutions that are aimed at strengthening their collective capacity to provide quality services to disadvantaged children and youth. Could include some of the following:
 - i. Support towards effectively managing Resource Centres;
 - ii. Regular information sharing meetings;
 - iii. Exchange visits between local and international organisations to enhance learning;

Key new additional developments for the next few years include:

1. Developing a third program focussing on management and advisory services (MAS);
 - Developing a program outline
 - Pilot the program and evaluate at the end of 2009
 - One of the specific activities to be conducted through the MAS program will be one-to-one coaching to individual recipient organisations;
2. Expanding EFD's activities into selected provinces in the Mekong;
 - Conduct a needs assessment and set-up networks with relevant organisations.
 - Organise awareness raising meetings for the funding and training programs.
 - Proactively develop project activities in selected provinces.
3. Proactively seek to support youth initiatives; e.g. projects submitted by youth volunteer groups and seek to involve disadvantaged children and youth and volunteers in general activities aimed at raising awareness of the educational rights and needs of disadvantaged children and youth.
 - Invite youth groups to SGS awareness meetings and proactively seek such projects out for support
 - Develop and implement a plan of action to involve disadvantaged children and youth in EFD activities.
 - Develop an approach through which volunteers could have more meaningful involvement in all EFD programs and projects;

In this new strategic period, a lot of emphasis will be placed on improving the collaboration between the two existing programs and the new MAS program. Through the MAS program stronger emphasis will be placed on reviewing the overall organisational needs of the LSO. In this regard, partners receiving funding or MAS support will also be encouraged to part-take in the training activities and vice versa.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

EFD will conduct an external review of the 2008-2010 strategic plan towards the beginning of 2009. Towards the end of 2010 EFD will conduct a final review that would be focused on the expected results and indicators as outlined in this strategic plan.

Monitoring and evaluations will also continue to be an integral part of the SGS program. The focus over the next three years will be to improve the process, ensuring it benefits EFD and the relevant partner.

A strategic review of SDTC will be undertaken in mid-2008 aimed at outlining how the centre can be made independent and self-financing by 2010. Since this is a joint venture partnership, the monitoring and evaluation processes will be agreed with TDT University. SDTC will however continue to develop training courses on the basis of extensive consultation and ongoing reviews.

The MAS program will kick-off in 2008. The initial phases of the program will be dominated by a needs assessment and the putting together of a program outline which will include a monitoring and evaluation plan.

7. Action plan for the development of Annual Plans

On receiving Administrative Council approval, this strategic plan will form the basis on which project officers will develop annual plans for the SGS and the SDTC. The CC will develop an initial one-year plan for the new MAS program. It is envisaged that the annual plans will be completed by the end of November 2007.

8. Resource plan for the implementation of program activities:

The activities as outlined above and in the attached log frame will require extensive resources. Some of the main areas that need consideration are the following:

Resources for programs:

1. The SGS:

- Based on the expansion of EFD programming to the Mekong Delta there will be an annual increase of 20% on the currently 50,000 US\$ budget for the SGS. Envisaged that 2008 will be $\pm 60,000$ US\$.
- Expansion into the Mekong Delta will also require more resources for staff and volunteers, awareness raising days, networking and public relations and ongoing project management.
- Management of the general SGS and the Entrepreneurship project will also require additional more human resources (full-time staff and volunteer).
- Much of EFD's current operations are based on non-specific baseline data. In the next strategic period, greater emphasis will be placed on measuring outcomes. This will necessitate the gathering of baseline and endline information that will also demand an increase in human resources and related costs.

2. The SDTC

- No increase in annual contribution to TDT/SDTC. At the moment 7,900US\$ and the salary of the EFD project officer.
- It is expected that the role of the EFD project officer for SDTC will be reduced over the next few years. This will enable the relocation of staff resources other activities of EFD.

3. MAS

- Estimated project cost for 2008 is 20 000US\$. This will be related to the management and advisory project activities. This includes resources needed to employ a local project officer and possibly an international volunteer consultant to kick-start the program; and resources for programme development.

General EFD resources:

1. Staff capacity is a major issue that needs immediate action to support the EFD strategic direction.
Possibilities:
 - Conduct an organisational audit to identify staff strengths and weaknesses.
 - Increase investment to building the capacity of current staff
 - Recruit additional staff/volunteers
 - Recruit deputy CC responsible for human resource management and administration, and replacing the CC in her absence.
2. Current IT and communication systems need upgrading or replacement to support increase demands.
 - Specific issues:
 - o Computers and software have limited capacity and are outdated.
 - o Website, as main communication tool needs, to be managed in a more professional manner. Might need full-time staff member or recruit company.
 - o Expansion of EFD and focus on outcomes increase demand for publicity materials and well-developed Newsletters.
3. Increase number of staff and volunteers, demand more workspace which might mean maximising current office space (partitioning, installing fans/air-conditioning) or moving to another venue that could accommodate increase staff and volunteers.

A budget for 2008 and indicative budget for 2009 and 2010 will be developed in support of the above considerations.

Operational needs to meet the program objectives:

Human Resources:

As a small INGO, EFD will continue to employ staff that will work on a full-time, part-time and/or volunteer basis. EFD will also continue to build on its reputation as an organisation with a strong culture of valuing and supporting its staff and volunteers. Considering the growth of EFD and the complex needs of the disadvantaged groups, the organisation will also ensure that staff has the necessary skill, knowledge and attitude to achieve the organisational objectives. In this regard EFD will strive to:

- Have a diverse core staff team, consisting primarily of full-time local staff.
- Encourage responsible local and international volunteering.
- Encourage active participation in all decision-making.
- Empower staff so that they can feel comfortable in their respective roles.
- Provide opportunity for ongoing professional development.

Fundraising:

EFD remains committed to its decision not to organise fundraising events in Vietnam in order not to compete with fundraising efforts of local organisations. As a result EFD Vietnam will continue to pursue fundraising through the recently established online donation service and through seeking grants from local companies and international donors outside of Vietnam. EFD Vietnam is committed to raising at least 20% of annual funds required. EFD Vietnam will strive to:

- Raise staff capacity to fundraise
- Diversify funding sources.
- Continue to provide ongoing support and information to the fund-raising units but agree annual deadlines and priorities.
- Put in place fundraising principles that will guide EFD Vietnam and EFD Holland and Belgium fundraising activities.

Coordination, Communications and Public Relations:

EFD will continue to prioritise communications and public relations to build on its current credibility and to ensure it continues to be accountable to partners, donors and beneficiaries in Vietnam and internationally. Through its communications and public relations, EFD will raise awareness of the needs of disadvantaged children and youth. EFD will ensure its programs are well coordinated with the work of other development actors to avoid overlap and duplication and to promote synergy in advancing national development goals. EFD will continue to:

- Produce and update communication tools like program brochures, posters, the website, annual reports and newsletters.
- Participate in INGO meetings and events organised in Ho Chi Min City and sometimes also in Hanoi.
- Ensure that the IT systems can effectively support the objectives of the EFD office.