

MOVING THE MOUNTAIN: RENOVATING MEDICAL EDUCATION IN A CHANGING VIETNAM



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Changing medical curriculum and the teaching and learning in medical schools to respond to the changing needs of society is necessary, but medical schools have not always been quick to respond to that demand. Changing a medical school is considered very hard work, according to a teacher in one Vietnamese school, even harder than “moving a mountain”. With project support from the Netherlands Government, eight medical schools in Vietnam worked together for more than 12 years to change their training of general medical doctors. The process was comprehensive, from formulating new and more community-oriented learning objectives through revising the curriculum, developing and applying new teaching and learning materials, to updating teaching methods and student assessment tools. Using the case study evaluation method, the change process was dissected and analyzed and the achievements and limitations of the medical education changes made with the support of this project were assessed. Experiences and lessons learned from this case can be shared with other medical schools that want to change their education.

A key product in the change process was a book presenting detailed learning objectives for general medical students. The 350-page book presents the knowledge, attitudes and skills (KAS) that medical doctors are expected to have when they graduate from any medical school in Vietnam. The KAS book, pictured below, has been approved by the Ministry of Health for use in all medical schools in Vietnam.

Luu Ngoc Hoat is currently Head of the Department of Biostatistics and Medical Informatics and Vice Rector of Hanoi Medical University, the lead school in the project to support medical education change in Vietnam.

