

**INFORMATION****International workshop “Teaching methods on human rights”**

From 2-3 April 2013, Hué University in collaboration with the University of Oslo (Norway) held an International Seminar on improving teaching methods of human rights education. The event was well attended by many researchers and jurists from Norway, Switzerland, Thailand, Malaysia, and numerous scientists from universities and research institutes in Vietnam.

Human rights are of universal values for all humanity. The issues of human rights as well as the assurance of the implementation of human rights have always been focuses of many countries on both national political and legal aspects. The seminar agreed that, in Vietnam, human rights embodied in the Constitution have complied with the obligations of protecting human rights and civil rights imposed by international conventions which Vietnam had signed.

In Vietnam, human rights education is conducted at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels in form of separate courses, such as: human rights theory, human rights in civil affair, history of human rights, etc. Some incorporate the issues of human rights into various courses, such as constitutional law, criminal law, international law, etc. Besides, they also include human rights education to other majors. However,

according to the seminar, teaching methods of human rights education at university contain limitations.

Participants at the seminar discussed thoroughly the teaching methods of human rights education and through them they wished to share experiences in order to improve the quality of human rights education at undergraduate and postgraduate schools in Vietnam.

The theoretical issue of human rights, such as the concept of human rights, was of the first concern of participants to be exchanged and discussed. Minors' rights and judicial protection of juveniles were also debated. In addition to the issues of human rights in the world in general, participants also mentioned human rights in Southeast Asia in particular. Besides, the seminar clarified the mechanism for the implementation and guarantee of human rights in the world and Vietnam as a specific case study. Another interesting topic was women's rights in relation to human rights and the issue of gender equality.

Especially, international attendees shared experiences of human rights education around the world, raising heated discussions about problems in selecting teaching methods applicable to the subject of human rights, thereby finding the better ones for teaching at universities in Vietnam.

*HOÀI PHÚC*

**Report “2012 Vietnam poverty assessment”**

The "2012 Vietnam Poverty Assessment" report under the title "well begun, not yet done: Vietnam's remarkable progress on poverty reduction and the emerging challenges" was the result of a research conducted by the World Bank (WB) in coordination with National Academy of Vietnam Social Sciences (VASS). The report states clearly that over last two decades Vietnam has made great strides in fast development and sustainable poverty reduction. Poverty (headcount index) fell from 58 % in early 1990s to 10 % in 2012. Besides, Vietnam has made remarkable progress in other dimensions of well-beings, ranging from high primary and secondary enrollments to improvements in health status and reduced disease and death.

Despite of these remarkable achievements, the task of poverty alleviation is not completed, and in some ways it has become more difficult. Vietnam's "basic needs" poverty line, which was fixed in the early 1990s, is very low by comparison with international standards, and the methods used to monitor poverty since the early 1990s till now are obsolete. The standards applied to low-income Vietnam in the 1990s are no longer consistent with modern day, rising middle-income Vietnam. Although tens of millions of Vietnamese households have risen out of poverty over the decades, many of them have incomes

very close to the poverty line and remain vulnerable to falling back into poverty as the result of idiosyncratic shocks, (such as job loss, accidents, or death or illness of a family member), or related to economy-wide shocks (e.g. the impacts of climate change on precipitation and temperatures, pandemics and the effects of global financial crisis). Poverty in ethnic minority is a persistent challenge. Most of the ethnic minorities in Vietnam continued to live in the remote and upland areas where labor productivity is lower...

Transformation and rapid economic growth are also contributing to increased inequality in incomes and opportunities. Some of the poor, particularly those living in rural areas and small cities, have not had the chance to access education and quality healthcare, as well as good jobs. In addition, urbanization is accelerating and an increasing number of workers from rural areas are migrating to the cities to seek for jobs, but many of these jobs are informal and lack of social security benefits such as health insurance and pensions.

The report also shows that many characteristic factors of the poor in the 1990s still characterize the poor today, such as low levels of education and limited job skills, heavy dependence on autarky agriculture, geographical and social isolation, specific disadvantages linked to ethnic identity, as well as exposure to natural disasters and risks. However, some of the specifics have changed. Poverty in ethnic minority was only emerging in the late 1990s, but it

has become a much more serious nowadays as the gap between the ethnic groups and the Kinh continued widening.

In addition, the report also gives a new insight into the lives of the poor, and insight into the limitations as well as opportunities to escape poverty in the future.

#### *DIỆU LINH*

#### **The International conference "Trần Đức Thảo's Philosophical and Education thought"**

On 7 May 2013 in Hanoi, Hanoi University of Education held the international scientific conference "Trần Đức Thảo's Philosophic and Educational thought". The conference was a practical activity on the occasion of commemorating 95 years of the birth and 20 years of the death of Prof. Trần Đức Thảo. The conference was well attended by representatives from the central government, ministries, organizations, research institutes, domestic universities, along with scientists, teachers, researchers, students of social sciences faculty of Hanoi University of Education and many other international delegates.

Prof. Trần Đức Thảo was born when Vietnam was colonized by the French. With the strong will for self-improvement and courage, he overcome the inferiority complex, made great effort to gain knowledge and determined to reach to the pinnacle of culture to exhibit the wisdom and spirit of the

nation. With the responsibility of a patriotic man, he didn't hesitate giving up glory to return to his homeland and joined with the people to battle a long-last historic war, contributed to victory of the Điện Biên Phủ battle on 7 May 1954.

Prof. Trần Đức Thảo was one of the most active contributors to the establishment of university education system in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Based On the ground of his knowledge acquired from the essence of philosophy and the approach of dialectical materialism, he submitted many proposals for the research and teaching on humanistic social science.

Prof. Trần Đức Thảo was among the founders of the National University of Literature - the forerunner of Hanoi University of Education. The contributions of Prof. Trần Đức Thảo towards the research and teaching in Philosophy, History, Psychology, Linguistics, etc. have been affirmed by his scientific works of considerable stature that are viewed as the symbols of Vietnamese intellectual and have great influences on modern Western philosophy, especially in France. Until now, the ideology of philosopher Trần Đức Thảo still attracts a great deal of scientific profession's attention in Vietnam as well as worldwide.

Conference organization board received more than 70 reports from scientific scholars, including 8 reports of foreign scholars and 68 from domestic sources, focusing on three main themes: 1/People

and career of Prof. Trần Đức Thảo, 2 / Prof. Trần Đức Thảo's philosophic thought, 3/ other science fields in Trần Đức Thảo's ideology.

After four sessions of the conference, participants finally came to the following points:

- Prof. Trần Đức Thảo was a true intellectual who had deep patriotism, a prominent Vietnamese philosopher who had significant influence on the twentieth century French as well as western philosophy. Prof. Thảo was a outstanding man of culture, an educationalist with great passion for science and lofty pedagogic personality who had valuable devotions in various fields such as philosophy, anthropology, history, literary, psychology, etc.

- Prof. Trần Đức Thảo was one of the greatest social scientists of Vietnam in the twentieth century. He set a good example for current Vietnam scientists about the multi-cultural convergence and integration of Vietnam's cultural traditions and the Western astute judgment ability of analytical thinking.

- Research on Trần Đức Thảo should be appreciated and promoted in the field of social science in Vietnam.

- Local authorities should support universities, research institutes, national cultural centers, academic institutions in deploying Trần Đức Thảo ideological heritage.

- The Promotion of Trần Đức Thảo ideological values could be done through establishing majors of social science and humanity such as

Philosophy, History, Psychology, Linguistics, Literature, Humanity, and Ethnic Studies in undergraduate and postgraduate education. Research, learning, and teaching content of each major should be carefully selected among typical scientific achievements of Prof. Trần Đức Thảo.

- Prof. Trần Đức Thảo deserves to be named for schools, streets, and parks in big cities and large province such as Hanoi, Hochiminh City, and Bắc Ninh.

*MAI LINH*

### **Conference: Impacts of global cultural trend on the direction of policies and cultural management**

On May 28 2013 in Hanoi, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism in collaboration with Information Technology Center held a seminar on "The influence of world cultural trends on policy orientation and cultural management". The seminar was well attended by many scientists, experts in cultural research, literary critics, translators, and representatives from agencies and television reporters.

The seminar focused on three main points: regional integration and foreign culture absorption, the influence of world cultural trend towards Vietnam, and issues in Vietnam's cultural management facing with the influence of world cultural trends.

In the opening speech, Deputy Minister Hồ Anh Tuấn emphasized the importance of Vietnamese culture the necessary of conference. In the context

of globalization, Vietnamese culture has chances to develop, exchange with the the world's culture, and originate new cultural values. In addition to these advantages, it also exposes to many challenges. Stepping into the Renovation (Đổi Mới) period, international culture directly affects many aspects of Vietnamese culture such as trends in fashion, music, and idol, etc. He stated that, Vietnamese people were facing a great cultural challenges from the impacts of foreign culture, so the question of how to "integrate" and "not dissolved" by other cultures is increasingly becoming a great conundrum to the nation.

Delegates at the seminar also shared the view that, besides the obtaining the quintessence of the world civilizations, Vietnamese culture has exposed to "toxic cultural waste" that may mainly came from the media. Currently, some issues such as the impact of foreign cultural elements (e.g Korean, Japanese pop culture waves) or the absence of pure Vietnamese language used in daily life, or the overwhelming number of news articles related to private life of

entertainment industry, etc. which advocates the youth to lead a strange, repulsive life were also concerned by participants. To some extent, this badly affects the deeply-rooted culture imbued with national identity of the country. The problem is how to promote traditional cultural values in daily life to young people.

Conference attendees offered some solutions to those drawbacks. For example, Vietnam needs to develop its own cultural identity; planning infrastructure for cultural activities in line with traditional culture and future development direction; training human resources for cultural management, to manage and develop Vietnamese culture.

Culture is a "soft power" of a country in the world. Planning a proper cultural policy in line with the trend of integration is essential to preserve Vietnamese cultural identity and to acquire selective world cultural values at the same time, conforming to the development of the human kind.

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