

Opening University Education to Deaf People in Viet Nam

**Through Sign Language Analysis,
Teaching, and Interpretation**

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1.1 Brief Project Description

“Opening University Education to Deaf People in Viet Nam Through Sign Language Analysis, Teaching, and Interpretation” is a project begun in 2000 that has provided deaf adults in Viet Nam with their first opportunity for higher educational programs taught in Vietnamese and Vietnamese sign languages (VNSLs)

1.2 Purpose of the Project

The project, funded by The Nippon Foundation, is intended to serve as a model program that demonstrates that most countries in the region could establish indigenous tertiary educational programs for deaf people even if the country has few financial and human resources it can call upon, no previous sign language analysis, and only the most basic level of Deaf Education

1.3 Reasons for Choosing Viet Nam

When the project was proposed in 1999:

- Viet Nam per capita income was \$300 per year.**
- Less than 1% of deaf people over 35 & less than 3% of deaf people between the ages of 25 & 35 had attended school in Viet Nam.**
- Only one school for deaf people in Viet Nam was attempting to provide junior high school education for deaf people in Viet Nam, but that school had taken 4 years to move students from grade 5 to 7.**

It was assumed that if the project could be established successfully in Viet Nam, it was likely that most of the countries in the region would be able to find enough financial and human resources to establish similar programs.

2.1 Implementation of the Project

The project was approved by The Dong Nai People's Committee in May 2000, and the project officially began in June 2000. The project is funded by the Nippon Foundation, administered by the Dong Nai Provincial Department of Education and Training (DOET), and housed at Dong Nai Provincial Teaching College.

3.0 Components of the Project

**The project has four major components
(presented in Slides 3.1-3.4) .**

3.1 Certificate Programs in Sign Language Analysis

The programs in sign language analysis are designed to train Deaf people in Viet Nam:

- how to analyze their own sign languages,**
- how to make dictionaries of sign languages in Viet Nam,**
- and how to produce grammatical handbooks for sign languages in Viet Nam.**

3.11 Level 1 Certificate in Sign Language Analysis Courses and Credits

• Introduction to Deaf Cultures	2 credits
• Introduction to Deaf History 1	2 credits
• Introduction to Languages & Linguistics	2 credits
• Intro. to Formational Structure of VNSLs	3 credits
• Intro. to Grammatical Structure of VNSLs	3 credits
• Intro. to Lexical Structure of VNSLs	3 credits
TOTAL (225 Instructional Hours)	15 credits

3.12 Level 2 Certificate in Sign Language Analysis Courses and Credits

• Introduction to Deaf History 2	2 credits
• Introduction to Deaf History 3	2 credits
• Intro. to Psycho/Neurolinguistics	2 credits
• Intro. to the Sociolinguistics of VNSLs	2 credits
• Intro. to the History of VNSLs	1 credit
• Intro. to Sign Language Lexicography	1 credit
• Lexicographical Study of VNSLs	2 credits
• Applied Sign Language Linguistics	3 credits
TOTAL (225 Instructional Hours)	15 credits

3.2 Certificate Programs in Sign Language Teaching

The programs in sign language teaching are designed to train deaf people in Viet Nam how to teach their sign languages to hearing people, especially to hearing people who want to become sign language interpreters. Courses in the certificate programs in sign language teaching are taught only by Deaf professional sign language instructors (Dr. Mike Kemp, Jean Gordon, Peoungpaka Janyawong).

3.21 Level 1 Certificate in Sign Language Teaching Courses and Credits

- Communication in Gestures 2 credits**
 - Methods of Teaching VNSLs, Level 1 2 credits**
 - Instructional Design for
Teaching VNSLs, Level 1 2 credits**
 - Materials Development for
Teaching VNSLs, Level 1 2 credits**
 - Practicum in Teaching VNSLs,
Level 1 7 credits**
- TOTAL (225 Instructional Hours) 15 credits**

3.22 Level 2 Certificate in Sign Language Teaching Courses and Credits

- **Sign Language Assessment for
Teaching VNSLs** **3 credits**
- **Methods of Teaching VNSLs, Level 2** **2 credits**
- **Instructional Design for
Teaching VNSLs, Level 2** **2 credits**
- **Materials Development for
Teaching VNSLs, Level 2** **2 credits**
- **Practicum in Teaching VNSLs,
Level 2** **6 credits**
- TOTAL (225 Instructional Hours)** **15 credits**

3.3 Adult High School Program

The high school program is designed to allow deaf people full entrance into college and university programs.

To facilitate relatively quick completion of high school requirements, the project is using the adult high school curriculum approved by Viet Nam's Ministry of Education and Training. In this curriculum, students can complete 3 years of course work in a 2-year period.

3.4 B.A. Program with Special Classes

After students finish senior high school successfully, they participate in a 2-year postsecondary certificate program to train them to become elementary school teachers which will allow them to finish a B.A. degree with 1 and ½ years of additional study.

4.0 Results

4.1 Results of Certificate Programs in Sign Language Analysis

Level	Accepted	Passed	Honors
1	43	41 (95%)	16 (37%)
2	16	on-going	on-going

Students who finished Level 1 and taking Level 2 are working on a dictionaries from HCMCSL to English, English to HCMCSL, HCMCSL to Vietnamese, and Vietnamese to HCMCSL. Soon, they will begin working on HNSL to English, English to HNSL, HNSL to Vietnamese, and Vietnamese to HNSL.

4.2 Results of Certificate Programs in Sign Language Teaching

Level	Accepted	Passed	Honors
1	22	16 (72%)	6 (27%)
2	12	on-going	on-going

Students who finished Level 1 are teaching classes in HCMCSL and HNSL to hearing people at various colleges/universities in Viet Nam. They are also working on a set of teaching books for HCMCSL and will begin working on a set of teaching book for HNSL

4.21 Examples Sign Language Teaching in Viet Nam



4.3 Results of High School Program

Grade	Accepted	Finished	Honors
6 th	34	30 ¹ (88%)	16 (47%)
7 th	37	36 (97%)	21 (57%)
8 th	34	33 (97%)	17 (50%)
9 th	25	25 ² (100%)	11 (44%)
10 th	32	32 ¹ (100%)	9 (21%)
11 th	25	25 (100%)	5 (20%)
12 th	16	16 (100%)	2 (13%)

¹One (1) student out of 30 took 2 tries to finish 6th Grade.

²Two (2) students out of 25 took 2 tries to finish 9th Grade.

³One (1) student out of 25 took 2 tries to finish 9th Grade.

4.31 Junior & Senior High School National Examinations

To graduate from 9th grade (junior high) and enter 10th grade (senior high), students are required to take National Examinations in Math, Literature, Physics, and Chemistry developed by each Provincial Department of Education.

To graduate from 12th grade (senior high school), students are required to take National Examinations in Math, Literature, Physics, and Chemistry and two other subjects (from History, Geography, or Biology) developed by the Ministry of Education.

The tests are given at a central center where no teachers of the students are allowed to be. No names appear on the test papers and the tests are graded anonymously by a panel of teachers who have had no contact with the students.

4.32 Overall Results of Junior & Senior High School National Examinations in Dong Nai Province

Year	Attempted	Passed	Honors
2003	10	10 (100%)	3 (30%)
2004	6	6 (100%)	0 (0%)
2005	9	9 (100%)	2 (30%)
Total	25	25 (100%)	5 (25%)

Year	Attempted	Passed	Honors
2006	4	4 (100%)	0 (0%)
2007	12	7 (58%)	0 (0%)

4.321 Results of 2003 Junior High School National Examinations

The 2003 class of the project was the first class of the project and the first class of deaf students in Viet Nam to take the Junior High School National examinations.

The passing rate for the 2003 class of the project was 100%. The overall passing rate for hearing students in 2003 in Dong Nai was 76%.

One deaf student, Ms. Nguyen T. T. Tien ranked 5th out of 1,332 students taking the exams in Dong Nai Province.

Junior High School Graduating Class of 2003



4.322 Results of 2004 Junior High School National Examinations in

The 2004 class was the second class of the project and the second class of deaf students in Viet Nam to take the Junior High School National Examinations.

The passing rate for the 2004 class of the project was 100%. The overall passing rate for hearing students in 2004 in Dong Nai was 77%.

Junior High School Graduating Class of 2004



4.323 Results of 2005 Junior High School National Examinations

The passing rate for the 2005 class of the project was 100%. The overall passing rate for hearing students in 2003 in Dong Nai was 81%.

One deaf student, Mr. Nguyen Hoang Lam ranked 1st out of 990 students taking the exams in Dong Nai Province.

Junior High School Graduating Class of 2005



4.324 Results of 2006 Senior High School National Examinations

The 2006 class of the project was the first class of deaf students in Viet Nam to take the Senior High School National Exams.

The passing rate for the 2006 class of the project was 100%. The overall passing rate for hearing students in 2003 in Dong Nai was 81%.

Senior High School Graduating Class of 2006

LE Thi Thu Huong, DOAN Pham Khiem

NGUYEN T. Tran Tien, LUU Ngoc Tu



5.0 Innovations in the Project Related to the Acceptance of Cultural Model of Deafness

- Acceptance of Vietnamese sign languages as one of the appropriate mediums of instruction,**
- Training of all hearing Vietnamese and deaf and hearing non-Vietnamese teachers in Vietnamese sign languages by the deaf adult students,**
- Use of foreign deaf sign language professors (with M.A. and Ph.D. degrees) as role model instructors for adult Vietnamese deaf students,**
- Deaf adult student input into teaching strategies,**
- Deaf adult student evaluation of hearing teachers.**

- **The project is Deaf-centered. The sign language teacher training program is designed and run by professional Deaf sign language teachers (Mike Kemp, Jean Gordon, and Peoungpaka Janyawong). Only Vietnamese Deaf people who have passed the Teaching Certificates in Vietnamese Sign Languages are allowed to teach signing in the project. The project does not train hearing people to teach sign language nor will it promote hearing people teaching sign language. Deaf students train their own teachers how to sign and have the final say about what type of signing will be used in the classroom. Eventually, Deaf people will run the entire project.**

The project encourages hearing teachers not to assume that their deaf students understand even if the students say they do. We encourage teachers to ask different deaf students to stand up and explain parts of the material to other deaf students who then give feedback with the help of the teacher. The students who give the explanation must use a Vietnamese sign language and written Vietnamese and we also encourage teachers to go back and forth between the two languages in all aspects of instruction. (We don't allow signing that only transliterates a message to suffice as an explanation—the students have to provide a meaningful translation.)

7.0 Applicability of Project to Other Countries

The project is succeeding in Viet Nam and similar programs can succeed in other countries with proper design and implementation based on anthropological and linguistic research on local indigenous sign languages and Deaf cultures and with the establishment of the program within a cultural/linguistic framework that is acceptable to the larger Hearing culture(s) in the country. Such programs can also be established in many countries at an approximate annual cost of \$50,000 per year very low cost, compared to other types of international “development”.

8.0 Project Costs

(S L Analysis, S L Teaching, Jr/Sr High School)

- This approximately U.S. \$50,000 per year can easily support 30 to 40 students per year. Our budget expenditures for all costs for our project for the first seven years were:**
- Year 1 (06-12/2000) 15 Deaf Students \$ 28,790**
- Year 2 (01-08 2001) 14 Deaf Students \$ 21,975**
- Year 3 (09/01-08/02) 30 Deaf Students \$ 49,795**
- Year 4 (09/02-08/03) 27 Deaf Students \$ 38,419**
- Year 5 (09/02-08/03) 40 Deaf Students \$ 41,535**
- Year 6 (09/03-08/04) 43 Deaf Students \$ 45,940**
- Year 7 (09/04-08/05) 50 Deaf Students* \$ 52,000**
- TOTAL \$277,482**
- AVERAGE \$ 39,640**

***41 Regular Students + 9 Provisional Students**

8.1 Project Costs for High School Only

• Cost for the High School Program for First Four Years		
• Year 1 (06/00-12/00)	15 Deaf Students	\$ 7,211
• Year 2 (01/01-08/01)	14 Deaf Students	\$ 9,733
• Year 3 (09/01-08/02)	30 Deaf Students	\$ 21,865
• Year 4 (09/02-08/03)	27 Deaf Students	\$ 18,912
• Year 5 (09/02-08/03)	40 Deaf Students	\$ 22,384
• Year 6 (09/03-08/04)	43 Deaf Students	\$ 25,071
• Year 7 (09/04-08/05)	50 Deaf Students*	\$ 28,358
• TOTAL		\$133,634
• AVERAGE		\$ 19,091

***41 Regular Students + 9 Provisional Students**

Contact Information for the Project

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