



On-campus Service-Oriented Business in Vietnamese Tourism Schools

Uniterra is a Canadian volunteer cooperation and international development program that is jointly operated by WUSC (World University Service of Canada) and CECI (the Centre for International Studies and Cooperation). The program supports inclusive economic development to benefit women and youth in 14 countries across Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Uniterra works with key private, public, and civil society partners to facilitate growth and change in markets that have the greatest impact on the marginalized.

Tourism is an important economic driver in Vietnam, one that currently employs close to 2M workers, and contributes 10% to the national GDP.

With the right skill set, workers in the tourism sector have the potential to earn wages that are double the national average. Unfortunately, the vast majority of young graduates are underqualified and do not have the relevant practical skills it takes to access decent employment.

The Uniterra program has worked with several tourism schools to reinforce and/or set up a model for on-campus businesses. On-campus cafes, restaurants and hotels provide excellent opportunities for students to gain real-life trade skills and business experiences.

Poor access to quality training for students

About 18,000 young men and women graduate from 284 tourism training schools across the country every year. However, employers typically find graduates' skills to be less than adequate. The deficiencies in both technical skills and business experience result directly from a nationally standardized training content that is too heavily focused on theory at the expense of practical application.

Poor skills mean that young tourism graduates usually have to resort to low-paying, unstable jobs. Meanwhile, employers have to spend expensive resources on recruitment and retraining, and customer satisfaction also suffers.

Program

Volunteer Cooperation
Program 2015-2020

Date

2016-2018

Implementing partner

Binh Thuan Community
College(BTCC),
Saigontourist Hospitality
College and other
tourism schools

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Key themes of the story

Tourism, university
restaurants, on-campus
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On-campus service-oriented businesses

The establishment of on-campus service-oriented businesses has been identified as an effective way to provide a training ground for students to develop technical skills, gain business experience, and be familiar with certain equipment. The actual establishment and operation of these practice facilities require skills, knowledge and experience that could be hard to find among local schools and educators. Very few schools own a practice restaurant or café, and the ones with such a facility usually run it more like a canteen rather than a proper business with a training purpose.

Based on the partners' needs and available resources, Uniterra provided volunteer support to establish on-campus businesses from scratch, or to overhaul and enhance existing facilities in order to expand the customer base, generate greater revenues and increase opportunities for practice for students.

Results

- Uniterra volunteers contributed significantly to the establishment of an on-campus café-restaurant at Binh Thuan Community College (BTCC). The town is a world-famous tourist destination, but loses a lot of its young workforce to Ho Chi Minh City, the country's biggest economic hub that is only a four hours' drive away. With its prime location, the college has the potential to develop high-quality tourism and hospitality training programs to cater for local resorts and hotels.
- Two volunteers in particular worked on this initiative. Over a one-year period, **Lynn Tremblay**, a long-term Uniterra volunteer worked with her local counterparts to oversee the establishment of their first ever on-campus business. Building on the work of a previous L4C designer, Lynn assisted with, and supervised, the process of construction planning, material selection, equipment purchase, etc. Benefiting from the financial support of the Vietnam Skills for Employment Project, a Canadian-funded bilateral project, the café-restaurant was finally inaugurated in February 2018, providing a training ground for around 150 students on an annual basis.
- At Saigontourist Hospitality College, a long-term volunteer, **Harold Mainguy**, worked closely with his counterpart to overhaul the school's existing café-restaurant. Initially geared towards an internal customer base of staff and students, the café has been refurbished, renovated and promoted to the local neighborhood. The drink and bakery menu has been diversified, with customer growth reaching approximately 30% this year, providing students with greater chances to practice their skills. The school's Food & Beverage program enrolls about 500 students annually, many of whom will be interning at this facility as their first on-the-job training experience.

50 direct beneficiaries:
students trained to work
in tourism enterprises

500 indirect beneficiaries:
students who will at one
point be interns in the
businesses

3 volunteers involved

**3 products: interior design,
planning sheet, customer
service process**



Scale-up, Replication, Sustainability and Innovation

Although Uniterra cannot claim full credit for the expansion of the on-campus business model, we have observed a growing number of partners and non-partners developing service-oriented cafés, restaurants, or bakeries on their campuses. In particular, our work with flagship schools such as Saigontourist has the potential to inspire other training institutions to replicate the model.

The results of this project contributes to SDG:
1 – No Poverty, 4 – Quality Education, 8 – Decent work and Economic Growth