

## Basic Leadership Development Course (BLDC) in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC).

Xin chao



The BLDC is an interactive learning program that aims to expand partnership and leadership in the region's networks that work in adult education and lifelong learning.

This year there are 34 participants from 16 countries. This mix of people, cultures and language has made for an extremely thrilling few days. The first day was spent getting to know each of the participants, their NGOs and the context in which they work. Participants work in the area of Education and Lifelong Learning in countries varying from Japan, Fiji, Myanmar, Mongolia, India, Afghanistan, NZ, Tajikistan to name just a few.

On the second day some of us got to visit a Community Learning Centre in the Linh Xuan Ward of the Thu Duc District in HCMC. This centre, which is primarily funded by the government (MOET – Ministry Of Education and Training Vietnam), provides alternative learning opportunities to individuals in the community. For example, night classes for those who have to drop out of school in order to work, or farmers who have sold their land due to urbanisations and now need other forms of income, or women who have not previously had the opportunity to learn to read or use a computer. The centre also runs quarterly gender mainstreaming activities.



\*While the continued support of the government provides stability for the centre and the important work that they do, the alliance with the government seems to play an integral role. For example, the centre is used to disseminate information on policies to garner public support. So one questions if the centre can at times become a body through which the government sells its policies. Furthermore, the centre's directors stated that Education for Sustainable Development is not something they have started to work on yet, and that this may happen in the coming years. This makes me wonder how the centre will respond to new global education and environment frameworks.



Nonetheless, the centre does admirable work in relations to the classes they run

and the info sessions that inform communities on issues of health, child rights, etc. When we visited one of their centre rooms located in an elementary school, the children in the school were extremely curious to know who we were. As I stood their taking group photos with the directors, participants and children, I couldn't help but think of the horrors of volunteer tourism we have talked so much about in class. I had to keep telling myself that I wasn't there for that but to learn about their work. And this has been my main reflection throughout the first few days, while we are here to learn about collaboration and the promotion of lifelong learning, we are currently taking part in the lifelong learning process itself.



\*Note: A translator was used during site visits to Community Learning Centres.

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ASPBAE Leadership course, Vietnam – 21 November 2015

Women in Adult and Vocational Education