

Policy Implementation towards an Inclusive Education

Experiences from the primary schools in Vietnam

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Abstract

Vietnam is in its first step moving from an integrated to an inclusive education. During the last ten years, the country has been carrying out piloting programs on inclusive education in several provinces. This study, followed a qualitative design, aims to explore how policy is carried out at grassroots level, what is the challenges and strengths of this process, as well as recommendations of feasible trend for inclusive policy development in Vietnam.

This study was conducted during August and December 2006 in Kimson district of Ninhbinh province in the North of Vietnam. Three primary schools that was under one provincial piloting program on inclusive education were chosen to participate. The informants of the study were the headmasters, teachers and resource persons who were responsible for the piloting program. Multiple sources of information including interviews, direct observations and archival records studying were employed in data collection.

The results of this study reveal that although the central government has been managing to promote inclusive education, it is still not clear for the local level know what should be done to achieve this ambition. Because of lacking unified guidance and regulations from central, the effectiveness of public policy depends much on how it is translated into practice at local levels. This in turn depends upon local public and professional knowledge and skills, their activity, creativity, vigilance, enthusiasm and commitment, as well as effective monitoring and supervising from central. To ensure the further achievement, not only more guidance and policy on the most necessities should be enacted, but also a monitoring and supervising mechanism from central to grassroots level should be strengthened.

As the generalizability of a case study mainly depends upon the readers, who determine the applicability of the findings in their own situation, I consider this study is a reference for other researchers who would like to go further in this field.

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Abbreviations

CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CwDs	Children with disabilities
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GSO	General Statistics Office of Vietnam
HDI	Human Development Index
IE	Inclusive education
IEP	Individual Education Plan
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalid and Social Affairs
NIESAC	The National Institute of Educational Strategies and Curriculum of Vietnam
UNICEF	United Nations International Children Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
WB	World Bank

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction about Vietnam

1.1.1. General background information

Vietnam is situated in the Northeast of Asia with the total land area of 331.114 square kilometers. Its economy is mainly based on agriculture with Gross Domestic Product was 441 USD in 2004. The population of Vietnam was about 81 millions people, in which 73.03% living in rural and 26.97% in urban areas (GSO, 2005). There are 54 ethnic groups living in 61 provinces, among them the Kinh group dominates 86% of total population. Vietnamese (Kinh language) is the official language, however in ethnic minorities' localities, the ethnic languages are taught parallel with Vietnamese in primary schools.

Though Vietnam is still considered as one of the poorest countries in the world, it gained remarkable achievements in both economy and social development in the last decade, which led to Vietnam human development index (HDI) ranked 109 out of 179 countries (UNDP, 2003). It continued to rank ahead of many nations with higher gross domestic product (GDP) and Vietnam is considered a country of medium human development.

However, the economic reform from a highly centralized economy to a market economy has brought both opportunities and challenges to the country. While larger number of people enjoy their better life as a result of the reform and become well off, many people are left behind or even suffering from it. The increasing poor-rich gap between different social classes has contributed to difficulties that still stick on some disadvantaged groups and remote regions, among which there are the disabled in Vietnam.

1.1.2. Vietnam education system

Formal Education in Vietnam is composed of pre-school, elementary, lower secondary, higher secondary and college/university levels (See Figure 2: Vietnam Education System).

Since 1992, primary education in Vietnam is free and compulsory. Vietnam has achieved primary education's universalization and now is trying to achieve the same goal for lower secondary education nationwide (Dang, 2005). According to UNDP 2004 Report, 90,3% of the population are literate, and the primary enrolment is 88,5%. The agency in charge of education at national level is the Ministry of Education (MOET) and is represented by in line departments at provincial and district levels. Since school year 2002 – 2003, Vietnam has started a newly reformed program, which mainly focuses on the introduction of new curriculum applied to under college/university level and in-service training for teachers and educational staffs.

However, education system in Vietnam is facing several obstacles. Besides shortcomings in economic that lead to poor conditions among many other factors such as training and paying for human resources, educational facilities etc., the socio-cultural factor also is a remarkable issue. Being dominated by the Confucianism in the past, the country's social thought nowadays is still influenced, for instance in education, teaching is understood belonging to teacher's power and pupil have no right to oppose or change the content of education. In addition, the compulsory educational content is too rigid and burden in compared with time plan. Therefore, though encouraged by the new curriculum, the flexibility of teaching methods is hardly implemented. In different angle, the assessment in Vietnam education still is traditional, with pupil's learning results based on marking. All of these shortcomings affect much to quality of education, that results in inactive learning of students (MOET, 2005)

1.1.3. Education for children with disabilities

There was about 11.5% of children in school age have not been able to go to school or had not yet finished primary education (Dang, 2005). Of this group, 54 % was children with disabilities, migrant and street children (WB, 2005). At present, according to the latest survey in 2005 taken by the General Statistics Office (GSO) and MOET, there were 1,2 millions children with disabilities, in which retardation 28.36%, hearing impairment 12.43%, seeing impairment 13.73 %, mobility impairment 12.62%, speech and language impairment 12.57%, multiple disabilities 12, 62% and other disabilities 1.04% (Le, 2005).

Presently, disabled children enjoy free tuition fees in all educational levels, but only the hard disabled are granted living allowances from government. Due to poor conditions of families and society, and low awareness on disabilities, the education level of people with disabilities was reported to be generally very low. The Child Disability Survey 1998 (UNICEF, 2000) reported that in the communities almost half of the school-age disabled children (age 6-17) was illiterate (45.5%).

In term of education opportunities for children with disabilities, special education for disabled children has been implemented in Vietnam from the early time 1920s, however the total number of disabled children that annually benefited from special schools is extremely small, this figure in 2004 was about 7500 (Le, 2005). Since 1991, Vietnam has done research works on inclusive education's good practices, and four years later, inclusive education officially has been announced a main form to distribute education for disabled children (Dang, 2005). Though national strategies was quite ambitious, achievements obtained is still limited. According to statistics of the MOET, in school-year 2004, just only 10% disabled children went to inclusive school, in comparison with the rate 50% set up in "National Action Plan on Children period 2001 - 2010".

1.1.4. Ninh binh province's background

Ninh binh , where this study took place, is a province in northern plain. The district where this study took place is a coastal and mountainous one among 9 districts and 2 townships of the province. People of Ninhbinh mainly live on agriculture. Ninhbinh was recognized univerlisation of primary education in 1992. Up to 2005 in the whole formal provincial system there were 267.722 students studying in 473 schools, in which there are 72.641 primary students studying in 154 primary school (Ngo, 2005)

At the time of this study, Ninhbinh has been carrying out the program “Expansion of community support for children with disabilities” for 8 years from 1998, in which the investigated district has jointed the program since 2002. This was the only program on inclusive education of the province, supported by the American Catholic Relief Service (CRS) and the National Institute for Educational Strategies and Curriculum (NIESAC). This project assisted the implementation of inclusive education in regular pre and primary school that allowed disabled children to participate in classroom activities with children that have no disabilities. The objectives on community awareness, coordinated community services, teacher/parent training, adapted curricula and low-cost teaching materials were integrated into the project. Activities to meet these objectives included publishing books on inclusive education, developing training manuals, producing curricula, conducting needs surveys, forming resource centers, training educational staff and mobilizing local and regional networks to advocate for national policy reforms. After eight year implementation, inclusive education in under-program districts has obtained initial respectful achievements that were modeled by the MOET for other provinces nationwide (CRS, 2003; CRS 2005; Dang, 2005). In other districts, inclusive education just is in the first steps.

1.2. The research problem

The transition from integrated to inclusive education is a long process that does not happen over night. For the last decade Vietnam has identified an orientation towards

inclusive education for all children. In few provinces, the model of inclusive education has been expanded and proved to be an applicable model. However, in many other provinces, inclusive education still has been groping its way to success. There were many reasons for a school to fail in implementing inclusive education. Among causes, constraint of financial resources and legislation were most cited in many country reports (Dang, 2005; Yoder, 2002). Nevertheless, experience showed that, inclusive education is not always more successful where financial resources are available compared with where budget is limited (Dang, 2005).

Internationally recognizing that legislation can play an important part in the transition process (UNESCO, 2001). Because of the barriers from socio-economic conditions, developing a strong policy framework might be a big challenge of poor countries. Similarly, Vietnam is evaluated as lacking of significant central legislation, especially explicit laws, to build up an inclusive system nationally (Le, 2000; Yoder, 2002). Despite lacking an effective support from central policy, the successes of several schools on inclusive education, have raised questions: *How have these schools been implementing the existing educational legislation to success on inclusive education? What is the lesson learnt from these successes?* That are the very issue to be discussed in this study

1.3. Objectives of the study

The study focuses on the key strengths, challenges of the policy implementation process towards inclusive education at grassroots level, as well as recommendations of feasible trend for inclusive policy development in Vietnam next period, from the viewpoint of primary schools in Vietnam.

To be more specific, the objectives of the study are narrated as follows:

- To describe the key issues in policy implementation process at school level
- To find out what could be important to success of a school in implementing policy towards inclusive education, under Vietnam conditions

- To suggest possible trend in policy development towards an inclusive education in Vietnam.

1.4. Research question/s

Based on research problem and objectives of this study, the main question of the study is:

How have inclusive schools succeeded in policy implementation towards an inclusive education?

To answer the main question, the study raises the following three sub-questions:

- How have the schools implemented policy towards an inclusive education:
- What challenges/disadvantages have they had to cope in this process,
- What have been the necessary policies for setting up an inclusive education at school but still lacked?

1.5. Significance of the study

It is recommended in major documents on Inclusive Education that policy framework and legislative support must be in place to ensure access to and equal participation in Inclusive Education programs. Stangvik (1997) in his study reckoned that a government in its role as being ultimately responsible for education, must clearly states that its support inclusive education by policy statement, then local-policy makers and educational staffs know what the government expects them to do. But in piloting period as it is in Vietnam, there is a question on how local-policy makers and educational staffs act towards an inclusion system, given conditions that significant laws and regulations are still missing or becoming obsolete. In many studies, lesson learnt shows that the more powerful a barrier that existing legislation constitutes to inclusion, the earlier it will be necessary to introduce legislative reform. Nevertheless, it seems to exist an international consensus that legislation should not be in the first step without a preparatory stage when some momentum have been

established behind first inclusion movement, and more important that early in the process, existing legislation should be reviewed to see what barriers it presents to inclusion (UNESCO, 2001). Moreover, researchers suggest that a country should not move quickly to highly detailed legislation which may, in years to come, operate as a strait-jacket on further developments (UNESCO, 2001). Applying good experiences from other countries, progress of policy development and application towards an inclusive education in Vietnam, though slowly, seems to follow this process step by step. The research questions and objectives revealed that this study aims to describe the first steps of inclusion movement and to review the current legislation system from viewpoint of school level, then to suggest a possible trend of policy development in future. Though this is a qualitative study with information gained from three schools, thanks to academic research method and serious studying attitude of the researcher, its findings could be a contribution to knowledge on Inclusive education in Vietnam. Since few similar research works had been done in this field, this study hopefully could be a good reference for other researchers who wish to follow this subject as well as for policy makers in my country, to develop a better policy framework for the growth of inclusive education

1.6. Organization of the thesis and miscellaneous

This study is divided into five chapters.

Chapter One give out introduction of the study: general background about Vietnam and province when this study took place, research problem and questions, objectives, scope, significance of the study.

Chapter Two deal with theoretical framework concerning this study: Discussion on key concepts and relevant literatures on implementing inclusive education at grassroots level that are useful for this study

Chapter Three - Methodology chapter describes how the study was conducted. It consists of: Phenomenon of this study; research design; sampling procedure; research methods and instruments; pilot study; data collection process; data transcription; data

presentation and analysis, validity, reliability of data; ethical considerations and the study's limitations.

Chapter Four consists of the presentation and analysis of data.

Chapter Five summarizes the findings and represents some remarks on possible trend on policy implementation and development in Vietnam

To unify the grammatical style of the study, the data presentation and analysis, which discusses about something happened in the past before the text is drawn up, will be mainly treated in past tense. Other discussions will be implemented in appropriate grammatical tenses according to their circumstances.

Chapter 2: Policy towards an inclusive education

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, conceptual meanings of the key concepts: "policy" and "policy implementation", "educational innovation", and "inclusive education" will be discussed to make better understanding of research topic. Then the most relevant theories and literatures will be reviewed in order to create a solid background for the next chapters as well as for the whole study. Those include: Reviewing of relevant international and national laws and conventions and how they were applying under Vietnam conditions; Presenting innovation theories and philosophy that should be considered when planning a child-centered education towards a meaningful inclusive education; and discussion about points of view on community-based collaborations and teacher training and development, which recently are the focused strategies as confirmed by the MOET of Vietnam (Dang, 2005; Le, 2005)

2.2. Conceptual meaning of key concepts

2.2.1. Policy and policy implementation

There are many ways to define policy and policy implementation in literature. Sutton et al. (2001: 3) categorized policy into public policy and individual policy. While "public policy" on national scale confers the status of official tool of governance, on smaller scale such as at cities, local schools, the mayors or principals may enact their own policy to specify proper procedure and conduct as long as this policy does not contradict with relevant policy issued by higher political hierarchy. Individuals may refer to their "individual policy" dealing with their individual matters. Murray (1983 : 1 - 29) explained that policy manifests "the efforts by groups to promote their belief or welfare in relation to other groups". In democratic societies, government usually is an elected body that represents for the value, belief and interest of the major public. Public policy in democratic societies serves at various governmental levels as an administration tool or operating manual for every day conduct, therefore, on one hand

its meanings represents for public needs, on the other hand it depends much on how people at each level interpret and translate it into practice. Shortly defining, public policy represents a decision, made by a publicly elected or designated body, which is deemed to be in the public needs and interests (Torjman, 2005; Sutton et al., 2001)

In this study, we focus on public policy, especially educational public policy at grassroots level. In most contemporary educational studies, educational public policy (hereafter will be educational policy) is conceived in terms of multilateral, national, state, or local directives that legislate institutional structures, proper codes of conduct, and academic standards for schools. (Sutton et al, 2001 : 5)

According to Hernes (2001) public policy is considered to be influenced by four steerings: 1. Steering from above: the consensus between educational policy with higher national legislation; 2. Steering from below: to ensure realism and appropriateness, national policy must be adjusted after a progress of implementation and evaluation at lower levels; 3. Steering from outside: one system is not working in isolation, it interacts and is influenced by many interest groups, organizations and individuals; and 4. Steerings from within: the effectiveness of educational policy may be enhanced thanks to good internal structure.

As Sutcliffe et al. (2006) described, policy process includes at least four components: 1. Agenda setting: identifying new problems, build up evidence regarding the magnitude of a problem so that relevant policy makers aware that the problem is indeed important; 2. Policy formulation: determining and then selecting the preferred option among many policy options; 3. Policy implementation: is the stage of translating the value, interest and belief expressed by legislation papers into practices; and 4. Policy evaluation: the stage of monitoring and assessing the process and impact of an intervention. Both Hernes (2001) and Sutcliffe et al (2006) considered policy as process. Therefore the impact, or the steerings, of inside and outside elements on the whole as well as each stage of process, is unavoidable. For the purpose of this study, I mainly focus on policy implementation stage. However, it is difficult to analysis one stage of a cycle, because all components of policy process

are closely interrelated and incessantly changing. For this reason, the important elements of other stages also will be considered when analyzing information.

Since Vietnam had no ratification of explicit legislation on inclusive education up to May 2005, educational administrators and teachers had to apply existing general policy in orders to conduct inclusion tasks. On this background this study analyses policy implementation in a perspective as Sutton et al. (2001: 2 - 10) presented: to highlight how creative agents at school level “take in” elements of policy, thereby in cooperating these discursive and institutional resources into their own schemes of interest, motivation and action to cope with challenges in a transition period, towards an inclusive education in Vietnam. This perspective leads to another concept that needs to be discussed, concept “innovation”.

2.2.2. Educational innovation

In literature, when mention the concept “innovation”, usually we encounter the term “purposeful change” or “planned change”. There are many definition of innovation, according to field of innovation or perspective of innovation that researchers want to emphasize. In education, UNESCO (2003: 118) gave out an definition:

“Innovation is a process of purposeful change towards something new, something different, something likely to have risk. Educational innovation takes place, and is rooted, in socio-economic context, stems from urgent needs in educational changing and reform to cope with new challenges and meeting new economy development requirements”

Because we live in a ceaselessly changing world, we are in the middle of a major paradigm shift, so does the school, as Dalin et al. (1996: 31) stated: *“The world is moving from the modern, industrial era to a new era, the postmodern. The world is in the middle of a social, political, economic and intellectual revolution. Education will likely undergo a radical change in the near future”*. Therefore, innovation is not an add-on, but a systematic change (Dalin, 1993). The school obviously is an important unit of change, because it is the place where the demands of society and the expectation and learning needs of students and teachers meet (Dalin, 1993). The pressure for change coming from the external environment and from internal needs of school itself as well, as Dalin (1993) stated.

These forces for renewal come in many form, intensities and qualities. Simmons and Paulston (Dalin et al., 1996: 3 - 4) reserved the term *educational reform* for changes involving normative national and broad structural changes, and the term *educational innovation* for micro-level programmatic alterations in education. They argued that this distinction may be somewhat arbitrary, but it is useful to distinguish between local, institutional innovations and large-scale reform endeavors. Because the purpose of this study is the changes on policy implementation at school level, I take Simmons' and Paulston's point of view to make clearer for the definition of educational innovation, which is a key concept of this study. At school level, the changes are different from one school to another; there is no standard recipe to cope with them all. The school therefore needs to cope with both external and internal demands in a creative development process, this is an innovation (Dalin, 1993).

There are many ways to classify educational innovation. In order to make clear for my argument in the next chapters, I take one classification from Tella et al. (1999: 20), which is used among the European Observatory of Innovation in Education and Training, including four levels of educational innovation as follows:

- Innovation as policy reform.
- “Catalytic innovation” driven by government reform, where systematic change was introduced and to create the need for further systematic change.
- “Responsive innovation, where institutions and advisory bodies have to respond to legislation and other “top-down” initiatives
- “Grassroots” driven innovation e.g an independent initiative by local educational authorities in response to their own context.

Innovation does not always happen from top – down or from central – periphery, as literature summarized. As school is a unit of change, many innovations have school – level start, such as an initiative by school board, teacher/s, student/s or parent/s, reflecting the identification of a need by individual, institution and communities (UNESCO, 2001b). Senge in Dalin (1993) called for “a shift of mind” as a first, indispensable requirement for any innovation. That is because of any innovation is

difficult, since it requires people to change their belief and practice to do something different (UNESCO, 2001b). An innovation is difficult also due to it has to stand the test of time, the longer an innovation can stand, the more successful it would be, with evidence of impact and adaptability (UNESCO, 2003).

According to Fullan (1991: 47 - 48), most researchers now recognize that an innovation process includes three broad phases: *“Phase I – variously labeled initiation, mobilization or adoption - consists of the process that leads to and includes a decision to adopt or proceed with a change; Phase II – implementation or initial use - involves the first experiences of attempting to put an idea or reform into practice. Phase III – called continuation, incorporation, routinization, or institutionalization - refers to whether the change gets built in as an ongoing part of the system or disappears by way of a decision to discard or through attrition”*

In educational philosophy, inclusion recently is internationally recognized as a global educational policy (UNESCO, 1994). Inclusive education requires a whole system changing in philosophy, values, principles, resources, structures, environment, methods and strategies (UNESCO, 1994). Obviously the change from integrated to inclusive education is really a huge reform nationally and a hard innovation locally. In the next part we will discuss about main elements of the concept “inclusive education”.

2.2.3. Inclusive education

Like the meaning of “education for all”, according to international legislation, inclusive education is about securing the right to education of all learners, regardless of their individual characteristics or difficulties, in order to build a more just society (UNESCO, 2001). Some of the most remarkable documents presented the basic philosophy of inclusive education include: The Convention on the Right of the Child (UN, 1989), The World Declaration on Education for All (1990), the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993) and the Salamanca Statement (1994), as follows:

- Inclusion and participation are essential to human dignity and human rights. The core of inclusive education is the right to education of all people.

- Individual differences are normal.
- Ordinary school must recognize and adapt to the diversity of students needs with appropriate support mechanism.
- Inclusive education is the most effective means to combat discrimination, to create welcoming communities, to build an inclusive society and to provide educational for all.
- Inclusive education can promote the fullest development of all learners irrespective of their background, attainment or disability. Inclusive education is based on the belief that all children can learn.
- Inclusive education can improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost – effectiveness of the entire education system.

2.3. Vietnam legislation towards an inclusive education

For the last 15 years, in implementation of its commitments with international community, Vietnam has specified them in important legislation documents.

The 1992 Constitution, article 59 set free primary education for all children. The Law on Protection, Care and Education of Children which was revised in 2004 stipulates the protection, care and education of all children including children with disabilities. The Law on Universal Primary Education 1991, Ordinance of People with disabilities (1998) and the Revised Education Law 1998, all mentioned that children with disabilities have the same rights as all other children and the State has to create all conditions, to give priority for implementation of those rights. The last one - the Regulation on Inclusive education of disabled people, issued in May 2006 – explicitly stated objectives, resources, duties and responsibilities of public and private sectors in implementing inclusive education (See Appendix 1 : Main Legislation pertaining to Children with disabilities and Inclusive education). Those laws set up a firm background to build explicit legislations and guidance for the development of an inclusive system.

Based on the above laws, strategies and plans were set up and carried out. In 2001, Vietnamese government announced the Strategy for Educational Development Period 2001 – 2010, then in 2003, the National Action Plan: Education for All period 2003 – 2015 was ratified. The objectives of these plan and strategy are: creating opportunities and conditions for all children generally and children with disabilities particularly to access pre- school, primary and lower secondary, by 2010 the rate of children going to school reach 99%, ensure 50% of children with disabilities in 2005 and 70% in 2010 being able to go to schools.

Along with issuing policy, the government has made a big change in administrative responsibilities. In 2002, The National Steering Committee of Education for children with disabilities (CwDs) – under the MOET was established, with members from the MOET, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLISA), Ministry of Health (MOH), Handicapped organizations and mass organizations such as Red Cross Association, Women Union etc. Up to the end of 2005, there were 38 out of 64 provinces to establish the Provincial Steering Committee of Education for Children with disabilities (Dang, 2005). The National Steering Committee had given further instructions to develop new training curricula for different types of disabilities or encouraging training programs on special needs education at college and university level. As a result, faculties of special needs education have been established in 5 universities and 10 colleges up to date (Tran,2005).

Though still facing many obstacles and limitations, the development towards an inclusive education in Vietnam has gained some initial achievements. Dr. Richard Villa (2004) in his study cited that Vietnam's 10-year experience with inclusive education appears to have started a ripple effect in some neighboring countries such as Lao, China.

In the next parts two major solutions for implementing inclusive education under poor economic conditions as defined by the MOET of Vietnam (Dang, 2005) - teacher training and professional development, and community-based collaboration, will be discussed, together with main considerations for a child-centred education.

2.4 Main considerations to build up an inclusive education

2.4.1. Multi-sector coordination and community-based collaboration

In literature, inclusion has emerged as a dynamic process of participation within a net of relationship (Katz et al., 1995). In the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), community perspectives were considered as the most important key for success of inclusive education in both developed and developing countries. Community perspectives according to the Salamanca Statement include: parent partnership, community involvement and role of voluntary organizations.

As summarized in international papers, the lesson-learnt is that the more effort is put on maximizing system efficiency and resource capacity through improving multi-sector coordination and community-based collaboration, the more successful in inclusive education it will be (UNESCO, 2001 : 82 – 94; UNESCO, 2005). Education of all children is not only a task of education branch; especially education of children with disabilities requires participation of more social forces. On one hand, disabled children need health care, early diagnosis and intervention, habilitation during all learning process. On the other hand, children with disabilities should be educated in a friendly environment of families and communities. Inclusive education for children with disabilities also requires technical and financial resources. This requirement sometime is beyond capacity of their families, schools and local communities. So the contribution from multi-sectors, community and out-local forces is essential for inclusive education.

By strengthen community perspectives, inclusive education would be not only cost-efficient, but also cost – effective, this is what the countries with limited resources are looking for (UNESCO, 1994; UNESCO, 2001). Among the most effective strategies to overcome financial limitation, all strategies more or less are concerned to multi – sector coordination and community – based collaboration (Peter, 2003). Peter (2003) summarized there are five proved effective, cost – saving strategies, as follows:

1. Centralized – resource center, outreach program and cooperative strategy : upholding multi – sector coordination and community – based collaboration to set up centralized resource, or converted from special school, then these resource centers can provide outreach and technical support to inclusive schools and teachers. This strategy is proved effective in many South – African countries and also has been adopted by Vietnam decision – makers recently; 2. Fostering the involvement of parents to mobilize resources for inclusive education: Parent partnership is considered as the privileged partners as regards the special education needs of their child (UNESCO, 1994), when they are empowered, along with school administrator, professional and teachers, parents may become active partners in decision – making. In developing countries when central budget is constraint, contribution from parents plays an important role in total budget for education; 3. The child – to – child program (children support children) has shown great promise for providing cost – saving as well as being effective in accelerating the academic progress of both those being tutored and the tutors themselves; 4. The fourth strategy is community – based rehabilitation program (CBR) that let the community takes responsibility for tackling existing barriers to participation disabled children, men and women. Vietnam has applied the model of cost-saving community-based programme on rehabilitation and education for disadvantaged groups, including disabled children for the last 15 years in some pilot target provinces; and 5. The last effective strategy according to Peter (2003) is teacher training and professional development, which will be discussed deeper in next part.

It was evaluated in national reports of countries that families' contribution is substantial in poor countries, even where primary education is officially provided free by the state. According to data from UNESCO Institute for Statistic/OECD in 2003 the share of private expenditure in primary and secondary education has been estimated at 42% in Jamaica, 33% in the Philippines, 30% in Chile, 24% in Indonesia and 21% in Colombia (UNESCO, 2005b).

Last but not the least, community involvement brings up another precious advantage for the goal that education should prepare individual with special needs to live and to work in their communities. In community – based program activities, with profound involvement of family and community, education does not mean schooling and score; it is seen as a development opportunity with emphasis on outcomes across the life – span.

As a developing country with limited resource, Vietnam is facing the same challenges as other developing countries in inclusive education. The vice minister of Ministry of Education stated that system efficiency is one of the most weakness of Vietnam education (Dang, 2005) Concerning national budget for education, though central government has tried its best to provide about 3.8% GDP (1998) for education, this amount mainly intended for teachers' salary (80 – 90%), the remain 20 – 10% is for purchasing of teaching and learning material, equipment etc. (Ngo et al., 2004). Therefore, to strengthen system capability and resources, the government must address multi-sector coordination and community – based collaboration as a key strategy in all national educational plans.

2.4.2. Teacher training and professional development

Teachers, who provide teaching, play a vital role in quality of education, as Vygotsky said: teacher's teaching "*gives development a forward thrust*" (Crain, 1992 : 218).

Therefore, investment in teacher's training is a wise decision because of its affordable expenses as well the short term and long term benefit it brings back for the development of education system. For this reason, teacher training strategy is considered one key cost–saving strategy to ensure the success of inclusive education (UNESCO, 1994; Peter, 2003). The huge challenge for educational personnel supply is how to prepare more teacher within a rigorous professional framework.

Pre-service training, which is conducted in colleges and universities, is considered the most important in personnel supply for inclusive education (Mittler, 2000).

According to Fullan (1992) and Mittler (2000), there are three major tasks towards

inclusive education that should be carried out in every pedagogic colleges and universities. The first task is training on child – centered pedagogy and other effective teaching strategies. The second is creating opportunities for teacher-student to expose to the good practices, so that they can benefit for themselves in future professional career and for their future pupils as well. The last task of colleges and universities is to prepare inclusion attitude and feeling for teacher – students.

For further development, it is necessary to design both pre-service and in-service training plan that take into account all stakeholders involved and the different models needed to meet different needs of in-service teachers and educational staff. For the success of this plan, teachers and educational staff must participate in the beginning of the whole process from identifying objectives, designing of training contents, strategies and activities. In a global society nowadays, networking among teachers and related professionals is indispensable and must be promoted through appropriate measures, in which legislation framework is a good tool (UNESCO, 2001)

Last but not the least, attention on teacher/educational staff turnover should be seriously addressed in professional development plan. In developing countries there is little attention being paid on conditions that can prevent high turnover of educational staff and teachers. These conditions include: teachers' working conditions, administrative support and supervision, incentives for participation, release time for preparation and evaluation, and teachers' salary (Peter, 2003) Although teachers' and staff's salary constitute about 80% of all school cost in developing countries (Ngo, 2004; UNESCO, 2005b), but the salary is not sufficient in comparison with huge teacher's workload, as they have to teach a large number of pupil with few teaching material, equipment and other supportive services. Therefore, in Vietnam every year there are a remarkable number of student-teachers who graduated from pedagogic colleges and universities, but applied for irrelevant jobs. This leads to a fact that the country still lacks qualified teachers, especially in rural and remote areas. The urgent issues of country's policy development are not only about quantity and quality of teacher training, but also legislation and measures to support teachers' long term professional development.

2.4.3. Child quality of life and child-centred education.

As stated above, one of the major tasks of teachers' training is child-centered pedagogy for a child-centered education. The meaning of child-centered education closely relates to the meaning of the child's quality of life and which factors influence it. Because child-centered education is the core of an inclusive education that can enhance quality of life for all children, especially ones with special needs (Skjorten, 2001). Quality of life means different thing to different people. Maslow (1943) considered quality of life is how the people's needs are fulfilled. He classified human's needs into the deficiency needs and the growth needs. The deficiency needs include: physiological needs (food, breathing, sleep, homeostatic etc.), safety needs (security of body, of health, of family etc.), love/belonging needs (friendship, family etc.), esteem needs (confidence, achievement, self-esteem etc.). The growth needs is self-actualization needs meaning the desire for self-fulfillment. While the deficiency needs are the must, the growth needs are the tendency of personal growth. In a national report of the State of Qatar, the child's quality of life is interpreted as the development of physical, social, mental/emotional/spiritual development of the child (The Human Rights Index for the Arab countries, 2000).

In literature, factors influence child – quality of life in defined in many ways. To simplify for the purpose of this study, I considered factors influencing to a child's quality of life including factors inside and outside the child. A child, at a time definitely is in his/her certain physical, social and emotional/mental states, those are the factors inside. Those factors may be inborn characters, uneasy-changed impairments, but most of them can be developed, improved through social interaction, intervention and treatment from the very beginning of the child's life. Besides factors inside the child, a big number of factors outside could be divided into seven categories: 1. Social factors; 2. Cultural factors; 3. Financial factors ; 4. Political factors; 5. Health care services factors; 6. Family factors; 7. Education factors (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Vygotsky, 1978; Rye, 2001). The child's quality of life therefore depends upon how positively these factors affect his/her

physical/mental/emotional/social development (see Figure 3: The child's quality of life)

Vygostky (Crain, 1992) reckoned education factor play an important role as a powerful stimulation for development. Education is most effective when teaching is geared to the child's own meaningful learning (Crain, 1992: 216 - 220). According to researchers, learning is socio-cultural, active, creative, and reflective (Vygotsky, 1978; Johnsen, 2001; Skjorten, 2001). Learning is socio-cultural because it occurs in certain socio-cultural context. (Vygotsky, 1978 : 88). Thus, without an appropriate socio-cultural setting, learning is unlikely to succeed. Learning is social also means that collaborative learning in groups benefits all learners, regardless their differences (Skjorten, 2001). Last but not least, learning is social denotes that individual learning is diversified, because individuals in society are all various. (Johnsen, 2001). One significant common point of theorists is they considered learning is an active and creative process. Learning is active and creative due to naturally it is a process of interpretation. Not occasionally only, but always, the meaning of an instruction goes beyond its author. That is why learning is not merely a reproductive, but a productive process as well (Crain, 1992). Learning is reflective process means that when students study in a certain setting, alone or with peers and teachers, they reflect on their successes and mistakes, their learning processes and products. The reflection is manifested in form of feedbacks from inside students as self-evaluation/self-reflection or from peers and teachers. Good feedback speeds student's learning and striving for better result and deeper understanding.

Education encompasses learning and teaching. Teaching is the activities to impart knowledge or skills from teaching givers to receivers/learners. If teaching could adapt to child's learning needs, and result in a meaningful, socio-cultural, active, creative and reflective learning, it is a child-centered education.

The main considerations to build up a child-centred education, much relate to the non-stop spiral of setting up, performing and evaluating a Curricular for the Plurality of Individual Learning Needs, as Johnsen (2001) described as follows:

1. The pupil (s) as the ultimate user of education. The educators must learn about the physical and mental development of the pupil such as experience, knowledge, experience, attitude, capacities, possibility, special needs etc., to adapt their teaching. There are many sources to understand about the students, from parents, from peers, community, professionals, and especially the students themselves as the most important informants. But to handle well information, teachers need firmly hold the foundation knowledge on learning and development, individual learning's respects and strategies, particularly knowledge about students with special needs.

2. The frame factors as a specific setting which the students are in the centre and affected directly or indirectly by. Frame factors also are diversified. It could be count here some main frame factors such as economic conditions, human resources, legislation, physical, socio- cultural factors.

3. Intentions/ Objectives/Aims: In institutionalized education, the task of teachers/educators is to change general intentions as legitimated in policy document into concrete and manageable goals. To prepare for future life as an independent person and citizen, the child need to learn not only knowledge and skills as “*subject-bound*”, but also positive human characteristics of “*self esteem, sense of responsibility, communication, cooperative skills, tolerance, solidarity and care*” (Johnsen, 2001 : 276), and others like braveness, self-discipline, honesty, innovativeness. All these must be intentions of a child-centered education, making education being education for life.

4. Contents if intentions are to set goals for education, then educational content is substance and value making these goals reached. In many countries, educational content is presented at macro level in policy document such as national curricula, while at micro level it is the teachers' duties to both obey the policy and adapt the contents to concrete learning of individual. Scholars may categorize educational content as “subjects” “themes” or “lessons”, but they still debate about what are the main criteria for choosing educational content. Nevertheless, whichever set of criteria they choose, the following criteria are set as most important ones: open, consistency

and adequacy to goals, adaptation and variety based on pupils' learning needs, relevance and meaning to pupils' development and life. (Johnsen, 2001: 272 -275.)

5. Learning strategies, teaching methods and classroom organization: the term “*learning strategies*” refers to “*individual strategies of attention focusing, problem solving, memorizing and monitoring the process of learning and problem solving*”. (Johnsen, 2001: 276). Students learn well through their preferred learning strategies. They can develop their strategies themselves, nevertheless in every case, support and guidance from teachers are always necessary and valuable. Especially, in inclusive education, when barriers to learning appear, the teacher's role is to adjust or alter teaching method and assist pupil creating appropriate strategies. Choice of teaching method leads to choice of teaching materials/equipment and classroom organization. In inclusive education, organizing a friendly learning classroom, in or out of physical classroom, for all children is a main principle. Group learning organization also is stressed as an effective choice. However, to adapt pupil's special needs, other alternatives can be considered such as individual teaching. (Johnsen, 2001: 275 - 283.)

6. Assessment: Assessment in a child-centered education does not mean to evaluate the pupil's learning and behaviors only, otherwise this means curriculum review on all levels. Especially, evaluation in inclusive education must be flexible and dynamic to adapt to each individual/class's needs or school, and the implementation of assessment based on dialogue and observation between teachers and students, teachers and other persons related to students like parents, peers, professionals, social workers etc. In practical application at class level, it denotes that teacher gathers, interprets and reflects information of all curriculum aspects in order to adjust curriculum toward future aim. (Johnsen, 2001: 283 -288.)

7. Communication and care are two remaining aspects of the model. They are the implicit parts of every curricular aspect. Communication is the core of interaction and mediation (Vygotsky, 1978), and mastery of communication is much related to cognitive development. Care is expressed through adult's behaviors and attitude towards the child. Care is to satisfy basic human needs of feeling safe, love,

belongingness, acceptance and recognition.. In education, “*care and involvement show themselves in how we plan, implement and evaluate*” (Johnsen. 2001: 288 -294).

Though the main considerations when planning a child-centred education can be categorized for studying purpose, in reality they are all related, intermingled and continuously change because of the interaction among them.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the phenomenon of this study is addressed, following by the detailed description of the research design used : the approach, area, population, informants, sampling procedures, instruments, data collection procedure, and methods of data presentation and analysis. In the end of this chapter, validity, reliability, ethical considerations and limitations are discussed.

3.2. A descriptive case study research

Case study design aims to shed light on the phenomenon in its natural context (Gall et al., 1996). In this study the phenomenon is the policy implementation towards inclusive education at school level in Vietnam.

In order to have in depth study on how teachers and administrative staff at primary school to carry out policy towards an inclusive education, I chose a descriptive case study design, because among qualitative approaches, the research question “How”/”What” emphasizes the initial trait of descriptive design that is to describe what is going on (Creswell, 1998; Yin, 1994, Gall et al.,1996).

Studying policy implementation towards inclusive education is unpopular field in my country (Yoder, 2002), therefore I chose qualitative approach because this topic needs to be explored. By this, I mean that the variables of my study were not easy to identify, theories are not always available to explain behaviors of participants of this study, and theories need to be developed (Creswell, 1998). My choice of qualitative research allows me to get closer to the participants and their social environment, which is not easy to carry out by other research strategies such as quantitative research, due to topic’s sensitivity and limitation of researcher’s budget.

I chose a qualitative approach in order to investigate the interests and attitudes towards inclusive education policy, knowledge and roles of teachers and educational

administrative staff in developing an inclusive education. It would give an understanding of the physical, emotional and political environment at school level in which the educational policies were carried out. This political environment refers to local communities' context, school and classroom environment.

The purpose of this study is, as Gall et al (1996:549) defined, "*In a case study whose purpose is description, the researcher attempts to depict a phenomenon and conceptualize it*".

However, the flow of research's sub-questions about the process, the challenges and the possible explanation for successes or failures of policy implementation may be considered a hidden "why" question, which is typical for an explanatory research.

Because of limitation of time, experience and budget, it was unlikely to be able to explain the causal pattern of the phenomenon within the context of this study.

Therefore, my attempt in this study is still the thick description of the phenomenon's process, challenges, successes or failures with the recommendations of possible reasons for the phenomenon.

3.3. Population and Sample

3.3.1. Area of the study:

I choose *area* that could represent for areas in Ninhbinh province, where this study took place. Since different areas in Vietnam are rather different in economic – social conditions, studying schools located in representative areas definitely will enhance the reliability of the research (Gall et al, 1996). I took consideration three main criteria when choosing area for this study:

- Areas could represent for geographical, culture and economic criteria of province,
- Areas would be accessible to me (by car or motorbike to go to the field and come back to the provincial town during daytime)
- Areas should represent for the level of inclusive education implementation of the province, focusing more on the successful school located in poor areas and vice versa.

3.3.2. Population

The population of this study was all 29 primary schools in one district in Ninh binh province, under one umbrella provincial program on inclusive education, which is mentioned in the first chapter

3.3.3. Sampling procedure and the informants

3.3.3.1. *The sampling procedure*

My sample consisted of 3 primary schools S1, S2, S3, were chosen as follows:

Because the sample size in qualitative studies typically is small, ***purposeful sampling*** was applied in order to select cases that are likely to be information-rich with respect to the purpose of the study (Gall et al., 1996). As discussed, studying policy implementation towards inclusive education is a quite new topic in Vietnam, therefore I chose ***typical case sampling***, involving the selection of typical cases to study, because of its usefulness in field tests of new program (Gall et al, 1996 : 232).

In Vietnam, inclusive education is just in its first step. Most of regular schools that have rich experience in inclusion are the schools under specific inclusive education program, coordinated by government or international organizations. The sample of this study was chosen because of its experience in inclusive education. In Ninhbinh province, there were four districts under this only provincial program on inclusive education. One district had jointed the program for eight years, another district, Kimson district, had jointed the program for five years, the remaining districts just newly jointed. The first district was not chosen because it moved to a quite different level in implementing inclusive education in comparison with the major of primary schools in Vietnam. To enhance reliability of this study, I chose Kimson district. With five year experience its lesson learnt may be more useful for the schools which are in the beginning steps in inclusive education. Then, all 29 schools of Kimson district were drawn up for the first list.

With the support from the in-charge person of the province and program, I divided the above list into 3 groups: average, successful, most successful group in implementing inclusive education. In consideration with area criteria, I chose 3 schools located in three communes of Kimson district: school S1 belonged to the group of 10 averages schools, located in an urban town of the province that had the high economic condition within the province; School S2 belonged to the successful group, located in rural commune that had an average economic condition, and the last school S3 located in remote, mountainous and poor commune. This sample can represent for the geographically and economically various areas, diversified level of inclusive education in the province, to compare the success or failure of the schools and withdraw possible answers for the research question.

3.3.3.2. The main informants and the resource persons:

The *main informants* of my study were headmasters and class teachers of the chosen primary schools.

The headmasters were the ones who were squeezed between three forces: from higher educational administration, from teaching staff and from outside interested individuals/groups. They were the people who directly carried out the policies as chief of staff, as well as supervised policy implementation of teaching staff.

Therefore, headmasters undoubtedly were rich-information informants for the research.

The class teachers played very important roles in the progress of transition too. Not only they were the ones who directly implemented the policies, but also the ones who deeply understood whether the policy were effective or not.

They were those with the following criteria:

- Working in regular primary schools/classes with student with disabilities in their schools/class at the time studied.
- Experienced with at least 3 years inclusive experience.

One headmaster and one class teacher were interviewed at each school, those were likely to be information – rich and accessible (Gall et al, 1996: 231). Beside the headmasters were considered as information-rich, among original list including 28 teachers of the school S1, 22 teachers of the school S2, 21 teachers of the school S3, I chose teachers who were given award of Excellent Teaching Qualification (one certificate issued by the Ministry of Education for outstanding teachers) who were considered as more experiences, more knowledge and more enthusiasm towards educational career. It came up to an intermediary list of 12 teachers. The final list of three teachers (one from each school) was decided based on advices from the headmasters and the resource persons.

In order to get an overall picture on how policy was carried out at grassroots, beside information collected from the very level, 3 key persons were informally interviewed as *resource persons*. These persons were chosen because of their responsibilities and knowledge in development of inclusive education in Ninh binh province. At the time this study took place, the first person was a leading researcher of the National Institute of Educational Strategies and Curriculum, who used to be a consultant for the umbrella program of Ninhbinh province, the second was a leader of Provincial Primary Educational Division who was in charge of inclusive education, the last resource person was a coordinator of the umbrella inclusive education program of the province.

As the main objective of this study is policy implementation at grassroots level, the information gained from resource persons will be discussed in capacity as supportive points of views to cross-check and bring matters to light, when compared with information obtained from main informants from school.

3.4. Research methods and Instruments

Data collection methods used in this study was Standardized open-ended interview, with Interview Guide as instrument.

The additional sources of evidences were gained from archival records (Yin, 1994: 79, 83), informal interview with resource persons (Befring, 2004: 164 – 167), and direct observation (Gall et al, 1996: 343 – 352). The supportive instruments includes observation guide and archival record guide.

3.4.1. Standardized open-ended interview as the main method of data collection:

As defined in Gall et al. (1996: 310, 313) *the standardized open-ended interview* involves a predetermined sequence and wording of the same questions to be asked of each informant in order to minimize the possibilities of bias. This set of questions was called Interview Guide with open- ended, evolving, non-directional main questions to restate the purpose of the study in more specific term (see Appendix 2: Interview Guide). Interview's sub-questions will be asked to address the major concerns and perplexities to be resolved (Creswell, 1998; Gall et al. 1996).

To create a thick description, the researcher must look for constructs that brought order to the descriptive data and that related these data to other research findings reported in literature (Gall et al, 1996 :549). Because the similar studies were hard to find in my country, I looked for those relevant in international literature. The main concerns were put on the implementation of policy that aimed to enhance:

- Acceptance of new philosophy on inclusion (Interview Guide's Question No. 2.2.3, 2.3.1, 2.3.4)
- Consensus to implement inclusion among the school, the higher educational administration, the professional/community's organizations and other interested groups (Interview Guide's Question No. 2.3.2, 2.3.4, 3.2.1)
- Ability to adjust school's structure to welcome diversity and set up inclusive environment (Interview Guide's Question No. 2.3.3, 2.3.4, 3.1.3, 3.1.4, 3.2.1, 3.4)

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- The stableness, cooperativeness and capability of school's staff to carry on inclusion (Interview Guide's Question No. 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 2.3.3, 3.1.2, 3.1.3)
 - Encouragement of school's administration for the training and re-training of teaching staff towards inclusion (Interview Guide's Question No. 2.3.3, 2.3.4, 3.2.2)
 - Leadership role towards inclusion (Interview Guide's Question No. 2.2.1, 2.3.2, 2.3.3, 3.4)
 - Ability to set up an inclusive teaching and learning methods (Interview Guide's Question No. 3.1.3, 3.1.4)

Those above focuses were summarized and adopted from international papers from the UNICEF, UNESCO, The United Nations Convention on the rights of the child, The Salamanca Statement etc, as presented in Chapter Two. These focuses were the foundation to built up the Interview Guide, and also were the foundation when looking for themes and categories when analyzing the collected data.

All informants from the schools were interviewed with the same Interview guide, with the aim to compare their awareness and policy implementation from different angles. Since the interviews were face-to-face, it enabled me to attempt all questions, clarify and explain to interviewees, and with sensitive questions I could probe as mush as possible in order to obtain as much information as possible.

3.4.2. Data collection procedure

I went to each school three times and stayed at each school three days to collect my data. The first time was for introduction, making acquaintance with teachers and administrative staff, reading school archival, observing and making sure that procedures for the interviews were explained to informants. The second and the third time were for main interviews with informants, continuous observation and more archival reading.

The media of communication was Vietnamese, the national language. The interviews with informants were planned for one month, it actually took two months, September and October.

With each main informant, I spent about four hours to interview. Informants were interviewed privately at the time and place of their own choice, and all of them chose being interviewed at school during their working time. Because of the Vietnamese culture and the sensitivity of the topic, all interviews were not allowed to tape record. Interviews with headmasters were conducted in the evening, in his/her offices, and were taken notes. For the interviews with teachers, since I carried out the interview during teachers' working time in morning, the interviews with teachers were conducted and taken note in 20-minute breaks after each 40-minute lesson and after the class. When the teachers came back to his/her classes, I continued to take note the remain of information I just received from him/her, then observed his/her teaching, class/school environment. After each interview, I encouraged informants to review the notes for accuracy and completeness. Five out of six informants also sent to me their letters to express their comments and give additional information that they forgot to talk about in formal interviews. These letters' contents will also be used as evidence for this research.

3.4.3. Additional sources of evidence

Beside the main source of information gained from interviews with teachers and headmasters, *archival records*, *informal interviews* with resource persons and *direct observations* were conducted to double-check and support for the main source of evidence.

3.4.3.1 Archival record

According to Yin (1994), there are six major sources of evidence, those are: Documentation, Archival records, Interviews, Direct observations, participant observations, physical artifacts. Archival record, such as organization records, survey data, personal records etc., “*can produce both quantitative and qualitative information.*”

Numerical data are often relevant and available for a case study, as are nonnumerical data” (Yin, 1994: 83).

Studying archival record was a good additional source to double-check the information gained from main informants, thanks to its secured accuracy, trustfulness and retrievableness. All archival record studied in this research were provided by the headmasters, teachers and responsible persons of the province and the umbrella program. As a supportive source of evidence, the contents of archival record used were closely relevant with the study’s concerns as discussed above.

Gall et al. (1996) considered written information from archival records can be seen as secondary source that is derived from primary sources. As a supportive source of evidence, the contents of archival record used were closely relevant with the study’s concerns as discussed above. These included the relevant regulation and policies issued by the government, provincial and district administration, umbrella program’s reports, School curriculum, teaching plans, individual plans, school reports, meetings’ memories etc. (See Appendix Three: Archival Record Guide).

3.4.3.2. Informal interview with resource persons

Informal interviews are the interviews that can unfold as a conversation between the researcher and the interlocutors, with only the subject and problem statements as a frame of reference (Befring, 2004 : 164). According to Gall et al (1996: 309), informal interview is the collection of information through spontaneous generation of questions during natural conversation or interaction. Both definitions stressed about the flexibility of matters addressed during an informal interview, in order to explore an unclear issue.

My informal interviews were conducted with the meanings as presented above. So far six informal interviews with resource persons were carried out before and after formal interviews with main informants. The content of informal interviews were flexible, depended on what the researcher needed to know, to check, to evaluate or to make clear any confusion before and after each formal interviews, usually topics were the

specific characteristics of province, community, schools, informants, resource persons' comments or evaluations on what were presented before by main informants. Therefore, no specific interview guide for informal interview was fixed before each interview. The information gained from the informal information, though it was very rich as it came from experienced and responsible persons, was treated as additional source to enhance the validity of the main source of information obtained from main informants.

3.4.3.3. Direct observation

In addition to the interviews, I found it is important to observe the informants at work and classroom/school arrangement, teaching aids and equipment. Observations were conducted during and after school hours at every time I was at school. The Observation Guide focused on physical environment of communities, schools, classes that might influence inclusive education, and the learning and teaching environment. It was developed based on the Curriculum model presented by Johnsen (2001) and the input-process-outcome-context framework for Inclusive education (Peter, 2003: 29) (See Appendix Four: Observation Guide). Because the aim of observations was to provide additional data, only the remarkable information that could support and verify the primary information gained from interviews was summarized in Appendix Five and analyzed in the text of this study.

3.5. Procedure of the study

The steps to conduct this study were: preparing the instruments, getting permission to conduct the study, making pilot study, main study, transcribing, interpreting the data, and presenting and analyzing data obtained. (See Figure 4: The study progress)

3.5.1. Preparing the instruments

The instruments were carefully prepared in English before I went to the field, with the assistance from my main advisor and local advisors. After completion of instrument development, translation of the instruments into Vietnamese was conducted.

To test the instruments, one pilot study was carried out. Few minor changes were made in the Interview Guide, with the support and agreement of my main advisor and my local advisor.

3.5.2. Getting permission

The key for getting permission for this study is Letter of References from University of Oslo (see Appendix 6: Letter of reference from the University of Oslo) which I firstly submitted to the Ministry of Education and CRS organization to get permission to access to the province of this study. I also got their support by introducing me by letter and in person to the Provincial Division of Primary education (see Annex 5: Letter of Introduction of CRS/Vietnam). With the permission from the Head of the provincial Primary Division (under the Provincial Department of Education) who escorted me to the schools and introduced me to the headmasters, I could arrange meetings with the informants. It took nearly one month (August) from the time I firstly submitted the Letter of references from University to the in-charge persons until I could arrange my first formal interview.

3.5.3. Pilot study

According to Gall et al. (1996 : 65) a pilot study should be included whenever possible as part of a research project, to test and revise the instruments and procedures the researcher is planning to use. Therefore, I conducted one pilot interview with the initial interview guides. The pilot informant was a deputy headmaster of a primary inclusive school in Ninh binh province. The pilot study followed exactly the same procedure as intended for the main study. The pilot study was very helpful, since it helped me to gain confidence and experience before the main study. From the pilot study I learned that the Vietnamese interview guide needed some improvements to concretize some questions on commenting the effectiveness of educational policy and challenges for setting up an inclusive education. I discussed those issues with the pilot informant and my local advisor to make changes by adding sub questions to the confusing questions. I also practiced

interview with the pilot informant about: how to start the interview, how to take note effectively, what were sensitive words I should avoid, how I should behave in front of interviewees.

3.5.4. Data transcription

Because I was not allowed to use tape records during the interviews, I had to take note. Since I chose to carry out interviews in break times between consecutive lessons and after the class hours, I had enough time to take notes all information I heard from informants. I tried to remember all important words and sentences, behaviors and attitudes of informants when transcribing the data. Then the transcription was translated into English. I sought for second opinion on the translation from an English degree teacher on both transcription and translation to ensure the validity of the data.

3.5.5. Data Organization, Analysis and Presentation

Data was typed to make easier to identify themes, categories and sub-categories. In the next step, data was organized according to identified themes, categories and sub-categories

This study uses *Interpretational Analysis* (Gall et al., 1996: 452-456) to analyze the Data, with the steps are:

- Segmenting the database.
- Developing categories.
- Coding segments.
- Grouping category segments
- Drawing conclusion

3.6. Validity, Reliability and Ethical considerations

3.6.1. Validity and Reliability

Yin in Gall et al. (1996: 571 - 572) stated that the quality of a case study depends upon: *Construct validity* means “the extent to which a measure used in a case study correctly

operationalizes the concepts being studied”, *internal validity* that is not applicable for descriptive case study research, *external validity* means “*the extent to which the findings of a case study can be generalized to similar case*” and *reliability* means “*the extent to which other researchers would arrive at similar results if they studied the same case using exactly the same procedures as the researcher*”

During this study process, construct validity was seriously paid attention. The pilot study and hard working with the local advisor who was an experienced specialist in inclusive education help me to elaborate the sub questions and develop appropriate approaches in order to share similar understanding with the informants on the concept being used. The generous time reserved for each interview (about four hours each) also made better understanding on used concept between the researcher and the informants.

According to Gall et al (1996), the generalizability of a case study depends on the readers more than on the researcher. To help the readers determine how the research is generalizable, researcher should : 1. provide thick description of the participant and context 2. Address whether the case studied is typical/representative of the phenomenon and why. (Gall et al, 1996 : 465 – 466)

To make stronger for the generalizability of the study, the criteria below was focused to enhance *the external validity*:

- Contextual completeness: study the phenomenon in its natural context;
- Choosing the typical case of the phenomenon
- Researcher positioning : keeping researcher’s neutral positioning in interview so that the interviewees was not influenced by my attitude.
- Triangulation : using multiple source of evidence and data collection methods, various related theories can eliminate biases resulting from relying on only one data collection method, single source of information or single theory;
- Arranging enough time for taking note due to not allowed to use tape – recording.

- Member checking: informants reviewed the notes made by me after interviews for accuracy and completeness.

To strengthen *reliability* of this study:

- The Interview Guide, Observation Guide and Archival Record Guide were created before the study took place, based on relevant theories and literatures, with advices from my Norwegian Advisor and Local advisor.
- Before main study, I piloted instruments to improve them and make necessary changes.
- Field notes were made in the field setting. If the complete notes could not make right away at the scene, at least a summary of the sequence and noteworthy statement was written down, then soon after leaving the scene this summary could stimulate my writing of a sufficient notes (Gall et al, 1996 : 349 – 350)

3.6.2. Ethical considerations

As Creswell (1998: 132) and Gall et al., (1996: 81) stated, a qualitative researcher always faces many ethical issues during data collection, analysis and dissemination of a qualitative report. Because if the researcher is not careful, his studies can place individuals in situation that involves risks.

Befring (2004) emphasized that a research cannot be said to maintain high academic standard unless it is trustworthy in terms of its methods and the research must be ethically trustworthy, trustful and reliable. For this reason I take critical view to avoid or minimize any deliberate as well as unintentional ethical errors.

The following steps and considerations were strictly followed in my whole study process, to ensure ethics of this study.

- Data was collected with the willingness of all participants, by:
 - Showing them the documented evidence (Letter of Introduction from my university, Letter of Introduction from the umbrella program) before the interviews.

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- Explaining about the research for all participants in advance.
 - Documented commitment of the researcher to assure to the interviewees of strict confidentiality of all information collected for study's use only.
 - Creating democratic interviews/conversations by telling the informants that they had rights to avoid answers or the whole study at any time.
 - The time of each interview, places and ways of recording the data obtained were agreed mutually between the interviewees and I before each interviews.
 - Apply anonymous situation for all interviewees, schools, communes and districts, use titles and description instead when analyzing
 - Create good relationships with participants before and after interviews, observations, to create favorable condition for this study
 - Protect the vulnerable participants of this study: in this study the vulnerable population was the disabled students in classes where I took observations. Those disabled children, who were observed, did not know they were observed intentionally.

3.7. Limitations of the study

This study was conducted under Vietnam conditions, where discussing about policy system is sensitive, especially when discussing about weaknesses of system or authorities. Therefore, all interviews of this study were not allowed to record by tape. Though an effective solution was carried out to take note all interviews' information as presented later in methodology chapter, limitation of lacking tape recording still raise somewhat unsatisfaction concerning validity and reliability of the study.

Due to Vietnam cultural perspective, the researcher, as a strange person with the interviewees, hardly heart criticism from the staffs to his/her management, also the staffs usually are more reserved than the managers when expressing their opinions on the operation of their institutions.

To avoid above limitations and secure research's validity and reliability, triangulation method with multi sources information and cross-checking is used, but it can not eliminate completely the limitations

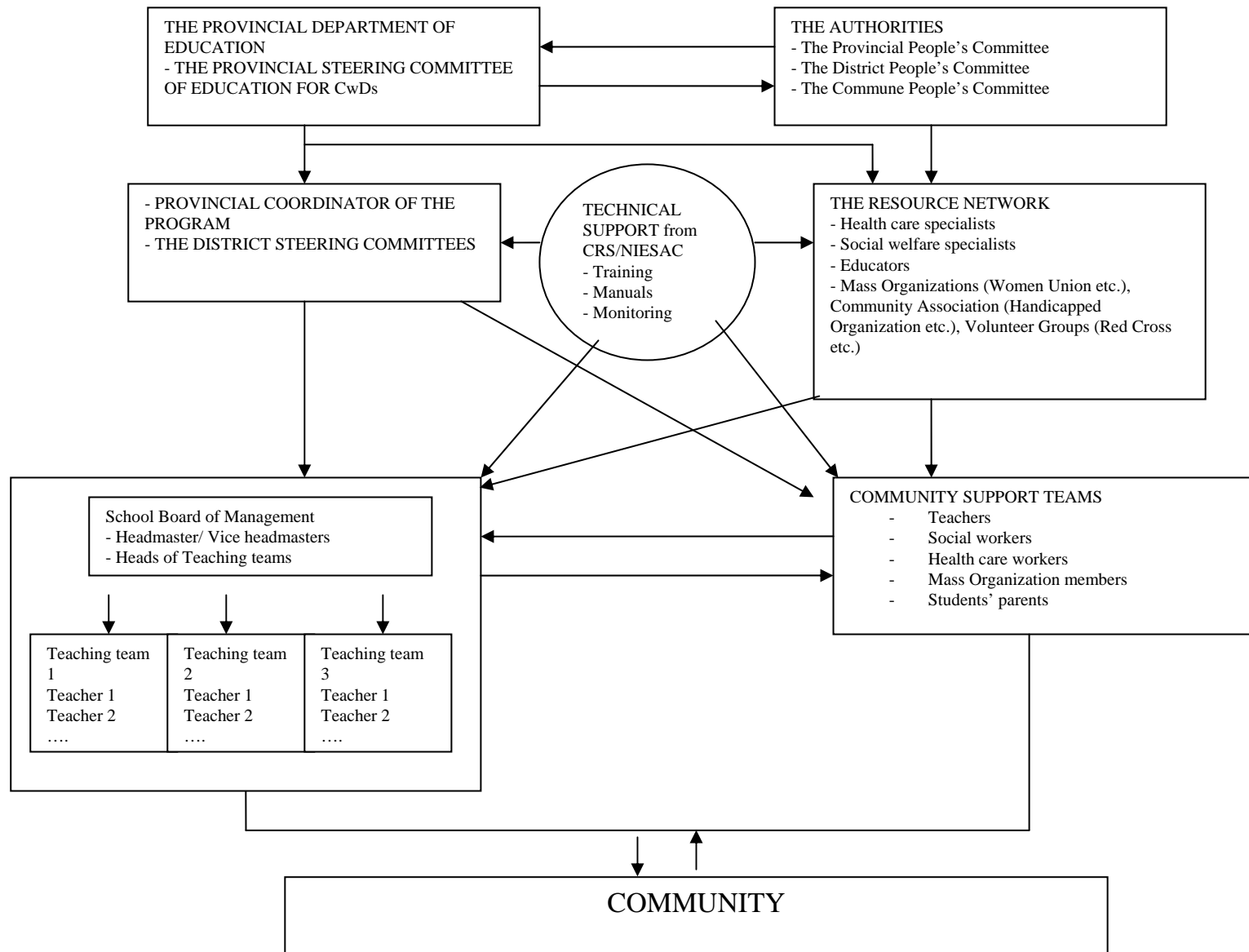
Chapter Four: Policy implementation at school level

4.1. Introduction and Background

The information presented and analyzed in this chapter is mainly withdrawn from the main interviews with three headmasters and three class teachers, in addition with three resource persons. The most relevant supportive evidences gained from archival records of three school and observations in classes also are carefully added to cross-check for what I learnt from the main informants and the resource persons. All data will be combined and categorized accordingly to the most stressed issues of the informants, including: awareness and perceptions on disabilities and inclusive education, teachers' training and professional development, collaboration as an effective way to maximize resources for inclusive education, and teaching and learning methods.

The Figure 1 below will simply describe about the Management and Collaboration of the inclusive education program in Ninhbinh province.

Figure 1: Management and Collaboration chart of the inclusive education program in Ninhbinh province



As presented in Chapter Three, the school chosen was identified as the school S1, S2 and S3. For confidentiality and ethical reasons, the headmasters of three schools were respectively given the identity H1, H2 and H3, the teachers were named T1, T2 and T3. The resource persons were given the identity as K1, K2 and K3.

Table 1: Background of the main informants.

Informant	Age	Gender	Background		Experiences		Current number of CwDs in his/her school/class
			General Education	Special Needs Education	General Education	Special Needs Education	
H1	49	Female	Bachelor	One workshop on Inclusive education (IE) (3 days)	26 years	5 years	9 (hearing, mental retardation, learning difficulties, multiple disabilities)
H2	42	Male	Bachelor	One training course for management in IE school (12 days)	17 years	5 years	26 (hearing, mental retardation, mobility, learning difficulties, vision, multiple disabilities)
H3	38	Female	Bachelor	One training course for management in IE school(12 days)	16 years	5 years	13 (vision, hearing, mobility impairments, learning difficulty/mental retardation)
T1	32	Female	College diploma	One general training course on IE (12 days)	11 years	4 years	1 (learning difficulty/mental retardation)
T2	36	male	College diploma	One general training course on IE (12 days)	10 years	4 years	1 (learning difficulty)
T3	35	Female	College diploma	One general training course on IE (12 days) And One training course on “teaching children with hearing impairment” (12 days)	13 years	5 years	2 (hearing impairments)

4.2. Perceptions on disabilities and inclusive education

In all interviews, the informants emphasized several times about the important role of perceptions towards a meaningful inclusive education. They mentioned Vietnamese culture, where Buddhism strongly influenced the way people think about disabilities and

capacity of disabled persons. K1 said, “*Buddhist theory taught that: people’s lives were decided by God and Buddha. Cruel previous incarnation would result in punish for following incarnation and could not become normal people*”. This idea led to perception that disabled children’s dignity was completely unacceptable, they were considered abandoned children, the ones that made society bad, even prevented normal children from development. The teachers and headmaster agreed this kind of perception had been existing in our society until today, in a part of population. T2 and T3 told it was hard at first time to mobilize children with disabilities (CwDs) to go to school, because their parents even hidden them inside the house to prevent neighbor and teacher to know about their disabilities, as they was ashamed of the child. The fact showed that even improper perception from outside locality sometimes could make bad effect on inclusive education at school. H2 told about his school’s two-storey building’s construction just completed few years ago without the path for wheelchair, due to the building contractor deliberately ignored to put it in the design as he thought it was not necessary and cost more money. It should be noticed here that all major building designs, construction capital, and the contractor assignation for the local schools were approved at provincial level and higher. Talking about this matter, K2 commented, after the Construction Code ratified in 2002, the major of building contractors still ignored its article on assessable facilities for disabled person since no sanction was applied for those who have not obeyed the Code. She said it was really a matter of perception, as according to the project’s construction experts, if the building contractor designed the accessible pathway and toilet from the beginning, it cost about only 1% of total budget for construction. Another significant example on low perception on disabilities was health care service for disabled children. T2 said that when commune health care workers referred the disabled child to provincial hospitals for making prosthetic, the family needed to wait a long time for their appointment. Although the cost of the prosthetic was sponsored by CRS organization and the disabled child were exempted from medical fee by laws, the indirect costs – transportation, cost of food, loss of income for the parent accompanying the child – could be a real obstacle for the poor

family. The resource persons indicated there were laws and regulations giving priorities on health care services for disabled people. However, due to bureaucracy and barriers on perception, poor and disabled people seldom benefited from these policies.

All headmasters described at the beginning time of program, most of their educational staff and teachers did not have enough confidence in teaching disabled children because they were aware of lacking knowledge and skills in inclusive education. H1 told, *"five years ago, our teacher could not imagine how to teach them(CwDs)"*. T2 related, *"Initially, knowing that it was not easy to care, to educate them (CwDs), I was so worried about how to engage CwDs in inclusive education"*. Even among professionals there were debates on whether inclusive education should be implemented the sooner the better, or after a decent preparation time when early intervention, human resources and educational facilities would be in their places, according to K1.

The teachers and headmaster confirmed that after 5 years implementing inclusive education program, perception on disabilities and inclusive education did improve within their communities and schools. All informants from schools expressed good understanding on the meaning of inclusive education, like T3 said, *"To my understanding, inclusive education is to help children with disabilities to integrate fully and equally participate in education and social activities, thus removing discrimination and prejudice by the community and developing their remaining capacity"*. Today the parents were eager to send their disabled children, though still worried about their children's performance at schools. The community started thinking that the CwDs could have their specific capability. The pupils and teachers were always willing to help out disabled students like learning support, pushing wheelchair, carrying the disabled one to go to high floors, assisting to go to toilet etc. Nevertheless, all informants from schools stated that the perception on disabilities should be improved one more step from realizing the CwDs' capacity and right to education to recognizing their capacity. T3 told, *"I know the majority of disabled students would like to assert themselves by doing the most they can. That makes them more confident and easier to include the society"*

K1 cited the national survey result on educational status of CwDs (just finished in 2006) showing that in localities under piloting inclusive programs, more than 80% of community members said that caring for and supporting all children, including children with disabilities, was clearly the responsibilities and desires of the community. The big part of surveyed teachers admired values of inclusive education and felt these values were consistent with the Vietnamese way of life. Although there were more than a half of community members still considered inclusive education as humanitarian, charity work, the achievement on perception was undeniable.

4.3. Administrative support and leadership

In the change process, leadership plays an indispensable role as Dalin et al. (1993: 119) wrote:” *it is vital to bring regular management into action. To become a natural part of the “new school”, the head and his or her team obviously need to be a part of it*”. The teachers appreciated the direction of the School Board of Management and considered it timely and proper. The School Board of Management manifested as the plan-maker, the coordinator of school activities as well as collaborations with authorities and community organization through co-working with the Community Support Team (See Figure 4). Among members of the School Board of Management of three schools, the headmasters played the most significant part. They were the brigade between schools and local authorities, schools and communities, and schools and sponsors. It seemed that H3 was more involved than the remaining two headmasters. She had schedule working with teachers who taught inclusive classes every two weeks, even every week if some matters suddenly came up. She visited inclusive classes more often. Even she could remember name of every disabled students in her school, kind of disabilities, families’ situations etc. (at the time this study took place, there were 13 disabled students studying in the school Three), which the other two could not. The meeting memoranda of three schools revealed, working plans by teachers in the school One and the school Two were designed monthly then were approved by the School Board of Management, while in the school Three,

they were designed and approved trimonthly. When being asked “*what kind of working plans you prefer, long-term flexible plan or short-term specific plan?*”, all teachers responded they want more flexible plan together with constant guidance and supportive from the School Board of Management whenever the teachers seek for assistance.

Concerning administrative support and leadership from higher level to policy implementation at schools, the Provincial Steering Committee of Education for CwDs was established in 2002, together with the establishment of the district Steering Committees soon after. From central, the National Committee provided close instruction to the local committees. According to K1, this was a specific work, marking advancement in state management of inclusive education for children with special needs. However, this top-down management sometimes brought up unclearness when it came to grassroots level. As the low levels had not been participated in decision making of higher level, H2 said, “*I am not very clear about all objectives of the program (on inclusive education), my schools operated inclusive education according to concrete guidance of higher level in accordance with specific period of program*”. K2 agreed with this opinion, she added that when she came to the field, some commune staff did not know clearly about project’s objectives implemented in their communes, they acted according to detailed guidance from district and provincial level. The same situation happened inside the schools. The teachers, due to cultural characteristics, usually did not criticize the management method. However it seemed that the latest decision depended on the School Board of Management, especially the headmasters, and the major of teachers usually followed the headmaster’s opinions in meetings without explicit objections. But the teachers expressed their wish to take part more in decision- making process. T2 stated, “*The School Board of Management is knowledgeable and experienced, but when it comes to the professional matters such as teaching plan, it would be better if we were empowered more*”

One remarkable point revealed by K2, according to the program’s reports, at commune and district levels the leadership of the Steering Committees expressed better than that of higher level. K3 explained the overlap on tasks assigned caused one leader might be in

charge for too many duties, therefore they did not have enough energy and time for all duties. K3 said,

Our head of Inclusive Education Steering Committee, he also is the Vice-chairman of the Provincial People's Committee (the highest administration of the province), he is the president of dozens other Steering Committees too, how he could notice of every duty of this Inclusive Education Committee

Generally speaking, the informants from schools reckoned the Steering Committees were active and involved to support school in implementing policy toward an inclusive education. In every school-year, the Committees issued documents instructing implementation, organized conferences, supervised and monitored implementation.

4.4. Implementation of existing policy and recommendations

4.4.1. Knowledge of legislation

At school level, it happened that the teachers mainly acknowledged and implemented legislation papers through the guidance, not by studying the original ones. All three teachers-informants responded they knew the names of significant laws related to inclusive education and disabled persons. Nonetheless, when being asked specific matters, for instance “*which articles in these laws mentioned right to education of disabled children?*”, two of them (T1 and T3) answered: “*I could not name the articles because I did not read the full text of the laws*”. This was against my expectation that the teachers at least should read the full text of the most important legislation such as Education Laws. T3 said he could not remember even he read some laws himself. The teachers explained that they were aware that there were articles on the right to education of CwDs in these laws, as it was mentioned in the guidance papers from the MOET and Provincial Department of Education. T2 who read some original laws for self-studying told he read the laws through his own subscribed newspapers; otherwise newspapers were not available for every teacher at school. It is worthwhile to notice that the low income (about 25 US Dollar/person/month in rural areas(GSO, 2006)) refrained people from spending for

unessential demands as buying newspapers. All the headmasters admitted their schools usually received the guidance papers from the Ministry of Education and the Provincial department of Education without attached original laws. The archives stores at three schools showed that except the guidance, only few copies of the most related educational legislation papers were sent to schools. The sending time of those laws delayed two to six months from the time these laws become effective. Through information gained, it seemed that a part of teachers and major of headmasters wanted to learn more about legislation, but the source of legislation documents was limited. One remarkable thing was the teachers did not feel worrying about unclear understanding about the whole educational legislation. Although having unclear understanding on the whole policy system, the informants from three schools presented thorough grasp on practical matters related to their teaching and professional development. That proved that the guidance papers were helpful and effective for the implementation of policy at school levels.

Having more opportunities to approach legislation papers than the teachers, the headmasters expressed better understanding on the policy system to support inclusive education. They reckoned that policy did mention the general perspectives to assist inclusive education, but there was not any explicit legislation paper on inclusive education. It should be noticed here that at the time the interviews were conducted (September – November 2006), the informants from schools were not aware of the newly ratified Regulation on Inclusive education, that issued in May 2006, which was considered as the only explicit policy on inclusive education, according to the resource persons. Generally and most distinguishably, the headmasters summarized the main issues address in legislation for the development of inclusive education, including:

1. Increase awareness for managing staff at all levels, in all branches, schools, people and especially disabled children's parents;
2. Improve teaching and learning quality by inclusive teaching and learning process;
3. Teachers' training;
- and 4. Strengthen collaboration and coordination between departments, branches, mass organizations and social forces, to mobilize resources for inclusive education

In view of existing legislation that can support inclusion, K1 realized Vietnam had built up quite comprehensive framework legislation for inclusive education, however seriously lacked of guidance papers and sanctions to force these laws into reality. The other resource persons totally agreed with him on this matter.

All resource persons remarked that since legislation just existed in framework, in each province the laws mainly were implemented according to guidance of localities. Because there had not been any survey on this field, K1 said:

It is hard to give out a general evaluation on the positivity or negativity of these local decision-making processes. But one obvious thing is the implementation of each province is different from others, this make collaboration and coordination more complicated and difficult

Generally, there were four issues that were seriously considerate by the informants from schools. Those are: the policies on raising awareness, collaboration, teachers' training and professional development, and innovative teaching and learning methods.

4.4.2. Awareness of disabilities and inclusive education

The informants from schools responded that they were aware there were articles on awareness towards inclusion in main laws. They commented that after the program was launched in their communities, there were much more local policy and activities to foster awareness on inclusive education. The headmasters reported that according to program's working plan, the schools played the most important role to propagate for inclusive education, along with the commune authorities and the Community Support Team. All headmasters asserted that their schools developed their own plans from the beginning of every school-year to enhance awareness of teachers and communities, as required by the provincial program. H3 said, "*Our school always considers of raising awareness among teachers and in community is one of our most important duties. From the beginning of every school year, we make plans with specific and detailed activities for it*". Memos of meetings and working plans showed the schools designed many activities. Some remarkable ones were: Assigning teachers to go to population areas to conduct survey on CwDs there, in order to mobilize children to

go to school; Putting this issue in working plans with the Community Support Team; Inserting awareness contents in teaching lessons. For instance in one lesson “Nature and Society” that I was observed in the school Three, the teacher asked student “*How do you help people around you?*”, she then navigated to “*How you can help your friends, especially your friends with disabilities or other difficult circumstances?*”.

Among teachers and educational staff, the main informants all considered developing awareness mainly as a self-learning process. H1 said, “*Through caring and educating CwDs, our staff raised our awareness on inclusive education, knew methods for organizing inclusive education and applied flexibly in lessons and activities*”. All headmasters appraised their teachers’ responsibilities and professional moral towards inclusion, like H3 admired, “*Our achievements result from the schoolteachers’ high commitment to inclusive education with voluntary spirit regardless of difficulties*”. The teachers also expressed that wishing the best quality of life for the disabled students give them more strength to overcome barriers. T3 expressed, “*I think an invaluable reward for me is seeing their happy faces*” (her students’ faces)

From the angle of coordinators of the provincial program, K2 and K3 described about how the program assisted for raising awareness at grassroots level:

We sent information on the rights to education of children, the abilities of children with disabilities, as well as the philosophy and practice of inclusive education to communities before school–year starting. Then our Community Support Teams started their activities to talk with families of CwDs and other parents to set up condition for CwDs to attend school

Besides campaigning, information-rich documents had been printed and delivered to target people and communities. K2 announced, “*So far, our project printed out 50,000 brochures and 26,000 books on early intervention, disabilities and inclusive education. About one third of these publications were delivered in Ninhbinh province*”. Awareness activities extended to media activities too. The provincial newspaper articles and radio programs informed people about right of the disabled, the program activities, role model of disabled students and adults etc. In the district where this study took place, the district and commune radio have been programming on disabilities and inclusion since 2003.

However, the resource person K2 claimed that though raising awareness was set up from the beginning of the program as the most important objective, the guidance from provincial level seemed not strong enough since few real activities at commune level had been clearly instructed in provincial program plan. Therefore, not every commune has been doing well this task. If the local headmasters and local authorities did not appreciate this objective, they ignore it. This point of views regained its reliability when K2 and K3 both commented that the school S3 which located in the poorest among three communes of this study, was the best in improving awareness, thanks to active role of its headmaster and commune leaders.

Another shortcoming of the program in Ninhbinh province was, according to K2 and K3, children with severe disabilities were still somehow perceived as the hopeless in education in a part of educational staff, teachers and communities' workers. K2 said, *"While all the teachers are enthusiastic about the advances that children with mild and moderate disabilities have been able to make, many teachers and community officials express concerns about how to include the severely disabled children"*. K2 provided some data about the rate of disabled children going to school. She commented that in reports, this ratio usually was used as a "community awareness" index. In three communes where this study took place, this rate was about 80 to 90 percent. It should be noticed that this ratio was calculated on the number of disabled children who had education needs and were mobilized to go to school. In fact, in some communes this number might not be the true number of CwDs who had special needs. In these cases, the schools and the Community Support Teams counted all children with slight impairments such as squint-eyed children, and they went to school by themselves without any assistance and mobilization. On the other hand, the schools ignored the children with severe disabilities as they considered these children had no competence in education. Therefore, the total reported number of children with disabilities might be low, but the rate of disabled children going to school stayed very high. This shortcoming might stem from the fact there is not a standardized classification of disabilities in Vietnam up to date. Furthermore it rang the bell about local perception

on the right to education of children with severe disabilities. It was worthwhile to notice that all main informants from schools did not want to talk about this issue during all six main interviews. They only told that they worried about how to include the children with severe disabilities in inclusive education. Nevertheless, through reading archives of the schools and the umbrella program, the researcher found there were differences between the rates of CwDs going to school according to schools survey and the rates according to the umbrella program's survey. At the school S1 and S2, the former rates were higher than the latter. At the school S3, the difference was insignificant. The resource persons claimed competitiveness among communes and schools as a part of this problem. Comparing this issue with other information gained, I leaned to a thought that the teachers and headmaster was acknowledged that the children with severe disabilities need to be educated. However they were unconfident to include them because of lacking skills and knowledge to teach these children, so that they ignored them. This also voiced that policy aims to raise awareness on disabilities and right of CwDs was not strong enough to fulfill its duties.

Although shortcomings existed, awareness on disabilities, right to education and inclusive education had obviously been pushed up a big step in comparison with the time before the program. All informants agreed that raising awareness should be addressed more in future, as it was one critical condition for success of inclusive education

4.4.3. Teachers' training and professional development

Teachers' training was mentioned many times by all informants as one of the most important policy for this period in Vietnam. The teachers from the schools answered they were not sure whether there was national policy on teachers' training specifically for inclusive education or not. The inclusive training they got thanks to the provincial program on inclusive education. The main informants asserted that training on inclusive education was very helpful to their teaching, though these training courses were quite short. The headmasters and teachers added that the knowledge and skills learnt from

training courses helped them to self-study on inclusive education. H2 said, *“Through this course, I myself learnt gradually, I got to understand how to do and how to guide”*

All headmasters said that their schools were always willing to send their qualified teachers to attend in-service courses on inclusive education, though the School Board of Management had to make changes in school’s schedule so that the out-for-training teacher’s responsibilities would be shouldered by others. H3 said, *“We wish there were more courses then the school could send its members of the School Board of Managements and teachers to attend basic and intensive inclusive education training, to meet the professional requirement for monitoring and teaching in inclusive classes”*

The main informants highly appreciated the in-service training manuals that were provided by the provincial program with sponsorship from international organization CRS. They considered it was economical and effective to self-study through instructional documents. All teachers expressed they would like to receive more practical manuals, especially on teaching skills for specific disabilities, as up to date there were only manuals on general IE knowledge and skills provided.

Regarding national respect, K1 provided some data: *“About 200 bachelor students and 700 college – diploma students who majored in special needs education graduated from 2002 to 2005. This number is too small in comparison with the demand”*

All informants concerned about there was no incentive policy for the teachers who taught inclusive classes so far. On contrary, teachers who worked in special schools had been receiving incentives for their special teaching of a 70% enhancement in salary. There were also incentives for teachers who volunteered to take other difficult tasks such as going to remote areas etc.

As summarizing by the informants, the teachers of inclusive education shared the following concerns:

- Teaching was hard work, especially teaching inclusive education
- Teachers’ need for supportive resources, like teaching materials, aids.

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- Teachers' need for advanced knowledge and skills of innovative teaching methods and specific knowledge and skills to teach specific kinds of disabilities.
 - Incentives for teachers who teach inclusive classes
 - Teachers' need for supervision and mentoring as they was implementing new innovative teaching methods

The informants pictured that policy in professional development just only focus on fostering the responsibilities and competitiveness among teachers. Although this kind of policy was still working well, the informants reckoned that it was the time to issue more policy to encourage teachers' training and career development for inclusive education.

Generally, the teachers seemed to concern more about the policy on inclusive education training for teachers, while the headmasters addressed more about the career encouragement and development for teachers and management staff. While regular training in universities and colleges was still limited, more alternatives should be developed, and the most suggested choice was in-service courses.

4.4.4. Collaboration and coordination

According to the headmasters and resource persons, Ninhbinh province had its own way to strengthen collaboration to assist the young inclusive education. One remarkable representative for community-based model in Ninhbinh province is the Resource Network. Due to unsolvable matters concerning the provincial mechanism, the province could not develop a physical Resource Center to support inclusive education. Therefore, the province concentrated on non-center-based service which could accomplish similar goals. The Resource Network works with the Steering Committees, Community Support Teams, teachers and parents in the communities and had been fulfilling the need for family and community support (See Figure 4: Management and Collaboration Chart of the inclusive program in Ninhbinh province). Rehabilitation staff spent more time in the schools, providing support to schools' nurses. The Department of Health provided

physical examinations and required immunizations to children with disabilities. The Community Support Teams helped those with social and economic problems, focusing on disabled children with more pressing needs. The commune level rehabilitation volunteers coordinated between the families and the health centers, worked together with the Community Support Teams in order to identify children with disabilities, provided the services that they were capable of providing and referred them to follow-up. The commune Community Support Teams were financially self-sustaining, composed of commune level health workers, teachers, mass organizations and parents of children with disabilities. They were set up early of the program and helped with speaking with the parents as well as with the community to promote inclusion. During the course, if both the commune Community Support Teams and the parents felt that there was no longer a need, the Team would stop meeting. The informants from the schools appreciated the role of the Steering Committees in assisting, monitoring and coordinating collaborative activities at commune level. The main informants said that Community Support teams were the most useful in the early stage of program, when there was the most need for mobilization of children and families and continued to assist families with the severely disabled children.

At commune level, the school played the most vital role in the Resource Network, according to K2. As described by the headmasters and teachers, the school took part in almost every activities of the network. For instance, H3 said, to identify the students' special needs for developing appropriate teaching and learning method, her school *"cooperates with the commune health clinic to provide health examination for the pupils twice a year, pay special attention to students with disabilities and give them free medicine"*. Her school actively participated in propaganda work, *"Our school and local organizations have done good propagating work through different channels: news on loudspeakers, teachers and the other Community Support team's members to visit CwDs' families etc."* The collaboration between school and community organizations expressed through concrete activities, sometime seemingly insignificant as visiting families, buying gift etc. But these activities effectively impacted

on people's sentiment and thinking. The main informants believed that their activities totally corresponded with Vietnamese nation's humanism, "*the intact leaves should wrap the torn leaves*", as T3 said.

Among collaborative relationships, all informants emphasized peers' and families' role in inclusive education as an indispensable part of community-based model. T1 said, "*Without support of parents and peers, inclusive education in my class could not be carried out*". T3 described, "*Almost everyday after class, when they come to collect their children, I spent at least three to five minutes sharing with them how their children work at school, the progress as well as shortcomings during the day. As a consequence, the parents know how to collaborate with me to best support the children*".

My observation confirmed that there was not a gap between teachers and parents in my study's classes. I witnessed T1 and T3 talking with CwDs' parents after class hours. Both sides talked freely in informal manner. That proved these teachers had developed a very close relationship with the children's families.

However, one obstacle for the parents' activeness was most of CwDs' families were poor. Therefore, these parents had to work hard for family's living. K3 commented about parents' acting in a Community Support Team in a town where the school S1 located, "*People there are very busy, that is why the Community Support Team in the town did not work well. Most of CwDs' families there are very poor, moreover earning a living in urban town is difficult because living expenses are expensive*". Therefore, the informants from schools suggested about policy to assist the poor families of CwDs, encourage the families' role in inclusive education and the collaboration between families and schools.

The headmasters and teachers agreed that collaborative activities between the school and community yielded quality of life for the disabled children. H3 told about the progress of a paralyzed and mental retardation student whose family was very poor:

"As a result, her family trusted care and education of the teacher and took her to school regularly. Quality of care and education for her was improved both at school and at home. She made certain

progresses: she could read and remember all letters, some poems in the curriculum. She actively participated in class activities, liked to go to school, even on rainy days”

The headmasters reported a fact that many collaborative activities based on agreements between the related branches as the program’s manager requested. This kind of agreement mainly was voluntary and time-limited. Therefore, in the long term they wished there were clear mechanism on collaboration, expressed in laws so that inclusive education could be benefited

Fostering the involvement of all stakeholders to make the most of limited financial resources also was one focus of the program in Ninhbinh province. Since the government budget for education was fixed in advance by Ministry of Education, in which about 70% was for teachers’ salary, another small portion was located for minor repairs of infrastructure and buying teaching aids (Ngo et al., 2003). The main informants stated that inclusive education required more environment conditions, teaching aids, but so far there was not policy to allocate more resource for it. Therefore, to meet the minimum demands of facilities for inclusive education, the schools had to mobilize from community resources. Although the material support from communities for CwDs was very limited, represented by small amount of money, stationery, food etc., it was really meaningful for the disabled children and their families, like a moral support. Sometimes it could be a good help with very poor families to buy the most needed things for the children’s studying. T1 and T3 told that the CwDs in their classes received material assistance from communities, mainly from The Local Red Cross, The Local Learning Promotion Society, The Local Women Union and some individual benefactors. For improving the environment and teaching aids, the schools usually requested the help from the School’s Parents Association. One worthwhile point here was the way to utilize the mobilized budget. Because of limited access to financial documents, I could not give out a clear description on how the schools raised and used budget except government budget. It seemed that the schools S2 and S3, especially S3, had better policy to deal with their constraint resources. Because S3 was located in remote areas where most

people were poor, the Parents' Contribution Fund of the school Three was about half of the similar one of the school S1. Each family of S2 and S3e contributed 5,000 VND/pupil/term, while at S1 each family contributed 10,000 VND/pupil/term. The archival records showed that to save money, S2 and S3 mobilized the parents to help with building the paths for wheelchair, planting trees in the school yards, repairing the toilets, even making new teaching aids etc., whereas S1 paid money to hire workers. S3 launched uncostly activities and competitions such as football tournament, writing competition etc, meanwhile at S1 they spent money on tailoring the costumes for the provincial singing competition. The resource persons also commented that S3 was the best school in developing physical and emotional environment for inclusive education with very limited budget.

Generally, comparing implementation methods, the school S3 seemed more active than the others in almost every collaboration activities. H3 said "*We develop our detailed collaborative plan based on guidance from the Steering Committees*", while H2 stated: "*We just follow every guidance from the Steering Committees*". The archival records also showed the school S3 had richer working plan in comparison with the others, based on the same guidance.

Besides some achievements, one weakness of the province's collaboration admitted by K2 and K3 was the loose relationship among the main branches at provincial level such as Social Welfare Provincial Department, Health Care Provincial Department and the Education Department. Sometimes the obstacles for community support came from the administration mechanism itself. For instance in one commune of this study, the provincial and district administration had refused a big amount of money from a benefactor contributing for inclusive education in community, because this person, who was living in oversea, used to be an opposite person to the current government.

Speaking from national context, K1 asserted that the policy support community-based collaboration existed in many main legislation papers. However, concrete guidance and sanctions to implement community-based inclusive education were still awaited. By way

of consequences, each locality had their own method to develop their collaboration, some were working well, and some were not good enough. K1 also thought that leadership played a remarkable role here.

Despite few shortcomings, it could be seen here that Ninhbinh set up a quite active structure to strengthen collaboration between existing resources, made good use of their limited financial capacity to deal with various duties of inclusive education. The success in collaboration played a vital role in the general success of inclusive education in this province.

4.4.5. Innovative teaching and learning methods.

Teaching and learning methods were the main concern and challenge for the implementation of inclusive education, as stated by the informants. H2 stressed about this issue before talking about other shortcomings, *“There were many difficulties at the beginning of the program because our School Board of Management and teachers did not have sufficient knowledge and skills of including and teaching children with disabilities. Our school also did not have adequate teaching facilities”*

For the last ten years, Vietnam education has witnessed a huge change in teaching methods and national curriculum, the traditional view of teaching methods based on a fixed curriculum with abstract assumption that pupils have to acquire with one-way delivery from the teacher. This teaching method has been strongly criticized and gradually changed since government chose inclusive education as a main means of education for all. The change in national primary curriculum since 2002 brought back both advantages and disadvantages for the implementation of inclusive education. The obvious advantage according to the teachers allowed more flexibility in teaching methods. However, the disadvantage as admitted by the teachers was the time it took for teachers to be acquainted with, and besides, the new curriculum was still a heavy workload.

To deal with challenges in teaching, each school proposed their own rules. The school S1 assigned teachers to teach the same grade every year. This means usually the teacher of one inclusive class would not follow it to the next grade. The school S3 assigned teachers to follow their classes to higher grade. The school S2 applied both methods, depending on the real situation each year and the School Board of Management was the decision – maker. H3 argued that with her school’s rule, the teachers could make best support for their students, especially disabled ones, because they understood well their students and had enough time to develop appropriate teaching method. Having different point of view, H1 considered changing teachers every school-year made opportunities for teachers to encounter with diversified classes and students, thence to develop their skills and knowledge in teaching methods. With the disabled students, different teaching and learning methods could help them obtain various skills and easily include in the real life which naturally was diversified. In addition, H1 stressed that teaching inclusive classes was hard work, so the responsibility should be shared among teachers. It should be noticed here that at every regular primary school in Vietnam, almost there was no co-teaching even in inclusive classes. The differences also presented in the rules on the procedure of developing teachers’ working plans. According to the archival records, the teachers of S3 seemed being given more flexibility when developing their teaching plans since their teaching plans were approved trimonthly, while at S1 and S2, they were approved monthly.

During the interviews, the teachers particularly described about their teaching methods. All teachers agreed that the in-service training courses were very helpful that provided critical knowledge and skills as well as opened the door for self-training. Because it was hard to find inclusive education materials in rural areas, the teachers developed their inclusive teaching methods mainly based on the manual they received from the provincial program. This manual included five sets of books : Training Primary School Teachers; Inclusive Education and Community; Training Key Management Staff; Sharing the same School. Thanks to its comprehensiveness and feasibility, the manual

was highly appreciated by teachers and educational staff. K2 briefly described about its editing process, *“This manual is more practical than theorizing about inclusive education. The development of these handbooks received participation and feedback from every concerned. There were also careful pre-testing and pilot implementing in order to ensure their effect”*. T3 praised, *“The materials are interesting and clearly written. The handbooks provide us very clear step-by-step guidance on working with students and address the most common problems that they are likely to encounter”*.

However, this manual was a practical manual on general inclusive education. That was why at the time when this study was carried out, teachers still had been looking for manuals on teaching specific disabilities. According to K2, these materials (on teaching hearing impairments, visual impairments, language impairments, mental retardation and general disabilities) had been drafted and were going to be delivered soon. For the time being, all three teachers of this study admitted that they faced big challenges when they teach new student with unfamiliar disabilities.

Generally, the teachers agreed upon several remarkable contents in their teaching strategies as follows:

- The Individual Educational Plan should be developed based on general teaching plan in consideration with student’s learning capacity and consultation from student’s parents or guardians
- The detailed teaching plan should be developed monthly, weekly or even daily, which could help teacher to achieve objectives and make students more participatory and enthusiastic.
- Special arrangement for CwDs should be carefully considered, including: seating, lightning, peer support.
- More teaching aids were required for teaching CwDs. With different kinds of disabilities, the teacher should create appropriate teaching aids, self-making and using the available resources instead of buying if the school budget could not afforded.

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- Teaching method should correspond with the capacity of students and encourage students, especially the disabled ones, actively taking part in the lessons.
 - Co-learning between the disabled students and capable peers is indispensable. It should be clearly directed by class teacher with teaching tasks, feedbacks and corrections.
 - Co-operating with CwDs' families was important to make the most support for CwDs' learning at home.

The teaching strategies shows that though receiving little training on inclusive education, these teachers grasped a quite solid understanding on the main principles to develop an inclusive teaching strategy. Observations done in the lessons gave the same impression (see Appendix 5: Observation Summary). These strategies also revealed the teachers received little continuing technical consultation from the umbrella program after training courses. When facing with challenges, the teachers sought for the consultation from the School Board of Management or other experienced teachers, no one talked about continuing technical support from the program or from the Local Resource Network. As explained in part 4.4.4 and described in Figure 4, the Local Resource Network worked as a non-center-based resource center, however it had very few experienced special needs educator, since the specialist in this field were rare in the province.

There were interesting experiences that were shared during the interviews, concerning their teaching methods. T3 said that as she was in charge of teaching students with hearing impairment, in addition of training the disabled student on sign language, she trained some capable peers in sign languages too. She said, “ *I chose one or two more able peers to get trained to use sign language, so that they can help me and the student with hearing impairment in teaching and learning*”. T2 stated that he always consolidated “*friendship groups*”. A “*friendship group*” usually were established on the basis of the same village or same section of the class and had been existed for the whole primary school time. He stressed that with proper organization of the peer group every student could support each

other and support more for the disabled student, “*I organize all pupils sitting in one section make up one group which is assigned to undertake some specific supports for the disabled student by dividing the labor among themselves*”

One strong tool for inclusive teaching strategy was the Individual Education Plan (IEP). According to information gained from interviewed teachers, the IEP helped to provide consistent care and assistance for children with disabilities and included social and health data as well as teachers’ notes. The IEP gave teachers an alternative way to assess a student’s progress in relation to his or her capacities, rather than a grade which was based on the level of achievement of non-disabled students. All teachers said that the IEP took a lot of time to develop. They suggested that Ministry of Education should approve a standard format which would be further adapted at the local level, so the teachers could easily exchange experiences in training courses and conferences nationwide. However, K1 and K2 revealed, from Ministry of Education source, a national standardized IEP was still on debates, but will be ratified in near future. When this study had been carrying out in Ninhbinh province, one format of the IEP had been provincially adopted as the interim standardized format with technical support from the National Institute of Education Strategies and Curriculum.

To comment on the development of teaching method, the resource person K1 suggested that inclusive teaching should include these stages: 1. Find out the child’s ability and needs; 2. Build up educational objectives and plan; 3. Implementation of educational plan; and 4. Evaluation of educational results. Through his own observation, K1 reckoned that stages one and four were carried out quite well in the schools of this study. But with stage two and stage three, teachers there still faced difficulties when they tried to balance the common educational objectives with individual objectives. K1 claimed heavy curriculum as the main obstacle. On the other side, he reckoned that the traditional teaching way still existed in mind of teachers. The other resource persons agreed with this opinion. K1 suggested a big change should be made in national curriculum and teachers’ training program, to deal with this challenge.

4.5. Summary

All resource persons agreed that the school located in the poorest commune was the best in policy implementation among three schools chosen and also is the most successful in implementing inclusive education. Their evaluation based on the program's evaluation annually, based on main indexes: The rate of children with disabilities in community going to school, rate of attendance (regularly attend the class), rate of CwDs dropped out, quality of teaching and learning (evaluated by Program Evaluation team through observations and interviewing teachers and teaching lesson), rate of using teaching materials, class and school environment, learning achievements of children with disabilities, extra activities for children with disabilities, and so on. Except the first index, rate of CwDs going to school was the same for all three schools, the other indexes of the school located in poorest commune were ranked higher than the remaining two schools. It is worthwhile to notice that the school located in the area having the best economic conditions, was ranked as the worst on implementing inclusive education among three schools.

The information gained from the main informants, archival records of three schools and my observations also gave me the impression that the school located in poorest area likely to be more active than the other schools in planning, managing, leadership role, raising awareness, and better using of resources.

As stated and analyzed above, policy implementation towards an inclusive education in regular primary schools was pretty complicated and represented by many factors that mingled and interacted with each other. Generally speaking, the most concerned issues at school levels were people's awareness, teaching skills and knowledge to teach disabled children, resources for inclusive education, and professional development. As consequence, the policies related to these issues were put effort on, looking for or discussed about most. The summarizing of whole picture of policy implementation at

school level as investigated in this study is coming up in the next chapter, together with the findings and recommendations for further projects.

Chapter Five: Summary, Findings and Recommendations

5.1. Introduction

In this last chapter, the answer on the main question of this study will be discussed through a picture of inclusive education focusing on policy implementation perspective at the grassroots level – the barriers, the challenges, the strengths, and some findings on the characteristics of the change process. Following this, the suggestion for a trend of policy development towards an inclusive education in Vietnam and the recommendation for the further studies will be the part that closes this study.

5.2. One picture of policy implementation at school level

5.2.1. Barriers

All informants agreed that the development of central policy on inclusive education was a slow process that did not meet the requirement of the education system, mainly due to lack of concrete guidance and sanctions. This point of view goes together with the summary from the research works of Selman (2002), Yoder (2002) and one national summarizing report (MOET, 2005), all those mentioned that though Vietnam had articulated a vision of inclusive education through a framework of laws, it still needed a system of regulations to make these laws effective. At school level, the remarkable *barriers from central policy* for the implementation of inclusive education were perceived as follows:

- Central policy that aimed to foster awareness on disabilities and inclusive education existed, but needed to be strengthened.

- Central policy support for collaboration and coordination among related branches was not always effective since there were no sanction for any individual or organization that refused it.
- There was no official motivating policy for teachers of inclusive classes. There was not official policy on expanding teachers' training on inclusive education.
- Curriculum and teaching instruction were still rigid and did not meet the requirement of an inclusive education.
- Fiscal policy for inclusive schools was indifferent with non-inclusive schools, whereas inclusive schools may need more budget than the regular schools for its inclusive necessities.

The above barriers from central policy is one reason of the *other main barriers* acknowledged at school level (Peter, 2003), including:

- Attitudes: negative attitudes towards disabilities and inclusive education existing in a part of population resulted in discrimination, prejudice, irresponsibility that might affect inclusive education
- Psychological challenges: depression among a part of education staff and teachers as they considered inclusive education meaning more responsibilities without more support and incentives.
- Human resource for inclusive education: not enough qualified teachers, lacking training and personnel to provide leadership for inclusive education
- Physical Environment: inaccessible school buildings, unhealthy or unsafe means of transportation to school and/or unsafe environments within schools
- Resources: lack of school resources, lack of adequate supports for classroom teachers, lack of teaching and learning materials
- Curriculum: lack of an inclusive education curriculum that can meet the needs of diverse abilities in large classes.

5.2.2. Challenges

With above barriers, the informants from schools summarized *the specific challenges* they experienced when implementing inclusive education:

- Many teachers of the schools were not got trained on inclusive education, other received but inadequately training. Inclusive education contents had not been included in the majority of teachers' training universities and colleges. Consequently, the teaching quality in inclusive classes was still low, especially with the children with severe disabilities. The schools in the areas without inclusion projects did not have qualified teachers to receive children with severe disabilities.
- There were in shortage facilities and materials for teaching the children with disabilities, especially Braille materials, hearing aids, learning aids. At the same time, most families with disabled children were poor and could not afford necessary facilities for their children. Both affected to the quality of inclusive education for the disabled children.
- Teachers of inclusive classes were not motivated due to lack of official incentive policy.
- Inclusive education just was carried out at primary level. It would be difficult for the disabled students to transit to lower secondary level and higher, because few lower secondary teachers were able to teach them.
- The current curriculum was still heavy and rigid; therefore many obligatory subjects were not necessary and suitable to different kind of disabilities. There had not been any official documents to instruct assessment, classification in learning process of the disabled students, or decide whether the students can move to higher grade or to graduate. For this reason the managing staff and the teachers did it subjectively, or according to the schools' own rule, not in a unified manner.

- People's awareness and attitude towards disabilities and inclusive education was still limited.
- Cooperation among various sectors had been poor. So far, collaboration remained limited mainly between education, health sectors and mass organizations.
- There was almost no large-scale networking among professionals on inclusive education. Besides, there were few manuals and materials on inclusive education, so that the teachers found hard to share experience and self-studying.

5.2.3. Possible factors for success

Changing the school from segregation to inclusion is a planned change, or an innovation at the school level. From the data presented and analyzed in Chapter Four, there were four factors, or the schools' strengths, that possibly contributed most for the change's success generally and policy implementation's success particularly. Those were: Visionary leaderships and administration support; Collaborative strength; Technical preparation; and Commitment and Enthusiasm.

5.2.3.1. Visionary leadership and administration support

Leadership plays a major role in making school more responsive to children with special needs, as the Salamanca Statement stated (UNESCO, 1994: 23). At three schools of this study, given under the same situation on administration and training as they came from one district and one umbrella program, there were evidences that better leadership positively affected the change process. According to Thousand et al. (2005), the degree of administration vision and support has been found to be the most powerful predictor of public attitude towards inclusive education. Muthukrishna (2000) considered the school head should be the planner, the decision – maker, the coordinator within schools and the facilitator within the community together with other facilitators to set up an inclusive society. At the school S3 that received highest evaluation from the in charge program's coordinators and the Provincial Education Department, the headmaster was

demonstrated her role as a creative and active facilitator who articulated and built consensus for an inclusive vision with school teachers and other stakeholders within the community. It seems that the school Three was a key link of the community network, since the school took initiatives for most activities within community to support inclusion. Within the school, the headmaster supported the school teachers by diversified forms: 1. Personal/emotional support (e.g. giving time to listen to the teachers' concerns); 2. Informational and instrumental support (e.g. sending teachers to attend training course, often provided counseling for teachers through regular meetings); 3. Appraisal support (e.g. giving teachers feedback whenever the teachers needed). The support was highly appreciated by teachers. They said that it was timely and helpful, especially when they encountered the ambivalence or confusion during the change process from integrated to inclusive education.

At the remaining two schools of this study, the headmasters also expressed strong vision and played significant role in administrative support. However their activity and creativity were somewhat fainter than those of the former headmaster, as it is discussed in part 4.2.2. of Chapter Four.

In summarizing, under the current context of Vietnam, the successful school head of an inclusive education program is a person who is:

- The creative and collaborative planner and decision-maker.
- Building consensus for an inclusive vision within school and in community.
- Fostering educational staff's, teachers', and parents' knowledge, skills and confidence for implementing inclusive education.
- Creating meaningful incentives for the teachers according to the responsibilities, even under the current situation it could only be spiritual encouragement.
- Supporting the involvement of parents and the community, and building structures to facilitate this.

- Mobilizing and utilizing the most of limited resources, including financial, human, technological and organizational resources to support inclusive education

5.2.3.2. Collaborative strength

In key international papers on inclusive education, whenever the authors mentioned how to carry out inclusive education with limited resources, collaboration was stated as a promising strategy (UNESCO, 2001; UNESCO, 1994)

The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994: 37 – 40) describes four collaborative perspectives: parent partnership, community involvement, role of voluntary organization and public awareness. Although levels of success were different, all three schools tried their best to become the motive force for the community collaboration network. The school management staff and teachers, as active members of the Community Support Teams, participated in almost every community activity to support inclusive education, such as assisting health care workers, speaking to parents, propagandizing the public, and so on. Among the collaborative partnership, parental role was most focused at all schools. The schools acknowledged that family and school were fundamental in preparing children for life in the broader society. The school – family relationship, expressed through activities, attitudes, and achievements could strongly influences the rest of society as good examples (Lehtomaki et al, 2000). Bearing that in mind, the schools of this study strengthened parent partnership by more communication opportunities between class teachers and parents, and more family support services (visiting, counseling, habilitation and early intervention training etc). Parents were the first being consulted when the schools sought for an educational solution for the child. Due to poor economic conditions of the CwDs' families that might negatively affect education background of the adults, the parents/guardians usually lacked of general knowledge and skills to support their children. The role of schools was important to provide initiative knowledge and skills so that the families could effectively do at-home assistance to aid the disabled children. Not only could the schools support the family to

assume the parental role for a child with special needs, but also the family could in its turn assist the school fulfilling the duties in inclusive education, including financial, time and labor sharing efforts. Above all other, the school – family relationship bought back double significant benefits directly for the children with disabilities and also for the CwDs' parents to become less isolated in community.

Peer group, children supporting children, was another focused issue. As Westwood (Mitler, 2000 : 124) summarized there are four essentials to assess a healthy “peer tutoring” mission : clear tutoring tasks' directions; effective tutoring behaviors and activities; feedback and correction from peers and teacher; and specific teaching task to undertake and appropriate instructional material. At the three schools, peer tutoring groups were well prepared with above dimensions, and existed for quite a long time with constant supervisor and assistance from class teachers. They were proved as a capable tool for teaching and learning in inclusive classes.

Another representative of collaborative strength was the cooperation among the educators within school. As the professional pioneers in implementing inclusive education, the teachers of this study developed their skills and practices through a trial-and-error process. They had limited initial training and continuous practical support from the umbrella program, so sharing experience, cooperative working team and monitoring from school management became indispensable. The teachers and management staff of the schools confirmed that they learnt very much from each other on inclusive education knowledge and teaching skills. During the interviews, the informants showed a good understanding on the basics of inclusive education, which could not be achieved without cooperation among school teachers and management staffs.

Last, but not the least, was the community involvement. The level of community involvement in each commune of this study varied. However, generally speaking, it played a significant role in supporting inclusive education. The local authorities encouraged inclusion through mass media to promote awareness and ordering its

workers and agencies to taking part in the Community Support Teams' tasks. This involvement provided supplementary for in-school activities. The communities assisted the disabled children and their families, which remarkably raised the child's quality of life. The schools of this study were aware that children's learning was not happened only during schooling hours. Children firstly belong to their families and community before they belong to school. Therefore, developing strong school – community partnership was a must to make inclusion a reality. The benefits for both sides were obvious. The schools received direct support from community, the teachers and management staffs got richer with skills and knowledge during the collaborations that could be good experiences for their educational missions. At the same time the community received better education and quality of life for all of its children. In addition, strong school – community partnership enabled existing policy and made inclusive education sustainable. My findings is found agreeing with the summary of the Final report of the Regional workshop on Inclusive education “Getting all children into school and helping them to learn” held in Bangkok Thailand in 2004 (UNESCO, 2005c: 28 – 32).

5.2.3.3. Technical preparation

Pijl et al. (1997) considered there are 3 key factors that make the minimum conditions for realizing inclusive education: 1. Teacher factor, including teachers' attitude, knowledge and skills, teaching methods and material on hand; 2. School factor, including organizational structure and physical environment that provide special needs education services in school, support system and cooperation; and 3. External factor, meaning public attitude, legislation and community support. In the context of the schools studied, the essential technical arrangement for the schools before and during implementation process means the preparation of teachers' skills and knowledge to teach inclusive classes, school's environment, teaching equipment and aids, and the school's organizational structure. In my study, the schools made vigorous efforts in the above matters. Thank to the umbrella program, teachers and management staffs received useful

training and materials, which equipped them with initial knowledge and skills, and opened the door for their long – life learning in inclusive education. Nevertheless the credit should be given firstly to teachers and school staffs, because in spite of limited training they could be able to transfer to the effective practices in classrooms. Having limited budget, the schools knew well how to make the most of their resources to improve school's environment, teaching material and aids. The observation showed that physical environments of the three schools were made accessible for children with wheelchair; many teaching aids were hand – made (see Appendix 5: Observation Summary). The schools' organizational structure also was adjusted to meet the new demands of inclusive education. The School Board of Management, Teaching team developed detailed activities for assistance and on–site consultation, such as class visiting, after-teaching reviews, group planning etc.

Though technical arrangement for inclusive education was considered by the informants as one disadvantage of the schools, I still see it an enormous endeavor of the schools and their supporters, given the poor economic conditions they were experienced.

Undoubtedly the schools needed more constant technical assistance to enhance teaching and learning quality. This wish could be fulfilled only with a clear mechanism and more technical, financial support in future, based on official legislation.

5.2.3.4. Commitment and Enthusiasm

In change process, Huberman and Miles (Dalin, 1993 : 120) found that commitment is not necessary an outcome of the change, but a critical condition for implementation. Commitment and enthusiasm is understood in my project as the positive attitude towards the disabled children and inclusive education, similar the care factor in Johnsen model (2001). The lesson learnt from successful inclusive programs revealed that it is the vital key for the sustainability of inclusive education, especially where resources are limited. This was totally right in the cases of this study, where I realized the commitment to inclusive duties of all stakeholders, especially the teachers and the school headmasters.

Although it is impossible to quantify how big the devotion is, through comments of other informants and what I learnt from the site, I experienced the teachers' commitment and enthusiasm towards students, especially the disabled ones. Borrowing ideas from Johnsen (2001) to shed light on my cases, I found that the teachers' care for the students was manifested in their daily working, particularly by the interaction between teacher and students, showing students care and trust, listening to them, instant and constant supports, even devoting spare time for works without any material incentives. The commitment of the school heads and other stakeholders expressed through their active and creative plans and activities, which were harmoniously orchestrated to make inclusive education a reality in these communes.

5.2.4. Findings

With all challenges and strengths of the schools, I found there were several perspectives that could describe the general changing process as well as policy implementation process of the studied schools from segregated to inclusive education. It has been and is a hard, active, creative and sustainable process.

5.2.4.1. A hard process

Changing naturally is hard. Marris (Fullan, 1991 : 31) said "*all real change involves loss, anxiety and struggle*", because people tend to conserve with what they are familiar with, what seems to be proved as reliable construction of reality (Wilson, 2001). Since it requires a whole system changing in philosophy, values, principles, resources, structures, environment, methods and strategies, changing to inclusive education at school level is ranked as the most difficult education innovation, as Dalin et al (1993 : 144) wrote: "*The projects that are most difficult to implement in a school are those that challenge the existing school culture, the methods used in the classroom, the demands on the students, the quality of human relations, ways that role and functions are divided, and the way decisions are taken and the school managed*"

Changing is especially hard at its beginning, as Vietnamese saying “It is the first steps that costs”. Inclusive education just was introduced in Vietnam 10 years ago. In the communes of this study, the program had been carried out for five years. This was the initiation of a long process. At the three schools studied, the informants expressed that they were very worry, especially at the first time of the program. The reason was that they had to face with a mountain of duties to do while lacking of skills, knowledge, confidence and supportive resources. During struggling process, the informants found the ways to master themselves together with the development of the young inclusive education in their school. Fullan (1991: 32) commented on this development, “*Real change, then, whether desired or not, represents a serious personal and collective experience characterized by ambivalence and uncertainty; and if the change works out it can result in a sense of mastery, accomplishment, and professional growth*”.

5.2.4.2. An active and creative process

In education, people are the actors of the change process. It goes without saying that an active and creative process is the demonstration of active and creative actors. James (1999: 25) defined the capabilities of one creative professional including “*isolating, articulating, examining and resolving (whether completely or in part) the problem that arise in one’s practice*”. In more details, Halliwell (James, 1999: 24) considered a creative educator need to be inventive and responsive. That depends on: a clear sense of need; the ability to read the situation; the willingness to take risks; and the ability to monitor and evaluate events. Agreeing with those points of view, Brookfield (James, 1999: 19) related the activity and the creativity of the critical thinkers as two sides of one matter: “*They are able to increase their autonomy, make more decision... As critical thinkers, we become actively engaged in creating our personal and social worlds*”.

Educational innovation by its nature is an active and creative process, which involves doing things or processes that one has never done before. For this reason, the actors of this process must figure out how to measure, manage, and control it in order to reach the goal. Tella et al. (1999: 19) cited the definition that is used widely among the European

Observatory of Innovation in Education and Training, as follows: “*Innovation is a collective creation of original solution, responding to (new) needs*”. According to Tella et al. (1999: 19 - 22), the above definition emphasizes the collectivity of creation, instead of “*allowing an individual or individualistic creation*”. This definition suits the context of educational sector, since every one understands that whatever planned change/innovation/reform in education requires the involvement of many actors.

Using the above literature to contemplate the schools’ implementation process, I observed a creative progress. From the information presented and discussed previously, it is obvious that activities of the change process were thoroughly prepared with defining the needs, assessing the situation, trial-and-error efforts, and finally solving the problem. The studied schools used their collective strength during the changing process. With each step, it could be seen that the schools were active and creative to mobilize as many as possible factors to guarantee for success. For instance, to organize peer group supporting the children with disabilities, the teachers used cultural factor when choosing students in the same village to establish one group, because culturally Vietnamese people have in mind that neighbors are very close persons; even there is a saying that “*one close neighbor is dearer than a relative who lives far*”. The teachers also used Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978) when choosing capable peers as the key students of groups. Another factor is the effective sharing labor among group members so that the peer group could bring back benefits for every member. From perspective of theory, Fullan (1991: 67) stated: “*Put positively, the more factors supporting implementation, the more change in practice will be accomplished*”.

We know that nothing represents problem-solving capability better than the outcome. In the cases of this study, the provincial initial achievements in inclusive education were recognized nationwide by government, which is the confirmation for the whole creative process towards an inclusive education of this province.

5.2.4.3. A sustainable process

An innovation will become a sustainable development if it responds to the current needs of today's citizens and of the society at large without compromising and hindering the resources required to fulfill the development of tomorrow's citizens (Sequeira, 1998: 17). According to Fullan (1991) as presented in part 2.2.2 of this study, an innovation process includes three broad phases: initiation, implementation and institutionalization phase.

From my study, I would consider the schools of this study to be in phase II of the change process. However some elements of institutionalizing course had already emerged. In order to comment whether the progress towards inclusive education at three investigated schools was sustainable, I reckoned it is to analyze whether each phase was sustainable and the outcome of progress could stand the test of time or not. Concerning initiation period, Wilson (2001) stated the quality of initiation depends upon how accurately and carefully the need is analyzed. In my cases, undoubtedly there was a thorough preparation for the initiation of the umbrella program, with the participants of international and national experienced experts, together with the consultation from provincial and district educators and officials. This proper start brought back reliability for the whole process later. In the next implementation stage, the researchers pointed out the most significant factors for a sustainable implementation are: planning feasible plan; marshalling the requisite resources, securing the support of all stakeholders; training and changing behavior, attitude and practices of teachers and students (Wilson, 2001). As analyzed previously, these necessities were carried out quite well at all schools. As Chutikul (UNESCO – ACEID, 1998: 49) commented: “*Community involvement, ownership and participation are the basics for sustainability in any of the undertaking at the local level*”, the implementation process clearly proclaimed the schools' ownership. It could be seen that with the same guidance from the umbrella program, each schools developed its own plan and policy to pursuit the objectives. The available local resources and self – financing

community involvement together with the schools' budgets were rationally mobilized in order to satisfy the most demands as well as to secure the resources for future activities. The progress of five – year implementing inclusive education was not long enough, but it could prove that the schools were able to carry out inclusive education under limited local conditions. The initial outcome of the program on raising the quality of life for children with disabilities, which was nationally recognized by government, is the most valuable comment for the soundness and sustainability of the whole progress. This indicates that the program really responded to the current need of today's citizens without hindering any resource for development of tomorrow's citizens.

5.3. Conclusion, Recommendations and Suggestions

This study shed light on my understanding about the policy system that support inclusive education and how it works at grassroots level. For the last decade there has been an enormous effort to instill inclusive education as an ethic and practice in Vietnam. Concerning legislation perspective, the main laws and national strategies do state that children with disabilities have the same rights as other non-disabled children, including the right to be educated in an inclusive schooling. According to laws, the national government and provinces should create favorable conditions to put the rights into practice. Thus, there is a clearly articulated national- level vision towards inclusive education. This is very important, because the government, in its role as being ultimately responsible for education, must clearly inform its support to inclusive education so that the lower administration could orient their policy (Meijer et al., 1997). However, my study reveals that the general vision is not enough to make clear for the local levels know exactly what the government expects them to do. In my cases, the effectiveness of central policy depends much on how it is translated into practice at local levels. This in turn depends upon local public and professional knowledge and skills, their activity, creativity, vigilance, enthusiasm and commitment, as well as effective monitoring and supervising from central.

The schools of this study still have a long way to go to a meaningful inclusive education. On this road, undoubtedly the schools need more support, including the development of an elaborate policy system for inclusive education. To ensure the further achievement, in addition to enact more guidance and policy on the most necessities as stated by informants, the more important is the government need build up a monitoring and supervising mechanism to guarantee the transmission from policy to practice.

As Gall et al (1996: 578 - 579) suggested, the generalizability of the case study findings depends on the “consumer” of the findings rather than the researcher. I also consider my findings as reference for other researchers who would like to go further in the field of inclusive education practice at grassroots level in Vietnam. Hutchinson in Gall et al (1996: 578) reckoned case study research can be used as the basics for relevant quantitative research. Because so far there is not a big – scale research on policy implementation towards an inclusive education in my country, I would like to suggest a survey study to be carried out on the same issue.

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Appendices

Appendix 1:

Main legislation pertaining to CwDs and Inclusive Education¹

No.	Legislation	The contents most related to CwDs/PwDs
I	Main laws	
1	1992 Constitution of Vietnam	Article 59 No fees for primary school Article 67 Social aid for the disabled
2	Law on Protection of Peoples' health 1989	Article 47 : the MOLISA, MOET, MOH are responsible to organize the care and rehabilitation for CwDs
3	Law on Protection, Care and Education of Children 1991	Article 6 ; CwDs must to be helped by Government and Society in treatment, rehabilitation to integrate into normal social living, to be accepted in inclusive education and special education.
4	Law on Universal Primary Education 1991	Primary education (grade one through five) is compulsory for every Vietnamese child between the ages of six and ten years
5	Labor Code 1994	Cover wage laws, vocational training, occupational safety and hazards and production establishments for PwDs
6	Education Law 1998	Article 58: the state establishes and encourages organizations and individuals to set up schools and classes for disabled children while at the same time promoting inclusive education to assist CwDs/YwDs in enjoying functional rehabilitation, basic education and vocational training Article 72 Incentives for teacher in special schools. Article 77 Scholarships and Aid subsidies for disabled student
7	Ordinance on people with Disabilities 1998	Cover all aspects of legislation pertaining to PwDs/CwDs
8	Ordinance on sport activities 2000	Article 11: Government and society create good conditions for PwDs to integrate in sport activities, supply aid equipment for PwDs to take part in appropriate sport
II	Important regulations	
<i>II.1</i>	<i>Regulation on education and training of CwDs</i>	
1	Decree 02/ND - Cp specifically regulating the implementation of Labor Code and Education Law on vocational training Approved by Government on 9/1/2001	Incentives for training institution reserved for PwDs/YwDs or accepting PwDs/YwDs as students.
2	Decision 1121/1997/QD-TTg on	Regulating incentive scholarship for disabled students in

¹ Sources: The cited legislation and Yoder (2003: 19 – 25)

	scholarship and social assistance for students in public schools Approved by the Prime Minister on 23/12/1997	public school (120 000 VND/month) Regulating social aid for disabled students in public schools (100 000 VND/month)
3	Decision 70/1998/QĐ - TTg regulating tuition fees and the use of tuition fees in all public schools and training facilities of the national educational system Approved by the Prime Minister on 31/3/98	Tuition fee waiver for disabled students in public schools
4	Regulation on Inclusive education of handicapped/disabled people Approved by the Minister of Education on 22/05/07	Explicit regulation on target groups, objective of inclusive education, organization and operation of inclusive education for disabled people, responsibilities of teachers, staffs in IE for disabled people, right to be educated in IE of the disabled people, infrastructure, equipment and teaching aids in IE for disabled people, implementation organization at various levels.
<i>II.2</i>	<i>Regulation on health care services, rehabilitation and social aid for CwDs</i>	
1	Decree 07/ND - CP on the Social Aid Policies Approved by Government on 9/3/2000	Assigning regular social aid degree for PwDs, CwDs living in public institution or in society (100.000 VND for PwDs living in public institution, 45.000 VND for PwDs living in society, 150 000 VND for CwDs under 18 months old)
2	Decision 139/2002/QĐ-TTg On medical treatment for the poor and people with difficult circumstances (PDC) Approved by the Prime Minister on 15/10/2002	Government ensure 75% budget for medical treatment for the poor and PDC (average level 70.000 VND per person/year), the rest 25% of budget is mobilized from local resources and other sources. The provinces establish the Medical Fund for the poor and PDC and grant medical insurance card for the poor and PDC.
3	Circular 05/TT-LT Approved by the Ministers of the MOLISA, MOH, MOF on 29/1/1999	Treatment fee waiver for PwDs/CwDs in public hospitals
4	Circular 12/BYT - TT on rehabilitation for PwDs/CwDs Approved by the MOH on 18/11/1993	Guiding the building of personnel for rehabilitation system; Improving the infrastructure for rehabilitation in hospital and institution for PwDs/CwDs; Fostering the Community-Based rehabilitation program; Budgeting for rehabilitation
<i>II.3</i>	<i>Regulations on participation of CwDs in cultural and sport activities</i>	
1	Decree 111/ND-CP on the	Encourage and create good conditions for PwDs/CwDs

	implementation of the Ordinance on Sport activities Approved by Government on 31/12/2002	integrating in all sport activities, especially in suitable sports.
<i>II.4</i>	<i>Regulation on accessibility to public facilities of CwDs</i>	
1	Building Code and Criteria of Construction Accessibility for PwDs/CwDs Approved by the Government on 1/2002	All Public utility buildings such as hospitals, administrative agencies, educational, sport and cultural buildings, public and residential buildings, roads and pavements must be accessible to be used by PwDs/CwDs

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

Policy implementation towards inclusive education - Experiences from primary schools in Vietnam

Self introduction of interviewer:

- Interviewer's Name
- Purpose of the interview :
 - + Not an evaluation of interviewee or interviewee's school
 - + Purpose of the study is "How has your school/class set up inclusive education, from the perspective of policy implementation"
- Commitment on Confidentiality

Interview Questions

1. Background of informant

1.1. Age:

1.2. Gender:

1.3. Educational background:

1.3.1. General educational background:

. What is your highest level of education:

1.3.2. Special Needs education background:

- . Have you been trained in any Special Needs Education Courses?
- . If yes, how long have you been trained in Special Needs Education courses?
- . What type/s of Special Needs Education you have been trained?
- . Who/What organizations/programmes have organized these courses?

1.4. Experiences in General Education:

- . How many years have your worked in educational field?
- . What are the positions in educational field you have held?

1.5. Experiences in Special Needs Education:

- . Since when you have worked with students with disabilities?
- . What types of disabilities you have worked with?
- . What type of disabilities you have worked with most?

1.6. Current job title :

1.7. Thumbnail sketch of your current job: (who you work with, your position in system described):

2. Now I would like to ask about the time when your school/class starting inclusive education

2.1. When was that?

2.2. Why did your school/class get involved in inclusive education?

2.2.1. Did your school implement inclusive education under the umbrella of government/international programmes in inclusive education?

2.2.2. For how long have your school undertaken the duties under these programmes?

2.2.3. After these programmes finished, why did your school continue inclusive education?

2.2.4 Can you remember the name/or content of the laws, regulations, decrees, or provisions in the government/international programmes above that your school based on when starting inclusive ducation?

2.3. From your point of view, could you describe the situation in your school/class at that time, following some main criteria:

2.3.1. How did you/other staff in your school at that time aware of these below point of views on:

- . A child-center education
- . The uniqueness and diversity of children with disabilities, for whom educational system should be designed.
- . The regular schools with an inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes and creating welcoming communities.

2.3.2. How did all parties involved (school, community, parents, educational administration, international sponsors etc.) cooperate in the beginning steps to set up inclusive education in your school?

2.3.3. How did your school prepare on personnel and finance for inclusion?

. Did your school send teachers/staff to special needs education training courses before your school get involved in inclusive education?

. Did your school get more financial assistance for inclusive education?

If No, How did your school manage when extra expenses appear because of implementing inclusive education?

2.3.4. What else did you consider important for the beginning of an inclusive education in your school/class?

3. Now we talk about present. Could you briefly describe:

3.1. How does your school work with disabled children?

3.1.1. Currently, how many children with disabilities are studying in your school/class?

3.1.2. Is your school able to offer seats for all children with disabilities in your locality?

If not, why?

3.1.3. How does your school adjust teaching methods to meet the diversified needs of student with disabilities?

3.1.4. Generally speaking, how do children with disabilities integrate in your school/class (How about their learning, playing, physical and emotional development etc.)?

3.2. How do you comment about policy support – the regulations, laws, decrees or provisions in programmes that are regarded as legislation framework for implementing inclusive education in your school, following main criteria:

3.2.1. Policy support aims to set up inclusive educational environment (consensus among parties involved, physical environment, Socio-emotional climate and attitude, learning and teaching environment, inclusive curriculum etc.)

3.2.2. Policy support aims to strengthen staff's capability and stableness (e.g. training, salary policy)

3.2.3. Policy support aims to mobilize financial resources.

3.2.4. Policy aims to other issues those you consider important

3.3. Among criteria above, which policy supports are explicit, which are implicit in laws? Tell me more details about these laws?

3.4. Do you school develop own policy to strengthen above criteria? How do these school's policies work?

4. With your experience on inclusion, what is your point of views about main challenges for setting up an inclusive education in your school/class: (tell me at least 3 main challenges)

- How have the identified challenges affected to the success of school/class in implementing inclusion

5. From the perspective of policy practice, have the exist policies been useful (or useless) to cope with the challenges?

- Tell me more about: How useful (or useless) the policies have been?

6. Could you recommend some important policies which you've considered necessary but still lacked?

7. Do you have any thing else to add

Thank you very much for your cooperation

Appendix 3: Archival Record Guide

1. Government, Provincial, District Legislation (Laws, Regulation, Guidance, Plan, Strategies)
2. Umbrella project's documents
 - Reports
 - Studies
 - Manuals
3. School records
 - School background/history
 - School annual, periodic working plan
 - School rules
 - School's meetings' memories.
 - School's financial documents.
 - School's, Classes' assessments
 - Teaching plan
 - Teaching manual
 - Individual plan
 - Learners academic records

Appendix 4: Observation Guide

Community

- Accessibility to school
- Community facility that may support inclusive education
- Parental support for school.

School

- Facility for inclusive education (building, classroom, resource room)
- Accessible facilities (corridors, paths, toilets, tables and chairs)

Classroom

- Text book and learning materials, teaching aids
- Accessible facilities
- Student characteristic (number of student, age, gender, disabilities)
- Space, seating, lighting arrangement
- Classroom decoration

Teaching and learning environment

- Diverse characteristic was valued and supported?
- Assessment and Evaluation
- Sufficient learning time
- Active teaching method
- Feedback
- Appropriate class size
- Adapted curriculum to meet individual needs
- Active student participation
- Role of peer group.
- How about care and communication in class?

Appendix 5: Observation summary

Geographically the length of the communes of this study was about 5 to 8 km. Therefore each school of this study had 3 sites to ensure the children could walk to the nearest school's site (in Vietnam rural areas the adults were quite busy that they usually did not bring the child to school or collect them after class). Because of limited time I only visited one main site of each school. As major time was reserved for interviewing, I just carried out my full-time observation in one lesson in one class at each school.

For the purpose of this study, only the most relevant information that can support or cross check the main information gained from interviews will be summarized and remarked, based on Johnsen's (2001) curriculum model and Peter's (2003: 29) model, as follows:

Contents to observe	The school	Observed characteristics	Remarks
<i>Path to school</i>	School One	- There was wide road to school	- Accessible for wheelchair - Headmaster Three said: the path to school was built up with a half budget from the province and half from community (self raised fund)
	School Two	- Path to school was concreted, about 2m in width	
	School Three	- Path to school was concreted, about 2m in width	
<i>Local sport and cultural services</i>	School One	- There was one cultural and sport centre	- Headmaster One said the town centre open only for its registered members (paying fee), not for every children. - Headmaster Three said: School football team usually was trained at communal training ground
	School Two	- There were communal training ground and communal house of culture.	
	School Three	- The communal training ground and communal house of culture. 400 m from school	


Health care services	School One	- the town health care centre had doctors, physicians and nurses (the informants did not remember the exact number)	Headmasters and teachers said: the health care workers supported the school with: - Periodically check-up for all students (twice a year). - Providing free of charge vaccination. - Providing suggestion for further treatment for students with disabilities or recommend them to district or provincial hospitals. Health care workers participated in the Community Support Team Headmaster Three said the commune clinic still would like to recruit more physician and nurse, but
	School Two	- The commune clinic had one physician and three nurses	
	School Three	- The commune clinic had one physician and one nurse.	
School and Classroom	School One	- The school's main site located on a small area in the centre of the town (about 1500 square meters) - All the classrooms were equipped with chairs, tables, ceiling fans, wall fan, blackboards, shelves, cupboards, neon lights - The teaching aids mainly were purchased. In the observed class, there were some handmade aids such as pictures, charts. - The classrooms on the first floor were accessible for wheelchair (there were pathway for wheelchair from ground yard to the first floor). The classrooms on the second floor were inaccessible for wheelchair. The headmaster One said that because of this reason, her school arranged for the students with physical impairment attend classes located in the first floor. - There were four toilet rooms for about 300 students of this site - No resource room for inclusive education	- Usually all students could come to school by themselves because the school's sites are near their houses, including disabled students - The school Two and Three located in rural areas got enough space for playing and learning. - The number of toilet rooms was less than the demands (Students queued in front of the toilet rooms during break time) - Physical environment was simple, but accessible and
	School Two	- Trees were planted in school yard and school garden - This school's site located in a wide areas (about 30000 square meters according to the headmaster) - There were four toilet rooms for about 270 students of this site	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All classrooms had enough light and tables, chairs, blackboard, shelves, cupboards, wall fans. - Teaching aids were mainly hand-made - No resource room for inclusive education 	<p>met the most critical demands for teaching and learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trees, paths for wheelchair, and hand – made teaching aids were planted, built and made with support from Parent Association (Labor and Money) - Headmaster Three said: The Local Learning Promotion Society donated the text books for all disabled students of school - No resource room for inclusive education at three school.
	School Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trees were planted in school yard and school garden - This school’s site located in a wide areas (about 50000 square meters according to the headmaster) - There were four toilet rooms for about 350 students of this site - All classrooms had enough light and tables, chairs, blackboard, shelves, cupboards. - Teaching aids were mainly hand-made (I saw about 50 teaching aids on shelves and cupboard, including chart, picture, math aids, clay cubs etc.) - About a half of student in class had text books (They shared with the neighbor students in class and at home, according to the class teacher) - All disabled students (two hearing impairment pupils) in class had text books - No resource room for inclusive education 	
<i>Learning/teaching/ Care/ Communication/Assessment in classroom</i>	At the school One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There was one male student with learning difficulty in the class I observed. He was 3 year older than the other classmates. He was placed in front of the teacher’s table, next to the left aisle so that his height did not block others’ sight. - Total number of students were 32 (the average class without disabled students had about 35 – 40 student) - The individual Educational plan of the disabled student was well prepared, detailing to weekly activities. - In the Ethics lesson “Requesting a help” that I observed, the teacher divided students into groups. She assigned them with roles to play. Some students played the requester (friend, patient, younger sister etc), some played as the helper (friend, doctor, older sister etc.) The teacher set the scenario and encouraged the student come up with own scenario. Each group divided the role among the members, then they swift role to each others. The disabled student had chance to play different roles. He was happy with this lesson. Then the teacher asked each group commented about the other groups’ activities, what they agreed with, what need to be changed. After all, the teacher summarized all comments and wrote the lesson learnt on the black board. By participating in these interactive activities, the disabled student understood the lesson and built 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The teachers prepared well to teach inclusive classes. They had different teaching methods, curriculum, teaching aids to teach students with different learning capacities. - The peer groups were organized properly to support teaching and learning in class. - The teachers demonstrated good expertise on teaching children with specific disabilities. - Interaction between teachers and students in classes was good. According to Rye (2001), interaction in

		<p>the habit of politely requesting or helping in his real life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This lesson closed the schooling day. After class, teacher talked with the disabled student's grandfather, who came to pick up him for about 5 minutes about what happened in class and the disabled student's performance. 	<p>inclusive class should include: demonstrate positive feeling; adapt to students; talk to the student; give praise and acknowledgement; help the students focus their attention; give meaning to the students' experiences; elaborate and explain; help the students achieve self – discipline.</p>
	<p>At the school Two</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The class had one male student, one year older than his peers, with learning difficulty. - There were 28 students in this class (the average class without disabled student had about 30 – 35 students) - Peer group included all member of one section (The class had 4 sections) - The individual Educational Plan for the disabled student was well prepared, detailing to weekly activities. - In the math lesson that I observed, “Time addition”, the teacher used a picture of several clocks to explain “ how long is one day (24 hours)?, one hour (60 minutes), one minutes (60 seconds)”, then he taught how to add time. During the teaching, he paid more attention to the disabled student than the others. He did some examples on blackboard before asked voluntary pupils go to blackboard to demonstrate his/her understanding. The teacher corrected some minor errors, then gave these students acknowledgement on their activeness and good works. The teacher gave the class practical sheet to work on; the disabled student was given a simpler exercise in which time units were adequately provided. After a while the teacher asked if anyone want to volunteer to solve the exercise on the blackboard. There were several hands raised. One student was invited. He did well. The teacher asked the whole class if there is any unclear. The class said “No”. But one student who sat next to the disabled pupils raised his hand and told the teacher that the disabled one might not understand how to convert minutes into hours or hours into days (if there were more than 60 minutes or 24 hours). Then the teacher went to in front of the disabled student and asked him understand or not. The disabled student looked confused. The teacher created a context to make him understand, he gave out a specific instance to ask the disabled student “what you will do from now to tomorrow, for how long it takes time each activities?” The disabled student came to the blackboard to write with the help from teacher. After about 6 minutes, the teacher helped the disabled student understand that if the time is more than 24 hours, we can convert into days. Then he told the peer group to help the disabled student to understand how to convert minutes into hour through homework. At the end of lesson, the teacher commented about the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The headmasters said that the schools tried to reduce the number of pupils in inclusive class so that the teachers could have more time to assist the disabled students.

		<p>whole progress, praising the efforts of class, individuals and especially the disabled one, then gave the students homework (the disabled one received a simpler exercise).</p>	
	<p>The school Three</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two disabled students (one male and one female), were placed in front of teacher's table. They were the same age with other peers. - There were 29 students in this class (the average class without disabled students had about 30 students) - The teacher always brought with her the Individual Educational Plans of two disabled student, which weekly described in details the activities, objectives, teaching contents, comments, aids etc. - The students sat next to the disabled students could communicate in sign language with the hearing impairment students - In the lesson "Nature and Society" that I was observed the teacher used signed language together with verbal language to teach. She stood face to face with the two disabled students in major time. She draw picture on the blackboard about people helping each other at home and in society, then asked several students come to blackboard to complete the picture by drawing. The teacher navigated to "<i>How you can help your friends, especially your friends with disabilities or other difficult circumstances?</i>". Then she asked one disabled student how he was help at home and at school, and how he helped others. The disabled student was required to draw what he helped his grandmother to feed the pigs at home. The teacher had prepared various tasks for students, with no-disabled ones they were required to write down what they help at home, but the disabled student were required to write down what they help their grandparents. The teacher always gave attention and appraisal to all students by calling the students by name, encouraging students to tell story, or to draw on blackboard, reiterating if one student request, commenting "very good" "excellent". At the end of lesson she commented about how the whole class work today, praised the active individuals and gave out homework, which was various between the non-disabled and the disabled students' - This lesson closed the schooling day. The mother of the disabled students came to collect her. The teacher talked to the mother for about 15 minutes about how her child doing today in class. 	

Appendix 6: Letter of Reference from the University of Oslo


UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

Department of Special Needs Education
 P.O.Box 1140, Blindern
 N-0318 Oslo
 NORWAY

Visiting address:
 Helga Eng's Building
 3rd and 4th floor

 Telephone: + 47 22 85 80 59
 Telefax: + 47 22 85 80 21

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Your ref:
 Our ref: 13/06 BHI/db
 Contact person: Denese Brittain d.a.brittain@isp.uio.no

Date: June 21. 2006

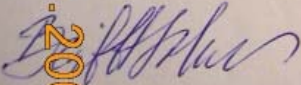
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This is to certify that **NGUYEN, Van Thi Hong**, date of birth 28.09.1970, is a full-time student pursuing a course of study at the Department of Special Needs Education at the University of Oslo, Norway, leading to the degree of Master of Philosophy in Special Needs Education (M. Phil. SNE).

This is a continuous two-year programme run on the "sandwich" principle, which involves periods of study and field work/research in both Norway and the home country. The student has concluded the initial 11-month period in Norway and will be returning to the home country in July 2006 to continue full-time studies/research until 1 January 2007 when s/he returns to Norway for the final part of the degree. The period of study will be completed at the end of May 2007.

The main responsibility for supervising the research, developmental work and thesis remains with the Department of Special Needs Education, University of Oslo, Norway. However, we would kindly request that the relevant authorities give the student the access required to the schools and educational establishments necessary in order to undertake field work and research. We would also be most grateful for any assistance that is afforded to the student which enables her/him to carry out this work, particularly the use of facilities such as access to telephone, fax, e-mail, computer services and libraries at the various educational establishments.

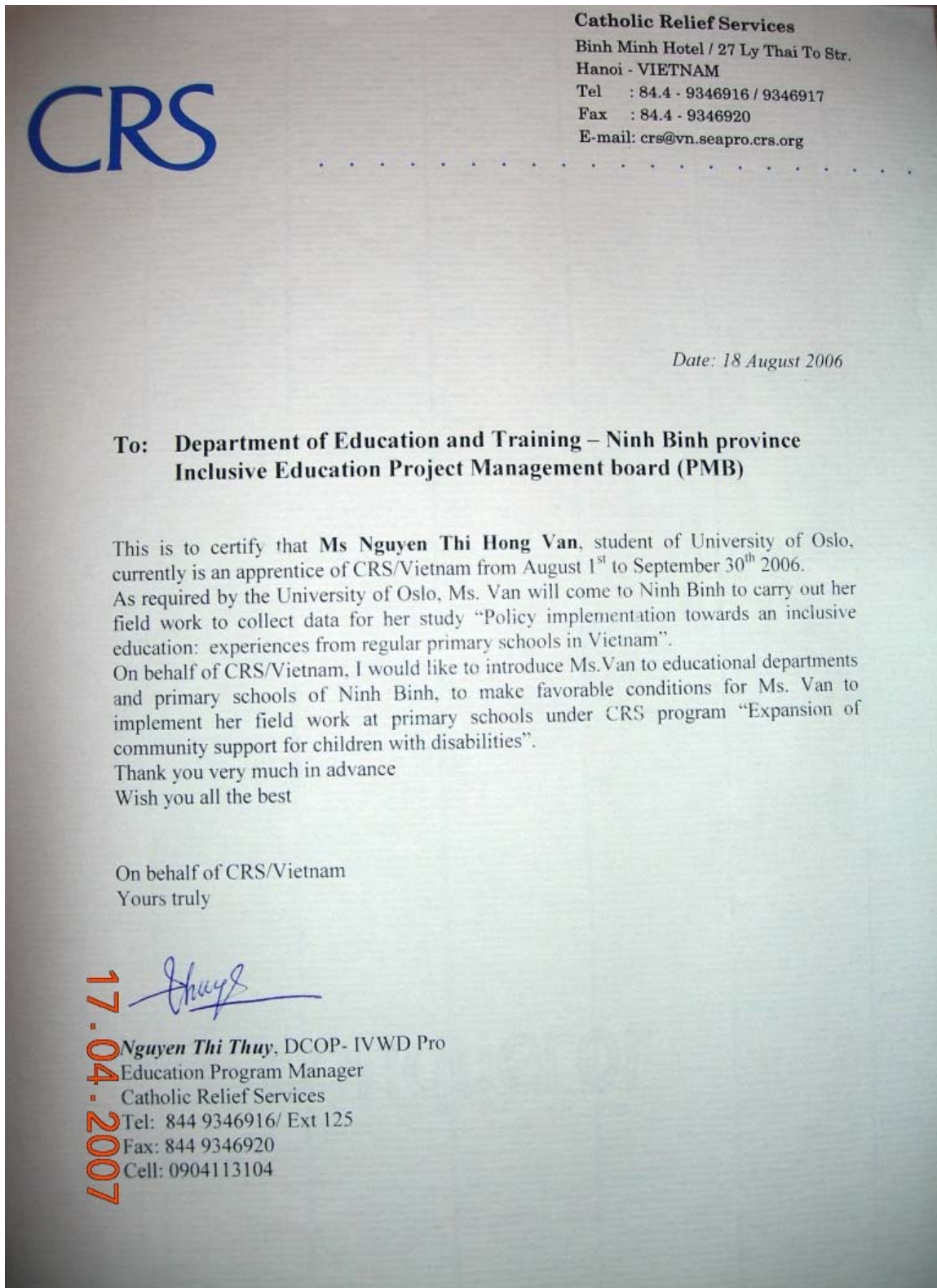
Yours sincerely


 Associate Professor Berit Helene Johnsen (dr.scient.)
 Academic Head of International Master's Programme
 Department of Special Needs Education


Department of Special Needs Education
 Faculty of Education
 University of Oslo, Norway

17-04-2007

Appendix 7: Letter of Introduction from the CRS/Vietnam (English)



Appendix 8: Letter of Introduction of CRS/Vietnam (Vietnamese)



Catholic Relief Services
 Binh Minh Hotel / 27 Ly Thai To Str.
 Hanoi - VIETNAM
 Tel : 84.4 - 9346916 / 9346917
 Fax : 84.4 - 9346920
 E-mail: crs@vn.seapro.crs.org

Ngày 18 tháng 8 năm 2006

Thư giới thiệu

Kính gửi : Sở giáo dục tỉnh Ninh bình và các cơ quan liên quan

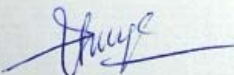
Tổ chức CRS/Việt nam xác nhận rằng Ms.Nguyễn Thị Hồng Vân, sinh viên trường Đại học Tổng hợp Oslo,hiện tại là thực tập sinh của CRS/Việt nam trong thời gian từ 1 tháng 8 đến 30 tháng 9 năm 2006.

Theo yêu cầu của trường Đại học tổng hợp Oslo, chị Vân sẽ tới Ninh bình để thực hiện chuyên nghiên cứu thực địa thu thập dữ liệu cho nghiên cứu “Thực hiện chính sách theo định hướng một nền giáo dục hoà nhập – kinh nghiệm của các trường tiểu học Việt nam”

Thay mặt cho CRS/Vietnam, tôi xin trân trọng giới thiệu chị Vân tới liên hệ công việc tại Sở Giáo dục tỉnh Ninh bình, phòng giáo dục các huyện và các trường tiểu học tham gia dự án do CRS tài trợ “ Mở rộng sự hỗ trợ của cộng đồng cho trẻ em khuyết tật”. Đề nghị các cơ quan nói trên tạo điều kiện thuận lợi cho chị Vân hoàn thành chuyên nghiên cứu thực địa.

Xin trân trọng cảm ơn.

Thay mặt CRS/Việt Nam



17.04.2007

Nguyễn Thị Thuỷ
 Phó Giám đốc dự án “Hoà nhập Người Khuyết tật Việt Nam”
 Phụ trách Chương trình Giáo dục
 CRS/Vietnam
 Tel: 844 9346916/ Ext 125
 Fax: 844 9346920
 Cell: 0904113104

Figure 2: Vietnam Education System

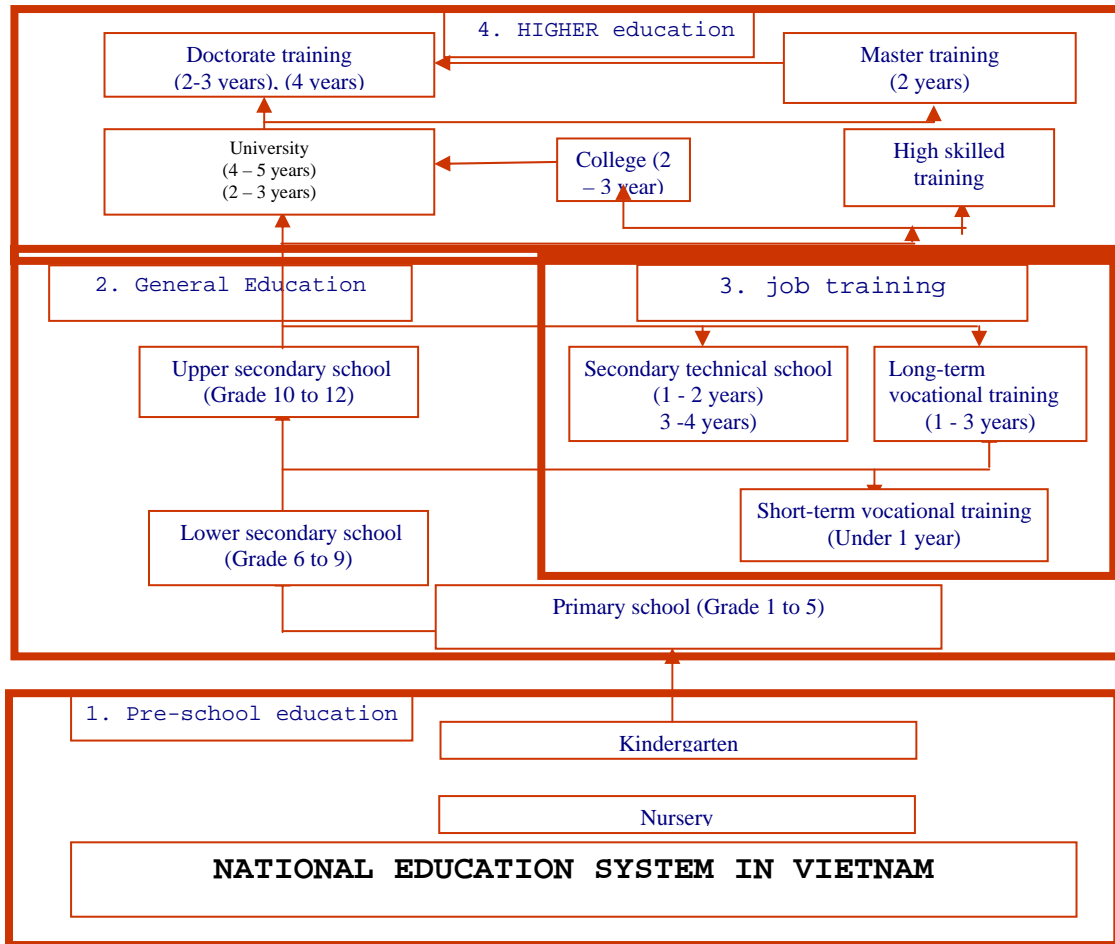
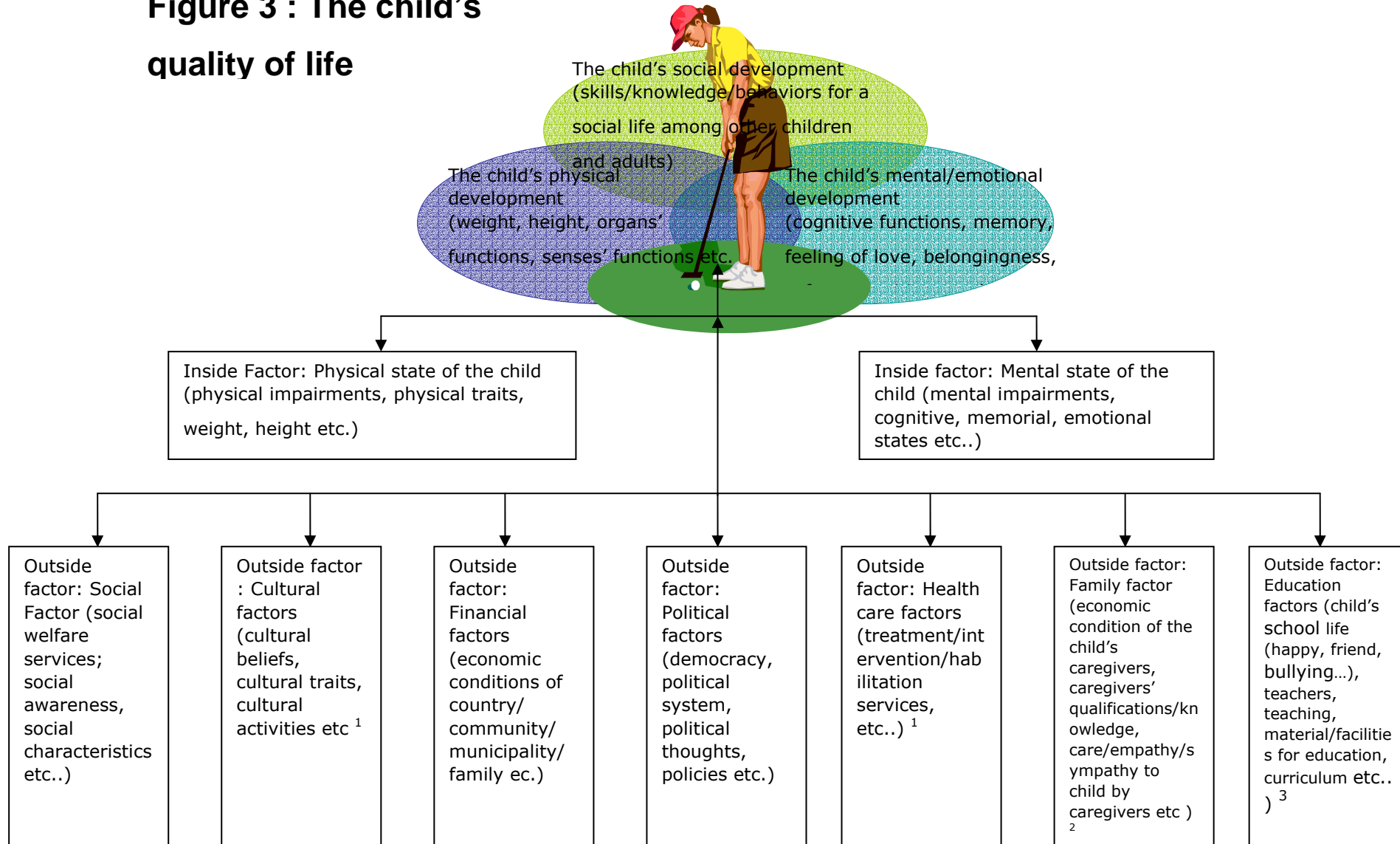


Figure 3 : The child's quality of life



- ¹. Skjorten, M.D. (2001). Cultural activities as a tool for interaction, communication and inclusion. In Johnsen, B.H. & Skjorten, M.D. (Eds.), *Education – Special Needs Education : An Introduction*. Oslo: Unipub.
- ². Rye, H. (2001). Helping Children and Families with Special Needs – A resource-Oriented Approach. In Johnsen, B.H & Skjorten, M.D (Eds). *Education – Special Needs Education : An Introduction*, Oslo, Unipub.
- ³. Johnsen, B. 2001. Curricula for the plurality of Individual learning Needs. Article in Johnsen, B.H & Skjorten, M.D (eds). *Education – Special Needs Education : An Introduction*. Oslo: Unipub.

Figure 4: The study progress

