



HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM

Nguyen Thi Van

Teaching Ourselves Before Teaching Others

A Vietnamese trainer learns about the Academy so she can teach others

Nguyen Thi Van is a trainer by profession who works for the Vietnam National Productivity Institute (VNPI) as the head of the Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) Office. Originally from Hanoi, Van, as she is usually called, is also a certified management consultant with years of experience in training services for consultants and entrepreneurs in the HCMC area. She is one of the people who was invited by the Ministry of Planning and Investment to participate in the training of facilitators for the ASEAN SME Academy through VNPI in 2017.

Han worked for various manufacturing companies for 10 years before she started working at VNPI. Operating under the auspices of Vietnam's Ministry of Science and Technology, VNPI is an organization that promotes productivity and recruitment in Vietnam, research on productivity for the industries in the country, and training for enterprises and entrepreneurs in Vietnam. "We work to empower and support small businesses," explains the mother of two children.

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Van first heard about the Academy through the Ministry of Planning and Investment’s Center for Supporting SMEs, which previously partnered with VNPI on various training activities. Van became intrigued immediately. Prior to her own training on the Academy in 2017, she thought that the Academy “focuses on the same things that we at VNPI are focused on,” Van explains. “I thought, then, that the Academy has similar objectives—to support SMEs—and even similar activities. So I was very excited to learn what it exactly is,” she adds.

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After the training of facilitators program, Van liked it even more. “The training opened my eyes about what the Academy does,” she says. “We can network, we can help each other, support the community.” To her personally, the Academy is very useful as she learned about creating modules and content. Van is also very interested to learn from the global companies that contributed to the Academy courses. “I’m especially interested to learn from companies like HP Life and Google,” she says.

Since her training in 2017, Van has conducted two main training activities to help others and to introduce them to the Academy. The first training, for 60 participants who work as managers in HR and other fields, took the form of a knowledge-sharing seminar on connecting through knowledge management. “Many of the participants were able to communicate well in English, so they did not have a problem logging in and using the Academy themselves,” Van says.

More recently, Van conducted a second training for 12 local government officials responsible for supporting small businesses in their provinces. “These officials came from six cities in provinces in the Mekong Delta and the Ho Chi Minh City region in Vietnam,” she explains. “They have their own network and they will use that to introduce the Academy in their own communities.”

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Van has also distributed the Academy booklet to most of VNPI's staff. "People really like the booklet, especially that fact that it is in Vietnamese," she says. "I'm surprised that the booklet is in Vietnamese. It's amazing to read in our language and it is very useful. The size of the booklet is small enough that it is easy to carry around. It is a good tool to use for training," Van notes, continuing to express her excitement for the Academy. "Now that people have seen the faces of the facilitators in the booklet, those facilitators feel a greater responsibility to promote the Academy," she observes.

According to Van, it is not just the people who have received training that are encouraged to take courses; she herself also keeps taking courses so she will be able to answer any questions about the platform. "Being a trainer myself, I can also learn from the Academy how to create training materials, how to create a platform," she explains. "I can also learn how to conduct training with a computer so I can improve my teaching methods."

When comparing their work before and after using the Academy, Van says that staff previously used a lot of paper materials for their trainings. "But now, after learning from the Academy, we have started using search engines like Google," she notes. Interestingly, to self-assess what skills VNPI trainers have improved the most, Van says that staff members have even created a questionnaire for their participants that asks what skills participants feel they have most improved.

As Van prepares for her next round of training, she notes that "the Academy couldn't have come at a better time. Now, online training is very popular and we have quite good internet here in HCMC."

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