

## FOCUS GROUPS: A first step towards improving the curricula



Automotive teachers focus group

One of the key project activities took place in June 2017: **the Focus Groups of the Companies and Pedagogical Teams**. The main objective of the focus groups was to identify the professional activities and skills required for a young technician to enter the job market, after a Trung Cap 9+2 diploma, in order to improve the training programs and to close the gap between the market's needs and the skills of young graduates. The workshops focused on the 2 fields of action of the Seeds of Hope program in Vietnam: *Residential Electricity* and *Automotive maintenance and repair*.

### The Groundwork

In preparation of the Focus Groups, a preliminary survey has been conducted among more than 25 companies regarding the recruitment of young technicians, their activities and work conditions. We also discussed companies' satisfaction in regard to graduates' skills and competencies.

We would like to **warmly thank all the companies** who welcomed us into their offices, plants and garages, told us more about their activities and shared with us very useful insights about their recruitment needs!

### 4 Focus Groups, 32 external participants:

- **Company representatives** from various backgrounds: technical supervisors, after-sales managers, HR specialists. All of them had in common a good knowledge of the technicians' activities.
- **Pedagogical teams** from the Seeds of Hope partner schools:
  - HOTECH: HCMC Technical and Economic College
  - TDC: Thu Duc College of Technology

Company representatives and pedagogical teams, led by a Pedagogical Expert, Jean-Paul Dief, worked together and brainstormed regarding the activities of young technicians, the requested competencies and the key areas for improving the trainings.

**Thank you to all the participants for their time and valuable contribution at this important step of the project !**

« Improving the curricula according to companies needs will be very useful for the students after graduation. I'm happy I could contribute with my knowledge and practical experience»

Technical supervisor  
Participant to the Focus Group



Electrical companies focus group

### The Outcome of the Focus Groups

Companies and teachers agreed on:

- **A framework of activities** for young graduates in the field of Automotive Maintenance and Residential Electricity
- The required **skills and competencies**
- The associated **knowledge, know-how and soft skills**

The pedagogical team also explored several **areas of improvement** for the training programs.

## Training of Trainers

In June 2017, the first two Training of Trainers workshops have been organized for the Pedagogical teams of TDC and HOTEV:

- **A training on communication skills** gathered 27 teachers on June 24. Carried out by Vincent Auclair, an expert from World University Service of Canada (WUSC), the workshop focused on the importance of communication skills and highlighted some specific techniques. Vincent also shared some useful tips for communication and networking.
- **A training on the Focus Groups Methodology** gathered 13 participants on June 26. The trainer, Jean-Paul Dief, shared the methodology to prepare and carry out a Companies Focus Group and raised awareness among the teachers about the competencies based approach.

## Orientation Day

On June 15, HOTEV, TDC and IECD co-organized an Orientation Day to introduce the Vocational Training programs to **local and international NGOs, shelters and orphanages**, who could guide young people towards the program.

The schools presented the content and advantages of the training programs and the application process. Professionals shared their work experiences and talked about job opportunities in this field.

The students recruitment process for next year has started!



The Orientation Day on June 15.

## What's next?

- ✓ Capitalizing on the **outcomes of the Focus Groups**:
  - Training the teachers and start implementing the competencies based approach
  - Work on a common action plan based on the improvement ideas raised during the focus groups
- ✓ Working together with the schools on the overhaul of **equipment in electricity workshops** :
  - Measurement devices
  - Personal protective equipment
  - Safety equipment

The recruitment of the students is now on-going and in September 2017, both HOTEV and TDC will welcome the first group of students within the Seeds of Hope project. We wish them the best of luck and lots of success !