

Dinh Quang Thu

Professor Bernd Meier as an Active Academic Scholar

When Dr. Nguyen Van Cuong informed me earlier that Professor Meier Bernd would be leaving up his office soon, it came as quite a surprise to me. I could not believe the day when he would stop being an academic. The day has arrived silently and suddenly. It is my pleasure to write this short note to celebrate Professor Meier's retirement. His academic contributions in the areas of international education are immense and I cannot even attempt to summarize all of them. I will only mention how my position as the Chief of International Relations Office, Hanoi National University of Education, Vietnam in association with him, influenced by his cooperation.

I have heard about Professor Meier Bernd long before 2002 when we first met briefly in person in Hanoi. During 2004 and 2005 we have been working closely on the project, which was part of the Viet Nam Primary Teacher Development Project, aimed to improve in-service and pre-service training programs for primary school teachers and education managers through the development of strategic training modules based on standards drawn from the teacher professional profile. In addition to the development of training materials, this project enhanced the capacity for teacher education curriculum development; delivered and provided in-service training for over 10,000 primary school teachers and education managers in 10 participating provinces of Viet Nam. Professor Meier was as an International Advisor for Teacher Education Development. His tasks included training of key teachers from primary schools, development of plans to incorporate new modules into new training curricula for teacher training institutions, and development of new training programs for primary school teachers.

More intensively, we did have more chances of working together since 2007 when Hanoi National University of Education has been pursuing the Teaching and Research of Hanoi National University of Education (HNUE) Project in line with modernisation and integration (TRIG). The University has built a strong reputation as one of Vietnam's leading universities. We have achieved this by providing a unique learning environment based on our deep commitment to meeting the changing needs of society and our growing

student population. According to this project, HNUE commits itself to excellence in research and teaching, to a high-quality student experience and to a spirit of real service to the community. A part of that the project advances rich international academic collaboration.

Notably, during this period of time, Professor Meier has engaged in some important educational projects in Vietnam, particularly, the Upper Secondary Education Development Project, as International Teaching Methodology Specialist. He has had a wealth of professional experience and has been very familiar with educational system and procedures in Vietnam, combining pedagogic and managerial know-how with new technology in the implementation of the project at the customers' location. In particular, together with Dr. Nguyen Van Cuong (one of his Ph.D. student and colleague at Potsdam University), he has been involved into teaching programs for the HNUE post-graduate students on Theories of Teaching – Contemporary Methods and Techniques. From 2009 to 2012 more than thousands of our learners have been benefited from their lectures. Later on, the series of the lectures have been published in the form of reference book by the Hanoi National University of Education Publishing House.

Beside teaching in Hanoi, Professor Meier and Dr. Cuong have also been running a number of training workshops, short courses and arranging study tours for staff members of Vietnam education institutions including Hanoi National University of Education. The implementation of these programs was made in Germany and other countries in Europe, which scheduled always carefully and got through successfully. The participants were received and welcomed by the enthusiastic representatives of the University Potsdam and other institutions thank to the efforts and hospitality of Professor Meier and Dr. Cuong. We have received highly appreciation and positive feedback from our colleagues who participated in the programs.

Professor Meier will be missed at his place as a teacher, a researcher, and of course as a friend. But given the breadth of his interests, from academic environment, I doubt if he will miss doing what he has been at Potsdam University for so long. In fact, I remember him saying something about going back to school after the retirement and I am positive that he will continue his career in many ways, a recall appointment to active service for education may be an option. His work and work ethic will continue to influence future generations via the students he has taught and guided.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to Professor Meier for his cooperation, for his knowledge in education of Vietnam and Southeast Asian, and for his support, kindness to me personally. I wish him the very best as he opens a new chapter in his life, where he will continue to mould lives around him.