



Building a learning society and lifelong learning - The key to development

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Abstract

In the era of knowledge explosion and digital transformation - where humanity makes great advances in technology, creativity and innovative thinking every day, building a learning society and lifelong learning is not only a choice but an inevitable requirement. This is the path for each individual to not fall behind, each organization to increase its competitiveness and each country to grow strongly the journey of comprehensive and sustainable development. The paper analyzes the inevitable trend of building a learning society and lifelong learning, thereby affirming that building a learning society and lifelong learning is the driving force for national development in the knowledge era.

Keywords: Learning society, lifelong learning, knowledge era

Introduction

The fourth industrial revolution has been changing the position of the education and training sector. Unlike previous societies, in the age of knowledge and information, the society is mainly based on knowledge. In that context, building a learning society and lifelong learning becomes a rule of life that not only helps individuals recognize, adapt, enrich their intelligence, perfect their personality, overcome difficulties and challenges to increasingly progress and position themselves, not fall behind in the face of world changes, but is also the key to improve people's knowledge, train human resources, and promote the socio-economic development of every country.

In Vietnam, the ultimate and important goal of education and training development is to build an education system that is truly of the people, by the people and for the people. Building a learning society and lifelong learning is one of the important strategies of the country's education sector. Resolution of the 13th National Congress (2021) of the Communist Party of Vietnam affirmed: "Building institutional policies synchronously is to effectively implement the policy of education and training together with science and technology as the top national policy and the key driving force for national development" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p. 136) [5]. To do so, we must "promote the building of a learning society and lifelong learning" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021 [5], p. 137).

Contents

Building a learning society and lifelong learning is an inevitable trend.

Learning is a basic need, both subjective and an essential requirement for the existence and development of each person; it is the foundation for human culture and civilization. According to Marxism-Leninism, learning plays an important role in forming and developing an individual's personality and contributes to determining the movement and development of society. The learning process helps people "to quickly master the entire system of production in practice, enabling them to move from one industry of production to another according to the needs of

society or according to their own preferences" (K. Marx and F. Engels Complete Works Vol. 4, 1995, p. 474).

For President Ho Chi Minh, education, self-study and lifelong learning are important issues that he placed at the top. The purpose of learning is: "Study to work, to be a human, to be a cadre. Study to serve the community, class and people, the Fatherland and humanity" (Ho Chi Minh Complete Works, Volume 6, p 208). To build a long-term education, everyone must participate in learning, regardless of age, profession, gender. with rich and flexible purposes, content, and methods, especially valuing self-study methods, "taking self-study as the core". Uncle Ho said: "If you want to know, you must compete to learn. Learning is never ending. Learn forever to progress forever. The more you progress, the more you see that you have to learn more" (Ho Chi Minh Complete Works, Volume 6, 2011, p. 61) and "The more society advances, the more work there is, the more sophisticated the machines are. If you do not learn, you will be left behind, and if you are left behind, you will be eliminated. You eliminate yourself" (Ho Chi Minh Complete Works, Volume 12, 2011, p. 333), "as long as you live, you must learn".

A learning society is an educational philosophy supported by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) that argues that education should cover the entire community and take place throughout each person's life, and is key to the development of each country; education is not limited to schools but also includes non-formal education centers outside of schools to promote development. In a learning society, lifelong learning is the obligation and duty of citizens. The lifelong learning and building a learning society have become an inevitable trend for every country to ensure prosperous and sustainable development.

Therefore, a learning society is a society that creates opportunities and conditions for all citizens to have the right and obligation to learn. This is an open educational model, in which self-learning awareness is the decisive factor in developing personal capacity and building a sustainable society.

Building a learning society means building the education of

a lifelong, comprehensive learning society, in which all learning needs of everyone, everywhere, at all times, are met. Building a lifelong learning society is based on the four pillars mentioned by UNESCO: “Learning to know; Learning to do; Learning to survive; and Learning to live together”.

In modern society, the world is constantly changing, lifelong learning becomes an inevitable requirement. Lifelong learning does not mean going to school all your life, but rather, each person throughout their life needs to be continuously trained, nurtured, and supplemented with the necessary knowledge and skills that are lacking to perceive the world, improve qualifications, knowledge, skills, adapt, and not fall behind the changes of the current world, meeting the increasingly high demands of work and life. At the same time, learning contributes to the formation, development, and perfection of each person’s personality and self-positioning; it is a method of practicing the mental health, helping people live happily, healthily, and usefully. Without regular, lifelong learning, people will fall into a state of skill deficiency, which is functional illiteracy. Furthermore, in a changing world, with rapid advances in science, engineering, technology and ever-increasing knowledge, lifelong learning is an important key to improving people’s knowledge, training human resources, promoting socio-economic development, and is an inevitable trend for every country. Building a learning society and lifelong learning is an important strategy to achieve democracy and equality for all people in society. According to Article 13 of the 2019 Law on Education, there are regulations on citizens’ rights and obligations to study: Learning is the right and duty of citizens. All citizens, regardless of ethnicity, religion, belief, gender, personal characteristics, family background, social status, or economic circumstances, have equal opportunities to learn.

Building a learning society and lifelong learning is the driving force for national development in the knowledge era.

Currently, the trend of globalization and international integration is increasingly deep, along with the development of the knowledge economy and the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which has been posing new requirements, tasks, thoughts and actions for each person, including the Vietnamese people. In the above context, the requirement for fundamental and comprehensive innovation in education and training, especially promoting the awareness of self-study and lifelong learning, has become both an urgent and long-term requirement to build a learning society, a driving force for development, and the key to adapting and not falling behind for each country.

In Vietnam, lifelong learning and building a learning society are not new issues and receive special attention from the Party and State. After the country gained independence (1945), more than 95% of the population could not read or write, “Illiteracy” became one of the three dangerous enemies along with “famine” and “foreign invaders”. Since then, the “Mass Education Program” movement was born to eliminate illiteracy, raise the people’s intellectual level, contributed to the victory of the resistance war against the French colonialists and build a new regime.

Promoting national traditions, studying and following the ideology, morality and style of President Ho Chi Minh, closely following the educational philosophy of UNESCO,

and recognizing the importance of education, training and lifelong learning becoming an important driving force for the country’s development, during revolutionary periods, especially the innovation period, the Communist Party of Vietnam has issued many resolutions, directives and conclusions, always pays attention to and encourages lifelong learning and builds the whole country into a learning society. Resolution No. 29-NQ/TW dated November 4, 2013 of the 11th Central Executive Committee on “Fundamental and comprehensive innovation of education and training, meeting the requirements of industrialization and modernization in the conditions of a socialist-oriented market economy and international integration”, clearly states that one of the basic tasks and solutions to implement fundamental and comprehensive innovation of Vietnam’s education is “perfecting the national education system towards an open education system, lifelong learning and building a learning society” (Central Executive Committee of the Party, 2013)^[2]. In the Resolution of the 13th National Congress, the Party emphasized: Developing education and training together with science and technology is a top national policy, a key driving force for national development in the context of a market economy and international integration, adapting to the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Focusing on educating qualities, creativity and core values, especially educating patriotism, national pride and self-respect, arousing the desire to develop, build and protect the Fatherland. Diversifying the training types. Promoting the building of a learning society and lifelong learning (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021^[5], p. 136- 137). In the article “Lifelong learning” (2025), General Secretary To Lam points out that lifelong learning is the key for Vietnam to enter a new era.

Implementing the Party’s policy, the Government has approved many projects to build a learning society; has directed ministries and branches to gradually carry out each agency, organization, individual, enterprise and household to focus on doing a good job of popularizing, dissemination, raising awareness and effectively implementing the work of encouraging learning, encouraging talents, building a learning society in the conditions of a digital economy and digital society; supporting the disadvantaged, over working-age labors, housewives, the disabled, creating conditions for all those who have learning needs to be satisfied and learned for life.

Up to now, building a learning society and lifelong learning has become a movement, a need, a cultural habit of the people and achieved many important results. The national education system from preschool education to postgraduate training has been formed and is increasingly improved. The educational network and scale expand across regions and areas. Diversification of school types, class’s types, training types and connections between training levels are improved. Social equity in education has made great advances, providing learning opportunities for people of all ages. The movement “The whole country competes to build a learning society, promote lifelong learning” and the model “Learning citizens” are being vigorously deployed in almost all localities. People’s education level is increasingly improving. The above initial results have been contributing positively to the country’s development.

Besides, building a learning society and lifelong learning has still had some shortcomings and limitations. The education system has not fully met the requirements of a

dynamic labor market and the rapid development of science and technology. The self-study and lifelong learning of a part of the cadres, party members and people have not achieved the desired results; there has been still the studying according to trends, degrees preference, the signs of reluctance to study, and no the concept of lifelong learning, so it becomes backward, conservative, and does not meet the requirements of development. The limited professional skills, individualism, and lack of experience among a number of cadres and party members affect the quality of public service and the quality of service to the people. The disparity in access to education between regions, especially in remote and ethnic minority areas, remains a matter of concern.

In the context of the strong development of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the knowledge-based economy and increasingly-deep international integration, the country is facing new opportunities and chances to “grow up” and “stand shoulder to shoulder” with the world powers, posing requirements for comprehensively developed human resources, with sufficient courage, intelligence, health, high qualifications and skills, and breakthroughs in science and technology development, innovation and national digital transformation. At the same time, ensuring to promote social progress, expand opportunities for all people to access quality education, and maximize individual potential. To meet the above requirements and realize the aspiration of “growing up” and “standing shoulder to shoulder”, Vietnam needs strategic and synchronous breakthrough solutions. Every citizen has the right and responsibility to study regularly and throughout life, taking advantage of every learning opportunity to become a digital citizen and a global citizen. Each party committee, socio-political organization, and professional association clearly defines lifelong learning content for cadres, party members, and association members. Building a learning society and improving people’s knowledge is not only an urgent requirement and a top priority, but also the key for Vietnam to break through and reach new heights.

We are living in the knowledge era - a place that helps people develop their full potential, take advantage of opportunities, and effectively respond to challenges for development. To build a learning society and lifelong learning, cadres, party members and people need to synchronously and comprehensively implement the following solutions:

First, raising awareness, strengthening leadership, direction and fully and deeply implementing the viewpoint on the position, role and necessity of building a learning society and lifelong learning are the inevitable path for individuals and the country to develop sustainably and adapt to social changes.

Second, continuing to comprehensively innovate the education system towards developing learners’ capacity, increasing practicality, connecting theory and practice, focusing on developing learners’ thinking and skills.

Third, increasing investment in facilities and infrastructure for the education and training sector, especially digital infrastructure. Promoting socialization, mobilizing participation, and effective coordination of organizations, individuals, and the whole society help to attract all resources for developing the encouragement of learning and talent, and build a learning society.

Fourth, promoting the training and fostering of human resources in all aspects to meet the requirements of fundamental and comprehensive innovation in education, training and development of science and technology;

organizing activities to encourage learning and talent, improving people’s intellectual level, creating conditions for everyone to study, develop and contribute to the country.

Fifth, promoting cooperation and experience sharing with international organizations and countries with extensive experience in the fields of education, lifelong learning, and building a learning society.

Sixth, each individual needs to develop a plan and have a learning method which is suitable to their own abilities, situation, and social requirements, and not shrink from difficulties and challenges, and be determined to carry out the plan.

Conclusion

In the knowledge era, building a learning society and lifelong learning has become a rule of life that helps each individual perfect their personality, raise awareness, and not fall behind the changes of the modern world. At the same time, it is the key to improving people’s knowledge, training human resources, nurturing talents, and promoting socio-economic development. In Vietnam, building a learning society and lifelong learning is one of the key strategies that the Party and State pay attention to and direct, becoming a movement, a need, a cultural habit among the people and achieving many important results. Entering the era of “national growth” requires the entire Party, the entire army, and the entire people to continue to effectively implement the building of a learning society and lifelong learning, creating a team of civil servants, public employees, and workers who dare to think, dare to speak, dare to do, dare to take responsibility, dare to sacrifice, and together realize the goal of “rich people, strong country, democracy, fairness, and civilization”.

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