

# Independent Community-Based Learning Webs

*An Alternative Way to a Better Quality of Human Resources of Da Nang*

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Da Nang has committed to be one of the major tourist attractions in Viet Nam. In order to meet this goal the city government **has been relentlessly giving** physical and non-physical attentions to improve the city's desirability to the eyes of the domestic and overseas tourism industry. The physical concerns



range from building new accommodations to improvement of the infrastructures in the less touristy areas<sup>2</sup>. Meanwhile, the non-physical concerns include the implementation of cost-cutting programs for touristic events and

the partnership the city recently made with UNS to provide technological training for a better quality of their human resources which, consequently, will increase the quality of hospitality service.<sup>3</sup> All that hard works seems to bear fruits as the government records show that the number of tourists coming into Da Nang has increased by 20 percent as of April, 2016.<sup>4</sup>

Managing the tourism industry is not an easy task, thus, making mistake here and there is not uncommon.<sup>5</sup> In this article I will suggest that, from a pragmatics perspective, what every city needs when it comes to building its tourism industry is that its people also **assume ownership** of the project and actively participate in the process itself. By assuming ownership I mean letting go of the idea that

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<sup>2</sup> "Developing Tourist Attractions in Hoa Vang Districts".<http://www.baodanang.vn/english/danang-attractions/201510/developing-tourist-attractions-in-hoa-vang-district-245-0166/>. Retrieved on April 27, 2016.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.baodanang.vn/english/politics/201604/uns-to-help-train-human-resources-for-smart-city-2482938/>. Retrieved on April 26, 2016.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.baodanang.vn/english/business/201604/tourist-arrivals-in-da-nang-up-20-percent-during-holiday-2481863/>. Retrieved on April 25, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> There are many problems arising within this project of developing Da Nang into tourist city. One of the example the case which involved Nguyen Ba Thanh.



the responsibility of building the city falls only on the government's shoulder. Instead,

society would need to come on board, making the improvements from a communal level. This way, upgrading the city is not only a top down process, but also a bottom up process, which is a more comprehensive approach. In the case of Da Nang, one of the aspects on which the society could play an active role is in the improvement of the quality of hospitality skills, such as mastering English, basic hotel and restaurant management, and other similar issues. What I envision is a networking of independent community-based learning, whereby those individuals with better English and hospitality knowledge, for instance, actively share their knowledge with those who are still in need of improvement in that field.

Photo credit: <http://www.oxy.edu/center-community-based-learning/cbl-courses>

I am positive that this idea is very feasible because the city of Da Nang has the necessary resources for such a project to succeed. These resources I am referring to are the many talented, progressive and smart young people of Da Nang, many of whom are overseas graduates with inspiring patriotism.

*"I just loved this city and I want to make it better"*, says Han, a PhD graduate from a university in French who is now working as a Nano engineer in the city.

The same testimony also came from a dentist who is now serving at one of the hospitals in Da Nang. She says, *"If I care about money. I will would have taken the job offer from a hospital in Ho Chi Minh back then. But, I just want to serve this city"*.

And as a volunteer who teaches basic English in one of the bars (maybe better to say "restaurant"?) in the An Thuong area, I also want to point out another potential that the city possesses; namely Vietnamese people who work in the small scale tourism business who are passionately and diligently seeking affordable opportunities to improve their English and hospitality skill. In addition, Da Nang may also takes advantage of travelers with English and hospitality or media backgrounds who express an

interest in doing volunteer work. This kind of interest appears often on travel sites such as Couchsurfing and Workaway.

Given such potential with these social and human resources and with the support of the city government, there is a lot of possibility for this idea to succeed. In this case, the city government would need to officially establish the project and recruit & train young people with potential to further carrying out the project. As a kind of reward, the government could offer a certificate of acknowledgement of some kind, such as free excursions to tourist attractions in the city area or basic accommodation to the volunteers which may benefit them in their travelling period or in the future.

Some apparent benefits that the city government may get by doing this project are, first, the city would be able to cut back on time, energy, and budget allocated for **the improvement of the quality** of local human resources. Second, it could be a free platform to advertise tourism products of the city. Third, by creating a space for voluntary work, the government will have indirectly contributed to the creation of a more responsible and meaningful kind of tourism in that the voluntary works will help tourists to develop more cultural awareness of the society. This way, the negative impacts which come along with the development of tourism can be minimized or controlled. In the end, with the hard works of the city government taking care of the big issues necessary to build and to promote Da Nang as a tourist-oriented city, and the active participation of its society in the project, I am positive that the comprehensive urban planning and the city's goal to become one of the major tourist destination is possible to be realized in the near future.