

By the bootstraps

Twenty-four innovative clean-tech start-ups recently graduated from Vietnam's first-ever Clean Tech Bootcamp. The program helps small- and medium-sized enterprises develop and bring to market innovative clean-energy and energy-efficiency solutions and technologies in the areas of transportation, agribusiness, and water management.

The initiative was developed by the World Bank's Climate Technology Program in partnership with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to accelerate the growth of new green businesses in the region and help reduce the threats posed by climate change. In the past 50 years Vietnam's sea level has risen by 5 centimeters while extreme climate events—typhoons, floods, landslides, droughts, and saline intrusions—have cost the country 9,500 lives and about 1.5 percent of GDP each year.

“To tackle climate change, we need to help train innovative and successful climate technology entrepreneurs,” said one of the organizers, Dr. Aiming Zhou, senior energy specialist at the ADB. “A boot camp like this, which provides intense hands-on support to the most promising emerging climate technology businesses in Vietnam, plays a critical part in making this happen.”

Drawing on the success of the boot camp, the program will continue to nurture and mentor climate technology enterprises through the Climate Innovation Center (Vietnam CIC). Support from the U.K. Department for International Development and the Australian Department of Foreign

Affairs and Trade will help deliver business advisory services and technology commercialization funding to many climate technology entrepreneurs, including equity investments to 25 companies in the first five years. Through this support, the center is expected to reduce or prevent the equivalent annual emissions of 47,000 passenger vehicles, improve access to clean water, increase agricultural efficiency, and provide access to renewable or more efficient sources of energy. Overall, Vietnam CIC will help protect a million people from the ravages of climate change.



Vietnamese children testing the power of green energy.

Spoon feeding

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the PepsiCo Foundation have launched the Sustained Program to Improve Nutrition (Spoon), a five-year program designed to prevent undernutrition and reduce the risk of obesity in babies living in poor areas of Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, and Peru.

“Undernutrition and obesity-related health problems are rising sharply in Latin America, and they place a growing

burden on our health care systems and budgets,” said IDB President Luis Alberto Moreno.

“At PepsiCo, we believe we have a key role to play in forming public-private partnerships designed to improve the health and nutrition of communities. Spoon is an important step toward addressing critical nutrition challenges facing many in Latin America,” said Indra Nooyi, PepsiCo chairman and CEO.

Studies show that early child development depends heavily on the quality and quantity of infants' diets. Despite progress in improving its health indicators in recent years, Latin America still experiences a high prevalence of chronic malnutrition, which affects nearly 7 million infants under the age of five. At the same time, rising incomes across the region have accompanied an increase in childhood obesity. Almost 4 million Latin Americans under five are either overweight or obese, increasing their risk for chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease in adulthood.

Spoon will develop pointers to help parents and caregivers adopt good feeding habits and will integrate its nutrition efforts into existing health services for pregnant women and babies. The project will be implemented in rural and urban areas of participating countries in collaboration with their health ministries and nonprofit organizations.



Peruvian woman carrying her child.



Commuters and traders at a Nigerian market.

Data based

Africa's progress relies on policies informed by reliable and timely data, which promote good governance and accountability and support decision making and capital allocation in the private sector.

In cooperation with other partners and the countries themselves, the African Development Bank (AfDB) has supported improved civil registries, adoption of international statistical standards to suit local conditions, and data harmonization and generation—as well as dissemination and enhancement of surveys and censuses.

The AfDB has launched a number of initiatives. The *Africa Information Highway*, an open-data platform, gives people better access to official and other statistics through data portals in most countries and regional organizations. Another initiative supports the generation of statistics on infrastructure, labor, agriculture, and rural development, and the International Comparison Program for Africa aims to standardize price and income statistics across countries.

“We must do what it takes to further strengthen African statistics, national accounts, balance of payments, trade, monetary surveys, labor statistics, and above all household surveys and censuses,” said AfDB President Donald Kaberuka.

The IMF in November announced its own initiative to provide free online statistical data to all worldwide users beginning January 1, 2015.

Home grown

Nine out of ten of the world's 570 million farms are managed by families, making the family farm the predominant form of agriculture, and consequently a potentially crucial agent of change in achieving sustainable food security and in eradicating hunger in the future, according to a 2014 report by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

Family farms produce about 80 percent of the world's food, and are also the custodians of roughly 75 percent of all agricultural resources in the world. They are key to improved ecological and resource sustainability, but are among the most vulnerable to the effects of resource depletion and climate change.

The report calls for the public sector—working with farmers, civil society organizations, and the private sector—to improve innovation systems for agriculture. Agricultural innovation systems include all the institutions and actors that support farmers in developing and adopting better ways of working in today's increasingly complex world.

According to the report, family farms are found mainly in China (35 percent), India (24 percent), and the rest of Asia (15 percent), with far fewer located in sub-Saharan Africa (9 percent) and other parts of the world.

Events in 2015

January 21–24, Davos, Switzerland

World Economic Forum Annual Meeting

March 26–29, Busan, Korea

Inter-American Development Bank Annual Meeting

April 17–19, Washington, D.C.

Spring Meetings of the IMF and the World Bank

May 2–5, Baku, Azerbaijan

Asian Development Bank Annual Meeting

May 14–15, Tbilisi, Georgia

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development Annual Meeting

May 25–29, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

African Development Bank Annual Meeting

Fish trail

The Global Environment Facility and the World Bank Group approved a \$10 million project in September to address declining migratory fish stocks. The Ocean Partnerships for Sustainable Fisheries & Biodiversity Conservation Project aims to improve the management of high-value migratory fish and maintain the economic benefits of sustainable fisheries and biodiversity conservation for developing economies and communities. More than a billion people rely on fish as their main source of protein, and about 300 million depend on healthy oceans for their livelihood.

“The health and productivity of global fish stocks are under threat from overfishing, habitat destruction, and marine pollution—all made worse by a patchwork of insufficient governance arrangements,” said Paula Caballero, World Bank senior director for the environment and natural resources.

Although many fish populations are within the exclusive economic zones of individual countries, migratory species such as tuna, billfish, and sharks travel between these zones and beyond national jurisdictions. These fish stocks represent some of the most economically valuable species in the ocean. Tuna fishing alone engages 85 countries and is valued at \$10 billion a year.

The \$10 million grant will be allocated to four marine regions—Western Atlantic and Caribbean, the Indian Ocean's Bay of Bengal, Western and Central Pacific, and Eastern Pacific—to support innovative joint management by the public and private sectors.

