

READING
Women at work

A Work in pairs. Read your article quickly and decide on a heading.

Student A: Read Article A below.
Student B: Turn to page 137.

Article A

When Nguyen Thu Hang was a child, her mother was a housewife in a small village whose women residents had no say in decision making, either at home or in the community. Now a mother herself, Hang not only shares her husband's burden of earning money for the family and bringing up children, but also has a career and social ambitions.

'Women are much happier than before. They have a good education and careers of their own,' says the 39-year-old who lives and works in Hanoi. 'And, of course, they are more respected in the family and society.' Hang, who carries a sleek laptop in her hand, gets out of an elegant black Mercedes and enters a building where she works as the General Director of Viet Hoang Trade and Investment Company, which specialises in construction and real estate.

Like Hang, many other Vietnamese women also pursue careers these days and have stormed the corporate boardroom to affirm their increasingly important roles. Whether in remote farms or in companies, they have become much more self-confident and are discovering their worth and fulfilling their potential.

Women account for nearly 52 per



cent of the workforce in the service sector, 50 per cent in the agricultural and fisheries sector and 37 per cent in industry and construction. Almost a quarter of all companies are run by women, many of whom are also the driving forces behind them. As for their status in the family, Hang says that women's position has improved remarkably. 'We jointly decide important issues in our life, such as work or education for our children. My husband always respects my opinions.'

The greater role of women is attributed to the effective policies of promoting them. The state and party are interested in women's advancement. The NA, the national legislature, has approved Law the on Gender Equality and the Anti-Domestic Violence Law. The government has national

programmes for vocational training and preventing trafficking of women and children.

Women's own efforts to acquire knowledge and education have, of course, been a major factor in their advancement. They make up over 40.2 per cent of all university graduates, including nearly 9.8 per cent of PhDs and 30.5 per cent of Master's degree recipients.

But women still face a number of difficulties, including poverty, underemployment, domestic violence, prostitution and gender inequality. 'I think the best way to help women overcome these challenges is to help them study and lead an active lifestyle,' says Hang, whose entry into the boardroom began after she obtained a Master's degree in Britain at the age of 27.

from Thanh Nien News

B Decide if the statements about your article are true (T) or false (F).

Article A

- 1 The position of women in Vietnam has improved.
- 2 Women make up less than half of the workforce in the service, agricultural, fisheries, industry and construction sectors.
- 3 Nearly 25% of Vietnamese companies are run by women.
- 4 More than a third of all university graduates and holders of Master's degrees are women.
- 5 Nguyen Thu Hang lets her husband make important decisions.
- 6 Nguyen Thu Hang's position with regard to decision-making is different to that of her mother.