



Internal Migration

Opportunities and challenges for
socio-economic development in Viet Nam

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AusAID	Australian Government Overseas Aid Program
ADB	Asian Development Bank
BCC	Behaviour Change Communication
EPZ	Export Processing Zone
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GSO	General Statistics Office of Viet Nam
HCMC	Ho Chi Minh City
HEPR	Hunger Eradication and Poverty Reduction
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IEC	Information Education Communication
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILSSA	Institute for Labour, Science and Social Affairs
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Viet Nam
MCST	Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Viet Nam
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MOH	Ministry of Health of Viet Nam
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour Invalids and Social Affairs of Viet Nam
MPS	Ministry of Public Security of Viet Nam
NEZ	New Economic Zone
PCS	Population Change Survey
SEDP	Socio-Economic Development Plan
SEDS	Socio-Economic Development Strategy
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
UN	United Nations

UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
VAPPD	Viet Nam Parliament's Association for Population Development
VDG	Viet Nam Development Goal
VHLSS	Viet Nam Household Living Standards Survey
VLSS	Viet Nam Living Standards Survey
VMS	Viet Nam Migration Survey

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Like many other countries that have undergone rapid economic and social development, Viet Nam has experienced an exponential increase in the movement of people both within and outside its borders over the past 20 years. There is growing recognition that these processes – development and migration – go hand-in-hand. Migration drives, as well as stems from, a country's social and economic development. In Viet Nam, the socio-economic development resulting from the *Doi Moi* (Renewal) process launched in 1986 has certainly catalyzed increasing internal migration, by not only making it possible for people to move away from their area of origin, but also by providing the motivation to do so as a result of growing regional disparities. Internal migration has in turn contributed to socio-economic development through the movement of workers to fill demand for labour created by industrial development and foreign direct investment, as well as by impacting large numbers of migrant-sending households.

To understand the role of internal migration for Viet Nam's continued socio-economic development, it is important to first note the legal, policy and administrative frameworks for internal migration in Viet Nam. Firstly, there are numerous rights guaranteed to internal migrants (and all other Vietnamese citizens) under the Constitution of Viet Nam and various human rights instruments which Viet Nam has committed itself to internationally. Unfortunately, various government policies have not devoted enough attention to ensuring that the rights of internal migrants are equally fulfilled and protected in Viet Nam. In part, this is reflected in the diffusion of migrants' protection issues across various government ministries, laws and policy documents. So far, no single agency or ministry has been given the

responsibility to ensure the protection of this group of citizens, resulting in their interests often being inadequately represented in national policies. One particular policy which adversely impacts upon internal migrants and their rights is the *hộ khẩu*, or registration system, which records and restricts changes in people's residency by classifying households into different categories that provide differential entitlements, such as the ability to access basic services.

Overview of Internal Economic Migration in Viet Nam

The 2009 Census recorded that 6.6 million people migrated internally in Viet Nam over the 2004-2009 period. This is a significant increase from the 4.5 million internal migrants identified in the 1999 Census. The data also shows that the majority of migrants are young, increasingly female and that a large majority of migrants move alone, either because they are not married or because their family stays behind in the departure community. Most migrants move for economic reasons, including those who move looking for work, those intending to increase their incomes and living conditions, and also those who move with a family member that is migrating for the above-mentioned reasons.

A majority of economic migrants move outside of government-led migrations and are therefore referred to as 'spontaneous migrants'. While some government-led migration programmes, most notably those of sedentarization, have gradually declined since the 1990s, there has been a recent augmentation in relocation programmes motivated by environmental concerns such as natural disasters and gradual changes in climate.

Internal migrations in Viet Nam encompass permanent movements, as well as those

that are short-term (temporary) or seasonal in duration. Unfortunately, most national and large-scale data on internal migrations in Viet Nam under-represent the latter two trends due to the sampling methods and definition of migration used. However, small-scale studies have found that these unrecorded movements are substantial in number and cover vast numbers of movements for off-farm employment in the low agricultural seasons, as well as migrants moving to infrastructure sites and urban areas for employment.

The majority of migration flows are directed towards urban and industrial areas where employment opportunities exist. This has led to urban growth, with urban populations now growing by 3.4 percent each year compared to 0.4 percent in rural areas. Given the close link between migration and economic development, internal migration dynamics are constantly changing and responding to current events such as the global financial crisis, climate change and demographic structures, and will continue to do so in the future.

Migration and Development

From the outset, it is important to acknowledge that the lack of data constitutes a serious limitation of the following analysis of internal migration. The under-representation in government household surveys, such as the Viet Nam Household Living Standards Survey (VHLSS), of many temporary registered and un-registered migrants is particularly regrettable, given that the type of internal economic migrants that are most likely to have been excluded are generally vulnerable and inadequately considered in government planning.

Adopting a gender and rights-based approach, this analysis uses three lenses to examine the impacts of development on migration, namely on: (1) migrants themselves; (2) migrant-receiving areas; and (3) migrant-sending communities.

1) Migrants

Many who migrate internally in Viet Nam with the intention of finding work at their destination succeed in finding decently paid work in a safe environment and report that they are satisfied with life after migration compared to before they moved. Evidence shows that migrants search for work as soon as they arrive at their destination, or arrange it beforehand, work hard and maintain higher levels of employment than non-migrants. However, migrants find themselves particularly vulnerable compared to local residents, especially in the labour market. While concentrated in certain sectors, they are subject to less job security or lower-paid work, and have no access to social, health and employment insurance if they are not covered by a labour contract.

The strong link between registration status and access to social services impedes many temporary registered or un-registered migrants from accessing those services in the same way as residents, and obliges them to pay for them with direct outlays of cash that are not reimbursed. The fact that migrants have to resort to more expensive private providers for secure social services such as health care leads to existing inequalities being exacerbated and increasing urban poverty. This situation is especially acute for some particularly vulnerable groups of the migrant population such as migrant children, women migrants or migrant families with children, as they have little or no access to formal support structures and are separated from social networks they may have relied on otherwise. As migrants try to save money to send remittances home, they often reduce expenditure on vital needs for themselves, for example, by self-medicating rather than seeking medical help, and by living in unhygienic, poor-quality housing. The combination of these factors, as well as a lack of access to government-provided information and mass organization and government support structures, gives rise to particular vulnerabilities among migrants which require attention and solutions.

2) Migrant-receiving areas

The destination areas to which spontaneous migrants move are most often urban and industrial areas, leading to an urbanization process where the urban population now accounts for almost 30 percent of the country's total population. This exerts pressure on existing infrastructure and urban services such as housing, education, health care, water and sanitation and transportation, with numerous economic, social and health consequences. In the 2004 Viet Nam Migration Survey, migrants identified housing as a key cause of dissatisfaction, as many live in temporary housing, low-quality guest houses where they pay rent by the day, or live onsite at their workplace, especially in the case of the construction sector. Women migrants in particular cited their home environment as a problem and are more vulnerable in terms of health and safety. The situation in industrial areas is also alarming, where living conditions have been described as cramped, insecure and unhygienic.

Recently, the Government has made considerable efforts to improve the housing situation in Viet Nam. Unfortunately, those efforts will also not affect the most deprived and vulnerable, as those without registration status will not be eligible to apply for social housing. With Viet Nam undergoing rapid urbanization and industrialization over the past two decades, and signs indicating this trend is set to continue in the future, it is imperative that all residents, regardless of registration status, are considered in urban planning and budgeting to ensure adequate housing and infrastructure.

3) Migrant-sending communities

In some ways, the communities which send migrants, and to which they often return, represent the most significant area for enhancing the benefits of migration. This is due to the fact that while migrants themselves only amount to 7.7 percent of the population, internal economic migrants in Viet Nam

move to assist their households, which likely comprise numerous people and multiple generations. According to the VHLSS 2004, 88.7 percent of Vietnamese households received some form of remittances, indicating the large reach of migration impacts across the country, all of which help finance the education and health care expenses of poor families and thereby reduce the disparities between urban and rural areas. Nevertheless, the impacts of migration on migrant-sending communities are extremely varied, as well as complex, and include the social and psychological impacts experienced by families in the absence of a migrating family member, parent or spouse. Migration affects the structure of responsibilities within households, both in terms of the gender-distribution of these responsibilities as well as the distribution across generations. The impact of migration on children in households that remain behind is another area which raises concern, yet not much is known in the context of internal migration in Viet Nam. Another impact on migrant-sending communities can be seen when migrants return back to their home communities, and the resulting positive and negative transfers of knowledge and behaviours from migrants upon their return. In this respect, research findings confirming the spousal transmission of HIV from returning migrants are particularly worrying.

Conclusion

Migration is an integral and important contributor to Viet Nam's socio-economic development. By meeting much of the demand for labour created by industrial development and foreign direct investment following the *Doi Moi* reforms, and remitting part of these earnings to the poorer areas of Viet Nam, migration represents significant opportunities for more even and widespread development through reducing existing regional differences.

It is often said that in development there are winners and losers. Many individuals and

households who make the decision to migrate elsewhere in search of a better life have not been the winners in Viet Nam's social and economic development so far. Ensuring the rights of these people are fulfilled and leveraging the impacts of internal migration to best benefit these individuals, households and communities is therefore an important task for Viet Nam's future development.

This paper has shown that these impacts will depend on the political, social and economic environments, along with the behaviours and resources of individual migrants and their households. Government, local authorities and the private sector all have a role to play in creating an adequate environment for migrants, households and society at large to fully benefit from this process.

Recommendations

- 1) **Accurate data and better understanding of internal migration processes is urgently required to inform evidence-based policy-making.** This includes improving census and large-scale national data to capture all internal migrations, as well as the need to fill specific research gaps, inter alia seasonal rural-rural migration flows, reproductive health of migrant women, housing conditions in industrial zones and migratory impacts of environmental changes and disasters.
- 2) **Ensure safe and successful migration for internal migrants** by removing overly restrictive barriers to migration and decoupling access to services from residency status. The potential benefits of migration should instead be promoted by its integration into socio-economic development planning and national poverty reduction strategies.
- 3) **Enhance benefits of internal migration in migrant-receiving areas.** Urban planning should take into account the actual population, including un-registered and temporary migrants, and focus on pro-poor planning, with safe and hygienic housing made available to low-income households. The housing and safety of migrant men and women workers in industrial zones should be given more attention by both government and private employers. Greater efforts should be made to ensure that migrants are integrated into destination areas by reducing stigma and facilitating their access to poverty reduction programmes and other social services.
- 4) **Enhance benefits of internal migration in sending communities** by supporting migrants to take advantage and share newly acquired skills and knowledge upon their return, and to use their remittances in the best way of their choosing. Family members left behind should also be provided with support to cope with the (temporary) loss of a household member.

INTRODUCTION



Like many other countries that have undergone rapid economic and social development, Viet Nam has experienced an exponential increase in the movement of people both within and outside its borders over the past 20 years. There is growing recognition that these processes – development and migration – go hand-in-hand. Migration drives, as well as

results from, a country's social and economic development¹. In the case of Viet Nam, the *Doi Moi* or “renovation” policies of the mid-1980s spurred vast numbers of internal migrations as Viet Nam moved away from a centrally controlled economy and towards a market economy. These reforms not only made it possible for people to move away from their area of origin, but also provided the motivational “push” and “pull” to do so.

The effects of *Doi Moi* in terms of social and economic development are widely regarded as a tremendous success. Poverty declined from 70 percent in the mid-1980s to 58 percent in 1993 and down to 14 percent in 2008² Viet Nam's annual growth rate swung from negative to positive and then rose to 7-8 percent annually; life expectancy has increased and infant mortality declined³. However, the contribution of internal migration towards these successes is not well recognized. The creation of a private sector and the burgeoning number of private enterprises, many of them foreign-invested, would have had little impact without the vast number of workers moving towards these opportunities, both figuratively and geographically⁴. Accordingly, while the economic reforms provided the opportunity and ability for many to migrate, the willingness of migrants and their families to move away from their place of origin (and sometimes away from their families) must be given due recognition. Representing a substantial component of the workforce, migrants are a fundamental building block of Viet Nam's economic and social development.

Building on the contribution of migration to development, a second important feature of this relationship is the way in which

- 1 IOM (2005), *Internal Migration and Development: A Global Perspective*, IOM Migration Research Series No. 19, p5; UNDP (2009) *Human Development Report 2009 - Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development*.
- 2 World Bank (2009), *Taking Stock: An Update on Viet Nam's Recent Economic Development*, Prepared by the World Bank for the Annual Consultative Group meeting, December 2009. This figure is based on the VHLSS 2008 data.
- 3 Le, Bach Duong, et al. (2005), *Social Protection for the Most Needy in Viet Nam*, World Publishing House, Ha Noi; Centre for International Economics (2002), '*Viet Nam Poverty Analysis*, Paper prepared for AusAID. Chu, Thi Trung Hau and Dickie Paul M. (2006), *Economic Transition in Viet Nam: Doi Moi to WTO, Public Policy Training Program*, PPTP Studies Series 1.
- 4 National Centre for Social Sciences and Humanities (2001), *National Human Development Report 2001: Doi Moi and Human Development in Viet Nam*.

development has in turn contributed to migration. The development gains achieved in Viet Nam have not been achieved evenly across the board⁵. As with social and economic gains in any country, some regions and some people benefited more than others. Evidence of the distribution of poverty and under-development in Viet Nam clearly shows that one of these disparities is between rural and urban areas, with people living in the latter areas significantly better-positioned to reap the benefits of recent development⁶. Evidence suggests that the average income of urban-dwellers in Viet Nam is about double that of people living in rural areas. Similar disparities can be found across different regions in Viet Nam, with the average income of inhabitants of the South East region over three times as much as that in the North West region, a proportion which has steadily increased over the preceding decade⁷. This disparity significantly contributes to increasing numbers of rural households, as well as households in certain geographic regions of Viet Nam, adopting migratory strategies, sometimes by moving within their province, sometimes to another province with greater land availability, and sometime for other off-farm employment in rural areas. In many cases, people seek out employment opportunities in urban and industrial hubs to “cash in” on the growth and relative wealth of these destination areas and to diversify the income sources of their household⁸.

Despite the complexity of the interrelationship between migration and development, one point that is clear is that migration should not

be seen as an impediment to development. However, neither is it a panacea for poverty or income inequality. The movement of people is a natural and irrefutable part of human history and current worldwide events. In recognising this, it is possible to move forward by appreciating that migration offers both opportunities for development, as well as challenges. Internal migration can contribute further to economic growth, both on a national scale and at the household level. It can foster links between destination areas and areas of origin, not only through financial remittance flows, but also through knowledge and skills transfers, thereby assisting in reducing regional disparities. Supporting migration also involves supporting the decisions made by individuals and households regarding their livelihoods, furthering their social and economic empowerment.

However, efforts towards this end are not without challenges. In particular, the biggest challenge remains ensuring that the rights of migrant women, men, boys and girls are addressed - both those rights contained in international human rights instruments as well as those guaranteed under the Constitution of Viet Nam. This includes ensuring that migrants have equal access to those rights entitled to all, many of which relate to basic standards of living and employment.

The particular impacts of migration, and whether it works for or in opposition to development, depend on the political, social and economic environment, along with the behaviours and resources of individual

5 Bhushan, Indu, Bloom Erik and Nguyen Minh Thang (2002), *Unequal Benefits of Growth in Viet Nam*, *Asian Development Bank Economic and Research Department Policy Series* No.3; Scott, Steffanie and Truong Thi Kim Chuyen (2004) 'Behind the Numbers: Social mobility, regional disparities and new trajectories of development in rural Viet Nam' in Philip Taylor (ed.), *Social Inequality in Viet Nam: Challenges to Reform*, Singapore Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS).

6 For example, in 1998 average incomes in Ha Noi or Ho Chi Minh City were 5 to 7 times higher than of that of a farm labourer. Scott and Chuyen (2004), note 5.

7 Findings of the 2002 VHLSS & 2006 VHLSS: GSO (2004) *Results of the Survey on Household Living Standards 2002*, Statistical Publishing House, Ha Noi; GSO (2007), *Results of the Viet Nam Household Living Standards 2006*, Statistical Publishing House, Ha Noi.

8 NCSSH (2001), note 4, p.35.

migrants and their households⁹. Migration holds considerable potential for contributing further to social and economic development. However, for this to occur coherent and thoughtful policy development is required that is based on a sound understanding of the flows, patterns and demographics of internal migration in Viet Nam, and on an understanding of the experience of migrants and the impacts of these movements on destination areas and areas of origin.

1.1. Scope

This paper focuses on internal economic migration in Viet Nam. “Migrants” include anyone who has moved within the boundaries of Viet Nam, irrespective of the duration of stay in the destination area. The geographic distance between origin and destination is not strictly circumscribed; however at a minimum this should involve the crossing of an administrative boundary, such as commune or provincial borders.

It is important to recognize the continuities between internal and international migration trends, as well as their shared capacity to significantly contribute to the socio-economic development of Viet Nam¹⁰. These two modalities of migration result from similar individual and household motivations and can have similar impacts on the communities and households from which the migrants originate. However, the experience of Vietnamese international migrants can substantially differ from that experienced by internal migrants, in

accordance with the numerous destinations to which they migrate. For this reason, and also because of the larger numbers of people involved, the present paper will consider internal migration alone¹¹.

The literature on migration in Viet Nam is littered with dichotomies that categorize these movements according to their destination, motivation and government involvement. Whilst these distinctions assist discussions relating to particular aspects of migration, they can also serve to fragment its broader importance. This paper will attempt to deal with internal migration in Viet Nam comprehensively; however, a major constraint in this endeavour is the limited amount of data and research available. Accordingly, this paper is not able to equally consider all aspects of migration in Viet Nam. The analysis here largely focuses on those movements destined for urban areas, despite the fact that almost one-half of census-recorded movements between 1994 and 1999 were to rural areas. It also concentrates on the experiences of spontaneous migrants, that is, those who move outside of government-led programmes. The distinction between spontaneous and government-led migrations is significant, both in terms of the patterns involved, as well as the protection issues they raise. However the census and other data utilized in this paper do not discriminate between the two, making it impossible to extract the rural/urban trends of these types of migration individually.

9 This is an important point recognized in the UN High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, but is nevertheless relevant to discussions on internal migration.

10 Three broad links between international and internal migration have been identified: *step migration*, where people migrate internally first as an initial step towards international migration; *replacement migration*, where internal migrants fill employment positions opened up by those who have migrated internationally; and *return migration*, where people who migrated in the past return to their region of origin: IOM (2008) *World Migration 2008: Managing labour mobility in the evolving global economy*, IOM *World Migration Report Series*, Vol.4, p182.

11 According to the 1999 Census, there were 4.5 million internal migrants in the five years preceding the census and fewer than 300,000 international migrants: Central Census Steering Committee (1999) *The 1999 Population and Housing Census: Sample Results* (“1999 Census”).

The analysis here will involve a consideration of the dominant trends of internal economic migration in Viet Nam, the development impacts of these migrations, both economic and social, and the challenges faced by those involved in these migration processes. Three “lenses” will be utilized to analyze the development impacts of migration. The first lens considers the individual migrant or migrating household and raises concerns about the social and legal protection of migrants and their ability to access basic services. The second lens assesses the impacts of migration on receiving communities, mostly urban centres and new economic zones, and identifies planning issues to be addressed. The third and final lens focuses on migrant-sending communities and addresses questions about the impacts of out-migration on families left behind, encompassing both remittances and knowledge transfers from returning household members. Each of these lenses involves gender dimensions, and thus requires particular consideration of the different impacts, capabilities and vulnerabilities of both men and women. They also adopt a rights-based approach and identify migrants as a group whose rights, as set by international standards and the Vietnamese legal framework, are often not fully realized. This shortcoming can arise from poverty, inability to access basic services, limited knowledge about certain rights, unfamiliarity with their place of destination, and any social stigma or discrimination they may experience. Often, even where the rights of migrants are guaranteed on paper, factors exist which prevent comprehensive access to them in practice. To conclude, this paper makes suggestions for appropriate policy interventions to maximize the contribution of migration to socio-economic and human development in Viet Nam and to ensure the rights of migrants and their families are realized.

1.2. Methodology & Limitations

The analysis in this paper of internal migration in Viet Nam is based on available data and research. The quantitative data stems largely from the 1999 and 2009 Population and Housing Census, the 2004 Viet Nam Migration Survey (VMS) and the Viet Nam (Household) Living Standards Surveys of 1992, 1998 and 2004¹². However, an important limitation must be noted - much of the data which seeks to be representative of the whole population excludes certain migrants and their migration flows. This stems both from the sampling frames used, as well as the phrasing of migration-related questions in the surveys. For this reason, national data is supplemented by small-scale quantitative and qualitative data, which in many cases provides a more in-depth understanding of migration patterns and issues in specific areas. The particular limitations of the national and large-scale data used in the analysis are considered below in order to provide a more accurate picture of who is likely to have been excluded.

The Population and Housing Census of 1999 and 2009 are the most recent and most representative demographic snap-shots of internal migration flows in Viet Nam. However, the Census defines a migrant as someone who has a different place of residence at the time of the survey as compared to a designated date five years prior. This omits those who have migrated more than five years prior, as well as those who migrated within the five-year period but returned home before the census date. Accordingly, seasonal and temporary migrants are under-represented as they tend to migrate for short periods. For these reasons, the total figure of internal migrants recorded by the Census excludes long-term migrants who have been away for over five years, seasonal and temporary migrants, and return migrants who migrated less than 5 years ago and have already returned to their place of origin.

12 1999 Census; GSO and UNFPA (2005), *The 2004 Viet Nam Migration Survey; Major Findings*, GSO Statistical Publishing House (“2004 VMS”); GSO (1992), *The 1992 Viet Nam Living Standards Survey (“1992 VLSS”)*; GSO (1998), *The 1998 Viet Nam Living Standards Survey (“1998 VLSS”)*. GSO (2004), *The 2004 Viet Nam Household Living Standards Survey (“2004 VHLSS”)*.

The 2004 Viet Nam Migration Survey (VMS) covers a much smaller proportion of the population than the Census, but as a specialized migration survey provides more in-depth knowledge about the experiences of migrants and their households. This includes motivations for migration, levels of satisfaction, remittances sent, as well as contextualizing migrations within the life events of the household. In addition, the areas selected for the survey included communes and wards identified in the 1999 Census as containing high numbers of temporary residents¹³. Accordingly, the VMS sample includes a substantial proportion of temporary migrants, as well as much smaller numbers of unregistered migrants.

The Viet Nam Living Standards Survey of 1992 and 1998 (VLSS) and the Viet Nam Household Living Standards Survey (VHLSS) from 2002 are other important sources of information, particularly in relation to remittances received by migrant-sending households, impacts of migration over time (as each survey also includes a proportion of households previously surveyed) and, importantly, seasonal migration. However, these surveys share the sampling issues mentioned above, in that they only include those households usually residing in communes and urban wards or who have lived in the enumerated area for at least six months. Accordingly new migrants who arrived to the destination place less than 6 months prior to the survey enumeration are unlikely to have been included. An additional concern was the time lag of six to 12 months between the selection of households from the commune and ward household lists and the completion of

the interviews¹⁴. This suggests further under-coverage of newly formed households, as well as explains the high non-response rate in urban areas. This is evident when noting that the 2004 VHLSS found that only 3.8 percent of Ho Chi Minh City's population possessed KT3 or KT4 registration¹⁵. In contrast, an inter-censal survey of Ho Chi Minh City from the same year found that these households composed nearly 20 percent of the population¹⁶. The 2004 VHLSS also captured less people in the 20 to 29-year-old age range (where migrants are concentrated) than the 1999 Census by 20 to 30 percent, further suggesting that a large number of young migrant individuals and households were not captured.

The annual Population Change Survey (PCS) is a useful information source on internal migration as it includes a question on the movement of residents over the year preceding the survey. However, it also fails to capture the dominant shorter term movements (especially seasonal movements that occur within a year) that many un-counted migrants undertake. These limitations reflect the understandable difficulties of capturing a segment of the population that is mobile by its very definition. Nevertheless, extensive mention of these limitations is made here because those who are under-represented are precisely the subject of this paper. There is significant anecdotal evidence, as well as supplementary research, which suggests that within internal economic migrants in Viet Nam, those likely to have not been captured by census and survey data are those most vulnerable and least considered in government planning¹⁷.

13 2004 VMS.

14 Pincus, Jonathan and Sender John (2008), 'Quantifying Poverty in Viet Nam: Who Counts?'

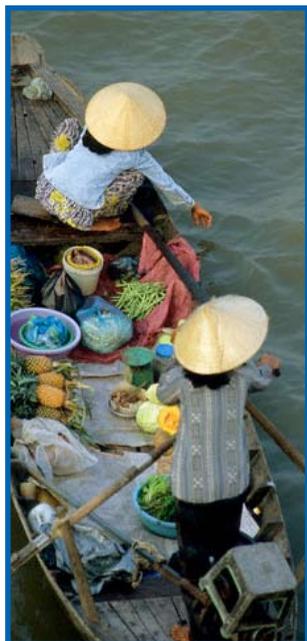
15 Please refer to section 1.3 Household Registration for explanation on the household registration system and the KT categorization.

16 World Bank (2008), *The Viet Nam Development Report 2008: Social Protection*. Joint Donor Report to the Viet Nam Consultative Group Meeting, Ha Noi 6-7 December 2008.

17 Pincus, Jonathan and Sender John (2008), 'Quantifying Poverty in Viet Nam: Who Counts?' Pfau, Wade Donald and Giang Thanh Long (2008), Groups Excluded from "Representative" Household Surveys.

PART 1 - THE CONTEXT OF INTERNAL ECONOMIC MIGRATION IN VIET NAM

1.1 Constitutional Rights and International Commitments



Viet Nam has committed itself internationally to the protection of its citizens by signing and ratifying a number of international conventions and declarations which are relevant to internal economic migrants in the country. The rights provided for in these conventions include, among others, the right to pursue economic, social and cultural

development¹⁸, the right to just and favourable working conditions, the right to adequate standards of living for each person and their families, the right to the highest attainable standard of mental and physical health, the right to education and to take part in a cultural life¹⁹, children's rights and the full realization of women's human rights and gender equality²⁰ (for details, please see An-

nex 1). Viet Nam has also committed itself to the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015, all of which have a linkage (directly or indirectly) to migration processes or the experiences of migrants and their families²¹. Viet Nam has also developed its own context-specific goals, the Vietnamese Development Goals (VDGs), which set the additional goal of reducing vulnerability (VDG8), reducing ethnic inequality (VDG10) and ensuring the development of pro-poor infrastructure (VDG11).

The Constitution of Viet Nam has guaranteed the equal rights of Vietnamese citizens for over six decades, first expressed in the 1946 Constitution, which stated that "all citizens are equal before the law and have equal rights in all fields – political, economic, cultural and social"²². Each successive Constitution passed by the National Assembly has further elaborated the rights due to all Vietnamese citizens. These include the freedom of movement and residence, the right to access health services, the right to access education and acquire knowledge, the right to work, the right to own lawful domicile and property, and the right to access socio-economic services in an equal manner²³. Importantly, the equal rights of male and female citizens in all

18 *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR), adopted by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966, entry into force 3 January 1976. Acceded to by Viet Nam on 24 Sep 1982.

19 Ibid, Articles 7, 11, 12, 13, 15.

20 *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, 18 December 1979, entry into force 3 September 1981. Acceded to by Viet Nam on 17 February 1982.

21 Ronald Skeldon (2005), 'Migration and the Millennium Development Goals' in IOM (ed) *International Dialogue on Migration: Mainstreaming Migration into Development Policy Agendas*.

22 Translation adopted from Nguyen, Thi Hoai Thu et. al (2005), *Assessment on Urban Migration Policy*, Parliamentary Committee for Social Affairs, p.19-20.

23 National Assembly, Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam of 1992, as amended by National Assembly Resolution 51/2001/QH10 (25 December 2001) ("1992 Constitution"), Articles 68, 39, 59, 55 and 23.

of these areas are also guaranteed in the Constitution and any discrimination against women or violations of women's dignity is strictly prohibited²⁴. Article 66 further ensures the promotion of young people, meaning that "the State and society shall create favourable conditions for the studies, work and recreation of young people and for the development of their intellectual faculties and physical fitness"²⁵. As set out in the following sections of the present paper, each of these rights is especially important for internal migrants and their fulfilment should be ensured.

1.2 Administrative, Legal & Policy Framework

Despite the rigorous legal framework for the protection of rights under which migrants and their families must also be protected, the national administrative, legal and policy framework for internal economic migration issues in Viet Nam is far from clear – a result of the diffusion of these issues across various government ministries, laws and policy documents. In part, this reflects the complexity of migratory phenomena, but perhaps also reveals inadequate government attention.

Internal migration is explicitly mentioned in the *Socio-Economic Development Strategy for the period 2001 – 2010*, and is also included in the corresponding *Socio-Economic Development Programme 2001-2010*²⁶. However, both documents express the aim of reducing spontaneous migration through a number of specific goals and solutions rather

than providing a framework for the protection of migrants or to enhance the benefits of migration for Viet Nam's social development.

In relation to ministerial mandate, it is important to note that internal migration in Viet Nam is not specifically assigned to any one government ministry. Rather, migration-related social policy comes within the purview of many different ministries²⁷. For example, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) is responsible for State-organized migration only, and the Ministry of Public Security (MPS) deals with household registration and social order. No department or agency under the Ministry of Health (MOH) is responsible for migrant health or access to services. The Ministry of Labour Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) is perhaps the ministry most appropriate for dealing with spontaneous internal economic migration as it is charged with State administration of labour and employment and is therefore particularly involved in the area of labour migration, such as employment of Vietnamese workers in foreign countries and movements to new economic zones for work. Yet even MOLISA lacks any plan or specific policy tailored to the needs and risks of spontaneous economic migrants.

Accordingly, internal economic migrants have not received appropriate consideration in the policy and strategy documents created under these ministries. For example, the *Reproductive Health Strategy 2001-2010*²⁸ does not include reference to the "migrant population group". Similarly, the *Master Plan for Youth*²⁹ or the *Youth Law*³⁰ do not

24 Ibid, Article 63.

25 Ibid, Article 66.

26 Communist Party of Viet Nam Central Committee, Strategy for Socio-Economic Development 2001–2010, presented by the Central Committee, 8th Tenure, to the 9th National Congress April 2001 ("SEDS"); Resolution No. 56/2006/QH11, Term XI, session 9 on Five Year Socio-Economic Development Plan 2006 – 2010 (16 May - 29 June 2006) ("SEDP").

27 Le, Bach Duong, et al (2005), note 3.

28 Prime Minister Decision No. 136/2000/QĐ-TTg, approving National Strategy on Reproductive Health Care for the 2001-2010 period (28 November 2000).

29 Ministry of Health, National Master Plan on Protection, Care, and Promotion of Adolescent and Youth Health for the Period 2006 – 2010 and Strategic Orientation until 2020; Decision No. 2010/QĐ-BYT, (7 June 2006).

30 National Assembly, Law on Youth, No. 53/2005/GH11, passed by the National Assembly (29 November 2005).

make reference to migrants, even though most spontaneous economic migrants are young - thus missing out on a large number of citizens that are vulnerable to social risks. The National Family Strategy 2005-2010³¹ does not make reference to different types of family situations including migrating families, or families suffering the temporary absence of a parent due to migration.

Where migrants are considered in policy strategies, the approach is not one aimed at their protection. This is evidenced by the current Population Strategy 2001-2010³², where migrants are stigmatized as bringing more negative consequences to development than positive ones. The only indicator which refers to migrants in the strategy is the objective to reach a 75-percent registration rate of spontaneous migrants by 2010. However there is no mention of any objective to ensure their access to basic social services or address other issues this paper will outline. One notable exception is the National Strategy on HIV/AIDS, which identifies migrants as a particularly vulnerable group to HIV infection³³. The 2006 Law on HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control additionally included a specific article on HIV/AIDS prevention and control among mobile populations³⁴.

The process of drafting strategies for the subsequent period 2011 to 2020 is already well underway by various ministries. Some draft versions of various strategies that have been circulated include some recognition of internal migration as a development issue. However, many do not, resulting in these piecemeal initiatives falling significantly short of

acknowledging the breadth and depth of internal migration's impact on Viet Nam. Resolving this situation would involve recognizing the role of internal migration as a force for development, as well as comprehensively addressing the social protection needs of migrants, the problems afflicting urban destination areas, and the migration-related impacts on communities of origin. Each of these aspects is outlined in Part 3 of the present paper.

1.3 Household Registration

The household registration system, or *hộ khẩu*, is intimately related to issues of internal economic migration in Viet Nam as it controls and monitors changes in people's residence in Viet Nam by classifying them into different residential categories, each with certain rights and obligations. The origins of the *hộ khẩu* system lie in population control measures to restrict urbanization and mobility during wartime and in rationing procedures under central planning during the post-war phase. During decollectivization, the possession of a rural registration entitled the holder to receive agricultural land and house plots. People holding an urban registration were allocated land use rights for their houses and gardens³⁵. Before *Doi Moi*, such migration control was effective because it was linked to government subsidies, rations and access to certain basic necessities and services. Even now, a *hộ khẩu* is required for certain administrative procedures, such as to buy land or build a house, register a motor vehicle, borrow money, access subsidized medical care, water and electricity or to participate in the national targeted programs for poverty reduction.

31 Prime Minister Decision No. 106/2005/QĐ-TTg, approving Strategy on Building the Vietnamese Family for the Period 2005 – 2010 (16 May 2005).

32 Prime Minister Decision No. 147/2000/QĐ-TTg approving Viet Nam's National Population Strategy for the 2001-2010 Period (22 December 2000).

33 Prime Minister Decision No. 36/2004/QĐ-TTg, approving National Strategy on HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control in Viet Nam till 2010 with a Vision to 2020 (17 March 2004).

34 National Assembly Law on HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control, Decision No. 64/2006/QH11 (29 June 2006).

35 Hardy, Andrew (2001), Rules and Resources: Negotiating the Household Registration System in Vietnam under Reform, Sojourn, Vol. 16(2).

Only those who are registered as permanent residents in the place they reside have full entitlements to government services - the rest must pay for them or are excluded³⁶.

Prior to 2007, four categories existed where permanent residents enjoyed KT1 status, entitling them to full residential rights, including permission to purchase land-use rights and the ability to access schools and medical services within their district of residence³⁷. Those who moved to a different district, but still in the same province, had KT2 status and could purchase land-use rights but were limited to schooling and other social services in the district where they are registered. People who were registered in one province but resided in another were classified KT3 and generally held a temporary residence permit of six-to-12 months which could be renewed fairly easily. These people could also purchase land titles, but could not access schooling unless there was space available after KT1 and KT2 children had enrolled. Those in the KT4 category were registered as individuals without a family, in contrast to the other three categories, and possessed an extendable three-month residence permit. They could not purchase land titles, and like KT3 residence status, they could not access certain social services. Other migrants relocated without registering their movement at all. These unregistered migrants remained on the household lists in their home communes and wards, despite actually living in another district or province.

According to the law, anyone living in a location other than their permanent

residence for 30 days or more must register their temporary status with the police³⁸. However, changing residential status was, and still is, not a particularly easy task. In order to obtain KT4 registration, migrants had to obtain a letter of release from district authorities (in the case of movement between provinces) or commune authorities (when moving between districts in the same province) where they hold their *hộ khẩu*. In order to obtain such official permission to leave, they had to prove evidence of a job at their destination. Hence, many migrants received neither permission to leave, nor KT4 status upon arrival³⁹ and many did not even try to reregister as they were uncertain of the length of their stay and unaware of the administrative process they were supposed to follow.

Findings from the 2004 VMS revealed the obstacles many migrants faced as a result of the registration system. Forty-two percent of those surveyed reported difficulties due to not possessing KT1 registration. Of those migrants that did not re-register their temporary status in their destination area, 48 percent believed that they had no permission to re-register, while 22 percent thought it was not necessary to register and 9 percent did not know how to re-register.

Reforms to the household registration system have been introduced in recent years which have relaxed some of the restrictions on changing residency. In 2005 for example, Decree 108 of the Prime Minister and Circular 11 of the Ministry of Public Security eased some of the conditions for KT3 residents to become

36 Deshingkar, Priya (2006), *Internal Migration, Poverty and Development in Asia: Including the Excluded through Partnerships and Improved Governance*. Paper presented at the Asia 2015: Promoting Growth, Ending Poverty Conference, March 2006.

37 Waibel, Michael (2007), *Migration to Greater Ho Chi Minh City in the Course of the Doi Moi Policy: Spatial Dimensions, Consequences, and Policy Changes with special reference to Housing*.

38 National Assembly, *Law on Residence*, No. 81/2006/QH11, taking effect on 1/7/2007 (29 November 2006) ("2006 Law on Residence"), Article 30, clause 2.

39 Dang, Nguyen Anh (2006), *Viet Nam Internal Migration: Opportunities and Challenges for Development*, paper presented at the Regional Conference on Migration and Development in Asia (Lanzhou, China 2006). Since province block grants are based on population, province officials are reluctant to record the departure of migrants, as this could reduce the population count of the sending province.

KT1 residents by removing the requirement of owning a house. Accordingly, those who rent or stay in another person's house are able to become permanent residents by showing the house-owner's written approval⁴⁰. However, the requirements still included conditions such as residence in a legal house, stable employment and continuous residence for years to be able to become a permanent resident. Another reform in 2005 permitted the registering of births with People's Committees at the location where the child was born, removing the need for migrant parents to go back to their area of origin to register the birth of their child⁴¹.

In 2007, the new Law on Residence took effect, which reduced the number of residence categories to just two - temporary and permanent - and further eased conditions for obtaining permanent residency⁴². For temporary residents applying to become permanent residents in centrally administered cities, the requirements were changed from having to prove three years of continuous residence to only one year of uninterrupted employment and residence⁴³. In addition, the 2007 law also removed any legal conditionality of employment for registration. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the Law on Residence is being applied inconsistently by local authorities across the country due to a lack of further guidance and differing interpretations of the law. For example,

authorities in Ho Chi Minh City are reportedly still using the four categories of KT1-KT4, whereas the two categories of permanent and temporary residence are often applied in Ha Noi. This inconsistency has created confusion regarding what procedures people are required to complete when applying for different residency registration across Viet Nam, which is likely to mean that those who are entitled to permanent or temporary residency under the 2006 law will not be able to access it, and furthermore that some have been deterred from applying in the first place because of the uncertainty surrounding implementation of the law.

More recently, a trend towards strengthening restrictions for migrants registering their residence in large cities has emerged. Reforms contained in the initial draft of the Capital Law in early 2010 proposed making requirements for permanent residency in Ha Noi significantly more onerous. These were intended to be considered at the National Assembly's May 2010 session, however were subsequently dropped from the draft law⁴⁴. This attempt to further restrict the ability of migrants to Ha Noi to obtain permanent residency and thereby access government services, as well as its subsequent removal from the draft law, is indicative of the political schism existing on this issue, as well as the likely reappearance of similar initiatives on the political agenda.

40 Prime Minister Decree No. 108/2005/ND-CP (19 August 2005); Ministry of Public Security Circular No. 11/2005/TT (7 October 2005).

41 Government Decree No. 158/2005/ND-CP (27 December 2005).

42 2006 Law on Residence, note 37.

43 Three years continuous residence was required by Ministry of Public Security Circular No. 11/2005/TT. Article 20 clause 1 of the Law on Residence changed this to one year. The requirements for obtaining permanent residence in provinces differ from those when applying in centrally-administered cities; Article 19 Law on Residence.

44 The draft provisions would have required that to be eligible for permanent residency in Ha Noi, a person must have resided continuously there for five years prior (instead of only one year), must earn a salary double that of the minimum wage and must prove employment in a legal job: Viet Nam Net (2010), Hà Nội bỏ dự thảo "Siết" Lao động Ngoại Tỉnh, 21 February 2010, accessed at <http://vietnamnet.vn/chinhtri/201002/hn-bo-du-thao-cac-quy-dinh-siet-lao-dong-ngoai-tinh-895275/> (23 February 2010).

PART 2 - OVERVIEW OF INTERNAL MIGRATION IN VIET NAM



Before discussing the complex relationship between migration and development, this paper will outline the internal migration context in Viet Nam, including an overview of the current numbers and demographic characteristics of internal migrants in the country, followed by an outline of the broad historical trends of migration in Viet Nam's post-

war period and how they may evolve in the future, and finally highlighting some of the key concepts or typologies for internal migration in Viet Nam. The subsequent analysis of migration and development will build on this context.

2.1 History of Internal Migration in Viet Nam

Internal migration is not a new phenomenon in Vietnamese society, rather it has been a defining part of its history. After reunification in 1975, considerable population movements occurred from the cities to rural areas. These were partly due to State-planned relocations of urban dwellers to the recently established New Economic Zones (NEZs) and partly a result of people returning home that had

been displaced by the war. From the 1970s onwards, this State-assisted movement of people to NEZs persisted and constituted the main form of internal migration in Viet Nam⁴⁵. The 1990s saw a shift in these government-led migration policies away from NEZs and towards integrating resettlement programmes into reforestation initiatives and then coastal rehabilitation programmes⁴⁶.

However, in addition to the increasing government-led resettlement programmes around this time, the spontaneous internal migration of people in Viet Nam gathered pace. These movements, which occurred independently of State planning, were linked to the impacts of the *Doi Moi* reforms or "renovation" policies of the 1980s which initiated Viet Nam's transition from a centralized command economy to one with increasing emphasis on market forces. These reforms eased some of the conditions that previously restricted movement, including the abandonment of the system of subsidies linked to strict household registration and the introduction of a household contract system which untied farmers from their land and led to the emergence of a land market, allowing flexibility for people to move after transferring or leasing their land⁴⁷.

Doi Moi also sparked the rapid economic growth and poverty reduction for which Viet Nam has achieved recognition within the international community. The non-State sector proliferated with foreign direct investment, attracting labour and encouraging migration to areas where jobs were in good

45 Guest, Philip (1998), *The Dynamics of Internal Migration in Viet Nam*, UNDP Discussion Paper 1.

46 In 1993, resettlement was integrated into some Program 327 projects on reforestation: Prime Minister Decision No. 327/1992/CT (15 September 1992). Program 773 in 1995 on rehabilitating coastal areas also involved resettlement to some areas: Prime Minister Decree No. 773 TTg Decision (21 December 1994).

47 NCSSH (2001), note 4; Scott and Chuyen (2004), note 5.

supply. A parallel trend was the decreasing viability of rural livelihoods around traditional products and agricultural production, with out-bound migration frequently chosen as an alternative. As industrialization and economic development continued, with much of the increased economic activity in the manufacturing and industrial sectors located in or near cities, disparities between urban and rural areas widened. For example, jobs in the industrial and manufacturing sectors in urbanized areas paid five-to-seven times as much as the agriculture sector, further pushing internal migrants towards the more profitable jobs⁴⁸.

The impact of the market reforms, as well as Viet Nam's vibrant economic development, has clearly shaped the dynamics of internal migration. However, these dynamics are not uniform and one of the most significant variances is between the migration of men and women⁴⁹. For example, the export-oriented development of the garment and textile sectors attracted mainly female workers, and emergence of the 'double-parent working household' has also created a need for domestic helpers, which is also filled largely by female migrant workers. The changing role of women in agriculture is also linked

to migration trends, although the particular relationship that exists is often contested. Some have suggested that with the decline of the agricultural sector, urbanward migration is one of the only means by which women can find employment outside of the farm as "the few agricultural jobs available are often reserved for men"⁵⁰. Others however refer to the "feminization of agriculture," indicating that as more men migrate towards off-farm employment opportunities, women who are left behind take on the agricultural workload⁵¹.

Labour and internal migration are clearly tightly linked in Viet Nam, a point that was very apparent from the 2008 -2009 global economic crisis. Rapid assessments showed that workers, especially female workers⁵² and those working in informal sectors, suffered from reduced incomes, and un- and under-employment⁵³. These assessments also showed that migrant workers were the most impacted group since they are concentrated in export-oriented enterprises and in the informal sectors. The economic crisis also proved to have deeper social ramifications than merely impacting on migration flows. As unemployed migrant workers stopped sending back remittances, the income of communities

48 Scott and Chuyen (2004), note 5; Balisacan, Arsenio M., Pernia Ernesto M. and Estrada Gemma (2003) Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction in Viet Nam. Asian Development Bank Economics and Research Department Working Paper Series, No. 42, p.14; Quality of Life Promotion Centre and Christina Cacioppo (2006) The Situation of Migration and Trafficking of Children and Women: A Rapid Assessment - Can Tho City, Hau Giang Province, and Tay Ninh Province in Southern Viet Nam, Paper for the ILO Mekong Sub-regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Women and Children.

49 Kabeer, Naila and Tran Thi Van Anh (2006), Globalization, Gender and Work in the Context of Economic Transition: The case of Viet Nam, International Working Group on Gender, Macroeconomics, and International Economics Working Paper Series 06-3.

50 Quality of Life Promotion Centre and Cacioppo (2006), note 47.

51 UN Viet Nam (2008), Gender and Climate Change in Viet Nam: A desk review. In 2006, the proportion of women and men taking part in agricultural activities was 80% against 60% respectively in World Bank (2006) Promotion Vietnamese Development: Growth, Equality and Diversity, p28.

52 Cling, Jean-Pierre, Razafindrakoto Mireille and Roubaud François (2009) Assessing the potential impact of the global crisis on the labour market and the informal sector in Viet Nam. Paper presented at the Vietnamese Economist Annual Meeting (VEAM), Ha Noi, Viet Nam on November 25 and 26, 2009.

53 Oxfam GB and World Bank (March 2009), Rapid Assessment of the Social Impacts of Global Economic Crisis in Viet Nam, summary of first round research; Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences (2009) Assessing the Impacts of the Financial Crisis in Viet Nam: Rapid Impact Monitoring (RIM).

at the departure areas also fell substantially⁵⁴. In some cases, hardship led migrants either to migrate back to their sending households, putting pressure on the rural agricultural workforce, or to move into the informal sector where they are unable to access government stimulus packages. Whilst many of these assessments were preliminary, it is clear that the effects of the global financial crisis had significant repercussions on migration movement trends and on the social protection rights of those affected. It can be expected that future economic trajectories will similarly hold great influence over contemporaneous patterns of internal migration.

It is also important to note the role of demographic trends in shaping future internal migration flows. As Viet Nam enters the so-called “demographic bonus era”, during which the working-age population will outnumber the dependent population for an estimated 30 years, approximately 1 million young people will enter the labour market each year. While such a large labour force will generate tremendous opportunities for Viet Nam’s economic development, it will also likely result in high migration rates as young workers move to areas that offer higher concentrations of employment.

In addition to the economic and demographic determinants of migration, the natural environment is increasingly recognized as influencing (and having already influenced) internal migration trends. It is estimated that migration itself will be the greatest human impact of climate change. Globally, millions of people will be displaced by severe coastal weather events, shoreline erosion, coastal flooding, sea level rises and agricultural disruption. Scientific data on global climate

change shows that Viet Nam will be one of the worst countries affected by climate change⁵⁵ and it is expected that some geographical areas and population groups, such as the poor, ethnic minorities, rural women, the elderly and children, will be more severely impacted than others. Migration will likely be one of the coping and adaptation mechanisms for people to deal with these changes by permanently or temporarily moving to another location to ensure their own safety and livelihood stability. There is already evidence of internal migrations in Viet Nam that have been induced by changing environmental conditions, including both natural disasters and gradual climate change impacts⁵⁶. For example, a study in the northern central coast of Viet Nam found that due to livelihood and income damage arising from changes in land, weather and water conditions, many people internally migrated as a way to replace lost income⁵⁷. In addition, an analysis of 2004 and 2006 VHLSS data found that there is a connection between natural disasters and other production shocks and both seasonal and temporary internal migration trends⁵⁸.

Besides the spontaneous migrations induced by environmental changes, government-planned relocations of those affected by disasters, which have been occurring since the mid-1990s, are being stepped-up. Recent governmental decisions indicate that as part of the “living with floods” policy, a very large number of households will be resettled by 2015. This government approach, together with the current climate-induced spontaneous migrations discussed above, suggests it is clear that climate and environmental changes will continue to be a significant influencing factor for internal migration in Viet Nam in the coming decades.

54 Oxfam GB and World Bank (2009), *Rapid Assessment of the Social Impacts of Global Economic Crisis*..

55 UN Viet Nam (2009), *Viet Nam and Climate Change: A discussion paper on policies for sustainable human development*.

56 Dun Olivia (2009), ‘Linkages between Flooding, Migration and Resettlement’ Viet Nam Case Study Report for Environmental Change and Forced Migration Scenarios (EACH-FOR) p18.

57 Hoang, Vu Quang, et al. (2008) *Study on Impact of Climate Change on Agriculture and Food Security: Case studies in Vietnam*, Actionaid.

58 Nguyen Minh and Paul Winters (2009), *The Impact of Migration on Nutrition: The case of Viet Nam*.

2.2 Numbers & Demographics of Current Flows

According to the 2009 Census, 6.6 million people (approximately 7.7 percent of the population) over the age of five changed their place of residence to a different administrative unit between 2004 and 2009. This is an increase of 2.1 million people on the number of migrants captured by the 1999 Census. Of the 1999 Census-recorded migrants, slightly over half were women (53.6 percent women, 46.3 percent men)⁵⁹. However, as discussed in Part 1.2, the census numbers are likely to exclude many seasonal, temporary and return migrants, as well as movements which took place 5 years prior to census enumeration. It is expected that the unofficial figure is thus much greater than the 6.6 million recorded by the latest census data. In China, which employs a similar registration system as Viet Nam, there are estimates of between 50 and 120 million unrecorded migrants, meaning that unregistered migrants may outnumber registered migrants by four to one⁶⁰. According to some commentators, if this scale was applied to Viet Nam, there could be between 12 and 16 million people potentially missing from national records⁶¹.

In terms of the demographic characteristics of migrants, the 1999 Census indicated that most migrants are young and single: approximately 60 percent of male migrants and 66 percent

of female migrants are aged 15-29 and the majority are not married⁶². This finding is also supported by the 2004 inter-censal survey of HCMC, which found that women tend to migrate at slightly younger ages than men, and the number of female migrants is increasing⁶³. In particular, the number of women moving to urban areas and industrial zones has begun to exceed the number of men, reflecting the high demand for female workers in the rapidly developing industrial areas. Significant numbers of migrants also move with their families, amounting to almost 38 percent of respondents in the 2004 VMS.

2.3 Motivations

The vast majority (70 percent) of internal migrants in Viet Nam migrate for economic reasons, including employment and to improve living conditions⁶⁴. However, it is also important to appreciate that individual and household motivations to migrate are never one-dimensional but rather incorporate a range of motivating factors. Such “mixed” motives are evident for most internal migrations in Viet Nam. For example, migration resulting from climate change can often have related economic determinants where individuals, households or communities move because their livelihood is no longer sustainable, for example where changes to soil salinity means that crop-rearing is no longer viable⁶⁵.

59 The number of men and women making up the 2009 census-recorded flows are not available at present.

60 Le Bach Duong, et al. (2005), *Social Protection for the Most Needy in Viet Nam*. Le Bach Duong et. al. base this figure on Chinese population estimates provided in Ping, Huang and Pieke Frank (2003) China migration country study, Paper presented at the *Regional Conference on Migration, Development and Pro-Poor Policy Choices in Asia*, Dhaka on 22–24 June; and based on calculations in Guest, Philip (2003), *Bridging the Gap: Internal Migration in Asia*, Population Council Thailand. Paper prepared for *Conference on African Migration in Comparative Perspective*, Johannesburg on 4–7 June.

61 Le, Bach Duong, et al. (2005), *Social Protection for the Most Needy in Viet Nam*.

62 Central Census Steering Committee (1999) *The 1999 Population and Housing Census: Sample Results*.

63 Dang, Nguyen Anh (2006) Viet Nam Internal Migration: Opportunities and Challenges for Development, paper presented at the *Regional Conference on Migration and Development in Asia* (Lanzhou, China 2006).

64 GSO, United Nations Population Fund (2005), *The 2004 Viet Nam Migration Survey; Major Findings*, GSO Statistical Publishing House.

65 Hoang, Vu Quang, Pham et al. (2008), *Study on Impact of Climate Change on Agriculture and Food Security*.

Even within the category of “economic” motivations, particular determinants can be identified, such as increasing income as a coping strategy (where there are little or no viable alternatives), to increase economic security, or to accumulate above what is absolute required⁶⁶.

2.4 Spontaneous or Planned Migration

The Vietnamese Government has implemented programmes to relocate certain population groups since the 1960s, which is described as State-led or State-planned migration. During the period 1994-1999, 2,105,000 people were resettled according to these government programmes, which is just under half of the 4.5 million migrants recorded by the Census for the same period⁶⁷. Since the 1990s, increasing numbers of people have migrated outside of government planning and are accordingly considered “spontaneous” migrants.

One of the main government-planned migration programmes is based on the policy of sedentarization, which encouraged ethnic minority households practicing swidden (or “slash and burn”) agriculture to settle and practice fixed farming, generally by moving them to new economic zones (NEZ)⁶⁸. It has

been estimated that up until 2000, 1.2 million people (or 200,000 households) participated in the sedentarization programme⁶⁹. Reportedly, since the 1990s the policy of sedentarization has no longer been carried out extensively, but has rather been linked with forestry and poverty reduction projects in particular areas.

Those susceptible to harsh environments or who experience natural disasters are another population group targeted by government-led migration programmes. Since 1996, the government disaster management strategy for the Mekong Delta, “living with floods”⁷⁰, relocates households based on environmental reasons such as risk of natural disasters, environmental sanitation, risk of bank erosion or landslides and protection of forest areas⁷¹. Non-environmental factors are also considered, such as natural defence and stabilization of nomadic households, illustrating the link between disaster-induced movements and those based on the aforementioned sedentarization policy. A similar strategy in Central Viet Nam also includes the relocation of households to “residential areas” in accordance with disaster prevention planning and structures.

Government-planned migration is also motivated by land requirements for the

66 Winkels, Alexandra (2009), Migrant Vulnerability: The Ambiguous Role of Social Networks. Conference paper presented at *Migration Nation*, Canberra on 19–20 November 2009.

67 Dang, Nguyen Anh (2005), *Internal Migration: Opportunities and Challenges for the Renovation and Development in Viet Nam*.

68 PM Decision No. 33/2007/QĐ-TTg of March 5, 2007, on policies to support relocation of ethnic minority inhabitants for sedentary farming and settlement in the 2000-2010 period.

69 Vo Thanh Son, Poverty and Utilization of Natural Resources: A case study in the Northern uplands of Viet Nam in Rudolphe De Koninck, Jules Lamarre and Bruno Gendron (eds.) (2003) *Understanding Poverty in Viet Nam and the Philippines: Concepts and context* (Localized Poverty Reduction in Viet Nam Project) p110.

70 The “living with floods” approach involves ensuring safety for sustainable development, measures to prevent disasters such as flood control and also proactively taking advantage of flooding. For Northern Viet Nam, government strategy is focused on radically preventing floods and also responding to them, involving largely structural measures including dyke systems, diverging flood courses and constructing reservoirs. Prime Minister’s decision No. 172/2007/QĐ272;-TTg to approve the *National Strategy for Natural Disaster Prevention, Response and Mitigation to 2020* (16 November 2007).

71 Dun, Olivia (2009), ‘Linkages between Flooding, Migration and Resettlement’.

establishment of large infrastructure such as power plants, economic zones or bridges⁷². The Son La Hydroelectric Power Plant in Northern Viet Nam, for example, involved the resettlement of 78,908 people, of which it is estimated that between 60 and 90 belong to the Thai ethnic minority group⁷³.

2.5 Duration

Internal migrations can be broadly categorized as seasonal, temporary or permanent⁷⁴. Seasonal migrations tend to involve rural households sending migrants during the agricultural off-season to supplement income. Based on VHLSS data from 2004 and 2006, approximately 3.3 percent of individuals interviewed migrated for a period of six months or less during the year in question, making them seasonal migrants. This data also revealed that 11.9 percent of households included a seasonal migrant⁷⁵. Such a high level of seasonal migration is a significant increase on levels recorded from a decade earlier, with only 1.3 percent of households containing a migrant in the 1993 VLSS and 6.15 percent in the 1998 VLSS⁷⁶.

Circular or temporary migration is an increasing feature of migration trends in Asia and can range in duration from weekly commuting to migrating for a few years with

the intention of returning. It is likely that some migrants captured by census data are migrating temporarily for a period of at least five years. However, the census numbers would also include permanent migrants, making it difficult to discern accurate numbers for either dynamic. In relation to permanent migration, it is known that all State-led migration programmes aim to resettle households permanently, and thus the vast majority of seasonal and temporary migration is spontaneous and occurs outside of State planning.

2.6 Rural- and Urban-Bound Migration

The 1999 Census data suggests that migration to urban areas accounted for just over half of Viet Nam's total internal migrations (53 percent), with 27 percent moving from rural to urban areas and 26 percent moving from urban to urban localities. For those moving from rural to urban areas, the most popular destinations were large cities such as Ho Chi Minh City (HCM City), Ha Noi, Hai Phong and Da Nang. This migration towards urban areas contributed to slightly over one-third of the population growth of all urban areas between 1994 and 1999. For HCM City and Ha Noi, this figure is as high as 50 percent⁷⁷. More recently, migration has also contributed

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- 72 Waibel, Michael et al (2007), Housing for Low-income Groups in Ho Chi Minh City: Approaches to Adequate Urban Typologies and Spatial Strategies, ASIEN No. 103.
- 73 Sixty percent ethnic minority households according to Asian Development Bank (2005) *Implementation of the Environmental Management Plan for the Son Law Hydropower Project*, Technical Assistance Report, Project Number 39537, p3. Eighty percent according to Bladh Ulrika and Eva-Lena Nilsson (2005), How to Plan for Involuntary Resettlement? The case of the Son La hydroelectric power project in Viet Nam. *Master of Science Thesis – The Royal Institute of Technology* 2005. Available at <http://www.infra.kth.se/bba/MASTER%20THESIS/ES/BladhNilsson.pdf>. Eighty-nine percent according to International Rivers Network (2001), *Planned Dams in Viet Nam*, available at <http://www.internationalrivers.org/en/southeast-asia/vietnam/planned-dams-vietnam>.
- 74 IOM (2008), World Migration 2008: Managing labour mobility in the evolving global economy, *IOM World Migration Report Series*, Vol.4, p.174. Temporary and permanent migration are sometimes labelled short-term and long-term migration.
- 75 Nguyen Minh and Paul Winters (2009), The Impact of Migration on Nutrition.
- 76 Own calculations based on numbers in De Brauw Alan & Harigaya Tomoko (2007), Seasonal Migration and Improving Living Standards in Viet Nam, *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 89 (2).
- 77 GSO & UNFPA (2005), *The 2004 Viet Nam Migration Survey; Major Findings*, GSO Statistical Publishing House.

to the growth of regional cities, for example Can Tho City, Long Xuyen, Cau Mau in the Mekong Delta, as well as emerging economic centres such as Quang Ninh, Binh Duong and Dong Nai.

Rural-bound migrations also make up a significant proportion of internal migrations, representing 47 percent of the flows recorded in the 1999 Census. In fact, the 2008 Population Change Survey (PCS) indicates that there were more internal migrations to rural areas than urban areas in the year preceding the survey⁷⁸. Most of the permanent rural-rural migrations occurring in Viet Nam involve movements of people from low agricultural productivity areas to high productivity areas due to new opportunities in agriculture. For example, significant movements have occurred between the densely populated Red River Delta in Northern Viet Nam to Central Highland areas⁷⁹. Temporary and seasonal migrations that are rural-rural are often made up of migrants working in industrial zones, as well as workers moving to infrastructure project sites where roads, bridges, power plants and rail and transport facilities are being constructed⁸⁰.

2.7 Regional and Provincial Flows

In relation to the distance moved, the 2009 Census indicated that 50 percent of the

census-recorded migrants moved within a province and the other 50 percent moved to another province, marking an increase in intra-provincial movements compared to the 1999 Census results⁸¹. The South East Region, attracting migrants with numerous industrial zones and large amounts of foreign investment, has surpassed the Central Highlands in terms of both in-migration as well as net migration rates. During the 1990s, the Central Highlands attracted substantial numbers of State-led migrants, as well as many spontaneous migrants, looking for arable and fertile land and often chasing the coffee-export boom experienced during that decade⁸². Both the Central Coast region and the Mekong Delta are also in close proximity to regions with higher living standards and employment opportunities, which could explain why there is more out-migration from these areas than other poorer upland areas in the north of the country.

When considered by province, the largest numbers of migrants have moved to areas containing industrial zones and big cities, such as HCM City (with a net migration rate of 116 percent), Da Nang (77.9 percent), Dong Nai (64.4 percent) and Ha Noi (50 percent)⁸³. Perhaps most remarkable is the province of Binh Duong, which has experienced a net migration rate of 341.7 percent due to its vast number of industrial zones⁸⁴.

78 Note that these data sets are not comparable as the Census defines migration as someone who has been away from their home for five years while the PCS uses a one-year timeframe.

79 Deshingkar, Priya and Grimm Sven (2009), *Internal Migration and Development: A Global Perspective*, IOM Migration Research Series No.19.

80 ADB and IOM (2009), *Infrastructure and HIV in the Greater Mekong Sub-region: A Literature Review*.

81 The 1999 Census recorded that 55 percent of internal migrants moved within their own province. Central Census Steering Committee (1999), *The 1999 Population and Housing Census: Sample Results*.

82 Cu, Chi Loi (2000), *Rural to Urban Migration in Viet Nam*, Institute of Developing Economies Publications.

83 Net migration rate is the difference between the in-migration rate and the out-migration rate. In and out-migration are calculated as a ratio of those arriving/leaving an administrative unit over the total number of people in that administrative unit. Central Population and Housing Census Steering Committee (2009), *The 2009 Viet Nam Population and Housing Census of 00.00 Hours 1st April 2009: Implementation and Preliminary Results*.

84 Ibid.

Table 1: In, Out and Net Migration Rates of Regions of 1999 and 2009 Census Sample Data⁸⁵.

Region	Migration-in rate*		Migration-out rate**		Net migration rate***	
	1999	2009	1999	2009	1999	2009
North East	16.15	15.9	27.53	33.5	- 11.38	- 17.5
North West	13.24		14.57		-1.32	
Red River Delta	23.28	35.0	32.61	36.7	-9.33	- 1.7
North Central Coast	8.61	16.0	31.97	50.6	-23.36	- 34.6
South Central Coast	17.02		29.74		-12.71	
Central Highlands	86.24	43.3	16.22	32.1	70.02	11.2
South East	68.33	135.4	26.80	27.7	41.53	107.7
Mekong River Delta	14.71	16.3	24.59	56.7	-9.88	- 40.4

* Migration-in rate is a ratio of number of migrants-in over total local inhabitants (per thousand)

** Migration-out rate is a ratio of number of migrants-out over total local inhabitants (per thousand)

*** Net migration is a ratio of net migrants (migrants-in minus migrants-out) over total local inhabitants (per thousand)

85 Based on Table 1 in Cu, Chi Loi (2000), *Rural to Urban Migration in Viet Nam*.

PART 3 - MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT



During the last two decades, the movement of the labour force from rural to urban and industrial areas has played an important role in filling the demand for labour generated by the *Doi Moi* reforms. This has in turn contributed to the broader economic and social development that Viet Nam has experienced, which has led to increases

in migration due to growing disparities across regions and between urban and rural areas.

Building on the linkages between migration and development, this paper argues for a more thorough analysis of the ways in which migration relates to development, including how processes of migration can be used to enhance socio-economic development both in absolute but also in equitable terms, and also the means by which development gains made in Viet Nam can be used to enhance the experience of internal migration, thereby contributing to the achievement of more equitable human development. Three “lenses” will be used through which the benefits and challenges of internal migration can be viewed: first, through the lens of the migrant themselves; second, through the communities which receive migrants at their destination

area; and last, through the migrant-sending communities at the area of origin.

3.1 Migrants

Whilst migrants have substantially contributed to Viet Nam’s economic development, many migrants work and live in situations which make them a particularly vulnerable part of the population. This vulnerability stems from their inability, in many cases, to access basic services and attain adequate living conditions; from their differential treatment in the labour market; and from the social stigma which is attached to them. In many ways, migrants, despite earning higher incomes post-migration, remain economically and socially more vulnerable and less protected than non-migrants for a number of reasons that will be outlined below. However, it is also important to emphasize the particular capabilities of migrants as agents of change in their individual or household livelihood strategy. This is reflected in the overwhelming satisfaction of migrant respondents in the 2004 VMS towards their life after migration as compared with before migration⁸⁶. Furthermore, an overwhelming majority of migrants responded that in spite of the difficulties they face because they moved, they would still do it again were they confronted with the same decision⁸⁷.

Employment

Those who migrate internally in Viet Nam for economic reasons largely do so with the intention of finding work at their destination. Many succeed in this objective and find decently paid work in a safe environment and

86 GSO and UNFPA (2005), *The 2004 Viet Nam Migration Survey*.

87 Dang, Nguyen Anh and Le Bach Duong (2007), *Social Protection and Rural-to-Urban Labor Migration: Practical and Policy Issues*, *Viet Nam’s Socio-Economic Development*, No.50.

report that they are satisfied with life after migration compared to before they moved⁸⁸. Evidence from the 2004 VMS shows that migrants are a hard-working sector of the population, in that they immediately search for work upon arrival at the destination (if they have not arranged it beforehand) and that they maintain higher levels of employment than non-migrants⁸⁹. Nevertheless, many migrants experience discrimination and some also find themselves at risk of exploitation.

Migrants are at a disadvantage compared to non-migrants in terms of their earnings. The 2004 survey found that even though incomes increased after migration, the average incomes of migrants were much lower than those of non-migrants in the destination areas. Within those who migrate, women migrants and migrants from ethnic minority groups appear to be at a particular disadvantage in terms of income, earning much less on average than non-migrant women and much less than men in both groups (migrants and non-migrants)⁹⁰. These differences remain even after factors such as age, education and occupation are taken into account⁹¹.

Part of this difference appears to result from migrants being concentrated in certain less-paid and less-protected jobs while non-migrants are concentrated in other sectors. Some have suggested that this is one of

the many indirect consequences of the household registration system, as in practice, employers do consider the registration status of prospective employees, even if it is not proscribed on paper. This is demonstrated by data which indicates that migrants in urban areas are more likely to work in the service sector (which includes transportation such as taxi drivers or motorbike taxis (xe om), hospitality and domestic work) and the production and construction sectors. In contrast, non-migrants are much more likely to work in professional, administrative and clerical employment positions. Significant proportions of urban migrants are either self-employed or work in short-term or casual employment, suggesting limited job security for this group of migrants⁹².

Many migrants employed in temporary forms of work are less likely to be able to protect themselves against unfair labour practices. This vulnerability results from the lack of formal labour contracts for these migrants, meaning that they work outside of the labour laws and without social protection⁹³. It is important to note that this vulnerability does not affect all internal migrants, for example, labour contracts are generally not relevant for those who are self employed, and migrants working in industrial zones are generally less likely to have this issue as they work under formal labour contracts. The importance

88 GSO and UNFPA (2005), *The 2004 Viet Nam Migration Survey*.

89 Ninety percent of those moving for economic reasons found work within one month of arrival: UNFPA (2007), *Internal Migration in Viet Nam: The Current Situation*. The higher employment rates of urban migrants compared to urban non-migrants holds even after adjustment of the data to compensate for the fact that migrants tend to be concentrated at ages where labor force participation is at its highest. Some evidence even suggests that those who migrate without permission have had higher employment rates than those arriving legally: Guest, Philip (1998), *The Dynamics of Internal Migration in Viet Nam*, UNDP Discussion Paper 1. p16.

90 Deshingkar, Priya (2006), *Internal Migration, Poverty and Development in Asia: Including the Excluded through Partnerships and Improved Governance*. Paper presented at the Asia 2015: Promoting Growth, Ending Poverty Conference, March 2006.

91 United Nations Population Fund (2007), *Internal Migration in Viet Nam: The Current Situation*; Le, Bach Duong and Khuat Thu Hong (2008), *Market Transformation, Migration and Social Protection*.

92 Guest, Philip (1998), *The Dynamics of Internal Migration in Viet Nam*, UNDP Discussion Paper 1.

93 Le, Bach Duong and Khuat Thu Hong (2008), *Market Transformation, Migration and Social Protection*. p397.

of labour contracts, especially for migrants and temporary migrants, is that it is on the basis of these contracts that workers access social, health and employment insurance. Where no contract exists, employers often feel no obligation to provide social and health insurance to those employed on verbal and informal contracts, according to the National Assembly's Committee for Social Affairs⁹⁴.

The proportion of migrants working under formal labour contracts also varies considerably across the country, as well as between different studies. According to the 2004 VMS, 58 percent of male migrants in HCM City had labour contracts⁹⁵. However, the numbers were substantially higher for female migrants in the same area (80 percent), as well as for both male and female migrants in Ha Noi (83 percent). It is likely that the higher percentage of female migrants with labour contracts in HCM City is a result of the higher proportion of female than male migrants working in industrial zones (compared to the informal sector). However, a small-scale 2003 study conducted in Ha Noi, HCM City and Da Nang focused on migrants with temporary or no registration found that only 36 percent of migrants had labour contracts. In addition, 38 percent of employed migrants received no assistance from employers, only 12 percent were permitted to take a day off when needed and 99 percent of respondents had neither

social insurance nor work-related accident insurance⁹⁶.

Not only do these figures suggest the particular vulnerability of temporary and unregistered migrants in the labour market, they also demonstrate that the existence of a contract is no guarantee that the migrant will have adequate access to the social and health insurance it supposedly provides. Some suggest that workers' lack of knowledge of social insurance laws, combined with weak enforcement penalties for employers who violate the law, has meant that the required social protections are not accessible to many workers, including migrant workers⁹⁷. Accordingly, while a labour contract does not of itself guarantee that a migrant will be adequately protected, having such a contract would be an important step in this direction. A further required step is to ensure that migrant workers and employers alike are aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to social insurance and that the law is adequately enforced.

Whilst many migrants working informally are vulnerable to labour exploitation, one particular group that is often singled out is migrant sex-workers. Several studies have demonstrated the relevance of mobility and migration to entry into sex work for migrant women and girls, suggesting that a large proportion of those working in the sex industry in Viet Nam are themselves migrants⁹⁸. These

94 Committee for Social Affairs (2003), *Some Critical Problems in Employment and Vocational Training*, report No 482TT/UBXH to National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, Ha Noi, 20 October. Cited in Dang, Nguyen Anh (2005), *Internal Migration: Opportunities and Challenges for the Renovation and Development in Viet Nam*. Please note however that this research also includes temporary migrants that are not reflected in the analysis of the 2004 Viet Nam Migration Survey.

95 2004 VMS.

96 Dang, Nguyen Anh and Le Bach Duong (2007), *Social Protection and Rural to Urban Labour Migration*.

97 Interview with the Tran Thi Thuy Nga, head of the Social Insurance Department of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) in Viet Nam News (2009), *Firms Renege on Social Insurance Payments, Obligations to Workers*, 11 May 2009.

98 Significant numbers of girls aged under 18 are involved in the sex industry, as revealed by a rapid assessment in four cities, which also found that a few boys were also working in the industry. It is likely that migrant men working in the sex industry share many of these characteristics and issues, however no evidence exists to substantiate it. Le, Bach Duong (2002), *Viet Nam Children in Prostitution in Ha Noi, Hai Phong, Ho Chi Minh City and Can Tho: A Rapid Assessment*. ILO - International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, Geneva.

studies demonstrate that, as with the majority of internal migrants in Viet Nam, many women engaged in sex work at their destination area migrated to better their family's situation and increase household income⁹⁹. Whilst some women migrate in order to work in the sex industry, many only decide to engage in sex work after arrival at their destination¹⁰⁰. However, it is also well-documented that for some, entry into sex work is not a decision but rather occurs as a result of coercion or force¹⁰¹. For example, many young women working in the sex industry are 'recruited' from their village, thinking they have been offered a job in a café or bar, but actually end up being tricked or lured into the sex industry. Elements of coercion and force can still be present even when a migrant is aware that they will be working in the sex industry if, for example, they are deceived about the conditions they will work in¹⁰².

In circumstances where a person is deceptively recruited or transferred into sexual servitude or forced into slavery-like circumstances of employment in other sectors, this will amount to

an instance of internal human trafficking. Whilst human trafficking across national borders is criminalized by Article 3 of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children and also under the Vietnamese Penal Code, internal trafficking is not covered by either, despite evidence which supports its occurrence¹⁰³. Worldwide, as well as in Viet Nam, there is a strong link between human trafficking and migration practices¹⁰⁴. Safe migration practices and an adequate and enforced legislative framework play an important role in lessening, and ideally preventing altogether, instances of trafficking. This should include ensuring that prospective migrants are well-informed about their options and are linked to genuine jobs through legitimate and affordable employment agencies, providing them with information about their destination and their employers¹⁰⁵.

Migrant Children

There is little evidence for the exact number of children under 18 years of age who are themselves independent migrants and move

99 Rushing, Rosanne (2006), Migration and Sexual Exploitation in Viet Nam, *Asia and Pacific Migration Journal*, Vol. 149(4) pp.471-494.

100 In the context of Viet Nam, sex work is distinguished according to whether it is "indirect" or "direct". Sex work that is indirect occurs in entertainment venues such as bars, hotels, restaurants and karaoke bars. It is considered indirect because the ostensible job of these workers is service of food and beverages, however most of their income is derived from sex-work with clients they meet through these venues. Direct sex workers are generally street-based and are thought to make only 30 percent of all sex workers in Viet Nam.

101 Rushing, Rosanne (2004), *From Perception to Reality: A Qualitative Study of Migration of Young Women and Sexual Exploitation in Viet Nam*, PhD thesis, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Le, Bach Duong (2002), *Viet Nam Children in Prostitution in Ha Noi, Hai Phong, Ho Chi Minh City and Can Tho: A Rapid Assessment*.

102 Rushing, Rosanne (2004), note 100.

103 Article 3 of the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*, Supplementing the *United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime* adopted in 2000, entry into force on 25 December 2003. Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, Ministry of Justice (2004), *Assessment of the Legal System in Viet Nam in Comparison with the UN Protocols on Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants, Supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*. MOJ, UNICEF & UNODC.

104 IOM (2008), *World Migration 2008: Managing labour mobility in the evolving global economy*, *IOM World Migration Report Series*, Vol.4.

105 At present, only a small proportion of migrants use employment agencies to obtain information about their place of destination. This proportion is lower than 2 percent in some areas, which is attributed to low awareness of the existence of these agencies, in ILSSA, UNIFEM and AusAid (2009), *Socio-Economic Impacts of WTO Accession on Rural Women*.

away from their families to take up employment in factories, in agriculture or as domestic workers. It is clear from the 2003 Survey and Assessment of Vietnamese Youth (SAVY) that living away from home for at least one month is experienced by approximately one-third of female youths, with a slightly lower rate for males. Forty-six percent moved away to earn money. Of the rural youth, 50.5 percent lived away for at least one month, compared to 31.2 percent of the urban youth¹⁰⁶.

Furthermore, other small-scale studies confirm the particularly vulnerability of this group due to their young age. According to several studies, there is a clear gender division between child labourers, with boys mainly working in physically demanding sectors, such as coal picking¹⁰⁷, and girls often identified in domestic work settings, as well as in the sex industry¹⁰⁸. The studies found that, in breach of the Viet Nam Labour Code, many of these children are generally not registered by their employers, they work many hours per day, and are paid very little or not at all¹⁰⁹. Isolated from their families, and often also from other children, as is the case for domestic workers, they suffer physical and mental stresses and are more prone to physical and psychological abuse¹¹⁰. However, international research has shown that such occurrences are often more complex than blatant exploitation by demonstrating the ways in which children are not necessarily passive victims of circumstances, but rather can themselves choose to migrate and earn an income¹¹¹.

This is especially so in the context of Viet Nam where there is a stronger expectation that children should contribute to household income than in Western industrialized countries. In light of this evidence, more information is required to understand the numbers and particular protection issues of children migrant workers in Viet Nam.

Access to State-Provided Services

Access to many social services and other administrative procedures are tied to registration status, which is a significant problem for many migrants without permanent residency in the area they live and work. Many administrative activities need to be carried out at the place of registration, such as marriage certificates and access to poverty assistance programmes, thus creating a hostile and difficult living environment for migrants whose permanent registration is at the departure area. The hộ khẩu system thus impacts migrant groups that are already vulnerable. By forcing them to resort to private providers for secure social and support services such as health care and loans, which are often more expensive, existing inequalities are exacerbated and urban poverty increased¹¹².

Increasing urban living expenses, not matched with any increases in wages, serve to augment these difficulties. Some evidence suggests that this has led to many migrants cutting expenses to keep paying rent and food, and in some cases, relying on their

106 UNICEF (2003), *Survey and Assessment of Vietnamese Youth*.

107 ILO Viet Nam (2005), *General Report: Children in Domestic Work, In Fishery, in Sales and Trafficking of Drugs and in Coal Picking*.

108 Children working in the sex industry were discussed in the preceding section: Le, Bach Duong (2002), *Viet Nam Children in Prostitution in Ha Noi, Hai Phong, Ho Chi Minh City and Can Tho: A Rapid Assessment*, ILO-International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, Geneva. ILO (2006), *Child Domestic Workers in Ho Chi Minh City: Survey Report*.

109 Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, Labour Code, 23 June 1994 (as amended 2 April 2002), Article 119 Chapter XI.

110 ILO (2006), *Child Domestic Workers in Ho Chi Minh City: Survey Report*.

111 IOM (2008), *IOM World Migration Report Series, Vol.4*.

112 ActionAid Viet Nam and Oxfam (2009), *Participatory Monitoring of Urban Poverty in Viet Nam*.

left-behind families to cover their costs for meals¹¹³. It is not only migrants themselves that are affected by such changes, but also a substantial number of remittance-receiving households in rural areas. Comprehensive reform of the hộ khẩu system, whereby access to State-provided services is decoupled from registration status, is needed if the most vulnerable migrants are to be granted the same treatment as long-term residents.

Children of Migrants

Even though the 2004 Survey does not show significant differences between number of school attendees between children of migrants and non-migrants in the destination area, some qualitative studies have nevertheless raised concerns about the difficulties migrants face in getting an education for their children¹¹⁴. The undersupply of primary schools in HCM City and Ha Noi for children aged six-to-10-years-old seems to be particularly acute in the migrant-rich suburbs and has been identified by various studies as the most pressing factor reducing opportunities for migrant children to attend school. Children with permanent household registration (KT1 and KT2) are guaranteed a place in a public elementary school, but public elementary schools are not obligated to provide places to children from households with only KT3 and KT4 registration if the schools are already full. Some parents are willing to pay higher fees to have their children enrolled in high-quality schools, so that in addition to registration status, the ability to pay for better education also plays a role. According to the qualitative research, it appears as though some migrants

experience difficulties enrolling their children at school, both in terms of obtaining a place and paying for it¹¹⁵. More research is needed to evaluate the inconsistent evidence in order to ensure that the children of migrants are provided with an equal opportunity to receive quality education in line with their Constitutionally-guaranteed right to do so.

Social Networks & Stigma

Internal migrants forge strong networks amongst themselves, which often guides further migration by attracting friends and family from the home area. The 2004 VMS shows that 55 percent of male and 59 percent of women migrants learn about their migration destination from a relative, and 38 percent of both male and women migrants learn about it from friends (with 7 percent of male and 3 percent of female migrants learning of their migration destination through other means).

These networks among migrants in destination areas are especially important as migrants, due to their often un- or temporary-registered status, are not as well linked to the Government or other formal support structures and have difficulties accessing mass organizations¹¹⁶. Often their long working hours do not allow them to engage in social activities or attend meetings of mass organizations¹¹⁷ and their knowledge on the existence of labour unions, for example, is often low¹¹⁸. For example, the VMS found that in the three months preceding the survey, less than ten percent of migrants participated in mass organization activities or community events in their place

113 Ibid.

114 Locke, Catherine et al. (2008), *The Institutional Context Influencing Rural-Urban Migration Choices and Strategies for Young Married Women and Men in Viet Nam*.

115 Ibid.

116 Waibel, Michael (2007), *Course of the Doi Moi Policy: Spatial Dimensions, Consequences, and Policy Changes with special reference to Housing*. Dang, Nguyen Anh (2005) *Internal Migration: Opportunities and Challenges for the Renovation and Development in Viet Nam*.

117 ILSSA, UNIFEM and AusAid (2009), *Socio-Economic Impacts of WTO Accession on Rural Women*.

118 ActionAid Viet Nam and Oxfam (2009), *Participatory Monitoring of Urban Poverty in Viet Nam*.

of residence¹¹⁹. They also often have little access to media, entertainment, or other recreational activities.

Since many women migrants are young and unmarried, they face the social and family pressures to get married, but do not have the free time for social interaction after their long working hours in a mainly female-dominated factory working environment. The social isolation in an unknown environment can lead to a lack of confidence in making friends. Women taking care of children face additional challenges as they do not have the traditional family and home community networks to assist in childcare and other domestic tasks.

The social stigma attached to migrants compounds this isolation as migrants are often viewed by local residents with mistrust and unease¹²⁰. They are stigmatized to be the root of much of the so-called 'social evils' that affect society such as crime, gambling and sex work. This in turn leads to further marginalization and social segregation than already created by the formal structures of registration and access to services, contributing to an increased risk of violence and abuse. Increased efforts by local authorities, as well as private employers and mass organizations, to recognize the contribution of migration to development, and to promote the benefits of migration, is likely to go some way to removing this stigma.

Health

Another challenge for at least some migrants is access to quality and affordable health care,

although existing evidence is ambiguous. In the 2004 VMS, the self-reported health of migrants is better than before they migrated, which is attributed to higher incomes and thus better nutrition and access to better quality health care providers in the urban, rather than rural, areas. This survey also found that migrants have on average better health than non-migrants¹²¹. However, other qualitative research suggests that migrants have worse health than non-migrants if compared to same-age counterparts¹²². A survey which compared health status among migrants in urban areas interestingly suggests that there is a disparity amongst migrants, depending on their type of housing. Results from the 1997 Viet Nam Migration and Health Survey indicate that the health of temporary migrants living in guest houses is worse than that of other migrants and also worse than that of non-migrants¹²³. The study also found that initially, the health of this group of migrants was better than the other groups, but that it deteriorates rapidly.

Some of the factors thought to increase the particular health vulnerabilities of some migrants are lack of access to information, weak social networks, ignorance or limited knowledge of urban diseases, poor living conditions, and lack of access to clean water and sanitation¹²⁴. The difference in health between men and women was analyzed in each of the groups surveyed, and it was found that women are more likely to get sick than males, regardless of their migrant status. However, the survey also revealed a significant difference in the likelihood of sickness amongst temporary migrant men and women, whereas female temporary migrants were found to be

119 Dang, Nguyen Anh and Le Bach Duong (2007), Social Protection and Rural-to-Urban Labor Migration: Practical and Policy Issues, *Viet Nam's Socio-Economic Development*, No.50.

120 Le, Bach Duong and Khuat Thu Hong (2008), *Market Transformation, Migration and Social Protection*.

121 This is based on the finding that 88.4 percent of non-migrants self-report that their health in the three months prior was "above average", compared with 93.8 percent of migrants reported on the same period.

122 Nguyen, Liem T and White Michael J (2007), Health Status of Temporary Migrants in Urban Areas in Viet Nam, *International Migration* Vol. 45(4) pp.101-134. Le, Bach Duong and Khuat Thu Hong (2008), *Market Transformation, Migration and Social Protection*.

123 Nguyen, Liem T and White Michael J (2007), Health Status of Temporary Migrants in Urban Areas in Viet Nam.

124 Ibid.

50 percent more likely to experience sickness than their male counterparts.

Low-income migrants are generally felt to be priced out of the urban market for social services, as indeed are many of the poor, however evidence to support this theory is still lacking. Throughout Viet Nam, high user fees have constrained the access of poor families to health treatment. While various subsidy programmes such as the Hunger Eradication Programme (HEPR) includes some provision for free health cards for poor families, the supply of these subsidised credits is bureaucratically determined, rather than being based on needs, and in many cases the benefits of the programme been diverted to better-off people¹²⁵.

Reproductive Health and HIV Vulnerability of Migrants

Taking into account the fact that the majority of migrants are young women, access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services is very important, yet few SRH programmes recognize migrants as a distinct group and tailor their services to this vulnerable group. Migrant workers have been found to have little knowledge about Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS¹²⁶ and resort

to self-medication rather than seeking support at a health facility¹²⁷. The rate of contraception use among currently married women migrants is also lower than that of their non-migrant counterparts¹²⁸. Given these findings, the lack of further research and interventions on the unmet SRH needs of unmarried women migrants is particularly alarming.

Some migrants are particularly vulnerable to HIV due to behavioural and situational factors and because of their limited access to government HIV prevention efforts, as well as care and treatment services. Young male migrants who work in construction, industrial and manufacturing enterprises, either in urban areas or rural sites of infrastructure projects, far away from home and from their families, have been found to have greater risk behaviour habits related to HIV and other STIs, such as unprotected sex and sharing syringes¹²⁹. This increased vulnerability stems from the particular situation of disrupted social relations with family and community, harsh working conditions and isolation from other community members at the destination area, which in turn contributes to the tendency of some migrants to engage in behaviour such as unprotected sex with more than one partner and injecting drug use¹³⁰.

125 Deshingkar, Priya (2006), Internal Migration, Poverty and Development in Asia: Including the Excluded through Partnerships and Improved Governance. Paper presented at the Asia 2015: Promoting Growth, Ending Poverty Conference, March 2006.

126 2004 VMS; Truong, Hien Anh (2009), *Reproductive Health of Female Migrant Workers in Ha Noi: Current situation and policy implications*. Paper presented at Workshop on Migration, Development and Poverty Reduction, Ha Noi 5-6 October 2009.

127 2004 VMS.

128 Ibid.

129 UNAIDS (2009), *The Far Away From Home Club: HIV Prevention and Policy Implementation Feedback for Migrant and Mobile Populations in the Mekong River Delta, Viet Nam*; Anh N. Dang (2005), The HIV/AIDS Vulnerability of Labor Out-migrants and its Consequences on the Left-behind at the Household Level in Viet Nam. Presentation at the International Workshop on The Impacts of Migration on the "Left-Behind" in Asia, in Ha Noi on 10-11 March 2005; Commission on Aids in Asia (2008), *Redefining AIDS in Asia: Crafting an Effective Response, Report of the Commission on AIDS in Asia*. Oxford University Press.

It is important to realize that whilst some migrant workers are more at risk of HIV infections, a significant proportion of the migrant population are not thought to be at particular risk. Specifically, women migrant workers are at less risk than their male counterparts, which is attributed to the observation that women tend to be more "traditional" in their sexual behavior and thus less likely to obtain sex work services. Married migrants who move with their partners are also at less risk than those migrating alone because they are less prone to engaging in HIV-related risk-taking behavior.

130 Ibid.

However, this vulnerability is not solely the result of behavioural and situational factors. In many ways, the bigger contributor to migrant HIV vulnerability is lack of access to, and marginalization from, government services. HIV prevention activities, such as mass media, behaviour change communication (BCC) and information, education, communication (IEC) activities are particularly ineffective for migrant and mobile populations who work in informal sectors, often with unusual work hours, and at worksites without relevant or appropriate services. Language can be a further barrier for ethnic minority migrants who move to urban areas without strong Vietnamese language skills.

In addition to lacking access to information to prevent infections, once infections are contracted, care and treatment services are also difficult to access for migrants, resulting in untreated STIs, tuberculosis, HIV, and other health conditions. Migrants' limited access results from their mobility, the long hours they work and lack of insurance coverage¹³¹. The registration system also plays an obstructive role as provincial budgets and services are almost exclusively made available to residents of that province, and pilot projects that are district-based only support residents of that district¹³². For migrants working at isolated infrastructure project sites, the remoteness of location can also mean that HIV services

are altogether absent in the area¹³³. Without provincial funding for migrant-targeted interventions, appropriate HIV prevention services that are accessible to migrants continues to be contingent on donor funds for specific projects or construction sites, and treatment is virtually non-existent.

In recent years, the Government has given some recognition to the particular vulnerability of migrant and mobile populations to HIV infections. This is evident from references in the National Strategy on the Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS (2010-2020) and the Law on HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control¹³⁴. At the sub-national level, there is also some growing recognition of migrant's HIV vulnerability, with some provincial and local authorities partnering with donors to implement HIV prevention activities which specifically target migrant workers¹³⁵. This recognition is a positive first step towards addressing the particular vulnerability of mobile and migrant populations. However, the bigger challenge ahead is to ensure that, in practice, HIV prevention, treatment and care are consistently available to migrant and mobile populations across Viet Nam. This should involve a commitment from the Ministry of Health to achieve the conditions of the World Health Assembly's Migrant Health Resolution from 2008,¹³⁶ specific national strategies or programmes to ensure

131 UNAIDS (2009), *The Far Away From Home Club*; Ministry of Health of Viet Nam (2008), *The Third Country Report on Following up the Implementation to the Declaration of Commitment on HIV and AIDS: The Socialist Republic of Viet Nam (UNGASS)*.

132 One example is the methadone treatment centre in Le Chan district, Hai Phong City, where Le Chan district resident drug-users alone are provided the necessary ID card to access methadone.

133 Asian Development Bank and IOM (2009), *Infrastructure and HIV in the Greater Mekong Subregion: A Literature Review*.

134 Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, *National Strategy on HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control in Viet Nam till 2010 with a Vision to 2020*. Decision No. 36/2004/QD-TTg approved on March 17, 2004, See 'Interventions and harm reduction and prevention of HIV/AIDS transmission,' in section c) 'Expanding harm reduction intervention measures'; Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, *Law on HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control*, Decision No. 64/2006/QH11, Article 11.2. The law states that mobile populations are one of the priority groups for national information, education and communication (IEC) activities.

135 UNAIDS (2009), *The Far Away From Home Club*.

136 World Health Assembly (2008), *Migrant Health Resolution*, adopted at the 122nd Session, 25 January 2008 (Document EB122.R5).

appropriate and effective HIV prevention efforts and access to care and treatment services for migrants, and the involvement of the business sector through HIV workplace policies and activities.

Gender-Based Violence

There is evidence to suggest that some migrant women in Viet Nam are particularly vulnerable to gender-based violence (GBV). The findings of a recent study indicate that women migrant factory workers are subject to gender-based violence, both from their intimate partners as well as “community violence,” involving violence between individuals who are unrelated and generally occurring outside the home¹³⁷. Much of this vulnerability stems from the living arrangements of these women, which are particular to those who are migrants. For example, the study noted the widely held view that women migrant factory workers are more likely to experience GBV because they live away from their family’s guidance and protection, which also emboldens their intimate partners to perpetrate violence against them. This is compounded by the lack of social networks for some female migrant workers, which can mean a lack of social cohesion in the migrant housing areas and that women fail to look out for one another¹³⁸.

Concerns of community violence generally focused on sexual violence occurring on the road home from work and in rental housing areas, such as while using shared toilets late at night¹³⁹. This indicates a strong link between the vulnerability of these women to GBV and

their accommodation choices. However, for migrant women the latter is largely dictated by proximity to their place of work and expense, according to the study findings. Many live in remote isolated areas because it is cheaper than near main roads or markets, which would be safer options, and also often share rental housing units. Such findings suggest that more efforts are needed to ensure that affordable and safe accommodation is available to women migrant workers, in addition to broader approaches to address violence against women.

3.2 Migrant-Receiving Areas

Migration is a process that fosters development by filling gaps in the formal and informal labour markets in destination areas¹⁴⁰. However, this can also present some challenges for the receiving community and for ensuring that the needs of migrants are met in these areas. Here we will focus on urban destination areas, including cities as well as industrial areas, which have grown considerably in no small part due to migration. In 2009, an additional 7.3 million people can be found in urban areas compared to 1999¹⁴¹, representing 77 percent of the country’s population increase during that period. Put another way, while the rural population increased by 0.4 percent during this time, the urban population increased by 3.4 percent¹⁴². Despite natural population growth certainly contributing to this figure, the fact that fertility in urban areas is below replacement level indicates that a much larger share of this

137 Steibelt, Erika (forthcoming), ‘The Context of Gender-Based Violence for Vietnamese Women Migrant Factory Workers in Southern Viet Nam,’ in IOM (eds) *Gender and Labour Migration in Asia*.

138 Ibid.

139 Although rape was the most discussed type of sexual violence during the study, none of the women migrant factory workers admitted to being raped by a non-intimate partner.

140 Dang, Nguyen Anh and Le Bach Duong (2007), *Social Protection and Rural-to-Urban Labour Migration: Practical and Policy Issues*, *Viet Nam’s Socio-Economic Development*, No.50, p15.

141 Central Population and Housing Census Steering Committee (2009), *The 2009 Viet Nam Population and Housing Census of 00.00 Hours 1st April 2009: Implementation and Preliminary Results*.

142 Ibid.

urban growth is due to migration¹⁴³. A further indication of the substantial urban growth of major cities in particular is that a recent estimation of HCMC population growth, which is based on motorcycle registration numbers, puts the growth rate at 400-500,000 people every year¹⁴⁴.

The number of industrial zones and industrial clusters, as well as export processing zones (EPZs), have also exponentially increased in number in recent decades, as they form the backbone of Viet Nam's strategy for industrial growth¹⁴⁵. The continued growth of this feature of Viet Nam's human geography is indicated by the recent government decision to approve the further establishment of 117 industrial areas nationwide by 2015, and the expansion of a further 27 existing industrial areas¹⁴⁶. Migrants constitute a large portion of workers in these industrial areas, perhaps as high as 70 percent of all workers in industrial areas, according to some estimates¹⁴⁷. This includes not only those employed in the large number of foreign-invested enterprises, as well as the lesser number of domestic enterprises, but also in the informal sector as small traders, street vendors and service providers¹⁴⁸. The contribution of migrants to the productivity of these areas is also estimated to be substantial, with the Viet Nam Parliament Association for Population Development estimating that 30

percent of HCM City GDP is attributable to the work of migrants¹⁴⁹.

Along with urban destinations, another significant destination area for many migrants are infrastructure project sites. These sites are often classified as rural areas and tend to draw thousands of poorly educated, semi-skilled and unskilled migrant workers. The living conditions in these sites can give rise to particular vulnerability issues, which are compounded by the limited support and services available to migrants at these remote locations¹⁵⁰.

Infrastructure and Social Services

Urbanization resulting from migration, as well as "natural increases" in the urban population, puts pressure on existing urban infrastructure and social services. Rapid unmanaged and unplanned urbanization is likely to lead to population pressures on urban services such as housing, education, health care water and sanitation, transportation. There is also evidence to suggest that the costs of infrastructure for individuals and households are more expensive in Viet Nam than in other countries, including the United States¹⁵¹. Recent signs show an augmentation of urban poverty, with alarming estimates suggesting that 41 percent of urban households in

143 Dapice, David, Jose A. Gomez-Ibanez, Nguyen Xuan Thanh (forthcoming) Ho Chi Minh City: The Challenges of Growth, Prepared under UNDP - Harvard Policy Dialogue Papers Series on Vietnam's WTO Accession and International Competitiveness Research, Policy Dialogue Paper Number 4.

144 Dapice, David (2008), *Choosing Success: The Lessons of East and Southeast Asia and Viet Nam's future - A policy framework for Vietnam's socio-economic development 2011-2020*.

145 Ha Noi Times (2009), Industrial zones, small and medium clusters in Ha Noi. *Ha Noi Times*, June 2009.

146 Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, *Decision 1107/QD-TTg* approved on August 21, 2006.

147 UNAIDS (2009), *The Far Away From Home Club*.

148 Cu, Chi Loi (2000), *Rural to Urban Migration in Viet Nam*.

149 Viet Nam Parliament's Association for Population Development VAPPD (2006), *Assessment on Urban Migration Policy*, Parliamentary Committee for Social Affairs.

150 Asian Development Bank and IOM (2009), *Infrastructure and HIV in the Greater Mekong Subregion: A Literature Review*.

151 Dapice, David, Jose A. Gomez-Ibanez, Nguyen Xuan Thanh (forthcoming) Ho Chi Minh City: The Challenges of Growth.

Viet Nam lack one of the following indicators: durable housing; sufficient living area; access to an improved water source; access to improved sanitation; or secure tenure¹⁵². With investment in infrastructure loosely based on population levels and growth rates, the evidence of gross underestimation of these numbers is somewhat alarming¹⁵³. Also concerning is that so far, existing formal poverty data only accounts for the local registered poor, not the migrant poor, meaning that understandings of determinants and prevalence of poverty in Viet Nam may be imprecise¹⁵⁴.

Aside from the very numerous social and “quality of life” consequences of inadequate infrastructure in urban areas, economic consequences are also a likely outcome. These include reductions in foreign direct investment, as well as domestic investment, and even impacts on tourism, which have been noted to occur as a result of Bangkok’s legendary congestion. It is also suggested that “infrastructure bottlenecks” could lead to an economic slowdown in Southeast Viet Nam, eventually affecting the national economy¹⁵⁵. In order to avoid such effects, proactive pro-poor urban planning should be a government priority.

Housing

In the 2004 VMS, migrants reported housing and access to healthcare as being the most pertinent issues of dissatisfaction, especially for women who cited their living place as a problem in higher numbers than men¹⁵⁶. Migrants are not only socially segregated, they are also spatially segregated, with migrants living in areas with inadequate housing and limited access to improved water supplies and sanitation, resulting in negative consequences for migrants’ health¹⁵⁷. For example, there are approximately 30 wards in HCMC in which migrants make up over half of the residents, and in at least three of these wards the proportion is over 70 percent¹⁵⁸.

Many of the poor, especially newly arrived migrants, live in boarding houses built for transition housing solutions, and in areas with poor or no infrastructure, electricity and sewage systems and poor or no connections to public transport¹⁵⁹. Many migrants also live in low-quality guest houses where they pay rent by the day, or live onsite at their workplace, which generally comprises a construction site. They try to save money for the future or to remit to their families, and hence minimize their expenses on essential needs. They

152 United Nations (2008), *Urban Population, Development and the Environment 2007*.

153 Dapice, David, Jose A. Gomez-Ibanez, Nguyen Xuan Thanh (forthcoming) *Ho Chi Minh City: The Challenges of Growth*. This paper compares official data on population growth of HCMC between 2002 and 2006 of 158,000 with statistics from the Enterprise Survey, motorcycle registration rates and registered construction rates, yielding estimates of between 400,000 and 540,000. By these estimates the actual population growth could be 2.5 - 3.4 times higher than that recorded.

154 ActionAid Viet Nam and Oxfam (2009), *Participatory Monitoring of Urban Poverty in Viet Nam*. Pincus, Jonathan and Sender John (2008) ‘Quantifying Poverty in Viet Nam: Who Counts?’, *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* Vol. 3(1).

155 Dapice, David (2008), *Choosing Success*.

156 Le, Bach Duong and Khuat Thu Hong (2008), *Market Transformation, Migration and Social Protection*.

157 The 1997 Viet Nam Migration and Health Survey identified that temporary migrants living in guesthouses have higher incidence of sickness than other migrants and also higher than non-migrants in Nguyen, Liem T and White Michael J (2007) *Health Status of Temporary Migrants in Urban Areas in Viet Nam*, *International Migration* Vol. 45(4) pp.101-134.

158 Le Van Thanh (2006), *Migrants and the Socio-Economic Development of Ho Chi Minh City (Viet Nam)*, NIE-SEAGA Conference 2006: Sustainability and South East Asia, Singapore on 28-30 November 2006, p3.

159 Waibel, Michael (2007), *Migration to Greater Ho Chi Minh City in the course of Doi Moi Policy*.

spend little on food and healthcare¹⁶⁰, which results in precarious and insecure living conditions for the inhabitants and increased related risks of communicable diseases and poor health.

Although few studies have touched on the issue, housing in industrial zones and export processing zones has received significant amounts of attention in the Vietnamese media. In particular, many reports have focused on the availability of housing more than the housing conditions. A 2006 Viet Nam News article reported statements from a conference on workers' living standards in industrial parks which stated that approximately 50 percent of the workforce in northern industrial and export processing zones and 65.8 percent of workers in southern areas of Viet Nam were in need of accommodation. Only 3-6.5 percent of that demand had been met at the time of publication. Whilst not explicitly mentioning migrants, the large proportions of migrants making up the workforce in these areas gives cause for concern. The actual living conditions of industrial zone workers were described as cramped, insecure and unhygienic. A further significant issue raised was that few entertainment options exist for workers to spend the little leisure time that they had. This has reportedly led to excesses in drinking and gambling and, whilst not mentioned in the article, it would seem that the impacts of this upon the mental health of migrant and non-migrant workers in industrial zones would also be detrimental¹⁶¹. This last point is an area which would benefit from increased research.

Even after finding appropriate housing, the ability of migrants to carry out administrative

processes or to obtain services relating to housing is often further complicated by their registration status. For example, people who rent accommodation rely on the landlord to give them the permission to register themselves under his registration book. If the owners of the rented accommodation are not willing to certify such status of contract, tenants are restricted in various ways. For instance, they cannot use their own electricity meter and have to accept the electricity charges determined by the landowner. Without his or her formal written permission, the renters are not eligible to register¹⁶².

Within the last two years, the Government has made considerable efforts to improve the situation of housing and has launched several social housing initiatives that call upon investment in social housing and housing for low-income earners¹⁶³. However, the scheme still faces many uncertainties in its implementation modalities. Furthermore, these efforts will also not touch those most deprived, as those without registration status will not be eligible to apply for social housing. With increasing urbanization and industrialization in Viet Nam over the past two decades, and signs indicating this trend will continue in the future, adequate and affordable housing in urban and industrial areas remains one of the key issues in ensuring the fulfilment of migrants' rights. This is especially important as housing is inherently linked to other social welfare outcomes such as health and education.

3.3 Migrant-Sending Communities

In some ways, the communities which send migrants, and to which they often return,

160 ILSSA, UNIFEM and AusAid (2009), *Socio-Economic Impacts of WTO Accession on Rural Women*.

161 Viet Nam News (2006), Better Living Standards Key To Productivity at IPs: Conference. *Viet Nam News*, 1 March 2006.

162 ActionAid Viet Nam and Oxfam (2009), *Participatory Monitoring of Urban Poverty in Viet Nam*.

163 Viet Nam News (2009), City Looks to Low-Cost Housing, *Viet Nam News*, 15 June 2009. Decisions include No. 65/2009/QĐ-TTg, No.66/2009/QĐ-TTg and No. 67/2009/QĐ-TTg, (24 April 2009), Decision No. 96/2009/QĐ-TTg (22 July 2009) and Ministry of Construction Circular No.13/2009/TT-BXD (30 June 2009).

represent the most significant area for enhancing the benefits of migration. This is because, while migrants themselves only amount to 7.7 percent of the population, internal economic migrants in Viet Nam move to assist their households, which likely comprise numerous people and multiple generations. This assertion is supported by a recent study conducted in Thanh Hoa and Nghe An provinces, which found that 42 percent of the households surveyed contained at least one migrant¹⁶⁴. 96 percent of these respondents stated that the impact of migration on family income was highly or at least marginally positive¹⁶⁵. According to VLSS data, migrant households are measurably poorer on average than non-migrant households and spend less per capita, providing further reason to enhance the benefits of migration for them¹⁶⁶.

Nevertheless, the impacts of migration on migrant-sending communities are extremely varied, as well as complex. They are also particularly difficult to measure due to the process of rapid, though uneven, development occurring across Viet Nam. However, some important and interesting issues emerge when looking at development and migration through the lens of migrant-sending communities. These include the impact of remittances, which has received increasing attention from the international community. Other less-discussed issues are also important, such

as the impact on those household members “left behind” during the migration of other household members, as well as the transfer of knowledge and behaviour from migrants to their communities on return.

Remittances

Remittances circulate part of the earnings gained by migrants in destination areas to mostly poorer, rural communities of origin, and thus are one of the positive direct effects of labour movements in the country. In Viet Nam, the estimates for remittances resulting from both internal and international migration in 2007 are as high as USD 5.5 billion¹⁶⁷, with the proportion of internal remittances within this total increasing over time¹⁶⁸. Over half of migrants captured by the 2004 VMS had sent money to their households of origin. A study on gender differences for remittances indicates that overall men send more remittances than women. However, on average, the money sent represents 10 percent of men’s income, while for women this proportion is 17 percent¹⁶⁹. Furthermore, women tend to be more responsible for the inter-generational transmission of remittances, while men tend to be more responsible for those within the same generation¹⁷⁰.

In terms of those receiving remittances, VHLSS data reveals that in 2004, 88.7 percent of Vietnamese households received

164 World Bank (2005), Joint Donor Report to the Viet Nam Consultative Group Meeting, Ha Noi, December 6-7, 2005.

165 Ibid.

166 De Brauw Alan & Harigaya Tomoko (2007), Seasonal Migration and Improving Living Standards in Viet Nam. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 89(2).

167 United Nations Development Program (2009), *Human Development Report 2009 - Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development*.

168 The international share of total remittances fell from 71.7 percent in 1992/1993 to 57.3 percent in 1997/1998. The share of remittances resulting from migration within same province increased from 18.9 percent to 25.8 percent, and the share from inter-provincial migration increased from 9.4 percent to 17 percent during the same period. Pfau, Wade Donald and Thanh Giang Long (2008), Gender and Remittance Flows in Viet Nam during Economic Transformation, *Asia Pacific Journal August*, Vol. 23(2), pp. 13-32.

169 United Nations Population Fund (2007), *Internal Migration in Viet Nam: The Current Situation*.

170 Pfau, Wade Donald and Thanh Giang Long (2008), *Gender and Remittance Flows*.

some form of remittances, indicating the large reach of migration impacts across Viet Nam¹⁷¹. Interestingly, remittances are disproportionately directed to households headed by those aged 50 and older, with those 70-years-old and over receiving the most remittances¹⁷². Generally, remittances are used to cover the daily expenditure of most families, as well as health and children's education costs¹⁷³.

The spread and use of remittances provides some indication of the extent to which internal migration can contribute to a redistribution of wealth to areas that have been left behind by Viet Nam's recent development phenomenon. Such income flows from mainly areas with high employment opportunities to mainly rural areas with low employment opportunities contributes to a wider redistribution of wealth throughout the country and could contribute to poverty reduction in lesser-developed areas of Viet Nam¹⁷⁴. The remittance flows from internal migration reflect that the decisions to migrate are not only based on the goals and unmet needs of individual migrants, but are likely also influenced by household strategies to maximize incomes or minimize risks by dispersing income sources.

In addition to the economic impacts of remittances, households and communities that send internal migrants can experience

other significant, although less-studied, impacts. This can include challenges or benefits associated with the redistribution of reproductive and productive household activities, psychological impacts of the migrant's departure, and perhaps transfers of knowledge and experience from the migrant upon their return. One study also referred to a 'brain drain' caused by young, educated and skilled people leaving rural areas to make a better living in the cities, thereby creating a lack of such workers in rural areas¹⁷⁵. Although these impacts have not received much attention in Viet Nam, and no representative statistical data is available to support these contentions, there is some evidence which suggests the relevance of these issues to communities and households of origin.

Redistribution of Household Responsibilities and the Potential for Gender Role Transformation

Some research has considered the redistribution of household responsibilities that result from the migration of one family member. When men migrate and leave their spouse and other family members behind, the workload of female spouses who remain often increases as a result of them taking on the productive workloads that their husbands

171 This figure includes remittances sent domestically, as well as internationally, to Viet Nam.

172 Pfau, Wade Donald and Giang Thanh Long (2009), Remittances, Living Arrangements, and the Welfare of the Elderly in Viet Nam. *Viet Nam Development Forum Working Paper 0901*.

173 GSO, United Nations Population Fund (2005), *The 2004 Viet Nam Migration Survey*; UNICEF Viet Nam and Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (forthcoming), Study on the Impact of Internal and International Migration on families and their members who stay behind. Please note that the order of importance of investment in health and education is reversed in the 2004 Migration Survey and the forthcoming UNICEF and MOCST study.

174 Deshingkar, Priya (2006), *Internal Migration, Poverty and Development in Asia: Including the Excluded through Partnerships and Improved Governance*. Paper presented at the Asia 2015: Promoting Growth, Ending Poverty Conference, March 2006.

175 Trinh, Duy Luan, et al (2008), Youth Migration in Viet Nam: Trends and Problems, *Socio-Economic Development: A Social Science Review* Vol.55.

were formerly responsible for, in addition to their own normal workloads¹⁷⁶.

Many suggest that the redistribution of household responsibilities may present an opportunity for gender-role transformation, which is hoped will lead to progress towards gender equality¹⁷⁷. This is thought to occur as female spouses left behind gain more control over the household's assets, and also because the productive work they take on is more visible than reproductive work women are traditionally charged with, thus increasing their status¹⁷⁸. However, these transformative impacts should not be presumed. In fact, others have highlighted that the productive work which women who stay behind take up in the context of China is agricultural, and this additional responsibility is not because women have gained in status but rather because agricultural has become a marginal economic sector¹⁷⁹.

Similar hopes for gender role transformation are held in relation to the migration of married women who leave their families behind. A study of 100 female circular migrants in Nam

Dinh province suggests that husbands often take on the responsibilities formerly held by the women migrants, and sometimes older relatives,¹⁸⁰ but that this temporarily reversed gendered division of labour did in fact not change gender roles but reproduced and perpetuated them as soon as the woman was at home on her return visit. Alternatively, arrangements were made to ensure the women's continued responsibility for these tasks while away. It follows that while impacts of migration on the migrant-sending household may have the potential to affect progress towards gender equality, this is by no means a given, but rather requires further social change.

Impacts on Elderly Left Behind

Concerns about the welfare of Viet Nam's elderly have received some attention in recent years, largely in relation to the decline of the multi-generation family model, with elderly family members living as dependents on relatives and the very small number of elderly people receiving public pensions¹⁸¹. A question that arises is the ways in which

176 Paris, Thelma et al. (2009), *Labour out migration on rice farming households and gender roles: synthesis of findings in Thailand, the Philippines and Viet Nam*, Paper presented at the FAO-IFAD-ILO Workshop on Gaps, trends and current research in gender dimensions of agricultural and rural employment: differentiated pathways out of poverty Rome, 31 March - 2 April 2009; Dang, Nguyen Anh (2005), *The HIV/AIDS Vulnerability of Labour Out-migrants and its Consequences on the Left-behind at the Household Level in Viet Nam*. Presentation at the International Workshop on the Impacts of Migration on the "Left-Behind" in Asia. Ha Noi, 10-11 March.

177 Paris, Thelma et al. (2009), *Labour out migration on rice farming households and gender roles: synthesis of findings in Thailand, the Philippines and Viet Nam*.

178 Meng X. (1993), Chinese rural women in the rural labour transfer, *Social Science Frontier* Vol.4 pp. 147-154; Li, J. (2003), An exploratory discussion on the change in the life style of the leftbehind rural women, *Journal of Shanxi College for Youth Administrators*, Vol.16(2)pp. 38 - 40. Both are cited in Xiang Biao (2007), How Far are the Left-Behind Left Behind? A Preliminary Study in Rural China. *Population, Space and Place* Vol.13, pp 179-191.

179 Fei, Juanhong (1994), Woguo nongcun gaige yu liangxing laodong fen'gong (Chinese rural reform and gender-based division of labour), *Shehuixue Yanjiu* (Sociology Research) vol. 2. Gao, Herong and Pu Xinwei (2003), Lun dangqian woguo nongcun jiating yanglao mianlin de xin wenti jiqi duice (On the new problems of the rural household elderly care and policy options), *Xibei Renkou* (Northwest Population) vol. 3(93). Cited in Xiang Biao (2007), How Far are the Left-Behind Left Behind? A Preliminary Study in Rural China. *Population, Space and Place* Vol.13, pp 179-191.

180 Resurreccion, Bernadette and Ha Thi Van Khanh (2007), Able to Come and Go: Rural-urban Migration of Women in Nam Dinh Province, The Red River Delta. *Population, Space and Place* Vol.13. pp.221-224.

patterns of out-migration further affect the welfare of elderly people in Viet Nam. Evidence from China indicates that elderly relatives of migrants feel more lonely as a result of remaining behind, however they are also more satisfied. This is explained with the observation that while the absence of caregivers increases loneliness, migrants often attempt to redress this with remittances and gifts. A further interesting finding was that there has been an increasing commercialization of support services for the elderly, for example, the hiring of other community residents to provide ad-hoc or regular services paid for by remittances received. In other cases, care of elderly relatives is rotated between kin (usually sons), who each received monetary contributions from the other kin when it is their turn to care for their parent¹⁸². Recent evidence from Viet Nam suggests a similar trend with increasing proportions of elderly living alone and decreasing proportions of those living with dependents. It was also found that this trend was more prevalent in the relationship between female migrants and rural elderly¹⁸³.

Impacts on Children Left Behind

The impacts of migration on children in households who remain behind is another area which draws concern, yet not a great deal is known in the context of internal migration in Viet Nam. The 2004 VMS found that the third-largest use for remittances received by households left behind was for children's

education, with about one-in-five migrants surveyed using remittances for this purpose¹⁸⁴. This is commensurate with findings that the impact on children's education from a family member migrating is one of the two biggest concerns for families left behind.

In addition to findings of increased spending on children left behind, some studies have also considered impacts on children left behind in terms of the health and education outcomes reported. For example, a recent study by the Institute of Sociology in 2009 found that in the absence of one or both parents, children, particularly those under the age of six, are vulnerable to health care risks¹⁸⁵. In terms of education, more than half of the families surveyed reported a negative impact on children's school performance after the migration of the parent(s), which is attributed to a lack of guidance and support, as well as increased time spent on household chores. Interestingly, different studies reported different and sometimes contradicting effects on the labour time contributions required from sons and daughters to replace parent's labour when they migrate.

Returning Migrants

An impact of migration on the community and households of origin which has received much attention in literature on international migration is the transfer of knowledge and behaviours from migrants upon their return. For example, it has often been found that

181 Pfau, Wade Donald and Giang Thanh Long (2009), Remittances, Living Arrangements, and the Welfare of the Elderly in Viet Nam. *Viet Nam Development Forum Working Paper* 0901.

182 Xiang Biao (2007), How Far are the Left-Behind Left Behind? A Preliminary Study in Rural China. *Population, Space and Place* Vol.13, pp 179-191.

183 Pham Thang and Do Thi Khanh Hy (2009), *Review of Elderly Health Care Policies in Response to Age Structure Changes in Viet Nam*.

184 GSO, United Nations Population Fund (2005), *The 2004 Viet Nam Migration Survey*; UNICEF Viet Nam and Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (forthcoming), Study on the Impact of Internal and International Migration on families and their members who stay behind.

185 UNICEF Viet Nam and Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (forthcoming), Study on the Impact of Internal and International Migration on families and their members who stay behind.

migrants who return bring back vocational skills or knowledge about specific health issues, such as HIV. It is also often suggested that migrants who return with savings may start their own enterprise, further contributing to their household's well-being and potentially that of their community¹⁸⁶. Unfortunately, very little is known about these impacts in the context of Viet Nam, indicating a significant research gap for understanding how migration can best contribute to social and economic development.

It is also important to note that knowledge and behaviours brought to the community by returning migrants are not always beneficial. This appears to be one of the biggest concerns of migrant-sending households who nominate the transmission of "social evils" from the cities as one of the two biggest concerns relating to migration. These evils are thought to include gambling, crime, drug use and sex work¹⁸⁷.

Another emerging concern in relation to returning migrants is whether this will lead

to increased vulnerability to HIV for their spouses and intimate partners. International research has suggested that married women's greatest risk of contracting HIV is from sexual intercourse with their husbands¹⁸⁸. For the wives of migrant workers, this risk is thought to be increased as male migrant workers who engage in specific high-HIV risk behaviours, such as engaging in commercial sex and low condom use, have been identified as particularly vulnerable to HIV infections¹⁸⁹. Concern has been raised, although largely through inference, that this vulnerability extends to their partners on return¹⁹⁰. This contention is supported by the findings of a study carried out in Thai Binh, which recorded that of eight women who had contracted the HIV virus from their husbands, all of the husbands had migrated in the past and all had engaged in injecting drug use outside the commune¹⁹¹. Accordingly, interventions should not only inform communities about means of transmission but should also focus on empowering women to allow them to put such information into practice.

186 Deshingkar, Priya (2006), *Internal Migration, Poverty and Development in Asia: Including the Excluded through Partnerships and Improved Governance*.

187 Institute of Sociology (forthcoming), *Study on the Impact of Migration on Left Behind Families*.

188 Phinney, Harriet (2008), Rice Is Essential but Tiresome, You Should Get Some Noodles: Doi Moi and the Political Economy of Men's Extramarital Sexual Relations and Marital HIV Risk in Ha Noi, Viet Nam. *American Journal of Public Health* Vol. 98(4), pp 650-660.

189 Hoang, Tu Anh, Nguyen Truong Nam and Nguyen Thi Vinh (2009), Spousal Transmission of HIV among Married Women in Viet Nam: Findings from a Review of Policies, Research, Interventions and IEC materials and a Qualitative Study in Ha Noi and Hai Phong. National AIDS Standing Bureau Viet Nam and Family Health International (2000), *HIV/AIDS Behavioral Surveillance Survey in Viet Nam*.

190 Bui, Thi Thanh Thuy and Kretchmar Joshua (2008), Supervisors and accomplices: Extra-marital sex among migrant construction workers in Ha Noi, Viet Nam, *Culture, Health & Sexuality* Vol.10 pp.189-199; Hoang, Tu Anh, Nguyen Truong Nam, Nguyen Thi Vinh (2009), note 188. Hoang, Tu Anh, et al. (2002), Assessing the Viet Nam Situation: HIV/AIDS Communication in Context, *Consultation of Investment in Health Promotion*.

191 Dang, Nguyen Anh (2005), *The HIV/AIDS Vulnerability of Labour Out-migrants and its Consequences on the Left-behind at the Household Level in Viet Nam*. Presentation at the International Workshop on the Impacts of Migration on the "Left-Behind" in Asia. Ha Noi, 10-11 March 2005.

PART 4 - CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS



Migration is an integral and important contributor to Viet Nam's socio-economic development. By meeting much of the demand for labour created by industrial development and foreign direct investment following the *Doi Moi* reforms, and remitting part of these earnings to the poorer areas of Viet Nam, migration plays an important role in Viet Nam's

economy, and can contribute to poverty reduction. The impacts of migration are not limited to those people who themselves migrate. Evidence presented above shows that migration impacts significant numbers of households from all areas of Viet Nam, an overwhelming majority of whom consider themselves better off because of it. Migration therefore represents significant opportunities for a more even and widespread development, whereby existing regional differences are reduced.

The internal migrating population is heterogeneous. It includes those who move great distances, as well as small; those migrating alone or those with other family members; those departing for good and those returning at regular intervals. Some internal migrants in Viet Nam are supplementing their income between peak agricultural seasons, others travel to large cities and send remittances to put their left-behind children through school or develop their own career by working in foreign-invested enterprises. Others still are escaping the gradual, yet unrelenting, effects of their changing climate – floods, crop devastation and rising tides. A

common thread runs throughout these varied experiences, that of the resourcefulness and adaptability of the individuals and households involved.

It is oft-said that in development there are winners and losers. Many of those individuals and households who make the decision to migrate elsewhere in search of a better life are those who were not the winners in Viet Nam's social and economic development thus far. Ensuring that the rights of these people are fulfilled and leveraging the impacts of internal migration to best benefit these individuals, households and communities is thus an important task for Viet Nam's future development. This paper has shown that these impacts will depend on the political, social and economic environments, along with the behaviours and resources of individual migrants and their households. Government, local authorities and the private sector all have a role to play in creating an adequate environment for migrants, households and society at large to fully benefit from this process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) **Accurate data and better understanding of internal migration processes to inform evidence-based policymaking**
 - a. Large-scale research and data gathering should be improved to ensure that all migratory movements are captured, including temporary, short-term and circular movements. This should be used to inform planning and budgeting at national and sub-national levels, especially for urban planning, poverty reduction and social welfare programmes that target the most vulnerable.
 - b. Certain internal migration flows also require better analysis, for example, rural-to-rural migration, especially of people from ethnic minority populations.

- c. There is a need for further research into issues of vulnerability of migrant populations, especially women and children migrants and those left behind, which should inform policymaking in the relevant areas. These include the health of migrants, including the reproductive health of migrant women, housing conditions in industrial zones, and the HIV vulnerability of migrants' intimate partners.
- d. Improved analysis of the ways in which internal migration contributes to the development of the community of origin is also called for, on the basis of which policies and programmes can be designed that leverage these benefits. Two important areas for such analysis are remittances and the contribution this makes towards poverty reduction, as well as the knowledge and skill transfers that returned migrants provide to their home community.
- e. A better understanding of the possible impacts of environmental changes and disasters, economic trajectories and population structures on migratory movements will help policymakers develop policies that pre-emptively reduce the potentially negative impacts of such changes. Vulnerability and adaptability assessments at sectoral, regional and community levels that identify the most vulnerable groups to the impacts of climate change will inform policies and programmes on adaptation and resilience strengthening.

2) Ensure Safe and Successful Internal Migration

- a. It must be recognized that internal migration can play an important role in poverty reduction and economic development and should therefore not be discouraged, but policies should instead aim to maximize the potential benefits of migration for the individual and society at large.
Internal migration should be mainstreamed into national poverty reduction strategies and socio-economic development planning. A starting point could be to review existing legal frameworks that affect migrants and put in place an institutional framework that covers all aspects and types of migration to ensure the rights of people on the move. This should include reforming foremost the registration law and decoupling the registration status of citizens from their access to services. Reform should however also include social housing policies, labour and employment laws, social protection laws, health laws and poverty reduction programmes to ensure equitable access for all Vietnamese people, regardless of their permanent or temporary residence status.
- b. Migration and the fulfilment of migrants' rights should also be reflected in the Socio-Economic Development Programme 2011-2015, which is currently being drafted, with an emphasis on putting in place the necessary action plan and corresponding budget to implement the programme.
- c. National, provincial and district budgeting and planning should take into account the total number of migrants, even if they are unregistered, in order to reflect the real number of residents.
- d. Social service delivery should be designed, budgeted and implemented in a way that removes the de facto constraints migrants face in accessing services. This is particularly relevant in relation to HIV prevention, care and treatment services, education, health and reproductive health services, as well as various support provided to the poor through national poverty reduction and social assistance programmes.
- e. It is necessary to transmit into national law the commitments Viet Nam has made at the international level and the implementation of the rights guaranteed to Vietnamese citizens by the Vietnamese Constitution. Institutional and legal measures should be implemented so that existing laws are enforced, such as the Social Insurance Law and the Labour Code. There should also be further commitments made to protect the rights of internal migrants, such as the World Health Assembly's Migrant Health Resolution of 2008.

f. Information access mechanisms should be established in both destination and departure areas that are targeted at young people, with information provided on migrants' labour rights, employment opportunities, administrative processes for household registration, access to health and other social services, vocational training and access to supportive services for victims of trafficking or abuse. In a similar vein, the existing government employment centres should be significantly improved so as to augment their low use.

3) Address Issues and Enhance Benefits of Internal Migration in Migrant-Receiving Areas

- a. Internal migration should be recognized as an engine for urban development. Government agencies cannot ignore the increasing pressure on infrastructure and services in large cities and should therefore include pro-poor urban planning in national planning and strategies which take into account not only the number of permanent residents, but also the number of unregistered and temporary migrant men, women, and children.
- b. Adequate, safe and hygienic housing and living conditions should be made available to low-income families and migrants, particularly access to electricity, clean water and sanitation/hygiene, by local authorities and/or private employers. In industrial areas, private employers and local authorities should ensure the availability of affordable and suitable worker housing to ensure that women can live without fear of harassment and abuse and migrant families can raise their children in safe and healthy environment.
- c. The safety of workers should be ensured, not only at the workplace but also on the way to work, by employers. This is particularly important for young women workers. Employers at large factories and mass organizations in migrant-rich areas should also ensure that low-income workers can lead fulfilled lives in terms of

access to social networks, entertainment, and media sources.

- d. The integration of migrants into destination communities should be facilitated by recognising migrants' contribution to development and by improving migrants' social capital to participate in unions and mass organizations, and community and cultural groups. Setting up information points and social gatherings for migrants to acquire information about their new living and working environment, their rights and the administrative and registration procedures they must follow, access to schools for their children, and reproductive health information could be an important step towards reducing their vulnerability.
- e. The capacity of local governments should be improved to support the integration of migrants and to implement poverty alleviation programmes. This can be achieved by raising awareness among local governments about the problems that migrants face upon arrival, by reducing stigma towards migrants and by increasing their capacity and funds to deal with the increased number of inhabitants in their wards/communes.

4) Address Issues and Enhance Benefits of Internal Migration in Sending Communities

- a. Returned migrants should be supported to take advantage of their acquired skills and knowledge and assisted to transfer this information to others in their home communities. Opportunities and assistance for returned migrant entrepreneurs to start their own business in their home communities should be expanded, for example, through the establishment of special loan and grant schemes.
- b. Information and education about HIV-intimate partner transmission should be provided to migrants and the broader community and women should be empowered to put this information into practice and protect themselves against transmission.

- c. Community schemes should be established for the elderly and children that are left behind, or for 'skip-generation' and single-parent households, to ease the burden of taking care of dependants.
- d. Information points in sending communities should be established to provide information on employment opportunities and to provide guidance on migrant labour rights, administrative procedures for household registration, access to health and other social services, vocational training and access to supportive services for victims of trafficking or abuse. The information provided should be youth - and gender - sensitive.

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The Mission of the United Nations in Viet Nam

The United Nations, in partnership with the government and people of Viet Nam, works to ensure that all Vietnamese people enjoy an increasingly healthy and prosperous life with greater human dignity and expanded choices. Collectively and through its individuals agencies, the United Nations cares and creates opportunities for the poor and most vulnerable, and for youth, to whom the future belongs.

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