



# Internal Migration

Opportunities and challenges for  
socio-economic development in Viet Nam

Ha Noi , July 2010

This paper was prepared by Veronique Marx and Katherine Fleischer on behalf of the Programme Coordination Group on Social and Economic Policies of the United Nations in Viet Nam. The paper is the result of the substantial contributions of, and extensive consultations with numerous UN agencies including IOM, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIFEM, and WHO (alphabetically). Special thanks also go to the UN Communications Team for editing the English version and to UNFPA for editing the Vietnamese version. Photos by Trung Kien (Call to Action Paper), UNFPA and T.E.A.M.



# CONTENTS

<b>LIST OF ACRONYMS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>10</b>
1.1. Scope	12
1.2. Methodology & Limitations	13
<b>PART 1 - THE CONTEXT OF INTERNAL ECONOMIC MIGRATION IN VIET NAM</b>	<b>15</b>
1.1 Constitutional Rights and International Commitments	15
1.2 Administrative, Legal & Policy Framework	16
1.3 Household Registration	17
<b>PART 2 - OVERVIEW OF INTERNAL MIGRATION IN VIET NAM</b>	<b>20</b>
2.1 History of Internal Migration in Viet Nam	20
2.2 Numbers & Demographics of Current Flows	23
2.3 Motivations	23
2.4 Spontaneous or Planned Migration	24
2.5 Duration	25
2.6 Rural- and Urban-Bound Migration	25
2.7 Regional and Provincial Flows	26
<b>PART 3 - MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>28</b>
3.1 Migrants	28
3.2 Migrant-Receiving Areas	37
3.3 Migrant-Sending Communities	40
<b>PART 4 - CONCLUSION &amp; RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>50</b>

## 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

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

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码如下：

[https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5\\_20027](https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_20027)

