



Understanding Children's Work
An Inter-Agency Research Cooperation Project

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Understanding children's work in Vietnam

Report on child labour

April 2009

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As part of broader efforts toward durable solutions to child labor, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the World Bank initiated the interagency Understanding Children's Work (UCW) project in December 2000. The project is guided by the Oslo Agenda for Action, which laid out the priorities for the international community in the fight against child labor. Through a variety of data collection, research, and assessment activities, the UCW project is broadly directed toward improving understanding of child labor, its causes and effects, how it can be measured, and effective policies for addressing it. For further information, see the project website at www.ucw-project.org.

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ABSTRACT

The current report was developed under the aegis of the Understanding Children's Work (UCW) project, a research co-operation initiative of the International Labour Organisation, UNICEF and World Bank. It provides an overview of the child labour phenomenon in Vietnam – its extent and nature, its determinants, and its consequences on health and education. The report also addresses the policy options for its elimination. The analysis considers the economics as well as the social determinants of child labour and follows a cross-sectoral approach, especially in the identification of determinants and strategic options.

Understanding children's work in Vietnam

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CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	NATIONAL CONTEXT	2
2.1	Country overview.....	2
3.	CHILDREN'S INVOLVEMENT IN WORK AND SCHOOLING.....	15
3.1	Involvement in economic activity	15
3.2	Trends in children's work	21
3.3	What helps to explain child work trends?	24
4.	CHILD LABOUR.....	29
4.1	Child labour incidence	29
4.2	Worst forms of child labour	31
5.	Characteristics of children's work	34
6.	IMPACT OF WORK ON CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND EDUCATION	37
6.1	Health and children's work	37
6.2	Education and children's work.....	39
7.	UNDERSTANDING WHY CHILDREN WORK	42
8.	ACCELERATING PROGRESS TOWARDS ELIMINATING CHILD LABOUR: A DISCUSSION OF POLICY OPTIONS	49
8.1	Preventive measures.....	50
8.2	"Second chance" measures	53
8.3	Direct action: removal, recovery and reintegration.....	55
8.4	Creating an enabling environment for progress against child labour.....	57
	ANNEX I. Ministerial Order on Hazardous Forms	60

1. INTRODUCTION

1. The current report was developed under the aegis of the Understanding Children's Work (UCW) project, a research co-operation initiative of the International Labour Organization, UNICEF and World Bank. It provides an overview of the child labour phenomenon in Vietnam – its extent and nature, its determinants, and its consequences on health and education. The report also addresses the national response to child labour, and policy options for its elimination. The analysis considers the economics as well as the social determinants of child labour and follows a cross-sectoral approach, especially in the identification of determinants and strategic options.

2. Three related objectives are served by the report: (1) to improve the information base on child labour, in order to inform policy and programme design; (2) to promote policy dialogue on child labour and accelerated progress towards national child labour reduction targets; and (3) to build national capacity for regular child labour data collection and analysis.

3. The remainder of the report is organised as follows. Section 2 briefly reviews the national context, and specifically major socio-economic factors underlying the child labour phenomenon in the country. Section 3 presents descriptive data on the extent of child involvement in work and schooling, and Section 4 on children's involvement in child labour for elimination. Section 5 examines key characteristics of children's work, and Section 6 at its consequences on education and health. Section 7 looks at major determinants child labour and schooling, making use of a simple economic model of household behaviour. Section 8 looks at strategic options for accelerating and strengthening national action against child labour.

2. NATIONAL CONTEXT

2.1 Country overview

4. Vietnam is one of the best-performing developing economies in the world¹, and it would enter the ranks of middle income countries by 2010, might be keeping the pace². By the mid-1980, this war-ravaged country faced famine and a failing command economy. In 1986 the government launched a renovation process: it experimented with market mechanisms while trying to preserve social inclusion. The reforms implemented, together with its political stability, led to a rapid expansion of Vietnam's economy. Subsequently, the government decided to deepen economic reforms: a new State budget law has led to major steps forward in public financial management; legal and regulatory policy frameworks for energy, water and forestry as well as for investment and enterprises also are in place; important progress have been recorded in the sale of state assets; and an ambitious roadmap for the reform of the financial sector has been adopted. Furthermore, the Government of Vietnam developed the Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP) 2006-2010:³ it lays out a path of transition towards a market economy with a socialist orientation, and sees Vietnam reaching middle-income country status by 2010. The SEDP covers the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) principles, incorporating a poverty focus and a result orientation, and is broadly sound. The preparation process has been open and participatory, representing a significant change in approach to mainstream planning. Vietnam became member of WTO in January 2007.

5. Vietnam's HDI (Human Development Index⁴) has increased constantly from 0.583 in 1985 to 0.691 in 2004 and has reached 0.704 in 2008, up 4 places from 2004, taking the lead of the Association of South-East Asian

¹¹ This section is drawn primarily from the following documents: *Vietnam – Country Partnership Strategy*, IDA, IFC, M.I.G.A., February 2007; *The comprehensive poverty reduction and growth strategy (CPRGS)*, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Hanoi, November 2003

²<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/EASTASIAPACIFICEXT/VIETNAMEXTN/0,,menuPK:387575~pagePK:141132~piPK:141107~theSitePK:387565,00.html>

³ Other strategies/plans implemented are: the Ten-Year Socio-Economic Development Strategy for the 2001-2010 Period, strategies for sectoral and industrial development during the 2001-2010 period, the Socio-Economic development Plan for the 2001-2005 Period, National Targeted Poverty Reduction and Job Creation Program, Prime Minister's decisions on socio-economic development in the Central Highland, North Mountainous and Mekong river delta provinces, etc. The Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS) is an action program that translates the Government's Ten-Year Socio-economic Development Strategy, Five-Year Socio-economic Development Plan as well as other sectoral development plans into concrete measures with well-defined road maps for implementation. *The comprehensive poverty reduction and growth strategy (CPRGS)*, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Hanoi, November 2003

⁴ The HDI provides a composite measure of three dimensions of human development: living a long and healthy life (measured by life expectancy), being educated (measured by adult literacy and enrolment at the primary, secondary and tertiary level) and having a decent standard of living (measured by purchasing power parity, PPP, income). The index is not in any sense a comprehensive measure of human development. It does not, for example, include important indicators such as inequality and difficult to measure indicators like respect for human rights and political freedoms. *Human Development Report 2006*, United Nations Development Program, <http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/statistics/>

Nations. The country's life expectancy has increased from 68.6 in 2003 to 69 in 2004 and to 70.5 this year while its per capita income rose from US \$2,300 in 2004 to US \$2,490 in 2005. The country ranks 108th out of the 177 countries on the HDI. Vietnam is also attaining significant progress in implementing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)⁵.

6. Notwithstanding these advances, the country's development agenda remains daunting. Vietnam remains a poor country with low per capita income; 28.4 percent of the children were underweight in 2003, and 17 percent of the total population was undernourished in 2002⁶; child labor is now a burning issue; trafficking and abuse of children and the number of street children are on the rise; the spread of HIV/AIDS has not yet slowed down; a striking gap in the access to basic services exists between rural and urban areas⁷. Macroeconomic balances are fragile and seriously constrained; the system of economic laws is inadequate and lacks consistency; public administration reform is slow and lacks decisiveness. Furthermore, there are many urgent social and environmental problems. Vietnam ranks 109th out of the 177 countries on the human development index⁸.

7. Economic growth achievements in Vietnam stand as a spectacular success story and the country has proven itself to be a resilient economy, as this performance was accomplished despite external shocks^{9,10}. From 2001-2005, annual real GDP growth averaged 7.6 percent and in 2006 the economy expanded by an estimated 8.0 percent and accelerated slightly to 8.5 in 2007 percent, making the 2007 the third consecutive year above the 8-percent benchmark¹¹. Per-capita income grown on average by 6.2 percent per year during 1995-2005. In US dollar terms, income per capita rose from US\$ 260 in 1995 to a 2007 level of US\$ 835. The growth was driven by rapid export growth and private sector development and was supported by strategies with strong national ownership and by sound macroeconomic

⁵Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Vietnam.

<http://www.mofa.gov.vn/en/nr040807104143/nr040807105039/ns050912160102>

⁶ <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx?cr=704>

⁷ In 2004 92 percent of the urban population used improved sanitation facilities; in rural areas the proportion is 50 percent; 99 percent of population in urban areas had access to an improved drinking water sources; in rural areas the proportion is 80 percent.
<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx?cr=704>

⁸ The HDI provides a composite measure of three dimensions of human development: living a long and healthy life (measured by life expectancy), being educated (measured by adult literacy and enrolment at the primary, secondary and tertiary level) and having a decent standard of living (measured by purchasing power parity, PPP, income). The index is not in any sense a comprehensive measure of human development. It does not, for example, include important indicators such as inequality and difficult to measure indicators like respect for human rights and political freedoms. *Human Development Report 2006*, United Nations Development Program, <http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/statistics/>

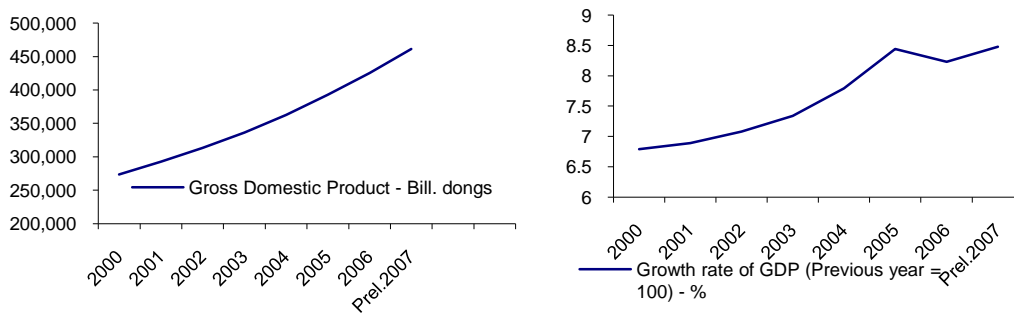
⁹ We refer to severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), avian influenza, rising oil prices, and natural calamities.

¹⁰ *Vietnam – Country Partnership Strategy (CAS)*, International Development Association, International Finance Corporation, and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, January 2007

¹¹ <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/EASTASIAPACIFICEXT/VIETNAMEXT/N0,,menuPK:387575~pagePK:141132~piPK:141107~theSitePK:387565,00.html>

policies. Increased competition in product markets was a key driver of reform. Since 2001, tariff reductions under the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTS) and the Vietnam-US Bilateral Trade Agreement have forced adjustments in the state sector. Integration with the world economy was strengthened significantly, with exports accounting for 71 percent of GDP in 2005, up from 56 percent in 2001, and private business employment increasing five-fold between 2001 and 2005. Inflation continued to run high, exceeding 7% on average during 2006 for the third year in a row. Rising food prices were one cause; increases in administered prices of domestic fuels and in transport charges were others.

Figure 1. Trends in GDP and GDP growth (2000-2007)



Source: General Statistics Office of Vietnam, www.gso.gov.vn

8. GDP growth was led by a dynamic manufacturing sector, which recorded an average annual real growth of 11 percent from 2001-2005 (10.4 percent in 2006¹²). While the most rapidly expanding products, such as garments and footwear, have benefited from strong exports, domestic sales also have been robust. Services, on the back of buoyant performances of trade, tourism, transportation, communications, and finance, grew by an estimated 8.2%. Surging demand for mobile phones is helping drive the expansion¹³. The industry and services sectors contributed more than 90% of total GDP growth in 2006. The agriculture and fisheries sectors overcame adverse weather and wide fluctuation in commodity prices to grow by more than 3.5 percent per year on average during 2001-05¹⁴; production in agriculture rose by 2.9% in 2006, below average for recent years, because of floods and typhoons. Agricultural land is being converted into industrial parks, which reflects the changing economic structure: agriculture's share of GDP declined to 20.4% in 2006 from 24.5% in 2000. Production of tea, coffee, and natural rubber was buoyed by high export

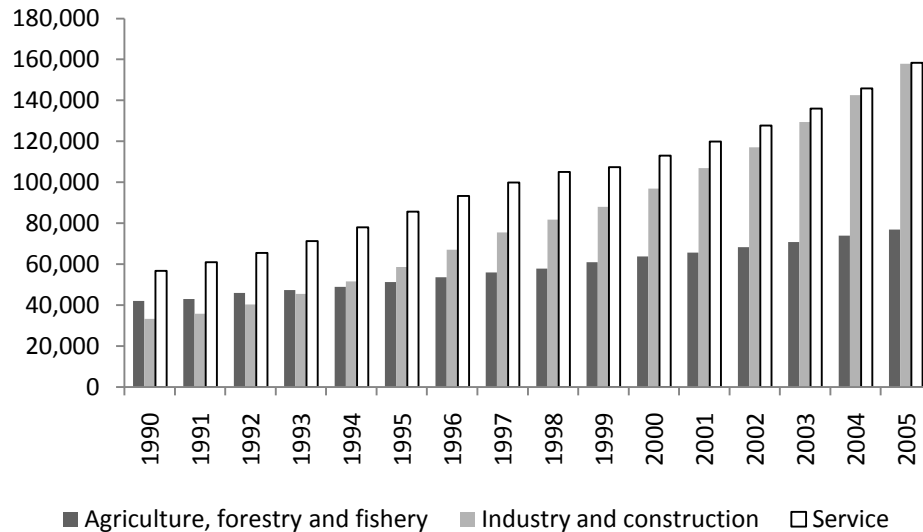
¹² Asian Development Bank, *Asian Development Outlook 2007*

¹³ Asian Development Bank, *Asian Development Outlook 2007*

¹⁴ *Vietnam – Country Partnership Strategy (CAS)*, International Development Association, International Finance Corporation, and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, January 2007

prices. Strong external demand also underpinned growth in the fisheries subsector.

Figure 2. Gross Domestic Product at constant 1994 prices by economic sector (Bill. Dongs)



Source: General statistics office of Vietnam, <http://www.gso.gov.vn>

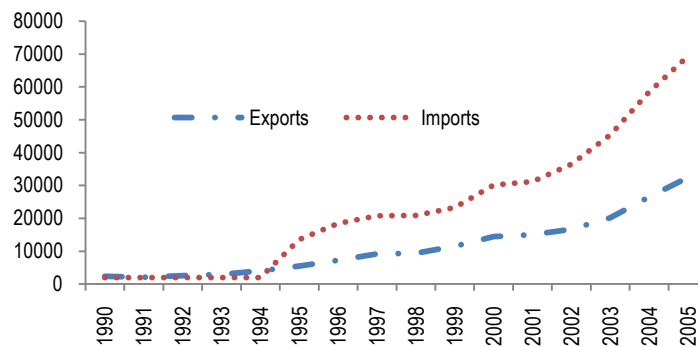
9. Demand was strong for the country's export of commodities, crude oil and manufactures. From a slow start in 2001, export growth accelerated to average 21 percent per year during 2001-05 and rose by 23 percent in 2006. The ratio of exports to GDP increased from about 46% in 2000 to 66% in 2006, indicating the openness of economy even before Vietnam joined WTO in January this year. The structure of exports is becoming more diversified—commodities such as crude oil, rice, marine products, and coffee remain important, but the share of manufactured products is rising. Exports of clothing, electronics, and wood products each expanded by at least 20% in 2006¹⁵. In the same period, imports grew by 23 percent per year, driven mainly by investment projects and due to the needs of a rapidly expanding economy¹⁶. As a consequence, the trade balance deficit widened from 2.5 percent of GDP in 2002 to 5.2 percent in 2004; in 2005 it narrowed to 1.6 percent. Strong remittance flows were also recorded in this period. Transfers through formal channels rose from a little over US\$1 billion in 2001 to nearly US\$3 billion in 2005. As a result, Vietnam's current account registered a surplus of approximately 0.4 percent of GDP

¹⁵Export to APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) countries sum to 71 percent of total export. More specifically, main destination of export are United States, Japan, China and Singapore. <http://www.gso.gov.vn>

¹⁶ 80 percent of imports comes from APEC countries, and specifically from China, Japan, Taiwan and Singapore. <http://www.gso.gov.vn>

in 2005, compared to a deficit of 1.9 percent in 2002. Past current account deficits were financed mainly by foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows and concessional lending. Vietnam's external debt stood at a manageable 33 percent of GDP in 2005, with debt service at approximately 5 percent of exports. External reserves rose to US\$8.6 billion (approximately 11 weeks worth of imports of goods and services), compared with US\$3.4 billion at the end of 2001.

Figure 3. Trends in the export and import of goods (millions, USD)



Source: General statistics office of Vietnam, <http://www.gso.gov.vn>

10. Private investment and private consumption recorded robust growth, too. Growth in private consumption was supported by rising incomes and inward remittances of about \$ 4 billion. Retail sales of goods and services increased by 20 percent in 2006 (about 13 percent after adjusting for inflation). Investment levels remained high at an estimated 39.4 percent of GDP in 2006. Private investment was encouraged by further simplification of administrative procedures for business and moves toward equal treatment between state enterprises and the private sector accounted for 33.6 percent of total investment in 2006. That proportion is up sharply from 22.6 percent 5 years earlier. In contrast, the share of the state-owned sector in total investment declined from approximately 60 percent in 2001 to 52 percent in 2005¹⁷. The growth of the private sector has been a significant feature of Vietnam's economic development over the past decade. The non-state sector accounted for more than half of GDP in 2006. Preliminary estimates show that private businesses generated almost 90% of the 7.5 million jobs created during the 5 years to 2005¹⁸. However, shortages of skilled labor have become apparent.¹⁹ Foreign direct investment (FDI)

¹⁷ *Vietnam – Country Partnership Strategy (CAS)*, International Development Association, International Finance Corporation, and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, January 2007

¹⁸ Asian Development Bank, *Asian Development Outlook 2007*

¹⁹ The industrial park and export processing zone authority for Ho Chi Minh City has stated that the city's vocational schools can only supply about 15% of the 500,000 workers that the city's industry will likely need through 2010. *Asian Development Outlook 2007*

commitments rose to \$ 10.2 billion last year, the highest since the country opened to investment in 1986.

11. Poverty rates continue to fall in Vietnam. The General Statistics Office (GSO) estimates, considering the poverty line as the cost of a basket allowing a daily intake of 2,100 calories per day, that the general poverty rate fell from 58.1 percent in 1993 to 16.0 percent in 2006,²⁰. Poverty has fallen dramatically between 1993 and 2006, both in rural and urban areas and for both Kinh and for ethnic minority groups. According to GSO estimates, over 13 years period Vietnam has seen 42 percent of the population (equivalent to about 35 million people) move above the poverty line. Poverty reduction has been driven primarily by rapid economic growth, together with other factors – such as massive government transfers to poorer parts of the country; rural infrastructure development; rapid creation of private sector jobs and wage employment; a massive shift in employment from agriculture to the wage sectors; and a rise in the world market prices of agricultural export commodities. Poverty remains overwhelmingly rural, but it seems to have stagnated, perhaps even increased in urban areas. Between 2004 and 2006, the rural poverty rate fell by 2.3 percentage points per year, compared to 3.5 points between 1993 and 2004. Urban poverty rate appears to have stabilized, or to have even increased slightly.²¹ That said, poverty in Vietnam remains overwhelmingly rural, with rural poverty at 20.4 percent compared to 3.9 percent for urban areas in 2006²². Regional differences remain wide, with the mountainous areas being much poorer than the lowlands, and especially than the Southeast. The poorest region of the country, the Northwest, has reduced poverty by 19 percentage points over the last four years and the Central Highlands by a staggering percentage points. The two least poor regions, the Red River Delta and the Southeast, on the other hand, are seeing a marked slowdown. The combination of fast declines in poverty rates in the poorer areas of the country and the slower declines in the richer ones is resulting in a narrowing of the gap between regions.²³

²⁰ *Social Protection– Vietnam Development Report 2008*, ADB, DFID of United Kingdom, EC, GDC, and the World Bank, December 2007

²¹ *Social Protection– Vietnam Development Report 2008*, ADB, DFID of United Kingdom, EC, GDC, and the World Bank, December 2007

²² *Social Protection– Vietnam Development Report 2008*, ADB, DFID of United Kingdom, EC, GDC, and the World Bank, December 2007

²³ *Social Protection– Vietnam Development Report 2008*, ADB, DFID of United Kingdom, EC, GDC, and the World Bank, December 2007

Box 2. Key characteristics of the poor in Vietnam

The head of the household is most likely to be a farmer: in 1998 almost 80 per cent of the poor worked in agriculture.

Most live in rural, isolated or disaster prone areas, where physical and social infrastructure is relatively undeveloped.

Most typically have small landholdings or are landless.

They have limited access to credit

Households are more than likely to have many children or few labourers

The poor are disproportionately likely to be from an ethnic minority.

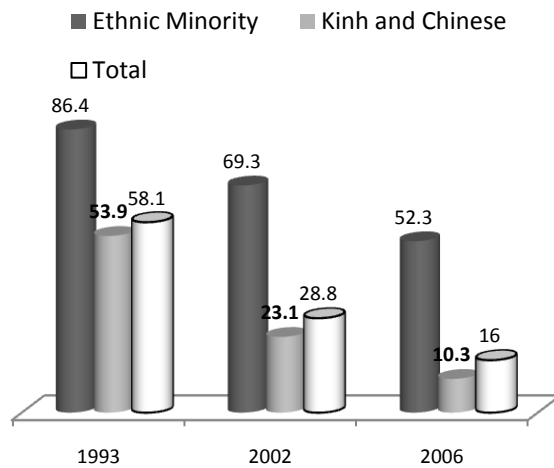
The poor are disproportionately likely to be children.

The poor have limited education: people who have not completed primary education make up the highest incidence of poverty.

Source: *Vietnam poverty analysis*, prepared for International Development by the Centre for International Economics, Canberra and Sydney, May 2002

Figure 4. **Poverty in Viet Nam**

(a) Poverty rates by ethnicity



(b) Poverty rates by province

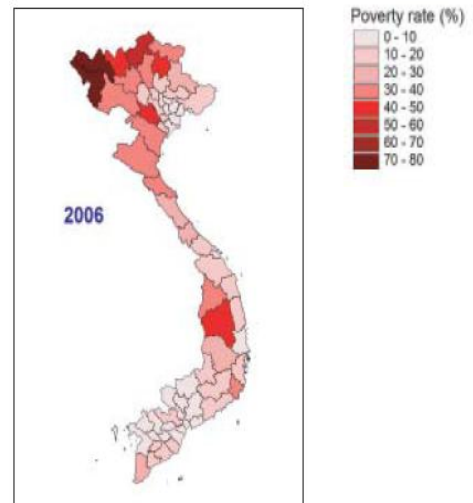
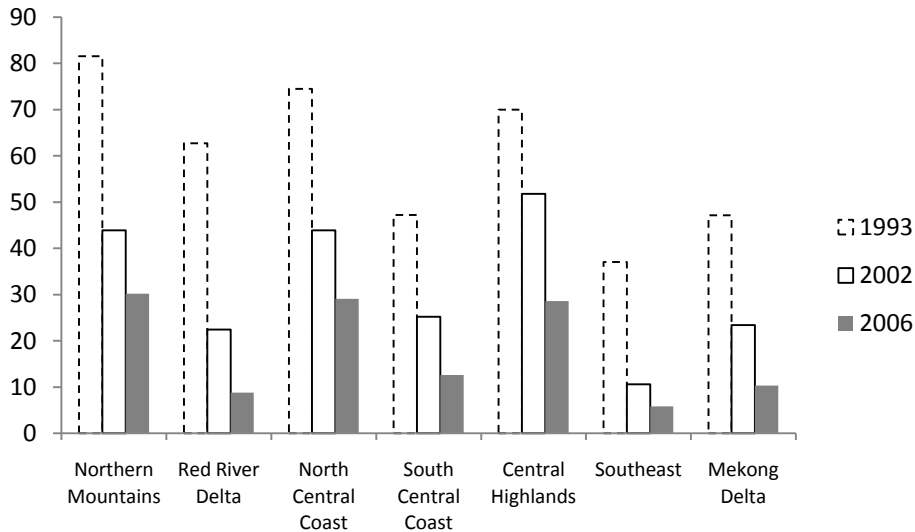


Figure 4. Cont'd
(c) Poverty rate across regions



Source: Social Protection– Vietnam Development Report 2008, ADB, DFID of United Kingdom, EC, GDC, and the World Bank, December 2007

12. Furthermore, the poverty rate is extremely high among ethnic minority groups. While accounting for roughly 14 percent of the total national population, the representation of ethnic minority groups among the poor is disproportionately high at approximately 44 percent, and 59 percent among the hungry²⁴. The majority of ethnic minority people live in remote and isolated areas. They are geographically and culturally isolated, and lack favourable conditions for developing infrastructure and basic social services²⁵.

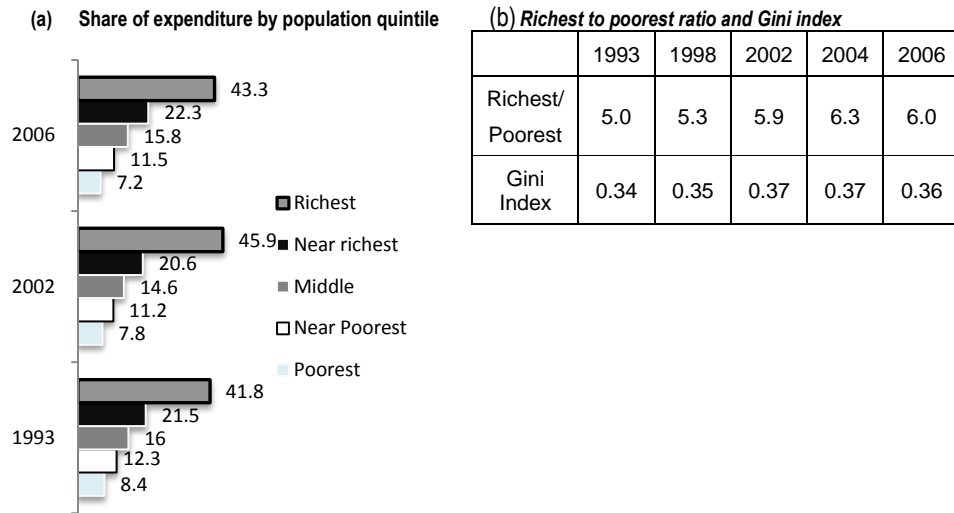
13. Rapid poverty reduction and high growth were accompanied by only very modest increase in inequality. The Gini index only trended up slightly between 1993 and 2004, and even declined a notch between 2004 and 2006. This stability of the Gini index is driven by the good performances of the three middle quintiles of the population, which in turn reflects the emergence of an increasingly important middle class²⁶.

²⁴ *Social Protection– Vietnam Development Report 2008*, ADB, DFID of United Kingdom, EC, GDC, and the World Bank, December 2007

²⁵ *The comprehensive poverty reduction and growth strategy (CPRGS)*, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Hanoi, November 2003

²⁶ *Social Protection– Vietnam Development Report 2008*, ADB, DFID of United Kingdom, EC, GDC, and the World Bank, December 2007

Figure 5. Inequality in Vietnam



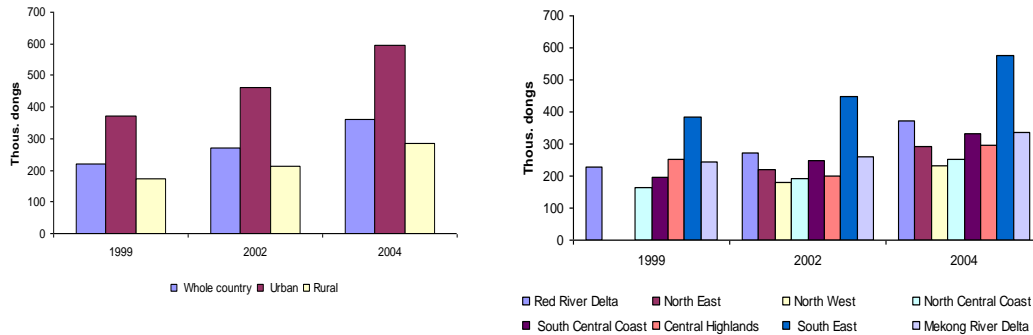
Source: Social Protection– Vietnam Development Report 2008, ADB, DFID of United Kingdom, EC, GDC, and the World Bank, December 2007

14. In addition, the gap in living standards between urban and rural areas remains very large, and the underdeveloped infrastructure of poor region causes the gap between them and other regions in the country to widen. As shown in Figure 6, while real per capita consumption increased in the whole country, the relative gains in real consumption were higher in urban areas, and depending on the region. The Northern Uplands, North Central and the Central Highlands are the three poorest regions in Vietnam, and these same three regions were also the poorest in 1993. However, the Northern Central region has seen the greatest reduction in poverty and the Northern Uplands the least²⁷.

²⁷ *Vietnam poverty analysis*, prepared for International Development by the Centre for International Economics, Canberra and Sydney, May 2002

Figure 6. Monthly average consumption expenditure per capita at current prices, by residence and by region

(a) Monthly average consumption expenditure per capita at current prices (b) Monthly average consumption expenditure per capita at current prices by region by residence

Source: *Statistical Yearbook of Vietnam 2005*, www.gso.gov.vn

15. A significant proportion lies just above the poverty line, so that a small downward shift in income can easily push them below the poverty line. Most of income come from agricultural work. Given their very limited resources, their income is highly unstable and they are vulnerable to unexpected shocks at the family and community levels. Seasonal factors affecting agricultural production create difficulties for the poor²⁸. The PPAs reported that failure of crops due to climatic conditions and pest infections was a particular problem in Lao Cai and Ha Tinh. Poor farmers lack the resources to take protective measures against such events. Livestock death and disease are considered to be one of the main factors contributing to poverty in nearly all the villages covered by the PPA in Lao Cai and was also mentioned in other studies. Livestock plays a pivotal role in Vietnam's farming systems (World Bank 1999a), and is an important store of household wealth²⁹.

16. Vietnam has made impressive advance towards the achievement of many of the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs). Poverty has been halved since 1990, well ahead of the MDG schedule, and considerable progress has been achieved across a range of other MDG indicators reflecting substantial improvements in human well-being. At the same time, a range of wide and in some cases vast socio-economic disparities and gaps persist across Viet Nam's provinces and major urban areas.

²⁸ *The comprehensive poverty reduction and growth strategy (CPRGS)*, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Hanoi, November 2003

²⁹ *Vietnam poverty analysis*, prepared for International Development by the Centre for International Economics,

Canberra and Sydney, May 2002

Box 3. Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals

Goal 1	Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	Progress	Status
Target 1	Halve between 1990 and 2015 the proportion of people living in poverty	Poverty reduced by two thirds between 1993 and 2004	Already achieved
Target 2	Halve between 1990 and 2015, the proportion who suffer from hunger	Proportion reduced by more than two thirds between 1993 and 2004	Already achieved
Goal 2	Achieve universal primary education	Progress	Status
Target 3	By 2015 boys and girls to complete a full course of primary schooling	Grade 5 completion rate has risen has reached 89 percent	Likely to be achieved
Goal 3	Promote gender equality	Progress	Status
Target 4	Eliminate gender gaps in primary and secondary education no later than 2015	Gender equality at all school levels, except for ethnic minorities	Already achieved
Goal 4	Reduce child mortality	Progress	Status
Target 5	Reduce by two thirds between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate	Reduced by 60 percent between 1990 and 2002, now at 23/1000	Likely to be achieved
Goal 5	Improve maternal health	Progress	Status
Target 6	Reduce maternal mortality by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015	Fell by two thirds, from 250 per 100,000 births in 1990 to 85 now	Likely to be achieved
Goal 6	Combat HIV/AIDS and other diseases	Progress	Status
Target 7	By 2015 have halted and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS	Infection rate went up from 0.34 percent in 2001 to 0.44 in 2005	Likely to be achieved
Target 8	By 2015 halted and reverse the incidence of malaria and other diseases	Malaria cases severely reduced	Already achieved
Goal 7	Ensure environmental sustainability	Progress	Status
Target 9	Embrace sustainability and reverse the loss of environmental resources	Forest cover up but loss in closed-canopy forest and biodiversity	Uncertain to achieve
Target 10	Halve, by 2015 the share of people without drinking water and sanitation	Share without improved water source fell by almost three quarters	Likely to be achieved

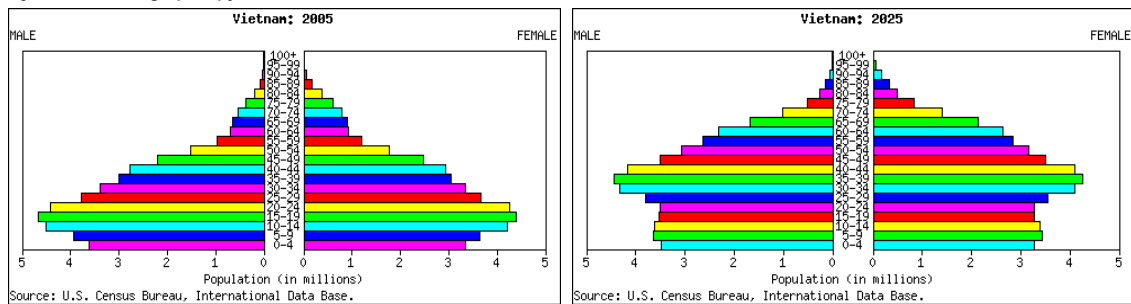
Source: UNDP (2005), VHLSS surveys and World Bank (2003).

17. In the East Asia region, Vietnam stands out for its success in closing gender gaps in the last 20 years. It ranks 80th out of 136 countries on the Gender Development Index. Vietnamese efforts have resulted in high adult literacy rates for men and women; school enrolment data that show little difference between boys and girls; and the highest percentage of women in national parliament in the Asia-Pacific region. Vietnam also has one of the highest economic participation rates in the world: 85 percent of men and 83 percent of women between the age of 15 and 60 participated in the labour force in 2002. Notwithstanding the significant achievements, some issues have to be tackled: ethnic minority women and girls lag behind ethnic minority men and Kinh and Chinese women in accessing health and education services and economic opportunities; there is persistent gender stereotyping in textbooks, which perpetuates gender inequalities; greater recognition is needed regarding the increasingly important role played by women in agriculture sector, recognizing the sheer numbers of women involved; progress in increasing the number of women in decision making has been slow and inconsistent.

18. In a very general perspective Vietnam's achievements in aggregate per-capita growth and poverty reduction relied on a drop in population growth from a yearly average of 2.2 percent in 1980s to 1.5 percent in the late

1990s.³⁰ The slow-down of fertility and population growth can be traced back to the combined effects of the economic reforms, which raised the opportunity costs for having children, the higher mobility of the population and the introduction of special measures of family planning.³¹ Nevertheless, Vietnam's population growth is a serious obstacle to the development of the country, due to population pressure on environment and especially in urban areas.³² Vietnam's population is young, and the growth rate of the labour force is often higher than that of the population³³.

Figure 7. Demographic pyramids in Vietnam, 2005 and 2025



19. The number of primary students has declined: after peaking in 1999, the net enrolment rate dropped from 95.7 percent to 92.9 percent in 2002³⁴. Analysts believe that this phenomenon is due to the decreasing population growth rate (i.e. the declining number of 6-11 year-old population) and the achievement of correct age enrollment (previously, with pupil repetition and late-entry or over-aged pupils the number of students in primary schools was larger than 6-11 year-old population)³⁵. Indeed, the gross and net enrolment rate in primary education tend progressively to converge: in 1990 the gross enrolment rate was 106.9 percent and the net enrolment rate was 90.5 percent, in 2004 the former was 98 percent and latter was 92.9 percent, and in 2006, GER and NER were 90.3 and 84.5 respectively³⁶.

³⁰ Operationalising pro-poor growth – a country case study on Vietnam, R. Klump, T. Bonschab, October 2004, a joint initiative of AFD, BMZ (GTZ, KfW Development Bank), DFID, and the World Bank

³¹ In 1988 the Vietnamese government officially proclaimed the “two-child policy” and adopted a comprehensive population policy under the Family Planning Program (FPP). FPP became a national target program, under which specialized health centres at the level of commune or districts were financed.

³² <http://www.fao.org/sd/wpdirect/wpan0004.htm>

³³ National Institute of Labour Protection of Vietnam-CIS/ILO Collaborating Center, <http://www.osh.netnam.vn/html/ENGLISH/population.htm>

³⁴ <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx?cr=704>

³⁵ Education in Vietnam – Development history, challenges and solution. http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1121703274255/1439264-1153425508901/Education_Vietnam_Development.pdf

³⁶ Summary education profile: Vietnam, http://ddp-ext.worldbank.org/ext/ddpreports/ViewSharedReport?&CF=&REPORT_ID=10804&REQUEST_TYPE=VIEWADVANCED&DIMENSIONS=202&HF=N

20. Social equity in education and equity in opportunities for access to education is the major challenge to Vietnam. The past efforts to achieve gender equity are clearly reflected in the proportion of female enrolled both in primary and secondary school: in the 2004-2005 school year, the proportion of female students were 47%, 47% and 49% in primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools respectively. This figure was even higher in professional secondary schools, i.e. 58%. In university entrance exams, the newly enrolled female students accounted for 48%.³⁷ The gaps in access to education among different ethnic groups have been narrowed. In 5 years (2001-2005), the number of ethnic minority students has experienced significant increase, e.g. by 7.3% per year and 26.1% per year at lower and upper secondary schools respectively. In 2004-2005, the percentages of ethnic minority students out of total enrollments were 15.7%, 18.5%, 13.7% and 9.4% in general, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools respectively. However, in university entrance exams, the newly enrolled ethnic minority students accounted for less than 4% of entering students. Therefore, the proportions of ethnic minority students (9.4%) in upper secondary schools and newly enrolled ethnic minority students (4%) in higher education institutions are relatively low and need improvement.³⁸

³⁷ Education in Vietnam – Development history, challenges and solution.
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1121703274255/1439264-1153425508901/Education_Vietnam_Development.pdf

³⁸ Education in Vietnam – Development history, challenges and solution.
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1121703274255/1439264-1153425508901/Education_Vietnam_Development.pdf

3. CHILDREN'S INVOLVEMENT IN WORK AND SCHOOLING

21. This section looks at the time use patterns of children in Vietnam, focusing in particular on the extent of children's involvement in work and schooling. The analyses in this and the remaining sections is based on data from the 2006 Vietnam Household Living Standards Survey (VHLSS 2006), a nationally representative household-based survey designed to study living standards and poverty levels. The survey contained a number of specific questions on the work and other time uses of children aged 6-17 years, including children's involvement in economic activity and "subsidiary" work activities, working hours, work sector and modality and a range of other work characteristics.

Box 1. Children's work and child labour: A note on terminology

Terminology and concepts used for categorising children's work and child labour (and in distinguishing between the two) are inconsistent in published statistics and research reports, frequently creating confusion and complicating cross-country and longitudinal comparisons. In this study, "**children's work**", is used broadly to refer to all productive activities performed by children. Productive activities, in turn, are defined as all activities falling within the general production boundary, i.e., all activities whose performance can be delegated to another person with the same desired results. This includes production of all goods and the provision of services to others within or outside the individual's household.

The study distinguishes between two broad categories of children's work – economic activity and non-economic activity. The definition of "**economic activity**" used in the study derives from the System of National Accounts (SNA) (rev. 1993), the conceptual framework that sets the international statistical standards for the measurement of the market economy. It covers all market production and certain types of non-market production, including production of goods for own use. "**Non-economic activity**" is defined as any productive activity falling outside the SNA production boundary. It consists mainly of work activities performed by household members in service to the household and its members.

The term "**child labour**" is used to refer to the subset of children's work that is injurious, negative or undesirable to children and that should be targeted for elimination. It can be either economic or non-economic in nature, though most published estimates refer only to the former. Three main international conventions – the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), ILO Convention No. 182 (Worst Forms) and ILO Convention No. 138 (Minimum Age) – provide the legal definition of child labour and a framework for efforts against it. There is not yet an agreed international statistical definition of child labour. In general however, it is the impact of work on children rather than its technical classification that is most important in determining whether or not work constitutes child labour. The specific statistical definitions employed to measure child labour are discussed in Section 3.

3.1 Involvement in economic activity

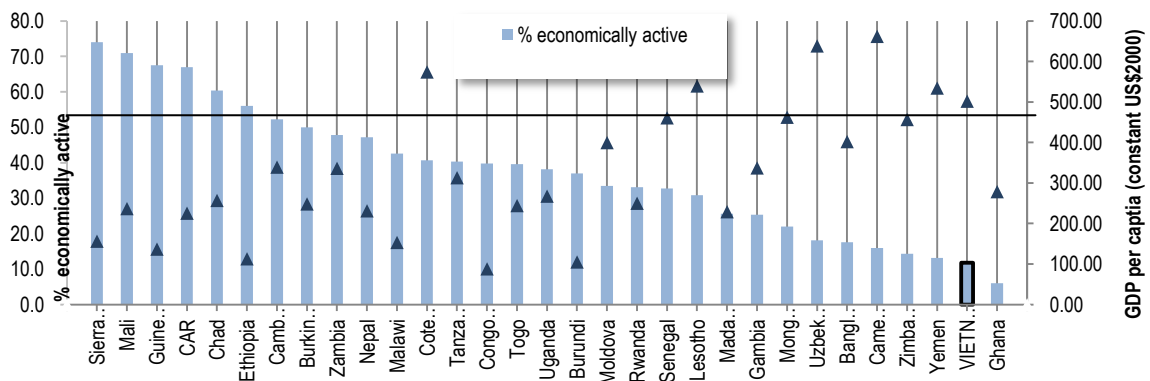
22. Children's involvement in work is not uncommon in Vietnam. An estimated 6.7 percent of children aged 6-14 years, almost 930,000 children in absolute terms, were economically active in the 2006 reference year (Table 1). Some 296,847 children aged 12 or less³⁹ were at work in economic activity, the absolute minimum working age specified by the country upon ratification of ILO Convention No. 138 (Minimum Age) in

³⁹ I.e., children aged 6-12 years. VHLSS 2006 did not collect information on children below the age of six years.

2006, and 37,139 children aged less than 10 years⁴⁰ were economically active. These very young child workers constitute a particular policy concern, as they are most vulnerable to workplace abuses, and most at risk of work-related ill-health or injury. They are also most affected by compromised education.

23. Vietnam's level of child economic activity is low relative to other countries with similar levels of income where data are available (Figure 8)⁴¹ Indeed, while there are a number of countries with higher levels of child economic activity despite also having higher levels of income (i.e., Cameroon, Uzbekistan, Lesotho, Côte d'Ivoire), there are no countries where the opposite pattern holds. Longitudinal data, however, hint at a recent rise in child economic activity in Vietnam (see discussion below) after a prolonged period of decline, underscoring that complacency is not in order.

Figure 8. Child involvement in economic activity and per capita income, 7-14 years age group, Vietnam and other low income countries^(a)



Notes: (a) Estimates of child economic activity relate to different reference years and are derived from different survey instruments; cross-country comparisons are therefore indicative only.

Sources: (1) GDP per capita estimates: World Development Indicators. (2) Child involvement in economic activity: UCW calculations based on various national surveys

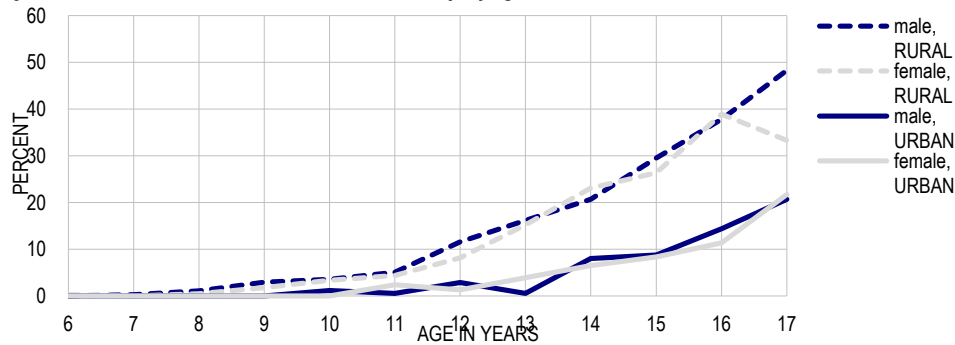
24. While most (three-fourths) of working children go to school, working children nonetheless lag 37 percentage points behind their non-working counterparts in school attendance. Some 386,000 working children in absolute terms do not attend school. Children's work therefore appears to represent a substantial barrier to schooling in the Vietnamese context, underscoring the link between child labour and efforts towards Education For All. A large portion of the remaining out of school children can be

⁴⁰ I.e., children aged 6-9 years.

⁴¹ However, as survey methodologies and exact reference periods differ, such cross-country comparisons are indicative only.

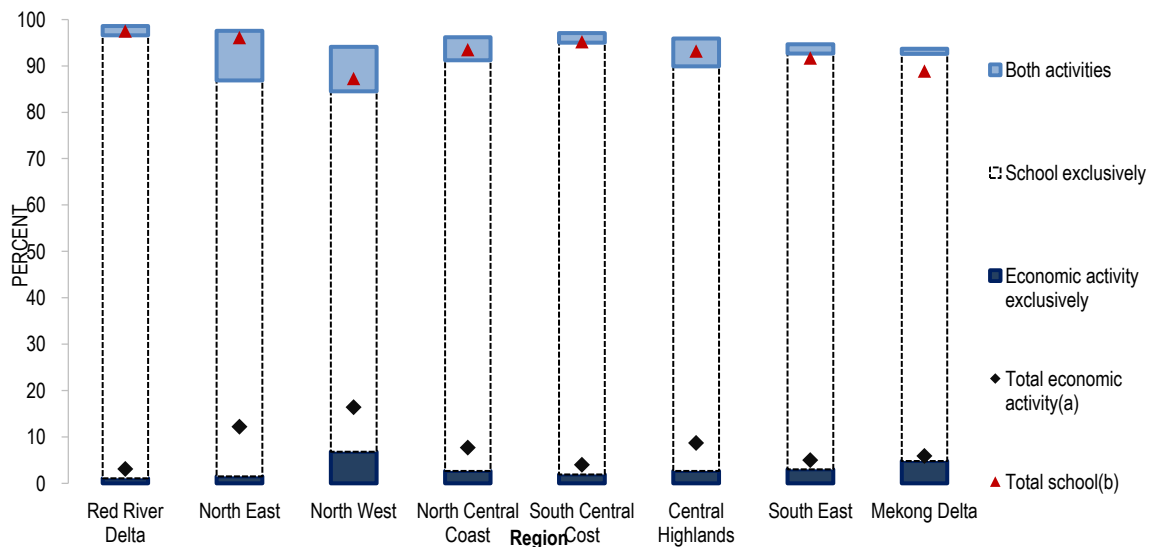
found in the working children population, and efforts to achieve universal attendance therefore must focus on this population in particular. For working students, i.e., those working children that do manage to go to school, work also undoubtedly interferes with the time and energy that they can devote to their studies, though evidence linking work and school performance is not available for Vietnam.

Figure 9. Children's involvement in economic activity, by age, sex and residence⁽¹⁾



Source: UCW calculation based on Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey, 2006

Figure 10. Child activity status, 6-14 years age group, by region



Notes: (a) Refers to all children in economic activity, regardless of school status; (b) Refers to all children attending school, regardless of work status.

Source: UCW calculation based on Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey, 2006

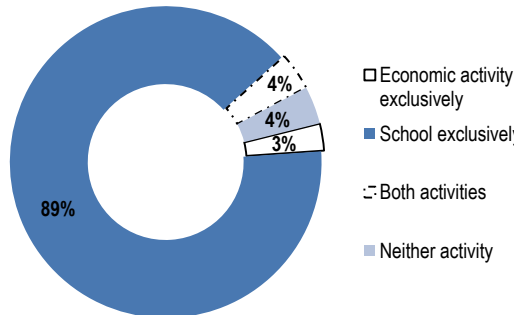
25. Aggregate estimates of child economic activity mask important differences by child age, sex, residence and region. Figure 9 and Figure 10 illustrate the main patterns. (Note that child-, household- and community-related *determinants* of child labour are discussed in Section 7 of this report).

- Children's involvement in economic activity is largely a rural (agriculture sector) phenomenon. Children living in cities and towns are considerably less likely than their rural counterparts to engage in economic activity, at every age and for both sexes. Children's work in urban settings is very uncommon up to the age of 12-13 years, while in rural settings child involvement in work starts at a much earlier age.
- Children's work does not appear to have a strong gender dimension. The share of boys and girls aged 6-14 years in economic activity (and in school) is almost equal. Other indicators also suggest that the gender plays a relatively minor role in the child labour phenomenon in Vietnam. As discussed below, working girls and boys differ little in terms of the nature of their economic activities (i.e., work sector and work modality) and in terms of the amount of time they spend performing them.
- Child economic activity rises sharply with age, although numbers of very young children at work are by no means negligible, particular in rural areas. In all, some 37,139 children aged less 10 years were at work in economic activity in the 2006 reference year. The gap in children's economic activity between rural and urban areas rises with age; differences in involvement by sex, however, appear to depend little on children's age.
- Sub-national data from VHLSS 2006 point to large regional differences in children's work involvement, underscoring the need for the geographic targeting of child labour elimination efforts. The child economic activity rate varies from over 16 percent in the northwest region to four percent in the south-central coast region. There is less geographic variation in school attendance; at least 90 percent of 6-14 year-olds attend school in all but northwest and Mekong delta regions.

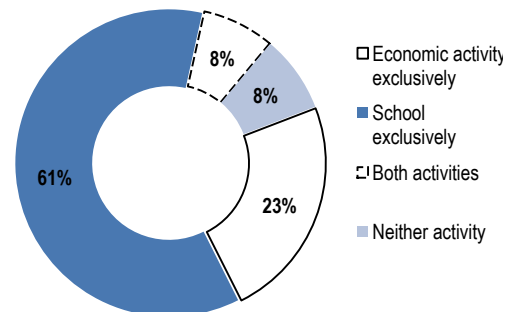
26. Another way of viewing children's involvement in work and schooling is by disaggregating the child population into four non-overlapping activity groups – children only engaged in economic activity, children only attending school, children combining school and economic activity and children doing neither (Figure 11 and Tables 1 and 2). This disaggregation shows that Vietnamese children are overwhelmingly students – 89 percent of all children aged 6-14 years attends school exclusively and an additional four percent attends school in combination with work. About three percent of 6-14 year-olds work in economic activity without also going to school, while the remaining four percent of this age group is “inactive”, i.e., not involved in economic activity or in schooling. Activity patterns differ considerably for older, 15-17 year-old children: a much greater share is in economic activity (exclusively or in combination with school) and a much smaller share is in school exclusively. Overall school involvement, however, remains relatively high among 15-17 year-olds, at 68.5 percent.

Figure 11. Distribution of children by activity category, 6-14 years and 15-17 years age groups

(a) 6-14 year-olds



(b) 15-17 year-olds



Source: UCW calculations based on Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey, 2006

Table 1. Child activity status, by age group and sex

Activity status	Children aged 6-14 years						Children aged 15-17 years					
	Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Economic activity exclusively	195040	2.8	191043	2.7	386084	2.8	862146	25.6	632139	20.9	1494285	23.4
School exclusively	6199594	88.9	6256011	90.0	12455605	89.4	1999142	59.3	1896499	62.8	3895641	60.9
Both activities	272210	3.9	271231	3.9	543442	3.9	255994	7.6	231765	7.7	487759	7.6
Neither activity	310086	4.4	233982	3.4	544068	3.9	255372	7.6	260786	8.6	516158	8.1
Total eco. active^(a)	467251	6.7	462274	6.6	929525	6.7	1118140	33.2	863904	28.6	1982044	31.0
Total school^(b)	6471804	92.8	6527242	93.9	12999047	93.3	2255136	66.9	2128264	70.5	4383400	68.5

Notes: (a) Refers to all children in economic activity, regardless of school status; (b) Refers to all children attending school, regardless of work status.

Source: UCW calculation based on Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey, 2006

Table 2. Child activity status, by age group and residence

Activity status	Children aged 6-14 years						Children aged 15-17 years					
	Urban		Rural		Total		Urban		Rural		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Economic activity exclusively	28564	0.9	357520	3.3	386084	2.8	171990	11.8	1322295	26.8	1494285	23.4
School exclusively	2915245	95.2	9540360	87.8	12455605	89.4	1103012	75.6	2792629	56.6	3895641	60.9
Both activities	31222	1.0	512220	4.7	543442	3.9	39434	2.7	448325	9.1	487759	7.6
Neither activity	87468	2.9	456600	4.2	544068	3.9	143944	9.9	372214	7.5	516158	8.1
Total eco. active^(a)	59785	1.9	869740	8.0	929525	6.7	211424	14.5	1770620	35.9	1982044	31.0
Total school^(b)	2946467	96.2	10052580	92.5	12999047	93.3	1142446	78.3	3240954	65.7	4383400	68.5

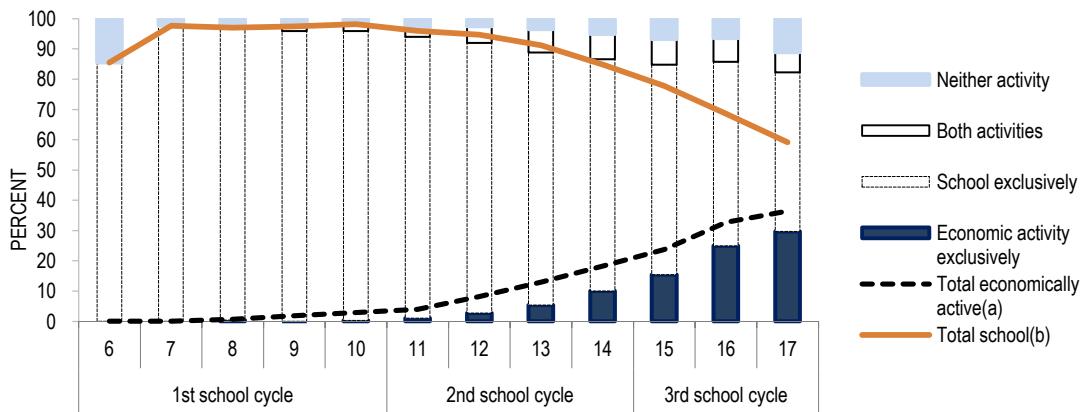
Notes: (a) Refers to all children in economic activity, regardless of school status; (b) Refers to all children attending school, regardless of work status.

Source: UCW calculation based on Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey, 2006

27. Figure 12 illustrates children's "transitions" from inactivity to school and work during the period from age 6-17 years. Almost all children (97.6 percent) are enrolled in school at age seven years and school attendance

remains at this level up to the age of 10-11 years. Thereafter, attendance slowly declines as children begin leaving school and taking on full-time work responsibilities, but the share of children still in school at age 17 years is still higher than the share of children working at this age. Once in school, then, most children appear to stay there well beyond the primary cycle. Exclusive school attendance, i.e., schooling unimpeded by the exigencies of work, peaks at age ten years, at 98 percent, and declines steadily thereafter. Involvement in economic activity begins to rise from around age nine years onwards, and reaches 18 percent at age 14 years and 36 percent at age 17 years. Exclusive work involvement, i.e., work not performed in combination with schooling, is negligible until age 10, but climbs rapidly thereafter.

Figure 12. Child activity status, by child age



Notes: (a) Refers to all children in economic activity, regardless of school status; (b) Refers to all children attending school, regardless of work status

Source: UCW calculation based on Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey, 2006

28. Economic activity is not of course the only form of work that children can perform. VHLSS 2006 also collected information on children's involvement some types of household chores. These types of work generally fall outside the international System of National Accounts (SNA) production boundary and are excluded from most published estimates of child labour (see Box 1 on terminology).⁴² About 36 percent of 6-14 year-olds report spending at least some time each week performing chores in their own homes. Most of those performing chores, however, do so for only very limited amounts of time –70 per cent spend only about an hour a day

⁴² It is worth noting that the classification of water and fuel wood collection within the SNA production boundary framework remains an area of debate. Technically, these activities constitute own-account production of goods, and therefore lie within the SNA production boundary. VHLSS 2006 and most other surveys on children's work, however, collection information on these activities as part of household chores.

on chores, while only two percent spend more than three hours per day on them. Children performing chores are primarily full-time students (84%); about one in ten, however, perform “double work duty”, i.e., economic activity in addition to chores.

3.2 Trends in children's work

29. A series of previous national household surveys permit a look at the evolution of children's activities, and particularly children's involvement in work, from 1993 to 2006. We limit ourselves to the age group 10-14 years, as we do not have information for younger children in the 2002 survey and because, as will be shown below, the participation rate of the 6 to 9 year-olds becomes negligible.

30. Participation of children in work has declined sharply over the last 15 years in Vietnam: from over 45 per cent in 1993 it fell to just under 10 per cent in 2006. The largest reduction (about 32 per cent) occurred during the last part of the 1990s.

Table 3. Changes in the composition of children's activities, 10-14 years age group, 1993-2006

Activity status	1993	1998	2002	2004	2006
Economic activity exclusively	16.4	7.6	5.4	4.3	4.1
Both activities	29.0	25.2	7.2	11.6	5.6
School exclusively	47.6	63.2	84.0	80.9	87.0
Neither activity	7.0	4.0	3.4	3.2	3.2
Total eco. active^(a)	45.4	32.8	12.6	15.9	9.7
Total school^(b)	76.6	88.4	91.2	92.5	92.6

Notes: (a) Refers to all children in economic activity, regardless of school status; (b) Refers to all children attending school, regardless of work status.

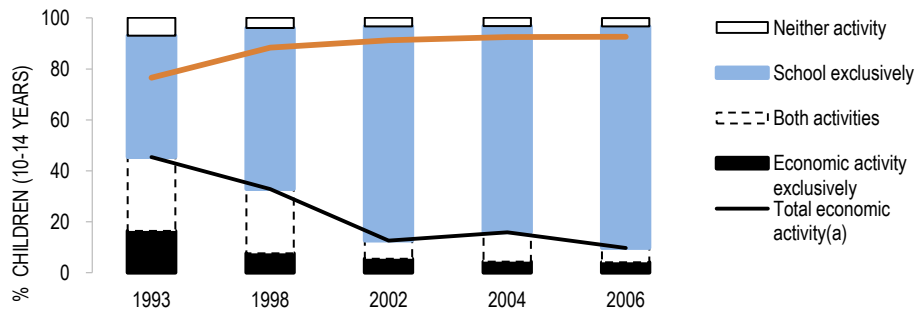
Source: UCW calculation based on Vietnam Household Living Standards Survey, 1993, 1998, 2002, 2004, 2006

31. The reduction in children's work was not been constant over the period considered. The data identify three distinct periods in terms of progress against child labour. The first, running from 1993 to 2002, was one of rapid decline in children's work, the second period, from 2002 to 2004, was one of a slight reversal of previous progress and, finally, in the third more recent period from 2004 to 2006 we observe an important further decline in children work. The decline during 2004-2006, more than made up for the slight rise in children's work involvement that occurred during 2002-2004. School attendance, on the other hand, saw a rapid increase during 1993-1998, and a continued slower rise from 1998 onwards.

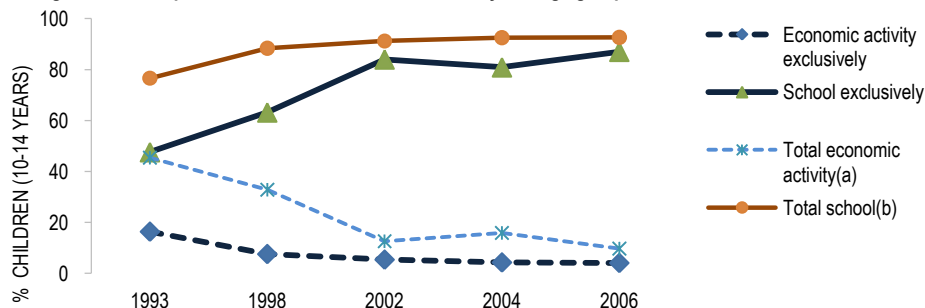
32. The increase in children's involvement in work observed between 2002 and 2004 was less broad-based than the decline that preceded it. It was

limited to rural areas, and to households falling in the lower income quintiles. The increase in children's work was not accompanied by a fall in school attendance during this period, but rather reflected a larger number of students also taking on work responsibilities. The proportion of children working exclusively continued to fall also during the 2002-2004 period.

Figure 13. a) Changes in the composition of children's activities, 10-14 years age group, 1993-2006



b) Changes in the composition of children's activities, 10-14 years age group, 1993-2006



Notes: (a) Refers to all children in economic activity, regardless of school status. (b) Refers to all children attending school, regardless of work status. See also notes for Figure 14, below.

Source: UCW calculation based on Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey, 1993, 1998, 2002, 2004, 2006

33. The trends in children's work are strongly differentiated by age. As Table 4 illustrates, participation rates for younger (6-9 year-old children) fell much more rapidly than for their older siblings: work involvement for this age group fell from almost 11 per cent in 1993 to less than one per cent in 2006.

Table 4. Changes in the composition of children's activities, 10-14 years age group, 1993-2006

Activity status	1993		1998		2004		2006	
	6-9 year-olds	6-14 year-olds	6-9 year-olds	6-14 year-olds	6-9 year-olds	6-14 year-olds	6-9 year-olds	6-14 year-olds
Economic activity exclusively	1.0	9.4	0.2	4.5	0.3	2.8	0.2	2.8
Both activities	9.9	20.3	4.9	16.7	1.9	8.1	0.6	3.9
School exclusively	73.6	59.5	88.6	73.8	92.4	85.1	94.0	89.4
Neither activity	15.4	10.9	6.3	5.0	5.4	4.0	5.2	3.9
Total eco. active^(a)	10.9	29.7	5.1	21.2	2.2	10.9	0.8	6.7
Total school^(b)	83.5	79.8	93.5	90.5	94.3	93.2	94.6	93.3

Notes: (a) Refers to all children in economic activity, regardless of school status; (b) Refers to all children attending school, regardless of work status.

Source: UCW calculation based on Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey, 1993, 1998, 2002, 2004, 2006

34. The reduction in children's work was largely concentrated in the agricultural sector. The share of total working children in agriculture fell from over 90 per cent to just over 80 per cent from 1998 to 2006, while that of working children working in the services and, especially, in manufacturing rose over the same period (Table 5). Given what is known about work conditions outside of agriculture, this seems to indicate that the remaining child workers tend to be relatively more concentrated in the more risky (to both for health and education) occupations.

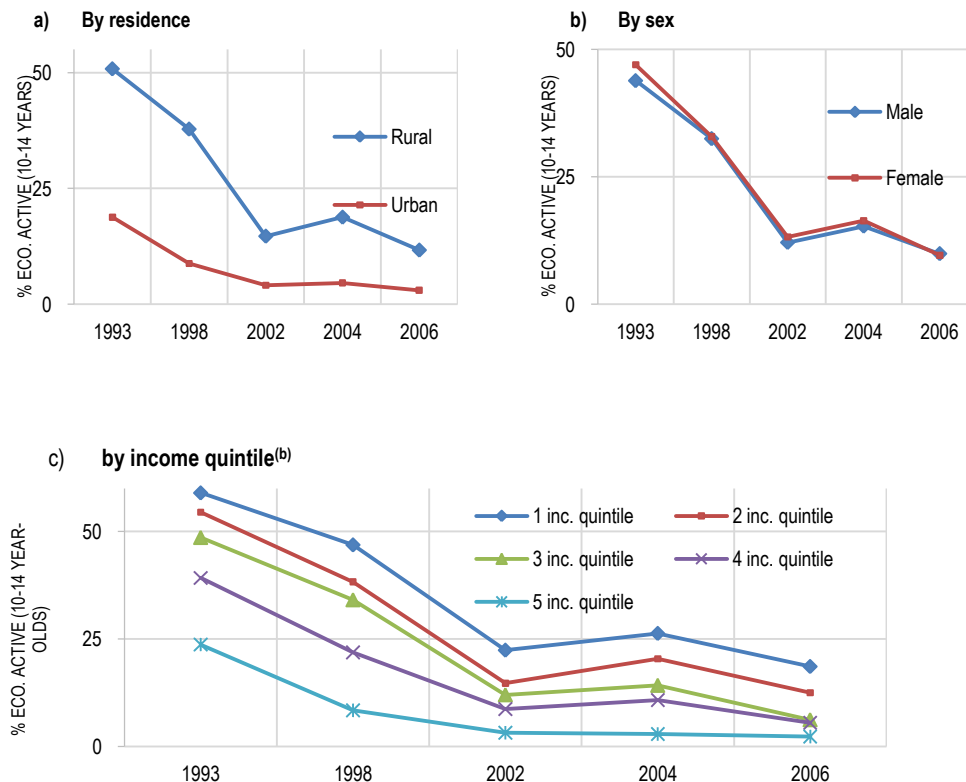
Table 5. Changes in the sectoral composition of children's work, 10-14 years age group, 1998-2006

Sector	1998	2002	2004	2006
Agriculture	90.2	69.5	84.8	82.8
Services	5.3	12.3	5.4	8.0
Manufacturing	3.4	7.9	9.1	8.2

Source: UCW calculation based on Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey, 1993, 1998, 2002, 2004, 2006

35. The reduction in children's work occurred in both the rural and urban areas. The fall in rural areas was much larger during the 1990s, and the gap in terms of children's work involvement between urban and rural areas was therefore substantially reduced (Figure 14, Panel a). The reduction in child labour did not show any difference by gender; the fall in children's involvement in work was almost identical across sexes. The positive trend in children's work occurred across all income group, although the decline was larger, of course, in absolute terms for poorer household (Figure 14, Panel c). While the gap in terms of children's involvement in economic activity between rich and poor was reduced in absolute terms, the same does not appear to hold true in proportionate terms: Vietnam does not seem to have experienced a particular pro-poor change in children's activities.

Figure 14. Changes in children's involvement in economic activity, 10-14 years age group^(a) 1993-2006, by residence, sex and income quintile^(b)



Notes: (a) Slight differences in indicator construction necessitated by the structure of the questionnaires mean that the longitudinal estimates should be interpreted with caution. For 1993, because a child is defined to be employed if he/she worked during last 7 days and/or last 12 months, and school attendance "is attending school this year". For 1998, a child is defined to be employed if he/she worked during last 7 days and/or last 12 months, school attendance "currently enrolled or on summer holidays". For 2002, a child is defined to be employed if he/she worked during last 12 months; and school attendance "has attended school in the past 12 months". Finally, for 2004 and 2006, a child is defined to be employed if he/she worked during last 12 months, school attendance "currently enrolled or on summer holidays". (b) The 10-14 years age group selected rather than the 6-14 years age group for data comparability considerations.

Source: UCW calculation based on *Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey, 1993, 1998, 2002, 2004, 2006*

3.3 What helps to explain child work trends?

36. As discussed in details in the previous Section, children's work has decreased substantially in the past decade. The following Table 6 summarizes the changes by area of residence and presents information on some of the potentially relevant explanatory variables. The set of variables considered here is restricted by need of comparison across different years and by the reduced number of "policy" variables identifiable in the datasets. Section 7 presents more detailed estimates on the basis of the VHLSS 2006 dataset alone.

Table 6. Children's time use and main characteristics: Vietnam, 1998, 2004 and 2006; 6-14 year-olds, by residence

	URBAN AREA			RURAL AREA		
	1998	2004	2006	1998	2004	2006
School attendance	0.94	0.95	0.96	0.90	0.93	0.93
Child Work	0.06	0.03	0.02	0.24	0.13	0.08
Work exclusively	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.05	0.03	0.03
School exclusively	0.90	0.93	0.95	0.71	0.83	0.88
School land work	0.04	0.02	0.01	0.19	0.10	0.05
Idleness	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.05	0.04	0.04
Age	10.4	10.5	10.5	10.2	10.5	10.6
Female	0.50	0.49	0.48	0.48	0.49	0.50
% of urban	16.8	20.4	22.0	83.2	79.6	78.0
HH size	5.36	4.98	4.93	5.89	5.28	5.20
P.c. Expenditure (1993 prices)	3073. 3	3936. 6	4462. 2	1392. 2	1717. 2	1957. 8
Access to the tap-water	0.52	0.49	0.55	0.02	0.05	0.07
Share of employed adults involved in agricultural sector in the province	-	-	-	0.66	0.56	0.55
Share of children living in commune with access to school	Primary	-	-	0.957	0.964	0.974
	Junior secondary	-	-	0.822	0.902	0.918
Enterprises/factories/firms in the area	-	-	-	0.37	0.65	0.66
Observations	1,294	1,530	1,346	5,020	6,522	5,456

Source: UCW calculation based on Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey for the years 1998, 2004 and 2006

37. In order to identify the forces underlying these positive trends, we have pooled the micro data from the 1998, 2004 and 2006 VHLSS surveys.⁴³ The econometric model includes fixed effects by province and time fixed effect. In this way, we purge our estimates of permanent differences across provinces and macro-economic changes that might be correlated with the variables of interest. In practice, for identification, we exploit both the within province variation (for the individual level variables, such as household income) and the differential time variation across provinces (for averages across provinces, such as the share of adult employment in

⁴³ The VGLSS 2002 was not used as it contains information only for children of at least 10 years of age.

agriculture). Different specifications, however, that make use of provinces averages bring similar results. The estimates were carried out separately for area of residence.

38. Table 7 shows that in urban areas, household characteristics and household income have a significant effect on children's participation in economic activities. Unfortunately commune level information is only available for rural areas and, therefore, we have at the moment a limited set of potential explanatory variables. On the basis of these estimates, we can see that income growth had a substantial, albeit far from exhaustive role, in explaining the changes. In fact, over one percentage point of the overall reduction in children's work of just less than four percentage points can be explained by income: about 30 percent of the overall change.

Table 7. Children's time use: Vietnam 1998, 2004 and 2006; 6-14 year-olds, URBAN AREA

Linear regressor with robust standard errors

	Total economic activity		Work only		School only		Both activity		Idleness	
	Coeff.	z	Coeff.	z	Coeff.	z	Coeff.	z	Coeff.	z
Age	-0.0387	-4.05	-0.0178	-3.03	0.1236	8.01	-0.0209	-2.66	-0.0849	-6.63
Age^2	0.0026	5.03	0.0011	3.53	-0.0068	-8.89	0.0014	3.45	0.0043	6.93
Sex male	0.0032	0.56	0.0048	1.36	-0.0050	-0.63	-0.0016	-0.34	0.0018	0.30
Household size	-0.0046	-2.40	-0.0003	-0.2	0.0054	1.77	-0.0043	-2.99	-0.0008	-0.33
Number of children aged 0-4 in the HH	0.0104	1.56	0.0079	1.53	-0.0247	-2.51	0.0025	0.56	0.0144	1.80
Number of children aged 5-14 in the HH	0.0120	2.48	0.0051	1.56	-0.0136	-2.06	0.0069	1.83	0.0016	0.32
Male sex of the HH head	-0.0076	-1.22	-0.0070	-1.74	0.0017	0.20	-0.0006	-0.12	0.0059	0.92
Log p.c. expenditure	-0.0286	-4.90	-0.0179	-4.36	0.0855	9.25	-0.0107	-2.41	-0.0569	-7.27
Access to tap water	-0.0211	-3.58	-0.0017	-0.46	0.0135	1.48	-0.0193	-4.17	0.0076	1.03
Year 2006	-0.0157	-2.05	0.0010	0.24	0.0046	0.42	-0.0167	-2.52	0.0111	1.34
Year 2004	-0.0226	-3.11	0.0008	0.19	0.0127	1.19	-0.0234	-3.90	0.0099	1.17
Const	0.3997	5.73	0.2042	4.24	-0.2702	-2.25	0.1956	3.57	0.8704	8.28
Province fixed effect	YES									

Source: UCW calculation based on Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey for the years 1998, 2004, and 2006

39. If we look at the different activities that children can carry out (Table 7), we see that improvements in living standards, as proxied by per capita expenditures, account for the most part of increase in the number of children attending school only: income growth explains about 65 percent of the change. Income also accounts for almost all of the reduction in the

number of children neither working nor attending school, that contributed to the increase in school attendance. The impact on children's work of income growth is differentiated: it can explain about 70 percent of the (small) reduction in the number of children working only, while it apparently contributed only about 15 percent to the participation in economic activities of children attending school.

40. In urban areas, living standards appear to be a driving force behind the increase in children attending school only, but are less relevant in explaining the reduction in the number of working children. Further analysis, and especially, additional data on relevant variables are necessary to fully understand what has driven the positive children's work trend in the urban areas of Vietnam.

41. For rural areas, we can exploit some additional information about school availability and can also introduce a proxy for the change in the economic structure of the province given by the share of adult employment in total employment. This variable should offer a rough proxy of changes in the economic and social structure of the different provinces. As a proxy for local employment opportunities we also introduce a dummy indicating the presence of factories in (or near) the commune. This variable, however, did not turn out to influence in a statistically significant way household behavior in terms of children's time allocation.

42. The results (Table 8) show that most of the variables considered are significant and with the expected sign (for a more detailed discussion refer to Section 7). Income (as proxied by per capita expenditures) explains just less than 20 percent of the overall decrease in children's work. Improved access to primary and, especially, junior secondary education has a significantly negative impact on children's work. It explains, however, only about five percent of the observed change. While the presence of a school in a commune has a relatively large impact on the household decision in that area (see Section 7 for further details), the countrywide impact of improved school accessibility appears to have been relatively small. The already fairly large diffusion of primary and junior secondary school across communes at the beginning of the period considered contributes to explain this finding. Changes in the productive structure also contribute to explain the reduction in children's work: the decrease in the share of agriculture employment of the adults explains about 10 percent of the observed changes.

Table 8. Children's time use: Vietnam 1998, 2004 and 2006; 6-14 year-olds, RURAL AREA

Linear regressor with robust standard errors

	Total economic activity		Work only		School only		Both activity		Idleness	
	Coeff.	z	Coeff.	z	Coeff.	z	Coeff.	z	Coeff.	z
Age	-0.0566	-6.35	-0.0698	-12.92	0.1420	12.77	0.0131	1.61	-0.0853	-11.74
Age ²	0.0053	11.46	0.0044	14.85	-0.0092	-16.72	0.0009	2.20	0.0039	11.47
Sex male	0.0021	0.38	-0.0079	-2.55	0.0038	0.63	0.0100	1.99	-0.0059	-1.80
Household size	-0.0028	-1.29	-0.0054	-4.25	-0.0009	-0.35	0.0026	1.31	0.0037	2.46
Number of children aged 0-4 in the HH	0.0091	1.71	0.0140	3.97	-0.0046	-0.75	-0.0049	-1.02	-0.0045	-1.22
Number of children aged 5-14 in the HH	0.0176	4.42	0.0114	4.65	-0.0187	-4.22	0.0062	1.70	0.0011	0.46
Male sex of the HH head	0.0088	1.12	-0.0020	-0.43	-0.0037	-0.42	0.0108	1.56	-0.0050	-1.02
Log p.c. expenditure	-0.0540	-8.63	-0.0509	-12.81	0.1072	14.79	-0.0030	-0.55	-0.0532	-11.60
Access to tap water	-0.0104	-1.00	-0.0164	-2.69	0.0043	0.33	0.0060	0.71	0.0060	0.66
Year 2006	-0.0981	-11.59	-0.0031	-0.70	0.0924	9.82	-0.0950	-12.09	0.0057	1.17
Year 2004	-0.1390	-15.81	0.0027	0.54	0.1251	12.65	-0.1417	-17.63	0.0139	2.62
Access to the primary school	-0.0425	-2.23	0.0044	0.45	0.0364	1.72	-0.0468	-2.50	0.0061	0.57
Access to the junior school	-0.0338	-3.53	-0.0089	-1.51	0.0491	4.43	-0.0249	-2.88	-0.0153	-2.28
Presence of the factories/enterprises in the area	-0.0090	-1.49	-0.0114	-3.43	0.0176	2.57	0.0024	0.44	-0.0086	-2.30
Share of employed adults involved in agricultural sector in the province	0.1154	2.73	0.0265	1.20	-0.1111	-2.44	0.0889	2.19	-0.0043	-0.21
Const	0.5818	8.15	0.6383	14.69	-0.4456	-5.17	-0.0564	-0.87	0.8638	15.60
Province fixed effect	YES									

Source: UCW calculation based on Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey for the years 1998, 2004, and 2006

43. Similar results are obtained when we look at the impact of these variables on the various combinations of children activities (Table 8). Improvements in living standards explain about 20 percent of the observed change in the number of children attending school only. They also explain more than 80 percent of the reduction in the number of children working only, but have only a marginal impact on the reduction of number of children working while attending school (where the bulk of the change took place). Changes in the economic structure explain about 10 percent of the increase in school attendance and of the decrease in the number of children working and studying.

44. In rural areas the information available is able to explain only part, roughly about half, of the observed change in children's work. More analysis is needed in this area to better understand the determinants of the large change observed. Possible factors include active government policies, improvements in school quality and changes in returns to education and in agriculture production techniques: no suitable information is available at this stage on these elements.

4. CHILD LABOUR

45. This section looks at the extent to which children's work constitutes "child labour",⁴⁴ i.e., the extent to which work is injurious, negative or undesirable to children, information critical for policy design and targeting purposes.⁴⁵ Lower-bound estimates of child labour are presented based on the approach employed by ILO in its global child labour estimates. This section also looks at involvement in hazardous and so-called "unconditional worst forms" of child labour, drawing on a variety of information sources.

4.1 Child labour incidence

46. The approach used by ILO in the global estimates to measure child labour stems from ILO Convention No. 138 (Minimum Age), the most comprehensive and authoritative international definition of minimum age for admission to employment or work. Convention No. 138 (C138) stipulates that ratifying states fix a general minimum age (normally not less than 15 years), but allows states to set a lower minimum age for "light" work (12 years in developing countries) below which no child should be allowed to work. C138 states that the minimum age for hazardous work should not be less than 18 years. Accordingly, the ILO estimation approach includes as child labour all employed or at-work 5-11 year-olds, all employed or at-work 12-14 year-olds *except those in light work*, and all 15-

⁴⁴ Implicit in this distinction is the recognition that work by children *per se* is not necessarily injurious to children or a violation of their rights. Indeed, in some circumstances, children's work can be beneficial, not harmful, contributing to family survival and enabling children to acquire learning and life skills.

⁴⁵ Three main international conventions – the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), ILO Convention No. 182 (Worst Forms) in addition to ILO Convention No. 138 (Minimum Age) – define child labour and provide a framework for efforts against it. ILO Conventions No. 138 (Minimum Age) and No. 182 (Worst Forms) target as child labour 1) all forms of work carried out by children below a minimum cut-off age (at least 12 years in less developed countries); 2) all forms except 'light work' carried out by children below a second higher cut-off age (at least 14 years in less developed countries); and 3) all 'worst forms' of child labour carried out by children of any age under 18 years, where worst forms include any activity or occupation which, by its nature or type has, or leads to, adverse effects on the child's safety, health, or moral development. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) recognises the child's right to be protected from forms of work that are likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. In order to achieve this goal, the CRC calls on States Parties to set minimum ages for admission to employment, having regard to other international instruments.

17 year olds in hazardous work (Figure 15).⁴⁶ The definition of “light” work used in ILO global estimates is non-hazardous work or employment below a weekly hours threshold of 14 hours per week.⁴⁷ Hazardous work is defined as work at or beyond a threshold of 43 hours per week, in addition to work in specified hazardous industries or occupations.⁴⁸

Figure 15. Measuring child labour: approach employed by ILO in global estimates of child labour

AGE GROUPS	FORMS OF WORK		
	Non-hazardous work (in non-hazardous industries and occupations and not for excessive hours)		Hazardous work (in specified hazardous industries and occupations) or excessive hours (≥ 43 hours per week)
	Light work (< 14 hours per week)	Regular work (≥ 14 hours per week and < 43 hours per week)	
6-11 years	CHILD LABOUR TO BE ELIMINATED		
12-14 years			
15-17 years			

Source: ILO/IPEC, International Labour Office, Geneva, April 2002.

47. Child labour based on these criteria is by no means negligible in Vietnam. Some 150,933 children below the absolute minimum working age of 12 years are at work in economic activity, 503,389 (12-14 year-old) children are in “non-light” economic activity below the minimum age for this type of work, and 633,405 children aged 15-17 year-olds work excessive hours. Putting these groups together yields an estimate of almost 1.3 million 6-17 year-olds in child labour, over six percent of this age group. It should be stressed that this is a lower-bound estimate, as it does not involve what ILO publications term “unconditional worst forms” of child labour, which are beyond the scope of standard household surveys (see discussion below).⁴⁹

⁴⁶ The criteria used for the estimation are intended purely for the purpose of obtaining figures to allow the extent of the problem to be assessed. The chosen criteria are not obviously intended to replace, revise or put into question current national provisions in force in Vietnam.

⁴⁷ The 14-hour cut-off point is supported by ILO Convention No. 33, as well as research looking at the link between economic activity and schooling.

⁴⁸ For details see: IPEC/SIMPOC, *Every child counts: new global estimates of child labour*. International Labour Office, Geneva, April 2002.

⁴⁹ Also children aged 12 – 14 in light, but hazardous, economic work are not included.

Table 9. Lower-bound estimate of child labour involvement, children aged 6-14 years, by sex and residence

Sex and Residence	Children aged 6-14 years ^(a) in economic activity (excluding 12-14 years old in "light" economic activity) ^(b) (A)		Children aged 15-17 years in hazardous work ^(c) (B)		Total child labor, children aged 6-17 years old (A)+(B)	
	% of total age group	No.	% of total age group	No.	% of total age group	No.
Male	4.8	333,819	11.2	377,128	6.9	710,947
Female	4.6	320,503	9.7	292,099	6.1	612,601
Rural	5.7	615,373	11.3	556,949	7.4	1,172,322
Urban	1.3	38,948	7.7	112,278	3.3	151,226
Total	4.7	654,322	10.5	669,227	6.5	1,323,548

Notes: (a) The lower bound of six years rather than five years is employed because VHLSS 2006 did not collect information on five year-olds. (b) Light economic activity is defined as work for less than 14 hours per week or in hazardous industry regardless of working hours. (c) Due to data limitation, hazardous work consists only of the mining and construction industries and of children working excessive hours (43 or more hours per week). VHLSS 2006 collected no information on children's exposure to the hazardous conditions contained in Inter-Ministerial Order, and information on occupation collected by the survey was too general to match to the national list.

Source: UCW calculation based on *Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey, 2006*.

48. Non-economic activity also can adversely affect children's welfare, and could therefore also technically fall within the definitions of child labour set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and ILO Convention No. 182. This, in turn, requires information on the relative impact of economic and non-economic activity on children's welfare (e.g., on their health, safety, and ability to attend and benefit from schooling). However, in Vietnam household chores appears to be lower intensity activities for children. About 37 percent of the children aged 6-14 carry out household chores but 93 percent of them does so for not more than two hours a day.

4.2 Worst forms of child labour

49. Children involved in worst forms of child labour, as set out in ILO Convention No. 182 (C182), are the sub-group of child labourers whose rights are most compromised and whose well-being is most threatened. They therefore constitute the most immediate policy priority. ILO supported the Government in developing a national plan of action for implementing C182 in 2001. ILO global publications divide worst forms into two broad categories, hazardous forms⁵⁰ and "unconditional worst" forms,⁵¹ each of which is examined below.

⁵⁰ The term hazardous forms refers to Art. 3(d) in ILO Convention No. 182, i.e., "...any activity or occupation which, by its nature or type has, or leads to, adverse effects on the child's safety, health, or moral development." ILO Convention No. 182 states that the "types of work referred to under Article 3(d) shall be determined by national laws or regulations or by the competent authority, after consultation with the organizations of employers and workers concerned, taking into consideration relevant international standards, in particular Paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Recommendation, 1999."

⁵¹ The term "unconditional worst forms" refers to Art. 3(a)-(c) in ILO Convention No. 182: (a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; (b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances; and (c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties.

50. Vietnamese legal provisions provide a detailed legal definition of hazardous child labour. Section 121(2) of the Labour Code prohibits the employment of “junior workers” (i.e., those under the age of 18 years) in heavy or dangerous work, or work requiring contact with toxic substances, or work or workplaces that have adverse effects to their personality. Inter Ministerial Order No. 9/TT/LB of 13 April 1995, adopted pursuant to the 1994 Labour Code, provides a list of 81 occupations prohibited for young workers, and 13 harmful working conditions in which employment of young workers are prohibited.⁵² Unfortunately, data limitations prevent an estimate of hazardous work based on these legal provisions. VHLSS 2006 collected no information on children’s exposure to the hazardous conditions contained in Inter-Ministerial Order, and information on occupation collected by the survey was too general to match to the national list. This information gap constitutes an important impediment to the design and targeting of interventions against child labour. Filling it should be an important priority in future surveys on child labour.

51. Information about so-called unconditional worst forms of child labour is also very scarce. This is due both to the methodological difficulties inherent in investigating them and to their cultural sensitivity. As noted above, VHLSS 2004 and similar household survey are not designed to generate information about children involved in these forms of work. However, reports from other sources, e.g., human rights groups investigations, NGO field reports, rapid assessments, etc., provide at least a partial picture.

52. **Child trafficking.** The United States Department of States Human Rights Report on Trafficking in Persons states that Vietnam is a source and destination country for women and children trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation.⁵³ The same report lists Cambodia, the People’s Republic of China (P.R.C.), Hong Kong, Macau, Malaysia, Taiwan, and the Czech Republic as main destination countries for Vietnamese women and

⁵² Paragraph B of the Order lists the following working conditions in which employment of young persons is prohibited: (1) Heavy work (average energy consumption is over 5 Kcal/minute and average heart beat is over 120 minute); (2) Working in uncomfortable position or in place lacking oxygen. (3) Having direct exposure to chemicals that may cause gene damage, adverse affect on cell metabolism, bad effects on reproductive functions (such as testicle insufficiency, ovary insufficiency) cancer as well as occupational diseases; (4) Working in contact with harmful elements that may cause infectious diseases; (5) Working in contact with radioactive substances (including radioactive machines); (6) Working in contact with electromagnetic field exceeding the permitted standards; (7) Working in the workplace with vibration exceeding the permitted standards; (8) Working in workplaces having the temperature over 45°C in the summer and 40°C in the winter or workplaces being affected by high thermal radiation; (9) Working in workplaces with pressure higher or lower than the atmospheric pressure; (10) Working in mines; (11) Working in high and sheer workplaces; (12) Working in workplaces unsuitable for young worker’s mental and psychology; and (13) Working in workplaces that may have bad effects on the development of young worker’s personality. Paragraph C further attaches an Appendix consisting of a list of 81 occupations prohibited for young workers, which shall be amended or supplement occupations added based on the reports by the Ministries to the MOLISA and MOH, about working places holding harmful working conditions and occupations that are not currently listed (Paragraph C (2)).

⁵³ US Department of States Human Rights Report on Trafficking in Persons, June 2005. Available at: <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2005/46616.htm>.

girls trafficked for involvement in commercial sexual exploitation. To lesser extent, it states that Vietnam is a destination country for Cambodian children who are trafficked for forced work as beggars, and that there is also internal trafficking from rural to urban areas. Domestic trafficking includes incidents of beggar children and flower selling rings, especially in the urban centers of Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi.⁵⁴ MPS and UNICEF research indicates that trafficking victims can come from any part of the country but were concentrated in certain northern and southern border provinces, especially the Mekong Delta and central province of Thanh Hoa. In July 2004, the government issued a national action plan to combat trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation, as well as a five-year national program for addressing all aspects of Vietnam's anti-trafficking efforts including prevention, prosecution, and protection.

53. Children in armed conflict. The 2000 Asia report of the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (CSUCS) indicated that there were no reports of underage recruitment in Vietnam. But a subsequent global report (2001) from the same source stated that there were indications of under-18s in government armed forces as 17 year-old trainees in military schools that are considered to be part of the armed forces. In its declaration on ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child in December 2001, the government stated that by law only male citizens over the age of 18 would be recruited for military service and that under-18s would not be directly involved in hostilities. However, under-18s could be recruited in the case of "an urgent need for safeguarding national independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity".

54. Child commercial sexual exploitation. In the concluding observations of the First periodic Report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC/C/65/Add.20), concern was expressed that a significant proportion of sex workers are under the age of 18 years. The 2006 Country Report on Human Rights Practices produced by the US State Department also points to the existence of child commercial sexual exploitation in major urban centres in Vietnam and involving Vietnamese children in locations outside the country. Many of the estimated 15,000 to 20,000 prostitutes in Phnom Penh, for example, are believed to be Vietnamese girls and women,⁵⁵ and there are reports of organised traffic into prostitution in Cambodia of young girls from Vietnam and South China.⁵⁶ An IPEC/SIMPOC rapid assessment of young people in prostitution sheds light on their extreme

⁵⁴ US State Department Report on Human Rights Practices, March 2006. Available at: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78796.htm>.

⁵⁵ UNICEF, *Children on the Edge*, citing, UN ESCAP (2000), UNICEF East Asia and Pacific.

⁵⁶ CWA, Tim Seaman, Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights (LICADHO), "Sexual Exploitation: Cambodia", *Child Workers in Asia*, Vol. 12, Nos. 1 & 2, January - June 1996.

conditions.⁵⁷ They were typically forced to prostitute themselves seven days a week, from noon to midnight each day, and were subjected to frequent beatings and psychological abuse. Those returning to their villages faced social ostracisation and sometimes permanent marginalisation. The Committee on the Rights of the Child has recommended the country continue strengthen national and sub-regional strategies and programmes on the prevention of sexual exploitation and trafficking and to ensure that the commitment made at the First and Second World Congresses Against commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (1991 and 2001 respectively) are taken into account.⁵⁸

55. Street children. A variety of media and NGO reports suggest large and growing numbers of street children in major urban centres.⁵⁹ No reliable quantitative data are available on this population; most numerical estimates refer to the 1990s and vary widely. One report from this period stated that on almost every street in Ho Chi Minh City, children could be seen selling newspapers, magazines, pornographic books, lottery tickets, cigarettes, chewing gum, etc. Some children worked as shoe-shine boys, street vendors and mechanics, while others are scavengers or beggars.⁶⁰

5. CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN'S WORK

56. Children's work in Vietnam is primarily agricultural. Some 83 percent of total economically-active 6-14 year-olds work in agriculture, against eight percent in manufacturing and eight percent in services (Figure 16). Children's sex and place of residence both appear to play roles in determining the type of work that they perform. Boys are relatively more likely to be found in agriculture and girls in manufacturing and service; agricultural work is not surprisingly much more common in rural contexts, but it accounts for almost 40 percent of working children even in cities in towns. Work in the services sector and in manufacturing is more common in urban areas. No clear patterns are apparent by children's age. The VHLSS 2006 data do not permit a more detailed breakdown of work

⁵⁷ Children in Prostitution in Hanoi, Hai Phong, Ho Chi Minh City and Can Tho: A Rapid Assessment, Page xiii, available at http://www.ilo.ch/public/english/region/asro/bangkok/child/trafficking/downloads/viet_nam_child_prost.pdf

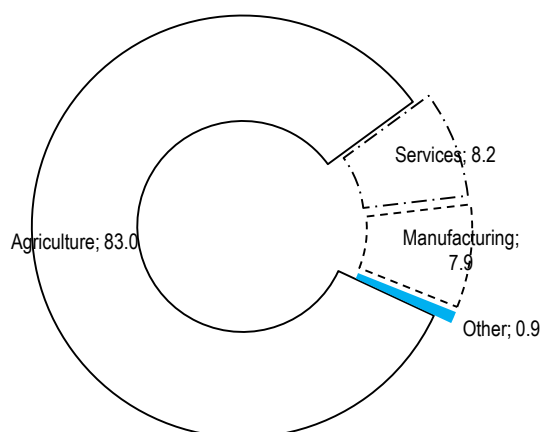
⁵⁸ Concluding observations of the First periodic Report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC/C/65/Add.20).

⁵⁹ See, for example: "Statistics paint grim picture of children's sad plight in Vietnam", *Vietnam Investment Review*, 11/9/2000; Binh Vu Ngoc, *Child Labour in Vietnam*, 1995; Taneeya Runcharoen, "The Child Workers of Hochiminh City", *Child Workers in Asia*, April-June 1994

⁶⁰ Taneeya Runcharoen, "The Child Workers of Hochiminh City", *Child Workers in Asia*, April-June 1994

performed by children, information critical to the identification of potentially hazardous work.

Figure 16. Distribution of children in economic activity by work sector



Source: UCW calculation based on Vietnam Household Living Standards Survey, 2006

Table 10. Sector of child economic activity, by child age, sex and place of residence

Background characteristic		Agriculture	Services	Manufacturing	Other	Total
Age	6-9 years	87.0	13.0	0.0	0.0	100
	10 years	90.8	4.5	0.0	4.7	100
	11 years	94.8	5.2	0.0	0.0	100
	12 years	85.3	4.1	9.1	1.5	100
	13 years	82.4	11.4	6.2	0.0	100
	14 years	79.0	8.0	11.8	1.2	100
Sex	Male	86.5	6.6	5.9	0.9	100
	Female	79.5	9.7	9.8	1.0	100
Residence	Rural	86.1	6.5	6.7	0.7	100
	Urban	38.7	32.5	24.7	4.1	100
Total		83.0	8.2	7.9	0.9	100

Source: UCW calculations based on Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey, 2006

Table 11. Modality of child economic activity, by sex and place of residence, 6-14 year-olds

Background characteristic		Self employed/work for own household	Work for other household	Other*	Total
Sex	Male	84.7	14.9	0.4	100
	Female	84.0	13.6	2.4	100
Residence	Rural	85.6	13.4	1.0	100
	Urban	65.2	26.9	7.9	100
Total		84.3	14.2	1.4	100

*Category other includes state owned economic sector, collective economic sector, private economic sector, foreign-invested sector.
Source: UCW calculations based on Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey, 2006

57. Most children involved in economic activity (84 percent) work non-formally, either in self-employment or for their own household (Table 11). Here too, however, there are important differences by residence, underscoring the different nature of children's work in cities and towns compared to rural areas. Urban working children are much more likely than their rural counterparts to be working outside their own families, either for another household or in some other type of work arrangement. The one-fourth of urban working children working for another household constitutes a particular concern and merits further investigation; evidence from elsewhere suggests that this work arrangement may leave children especially vulnerable to abuses and exploitation.

58. Economic activity is typically time intensive for Vietnamese children. Working children aged 6-14 years perform an average of over 22 hours of economic activity each week. The sub-group of working children not in school puts in the longest working week, some 32 hours. Working students, by contrast, work less than half this amount of hours. Work intensity increases with age, reaching a weekly average of over 34 hours for the 15-17 years age range. Time spent on work also depends considerably on the work sector. Average weekly working time in services is especially high, at 34.6 hours, comparable to that of an adult worker in the industrialised world. In comparison, children in manufacturing put in an average of 32.4 hours per week and in agriculture an average of 19.2 weekly hours. There is little difference in the time spent in work by girls and boys at any age.

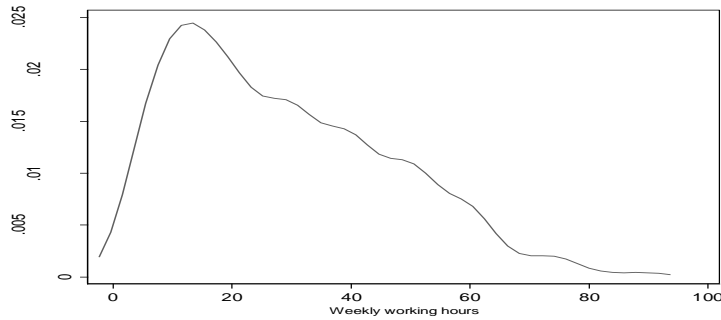
Table 12. Average working hours per week by working status, age group and industry

Sector	Sex	6-14 years			15-17 years		
		Work only	Work and study	Total work	Work only	Work and study	Total work
Total	Male	32.8	14.0	21.8	38.5	17.1	33.6
	Female	30.5	14.9	21.3	39.5	17.6	33.7
	Total	31.7	14.4	21.6	38.9	17.3	33.6
Agriculture	Male	30.9	13.7	20.2	32.5	16.3	28.0
	Female	24.6	14.2	18.1	30.7	15.6	25.7
	Total	27.9	14.0	19.2	31.8	16.0	27.0
Services	Male	39.4	23.4	34.0	55.2	20.7	50.8
	Female	37.0	29.8	35.0	54.1	24.8	49.2
	Total	37.9	26.9	34.6	54.5	23.3	49.9
Manufacturing	Male	37.9	9.7	28.5	52.3	17.8	49.5
	Female	55.7	13.2	34.8	51.6	26.9	48.1
	Total	47.8	12.2	32.4	51.9	24.4	48.6

Notes: Working hours per week are calculated as follows: $\text{working_hours_weekly} = (\text{working_hours_daily} * \text{working_days_monthly}) / 4$

Source: UCW calculations based on *Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey, 2006*

Figure 17. Distribution of economically active children aged 6-17 years by weekly working hours



Source: UCW calculations based on *Vietnam Household Living Standards Survey, 2006*.

59. The distribution of working children by weekly working hours indicates that while most working children are concentrated in the range of 10-20 hours per week, there is also a significant proportion of children in the “tail” of the distribution performing exceptionally long working hours, i.e., more than 43 hours per week (Figure 17). In absolute terms, over 109,000 children aged 6-14 years and over 633,000 children aged 15-17 years log more than this number of hours each week. These are among the worst off working children, as their work responsibilities effectively preclude their rights to schooling, study, leisure and adequate rest. Their prolonged exposure to workplace risks also undoubtedly increases their susceptibility to work-related sickness and injury, although VHLSS 2006 did not collect information on ill-health specifically attributable to the workplace.

6. IMPACT OF WORK ON CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND EDUCATION

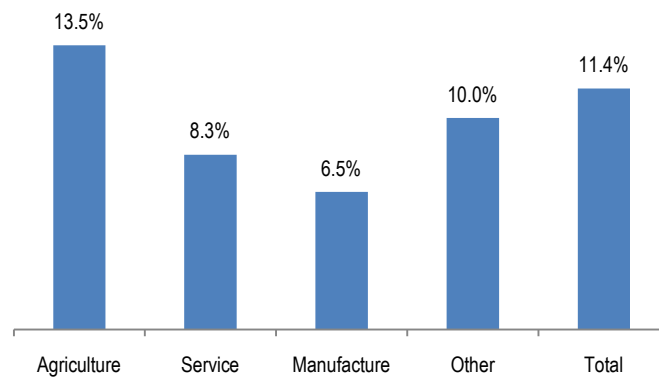
6.1 Health and children's work

60. The VHLSS 2006 data do not point to large differences in the health status of working and non-working children. Indeed, if anything, the data suggest that working children are slightly healthier: 15 percent of non-working children were reported as having experienced ill-health during the four-week survey reference period against only 13 percent of working children. The same pattern held for a one-year reference period: 50 percent of non-working children were reported as having experienced ill-health against 43 percent of working children.

61. But these are findings that come up frequently in household surveys on children's work and are likely at least in part the product of measurement problems encountered when attempting to look at the work-health

relationship.⁶¹ The health consequences of work, for example, may be obscured by the selection of the healthiest children for work, or by the fact these health consequences may not become apparent until a later stage in a child's life. It must also be recalled that VHLSS 2006 did not capture unconditional worst forms of child labour, whose health consequences for children are undoubtedly most severe. Further, more in-depth, data are therefore needed before any concrete conclusions concerning the links between children's health and work can be drawn.

Figure 18. Health incident density , economic active children aged 6-17, by industry



Source: UCW calculations based of Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey, 2006

62. Incidence densities⁶² calculated for general ill-health (*work-related* ill-health was not collected by VHLSS 2006) suggest that working children face an overall 11 percent chance of suffering ill-health over the course of a 12-month period. But risk the of ill-health faced by child workers appears to depend somewhat on the type of work they are involved in. Children in agriculture face the highest risk of ill-health (13.5 percent), followed by service (8.3 percent) and manufacturing (6.5 percent). Again, however, these figures reflect general ill-health rather than illness or injury directly attributable to workplace conditions. Information on the latter is

⁶¹ For a more complete discussion on measuring the health impact of child labour, see O'Donnell O., Rosati F. and Van Doorslaer E. *Child labour and health: evidence and research issues*. UCW Working Paper, Florence, January 2002.

⁶² The occurrence rate does not take into consideration that differences in observed occurrence can be due to differences in exposure. To take exposure into consideration, a standard *incidence density* is computed as follows:

$$\text{Incidence Density} = \frac{\text{children injured during a specified period of time}}{\text{total person time}}$$

where "total person-time" is cumulated exposure for all the individuals considered. In our case, it should be defined as average weekly working hours multiplied by the number of weeks worked during the reference period (assumed to be one year). We had to assume, however, constant weekly hours of work for the whole reference period.

needed as part of broader efforts to identify the forms of work that pose the greatest threat to children and to prioritise interventions accordingly.

Table 13. Healthcare availability for 6-14 year-olds, by involvement in economic activity

Activity status	Availability of health insurance or free healthcare certificate	
	Yes	No
Economically active	66.2	33.8
Not economically active	77.2	22.8

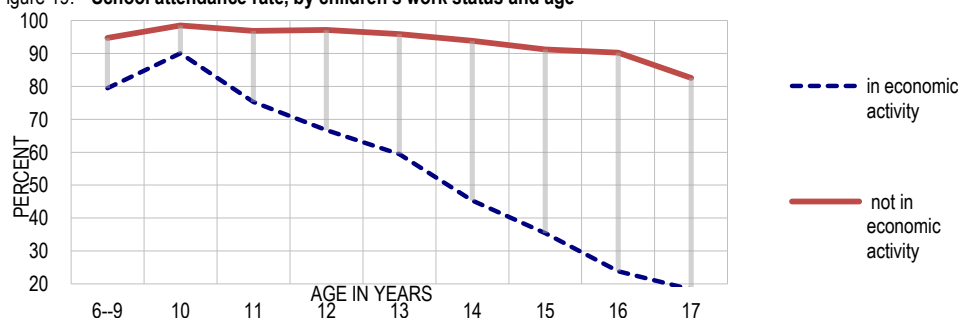
Source: UCW calculations based on *Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey, 2006*

63. The households of working children are less likely to benefit from health insurance (Table 13), suggesting that working children may have less recourse to medical care in the event of ill health. Access to health care can also affect children's risk of being involved in work in the first place. Evidence suggests that social vulnerability can be an important factor in household decisions to involve their children in work: in the absence of formal social insurance, child labour is used by households to mitigate social risk.

6.2 Education and children's work

64. Involvement in work appears to interfere with children's ability to attend school, underscoring the importance of child labour as a barrier to achieving Education For All. As shown in Figure 19, the attendance of working children lags far behind that of their non-working counterparts at every age. The gap in attendance grows moving across the 6-17 years age spectrum, suggesting work becomes increasingly incompatible with schooling as children grow older. In fact, the ability to attend to secondary education (defined as the ratio of net enrolment rate for working versus not working students) is very low (Table 14). The secondary level net enrolment rate for non-working children is 85 percent, while that for working children is only 31 percent.

Figure 19. School attendance rate, by children's work status and age



Source: UCW calculations based on *Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey, 2006*

Table 14. Ability to attend secondary education, by sex and residence

	NER Non-eco active (1)	NER Eco-active (2)	ABILITY TO GO attend secondary education (2):(1)
Male	84.6%	28.7%	0.339
Female	84.7%	34.7%	0.410
Urban	86.3%	25.5%	0.296
Rural	84.1%	32.1%	0.381
Total	84.6%	31.4%	0.371

Source: UCW calculation based on Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey, 2006

65. School life expectancy (Table 15) offers additional evidence of the negative impact of children's work on secondary education. At age 11, for example, the school life expectancy of a working children is about half (three years) that of a non working student. The gap in terms of school life expectancy is larger in urban areas, indicating that urban employment is even less compatible with education than rural work.

Table 15. School life expectancy⁽¹⁾

age	At work in economic activity					Not at work in economic activity					Total Total
	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Total	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Total	
At age 11	3.18	3.27	2.79	3.29	3.24	6.47	6.49	6.51	6.47	6.48	5.73
At age 12	2.46	2.49	2.58	2.48	2.49	5.50	5.51	5.54	5.50	5.51	4.76
At age 13	1.69	1.95	1.58	1.83	1.82	4.53	4.54	4.55	4.54	4.54	3.82
At age 14	1.15	1.30	1.27	1.23	1.23	3.57	3.58	3.59	3.58	3.58	2.91
At age 15	0.73	0.83	0.70	0.79	0.77	2.65	2.63	2.65	2.64	2.64	2.06
At age 16	0.38	0.47	0.36	0.43	0.42	1.74	1.72	1.72	1.73	1.73	1.28

Notes: (1) Theoretical upper age-limit of schooling is 17 years

Source: UCW calculations based on Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey, 2006

66. Working children benefit less from remedial education offered outside regular classroom hours, not surprising given the time intensity of their work responsibilities (see previous section) (Table 16). Forty percent of non-working children attended extra classes during the 12 months prior to VHLSS 2006, each for an average of 228 hours. This compares with only about 32 percent of working children attending extra classes for an average of 163 hours each over the same time period. Working children, whose academic performance often lags behind that of their same-aged peers (see below), therefore have less opportunity to catch up, undoubtedly contributing to their premature drop-out from the school system.

Table 16. Extra classes of 6-14 year-olds during formal school year, by involvement in economic activity

Activity status	Attendance of extra classes during the formal school year in the last 12 months		Average hours of extra classes during academic year 2005-2006
	Yes	No	
Economically active	31.6	68.4	162.9
Not economically active	40.4	59.6	228.1

Source: UCW calculations based on *Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey, 2006*

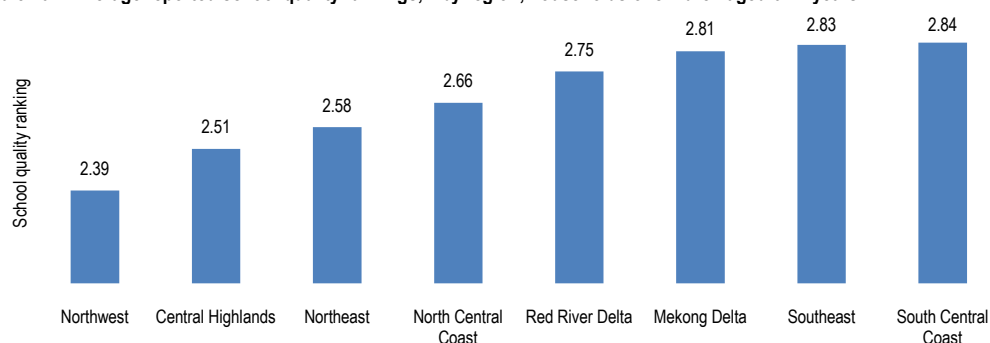
67. Working children students also appear more likely to attend poor quality schools, placing them at further disadvantage. Households with working students are much less likely to rank their children's schools in the highest two quality categories and more likely to rank their children's schools as "normal" or "weak" (Table 17). Figure 20, which looks at household school quality rankings generally, indicates that perceptions of school quality are lowest in the Northwest and Central Highlands regions, although even in these regions household rank schools on average as between "normal" and "good".

Table 17. Reported school quality,^(a) by involvement in economic activity, 6-14 year-olds

Activity status	Self-reported school quality				
	Distinction (4)	Good (3)	Normal (2)	Weak (1)	No idea
Economically active	3.5	38.7	46.5	1.5	9.8
Not economically active	9.8	49.9	33.3	0.6	6.5

Notes: (a) As reported by household survey respondent.

Source: UCW calculations based on *Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey, 2006*

Figure 20. Average reported school quality rankings,^(a) by region, households of children aged 6-17 years

Notes: (a) As reported by household survey respondent. Four is the highest possible quality ranking and corresponds to "distinction"; a ranking of three corresponds to "good", a ranking of two corresponds with "normal", and ranking of one corresponds with "weak".

Source: UCW calculations based on *Vietnam Household Living Standards Survey, 2006*

68. Some limited evidence suggests that children's economic activity not only affects their ability to attend school but also their ability to perform

effectively once there, although this is an area requiring further research. The school performance of working students is much less likely to be ranked as “distinction” or “good” compared to that of non-working students (Table 18), although this finding reflects performance reported by households rather than actual achievement testing and therefore should be interpreted with caution. Average age for grade also indicates that working students lag behind their non-working counterparts in terms of their ability to progress through the school system (Table 19). Working children attending primary school are on average two years older, and working children attending secondary school on average one year older, than their non-working counterparts, suggesting that working children may be performing less well at school and repeating grades more often.

Table 18. Reported academic performance,^(a) 6-14 year-olds, by involvement in economic activity

Activity status	Academic record				
	Distinction	Good	Normal	Weak	No idea
Economically active	5.2	25.4	65.3	3.0	1.1
Not economically active	17.5	38.0	42.6	1.1	0.8

Notes: (a) As reported by household survey respondent.

Source: UCW calculations based on *Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey, 2006*

Table 19. Average age of pupils (aged 5-24) currently attending school in 2006, by economic activity, sex and residence

	Average age at primary school		Average age at secondary school	
	Non-eco active	Eco-active	Non-eco active	Eco-active
Male	8.7	10.8	14.2	15.5
Female	8.7	10.7	14.1	14.9
Urban	8.6	no obs	14.2	15.5
Rural	8.7	10.8	14.1	15.2
Total	8.7	10.8	14.1	15.2

Source: UCW calculation based on *Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey, 2006*

7. UNDERSTANDING WHY CHILDREN WORK

69. As most children (excluding those that live on their own) exercise little control over their time allocations, determining why children work requires investigating why parents choose to engage their children in work rather than sending them to school or leaving them idle at home. This section makes use of econometric evidence from VHLSS 2006 to identify some of

the factors influencing parents' decisions concerning their children's time use.⁶³ Key results are presented in Table 20 and summarized below.

70. Child age and sex. The analysis shows that the probability of a child working increases with age. While this common result can be explained in large part by the rising opportunity cost of schooling as a child grows older, evidence also suggests that lack of access to schooling at the post-primary level may also play a role (see discussion below). Gender considerations also appear to play a role in parents' decisions concerning whether to involve their children in school or work. Boys appear to have a double disadvantage in this context, facing a greater risk of both of work and denied schooling, although these gender effects are not large.

71. Education of household head. The effect of an increase of parents' education levels on the reduction of child labour is strong and positive. Children from households where the head has primary education are 5 percentage points less likely to work exclusively, and 8 percentage points more likely to attend school exclusively, than children from households where the head has no education. Raising the education of the household head from primary to lower secondary education and from lower secondary to upper secondary and post-school higher (the reference category) education results in further large increases in the likelihood of children being in school rather than in work. It is worth reiterating that these results are obtained holding income constant, i.e., independent of any disguised income effect. One possible explanation is that more educated parents might have a better knowledge of the returns to education, and/or are in a position to help their children exploit the earning potential acquired through education.

72. Household income. Empirical results indicate that higher levels of household income increase the probability of children attending school and decrease their probability of working, evidence of the often-cited role of poverty in the decision to make children work. The results underscore that children's earnings or productivity can play an important role in household survival strategies among low-income families, and point to the need for some form compensatory income or earnings schemes as part of a broader effort for encouraging school attendance and discouraging children's work among poor households.

⁶³ A bivariate probit model was used to jointly determine the correlated decisions on child schooling and work. A simple economic model of household behavior is used to guide the empirical specification. For detailed information on the model, see Cigno, Rosati and Tzannatos, *Child Labour Handbook*, May 2002. The analysis carried out in this section is, obviously, conditioned by the information available. Notwithstanding the extensiveness of the survey utilised, potentially important variables are missing. In particular, information on the relative price of child work is difficult to capture: indicators for returns to education, work and household chores are not easily available (for a discussion of the role played by unobservables refer to Deb and Rosati, *Determinants of Child Labour and School Attendance: The Role of Household Observables*, December 2002).

Table 20. Marginal effects after bivariate probit estimation, 6-17 age group

Covariates	Economic activity exclusively		School exclusively		Both Activities		Neither activity	
	dy/dx	z	dy/dx	z	dy/dx	z	dy/dx	z
Age	-0.0132	-2.98	0.0616	7.20	0.0448	10.43	-0.0933	-14.15
Age^2	0.0014	7.56	-0.0045	-12.50	-0.0012	-6.99	0.0042	15.48
Sex male	0.0085	3.22	-0.0214	-3.44	0.0021	0.81	0.0108	2.76
Household size	-0.0008	-0.79	0.0015	0.61	-0.0012	-1.09	0.0005	0.32
Number of children aged 0-4 in the HH	0.0046	1.51	-0.0122	-1.74	-0.0001	-0.04	0.0078	1.78
Number of children aged 5-14 in the HH	0.0072	4.11	-0.0158	-3.84	0.0056	3.26	0.0030	1.19
Male sex of the HH head	0.0028	0.77	-0.0004	-0.04	0.0087	2.74	-0.0112	-1.89
HH head does not have any education	0.1114	7.04	-0.2180	-8.65	0.0254	2.50	0.0812	4.53
HH head has a primary school education	0.0599	7.81	-0.1335	-8.86	0.0183	3.09	0.0553	5.52
HH head has a lower secondary school education	0.0267	5.40	-0.0631	-5.62	0.0109	2.33	0.0255	3.45
HH expenditure: quintile1	0.0896	6.93	-0.1899	-8.14	0.0231	2.65	0.0773	4.85
HH expenditure: quintile2	0.0583	5.78	-0.1276	-6.53	0.0184	2.38	0.0509	3.90
HH expenditure: quintile3	0.0300	3.69	-0.0735	-4.17	0.0048	0.74	0.0387	3.14
HH expenditure: quintile4	0.0118	1.70	-0.0281	-1.79	0.0040	0.62	0.0123	1.19
Urban area	-0.0155	-4.17	0.0295	3.07	-0.0170	-4.81	0.0029	0.42
Water access: tap water	-0.0187	-5.30	0.0382	4.01	-0.0183	-5.33	-0.0012	-0.17
HH Life quality: much better since 2001	-0.0095	-2.06	0.0268	2.45	0.0036	0.72	-0.0209	-3.12
HH Life quality: better since 2001	-0.0059	-1.31	0.0145	1.36	-0.0021	-0.45	-0.0065	-0.97
HH Life quality: worse since 2001	0.0142	1.54	-0.0302	-1.54	0.0109	1.18	0.0051	0.47
HH benefited: tuition exemption of 2005	0.0058	0.56	-0.0135	-0.56	0.0030	0.28	0.0046	0.28
HH benefited: tuition exemption of 2006	-0.0075	-0.92	0.0164	0.79	-0.0064	-0.76	-0.0025	-0.17
Self-reported school quality*, by province	-0.0425	-3.99	0.0895	3.59	-0.0396	-3.75	-0.0073	-0.48
Red river delta	-0.0017	-0.27	0.0049	0.32	0.0005	0.08	-0.0037	-0.39
Northeast	0.0094	1.15	-0.0334	-1.66	0.0596	4.08	-0.0356	-5.43
Northwest	0.0133	1.34	-0.0283	-1.30	0.0284	2.20	-0.0134	-1.36
North-central coast	0.0015	0.23	-0.0019	-0.13	0.0038	0.57	-0.0034	-0.38
Central highlands	0.0038	0.48	-0.0067	-0.37	0.0069	0.80	-0.0039	-0.38
Southeast	0.0347	3.49	-0.0731	-3.71	0.0205	2.21	0.0179	1.60
Mekong delta	0.0390	4.05	-0.0829	-4.34	0.0212	2.42	0.0227	2.06
Province prime age employment to population ratio	-0.0558	-0.95	0.2501	1.83	0.1717	3.03	-0.3660	-4.50
Province youth to working-age population ratio	0.0192	1.06	-0.0314	-0.74	0.0331	1.84	-0.0209	-0.80

*Self-reported school quality is an ordered variable rankings from weak (1) to distinction (4)

Source: UCW calculations based on Vietnam Household Living Standards Survey, 2006

73. Place of residence. Children's living location has a large influence on their time use, highlighting the importance of targeted, area-specific approaches to reducing child labour and raising school attendance. Holding other factors constant, children living in cities and towns are 3 percentage points more likely to be attending school exclusively, and 1.5 percent less likely to be working exclusively than their counterparts living in the countryside. The likelihood of school attendance and child labour also depends to a large extent on the region where children live, at least for rural areas (Table 20). Children living in the rural southeast and northwest

regions face the highest risk of work and denied schooling. Compared to the rural south-central coast region, for example, a rural child in the northwest region is 2 percentage points more likely to work exclusively and 11 percentage points less likely to attend school exclusively (Table 21). Other inter-regional differences in the likelihood of child labour and school attendance are also large.

74. Access to water. Water access has a significant effect on the probability that children perform economic activities, reducing the probability of involvement in economic activity by some 2 percentage points and increasing by a similar amount the probability that they attend school only. It is a well known fact that the value of children's time outside education depends also on the access to basic services like water⁶⁴. Ready water access might allow adults more time for other productive activities, making them less reliant on their children to work, or households might incur savings from not having to have water delivered, again making the income from children less necessary.

75. Household perceptions of life quality. Household perceptions of how the quality of life has changed in recent years appears to play a role in their decisions concerning their children's work involvement. A perception of life being much better reduces the likelihood of households putting their children to work exclusively or of keeping their children at home full-time (presumably to perform household chores). Households, faced with better times, no longer have to resort to their children's labour as part of their household survival strategies.

76. Labour market demand and supply. Household decisions concerning children's work and schooling may also be influenced by local conditions labour market. Faced with few prospects for gainful employment upon graduating from school, for example, households may be reluctant to invest in their children's education. To investigate this possibility in the Vietnam context, we used two indicators at the provincial level: prime age employment to population ratio, an indicator of labour demand; and youth to working-age population ratio, an indicator of labour supply. If higher labour demand is reflected in higher wages (or return to work) for both adults and children, it is likely to generate both an income and a substitution effect. The former should tend to reduce child labour and to increase school attendance, while the opposite is true for the latter. In the case of Vietnam, we observe an increase of the number of children both working and attending school. This effect seems, however, associated with the reduction of children neither working nor attending school. In conclusion, we have some evidence of a pro cyclical behaviour of child work, that however does

⁶⁴ See, for example, Guarcello, Lyon and Rosati (2004), Child labour and access to basic services: evidence from 5 countries. (http://www.ucw-project.org/pdf/publications/standard_infrastructure19February2004.pdf)

not seem to be associated with substantial reduction in school attendance. If anything the opposite seems to be true.

77. The relative supply of children and youth work with respect to adult work, seems to exert a positive impact on the probability of children employment. The direct impact of relative supply seems to dominate the indirect effects due to lower wages or return to work. It should be stressed, however, that further research is needed to ascertain the linkages between the labour market condition and the supply of child work.

78. **School quality.** Household perceptions of school quality also appear to influence their decisions concerning whether to send their children to school rather than to work. Households are significantly more likely to send their children to school full-time, and significantly less likely to involve them in full-time work, in provinces where school quality is perceived as being higher. This underscores that the “education response” to child labour should not focus on extending access alone: while school access is necessary for families to have the opportunity to invest in their children’s education (see discussion below), school quality is necessary to make it worthwhile for parents to invest their children’s time in school.

79. **Access to post-primary education.** The VHLS 2006 contains information on access to schools in the rural areas of the country at commune level. While access to primary education is almost universal, about 10 per cent of the communes do not have a junior high school. In those communes where no junior high school is present, the average distance from the nearest one is 1.5 kilometers (25 per cent of the households of these communes have the nearest school at not less than 2.5 kilometers of distance). Accessibility of secondary education plays an important role in children’s time allocations even prior their reaching the age for post-primary schooling. As it has been often observed, parents appear to be less willing to invest in their children’s schooling at primary level if there is no opportunity for their children to continue schooling past the primary cycle in the future.

Table 21. Marginal effects of the access to the junior school after bivariate probit estimation, rural areas, 7-14 age group

Covariates	Economic activity exclusively		School exclusively		Both activities		Neither activity	
	dy/dx	z	dy/dx	z	dy/dx	z	dy/dx	z
Age	-0.0030	-0.58	-0.0059	-0.34	0.0479	3.78	-0.0391	-4.27
Age^2	0.0006	2.42	-0.0014	-1.72	-0.0012	-2.19	0.0020	4.87
Sex male	0.0020	1.08	-0.0055	-0.86	-0.0019	-0.48	0.0054	1.65
Household size	0.0001	0.20	0.0003	0.11	-0.0023	-1.40	0.0019	1.44
Number of children aged 0-4 in the HH	0.0028	1.49	-0.0107	-1.63	0.0069	1.61	0.0010	0.30
Number of children aged 5-14 in the HH	0.0021	1.65	-0.0075	-1.70	0.0036	1.27	0.0018	0.83
Male sex of the HH head	0.0047	1.97	-0.0181	-2.09	0.0132	2.59	0.0001	0.03
HH head does not have any education	0.0453	3.52	-0.1304	-4.06	0.0129	0.99	0.0722	2.81
HH head has a primary school education	0.0203	3.40	-0.0637	-3.58	0.0048	0.56	0.0385	2.84
HH head has a lower secondary school education	0.0085	2.03	-0.0276	-2.11	0.0066	0.84	0.0125	1.41
HH expenditure: quintile1	0.0444	4.28	-0.1283	-5.28	0.0479	3.10	0.0359	2.54
HH expenditure: quintile2	0.0305	3.72	-0.0946	-4.58	0.0425	3.08	0.0216	1.92
HH expenditure: quintile3	0.0137	2.14	-0.0464	-2.48	0.0242	1.89	0.0086	0.89
HH expenditure: quintile4	0.0062	1.11	-0.0224	-1.29	0.0132	1.14	0.0030	0.33
Water access: tap water	-0.0087	-3.46	0.0336	3.33	-0.0216	-3.81	-0.0033	-0.50
HH Life quality: much better since 2001	-0.0086	-2.88	0.0229	2.06	0.0064	0.80	-0.0207	-4.27
HH Life quality: better since 2001	-0.0065	-2.06	0.0193	1.76	0.0020	0.29	-0.0148	-2.82
HH Life quality: worse since 2001	0.0049	0.77	-0.0288	-1.24	0.0297	1.67	-0.0058	-0.93
Natural disaster occ. In the commune over the last 3 y.	-0.0024	-1.09	0.0080	1.07	-0.0025	-0.52	-0.0031	-0.79
Presence of the interp./factories/firms in the area	0.0013	0.63	-0.0050	-0.71	0.0037	0.82	0.0000	0.01
Access to the junior school	-0.0135	-2.95	0.0555	4.03	-0.0424	-3.84	0.0004	0.08
Red river delta	-0.0033	-0.77	0.0092	0.60	0.0011	0.11	-0.0071	-1.05
Northeast	0.0025	0.47	-0.0792	-3.11	0.0975	4.26	-0.0207	-5.30
Northwest	0.0222	2.14	-0.1116	-3.42	0.0956	3.50	-0.0062	-0.92
North-central coast	0.0058	1.05	-0.0250	-1.36	0.0206	1.56	-0.0015	-0.20
Central highlands	0.0077	1.13	-0.0569	-2.25	0.0599	2.79	-0.0107	-1.88
Southeast	0.0307	2.83	-0.0899	-3.27	0.0347	2.01	0.0245	1.85
Mekong delta	0.0190	2.57	-0.0585	-2.79	0.0067	0.64	0.0328	2.67

Source: UCW calculations based on Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey, 2006

80. The results reported in Table 21 and Table 22, respectively, for availability of school in the commune and distance to school among rural children indicate that where relevant school accessibility plays an important role. Presence of a junior secondary school reduces the probability that a child works by more than five per cent and increases by the same amount the probability that a child attends school only. Distance to a post-primary school also appears to play a role, although the magnitude of the effect is smaller. As shown in Table 22, the greater is the distance to a junior school, the less likely it is that 7-14 year-olds attend school exclusively and the more likely it is that they work.

81. We also tried to identify the effects of additional local variables, i.e., occurrence of natural disasters and presence of firms/factories. These, however, were not significant (Table 21 and Table 22).

Table 22. Marginal effects of the distance to the nearest junior school after bivariate probit estimation, rural communes with access to the junior school, 7-14 age group

Covariates	Economic activity exclusively		School exclusively		Both activities		Neither activity	
	dy/dx	z	dy/dx	z	dy/dx	z	dy/dx	z
Age	-0.0010	-0.19	-0.0098	-0.58	0.0488	4.12	-0.0380	-4.11
Age^2	0.0005	1.89	-0.0010	-1.33	-0.0014	-2.65	0.0019	4.63
Sex male	0.0023	1.22	-0.0062	-1.02	-0.0023	-0.62	0.0062	1.92
Household size	0.0000	0.07	0.0006	0.24	-0.0027	-1.77	0.0021	1.67
Number of children aged 0-4 in the HH	0.0045	2.32	-0.0154	-2.52	0.0093	2.43	0.0017	0.53
Number of children aged 5-14 in the HH	0.0027	2.02	-0.0089	-2.09	0.0041	1.54	0.0021	1.01
Male sex of the HH head	0.0037	1.46	-0.0129	-1.52	0.0080	1.60	0.0012	0.26
HH head does not have any education	0.0412	3.12	-0.1119	-3.59	0.0151	1.11	0.0556	2.35
HH head has a primary school education	0.0172	2.90	-0.0511	-3.10	0.0088	1.02	0.0251	2.15
HH head has a lower secondary school education	0.0074	1.81	-0.0243	-1.98	0.0114	1.50	0.0055	0.71
HH expenditure: quintile1	0.0394	3.79	-0.1079	-4.52	0.0351	2.50	0.0334	2.36
HH expenditure: quintile2	0.0283	3.49	-0.0833	-4.22	0.0367	2.86	0.0183	1.75
HH expenditure: quintile3	0.0124	2.01	-0.0402	-2.31	0.0215	1.83	0.0063	0.72
HH expenditure: quintile4	0.0042	0.79	-0.0146	-0.91	0.0096	0.92	0.0009	0.11
Water access: tap water	-0.0085	-3.35	0.0302	3.17	-0.0178	-3.51	-0.0038	-0.63
Life quality: much better since 1999	-0.0074	-2.41	0.0182	1.68	0.0082	1.08	-0.0190	-3.87
Life quality: better since 1999	-0.0054	-1.66	0.0150	1.41	0.0042	0.63	-0.0137	-2.57
Life quality: worse since 1999	0.0054	0.82	-0.0280	-1.25	0.0279	1.64	-0.0053	-0.89
Natural disaster occ. In the commune over the last 3 y.	-0.0018	-0.81	0.0075	1.05	-0.0074	-1.60	0.0017	0.49
Presence of the interp./factories/firms in the area	0.0019	0.91	-0.0057	-0.85	0.0007	0.15	0.0032	0.89
Distance to the nearest junior school	0.0015	3.44	-0.0047	-3.51	0.0017	2.06	0.0016	2.33
Red river delta	-0.0019	-0.43	0.0034	0.22	0.0053	0.49	-0.0068	-1.07
Northeast	0.0015	0.28	-0.0609	-2.32	0.0775	3.30	-0.0181	-4.80
Northwest	0.0184	1.73	-0.1034	-2.88	0.0938	3.03	-0.0087	-1.52
North-central coast	0.0074	1.17	-0.0317	-1.57	0.0276	1.85	-0.0033	-0.48
Central highlands	0.0001	0.02	-0.0573	-2.00	0.0743	2.86	-0.0171	-4.75
Southeast	0.0300	2.56	-0.0833	-2.91	0.0313	1.77	0.0220	1.68
Mekong delta	0.0215	2.49	-0.0621	-2.77	0.0101	0.89	0.0305	2.42

Source: UCW calculations based on Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey, 2006

8. ACCELERATING PROGRESS TOWARDS ELIMINATING CHILD LABOUR: A DISCUSSION OF POLICY OPTIONS

82. Achieving Vietnam's time-bound objectives for eliminating child labour requires a policy response targeting three broad groups: (1) children at risk of involvement in child labour; (2) children already harmed by exposure to child labour; and (3) children in the worst forms of child labour requiring immediate, direct action.

83. Empirical analysis conducted for this study (see Section 7), as well as policy experience in Vietnam and elsewhere, points to a number of general strategies for reaching these groups. Better access to schooling and other basic services, combined with mechanisms to reduce social risk, is particularly important to preventing children from entering child labour, and to stopping children already in work from moving to more hazardous forms or leaving school prematurely. Remedial schooling and other "second chance" learning opportunities is important to overcoming work-related damage to children's welfare. Better formal workplace inspection instruments, together with expanded grassroots level monitoring, are needed to guide "direct action" to remove and rehabilitate children in unconditional worst forms of child labour.

84. Achieving sustainable reductions in child labour also requires a supportive national political, legal and institutional environment. Political commitment is needed to ensure that child labour is mainstreamed into broader development plans and programmes. This may include, for example, integrating child labour as an explicit concern in Millennium Development Goals, Education for All (EFA) plans, and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP). Labour legislation consistent with international child labour standards is necessary both as a statement of national intent and as legal and regulatory framework for efforts against child labour. As child labour is an issue that cuts across sectors and areas of ministerial responsibility, progress against it requires that institutional roles are clearly delineated, and that effective coordination and information-sharing structures are in place.

85. In summary, "prevention" measures are needed both to reduce the flow of vulnerable children into child labour and to stop children already in work from moving to worse forms or leaving school, while "second chance" measures are needed to avoid large numbers of children entering adulthood in a disadvantaged position, permanently harmed by early work experiences. "Direct action" is needed to identify and withdraw the children in unconditional worst forms, a group facing immediate and severe threats to survival, safety and development. existing stock of child labourers. The effective implementation of both prevention and protection measures requires political commitment, reliable information, an appropriate legal

and regulatory framework, functioning coordination structures, capable institutions and a mobilised society, i.e., an "enabling environment".

8.1 Preventive measures

86. Prevention measures designed to stem the flow of children into work constitute the most important component of a policy response to child labour. Clearly, sustainable reductions in child labour cannot be attained without addressing the factors causing children to enter work in the first place. As primary school-aged children are rarely responsible for their own choices, the design of preventive measures requires an understanding of factors influencing household decisions relating to schooling and work. A model of these household decisions was estimated in Section 7, making use of the VHLSS 2006 dataset. The implications of the estimation results for prevention policies are summarised in Table 23 and discussed in more detail below. The following discussion also draws on international evidence and policy experience.

87. **Reducing household vulnerability:** Children's work frequently forms part of a household's strategy for dealing with risk, making them less vulnerable to losses of income arising from individual or collective shocks.⁶⁵ High levels of poverty mean that household vulnerability is also high in Vietnam. This is especially the case for ethnic minority groups, which account for roughly 14 percent of the total national population but 44 percent of the poor. The government recognises that reducing household vulnerability through expanding social protection remains a key national priority. The Five-Year National Development Plan calls for a variety of actions in this context, including pilot crop and market insurance schemes for farmers, household insurance schemes to gradually replace school health insurance system, community-based social protection networks, natural disaster assistance programmes, and expanding the role of non-governmental organizations in the development of social security networks. The Five-year Plan also calls for a prioritisation of efforts in the communes and districts where poverty is most entrenched and household vulnerability is highest.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Although not investigated in Vietnam, empirical evidence from other countries underscores this point. In Guatemala, for example, controlling for other factors, children from households exposed to collective or individual shocks are four to five percentage points more likely to work compared to children from families that had not experienced these shocks. UCW Project, *Understanding Children's Work in Guatemala*, Florence, April 2003.

⁶⁶ The Socialist Republic of Vietnam, *The Five Year Socio-Economic Development Plan, 2006 – 2010*, July, 2006.

Table 23. Policy implications from multivariate analysis of child labour decisions

Empirical result	Implication for policy
1. Negative effect of income/wealth on children's involvement in economic activity.	Social risk management policies (e.g. access to credit, social insurance) and compensatory income or earnings schemes
2. School quality helps attending working children to remain in school	Policies aimed to improve school quality (teacher training, curriculum reform, etc.)
3. Access to post-primary education raises likelihood of school attendance at primary level and reduces likelihood of involvement in work among primary school-aged children.	Expanding junior secondary schooling to unserved communes.
3. Parents' education level negatively associated with child labour and positively associated with school attendance	Adult literacy policy; awareness raising components in education and other projects
4. Ready access to water networks reduces the likelihood of children working.	Targeted expansion of water networks and other basic services in under-served rural areas.
6. Region and residence strong determinant of child labour	Geographic targeting of child labour policies

88. Reducing barriers to school access and raising school quality: There is broad consensus that the single most effective way to stem the flow of school age children into work is to extend and improve schooling, so that families have the opportunity to invest in their children's education and it is worthwhile for them to do so. The empirical results indicated that Vietnamese working children are much less likely to be attending school than their non-working peers (primary net enrolment is 85 percent versus 31 percent for the two groups), and, if enrolled in school, are more likely lag behind and to drop-out prematurely. These results point to the need to address the access and quality issues influencing parents' decisions to enrol and keep their children in school, within the broader education reform framework. The empirical evidence and programme experience points to a number of possible policy measures in this context:

- (i) *School incentive schemes* that provide cash or in-kind subsidies to poor children conditional on school attendance (see Box 4) offer one possible route for getting more working children in school. These demand incentives can increase schooling directly by providing poor families with additional resources (i.e. income effect), as well as indirectly by compensating parents for the foregone economic product from their children's labour and thus reducing child work (i.e. substitution effect).
- (ii) *Flexible schooling measures*, such as adaptive school calendars and scheduling are another possibility in this context. Extensive international policy experience highlights of potential of these measures in reducing drop-out through making school more accommodating of the exigencies of light work (see Box 4);

- (iv) *Targeted school expansion at the junior secondary level (lower secondary)*, in response to empirical evidence of a strong positive relationship between post-primary school availability and enrolment at the primary level. Expansion efforts require needs-based criteria to ensure that the most disadvantaged and under-served communes are reached; and
- (vi) *School quality enhancements*, in response to empirical evidence indicating that households are significantly more likely to send their children to school and less likely to involve them in full-time work in provinces where school quality is perceived as being higher. Again, this underscores that the “education response” to child labour should focus on both extending access and improving quality. Schools must not only be accessible, but also of sufficient quality to make them a worthwhile investment of children’s time.

89. **Adult education**, in response to the empirical evidence in Vietnam indicating the parents’ education and particularly mothers’ education, has a significantly positive effect on children’s time use. Developing and expanding efforts in promoting good parenting, functional literacy and numeracy, work-related skills training and basic education equivalency programmes are all important in this context.

90. Empirical evidence presented above also suggested that **improving access to basic services**, and specifically to water networks, can have a dramatic impact on school attendance and child labour rates. This is because the availability of basic services can affect the value of children’s time and, consequently, household decisions concerning how this time is allocated between school and work. In addition to its health and other social benefits, therefore, expanding access to basic services is an important strategy for getting children into school and out of work. Vietnam should accelerate efforts aimed at increasing the number of water sources for households in under-served communes, and to innovate low cost ways to bring safe water closer to households.

Box 4. Reducing school access barriers for vulnerable children: School attendance incentives and flexible schooling**Flexible schooling**

Flexible schooling measures are typically targeted specifically to working children, and are designed to reduce the risk of drop-out by making school more accommodating of the exigencies of children's light work. Such measures can take various forms, including setting daily school hours to accommodate daily work schedules; setting the yearly academic calendar to reflect local conditions, e.g., agricultural seasons; adding additional school shifts during off-work hours; and introduction of independent study modules to compensate for class time lost to work.

There are numerous examples of flexible schooling initiatives. The BRAC program in Bangladesh is probably the best known scheme. In this program, school times are set by local parents, and the school calendar is adapted to fit local considerations such as harvest seasons.

In Guatemala, a number of flexible scheduling measures are used to make schooling more compatible with the work-related demands on children's time. One measure allows children who spend the morning working on farms to begin school later in the day, with the fewer class hours compensated for by more time on independent study. Another allows students to complete 1,000 hours of schooling with no time restriction to get primary school certification.

In the Nicaragua "Extra-Age" program, classes are taught in modules to permit maximum attendance during off-work hours, and separate extra-age classrooms are established to avoid the social stigma associated with older children attending classes with younger children. A project implemented by the Department of Education, Culture and Sports in the Philippines allows children to attend school in the morning and report for work in the afternoon.

Peru has made the school attendance of working children a particular priority. The Peru Child and Adolescent Code guarantees special school schedules that allow children who work to attend school regularly. A number of Peruvian schools have established multiple shifts – morning, afternoon and night – to allow working children to fit schooling into their work schedules, and teachers are charged with providing extra attention to children who lag behind because of work.

School attendance incentive schemes

School attendance incentive schemes involve offering households cash or in-kind payments conditional on the child attending school. These transfers differ from conventional scholarships in that their primary purpose is to encourage enrolment and only secondarily to allow talented children or young people of modest means to obtain an education. What these schemes do, essentially, is to compensate families for the direct and indirect costs associated with children attending school rather than working.

The primary benefit of these programs is their ability to tie together short-run assistance and long-run human capital formation to fight the intergenerational transfer of poverty. By helping the children of poor families to enter and remain in school today, the incentive schemes make it less likely that these children become tomorrow's poor. Incentives used in these schemes typically take the form of either cash or food rations:

Conditional cash transfer (CCT) programs are often implemented as part of a broader package of poverty alleviation initiatives. They consist of direct monetary transfers or stipends to families in return for their children's regular attendance at school. The *Progresar/Oportunidades* program in Mexico is perhaps the best known conditional cash transfer programme. It provides twice-monthly cash payments conditional for students in grades 3 to 9 conditional upon their attaining an 85 percent attendance rate (with teachers relied upon to verify student attendance).

School nutrition and food-for-schooling use food as an incentive for parents to send their children to school. They involve either 1) children being fed in school (school nutrition programs) or 2) families being given food if their children attend school (food-for-schooling programs). The first type, school nutrition programs, is designed to alleviate short-term hunger and thereby improve children's ability to derive educational benefit from their time in the classroom. These programs do not, however, compensate parents for the lost income or output from child work. The second type, food-for-schooling programs, allows the entire family benefit from a food ration rather than just the child attending school. As such, they go further in helping families to give up the income or productivity derived from child work.

8.2 "Second chance" measures

91. "Second chance" policies are critical to avoiding large numbers of children entering adulthood in a disadvantaged position, permanently harmed by early work experiences. Children with little or no schooling will be in a weak position in the labour market, at much greater risk of joining

the ranks of the unemployed and the poor. If left alone, these children and youth are likely to be in need of other (more costly) remediation policies at a later stage of their life cycle. Second chance programmes are based on the premise that working children are often difficult to insert directly (back) into the formal education system because of their age, different life experiences and lack of familiarity with the school environment.

92. Second chance education programmes are needed to reach former working children and other out-of-school children with educational opportunities, as part of broader efforts towards their social reintegration. Empirical evidence presented above on education indicates that such programmes are particularly relevant in the Vietnamese context: compared to non-working children, a far lower proportion of working children are in school, and those working children in school are much less likely to benefit from remedial education needed to help keep them there. Working children, whose academic performance lags behind that of their same-aged peers, have less opportunity to catch up, undoubtedly contributing to their premature drop-out from the school system

93. Second chance education programmes offer children who have never enrolled in school, who have dropped out, or who are at risk of dropping out, an opportunity for successful integration or (re-integration) in the formal school classroom. They are critical to ensuring that these children, once in school, remain there, and are able to learn effectively. Programming experience elsewhere points to three main options for reaching disadvantaged children with opportunities to (re)integrate in the formal school system: (a) mainstreaming, providing returning children and working children with special remedial support within the regular classroom context; (b) school-based “catch-up” education, involving separate, intensive courses making use of school facilities; and (c) non-formal “bridging” education, involving intensive non-formal courses designed to raise academic proficiency (see Box 5).

Box. 5 Integrating former child labourers and other vulnerable out-of-school children into the formal school system: Policy considerations and international experience

Programming experience elsewhere points to three main options for reaching disadvantaged, out-of-school children with remedial education to ease their transition back to the formal school system: (a) mainstreaming, providing returning children and working children with special remedial support within the regular classroom context; (b) school-based "catch-up" education, involving separate, intensive courses making use of school facilities; and (c) non-formal "bridging" education, involving intensive non-formal courses designed to raise academic proficiency.

- *Mainstreaming:* Providing returning children with remedial support in the regular classroom is consistent with the principle of mainstreaming disadvantaged children and promoting inclusive education. Depending primarily on existing school facilities and human resources, it is also likely to be most cost-effectiveness and sustainable option. Mainstreaming might be most appropriate for younger, 7-9 year-old returning children, whose remedial learning needs and adjustment difficulties are lesser than their older counterparts. Two potential problems, however, require consideration. The first is teacher capacity. Teachers are not well qualified and many lack training in even basic teaching skills, calling into question their ability to cope with additional children in their classes with substantial remedial learning needs. Placing local teaching assistants in the classroom, may be one way of addressing this concern. The second potential problem is classroom capacity. In contexts in which class sizes are already large, or physical space is limited, it may not be possible to accommodate additional children in existing classes.

Extra-curricular "catch-up" education: These intensive remedial courses, provided prior to, during, or after regular school hours, are designed to lead to qualification to (re)enter regular classes at the age-appropriate grade level. This option provides children with a more gradual introduction into the school environment, and a teacher dedicated exclusively to their learning needs. As such, it may be most appropriate for older, 10-14 year-old returning children, who face a more difficult transition back to formal schooling. Separate courses also help avoid the social stigmatization of older students attending classes with younger ones. In schemes implemented elsewhere, regular teachers have been recruited to run these courses, for a small supplement to the regular income. But school capacity is also an issue here. In circumstances in which schools are already functioning in two shifts, or all classroom space is occupied, there may not be time or physical space to accommodate additional classes of remedial learners. This option would also require specialized training for course instructors, and the development of specialized teaching materials tailored to accelerated learning.

Non-formal "bridging" education: Involves the establishment of non-formal networks of community schools offering intensive courses designed to raise academic proficiency to a level permitting entry into the formal school system. These programs are useful in hard-to-reach areas lacking formal school facilities and for groups of

disadvantaged children (e.g., street children) outside the reach of State structures. But non-formal programs by definition require substantial grassroots-level mobilization and organisation, often making them difficult to scale up and sustain. They also require strong community-school links to be effective; these links remain relatively weak in Zambia, although are being addressed in the context of the broader education reform program. In the absence of a link to the formal education system, non-formal education programs run the danger of evolving into parallel, frequently inferior, education systems for advantaged children, rather than as bridges to the regular classroom.

There are numerous examples of remedial schooling initiatives. Networks of community schools have been established in India and Egypt providing marginalized out-of-school children with learning opportunities and a bridge to the formal system. The India *Janshala* program, a joint Government-UN initiative, serves as a vehicle for mobilizing community involvement in schooling, introducing teaching innovation and meeting learning needs of disadvantaged children. Since its launch in 1998, it has opened more than 2,000 alternative schools, trained 58,000 teachers and established Village Education Committees in 15,000 villages.

The Egypt Community Schools project has played a similar role, providing hard-to-reach rural children, particularly girls, with basic education equivalency allowing them to continue to preparatory school in the formal system. The initial UNICEF-supported project that established 200 community schools during the 1990s has now been incorporated into a national Girls' Education Initiative aimed at reaching half a million out-of-school girls in Egypt by 2007.

The Basic Education for Hard-to-Reach Urban Children project in Bangladesh is a large-scale alternative education effort specifically targeting working children. Based on an "earn and learn" strategy, the project offers a two-year bridging course to working children at the end of which they receive an equivalency of grade 3 and can be admitted to mainstream education. The course runs two hours per day, six days per week, but timing is flexible in order that children are also able to continue working.

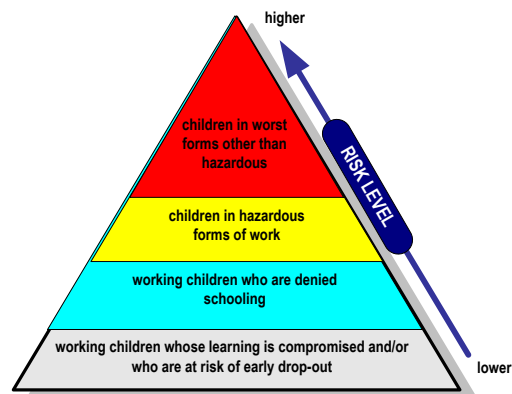
An India Back-to-School pilot program, linked to *Janshala* and administered by the Andhra Pradesh Social Welfare Department, offers bridging courses to school non-entrants and early drop-outs in order to raise their academic proficiency to a level permitting their re-entry into the formal education system. The India *Balsakhi* program, involves the hiring of young local women ("*Balsakhis*") with the equivalent of a high school education to provide remedial education to disadvantaged or lagging students within the formal school structure.

8.3 Direct action: removal, recovery and reintegration

111. Direct action is needed to ensure the removal, recovery and reintegration of working children whose rights are most compromised, i.e., those facing the greatest degree of hazard and/or exploitation. This refers, first and foremost, to children in worst forms other than hazardous

(activities against fundamental human rights) and those in hazardous forms of work (activities compromising children's safety, health or moral development). Evidence cited above suggests that both these groups of child labourers are found in Vietnam. Inter Ministerial Order No. 9/TT/LB of 13 April 1995, adopted pursuant to the 1994 Labour Code, provides a list of 81 occupations prohibited for young workers, and 13 harmful working conditions in which employment of young workers are prohibited, providing a starting point for targeting.

Figure 21. Priority target groups for direct action measures



112. Identification and removal (direct action). Immediate, direct action is needed to rescue children from unconditional worst forms of child labour and provide them with the support and follow-up needed for their recovery and reintegration. Such action is relevant above all in cases of trafficked children, children subjected to commercial sexual exploitation, and children facing other extreme forms of hazard or exploitation in the workplace. The effective identification and follow-up of these groups depends, first and foremost, on mobilising and capacitating the local State and non-governmental actors that operate closest to where these frequently-hidden forms of child labour occur.

113. Recovery and reintegration. Follow-up actions ensuring that rescued children are provided a full range of needed social services (e.g., emergency shelter, needs assessment and referral, medical care, psycho-social counselling, legal support, family tracing and assessment, post reintegration follow-up, etc.) are also critical. Regulatory frameworks need to define minimum standards of care for former child labourers and other vulnerable children, and to specify the respective roles of the various State and private actors in meeting these care needs.

114. Strengthening enforcement and monitoring of child labour laws: There is a need to strengthen the State's ability to monitor workplaces for compliance with child labour laws, starting with the priority hazardous

sectors specified by governments upon ratification of ILO Convention No. 182. Numerous measures may be relevant in this context: (a) improving workplace monitoring for compliance with child labour laws; (b) training inspectors on child labour laws and on workplace inspection for occupational health and safety (OHS) purposes; (c) developing implementation guidelines for child labour laws for use by inspectors and other enforcement bodies; (d) strengthening business registration and licensing systems and extending them to informal enterprises; and (e) introducing requirements relating to validation/authentication of workers' ages as part of licensing criteria.

115. Introducing informal community-based monitoring mechanisms. But given the extent of child labour and the limited resources of many labour inspectorates, the formal inspection system alone is unlikely to be effective in protecting children from workplace violations in many national contexts, even with more training and a clearer legal framework. There is therefore also a need for labour inspectors to join hands with other organisations (e.g., employers' organisations, social workers, local community organisations) to form broad-based child labour monitoring systems at the local level. Replicating ILO-IPEC-supported pilot community monitoring programmes is one possible vehicle for achieving this. The programmes involve tripartite monitoring of children's school attendance and workplaces by labour inspectors, teachers and community volunteers.

8.4 Creating an enabling environment for progress against child labour

116. Achieving sustainable reductions in child labour also requires political commitment, an appropriate legal and regulatory framework, functioning coordinating structures, capable institutions and a mobilised society, i.e., an enabling environment.

117. Awareness-raising. Perceptions of child labour as either beneficial or, at worst, a necessary evil, remain entrenched in many societies. This underscores need for expanded communication efforts on the negative effects of child labour and the benefits of schooling as part of an overall strategy against child labour. Such an effort needs to take place at both national and local levels, and involve a wide variety of communication vehicles. Baseline information on local knowledge and cultural attitudes towards child labour is needed to tailor communication messages, and to evaluate changes in awareness and attitudes following communication efforts. The urgent need to address worst forms of child labour other than hazardous, including human trafficking and child commercial sexual exploitation, should be a particular focus. Providing information on national child labour legislation, presented in terms that are understandable to the populations and communities concerned, is another communication priority.

118. Social mobilisation. Building on efforts being undertaken with support from ILO-IPEC, UNICEF and other groups, religious organizations, educational institutions, teachers' organizations, NGOs, the mass media, community-based organizations, trade unions, employers' organizations and numerous other groups need to be actively engaged in addressing child labour. Care providers in direct contact with children, including teachers and health workers, are in an especially good position to identify and refer child labourers, and therefore constitute particularly important allies in protecting children from child labour. Initiatives such as community-based child protection networks provide useful vehicles for bringing together a wide variety of stakeholders to combat child labour.

119. Institution-strengthening. Strengthening institutional capacity at all levels of Government is needed for continued progress towards child labour reduction goals in many national contexts. While national plans of action, PRSPs and other development plans provide solid bases for action, these frameworks are unlikely to be implemented effectively in the face of capacity constraints. Institutions require strengthening in a number of areas, including using data for strategic planning, policy and programme design, programme monitoring and evaluation, programme coordination, and the mainstreaming of child labour in broader development plans and programmes.

120. Improving co-ordination and information-sharing. As child labour is a cross-sectoral issue, requiring close collaboration across a range of Government bodies, the clear delineation of roles, and the strengthening of coordination and information-sharing, will also be critical to the effective functioning of Government institutions and their social partners in efforts combating child labour. Assistance in the child labour field is often highly fragmented, with a large number of actors operating with little or no coordination or linkages. This leads to overlaps in assistance in some areas and to gaps in assistance in other priority areas. The starting point for improved co-ordination is a detailed mapping of current efforts in the area of child labour, and the establishment of a system for monitoring assistance on the basis of this mapping.

121. Strengthening information for policy design and targeting. Despite recent national household surveys, important information gaps remain in the area of child labour, affecting understanding of the phenomenon and the ability of policy-makers to address it. Foremost among these gaps is child labour in the agriculture sector. More than 80 percent of the 930,000 children that are working in Vietnam are working in the agriculture sector, but little is known about the characteristics of children's agricultural work, its degree of hazardousness, or the extent to which it interferes with schooling. Other information gaps include:

- *Involvement in hazardous work.* The standard 3-digit industrial and occupational classifications used in VHLSS 2006 and other child labour surveys do not match the national list of hazardous sectors, meaning that

only a very partial estimate of children's involvement in hazardous forms is currently possible. This, in turn, complicates the setting of clear time-bound child labour reduction targets for the elimination of worst forms. Generating reliable quantitative data on hazardous forms is therefore an urgent priority.

- *Involvement in worst forms other than hazardous.* Information about children involved in unconditional worst forms of child labour is very scarce. The reports and sources cited above are able to provide only an initial, partial picture of the extent and nature of children's involvement in unconditional worst forms in Vietnam. Further, targeted research utilising specialised survey instruments is needed in order to generate more complete information on this highest-priority group of child labourers.
- *Programme impact.* Very few of the array of current programmes relating to child labour have been systematically evaluated, making it difficult to draw policy lessons from these experiences or to identify programmatic approaches meriting broad scale replication.

122. More broadly, there is a need for a system of regular monitoring of national progress towards child labour elimination targets. Currently, statistical information on child labour is not collected or, particularly, analyzed, in a systematic fashion, making it difficult to compare estimates or assess trends across time. Such a system could be established by integrating the defined set of core child labour intervals into on-going labour force and/or living conditions surveys at regular intervals.

ANNEX I. MINISTERIAL ORDER ON HAZARDOUS FORMS

Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and
Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No.182)

VIET NAM

Heading

➤ [Interministerial Order No.9 TT/LB of 13 April 1995 \(Order No. 9 of 1995\).](#)

Original language

Vietnamese.

Official English translation available in NATLEX database.

Abstract

Part [B](#), [C](#) and [Appendix](#) determining hazardous work in which employment of young persons is prohibited.

Text of legal provisions

• **B. HARMFUL WORKING CONDITIONS IN WHICH EMPLOYMENT OF YOUNG WORKERS IS PROHIBITED**

1. Heavy work (average energy consumption is over 5 Kcal/ minute and average heart beat is over 120 minute.)
2. Working in uncomfortable position or in place lacking oxygen
3. Having direct exposure to chemicals that may cause gene damage, adverse affect on cell metabolism, bad effects on reproductive functions (such as testicle insufficiency; ovary insufficiency) cancer as well as occupational diseases.
4. Working in contact with harmful elements that may cause infectious diseases;
5. Working in contact with radioactive substances (including radioactive machines)
6. Working in contact with electromagnetic field exceeding the permitted standards.
7. Working in the workplace with vibration exceeding the permitted standards;
8. Working in workplaces having the temperature over 45oC in the Summer and 40oC in the winter or workplaces being affected by high thermal radiation.
9. Working in workplaces with pressure higher or lower than the atmospheric pressure;
10. Working in mines;

11. Working in high and sheer workplaces;
12. Working in workplaces unsuitable for young worker's mental and psychology;
13. Working workplaces that may have bad effects on the development of young workers' personality"

- **C. LIST OF OCCUPATIONS IN WHICH EMPLOYMENT OF YOUNG WORKERS IS PROHIBITED.**

"1. A list of occupations prohibiting the employment of young workers (see Appendix) is promulgated as an attachment to this Circular.

2. These Ministries and branches shall report to the MOLISA and the MOH, about working places holding harmful working conditions and occupations that are not listed in the attachment to this Circular for consideration, with the purpose of amendment and supplement to the list."

- **Appendix: LIST OF OCCUPATIONS PROHIBITING THE EMPLOYMENT OF YOUNG WORKERS**

(Attachment to Circular No 09 dated 13/4/1995 stipulating harmful working conditions and list of occupations prohibiting the employment of young workers)

"1. Direct boiling, pouring and transporting hot melted metal, disassembling moulds and cleaning molded products:

- Arch electric kiln (irrespective of capacity)
- Horizontal steel refining kiln
- Car tunnel steel kiln
- Blast furnace
- Rotary kiln (for pig-iron)

2. Rolling hot metal;
3. Refining non-ferrous metal ore (bronze, lead, tin, mercury, zinc, silver);
4. Firing kiln for refining coke;
5. Firing steam engines;
6. Welding in air-tight tank, welding over 5 meters above the ground;
7. Digging wells in mines;
8. Digging mines and doing other work in mines or working in deep holes over 5 meters deep;

32. Uprooting trees having a diameter of over 40cm;
33. Felling big trees; cutting high branches;
34. Transporting big trunks of wood; loading and unloading them by hand;
35. Floating rafts on rivers with many waterfalls;
36. Feeling, catching and lifting timber from under the water by hand, gathering and -rolling timber offshore;
37. Sawing by hand;
38. Working in scaffold, or working in saddle scaffold that is located higher 5 m, or other similar occupations;
39. Assembling, disassembling and repairing scaffolds;
40. Exploiting sallagane nets, bat manure;
41. Working on ocean-going ships;
42. Guarding ships near sheer rocky shores;
43. Working alone on railways; in tunnels in mountain; in underground constructions; in places reducing eyesight to under 400 meters; or in inaccessible places;
44. Moving carriages in garages or on railways;
45. Operating disk or annular sawing-machine;
46. Feeding or operating rock-grinding machines;
47. Operating planing machines;
48. Operating or metal processing with compression, team pressure or electric forging, striking, pressing and cutting machines;
49. Installing, repairing, cleaning all kinds of compression, team pressure or electric forging, striking, pressing and cutting machines;
50. Working in ship-building involving handling loads over 30kg.;
51. Load handling limits;

Age groups	On and off Handling	Continuous handling
From 15 years (180 months)	Female: 12 kg	8 kg
to under 16 years (192	Male: 15 Kg	10 kg

months)		
From 16 years (192 months)	Female: 25 kg	15 kg
to under 18 years (216 months)	Male: 30 Kg	20 kg

52. Operating or being on duty in low, medium or high voltage power stations;
53. Checking, repairing or fixing 700v direct or 220 alternating current circuits;
54. Lighting oil burning machines consuming 400 liters per hour;
55. Manufacturing, using, transporting dangerous substances such as explosive materials, inflammable substances, oxygen, gas, guns, ammunition and fire-crackers very likely to cause explosion and fire;
56. Operating acetylene, oxygen, hydrogen, chlorine and other liquefied gases processing and bottling systems;
57. Operating freezing systems (ice producing and congealing);
58. Working in Workplaces where the amount of dust, rock or cement powder, coal dust, animal hair exceeds the permitted standards;
59. Repairing kilns, air-tight towers and pipes conducting chemicals;
60. Working in tobacco fermenting and cigarette drying kilns;
61. Burning glass melting kilns and blowing glass by mouth;
62. Rinsing paraffin in alcohol tanks;
63. Working in contact with gasoline in cellars, such as receiving, delivering, maintaining, operating petrol pumps and petrol gauges;
64. Sorting out lead minerals;
65. Laminating, pulling and striking lead products or lead-plated products;
66. Vulcanizing, forming and handling big sized rubber products in, such as big fuel tanks and containers, motor car tyres;
67. Working in contact with organic solvents such as embalming sleepers laying emulsion of photographic paper, printing patterns on thin materials, printing labels on thin and smooth paper, laminating phenol plastic, operating phenol glue multi-condenser pots;
68. Dredging underground sluices; working in dirty water;
69. Burning down and killing cattle;
70. Operating on dead body, preparing dead body for coffin, burying and exhuming graves;

71. Working in prisons or in mental hospitals;
72. Working in pubs, dance halls, or working in entertainment services;
73. Feeding wild beasts and poisonous animals;
74. Working in workplaces affected by radiation, X-ray and other harmful rays;
75. Working in radio, TV radar and telecommunication stations;
76. Working in direct contact with chemicals causing gene damage such as:
- 5 Fluoro-uracil
 - Benzene
77. Working in direct contact with chemicals causing harm to reproductive functions such as:
- Estrogen;
 - Axial cis retinoid;
 - Carbaryl;
 - Dibromaclo propan (DBCP);
 - Toluene diamine and dinitrotoluene;
 - Polychlorin biphenyls (PCBs);
 - Polybromina biphenyls (PBBs).
78. Working in direct contact with likely-to-cause-cancer pesticides, herbicides containing the following chemical:
- 1,4 butanediol, dimethyl sulphate;
 - 4 aminobiphenyl;
 - Asbestos (amosite, Crocidolite, Chrysotile);
 - Arsenic, Calcium Arsenic;
 - Dioxins; - Dichloromethyl ether;
 - Precipitate Chromate compounds;
 - Coal-plastic and coal-gas;
 - Cyclophosphamide;
 - Diethylstilbestrol;
 - 2 Naphthylamine;
 - N, N - di (Chloroethyl);
 - 2, Naphthylamine;
 - Thorium dioxide;
 - Thioisourea;
 - Vinyl chloride, vinyl chloride;
 - 4- amino, 10- methyl folic acid;
 - Mercury, methyl mercury compounds, methyl;
 - Nitrogen pentoxide;
 - 2,3,7,8 tetrachloro dibenzene furan;
 - 3- alpha phenyl- beta acetylethyl;
 - Acety salicylic acid;
 - Asparagine;