

Vietnam Country Gender Assessment

December, 2006



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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CAS	Country Assistance Strategy
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CFAW	Committee for the Advancement of Women
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIEM	Central Institute of Economic Management
CPRGS	Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy
DFID	Department for International Development
DONRE	Department of Natural Resources and Environment
GDI	Gender Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOV	Government of Vietnam
GSO	General Statistics Office
HIV/AIDS	Human Immuno Virus / Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HEPR	Hunger Elimination and Poverty Reduction
IDU	Injecting Drug User
LUC	Land Use Right Certificate
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour Invalids and Social Affairs
MMR	Maternal Mortality Ratio
MPDF	Mekong Private Sector Development Facility
MPI	Ministry for Planning and Investment
NCFAW	National Committee for the Advancement of Women
POA	Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women
PRB	Population Reference Bureau
PRSC	Poverty Reduction Support Credit
SAVY	Survey Assessment of Vietnamese Youth
SEDP	Socio-Economic Development Plan

SPC	Supreme People's Court
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNGASS	United Nations General Assembly Special Session
UNHDR	United Nations Human Development Report
UNIFEM	United Nations Fund for Women
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
VASS	Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences
VDR	Vietnam Development Report
VBARD	Vietnam Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
VCCI	Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Investment
VGA	Vietnam Country Gender Assessment
VHLSS	Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey
VND	Vietnamese Dong
VNHS	Vietnam National Health Survey
VWU	Vietnam Women's Union
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization
WVS	World Value Survey

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Foreword

With one of the highest rates of economic participation of women in the world, and the highest participation of women in parliament in the Asia Pacific Region, Vietnam is one of the more advanced countries with respect to gender equality. The country has appropriate policies to ensure equal rights of men and women and very significant progress has been made in reducing the gender gaps in health and education, and improving the situation of women more generally.

However, the progress is not entirely uniform and while progress was made, almost half of the targets in the second Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women (2001-2005) were not met. Moreover, with the transition to a more open market economy, the challenges to achieving gender equality are changing as the structure of the labor market responds to the rapid economic growth. While growth is bringing with it new opportunities, gender inequality in access to productive resources and training opportunities, limit the capacity of women to compete. The government and other stakeholders will now need to look forward with improved analysis to predict the trends and put the policies, institutions, and programs in place that will ensure women can benefit equally from the rapid development taking place.

The donor community in Vietnam will continue to fully support the government in these endeavors. This Country Gender Assessment, prepared by the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, UK Department for International Development and Canadian International Development Agency, provides the analytical background and a common framework for the donors and the Government in tackling gender inequality in the future and to contribute to implementation of the Government 10-year Strategy for the Advancement of Women in Vietnam.



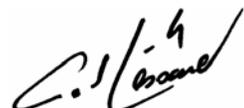
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The Vietnam Gender Assessment (VGA) is the final product in a series of activities funded by several donors to provide an analysis of priority gender issues, forming the basis of policy dialogue with the government. The report identifies priorities that can be included in Poverty Reduction Support Credits (PRSC) and sector programs, as well as further analytical work, advisory services, partnerships, and project activities. Preparation of the report and background papers took place simultaneously with preparation of the Socioeconomic Development Plan and Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women 2006–10, and provided input into these documents.

Special thanks are due to the representatives from the National Committee for the Advancement of Women in Vietnam, Ministry of Planning and Investment, Women's Union, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, Asian Development Bank, UK Department for International Development, Canadian International Development Agency, Mekong Private Sector Development Facility and Oxfam UK who formed the advisory committee and provided valuable advice throughout, and to other Vietnamese government officials and stakeholders who provided advice, comments, and information, especially during the national workshop in April 2006.

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Executive Summary

Over the last few decades, Vietnam has made striking progress in improving people's well-being and reducing gender disparities. Vietnam now ranks 109th out of 177 countries in UNDP's human development index (UNDP, 2006), placing it in the group of countries with medium human development. 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 (GDI). These 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 (27 percent since 2002). Vietnam also has one of the highest economic participation rates in the world: 85 percent of men and 83 percent of women between the ages of 15 and 60 participated in the labor force in 2002 (VDR 2004).

The Vietnam Gender Assessment was a participatory process that sought to build greater consensus between the government and donors on gender priorities in existing programs and projects, as well as areas for future research and dialogue. Criteria to identify priorities included issues (a) that were aligned with the government poverty reduction strategy; (b) that were associated with human rights; (c) that impacted a high number of people; (d) that had multiplier or secondary effects; and (e) that addressed underlying causes of gender inequalities. To develop recommendations, we analyzed the enabling environment using a framework with five components: (a) data and research, (b) policy and legal issues; (c) institutions; (d) resources and programs, and (e) attitudes, norms, and behaviors.

The Path to Gender Equality

Vietnam has made good progress in improving gender equality. Given the attention gender has received in national planning, further improvements seem assured. We highlighted four issues that require additional attention to keep on track. First, ethnic minority women and girls lag behind ethnic minority men and Kinh and Chinese women in accessing health and education services and economic opportunities. Second, there is persistent gender stereotyping in textbooks, which perpetuates gender inequalities. Third, greater recognition is needed regarding the increasingly important role played by women in the agriculture sector, recognizing the sheer numbers of women involved. Fourth, progress in increasing the number of women in decision making has been slow and inconsistent. To ensure continued progress, we recommend:

- Developing innovative solutions to increase access to health, education, and agricultural services in ethnic minority areas
- Preparing gender-sensitive modules and materials for use in schools
- Developing creative solutions to support women farmers more proactively
- Preparing a roadmap—including policy changes, training, instruments, and resources—to increase the number of women in decision making

Leveling the Playing Field for Sustained Growth

Economic growth has improved economic opportunities for men and women. However, the playing field is not level, and women are not yet able to compete on equal terms with men. Women are over-represented in some sectors and occupations and men in others. Men benefit more from jobs with decision-making power and status. With a projected shift of the workforce from agriculture to wage labor and from the public to the private sector, some issues, such as the relatively lower wages and higher wage gaps in the private sector, will impact more and more women in the future and take on greater importance.

Women's ability to compete equally with men in the private sector is constrained by open discrimination practices in recruitment, women's lower education and skills, and lesser ability to capitalize assets when their names are not on the already-issued land certificates. In the public sector, which will continue to be a major employer for some time, the different retirement ages for men and women, while representing a transfer of public resources to women in the form of additional pensions, also works through the system to be a factor in reducing the career and promotion prospects for younger women. Meanwhile, Vietnamese women, while contributing equal time to income-generating activities, bear the burden of the work in the home. With a projected increase in the number of dependents, this burden may be increased. The government is addressing these issues through the preparation and approval of the Gender Equality Law. But turning the Law into practice presents considerable challenges. Leveling the playing field will involve:

- Support for policy dialogue on retirement and pensions
- Implementation of the Gender Equality Law and Labor laws to reduce discrimination
- Support for the provision of skills training
- Increasing the value of household work to encourage shared responsibility between men and women, as well as providing incentives for regulated private sector provision
- Re-issuing land use right certificates (LUCs) with the names of both the husband and wife

The Fallout of Social and Economic Change

Economic change brings social but the current approaches, policies, and institutions do not adequately address emerging social impacts linked to increased migration and risk-taking behaviors. In addition, current social support services do not adequately address issues such as the high rate of abortions or persistent domestic violence. All of these issues affect men and women differently and are founded on gender roles and relations which are changing. Addressing the issues would require:

- Increased research and monitoring, for example on trends in migration or risk-taking behaviors

- Passing and or implementation of laws on domestic violence, labor exports, and trafficking
- Changing policies and procedures for registering domestic migrants
- Considering future policy and institutional requirements that provide increased range and coverage of support services to address the emerging issues of the modern-day population
- Building short-term capacity to address issues such as sexual health in young people, risk behaviors, victims of domestic violence, and support to migrant workers before and after they migrate

Specific Recommendations

The recommendations arrived at in each section of the report were consolidated and made more specific under the different components of the enabling environment framework (Annex 2).

Research and information. In general, statistics are relatively good in Vietnam. Further improvements could be made through the following:

- Institute a comprehensive and gender-sensitive periodic labor force survey to analyze trends in relation to the labor force.
- Include in the Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey (VHLSS) questions relating to migration or intra-household power relationship. Other monitoring systems, such as crime reporting systems, or hospital admission records could be used for regular tracking of trends in domestic violence, or risk-taking behaviors.
- Undertake special surveys or qualitative research on the impacts of migration, changing gender roles, or issues relating to unprotected sex, abortions, or trafficking. Conduct impact evaluations to assess the effectiveness of interventions designed to reach ethnic minority women, to increase the number of women in decision making, or to reduce women's burden in the home. The effectiveness of current vocational training strategies, as well as the impact of having the names of both men and women on land titling certificates, also need to be researched.
- Conduct economic and trend analysis in three specific areas: (1) to assess the economic impacts of different options for policies on the age of retirement; (2) to quantify the amount of care work being undertaken in the home; and (3) to analyze future trends in the labor force so that more effective strategies for vocational training could be identified.

Policies and legal frameworks. Significant progress has also been made in putting conducive policy and legal frameworks in place. Priorities that have been highlighted in this document include the following:

- Concerted efforts and support will be needed to put the Gender Equality Law into practice and ensure its implementation. The same will apply to the Law on Vietnamese contracted laborers working abroad (labor export law in short) and also to domestic violence law once it has been passed.

- Policies to target services to ethnic minority women, including recruitment and training of more ethnic minority women to become service providers, and to improve the access that women farmers have to markets and technology would build on the Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP) commitments and provide a basis for targeting of resources in these areas.
- Reproductive health, sexual health, and HIV/AIDS policies and programs that focus on adolescents and unmarried men and women would help to mitigate the impacts of risk behaviors in these areas. In the long term, however, comprehensive policies need to be considered for institutionalizing the provision of skilled, professional help to address social problems and issues, and help those who are struggling to cope with the rapid social changes taking place.
- In the area of care work within the home, there is the potential for policies that would help relieve the burden of household work on women. Policy options could include policies to encourage and regulate private sector providers to develop and provide care services (e.g. for young children, old people, or the sick), policies to train and certify individuals to provide care services, or else for the services to be provided through specific government programs, possibly working with communities. Paternity leave may help to remove gender bias and encourage men to share the burden.
- A comprehensive roadmap is needed to increase women's participation in decision making by identifying policies that need to be changed and setting targets and action plans.

Institutions and Organizations. Well-developed institutions, organizations, and procedures exist for the traditional sectors such as health, education, and agriculture. In addition, mass-based organizations play a significant role in reaching out to members. Further institutional development or change is needed in the following areas:

- Build capacity of staff in sectoral institutions such as health, education, and agriculture, and who work in rural areas, to improve capacity to provide culturally sensitive services to ethnic minority women.
- Develop programs in relevant organizations to support the achievement of the targets set out in the Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women (POA-3) and SEDP.
- Develop the institutions that, according to the law, have the responsibility to implement the Gender Equality Law, or to monitor its implementation.
- In the longer term, and after policies have been developed, institutional structures, either within existing departments, or indeed new departments, may be developed firstly to provide care services to help ease the burden of care work in the home (care of young children, sick, or old people), and secondly, to provide professional help and support to help address social issues, including risk behaviors, sexual health, and domestic violence. In the short term, staff in existing institutions such

as police or health workers could be provided with additional training and incentives to help improve the support provided to those in need.

- Simplifying the registration procedures for migrants could improve the status of migrants in urban areas.

Resources and programs. With policies and institutions in place, programs and projects can be implemented by mainstreaming the responses into programs or developing pilots. These include:

- Implementing innovative projects to increase the access to health, education, and agricultural services for ethnic minorities, especially women.
- Developing projects and pilots to link women farmers more effectively to markets and resources, which they can use to increase productivity.
- Addressing gender stereotyping in textbooks and school curricula by developing and printing new materials.
- Scaling up a pilot to amend old land certificates to add women's names.

Other programs may need more discussion and effort to develop, but as pilots, could have an impact on future development of more institutionalized approaches. The following fall in this category:

- Specific projects and activities designed to prepare women for leadership positions and to participate in decision making.
- Pilots to test different models of care provision, including community-based provision of services such as day care or care of the sick and old.
- Pilot activities to provide support to migrants both before they leave their villages and when they arrive at their destinations. This support could be in the form of information, training, and the provision of a helpline and other support. This could go beyond working with domestic migrants, and include working with Vietnamese embassies overseas to support migrants in other countries.

Implications for Government Institutions

Institutionally, there are implications in these recommendations for the organizations concerned specifically with women's issues such as the National Committee for the Advancement of Women (NCFAW) and the Vietnam Women's Union (VWU), as well as for the line agencies and for donors.

NCFAW has done a good job at ensuring attention to gender in the SEDP and in preparing the POA, but it is important to stress the limits of their role with respect to implementation, which will mainly be carried out by others. However, a large share of the responsibility for implementing the Gender Equality Law will lie with NCFAW and the VWU. There is also a role for them to play in moving the agenda forward into new areas such as the recommendations made in this report relating to care work. In its coordinating and monitoring role, NCFAW will need to work with other agencies to prepare plans for implementing the POA-3 and developing a roadmap for increasing women's participation in leadership and decision making.

Throughout this report, there are significant implications for the role of the Ministry of Labor Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA). Not only are they central to the discussions about labor force, retirement age, and migrant workers, but also potentially for the improved and expanded provision of social services, including care services. If MOLISA is prepared to take up the challenge, they will need to prepare a strategic approach and prioritize their responses. They would also need to be well supported by donors.

Ministries of Health, Education, and Agriculture are the agencies that would need to take the responsibility for ensuring that services reach ethnic minority women and girls. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), together with the VWU and banks, would be the primary agencies for developing services for women farmers. The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) would be responsible for revising the textbooks to remove gender stereotyping. Recommendations for improvements in sexual and reproductive health are especially relevant to the Ministry of Health (MOH).

The General Statistics Office can make a tremendous contribution by helping in the preparation and implementation of a labor force survey (with MOLISA) and amendments to the VHLSS. Vietnam has some excellent research institutions that could contribute to the areas identified for analysis such as the analysis of care work, approaches for reaching ethnic minorities, risk behaviours, or the situation of migrant workers and their families.

The Ministry of Finance (MOF) could assist with economic analysis of the costs of care work in the home and its inclusion in the national accounts. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) would need to take the lead in the reissuance of old LUCs so they include women's names as well as men's. Also there are implications for the police force and MOH who need to improve the way they respond to and treat the victims of domestic violence.

Implications for Donors

Donors have the means to help government agencies act upon these recommendations. Some donors are well-placed to fund discrete research studies. Others with a comparative advantage in economic analysis could provide technical support for analysis on future trends in labor force issues regarding pensions, or help to establish the economic justifications for further investment in care work. The international finance institutions are well-positioned to help mainstream operational responses into sectoral programs, for example on land management, agriculture, health, HIV/AIDS, or education.

A few of the issues identified call for developing well-planned and coordinated support to the government, for example to help with the implementation of the Gender Equality Law, develop and implement a strategy for provision of care services, or address risk behaviors.

Introduction

Background

Over the past decade, Vietnam has made impressive progress in economic and social development. Between 1993 and 2002, Vietnam doubled its economy, and almost halved the number of people living in poverty.¹ Today, the literacy rate is almost 95 percent and average life expectancy is 71 years (UNFPA and PRB, 2005). The country's key planning document, the Socio-Economic Development Plan 2006–10 (SEDP), affirms the inextricable link between economic growth and social development. In this respect, the greatest challenge for the government is to successfully manage the transition to a socialist-oriented market economy in a manner that is inclusive, pro-poor, and gender-responsive.

Vietnam holds a reputation throughout the region for relative gender equality and has been able to close gender gaps in areas such as education, access to health care, and some aspects of employment.² Where the benefits are not reaching all, gender equality issues are often amplified by factors such as age, ethnicity, and regional differences, especially between rural and urban areas. Focused initiatives may be needed to target specific groups and geographic areas that are lagging behind.

As Vietnam's spectacular growth continues, dramatic changes are taking place in the lives of both men and women, especially in the workforce. Labor force participation rates for women in Vietnam are among the highest in the world at 83 percent (compared to 85 percent for men) for the 15 to 60 age group (VDR 2004). However, women are not always competing on a level playing field. Among other things, they lack access to the same opportunities for skills training, and face discrimination in recruitment. Within the context of the changing economy, continuous analysis and policy change will be needed to ensure that women and men are able to avail themselves fully of the same opportunities to contribute to, and share in the benefits of, economic growth. With economic change comes social change in both the community and the family, especially in the context of trends in domestic migration. New risks and emerging issues, such as changing paths of HIV/AIDS transmission and substance abuse, have a gender face and impact men and women differently. They need to be addressed with appropriate services and skills.

Tracking and responding to the changing dynamics of gender gaps and relationships presents a considerable challenge. Donors and the government have a history of cooperation on these issues, which reached a high point during the preparation of Ten-Year Strategy (2001–10) and Five-Year Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women

¹ In 1993, 58 percent of the population lived in poverty, compared to 29 percent in 2002 (World Bank Vietnam Development Report 2004). According to Vietnam poverty line standards, the number of poor people also decreased by more than half, from 17.5 percent in 2001 to 7 percent in 2005 (SEDP, 2006).

² A summary of Vietnam's progress can be found in the ADB's Vietnam Gender Situation Analysis (2005).

(POA-2, 2001–05) in 2000. These plans were followed in 2001 by Vietnam's poverty reduction strategy, known officially as the Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS). At that time, the donors came together and supported the National Committee for the Advancement of Women (NCFAW) in the preparation of a gender situation analysis and the second Plan of Action (POA-2), and helped to ensure its integration into the CPRGS. There was a strong sense that donors and the government were all working from the same framework and with the same set of agreed priorities, goals, and targets for achieving gender equality in Vietnam.

By 2005, efforts to maintain this cohesion did not keep up with Vietnam's rapid development. While there was consensus that progress had indeed been made, there were differing views on the priorities for future directions and action. Donors were moving to new types of support that included policy-based lending, and there was concern that the dialogue on gender equality was not keeping pace. These discussions took place at a time when the government was preparing the new national development plan, the Socio-Economic Development Plan 2006–10 (SEDP) and the third Plan of Action for 2006–10 (POA-3). The timing was conducive for a new coordinated effort to refocus the gender agenda and prepare a common framework of priorities and actions from which the different stakeholders could move forward.

To this end, this report attempts to distill the information and findings presented in the recent literature and research on gender issues in Vietnam (Box 1). The report selects the key issues for inclusion in the policy dialogue, much of which has been used to develop the priorities in the SEDP and POA-3. This initiative is intended to provide a basis for (a) integrating gender issues into policy dialogue between donors and the government; (b) identifying priority gender-responsive interventions for donors to support; and (c) assisting the government in developing a gender-sensitive SEDP and POA-3.

Objectives and Methodology

The Vietnam Gender Assessment was initiated as a participatory process by which analysis and dialogue on gender issues would result in a shared understanding and greater consensus between government and donors on gender priorities goals and targets that could be taken up in their programs and projects, and to chart out areas for future research and dialogue.

This integrated process has produced three background reports in addition to the government household survey on men and women (Box 1). The gender assessment draws mainly on these documents and attempts to highlight the collective findings with the intention of mapping possible future areas of work and interventions.

Box I. Key reports contributing to the VGA

Vietnam Gender Situation Analysis (VGSA) (ADB 2005)

The VGSA provides a comprehensive literature review summarizing gender equality issues and indicators for women's socioeconomic development in Vietnam. Gender aspects are documented in the following areas: poverty; women's participation in the economy; access to capital; education; health; legal rights; violence; politics and decision making; government policies and institutions; and gender mainstreaming and strategic coordination. The report concludes that while progress has been made, culture is influencing gender relations, and persistent gender inequalities remain, including the vulnerability of certain female headed households to poverty, long hours worked by women, women's limited access to resources, poor representation in decision making (particularly at the local level), and persistence of domestic violence. Among the issues identified were the gap between ethnic minorities and Kinh and Chinese women, barriers to economic participation, social pressures caused by migration, and the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Preparing for the Future: Forward looking strategies to promote gender equity in Vietnam (Kabeer et al 2005) UNDP World Bank thematic discussion paper

Based on extensive consultation with government agencies, civil society, and donors, the paper uses a set of selection criteria to prioritize policy areas for future dialogue and research. The five priority areas identified for working toward gender equality in Vietnam include (1) closing the gender gap between men's and women's economic opportunities, especially in terms of returns to labor and the allocation of time and workloads; (2) improving access to quality social care services and the need to professionalize social care work; (3) addressing women's reproductive health problems, including high abortion rates, son-preference, and risky sexual behaviors; (4) the impact of domestic violence on women; and (5) women's low participation in public decision making in terms of both numbers of women and their capacity to act as leaders. The paper also calls for more sex-disaggregated statistics and information and research on gender issues in Vietnam, initiatives that seek to close the gap between legislation and implementation, and increasing awareness of gender equality issues.

Household survey on men and women in Vietnam Vietnam Academy for Social Science (VASS 2006)

The VASS conducted a survey among 4,176 Vietnamese men and women in 2005 focusing on the current state of gender relations in the family. Significant findings of the study include new data on employment, including home-based work, differential access, and utilization of health-care services by men and women; participation rates of girls and boys in education, time use, and decision making within families; gendered perceptions and values; gender stereotypes in the mass media, as perceived by women and men; and the incidence of domestic violence in Vietnam. The analysis shows a gender gap in professional qualifications rooted in the lower return to girl's education and women's reproductive role. There are number of factors influencing gender relations, among which are social values and socialization. Large proportions of men and women shared perceptions of the man as a home pillar and the woman as a caretaker. Both women and men see women's images on television shown more in a traditional role and career, while men's images are in conventions and leadership. The analysis emphasizes that a comprehensive approach to tackle gender inequality should focus on changing gender stereotypes in norms, values, and practices of both men and women.

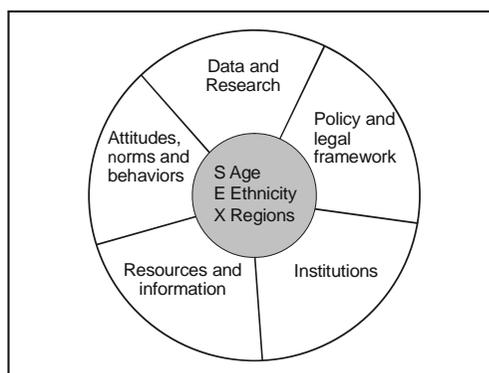
Gender analysis of the 2004 VHLSS (World Bank 2006)

The gender analysis of the VHLSS 2004 provides a demographic overview of the composition of households in Vietnam. It focuses on an analysis of four important areas: employment and earnings, education, land use rights, and access to credit. The analysis is particularly useful because it provides data on the situation facing particular groups of women, including women of different ages, ethnic women, and women in rural areas. Findings from the report point to (a) the number of women who are self-employed in agricultural production and non-agricultural work; (b) the lack of reliable data comparing men's and women's access to credit; (c) a continuing gender gap in the attainment of higher education qualifications, which impacts on economic and skill development opportunities for women; and (d) the need for further research and information on care services, especially child care. All of these reports are available on <http://www.worldbank.org/vn> in Publications and Reports.

The key findings of the reports have been analyzed using a framework that helps to ascertain the enabling environment for gender equality in Vietnam and takes into account the country's economic, social, political, and cultural environment. In this respect, the framework contains five components that are used in the analysis of each issue: (1) the available research and information on gender issues and the gaps, trends, and causalities; (2) the existing policy and legal framework to address each issue; (3) the relevant institutions that support gender equality; (4) the resources and operational programs available to respond to the issue; and (5) the prevailing attitudes, norms, and behaviors that facilitate or inhibit the achievement of gender equality (Figure 1).

Each of these five components can be seen as determinants that enable or constrain progress with respect to a specific issue. In this context, research and information are data and evidence that form the knowledge bank to assess gaps, issues, and track changes. The policy and legal framework includes the policy proclamations and laws made by government, as well as practices outlined in policies at an organizational level. The institutions component encompasses government, public administration, the workplace, and civil society. The component identified as resources includes the allocation of financial, human, and information resources that enable institutions and people to put policy into action and produce outcomes. Finally, attitudes, norms, and behaviors comprise popular perceptions, culture, and traditions that underlie people's acceptance of changes in gender roles and relationships.

Figure 1. Components of gender issues within the economic, social and culture environment



The VGA also borrows from the criteria for selecting the priority recommendations developed by Kabeer et al. (2005). The highest priority is placed on recommendations that (1) are closely aligned with the government's pro-poor growth policy; (2) address gender equality issues that demand attention on human rights grounds; (3) impact the highest number of people who will benefit from improvement; (4) have a multiplier or secondary affect for solving other gender issues; and/or (5) address the underlying causes of gender inequality rather than just the outward manifestations of the gender issue.

Organization of the Report

The report is organized into three main sections:

The first section reviews some of the trends over time in closing gender gaps, focusing on key indicators such as access to health care and education and participation. Thanks to an appropriate policy and institutional framework, the trends are mostly good and are expected to continue, albeit at a slower pace. The section's main message is that the GOV has achieved a great deal, but some groups have been left behind and there are a few indicators that are lagging behind the others. The section ends by calling for more

resources and specific targeted interventions in a few key areas to keep the progress on track.

The second section looks at the context of development and change in Vietnam. This section identifies some areas in which the playing field is not level, causing women's opportunities to be more limited, and focuses on the changing economy and how women and men avail themselves of new opportunities. While appropriate policies are in place, improvements can be made in their implementation and there needs to be an ongoing dialogue to overcome some of these issues. Improved monitoring of the situation and specific research can help provide the basis for this dialogue and lead to changes and improvements.

The third and final section is concerned with the social change that accompanies economic development. The report describes the gender aspects of some of the new and emerging issues resulting from rapid economic and social change, and suggests new ways to approach these issues.

Section I. On the Path to Gender Equality

I.1 Regionally, Vietnam compares favorably on most indicators of gender equality

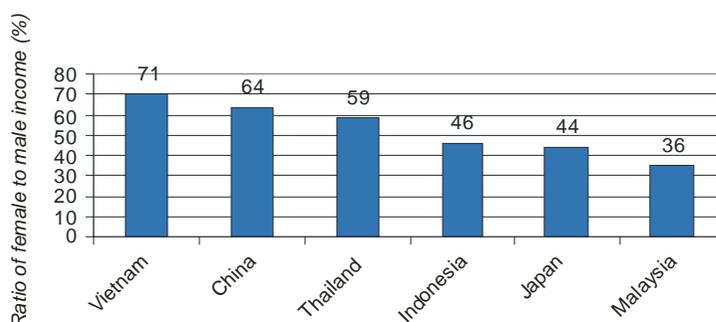
Over the last few decades, Vietnam has made striking progress in improving people's well-being and reducing gender disparities, reflecting the country's remarkable efforts at reducing poverty and the government's commitment to achieving gender equality. Vietnam ranks 109th out of 177 countries in UNDP's human development index (UNDP, 2006), placing it in the group of countries with medium human development. As Table 1 shows, Vietnam's indicators for life expectancy, adult literacy, and education enrollment are on a par with the average for the East Asia and Pacific countries, most of which have much higher per capita GDP.

Table 1. Comparative Human Development Indicators, East Asia

	Vietnam	East Asia and Pacific
Human Development Index 2004	0.709	0.760
Life expectancy at birth (years)	70.8	70.8
Adult literacy rate (% population aged 15 and above)	90.3	90.7
Combined gross enrollment ratio: primary, secondary, tertiary (%)	63	69
GDP per capita (PPP adjusted)	\$2,745	\$5,872

Source: UNDP, *Human Development Report 2006*

Figure 2. The gender gap in earned income is greater in many other East Asian countries



Source: UNDP *Human Development Report 2006*

Efforts to narrow gender gaps and invest in human capital have made Vietnam the 80th ranking country worldwide (out of 136 countries) on the Gender Development Index (GDI), and one of the countries in East Asia that has seen the most rapid change in closing gender gaps in the last 20 years. These efforts range from the successful delivery of educational and health services for both females and males to improvements in accessing opportunities to work and participate in decision making. These measures contributed to high adult literacy rates for men and women; school enrollment data that show little difference between boys and girls; and currently the highest percentage of women in national parliament in the Asia-Pacific region (27 percent since 2002) (GSO-NCFAW, 2005). Vietnam also boasts one of the highest economic participation rates in the world: 85 percent of men and 83 percent of women between the ages of 15 and 60 participated in the labor force in 2002 (VDR 2004). Although female earned income is on average only 71 percent³ of men's—an obviously large gap—Vietnam is well ahead of countries such as Malaysia (36 percent) and Japan (44 percent), as shown in Figure 2. (UNDP, 2006).

A strong policy and institutional environment supporting gender equality has resulted in continuing improvements for the majority of the population (Box 2). The National Committee for the Advancement of Women (NCFAW) is the formal state machinery responsible for promoting gender equality. It is a high-level multisectoral committee that reports directly to the prime minister. The Vietnam Women's Union is a mass-based organization for women. It reaches to the grass roots level and facilitates implementation of projects and programs at the local level, in addition to representing their members in national-level policy dialogue.

³ For comparability with other countries, this figure is estimated earned income used by UNDP in the *Human Development Report 2006*. The figures from the VHLSS 1998 and 2004 used later in the report refer to gaps in wages and show a much smaller gap for Vietnam.

Box 2. Vietnam's achievements are in great part due to a good policy and institutional environment

The strong legal and policy framework developed by Vietnam has been instrumental in empowering Vietnamese women and reducing gender gaps. This environment provides Vietnamese women with a system of rights, including affirmative policies for political participation, property rights, generous maternity benefits, and the right to make reproductive decisions. (ADB, 2005). The GOV was one of the first countries to sign and ratify the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1980 and 1982. Prior to CEDAW, Vietnam embodied the principle of equality of men and women in the Constitution of Vietnam. The 1992 amendments to the constitution paid close attention to gender equality considerations.

The newly issued Gender Equality Law provides leverage for addressing priority gender issues. The Law redresses gender disparities in existing laws, calls for gender mainstreaming in public administration, and legislates for the inclusion of temporary measures, such as targets and quotas for women's participation in decision making. The legislation also suggests mechanisms to facilitate the implementation of the Law. The SEDP 2006–10 has adopted an approach to planning that integrates gender equality considerations and indicators into the plan in areas such as agriculture, employment, environmental management, health, and education. The National Strategy for the Advancement of Women to 2010, developed by NCFAW and approved by the prime minister, is supported by a five-year plan of action, which identifies priorities related to gender equality in Vietnam. Finally, small steps are also being taken in the area of gender-responsive budgeting and planning (ADB 2005).

1.2 Continuing progress is being made to close gaps in education

Education has always been a core value in Vietnamese society and this outlook is reflected in the government's prioritization and investments in this area. Educational spending in Vietnam is rather high relative to the country's income, with 16.7 percent spent in 2002⁴ and 18 percent in 2005, which is on a par with the amount spent in more developed countries (ADB, 2005). The country has virtually achieved universal primary education and is on track to achieving universal lower secondary education (ADB 2005). Vietnam has achieved exceptionally high levels of primary school enrollment for both boys and girls. Adult literacy rates for men and women are 96 and 91 percent, respectively (GSO, VHLSS 2004). Upper secondary school enrollment for girls is almost the same as for boys in 2003–04 (45 and 46 respectively, Table 2). Vietnam has also exceeded the target of 30 percent of postgraduate qualifications going to women (MPI NCFAW, 2006). Signs that this investment is paying off are reflected in data showing the labor market premium for education. According to the latest *Vietnam Development Report*, in 1993 one additional year of schooling was associated with a 1 percent increase in wages; by 2002, the figure had risen to 6 percent. Similarly, the returns to tertiary education are also evident. Over the same period, this study also shows an increase of 70 percent in the gap between an employed person with a university degree compared to someone with only primary education (VDR 2006).

⁴ This indicator for Vietnam is in the middle among East Asia countries. It is higher than that of Indonesia (9 percent), Laos (11 percent), and Cambodia (15.3 percent), but lower than the Philippines (17.8 percent) and Thailand (28.3 percent) in 2002 (UNDP, 2005)

Table 2. Changes in gross enrollment rates (GER)* 2000–04

Educational level	2000–01		2001–02		2002–03		2003–04	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Primary school	110	105	109	103	107	103	107	103
Lower secondary school	83	80	87	84	88	84	90	86
Upper secondary school	44	37	45	38	44	43	46	45

Source: GSO-NCFAW, 2005

*GER is percentage of pupils attending school to the total population in the appropriate school age group.

Using the enabling environment framework, we can see that the policies, legal frameworks, and institutions to deliver education to boys and girls are clearly in place. There is good information and data that are sex disaggregated and allow frequent and detailed analysis of trends, and adequate resources are being allocated to the education sector. In short, the current trends in access to education appear likely to continue to improve. For this report, there are therefore just two issues that are highlighted for special attention.

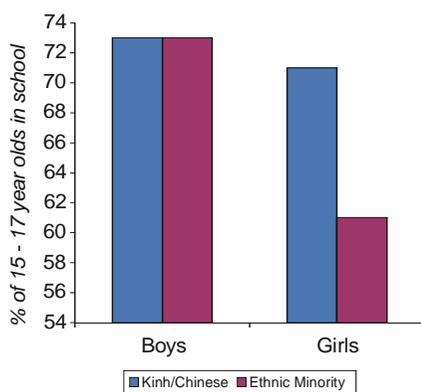
The first is the persistent challenge in providing educational opportunities to ethnic minority girls and women. According to one survey, around one-fifth of ethnic minority young women reported never having attended school (SAVY, 2003).⁵ Among 15-to-17 year olds, ethnic minority girls lag behind Kinh and Chinese girls by 10 percentage points, and behind Kinh and Chinese, or ethnic minority boys, by 13 percentage points. Enrollment rates for boys are equal for both Kinh/Chinese and ethnic minorities (Figure 3) (World Bank, 2006). The literacy rate in 2002 for Kinh women is 92 percent, while the rate is 70 and 22 percent for Thai and Hmong women, respectively (GSO-NCFAW, 2005). For an overview of some of the key facts relating to ethnic minorities in Vietnam, see Box 3.

⁵ On the whole, ethnic minorities have greater gender disparities in school enrolments than the Kinh majority. However, these gender disparities appear limited to certain ethnic groups. For example, in lower secondary school there appear to be more Nung, Chinese, Muong, and Tay girls enrolled than boys, while the opposite is true for Khmer, Xo-dang, and H.mong.

Box 3. At a glance: Ethnic groups in Vietnam

- ❖ Vietnam has 54 ethnic groups. In the last Population and Housing Census in 1999, the Kinh majority accounted for 86 percent of the total population (GSO, 2001). Regions with a high proportion of ethnic minorities were the Northwest (79 percent), Northeast (41 percent), and Central Highlands (33 percent) (ADB 2005).
- ❖ Fifty-five percent of ethnic minority households are in the poorest quintile, compared to 12 percent of Kinh Chinese. Ninety-three percent of the ethnic minority households—compared to 71 percent of the Kinh/Chinese households—live in rural areas. (World Bank 2006).
- ❖ Ethnic minority household heads tend to be younger by an average of five years and less educated (19 percent compared to 5 percent have no schooling). Nearly twice as many work in agriculture self-employment (79 percent compared to 43 percent Kinh/Chinese). They are half as likely to be in wage employment (15 percent compared to 31 percent Kinh/Chinese). Fewer household heads are female (12 percent compared to 27 percent for Kinh/ Chinese) and more families have children, especially young children. (World Bank, 2006).

Figure 3. Ethnic Minority Girls (age 15-17) lag behind in enrolments



Source: VHLSS 2004 in World Bank 2006

This issue is a high priority because it meets several of the selection criteria. Ethnic minorities are disproportionately represented among the poor, and this is therefore central to a pro-poor growth strategy. It is also a human rights issue when one group is persistently left behind others in accessing development opportunities. Finally, there is scope for a multiplier effect for solving other gender issues, since providing girls with education is known to be a good investment in terms of improving the welfare and opportunities of the next generation—especially for their female children.

The second issue is the continuing presentation of gender stereotypes in educational materials and text books. Attitudes and behaviors underlie so many of the existing or emerging gender issues in Vietnam, including the lack of sharing of work within the home, discrimination in the workforce, and risk behaviors of young men and women. While this continues to be perpetuated through schoolbooks, progress to change attitudes will be slow. Addressing the causes that underlie gender inequality has a potentially broad impact across society. A review of *Citizen Education Textbook of 9th grade*, carried out for this report, is summarized in Table 3 below. Female characters were found in 5 of the 20 case studies or stories reviewed; male characters in 11; and neutral terms in 4. The presentation of gender stereotypes shows little change since the review in 2000 included in the NCFW situation analysis.

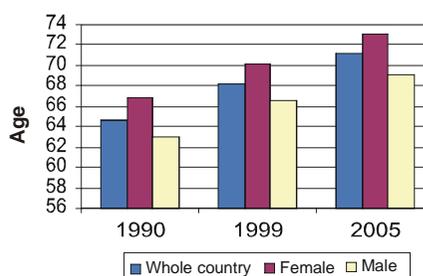
Table 3. Gender stereotypes in citizen education, Grade 9

Female characters	Male characters	Neutral characters
Mother with HIV-positive son	Director of an enterprise	Neutral names that do not shed light on the sex of the character
Unhappy girl who marries early	Head of the county ward	
A girl who has premarital sexual relations	Outstanding teacher	
A female worker who illegally leaves the job	Famous scientist	
A lady who does not repay her debts	Student recipient of national award	
	Professor medical doctor	
	Wood artist	
	Environmental protection worker	
	A man who builds his house	
	General director of a construction company	

1.3 Health outcomes have improved

Life expectancy (Figure 4) has increased by more than six years for both men and women since 1990 (UNFPA/PRB, 2006). The gap is within reasonable bounds considering that women tend to live longer than men. Maternal mortality rates, which had already decreased significantly in the 1980s, have declined further to 130 per 100,000 live births, albeit at a slower pace. Immunization rates have increased, and infant and child mortality has fallen. Selected indicators are presented in Table 4.

Figure 4. Life expectancy at birth



Source: GSO-NCEAW 2005, UNFPA and PRB 2006

In health, as in education, the legal, policy and institutional frameworks are in place. Vietnam has established a nationwide health care network. According to the GOV, all provinces and districts have health-care facilities, and nearly all communes/wards have health centers. However, in contrast to public spending on education, public spending on health is low by international standards. One-fourth of the budget for health-care funds for the poor is from aid money. Without donor support, investment in health equity would be heavily underfinanced (ADB, 2005).

Table 4. Changes in select health indicators, 1990–2005

	1990	Most recent*
Total fertility rate per woman 15-49	3.66	2.90*
Contraceptive prevalence rate for women 15-49, modern method, %	35	57
Contraceptive prevalence rate for women 15-49, any method, %	53	79
Maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births (MMR)	160	130
Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births	48.0	27.7**
Under age 5 mortality rate, total	60	35
Female	NA	37
Male	NA	52
Life expectancy at birth years, total	64.7	71.1
Female	66.8	73.1
Male	63.0	69.1

Source: UNFPA and PRB. 2006. *Country Profiles for Population and Reproductive Health: Policy Developments and Indicators 2005*.

*Actual year not specified in the 2005 source, but believed to be after 2000.

** According to *Population Dynamic Survey 2002*, TFR for Vietnam calculated on April 2002 was 2.28, and IMR was 26 (*Vietnam Socio-Economic Situation 2001-2003* available on GSO webpage <http://www.gso.gov.vn/default.aspx?tabid=418&ItemID=1470>)

Disparities in health outcomes are evident between the poor and the better-off. Knowledge of family planning in Vietnam is very high, but there is limited choice of modern contraceptive methods and the abortion rate is high. HIV/AIDS is increasingly spreading to the young population (age 18–25). Both young men and young women are participating in risky behavior, introducing new risks to their health. Some of these emerging health issues linked to social change are discussed in Section 3.

At this point, there is just one issue that is being highlighted as a priority, and that is ***the poor utilization of health services and disparities in outcomes between ethnic minority women and Kinh/Chinese women***. While recent statistics show that 98 percent of people in Vietnam live in communes that have access to a commune health center, only 59 percent of people live in communes where the commune health center has a medical doctor (MOH National Health Survey, 2001–02). The proportion of ethnic minority people (except Chinese people) living in communes where the commune health center has a medical doctor is only 30 percent, as compared to 63 percent for Kinh or Chinese people (MOH National Health Survey, 2001–02).

The infant and child mortality rates in the mainly ethnic minority Northern Mountains region are twice the rates of the majority Kinh in the Red River Delta region (MOH National Health Survey, 2001–02), while the maternal mortality rate was nine times

higher (MOH, 2003). There is also a shortage of qualified ethnic health care professionals who can bridge the language and culture gap in the provision of health services in certain geographic areas. Despite the availability of health care, 63 percent of Northern Mountain ethnic minority groups and 75 percent of central region ethnic groups give birth alone without trained health assistants (MOH National Health Survey, 2001–02).

1.4 Economic opportunities have increased for both women and men

Changes in the labor market are reflected in the shift from agriculture to wage labor for women and men and increasing incomes for both. As Vietnam embarks on new avenues of economic growth, the dominance of farming is waning, with an increasingly large share of the population working outside of agriculture. The percentage of the labor force involved in agriculture fell from 71 percent in 1995 to 57 percent in 2005. However, one-half of men and two-thirds of women in rural areas still have their main job in agriculture (World Bank, 2006).

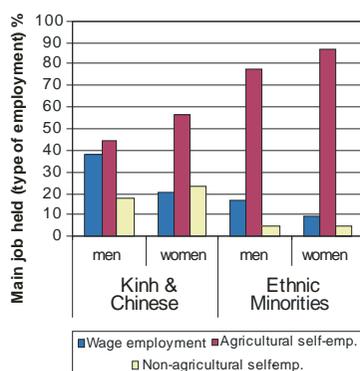
Labor force participation is high for both men and women. The number of those who are now engaged in wage employment, predominantly in the private sector, has increased. One-quarter of the female labor force (26 percent) and 41 percent of the male labor force earn their main income from wage labor (World Bank, 2006)). As educational opportunities have increased, the number of school-age children—both male and female—participating in the labor force has decreased by more than half for males and females in the 11-to-14 age group, and by one-third in the 15-to-17 age group. Labor force participation rates have also declined for both males and females in the 18-to-24 year age group, as more higher education opportunities have opened up. (World Bank, 2006). At the same time, the gender gap in wages has narrowed overall from 78 percent in 1998 to 83 percent in urban areas and 85 percent in rural areas in 2004, albeit with wide variations between sectors and types of employment (World Bank, 2006). Further discussion of the changing nature of the economic sector and gender issues and gaps is presented in Section 2.

There are two issues relating to economic participation that are highlighted in this section. The first relates to the *lack of economic opportunities for ethnic minorities, especially women*, and the second is a reminder of *the importance of women in the agriculture sector. Agricultural production is increasingly dependent on women's labor.*

Ethnic minorities, especially women, are lagging in their ability to take advantage of economic opportunities. Eighty-seven percent of ethnic minority women in rural areas are self-employed in agriculture (World Bank, 2006), and the same group is least likely to be in wage employment, as illustrated in Figure 5. While the percentage of school-age children engaged in income generating activities fell overall between 1997 and 2004 as more children stayed longer in school, ethnic minority girls in rural areas were more likely than other girls or their male counterparts to have worked. (Figure 6) (World Bank, 2006). The opportunity cost of sending children—especially girls from ethnic minority families—to school remains high. For these families, there is still a need to

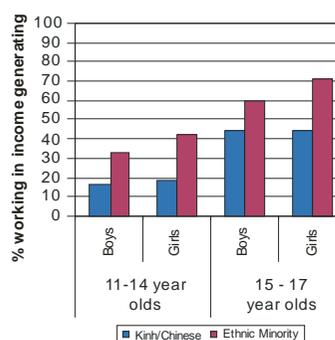
demonstrate that educating girls will yield greater economic opportunities in the long run.

Figure 5. Economic opportunities for rural ethnic minorities, especially women, are limited *



Source: World Bank, 2006
* Ages 18-64

Figure 6. Ethnic minority children, especially girls, are more likely to have worked



Source World Bank, 2006

Despite their heavy participation in agriculture, ethnic minority women are less likely to have any security of land tenure. Land titles issued to ethnic minority households are less likely to have a woman's name included than those issued to Kinh Chinese households. For annual agricultural land, 36 percent of titles held by Kinh/Chinese either were held in the name of women or jointly, while for those held by ethnic minorities the figure was 21 percent. The discrepancy was even greater for titles for residential land, whereby 42 percent of the titles held by Kinh Chinese were held by women or jointly, compared to only 23 percent of ethnic minority women. (World Bank, 2006). For many ethnic groups, inheritance customs passing land through the male lines, and women's lack of awareness of their legal rights, exacerbates the situation.⁶

The second issue highlighted here is the increasingly important role women appear to be playing in agriculture (Box 4). Vietnam now has more than 12 million women farmers (Center for Informatics, 2005). This huge number alone justifies including them as a priority. Almost all of the new participants in the agriculture sector are women (ADB, 2005), which may indicate that women will be taking a greater responsibility for agricultural production in the future. Progress is being made to provide services to women farmers; 30 percent of extension workers are now women. However, continued attention is needed to ensure they are proportionately represented as beneficiaries of services, and that specific services for women are provided to ensure they can equally access opportunities, such as training in literacy and numeracy, and market information strategies targeted at women.

⁶ Ethnic groups in Vietnam are diverse and cultures and traditions vary between groups. Some groups in the Central Highlands have matrilineal inheritance systems whereby land is passed down through to women and not men.

Box 4. At a Glance: Women in Agriculture

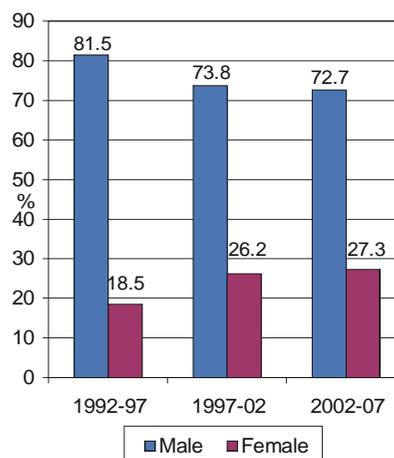
- ❖ Farmers make up 40 percent of the overall male labor force (18-64 years), while they account for 49 percent of the female labor force. In rural areas, 62 percent of women work in agriculture and 87 percent of ethnic women work in agriculture (World Bank 2006).
- ❖ From 1993 to 1998, 92 percent of new entrants to the agriculture sector were women, while the number of male farmers is slowly decreasing (0.3 percent annually) (ADB 2005).
- ❖ According to the Ministry for Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), in 2005 30 percent of extension workers were women. The VASS survey also found that less than half of female farmers had attended extension training (VASS 2006).

1.5 Women's participation in decision making and politics has not made the same progress as other areas

Among East Asia and Pacific countries, Vietnam has the highest proportion of women in Parliament. Worldwide, Vietnam also performs well, with the 18th highest proportion of women parliamentarians. National-level participation has also shown some improvement over successive sessions (Figure 7). However, in the leadership of the Communist Party for 2005–10, women's participation reached only 13.5 percent, below the target of 15 percent set out in the POA-2 (MPI/NCFAW 2006).

In the offices of the National Assembly, women are well-represented in committees that focus on “soft” political issues. For example, committees on social affairs, culture, education, and youth have 40-percent women. Similarly, the committee on ethnic minorities has 44 percent women's representation. Women are poorly represented in strategic committees such as the committee on budget and economics (13 percent) or defense and security (0 percent) (ADB 2005).

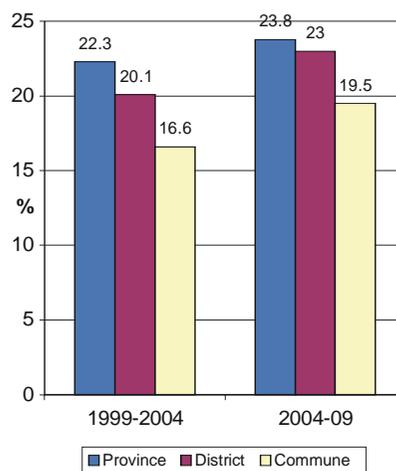
Figure 7. Participation of women in National Assembly is relatively high (%)



Local government is on three levels: province, district, and commune levels. At each level is a People’s Council, which is elected and plays a supervisory role, and a People’s Committee, which is appointed and has decision-making powers. Women’s participation increases at each level of People’s councils (Figure 8), up to the national level. (MPI/NCF AW 2006).

Within the public administration’s central executive level, very few women are represented in leadership positions (Table 5). At the central level in 2005, only 6 percent and 14 percent respectively of department directors or deputies were women (MPI-NCF AW, 2006). At local levels, women are almost invisible in leadership positions across most departments and all sectors.

Figure 8. Percentage of women in People’s councils is slowly increasing



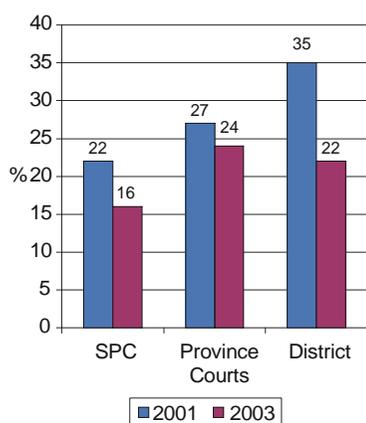
(Source: Administrative report of National Assembly Office)

Table 5. Percentage of female leaders at central level

Level	1987–91	1992–96	1997–2002	2005
Minister and equivalent level	10	12	13	12
Deputy minister and equivalent level	7	7	9	9
Department director and equivalent level	13	13	12	6
Deputy director of department and equivalent level	9	12	8	14
Director of division level				25
Deputy director of division level				33

Source: GSO-NCF AW 2005, MPI-NCF AW 2006, POA3, 2006

More worrisome are those areas where a decrease in representation has occurred over the last decade, such as in the judiciary, where the number of women at district level fell by 13 percent between 2001 and 2003 (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Percentage of women in the Judiciary has decreased

(Source: Administrative report of National Assembly Office)

low educational qualifications and skills—prevent women from participating in leadership roles (MPI NCFAW 2006). Addressing women's low participation in leadership and decision making is contingent on changing attitudes, norms, and behaviors, as well as institutional reform and political support. Efforts to increase women's participation in decision making and leadership have focused on numbers, rather than on building the capacity of women and men to enable women to thrive as leaders.

While government policies and laws in Vietnam encourage women's political participation, the reality is often different. For those women who manage to enter the political arena, their voices and presence remain marginal in a predominantly male political culture, with political power remaining in the hands of a select group of men (Kabeer et al., 2005).

Slowly changing cultural norms and a lack of open and transparent recruitment and promotion practices can be blamed for the low representation of women in leadership positions. At the provincial, district, and commune levels, these factors—coupled with

1.6 Priority issues and proposed responses

In summary, the path to gender equality that Vietnam laid out for itself led to significant improvements. At several points, the government and donors have assessed progress and finessed the strategy, using comprehensive targets and indicators to track it, with good results in most areas. The current SEDP and POA-3 continue to lay out the path ahead and the course for action in the future (see Annex 1). This section has highlighted a few specific issues. This is not to say that these issues are omitted from current plans, but rather to elevate their importance and the level of urgency with which resources are provided to address them. Four main issues have been raised in this section:

1. ***Ethnic minority women in particular are lagging behind ethnic minority men and Kinh/Chinese women in accessing education and health services and economic opportunities.*** This is a high priority because it is persistent, it is a rights issue, and it stands to have a significant incremental impact on future generations.
2. ***Gender stereotyping in school text books helps to perpetuate attitudes and behaviors that reinforce gender inequalities in the workforce, society, and in the home.*** This is a high priority issue because of the potential to address underlying causes rather than the manifestations of gender inequalities, and the potential to reach a significant share of the future generation.

3. ***Women are major contributors in the agriculture sector and appear to be taking an increasingly important role.*** This a priority because of the huge number of women involved in agriculture and their potential to improve production, reduce poverty and food insecurity, and improve the welfare of future generations.
4. ***Women's participation in decision making is not seeing significant increases and targets are not being met.*** The issue was prioritized primarily from a rights perspective.

These issues are recognized in the SEDP and addressed in the following policy objectives:

- Issue incentive policies to encourage girls and women from remote ethnic minority areas to enroll in schools and colleges; implement support policy to ensure gender equality among ethnic minority people.
- Improve quality of the textbooks; eliminate all misconceptions and gender stereotypes.
- Provide women with sufficient land for cultivation and fundamental resources.
- Intensify women's access to credit sources and funds from Hunger Elimination and Poverty Reduction (HEPR) programs.
- Highlight women's roles, positions in, and contributions to the decision-making process, leadership, and management at all levels and fields.
- Increase the figure of 65 percent of commune health centers served by doctors in 2005 to 80 percent by 2010, and that of mountainous communes from 50 percent to 60 percent.

With the legal and policy frameworks, and the institutions in place, what remains is to ensure that additional resources are made available for programs and quick impact initiatives to target efforts and boost the progress in the highlighted areas.⁷ We recommend the following interventions:

Develop innovative solutions to increase access to health, education, and agricultural services in ethnic minority areas. To increase enrollment, health care utilization, and agricultural services for ethnic minority women and girls, innovative ways of delivering services need to be tried and tested. Innovations may need to be more culturally appropriate and provide positive incentives, such as a higher representation of ethnic minorities among the services providers. Greater understanding of the cultural complexities and constraints may improve the willingness of women to use the services. Cash transfers may offer incentives for vaccinations or education where parents or husbands make decisions affecting their offspring or wives. Non-formal education and adult literacy programs may need to be emphasized to reach the older ethnic minority women beyond school age, who are illiterate. Targeted

⁷ The enabling environment matrices for these issues are presented in Annex 2.

projects could also include special measures to encourage ethnic minority girls to go to school, as well as training more teachers and health and agricultural extension workers from ethnic minorities

Prepare gender sensitive modules and materials for use in schools. Changing school curriculum or text books throughout the country is a major operation. However, although the issue has been raised previously, little has been done to bring about any change. Concerted efforts to make revisions before new books are printed, and to start introducing new books in some fields, would make a substantial difference.

Develop creative solutions to support women farmers more proactively. In general, agriculture extension services need to be improved and the scope broadened to be more responsive to the needs of farmers working in a wide range of farming systems. In particular, improvements are needed to respond more directly to the needs of women farmers, for example through radio programs targeted at female audiences, or by expanding networks of women farmers to reach those women who may not participate in gender-neutral activities. The latter may be done through mass-based organizations and combined with micro-credit programs. Successful examples are already evident in some places; resources would be targeted to expanding the coverage into new areas, and expanding the types of services provided through existing mechanisms.

Prepare a roadmap—including policy changes, training, instruments, and resources—to increase the number of women in decision making. In order to meet the new POA-3 targets, more affirmative action is needed. We recommend that a comprehensive roadmap be prepared identifying the policies that need to be changed and the targets and action plans in each line ministry. In addition, programs to increase women's political awareness could be initiated. It is most important to review disparities in retirement age, which has such a constraining effect on the opportunities offered to younger women. This issue is discussed in the next chapter.

Section 2. Leveling the Playing Field for Sustained Growth

2.1 Economic growth has, and will continue to, alter economic opportunities for men and women

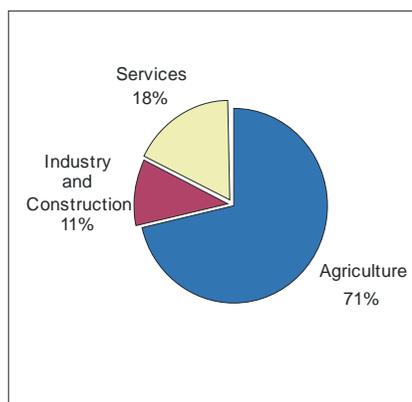
Vietnam's economic growth performance since the beginning of the *Doi Moi* (open door) reform process in 1986 has been dramatic. For more than a decade, GDP has increased by more than 7 percent per year on average, making it the world's fastest growing economy after China (World Bank, 2004). While agriculture continues to dominate the economy, there has been a shift toward manufacturing in recent years, creating a demand for labor in nonfarm employment and contributing to increased labor mobility from rural to urban areas (Kabeer et al., 2005). Today, household businesses, registered domestic private enterprises, and foreign-invested companies provide wage employment to more than 18 percent of the working age population (VDR 2006). Box 5 presents some key facts relating to women's participation in the labor force.

Box 5. At a glance: Women's participation in the labor force

- ❖ In 2005, men and women comprised 51 and 49 percent of the labor force, respectively. In numbers, this translates into 22.3 million men and 21.1 million women (MPI-NCF AW, 2006).
- ❖ Overall, 26 percent of working women have their main job in wage employment, compared to 41 percent of working men (WB, 2006).
- ❖ Women are over-represented in low-skilled employment with poor pay, particularly in the informal sector (Kabeer et al., 2005). Unskilled women employed in wage labor, typically on the production line, also receive few opportunities for skills development and remain "stuck" in poorly paid jobs on the factory floor (Mekong Economics, 2004b).
- ❖ During the 2001–05 period, the gender gap in the labor force increased in favor of men, from 0.6 in 2001 to 2.8 percent in 2005 (MPI-NCF AW, 2006).
- ❖ During the 2001–05 period, women occupied 46.5 percent of newly created jobs within the public sector and were 33 percent of participants in vocational training (MPI- NCF AW, 2006).

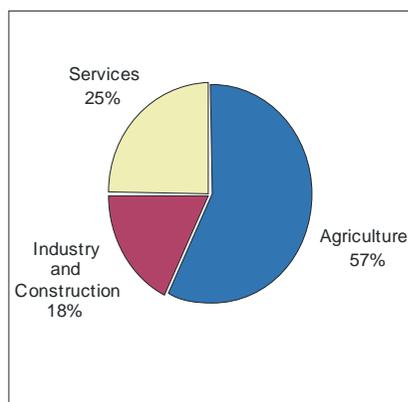
The structure of growth in Vietnam is changing. The increase in exports has coincided with a shift away from the agricultural, forestry, and fishery sectors toward manufacturing, handicrafts, and the production of light industrial goods. As a percentage of GDP, agriculture, forestry, and fisheries fell from 24.5 percent in 2000 to 20.5 percent in 2005, while there was a rise in industry and construction (from 36.8 percent in 2000 to 41 percent in 2005) and a stable share of services (around 39 percent) (ADB, 2005). Though still accounting for a large share of total employment, the dominance of agriculture declined from 71 percent in 1995 to 57 percent in 2005, while the corresponding figure for industry and construction rose from 11 to 18 percent over the same period. Jobs in services now make up 25 percent of the labor force (MPI SEDP, 2006), as shown in Figures 10 and 11 below. The resulting increases in men and women in wage employment is shown in Figure 12. The public sector also accounts for a falling share of total employment, down from 14.5 percent in 1989 to 9 percent in 2004, according to the General Statistics Office (GSO) (Kabeer et al., 2005).

Figure 10. Labor force share by sector in 1995



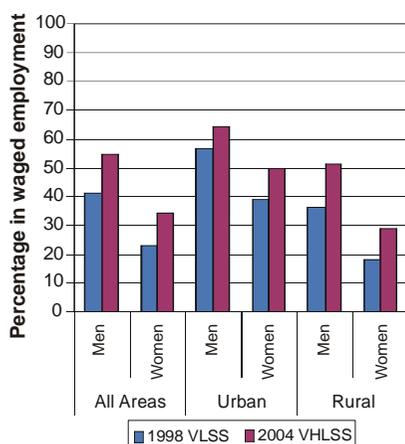
Source: MPI SEDP 2006

Figure 11. Labor force share by sector in 2005



Source: MPI SEDP 2006

Figure 12. Waged employment increased for men and women between 1998 and 2004



Source: World Bank 2006

While Vietnam has one of the world’s highest female labor participation rates, and women as well as men have both contributed to and benefited from economic growth, inequalities persist in the workforce and new inequalities are unfolding with the process of economic development. In a recent WB-UN paper, these inequalities are presented as “indicators of gender disadvantage” and can be broken down into three main categories: economic opportunities, returns to labor, and the allocation of time and workloads (Kabeer et al., 2005). These issues are discussed below.

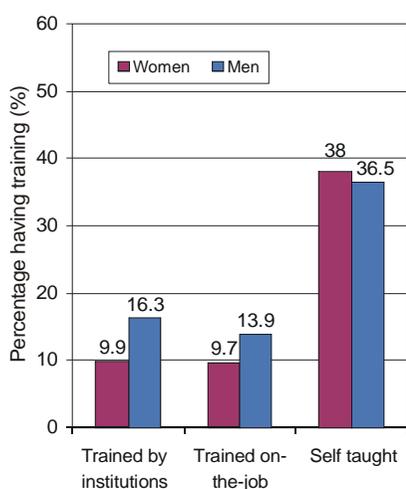
2.2 Women are over-represented in some sectors and occupations, men in others

The first indicator of gender disadvantage relates to the *gender distribution of employment by sector and occupation*. Almost half of working women are mainly employed in agriculture self-employment, compared to a third of working men. Outside of agriculture, 26 percent of working women are likely to be found in self-employment, compared to 19 percent of working men. Forty-one percent of working men—as opposed to 26 percent of working women—are engaged in salaried or wage work. Between the sectors, the percentage of working women employed in agriculture and trade is greater than the percentage of working men; the opposite is true for the secondary industry sector and services. Even within these categories there are gender differences; for example, within secondary industries men are the majority of the workforce in heavy industries such as construction and mining, while women are the majority in the light manufacturing industries such as textiles and garments. In the services sector, men are dominant in

transportation and business and financial services; women form the majority in education, health, and cultural services.

In both rural and urban areas, nearly twice as many men as women are categorized as skilled manual workers in both the wage and non-agricultural self-employment sectors (rural men 14 percent, rural women 7 percent; urban men 28 percent, urban women 14 percent). There are no significant differences between the percentages of men and women who are unskilled manual laborers in wage employment. However, the percentage of women who are unskilled and in the non-agricultural self-employment category is significantly higher than for men (70 and 53 percent respectively in urban areas; 67 and 49 percent in rural). These women are mostly in the informal sector (GSO, 2002; ADB, 2005; Kabeer et al., 2005; World Bank, 2006).

Figure 13. Men have more professional training opportunities



Source: VASS, 2006

SAVY data (2003) suggest that women's disadvantage in skill acquisition is being reproduced among the younger generation of workers. For instance, in the 22-to-25 age group, 51 percent of urban males had participated in vocational or job training compared to 38 percent of urban females. Within the rural cohort, 30 percent of males and 25 percent of females had received training (Kabeer et al., 2005).

A second reason is the widespread discrimination against women in recruitment, which persists in Vietnam. The Vietnamese newspapers regularly publish job advertisements that specify the sex of the candidates for positions, including different qualification requirements for male and female positions, or where, for the same positions, women are requested to have higher qualifications than men.

Gender distribution by sector and type of occupation manifests itself in pockets of "male" or "female" employment in which there are differences in pay and career opportunities. There are several reasons why such pockets develop. The first reason is in the difference in access to skills training, which limits women's ability to apply for some jobs. A 2005 survey (VASS, 2006) showed that in terms of "professional skill," 16 percent of men had acquired skills through school education, compared to 10 percent of women. Fourteen percent of men had on-the-job training, compared to 10 percent of women. (Figure 13). A slightly higher percentage of women than men acquired their skills through self-education (38 percent compared to 37 percent).

2.3 Men benefit more from jobs with decision-making power and status

The second indicator of disadvantage involves the *gender distribution of employment across the occupational hierarchy*. Comparatively speaking, men tend to benefit more from jobs that have greater decision-making power and status, and that are subject to greater remuneration and professional prospects. Many of these jobs are of a technical or professional nature. Even in those sectors where women predominate, they are rarely awarded prestigious posts and are mostly concentrated in employment that carries little chance of career or skill enhancement (Kabeer et al., 2005). For example, although women make up the 71 percent of education professionals, educational institutions are usually headed by men. In addition, almost five times as many men as women work as administrators and managers (World Bank, 2006).

While there are many reasons for this, consultations with professional women highlighted the issue of differences in age of retirement in the public sector, which is 55 for women, and 60 for men. Because of this, women are also overlooked for promotions or career development opportunities at a younger age than men, usually by the same five-year gap. This is a double challenge for women who may also have had to pass over earlier opportunities while they had young families. The story in Box 6 of a young female government official illustrates the frustration and anguish this can cause.

Box 6. “My career is over before it began!”

“I am 30 years old and just completing my master’s degree. There is a special political training for senior civil servants, which is an important condition for civil servants to be promoted to a leadership position. The criteria for participants are men under 41 and women under 36 years old with a certain salary level (3.6). In order to get this level, I would need 8 years more. By this time I will be 38 years old and will no longer be eligible to participate in the training. If I were a man, I would still be eligible until I was 40. It is so unfair. I have worked so hard but already my chances are over before I ever really began!” (Female MPI staff at World Bank gender workshop in Hanoi, June 2006).

2.4 The wage gap has narrowed, but men earn more than women

Inequalities in returns to labor make up the third indicator of disadvantage. Although the gender wage gap narrowed between 1998 and 2004 (World Bank, 2006), in both non-wage and wage employment, gaps persist, with Vietnamese men earning more than women.⁸ On average in 2004, a woman in Vietnam earned 83 percent of a man's wage in urban areas and 85 percent in rural areas (World Bank, 2006). The wage gap can also be explained by the segregation of job opportunities for men and women and the low

⁸ The wage disparity by region is much greater than the wage disparity by gender. Rural women’s average wage is only 63 percent of urban women’s, while rural men’s average wage is merely 58 percent of urban men’s. (World Bank, 2006)

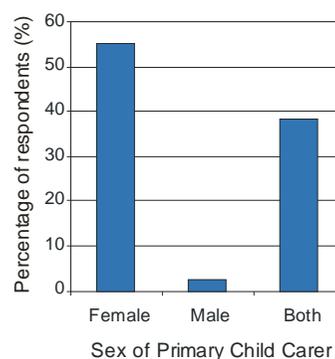
value attached to women's work in particular sectors. Overall, wages are lowest in the private sector, where the majority of wage employment is found (66 percent of men and 54 percent of women age 15+). The gap is greatest in foreign-invested enterprises, where high wages are paid to men. Male wages in foreign-invested enterprises are far higher than average urban male wages (mean hourly wage of VDN 10,458 for men in urban areas, compared to a male urban average of VDN 7,677). This is not true for female wages, where the gap between the same two averages for females is not great; that is, women do not benefit from the same dividend for working for a foreign company. This is likely to be because men are more likely to be recruited into management positions in these companies, while women work as support staff or factory workers (in industries such as textiles) (World Bank, 2006). Other than this, the highest wages are paid to both men and women in the public sector. The only wage gap in favor of women is among government workers in rural areas, where many women are employed by the government in the education sector, and where higher wages are paid to educators in rural areas. By occupation, in both rural and urban areas, the largest wage gaps are for skilled manual workers reflecting diverging types of industry jobs engaged by men and women (World Bank, 2006).

Although the trends seem to be positive, there is some concern for the future. Wage employment for women in Vietnam is still limited and concentrated in government and state-owned enterprises, where wages are relatively high. The private sector is predicted to continue growing, and more state-owned industries will be privatized. Women will need to compete with men for private sector jobs and will need to do so on equal terms. To do so, they will need to be free from discrimination in the recruitment process, and to have the appropriate skills to make them competitive—both of which are areas of concern.

2.5 Men and women contribute equal time to income-generating, but not to housework

Unequal workloads constitute the fourth indicator of disadvantage. With the burden of having to balance work and home obligations, some Vietnamese women work very long hours. According to a Vietnam Women's Union assessment of gender equality in Vietnam in 2004, women work an average of 13 hours per day compared to only 9 hours for men (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2005). Data from the 2002 VHLSS found that women were overrepresented among those reporting work weeks that are 51 to 60 hours long, as well as over 61 hours long. The 2004 VHLSS finds that while women contribute equal amounts of time to income-generating activities, men do not share equally in the housework, leaving women with an unequal share of the work burden overall. (World Bank, 2006).

Figure 14. Women are responsible for most of childcare



Source: VASS 2006

Despite the high numbers of women in paid employment in Vietnam, there is still a perception that household work such as cooking, cleaning, and caring for children is women's work. Unpaid care work is predominantly work inside the home, caring for the sick, elderly, or young. In Vietnam, in more than half of families with children, care for the elderly, disabled, or sick is provided by women alone (VASS, 2006) (Figure 14). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), chronic conditions requiring home-based care are increasing (WHO, 2006). In Vietnam, more than 6.4 percent of the population in 2000 required on-going home-based care (Table 6). This figure is expected to increase to 9.4 percent by 2050 due to increased life expectancy, as well as lifestyle and consumption patterns.

Traditional attitudes and behaviors position women as caregivers within Vietnamese society. The government recognizes the role of women in the home through awards and certificates, but does not recognize men's contribution. Except for childcare policies, there are no comprehensive policies for care work. Under the Labor Code 2002 and associated regulations, leave to care for a newborn baby or sick child is only available to mothers. Allowing fathers to take leave to care for children would go part of the way to easing the heavy work burden of women.

Table 6. Number of people in Vietnam requiring home-based long-term daily care

Year	Prevalence (thousands) by age in years						Total population (thousands)	Prevalence increase %	Proportion total pop %	Dependency ratio (%)*
	0-4y	5-14y	15-44y	45-59y	60+y	Total				
2000	191	331	2,647	755	1,109	5,033	78,137	0	6.4	10.9
2010	192	275	3,149	1,308	1,279	6,196	88,684	23	7.0	10.5
2020	212	290	3,267	1,751	1,989	7,508	100,205	49	7.5	11.5
2030	196	304	3,281	2,121	3,111	9,014	110,080	79	8.2	13.1
2040	198	284	3,201	2,485	4,305	10,473	117,740	108	8.9	14.7
2050	205	294	3,246	2,289	5,544	11,577	123,782	130	9.4	16.5

Based on three severest Global Burden of Disease study disability categories (Source: World Health Organization, 2006. *Chronic conditions: the global burden*)

*(total number of dependent people)/(population aged 15–59)

Paid domestic work is considered stopgap employment for young women before they marry or for retired women. Paid childcare, domestic help, and home care for the sick and elderly is unregulated and undervalued. Although there is no data available, it is expected that the majority of paid care providers are women in the informal sector, working within households. It is likely that women working in care services are often young migrant women. (Institute of Social Sciences, Mac Duong, 2004). Future policies also need to ensure that these women do not become invisible, more vulnerable or exploited as they increasingly fill the gap in provision of care services and ease the burden on working women.

In the future, policies to promote men’s participation in care giving, such as paternity leave, along with policy and legal frameworks to encourage and regulate private sector provision of care, would help to ease the burden on women and eventually increase the value and recognition given to this kind of work, either by men and women within their own families, or by private sector providers who fill the gap.

2.6 Men’s opportunities to capitalize assets are greater than women’s

One of the main ways in which assets can be capitalized is through the use of land as collateral to access loans. However, a recent survey found that of women who were denied financing, 20 percent said it was because they lacked collateral (MPDF, 2006). Although traditional inheritance practice in Vietnam dictates that land can be passed down to males and females, in practice women are less likely to be registered as land users. While land has been distributed among rural households since 1988, most of the certificates issued were in the name of the man only. A 2003 revision of the Land Law decrees that all new land use right certificates (LUCs) must include names of both husband and wife. While this is a step in the right direction, and will ensure that many women will gain access to land and credit, the law does not require the previously issued titles to be changed. Eighty-one percent of households in the VHLSS 2004 had land use title certificates for some of their land. The distribution of these by title holder is shown in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Men are more likely to be sole holders of land use certificates

Land type	Land-Use title holders		
	Male only	Female only	Joint holders
Annual Agricultural land	66	19	15
Residential land	60	22	18

Source: WB, 2006 using VHLSS 2004 data

Many women are thus left without assets to their name, which would not only give them better access to capital, but would also increase their security in cases such as divorce or inheritance. With three-quarters of women (compared to 59 percent of men) being self-employed, mostly in agriculture or in the informal sector, improved access to capital resources would have a significant impact on their ability to improve their productivity and expand their businesses. Table 8 shows how sources of credit differ for those who hold LUCs; households with titles are more likely than those without to access formal sources of credit. Interestingly, even with LUCs, female-headed households are still less likely than male-headed households with LUCs to access formal credit. Further work needs to be done to understand fully the constraints that women have in accessing formal credit and the role that LUCs play in overcoming this.

Table 8. Households with LUCs are more likely to access formal sources of credit (%)

	Sources of Credit**			
	Formal	Semi-formal	Private	Total
Total	56	10	35	100
LUCs for any type of land				
Male-headed				
No	40	13	47	100
Yes	62	9	29	100
Female-headed				
No	43	12	46	100
Yes	51	11	39	100

Note: Percentages are weighted; sample sizes are unweighted total number of households.

* Since some households have more than one credit or loan, only the first loan is examined for its sources.

** "Formal" source includes the Social Policy Bank, the Agriculture and Rural Development Bank, and other banks;

"Semi-formal" source includes Employment Support Funds, credit organizations, and socio-political organizations;

"Private" source includes individual creditors, friends, relatives, and other specified sources.

2.7 Leveling the playing field: priority issues

This section looks at the future development of the labor force and identifies the key issues that are likely to limit the ways in which women can participate and compete with men on equal terms. In the future, while agriculture will continue to be the backbone of the rural economy, more and more people will rely on wage labor either instead of, or in addition to, their agricultural work. The private sector, where wages are lower and gender gaps in wages are higher, will continue to expand and open more opportunities. Meanwhile, the public sector will continue to decrease, and state-owned enterprises will be privatized. Women will continue, for the foreseeable future, to take a disproportionate burden of work in the home, while competing to the same degree as men in the workforce. The issues include the following:

Differences in retirement age are impacting women's career opportunities, especially in the public sector. However, arguments about the retirement age are not clear-cut, as this also represents five additional years of pension payments—a significant transfer of resources in favor of women that would be lost if it was increased to the same age as for men. Given that women already make up a greater proportion of retirees over 65 because of their longer life expectancies, the gender dimension of the pension debate is significant. The issue is a priority because it meets two of the selection criteria. First, it is a human rights issue when individual women face barriers to employment and promotion opportunities that favor men. Second, this is an issue that underlies other manifestations of gender inequality. Lower age of retirement is an

excuse for lowering the cut-off age for participating in training. Women who have less opportunity for training and skills development are less likely to be in higher level positions, and the pool of women with the qualifications to compete against men for public office or elected positions is also reduced.

A strong legal framework to prohibit discrimination against women still needs to be put in place and implemented. The steps are already being taken, but will need to be supported and given adequate resources. This issue is again a priority on human rights grounds at an individual level. In addition, blatant discrimination limits the ability of women to lift their families out of poverty when they are kept in low-paid jobs and sectors. Finally there is a multiplier affect: limiting the opportunities and therefore the potential of women also limits the pool of women suitable for promotion to higher level positions, or for election or appointment to decision-making positions.

Women lack the necessary skills to be able to compete on equal terms with men. While technical and higher education levels are low in Vietnam for both women and men, women are disadvantaged relative to men. This limits their opportunities to compete with men. This is a human rights issue, which if addressed would increase women's capacity to raise their position, power, and voice in both society and family.

Women still bear a disproportionate burden of unpaid work at home while contributing equal time to generating income. Norms and expectations of "male" and "female" behavior are passed on within the family from fathers to sons, from mothers to their daughters. This issue perpetuates gender stereotypes; addressing it would address the underlying causes of gender equality. The issue is also a priority because it affects huge numbers of people—the majority of the population.

No system is in place to include women's name as title holders on previously issued certificates. Increasing women's access to land certificates is both a pro-poor issue—it allows women to access more capital—and a human rights issue, in that it provides tenure security in the case of divorce or inheritance disputes.

The government is taking an essential step in addressing most of these issues in the newly approved Gender Equality Law. The Law lays out the basic principles of gender equality and addresses several key areas, which are summarized in Box 7.

In addition, the SEDP addresses priority issues through a set of policy measures. It would:

- Complete regulations and intensify the implementation of policies on women laborers to ensure effectiveness and fairness in policies on vocational training and social insurance and retirement
- Ensure women's equal participation and benefits in the socioeconomic development process by completing laws and legal documents for implementation and protection of women's rights and interests

- Develop vocational and job centers for women; build up databases of laborers and vocational training with sex-disaggregated data
- Gradually reduce household chore burdens on women through investing in small-scale technology for domestic purposes, such as clean water and power supply projects in rural areas; develop and reorganize pre-school and nursery system; launch propaganda campaigns on responsibility-sharing among family members
- Improve women's rights in land use certificates

Box 7. Law on Gender Equality

The Gender Equality Law was approved by National Assembly in November 2006, which covers the following areas:

- **The political arena:** equal rights to be selected in National Assembly or People's Councils, men and women subject to same qualification criteria and age in promotion and leadership or management positions.
- **Economic opportunity:** equal access to resources.
- **Labor:** equal qualification and age criteria in employment and work assignment, labor safety, salary, bonuses and social security
- **Education and training:** training ages shall be the same; equal access to training.
- **Scientific and technological arena:** equal access to science and technology; equality for science and technology training.
- **Culture information and sports:** equal participation for men and women; equal enjoyment of culture; and equal access to information.
- **Health:** equal opportunities in obtaining knowledge and education regarding health care and reproductive health, and in accessing health services.
- **Family:** spouses have equal rights and obligations in the possession of common property and use of income; equal responsibilities in family planning and taking leave to care for children; sons and daughters are equal in health care, study, and development; every family member has the responsibility to do housework.

The law also includes measures to ensure gender equality, such as setting ratios for participation and providing tax incentives to companies employing a high number of female workers. It states that education on gender and gender equality will be conducted through mass media, school curricula, and activities of agencies and communities. There are provisions for mainstreaming gender into the formulation of policies and laws; detailed responsibilities of the concerned agencies, and guidelines for appraising gender mainstreaming in policies and laws, and for gender mainstreaming in organizations, and in the operation of organizations and agencies. The responsibilities are defined for the following: the state, gender equality state management agency, ministries and ministerial-level agencies, People's Committee at all levels, National Fatherland Front, VWU, state agencies, political organizations, socio-political organizations, other agencies and organizations, families, and citizens. Finally, the law calls for the Gender Equality State Management Agency to be responsible for gender equality inspection, and gives definitions of violations of gender equality in different areas.

2.8 Recommendations

Taking into account key issues and the ongoing work to address these issues, this report makes the following recommendations:

Support policy dialogue on retirement and pensions. The issue of the retirement age is fundamentally linked to policies on social protection. The current early retirement age for women also represents a significant transfer of resources in the form

of pensions to women between 55 and 60. For some, this is recognition of the hard work that women do in the home as well as in the labor force. Others say that because women work so hard up to that age, it would be unfair if they also had to work as long as men before receiving pensions. It is an issue that inevitably causes debate and has proponents, men and women, who argue on both sides. Unfortunately, the debate is rife with emotional arguments and could be much better informed by presenting the economic arguments and also predictions on the impacts to the labor force and employment opportunities of each option, or alternative options.

Implement Gender Equality Law and labor laws to reduce discrimination: Today in Vietnam, laws that are aimed at protecting women in the workforce do exist, but these often contain elements of gender discrimination. For instance, the labor law of Vietnam outlines different working conditions for men and women, excluding women from jobs deemed dangerous and imposing restrictions on the participation of pregnant women in the labor force. The law makes hiring women costly for employers, thereby encouraging them to practice gender-discriminatory recruitment. As the Gender Equality Law has been adopted, other laws will need to be brought into line with it. Most importantly, the Law needs to be implemented and significant steps will need to be taken to ensure this. The government responsibilities for gender equality are only broadly defined in the Law, and detailed institutional arrangements and guidelines will be needed. Sanctions will need to be applied and the impact of the Law will need to be monitored, including by means of an improved labor survey that allows gender analysis of the different dimensions of gender inequalities.

Support the provision of skills training: Trade and economic integration will be unable to address women's job insecurity and low paying jobs unless opportunities are created for women to improve their skills and education levels. The effectiveness of current programs needs to be assessed and programs reviewed and adapted to ensure they meet the future need for skills in an export-oriented market economy. Increasing the access women have to appropriate career and skills development opportunities is fundamental to ensuring that they can compete equally, and have the same opportunities as men to contribute to the economy, as well as guaranteeing their human rights. The Plan of Action 2 (POA-2) has managed to achieve a target of 30 percent of women officials attending training courses on business administration, information technology, and foreign languages (MPI- NCF AW, 2006).

While workplace training is one of the few opportunities for workers to develop skills, unskilled workers (and women in particular) seldom occupy jobs where training is offered. For these workers who may be clustered within the informal sector or within waged labor, vocational education and short-term training courses provide a key to developing their skills. Moreover, resources need to be allocated for training and skills development to promote the participation of women in employment, especially ethnic minorities, women in rural areas, young women working in the informal sector, and migrant men and women.

Increase the value of household work, encourage shared responsibility between men and women, and provide incentives for regulated private sector provision.

Several things could be done to help reduce the inequality of work-sharing within the home and the burden this places on women. First, this kind of work needs to be accorded greater recognition and value, which could be done by piloting ways to include it in the national accounts. This would help to develop an economic justification for more investment in providing support. A second aspect would be to promote greater sharing of the work between men and women. In this case, attitudes and behaviors need to be changed through the promotion of positive gender images of both men and women at home and at work, for example through school text books and curriculum. Third, strengthening the public sector provision of care services and putting a framework in place to encourage a regulated private sector to provide care services such as day care centers, or care for old people, would fill a gap in current service provision in this area, as well as professionalizing the private sector care providers. Encouragement could be in the form of providing tax or financial incentives for certification, or accreditation, and professional training. Finally, more work also needs to be done to assess the impact of infrastructure projects—such as transport, electrification, and water supply interventions—in reducing the household work burden.

Re-issue land use right certificates (LUCs) with the names of both husband and wife. A mechanism should be in place to change existing LUCs to new ones with the names of both the husband and wife. Awareness of women's rights to land should be raised among the people, especially for ethnic minorities.

Section 3. The Fallout of Social and Economic Change

3.1 Economic change brings social change

With such rapid changes taking place in the economy, it is inevitable that there will also be social change. For the most part, the social change is for the better. Fewer families are in poverty, and more children have access to education and prospects for a healthy and prosperous future. However, it is also inevitable that there will be other changes that open up new areas of risk, and potentially negative consequences. Regulations, criminalization, and law enforcement may provide partial answers in some cases, but may not address the underlying causes. In an increasingly complex and changing country, systems and resources need to be allocated to develop mechanisms that help those who are trying to cope with these changes. This section looks at some of the social changes that have a gender perspective.

3.2 Gender-segregated employment practices and wage gaps affect female domestic migrants

A lack of employment opportunities in rural areas and thriving opportunities in urban areas are leading to increasing domestic migration (MPI SEDP 2006), with an estimated 1 million people moving to urban areas per year. (VDR 2004). The urban population accounted for 24 percent of the population in 1999, a 4.6 percent increase since 1989.

Box 8. At a glance: Domestic Migration

- ❖ The most recent census shows that 5.5 million people moved from one province to another between 1995 and 1999 and have no fixed address.
- ❖ The KT3 classification refers to temporary migrants who are away from their household for 6–12 months. Migrants classified as KT4 do not have a household registration book and can stay in temporary accommodation for up to three months. Migrants under the KT3 and KT4 categories find it difficult to access basic services, including housing, education, health care, and sanitation (GSO, 2005).
- ❖ In 2003, 70 percent of migrants to Ho Chi Minh City were women (Institute of Social Sciences, Mac Duong, 2004).
- ❖ Migrants tend to be young; 66 percent of female migrants and 60 percent of male migrants are between 15 and 29 (GSO, 2005).

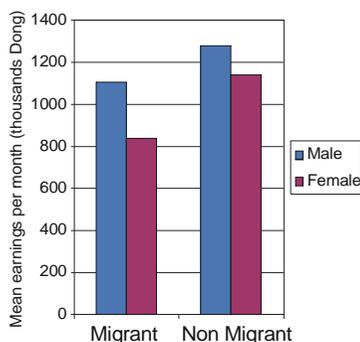
A recent survey⁹ of migration found that there were only 76 male migrants for every 100 female migrants, and that women were especially dominant among younger

⁹ In this survey, 10,000 interviews were conducted—5,000 with migrants and 5,000 with non-migrants—in five areas with high levels of in-migration. Communes with high levels of KT3 and KT4 residents were selected, and migrants and non-migrants were randomly selected from the lists in these communes. The information is not representative of the populations in the sample areas, but provides information that helps to understand some of the dynamics of migration.

migrants. Most migrants, both male and female, migrate for economic reasons. Eighty percent of men and 78 percent of female migrants said that their income was better after migrating, even though the incomes of migrants is still lower than non-migrants. (GSO-UNFPA, 2005).

Migrant labor in Vietnam has obvious gender patterns. Young women migrate from rural to urban areas to work in manufacturing or as domestics in the informal sector. In contrast, men tend to migrate within rural areas as seasonal labor or on industrial farms, or to cities to work in construction or factories. Among the GSO-UNFPA survey respondents, the gender gaps in wages were greater among migrants than non-migrants; female migrants' mean monthly earnings was 76 percent of their male counterparts, while for non-migrants the figure was 89 percent (calculated from data in GSO-UNFPA, 2005) (Figure 15). Regardless of this, female-migrant respondents were more likely than male-migrant respondents to remit part of their earnings, although male migrants remitted a higher amount than female migrants, possibly due to the higher wages.

Figure 15. The gender gap in wages is greater among migrant survey respondents



Source: GSO-UNFPA 2005

The government has a policy that requires all migrants to register their status. Migrant survey respondents registered under the KT3 and KT4 classifications (Box 8) reported having limited access to basic services such as health, education, housing, and utilities (GSO-UNFPA, 2005). Regardless of whether or not a migrant respondent was male or female, they were more likely than non-migrants to live in inadequate living conditions (GSO-UNFPA, 2005). Employers, MOLISA, and local authorities are slow to increase migrants' access to information, services, and infrastructure through measures such as extending services, allocating more resources, and changing policies.

The same survey found that there was great variation in migration patterns across the regions. For example, in the southeast industrial zone, more women were likely to be employed by foreign companies (65 percent compared to 35 percent for men), suggesting they were working in factories. In the Central Highlands, where people migrated more as families, the majority of men and women worked in small companies or were self-employed. (GSO-UNFPA, 2005).

In the future, the manufacturing sector is likely to expand and more women are likely to migrate to find employment in factories. The gender differentiation in the sectors of employment is unlikely to change, and hence the issues such as gender gaps in wages will be perpetuated, and will be disproportionately felt by migrant women without more affirmative action.

3.3 Women in particular are vulnerable to risks of labor export

In recent years, the issue of cross-border migration—though still relatively small—is taking on greater importance in Vietnam. Every year, migrants on the labor export program send home around \$1.5 billion, the equivalent of the contribution of the tourist sector to GDP (Enterprise Survey, quoted in Kabeer et al., 2005). Identified in the SEDP 2006–10 as a solution to unemployment, it is not only seen as a source of income generation but also job creation, foreign currency, and a way to improve economic, cultural, science, and technology relations between Vietnam and recipient countries.

An estimated 288,000 Vietnamese men and 112,000 Vietnamese women currently work overseas in around 40 countries. Among the workers migrating to other countries each year, the percentage of women increased from 28 percent in 1992 to around 37 percent in 2003 and 54 percent in 2004 (VASS, 2006). Like internal migration within Vietnam, cross-border laborers also tend to work in sex-segregated sectors. Women typically work as domestic labor within households, as laborers in factories manufacturing garments or electronics, or in the hospitality sector. Of the women, 64 percent work as domestic workers or in restaurants or the service industry. Men work on farms or in industrial estates (VASS, 2006).

Most official overseas migrants are not poor. Deployment to another country involves the payment of fees, a requirement that only the few educated and wealthy men and women could afford. Labor export companies require a substantial deposit and often relatively high levels of education. However, the lack of regulations, limited information provided before departure, and support services in the receiving countries for cross-border migrants places them in a vulnerable situation. Women workers in the informal sector may be particularly at risk of isolation or harassment, while workers in the formal sector may be particularly vulnerable to poor working conditions.

Moreover, as the interest in benefiting from economic opportunities in other countries increases, especially from the rural poor who are unable to afford the fees, the possibility of an increase in illegal migration and trafficking also rises. Poor women and children in particular are vulnerable to being trafficked through illegitimate labor export companies. In addition, demographic and social changes in neighboring countries have increased the demand for more “traditional” brides to maintain the household. For example, more than 100,000 Vietnamese women have married Taiwanese men since the 1990s, and others have gone to China (UNFPA, 2006). While some of the marriages offer the women an escape from poverty, others may lead to greater hardship, slavery, and risk of abuse.

The government has started addressing some of these issues. The Law on Vietnamese contracted laborers working abroad has just been passed and the 2004–10 Plan of Action for prevention and fighting crimes of trafficking in women and children signals that measures will be introduced to tackle the problem of labor trafficking. To date, there is no law protecting women and children from being trafficked. To implement these laws, and reduce the vulnerability of migrant workers, further steps will need to

be taken to inform and train workers before they depart, and to develop support services for Vietnamese workers in the receiving countries through the embassies.

3.4 Gender dimensions of risk-taking behaviors, unprotected sex, and HIV/AIDS need to be better addressed

Box 9. At a glance: Risk-taking behaviors

- Eighteen percent of men and 10 percent of women 14–25 years have ever had a traffic accident (SAVY, 2003). Seventy percent of young women and 64 percent of young men use motorbikes but do not use helmets.
- Forty-five percent of young males and only 13 percent of young females reported having been drunk at least one time in a given month (SAVY, 2003).
- More than 70 percent of adult males smoke compared to only 5 percent for women (WHO website). Forty four percent of young men and 1 percent of young women 14–25 years had ever smoked (SAVY 2003). Thirty one percent of young men and 0.2 percent of young women currently smoke.

Risk-taking behaviors are often wrongly associated with particular social groups, including migrants, people from low economic backgrounds, and young people. However, such behaviors actually cut across all strata of society (Box 9). Culturally accepted behavior associated with masculinity is leading men to take risks associated with motorbikes, drugs, and alcohol, exposing them to risks of injury. In the case of intravenous drug use, it puts them at higher risk of contracting HIV/AIDS, which had a 32 percent prevalence rate among drug users in 2004 (GOV, 2006). Vietnamese men are also twice as likely to be killed by accident (at work or on the road) and 1.5 times more likely to engage in risky activities than women (ADB, 2005). Contrary to popular opinion, a recent survey showed that there was little difference in the use of tobacco or alcohol between male migrant respondents and non-migrant respondents, with male non-migrants slightly more likely to smoke (59 percent non-migrants and 52 per cent migrants) and drink beer or wine than male migrants (80 percent non-migrants and 77 percent migrants) (GSO-UNFPA, 2005).

Although young men and women are more often sexually active before marriage, the numbers are still low compared to other countries. However, their contraception use is low (SAVY, 2003). According to the SAVY survey, about one-third of young men and 9 percent of young women in the 22–25 age group reported having premarital sex, and 21 percent of young men have had sex with a sex worker (SAVY, 2003).

Women's lack of sexual negotiating power is placing them at risk of unwanted pregnancies, STIs, HIV/AIDS, and complications following abortions. Risky sexual behavior, combined with increasing rates of injecting drug use among young males, is also taking its toll on men and women in the form of increasing rates of HIV infection, especially among women who are not sex workers. Women are now more likely to contract HIV from their partners than through sex work or injecting drug use.

Unprotected sex is also common within a marriage, which is a growing concern as the number of men with HIV/AIDS continues to rise, increasing the risk of transmission to their wives. Estimates point to almost 70,000 women (29,000 in urban areas and 38,000 in rural areas) living with HIV (UNAIDS, 2005). Female sex workers only account for 14 percent (about 10,000 women) of all women living with HIV (UNAIDS, 2005).

As Vietnam continues to develop, risk-taking behaviors may increase, exacerbated by modern-day lifestyles and pressures, and changing roles and relationships, including gender roles and the relationships between men and women. Regulations and criminalization will go some way to addressing problems. However, a more sympathetic and institutionalized approach to helping young men and women cope with these pressures and supporting them through key points in their lives may be needed.

Institutions and policies have been slow to reflect the needs of men and women engaging in risk-taking behaviors. Mass-based organizations such as the Youth Union and the Women's Union are providing support and information on some high-risk behaviors. However, with already broad mandates, conservative approaches, and limited resources, they cannot fulfill this care, support, and prevention role in a way that understands and responds to the needs of Vietnam's young people. Education and health institutions face similar difficulties, including a lack of resources and technical ability to provide accurate information on risks associated with particular behaviors. For example, there are few specialized sexual health clinics where young men and women can go to receive low-cost counseling, treatment, and information anonymously (Kabeer et al., 2005).

Policies such as the National Strategy for the Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS and other policies related to tobacco control and accident prevention do exist. However, with the exception of the HIV/AIDS strategy, these policies have a sectoral focus and do not specifically tackle the gendered nature of many of these issues. Similarly, they do not focus on young people who are or are about to engage in risky behaviors.

3.5 High rates of abortion pose health risks

Unprotected sex and limited use and choice of contraceptives are contributing factors to Vietnam's extremely high abortion rates. In 2002, it is estimated that an alarming 46 percent of all pregnancies in Vietnam were terminated (Kabeer et al., 2005). The two-child policy may also be a factor for explaining high abortion rates among married women. Married women comprise the majority of women (about 60 percent) having abortions; the abortion rate among married women 15-to-49 years is 1.47 (Kabeer et al., 2005). Half of all women who have had abortions report having health problems as a result (ADB, 2005; Kabeer et al., 2005).

There are some indications that the popularity of sex-selective abortions due to the strong preference for sons and the availability of technology to simply and cheaply detect the sex of the fetus may be increasing (Population Change and Family Planning

Survey, 2004; ADB, 2005). Although the data is inconclusive, some sources show an increasing gap in the sex ratio at birth in some provinces or districts. Statistics from particular provinces such as Ha Tay show a male-to-female birth ratio as high as 128 males to 100 females (Population Change and Family Planning Survey, 2004). Within Ha Tay province, some districts, typically urban centers, also report ratios as high as 175.6 males to 100 females. This same research also demonstrates that the gap widens with the birth of the second and third child. A lack of consistency in the data does not allow for the conclusive identification of trends, but the figures are sufficient to raise concern and call for improved monitoring. The government has responded to the concern by issuing a resolution in October 2006 making it illegal to help determine the sex of a fetus or abort it for gender reasons.

These statistics point to the urgent need for (a) a wider range of contraceptive choices; (b) men to take a greater role in sharing responsibility for contraception; (c) more education on the side effects of pregnancy terminations on women's reproductive health, and in particular fertility problems later in life; and (d) improved monitoring of birth rates.

3.6 Domestic violence persists as an issue

While there is no comprehensive data on domestic violence in Vietnam, there is a growing acknowledgment of its extent and impact, cutting across class, economic, and social lines. Evidence from small non-representative studies on domestic violence offer a glimpse into this phenomenon, which drives many victims to adjust their lives to minimize abuse. According to one study conducted in Thai Binh, Lang Son, and Tien Giang provinces by the Vietnam Women's Union, 40 percent of women said they had been hit by their husbands at some point in time (VWU, 2006; cited in Vietnam News 18/3/2006 *Women's Union Tackles Domestic Violence*). The study also found that domestic violence was cited as the justification in 66 percent of all divorces (Vietnam News, 2006). A recent nationwide survey found lower rates of beating (about 6 percent), but rates of up to 21 percent for verbal abuse in a twelve-month period (VASS, 2006). While domestic violence can be attributed to a number of causes, including unequal power relations, the incidence of such acts is often associated with male alcoholism and financial hardship (Kabeer et al., 2005).

At present, there are no comprehensive laws or policies addressing the issue. Institutions, services, and resources focusing on managing gender-based violence are insufficient to deal with the problem. To some extent, the 1999 Criminal Code and the 2000 Law on Marriage and Family cover violence against women in the home through provisions such as "Ill treating or persecuting grand-parents, parents, spouses, children, grandchildren and/or fosterers." But the degree of ill-treatment is usually required to be quite high before a case is taken seriously (ADB, 2005).

A law on domestic violence is expected to be approved by the National Assembly in 2007; however, much work remains to be done to develop awareness of domestic violence within the country. At present, clear definitions of domestic violence are lacking, as is understanding of the impacts it has on the lives of men, women, and

children and on society as a whole. Emotional abuse and sexual violence within marriage are not widely perceived as domestic violence. At present, domestic violence issues are typically dealt with in the home or at the community level by the VWU, where the focus is on mediation and restoring calm within the home. Women and men do not have access to welfare services, adequately qualified counselors, or even police and medical professionals equipped to deal with this sensitive problem. Further research is required to measure the costs of domestic violence on the lives of individuals and the resources required for the state to curb the problem.

3.7 Priority issues and recommended interventions

This section has identified some of the issues that are associated with the social and economic changes taking place in Vietnam and that have a strong gender perspective. Depending on how they are managed and addressed, much can be done to mitigate these problems. An absence of effective responses, however, may cause them to increase; moreover, new problems may emerge that need to be addressed. Attention and resources need to be committed at this stage to debating aspects of social policy and establishing new institutions and procedures in order to be prepared to address and mitigate them in appropriate ways. The priority issues raised in this section can be summarized as follows:

- Female domestic migrants are vulnerable to gender-segregated types of employment and resulting gender gaps, for example in wages.
- Future trends in labor exports may increase the vulnerability of female cross-border migrants to isolation, harassment, and poor labor conditions. An increased demand for employment opportunities in other countries may lead to higher risk of trafficking.
- Risk behaviours affect men and women differently, and are often associated with their gender roles and relationships.
- The high rate of abortions poses health risks.
- Domestic violence continues to be prevalent and unaddressed.

Several of these issues are taken up in the SEDP and some measures have been included to address them, including:

- Building an appropriate migration policy to speed up labor distribution among regions and assist immigrants to have access to social services
- Taking measures to reduce the transmission of HIV/AIDS and other postpartum infectious diseases
- Encouraging men to use various contraceptives methods
- Taking strong measures to strictly control and then reduce drug-related crimes, sex work, and trafficking in women and children; improving material facilities of drug detoxication centers
- Taking strong measures to reduce discriminations against women, maltreatment to women in the family, and protecting women and children

However, this may not be sufficient. The issues raised in this section of the report are complex, and new responses are needed. The current or proposed approaches have been ad hoc for the most part, with responsibilities split over several institutions and little data or information to inform the development of appropriate policies or service provision. Moreover, the deeply embedded nature of the culture and gender roles that underlie the issues has in some cases reduced their visibility.

To identify an appropriate set of responses, we turn to the components of the enabling environment framework (Annex 2) to systematically identify the gaps and priorities in the areas of research, policies, institutions, and resources.

Research. The gaps in information on the issues raised in this section are significant. In the absence of more detailed information, it is difficult to both develop the policies or the indicators and targets to monitor the effectiveness of interventions. Research—on migration, trafficking, risk behaviors, and abortions—is needed to track changes and the impacts of policies and interventions. Recommendations relating to research include the following:

- **Add questions into routine survey instruments** such as the VHLSS to allow greater ability to monitor trends; for example, in migration and the impacts of migration.
- **Identify routine monitoring systems** that can be used to collect information on other problems; for example, hospital admission forms or police records might be used as input to compile information on domestic violence or substance abuse, and birth registrations could be used to monitor sex ratios at birth. To do so, the forms and procedures used need to be improved; staff need to be trained to recognize and address these issues sensitively with victims; and the information needs to be made available to researchers.
- **Undertake qualitative research** to improve understanding of social relationships; for example, the impacts of migration.

Policy and legal frameworks. Most of the existing policy and legal frameworks do not respond to the issues identified and considerable work will be needed to fill the gaps. For the most part, the SEDP sets out a basis on which to develop this area; however, a more comprehensive approach to social policy formulation is still needed. Some suggested recommendations for inclusion are the following:

- **Laws on labor export has just been passed and domestic violence is being drafted.** They will need to be followed up with guidelines and action plans for implementation.
- **Policies are needed to establish support services for men and women dealing with social problems, including young people and migrants.** The policies should consider the different options for institutionalizing support services for those in need, including increasing the number of professional, skilled service providers or establishing new institutions.

- ***Changing the policies on registration of migrants to simplify the procedures*** would contribute to removing some of the inequalities that exist between migrants and non-migrants, such as in housing or access to services.

Institutions. Even without the policy frameworks in place, much could be done to improve the institutional response. For example:

- ***Build a cadre of professionals in social support services.*** This could be done by improving and expanding the technical skills of selected individuals in current institutions that are de facto providing some of the support, such as the VWU, Vietnam Youth, and MOLISA.
- ***Expand the capacity of existing institutions to respond effectively to new challenges.*** For example, the police force, hospitals, or schools may need to adopt new guidelines, introduce new training courses, or expand their curricula to ensure they reflect some of the realities of modern life and prepare people for it.
- ***Consider the establishment of a separate institution*** that can provide a range of services, for example to victims of domestic violence, or substance abuse, or those finding it difficult to cope with stress.
- ***Assess the role that NGOs are playing in providing these services.*** In many countries, NGOs often provide considerable services in these areas and make valuable partners with government in filling the gaps. The extent to which this is or could be happening in Vietnam needs to be reviewed and discussed.

Resources. Resources will be required to develop programs and projects to support the provision of social support services and increase the information to vulnerable groups to reduce their risk. In the short term, these resources could be provided by developing pilot projects with institutions already engaged in provision of services; for example, mass-based organizations or government departments.

Conclusions, Recommendations, and Implications

This report draws attention to existing gender equality issues in Vietnam and prioritizes solutions likely to close or reduce existing gender gaps. In the context of past efforts, new economic opportunities, and emerging social change, the report seeks to reflect the dynamic nature of these issues, as well as the need for carefully tailored strategies.

The first section of the assessment looked at the path Vietnam has taken to reduce gender gaps and promote gender equality, and how the outcomes compare with other countries in the region. A key finding is that the path has been a good one and the achievements are notable, placing Vietnam in a favorable position relative to other countries in the region. Further improvements seem assured, given the attention gender has received in national planning. Issues assigned a high priority in this section included (a) those where specific groups were left behind in the development progress, such as ethnic minorities, especially ethnic minority women; (b) those that would have a major impact on addressing underlying causes of gender inequalities, namely attitudes and behaviors perpetuated through gender stereotyping in school textbooks and curricula; (c) those affecting large numbers of people, such as the nation's 12 million women farmers; or (d) those that have seen little or inconsistent progress, such as increasing the number of women in decision making.

The second section of the report looked forward. It considered Vietnam's current economic path and how level the playing field is for women and men to participate equally in future development. With a projected shift of the workforce from agriculture to wage labor and from the public to the private sector, issues such as the relatively lower wages and higher wage gaps in the private sector will impact more and more women in the future and take on greater importance. Women's ability to compete equally with men in the private sector is constrained by open discrimination practices in recruitment, women's lower education and skills, and their lesser ability to capitalize assets when their names are not on already-issued land certificates. In the public sector, which will continue to be a major employer for some time, the different retirement ages for men and women, while representing a transfer of public resources to women in the form of additional pensions, also works through the system to be a factor in reducing the career and promotion prospects for younger women. The GOV is taking significant strides to address these issues through the newly approved Gender Equality Law; however, considerable challenges exist in turning the Law into practice. Meanwhile, Vietnamese women, while contributing equally to income-generating, bear the burden of work in the home. With a projected increase in the number of dependents, this burden may be increased.

Finally, the assessment looked at some of the impacts of social and economic change, and concluded that the current approaches, policies, and institutions were not well-prepared to address emerging social impacts linked to increased migration and risk-taking behaviors. In addition, the current social support services do not adequately

address issues such as the high rate of abortions or persistent domestic violence. All of these issues affect men and women differently and are founded on gender roles and relations and how these are changing.

Recommendations

To identify the gaps in responses, the enabling environment framework was applied to each of the priority issues (see Annex 2). The following recommendations are made for each component of the enabling environment framework to help government and donors prioritize responses.

Research and information. In general, statistics are relatively good in Vietnam and significant progress has been made in identifying and tracking indicators. Statistics collected regularly through sectoral departments, and surveys such as the Vietnam Household Living Standards Survey, provide a good basis for analysis, including gender aspects. Further improvements could be made and gaps filled through the following:

- Analysis of trends in relation to the labor force could be better informed through a comprehensive and gender-sensitive periodic labor force survey.
- Inclusion in the VHLSS of questions relating to migration or intra-household power relationships would provide a rich source of information on trends, and would also allow for statistical analysis of impacts in future years. Other monitoring systems, such as crime reporting systems or hospital admission records, could be used for regular tracking of trends in domestic violence or risk-taking behaviors.
- A better understanding of some specific issues might be gained through special surveys or qualitative research. Topics identified where such research is most needed include the impacts of migration or changing gender roles, or issues relating to sensitive subjects such as unprotected sex, abortions, or trafficking.
- Impact evaluations are also needed to improve the effectiveness of development or assess impacts of policies. Priority areas include assessing the effectiveness of interventions designed to reach ethnic minority women; measures to increase the number of women in decision making; strategies to reduce women's burden in the home; the effectiveness of current vocational training strategies; or the impact of having both men's and women's names on land titling certificates.
- Economic and trend analysis is needed in three specific areas. The first is to assess the economic impacts of different options for policies on the age of retirement. The second is to quantify the amount of care work being undertaken in the home. This would contribute to better accounting for this in the national accounts and prepare an economic argument for focusing more attention on developing policies to share the burden of women's work in the home. Finally, the discussion on skills training would be better informed by an analysis of future trends in the labor force so that more effective strategies could be identified.

Policies and legal frameworks. Significant progress has also been made in putting conducive policy and legal frameworks in place. The efforts are ongoing with the

approval of the Gender Equality Law, labor export law as well as preparation of the law on domestic violence. Priorities highlighted in this document include the following:

- Concerted efforts and support will be needed to put the Gender Equality Law into practice and ensure its implementation. The same will apply to the labor export law and also to domestic violence law once it has been passed.
- Policies to target services to ethnic minority women, including recruitment and training of more ethnic minority women to become service providers, and to improve the access that women farmers have to markets and technology, would build on the SEDP commitments and provide a basis for targeting of resources in these areas.
- Reproductive health, sexual health, and HIV/AIDS policies and programs that focus on adolescents and young unmarried men and women would help to mitigate the impacts of risk behaviors in these areas. In the long term, however, comprehensive policies need to be considered for institutionalizing the provision of skilled, professional help and support to address social problems and issues, and help those who are struggling to cope with the rapid social changes taking place.
- In the area of care work within the home, there is the potential for creative thinking with regard to policies that would help relieve the burden of household work on women. The problem seems to be more of an issue in Vietnam than in other countries in the region, in part because women are so heavily engaged in income-generating activities. Once an economic basis for focusing on this has been made, policy options that could be discussed could include policies to encourage and regulate private sector providers to develop and provide care services (e.g. for young children, old people, or the sick), policies to train and certify individuals to provide care services, or else for the services to be provided through specific government programs, possibly working with communities. Other policies, such as paternity leave, may help to remove the gender bias and encourage men to share the burden.
- A comprehensive roadmap is needed to increase women's participation in decision making by identifying policies that need to be changed and setting targets and action plans.

Institutions and Organizations. Well-developed institutions, organizations, and procedures exist for the traditional sectors such as health, education, and agriculture. In addition, mass-based organizations play a significant role in reaching out to members. The recommendations relating to institutions are the following:

- Capacity building could be provided to staff in sectoral institutions—such as health, education, and agriculture, and who work in rural areas—to improve the capacity to provide services to ethnic minority women. Such capacity building may include training in culturally sensitive service delivery.

- Relevant organizations need to develop programs to support the achievement of the targets set out in the POA-3 and SEDP. Organizations should set quotas for skills training for women and ensure that targets are met.
- Once the policies and guidelines put in place to implement the newly approved Gender Equality Law, resources will also be needed to develop the institutions that have the responsibility to implement the Law, or to monitor implementation.
- In the longer term, and after policies have been developed, institutional structures—either within existing departments or new departments—may be developed to provide (a) care services to help ease the burden of care work in the home (care of young children, sick, or old people); and (b) professional help and support to help address social issues, including risk behaviors, sexual health, and domestic violence. In the short term, staff in existing institutions such as police or health workers could be provided with additional training and the right incentive structure to help improve the support provided to those in need.
- Simplifying the registration procedures for migrants has the potential to improve the status of migrants in urban areas.

Resources and programs. With the policy frameworks, institutions, and procedures in place, attention can be turned to providing resources for programs, and to help implement projects and activities where they are needed. Some activities are ready to absorb immediate additional resources so they can be improved or expanded. These include:

- Increasing access to health, education, and agricultural services for ethnic minorities, especially ethnic minority women. As this would be done through existing institutions, with staff in place, developing and implementing innovative projects would be relatively simple and have quick impacts.
- Similarly, focusing on women farmers would simply require financial resources and innovation to develop projects and pilots to link women farmers more effectively to markets and resources they can use to increase productivity. The policies and institutions are already in place.
- The well-established education sector has the capacity to address gender stereotyping in textbooks and school curricula; additional financial resources for developing and printing new materials could be utilized with relative ease.
- Another area where little more than money is needed is to get women's names on land certificates issued before the regulation requiring that women's names be included on new certificates. A pilot to amend old certificates has already been implemented and could be scaled up and expanded if the funds were available.

Other programs may need more discussion and effort to develop, but as pilots, could have an impact on future development of more institutionalized approaches. The following fall in this category:

- Specific projects and activities designed to prepare women for leadership positions and to participate in decision making.
- Pilots to test different models of care provision, including community-based provision of services such as day care or care of the sick and old.
- Pilot activities to provide support to migrants, both before they leave their villages and when they arrive at their destinations. This support could be in the form of information, training, and the provision of a helpline and other support. This could go beyond working with domestic migrants, and work with Vietnamese embassies overseas to support migrants in other countries.

Implications for Government Institutions

Institutionally, there are implications in these recommendations for the organizations concerned specifically with women's issues, such as the NCFAW or VWU, and also for the line agencies and donors.

NCFAW has done a good job of ensuring attention to gender in the SEDP and in preparing the POA, but they have a limited role with respect to implementation, which will mainly need to be done by others. In moving forward, however, a large share of the responsibility for implementing the Gender Equality Law will lie with NCFAW and the VWU. There is also a role for them to play in moving the agenda into new areas, such as the recommendations made in this report relating to care work. In their coordinating and monitoring role, NCFAW will need to work with other agencies to prepare plans for implementing the POA-3 and developing a roadmap for increasing women's participation in leadership and decision making.

There are significant implications throughout this report for MOLISA. Not only are they central to the discussions of labor force, retirement age, and migrant workers, but also potentially for the improved and expanded provision of social services, including care services. If MOLISA is prepared to take up the challenge, they will need to prepare a strategic approach and prioritize their responses. In doing so, they would need to be well-supported by donors.

The Ministries of Health, Education, and Agriculture are the agencies that would need to take the responsibility for ensuring that services reach ethnic minority women and girls. MARD, together with the VWU and banks, would be the primary agency for developing services for women farmers, and MOET for revising the textbooks to remove gender stereotyping. Recommendations for improvements of sexual and reproductive health are especially relevant to MOH.

The General Statistics Office can make a valuable contribution by helping in the preparation and implementation of a labor force survey (with MOLISA) and amendments to the VHLSS. Vietnam has some excellent research institutions that could contribute to the areas identified for analysis such as the analysis of care work, approaches for reaching ethnic minorities, risk behaviors, or the situation of migrant workers and their families.

The Ministry of Finance could assist with economic analysis of the costs of care work in the home and its inclusion in the national accounts. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment would need to take the lead in the re-issuance of old LUCs so they include women's names as well as men's. There also are implications for the police force and MOH, who need to improve the way they respond to and treat the victims of domestic violence.

Implications for Donors

Donors have the means to help the government agencies act on these recommendations. Some donors are well-placed to fund discrete research studies. Those with a comparative advantage in economic analysis could provide technical support for analysis on future trends in the labor force, issues regarding pensions, or help to establish the economic justifications for further investment in care work. The international finance institutions are well-positioned to help mainstream operational responses into sectoral programs, for example on land management, agriculture, health, HIV/AIDS, or education.

A few of the identified issues call for developing well-planned and coordinated support to the government; for example, to help with the implementation of the Gender Equality Law, to develop and implement a strategy for provision of care services, or to address risk behaviors.

Annex I. POA-2 implementation and directions for POA-3

POA Objectives	POA-2 Indicators (by 2005)	Achievement by 2005	POA-3 indicators (by 2010)
1. WOMEN'S EQUAL RIGHT IN LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT	1.1 Women make up 40% of people receiving new jobs	46.5 % Overachieved	1.1 Women make up 50% of people receiving new jobs
	1.2 Rural women are productive for 75% of total working time	80% Overachieved	
	1.3 Decrease unemployment rate of women in urban area to 5–6%	6.14% Underachieved	1.2 Decrease unemployment rate of women in urban area below 6%
			1.3 Decrease 50% of women headed poor households
	1.4.1 80% of poor women-headed households get loans from poverty reduction program	70% Underachieved	1.4.1. Reach at least 80% of women-headed poor households who have demand and meet required conditions to borrow capital from the national poverty reduction program
	1.4.2 Women make up 50% of total credit borrowers	45%	1.4.2 Women make up 50% of total number of borrowers from Social Policy Bank
	See 2.3		1.5 Increase percentage of women laborers to be trained to 35%, among which 21% in vocational training
2. WOMEN'S EQUAL RIGHT IN EDUCATION	2.1 95% of illiterate women under 40 years old become literate	85.1% of illiterate women under 40 become literate Underachieved	2.1 95% of illiterate women under 40 years old become literate; increase literacy rate for ethnic minority women
	2.2 30% of women in total postgraduate students	30.1 % On target	2.2 35% of women in total postgraduate students
	2.3 Increase percentage of women laborers to be trained to 30%, among which 20% in vocational training	20.45 % and 15.46 % Underachieved	See 1.5
	2.4 30% of officials getting political, administrative, computer, and foreign language training are women	Over 30% On target 82.7% (by 2003)	2.3 Percentage of women officials getting professional, foreign language, computer training is equivalent to ratio of women working in such areas 2.4 100% of girls from 11–14 years old finish primary school and enroll in grade 6

Annex 1. POA-2 implementation and directions for POA-3

POA Objectives	POA-2 Indicators (by 2005)	Achievement by 2005	POA-3 indicators (by 2010)
		86.5% at secondary school and 45.2% at high school	2.5 Increase enrollment rate of girls at secondary school to 90% and high school to 50%, of which particular attention should be paid to girls in remote and ethnic minority areas
3. WOMEN'S EQUAL RIGHT IN HEALTH CARE	3.1 Women's average life expectancy increases to 71	71 On target	3.1 Women's average life expectancy increases to 72
	3.2 55% of pregnant women getting three prenatal health checks	53.4 % Underachieved	3.2.1 60% of pregnant getting three prenatal health checks 3.2.2 90% of pregnant women get health check before delivery
	3.3 Reduce maternal mortality rate to 80/100,000	85/100,000 Underachieved	3.3.1 Reduce maternal mortality rate to 60/100,000 3.3.2 Reduce abortion cases by 25%
	3.4 90% of women have access to healthcare services	90% On target	3.4 95% of women have access to healthcare services
		In 11 years, HIV-infected pregnant women increased nearly 20 times from 0.02% in 1994 to 0.37% in 2005	3.5 Limit to 0.5% the pregnant women infected with HIV
	3.5 100% of health stations have midwife	93% Underachieved	3.6.1 100% of health stations have midwife 3.6.2 80% of health stations have doctors
			3.7 95% of healthcare centers provide sufficient medicines and materials for pregnant care; 90% of healthcare centers have sufficient technical facilities for pregnant care; 90% of village healthcare staff have sufficient medicine and facilities for birth-giving services

POA Objectives	POA-2 Indicators (by 2005)	Achievement by 2005	POA-3 indicators (by 2010)
4. ENHANCE THE ROLE AND POSITION AND INCREASE THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP AND DECISION MAKING	4.1 15% of Executive Party Committee members at all levels will be women	7.5%(central)11.75% (provincial) 14.74% (district) 15.08% (commune) Underachieved	
		37.24% of party members are women	4.1 40% of new party members are women
	4.2 30% deputies in National Assembly are women	27.3% at the XI Congress Underachieved	4.2 30% National Assembly members at the XII Congress are women
	4.3 Female participation in People's Council committee is 28% at provincial/city, 23% at district, and 18% at commune level	23.8% (underachieved); 23.01% (on target) and 19.53% (overachieved)	4.3 Female participation in People Council committee is 27% at provincial/city, 25% at district, and 23% at commune level
	4.4 40% of state agencies and political and socio-political organizations have women leaders	Data not available - At central level: 12% of minister level, 9% of vice minister, 6% of department head, 14% of department deputy head, 25% of division head, and 33% of division deputy head are women. - At local level: 3.2% of PPC chair, 3.7% of DPC chair, 3.42% of CPC chair are women; 16.8% of PPC vice-chair, 13.9% of DPC vice chair and 8.84% of CPC vice chair are women	4.4 Each ministry/sector, state agencies (where appropriate), and each people's committee at different levels has at least one woman leader. 15% of leaders at division and department level are women
	4.5 All education, health, culture, and social organizations and enterprises having above 30% women out of total workforce will have women leaders	Data not available	4.5 All education, health, culture, and social organizations and enterprises having above 30% women out of total workforce will have women leaders
	From 1998-2005, 4,527 cases of trafficked women and girls were discovered, of which 3,862 were	4.6 Reduce trafficking cases by 50% nationwide, 20% at focused areas; 50% of trafficked women and girls are discovered, cured, and trained	

POA Objectives	POA-2 Indicators (by 2005)	Achievement by 2005	POA-3 indicators (by 2010)
		trafficked overseas; in 2005, 209 cases were discovered and 449 women and girls were trafficked overseas	
5. CAPACITY BUILDING FOR THE MACHINERY FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN	5.1 100% of cadres working for the advancement of women will receive relevant technical training 5.2 100% of leaders at ministries, departments, sectors and mass organizations at central level are educated with gender knowledge	56.50% Underachieved 58.2% Underachieved 63% of ministries and sectors and 76.2% of provinces and cities From 2001-2005, NCFAW supervised 115/149 ministries/sectors and provinces, cities reached 77% 97% of provinces/cities and 92.6% of ministries/sectors	5.1 100% of cadres working for the advancement of women will receive relevant technical training 5.2 100% of leaders at ministries/branches, provinces/cities are educated with gender knowledge 5.3 100% of ministries, sectors, provinces, and cities integrate gender equity objectives/targets into their 5-year and annual development plans or socio-economic development plans 5.4 100% of agencies under supervision on activities for advancement of women; enhance efficiency in gender inequality settlement through supervision 5.5 100% ministries/sectors and people's committee at all levels allocate budget for women's advancement activities

Annex 2. Summary of analysis and recommendations

I. CLOSING THE GENDER GAP: PERSISTENT CHALLENGES

GENDER ISSUE AND AFFECTED POPULATIONS	ANALYSIS OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT IN VIETNAM				
Ethnic minority women benefit least from education and health services, and lag in access to economic opportunities	RESEARCH AND DATA	POLICIES AND THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK	INSTITUTIONS	RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION / INFORMATION DISSEMINATION	ATTITUDES, NORMS, BEHAVIORS
<p>Gap in 15–17 year olds at school is 13% for ethnic girls and boys (61% and 74%) and only 3% for Kinh, Chinese girls and boys (71 and 74%)</p> <p>Literacy rate is 92% for Kinh women, 70% for Thai women, and 22% for H'mong women.</p> <p>63% of women in North mountain ethnic groups and 75% women in central region ethnic groups give birth at home.</p> <p>Ethnic minority women twice as likely to work in ag. self-employment (79%/ 43%) and half as likely to be in wage employment (15% / 31%) as Kinh/Chinese.</p>	<p>Data are available</p>	<p>Good policies in place but not reaching all ethnic groups SEDP recognizes need to issue incentive policies to encourage girls and women from remote and ethnic minority areas to enroll in schools and colleges, to implement support policy to ensure gender equality among ethnic minority people</p>	<p>The quality of health care and education services is poor in remote areas</p> <p>Lack of agricultural extension workers from ethnic minorities</p> <p>Few vocational training institutions in remote areas</p>	<p>Resources and information are not reaching women in remote areas and particular ethnic groups.</p> <p>Education and healthcare services are limited in rural areas.</p>	<p>Ethnic minority parents may pay more attention to boys than girls in schooling and healthcare</p> <p>Different groups define the role of women differently, including some ethnic groups that are matriarchal</p>
	<p>Recommendations Research to find innovative, culturally appropriate ways of delivering services to ethnic minorities</p>		<p>Recommendations Improve capacity of institutions in remote areas to provide culturally appropriate services to ethnic women</p> <p>Encourage recruitment and training of ethnic minority teachers, healthcare, and agricultural extension workers</p>	<p>Recommendations Allocate sufficient resources to develop innovative programs and projects, including piloting cash transfer schemes</p> <p>Expand education, healthcare, agricultural extension services, and information for ethnic women.</p>	<p>Recommendations Demonstrate economic return of educating ethnic minority girls Target education and awareness programs at adult women so they can facilitate change for the next generation</p>

Annex 2. Summary of analysis and recommendations

GENDER ISSUE AND AFFECTED POPULATIONS	ANALYSIS OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT IN VIETNAM				
<p>Gender stereotyping in school text books helps to perpetuate attitudes and behaviors that reinforce gender inequalities in the workforce, society, and in the home</p>	RESEARCH AND DATA	POLICIES AND THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK	INSTITUTIONS	RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION / INFORMATION DISSEMINATION	ATTITUDES, NORMS, BEHAVIORS
	No systematic review or monitoring	SEDP mentions the need to improve the quality of the textbooks, eliminate all misconceptions and gender stereotypes	A well-established institution (MOET) is responsible, but without a program or resources to make the necessary changes	Sufficient resources have not been allocated to make the changes necessary.	Schoolbooks perpetuate attitudes and behaviors underlying existing or emerging gender issues, including lack of sharing of work within the home, discrimination in the workforce, and risk behaviors
				<p>Recommendations Develop program to change text-book stereotypes and make revisions before new books are printed</p>	
<p>Women are major contributors in the agriculture sector and appear to be taking an increasingly important role</p> <p>Vietnam has > 12 million women farmers; 52% of the agriculture labor force are women</p> <p>New participants in the agriculture sector are mostly women (ADB, 2005)</p>	Data on women's access to services and extension available	MARD has developed and is implementing a gender strategy.	MARD and the Farmer's Union are key organizations for farmers; VWU also supports female farmers	Progress is being made to provide services to women farmers; 30 percent of extension workers are women	There is an awareness that women work in agriculture
	Research and sex-disaggregated statistics available from MARD.	The POA-3 and SEDP prioritize the needs of women in agriculture	CFAWs established at all levels within MARD	Women remain proportionately represented as beneficiaries of services	Cultural norms in rural areas that women must stay close to home limit their training opportunities
	<p>Recommendations Develop policies to improve women farmers' access to markets and technologies</p>	<p>Recommendations Establish/expand women farmers' networks to get better access to services</p>	<p>Recommendations Provide services for women to access opportunities, e.g. training in literacy, numeracy, and vocational training; targeted information strategies; and credit</p>	<p>Recommendations Use mass media to show women's role in agriculture and their needs in training, information, and credit</p>	

GENDER ISSUE AND AFFECTED POPULATIONS	ANALYSIS OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT IN VIETNAM				
	RESEARCH AND DATA	POLICIES AND THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK	INSTITUTIONS	RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION / INFORMATION DISSEMINATION	ATTITUDES, NORMS, BEHAVIORS
Women's participation in decision making is not seeing significant increases and targets are not being met	<p>Reports exist on women's participation in leadership, politics, and the civil service</p> <p>No data comparing quality of roles occupied by women and men in leadership</p>	<p>Several decrees focus on increasing women's participation in leadership and decision making</p> <p>Targets for women's participation in the POA</p> <p>Temporary quotas have been used during elections</p>	<p>Women present in all areas of government and national assembly</p> <p>No overt discrimination against women, but key positions are not being held by women</p> <p>Women receive less support than men for training and promotion</p>	<p>Some resources to promote women as candidates in elections</p> <p>Lack of resources to increase women's role in leadership</p> <p>Few resources allocated for full-time positions in politics</p>	<p>Confucian ideas of womanhood uphold men as breadwinners and decision makers</p> <p>Politics still perceived as man's job</p> <p>Male culture of politics restricts women's participation</p> <p>Some women don't believe that women can become leaders</p>
		<p>Recommendations Prepare comprehensive roadmap identifying policies that need to be changed, targets and action plans in each line ministry</p>	<p>Recommendations Each institution to have appropriate measures to implement POA targets</p>	<p>Recommendations Increase resources to encourage women in leadership such as funds for women candidates during elections and funding for more full-time positions within the parliament</p> <p>Initiate programs to increase women's political awareness</p>	<p>Recommendations Increase the promotion and visibility of women as leaders that aim to break negative stereotypes</p>

II. LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD FOR SUSTAINED GROWTH

GENDER ISSUE AND AFFECTED POPULATIONS	ANALYSIS OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT IN VIETNAM				
	RESEARCH AND DATA	POLICIES AND THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK	INSTITUTIONS	RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION / INFORMATION DISSEMINATION	ATTITUDES, NORMS, BEHAVIORS
<p>Differences in retirement age impacts women's career opportunities, especially in public sector</p> <p>Lower age of retirement is excuse for lowering cut off age for women to participate in training and reduces opportunities for promotion</p>	No comprehensive research on the topic	Completion of regulation and implementation of policies to ensure efficiency and fairness in retirement mentioned in SEDP		There have been several consultations around the issue but it remains contentious	Perception that women are less healthy than men and need to be retired earlier Perception that women have been working harder including housework, and need to retire earlier
	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Research economic arguments, and impacts on labor force, employment and promotion</p>			<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Hold informed consultation with both men and women</p>	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Analysis would provide sufficient information for people to judge</p>
<p>Legal framework to prohibit discrimination against women in employment still needs to be put in place and implemented</p> <p>Discrimination regularly visible in recruitment advertisements in media and other areas</p>	<p>Research on the situation of women at work available</p> <p>MOLISA collects and manages data on government employees but research and statistics on personnel at the workplace level are limited</p>	<p>Labor law makes hiring women costly for employers</p> <p>Employment for women in POA-3 and SEDP; new law on gender equality addresses discrimination in training, recruitment, and promotion</p>	There is no special institution taking care of law enforcement on the issue	No resources for law enforcement	<p>There are stereotypes of men's and women's job.</p> <p>Employers demonstrate preferences for male or female employees</p> <p>Men are preferred in recruitment for higher paid and higher position jobs</p>
	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Invest in gender responsive personnel management systems and periodic labor force survey</p>	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Gender Equality Law to be implemented</p>	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Establish institution/mechanism and procedures, and sanctions against discrimination</p>	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Resources for Law dissemination and enforcement</p>	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Media to change stereotypes of men and women's job and positions</p>

GENDER ISSUE AND AFFECTED POPULATIONS	ANALYSIS OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT IN VIETNAM				
	RESEARCH AND DATA	POLICIES AND THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK	INSTITUTIONS	RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION / INFORMATION DISSEMINATION	ATTITUDES, NORMS, BEHAVIORS
<p>Women lack necessary skills to compete on equal terms with men</p> <p>Women make up 33% of participants of vocational trainings during 01-05. 16% of men, 10% women got skill through education, 14% of men and 10% of women had on job training.</p>	<p>Data are available on current participation but not on effectiveness, nor on future trends and needs</p>	<p>Skill development for women and temporary quotas mentioned in SEDP and POA</p>	<p>Few training institutes paying attention to gender</p>	<p>Resources are not meeting women's needs</p>	<p>There is a popular perception that it is not worth investing in women over 40 years because they retire early.</p>
	<p>Recommendations Skills for future economic developments need to be assessed</p>	<p>Recommendations Revise vocational training strategies to meet future needs</p>	<p>Recommendations Increase appropriate training and skill development places for women</p>	<p>Recommendations Support programs to train informal sector workers</p>	

Annex 2. Summary of analysis and recommendations

GENDER ISSUE AND AFFECTED POPULATIONS	ANALYSIS OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT IN VIETNAM				
	RESEARCH AND DATA	POLICIES AND THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK	INSTITUTIONS	RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION / INFORMATION DISSEMINATION	ATTITUDES, NORMS, BEHAVIORS
<p>Women bear most of burden of work at home while contributing equally to income generating</p> <p>Most housework is performed by women and girls</p> <p>Most employees in the care economy are women</p>	<p>VWU study on unpaid care work women perform</p> <p>MARD data on rural women's time use</p> <p>Lack of information on women in paid care work</p>	<p>Family Law 2000 recognizes women's role as care workers; GOV recognizes role of women in the home but not men</p> <p>SEDP has measures to reduce housework burden; except for childcare, there are no policies for care work</p> <p>National budget does not attribute a monetary value to women's care</p>	<p>Childcare is responsibility of MOET; disabled and veterans are the responsibility of MOLISA; MOH is responsible for the sick</p> <p>Care provided by the VWU, public health system, or education system is considered inadequate</p>	<p>State resources for social care work are insufficient.</p> <p>Reduction in the national budget for childcare, which was previously included in the budgets of SOEs</p> <p>Women clients demand more information on the availability and quality of social care services</p>	<p>Traditional attitudes and behaviors position women as carers</p> <p>Care work is considered private and is usually carried out in the home or by family members.</p> <p>Paid domestic work is considered stopgap employment for young women before they marry or for retired women.</p>
	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Research care work to understand numbers of women engaged, working conditions, and needs</p> <p>Assess impact of infrastructure in reducing household work burden</p>	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Develop policies to professionalize and regulate paid care work including certification of care workers in private sector</p> <p>Develop policies to encourage private sector to provide care services</p> <p>Count value of care work in the national budget</p>	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Build and strengthen public institutions that support care work (day care, care of elderly, and sick)</p> <p>Support development of private sector institutions that provide care services</p>	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Provide professional training on care work professions such as aged care, child care, and caring for the disabled</p> <p>Develop pilots for different models of care services such as community-based childcare centers, subsidies, or state-funded endowment payments</p>	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Promote greater sharing of the work between men and women</p> <p>Promote positive gender images of both men and women at home and at work</p>

GENDER ISSUE AND AFFECTED POPULATIONS	ANALYSIS OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT IN VIETNAM				
	RESEARCH AND DATA	POLICIES AND THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK	INSTITUTIONS	RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION / INFORMATION DISSEMINATION	ATTITUDES, NORMS, BEHAVIORS
<p>Previously issued land tenure certificates do not have husband and wife names</p> <p>66% of LUCs for annual agricultural land and 60% of LUCs for residential land hold only men's name</p> <p>For ethnic minorities, these figures are 79% and 77% respectively</p>	<p>Statistics exist on the numbers of women registered on LUCs</p>	<p>Land law states men's and women's names should be on newly issued LUCs</p> <p>Target for joint names on LUCs by 2005 in Vietnam Development Goals and CPRGS and in SEDP</p> <p>The current law does not provide a mechanism to change existing LUCs</p>	<p>MONRE and MARD provide support for women's access to land</p> <p>Decrees/regulations on the implementation of the land law direct DONRE to include two names on LUCs</p>	<p>Resources have been allocated to increase the numbers of women registered as land users</p> <p>Resources have not been allocated to change existing LUCs</p>	<p>Patriloc and patrilineal traditions legitimate men as owners of land</p> <p>Awareness of the land issue is limited, even among DONRE staff</p>
	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Conduct research on impact of joint titling to women's access to land and to capital</p>	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Issue regulation to change all existing LUCs</p>		<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Allocate resources to include names of men and women on all existing LUCs</p>	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Raise awareness on women's rights of access to land, especially among ethnic groups</p>

III. THE FALLOUT OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGE

GENDER ISSUE AND AFFECTED POPULATIONS	ANALYSIS OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT IN VIETNAM				
	RESEARCH AND DATA	POLICIES AND THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK	INSTITUTIONS	RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION / INFORMATION DISSEMINATION	ATTITUDES, NORMS, BEHAVIORS
<p>Female domestic migrants are vulnerable to gender-segregated types of employment and gender gaps, for example in wages</p> <p>57% of females working in manufacturing are migrants</p> <p>Gender gaps in wages greater among migrants than non-migrants (76% and 89% respectively)</p>	<p>GSO study on domestic migration in 2005</p> <p>Limited information on vulnerability of men and women migrants in informal sector</p>	<p>Government monitors movement of people through residency permits</p> <p>SEDP mentions assisting migrants have access to services</p>	<p>People's Committees, MOLISA, employers, share responsibilities for migrant issues</p> <p>Public and private recruit /training services exist</p>	<p>Adequate information about jobs not provided to migrants before they leave their villages</p> <p>Resources not invested in services in receiving areas, especially in industrial zones.</p>	<p>There is a perception that migrant men and women engage in alcoholism, injecting drug use and sex work</p> <p>There is a perception that migrants are a burden on the cities, receiving migrants</p>
	<p>Recommendations Collect data on migration through regular surveys (e.g. VHLS); qualitative research on migration and the impacts on their families</p>	<p>Recommendations Develop specific policies to support migrants to de-link residence registration from service delivery</p>	<p>Recommendations Simplify registration procedures</p>	<p>Recommendations Improve information and services provided to women and men before migrating and improve basic services and infra where migrants work</p>	<p>Recommendations Media to show contribution of migrants to economic development of the cities</p>
<p>Future trends in labor exports may expose women to higher risks</p> <p>Estimated 288,000 men and 112,000 women work in 40 countries.</p> <p>Female percentage of annual overseas migrants increased from 28% in 1992 to 54% in 2004</p>	<p>Lack of data on the impacts of migration on families</p> <p>Lack of data on incidence of trafficking</p>	<p>Labor export law is in place but law against trafficking not final</p> <p>Addressing trafficking in SEDP, and targets in POA-3</p>	<p>Private sector labor exporters provide some services before departure</p>	<p>Lack of social support services to cross-border migrants before they leave, or in receiving country</p>	<p>The perception that women can be bought for marriage, or promised to men, minimizes the importance and implications of trafficking on the lives of Vietnamese women</p>
	<p>Recommendations Collect data and research as above</p>	<p>Recommendations Implementation guidelines for labor export law should be gender-responsive; law against trafficking needed</p>	<p>Recommendations Strengthen public sector support to cross-border migrants including embassies</p>	<p>Recommendations Develop programs and projects for provision of social support services and increase information to female migrants</p>	

GENDER ISSUE AND AFFECTED POPULATIONS	ANALYSIS OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT IN VIETNAM				
	RESEARCH AND DATA	POLICIES AND THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK	INSTITUTIONS	RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION / INFORMATION DISSEMINATION	ATTITUDES, NORMS, BEHAVIORS
<p>Risk behaviors affect men and women differently</p> <p>Men twice as likely to be killed by accident and 1.5 times more likely to engage in risky activities than women.</p> <p>Women's lack of sexual negotiating power is placing them at risk of unwanted pregnancies, STIs, HIV/AIDS, and complications following abortions</p>	<p>Statistics and information on HIV/AIDS collected by MOH, VHLSS, NGOs, and academia.</p> <p>Little or no quantitative or empirical research on risk-taking behaviors among men and women</p>	<p>National Strategy for HIV/AIDS and policies on tobacco control and accident prevention exist, but sectoral focus and don't tackle gendered issues or focus on young people.</p> <p>Measures to reduce risk taking in SEDP</p>	<p>Youth Union and Women Union provide support and information on some high-risk behaviors</p> <p>Education and health institutions lack of resources and technical ability address risk behaviors</p>	<p>Limited development initiatives have addressed issues such as unsafe sex, high numbers of traffic accidents, and drug and alcohol abuse</p>	<p>Risk-taking behaviors are often wrongly associated with particular social groups, including migrants, people from low economic backgrounds.</p> <p>Culturally accepted behavior associated with masculinity is leading men to take risks associated with motorbikes, drugs, and alcohol, exposing them to risks of injury</p>
	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Research risk-taking behaviours and improve monitoring systems</p>	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Focus policies and programs on adolescents and include unmarried women and men</p>	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Increase quality of social services to respond to needs of young people and to risk behaviors</p>	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Support media campaigns to inform young people of risks, and of where support is available</p>	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Media to change the attitudes, especially among adolescent and young men and women</p>

Annex 2. Summary of analysis and recommendations

GENDER ISSUE AND AFFECTED POPULATIONS	ANALYSIS OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT IN VIETNAM				
	RESEARCH AND DATA	POLICIES AND THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK	INSTITUTIONS	RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION / INFORMATION DISSEMINATION	ATTITUDES, NORMS, BEHAVIORS
<p>High rate of abortions pose health risks</p> <p>In 2002, it is estimated that 46 percent of all pregnancies were terminated</p> <p>Increasing gap in the sex ratio at birth in some provinces or districts, purportedly due to sex-selective abortions</p>	<p>Difficult to obtain data on abortions</p> <p>Abortion statistics do not usually count unmarried women</p>	<p>Abortion reduction is a priority issue in POA-3</p> <p>New regulation banning sex-selective abortions</p>		<p>Inadequate provision of information and counseling on contraception, and limited contraceptive choices</p> <p>Few clinics for young men and women to receive counseling and information</p>	<p>Perception that contraception is the woman's responsibility</p> <p>Son preference is prevalent</p>
	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Improve data collection on abortion and contraception statistics among unmarried women</p>		<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Develop clinics to provide sexual counseling for young people</p>	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Provide a wider range of contraceptive choices</p> <p>Provide more education on the side effects of pregnancy terminations</p>	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Change approaches to reproductive health for men to take greater role in using contraception methods</p> <p>Encourage open discussion and provision of family planning and safe-sex services</p>
<p>Domestic violence persists as an issue</p> <p>Recent nationwide survey found 6% of women being beaten and 21% got verbal abuse in a twelve-month period</p> <p>Domestic violence was cited as the justification in 66% of all divorces</p>	<p>There is limited information and data on domestic violence</p>	<p>No existing law comprehensively dealing with gender-based violence</p> <p>Domestic violence in SEDP</p>	<p>Gender-based violence managed by the public health care system, the VWU, and police; none of these institutions are adequately equipped to deal with the problem</p>	<p>Lack of welfare services, qualified counselors or police and medical professionals to provide support services</p>	<p>Perception that men are hot-tempered minimizes significance of domestic violence</p> <p>Perception that family problems are private means that victims do not speak out or seek help</p> <p>Abuse and sexual violence in marriage not perceived as domestic violence</p>
	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Research problem of gender-based violence, including the costs to society</p>	<p>Recommendation</p> <p>Support development and implementation of law on domestic violence, including sexual violence</p>	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Improve and expand existing services through provision of training, information, and resources</p>	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Develop culturally responsive services, including welfare, legal services, counseling, information, shelter</p>	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Use mass media to change attitudes toward domestic violence</p>

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