



# Internal Migration

and Socio-economic Development in Viet Nam:  
A Call to Action



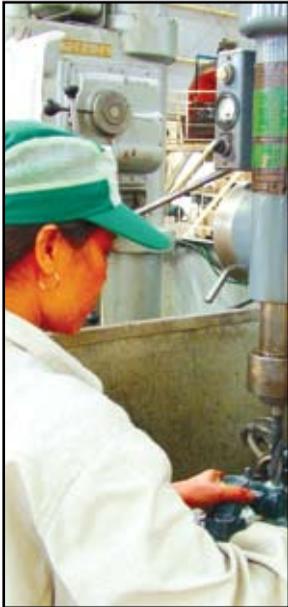




# CONTENTS

Introduction	4
1. Need for Internal Migration Data for Evidence-based Policymaking	5
2. Reform of the Household Registration System: Removal of Institutional Barriers to Migrants' Access	7
3. Safe Internal Migration and Protection of Migrants in their Employment	9
4. Need for Migrant-Sensitive Planning in Urban Areas and Industrial Zones	11
5. Explore Ways to Leverage Internal Migration for Human Development	13

# INTRODUCTION



This advocacy brief highlights five main ways in which internal migration affects and is affected by socio-economic development. As such, these are issues that deserve attention from policymakers and development partners in Viet Nam. The content of this document is drawn from the United Nations discussion paper “*Internal Migration: Opportunities and Challenges for Socio-Economic Development in Viet Nam*”, which analyses the impact of internal migration through three lenses, namely the lens of the migrant themselves, the migrant-receiving communities and the migrant-sending communities.

Like many other countries that have undergone rapid economic and social development, Viet Nam has experienced an exponential increase in the movement of people both within and outside its borders over the past 20 years. There is growing recognition that these processes – development and migration - go hand in hand. Migration drives, as well as results from, a country’s social and economic development. In Viet Nam, the socio-economic development resulting from the *Doi Moi* reforms has certainly catalyzed increasing internal migration by making it possible for people to move away from their area of origin, and by providing the motivation

to do so as a result of growing regional disparities. Internal migration has in turn contributed to socio-economic development as migrant workers have moved to fill demand for labour created by industrial development and foreign direct investment. Not only does this migration contribute to migrants’ own wellbeing and security through higher and diversified incomes, but their households and home communities also benefit through the receipt of remittances.

Despite the complexity of the interrelationship between migration and development, one point is clear: migration should not be seen as an impediment to development. However, neither is it a panacea for poverty or income inequality. The movement of people is a natural and irrefutable part of human history. In recognizing this it is easier to appreciate that fact that migration offers both opportunities for development as well as challenges. Internal migration can contribute to economic growth, both on a national scale as well as at the household level, and can foster links between destination areas and areas of origin, decreasing regional disparities. Supporting migration involves supporting individuals’ and households’ decisions about their livelihoods, which contributes to migrants’ economic and social empowerment.

To enhance the potential of internal migration to contribute to equitable social and economic development, this paper provides a set of specific policy recommendations as outlined in the chapters below. The recommendations focus on the need for more and better data on internal migration to support evidence-based policymaking; reform of the household registration system; actions to ensure internal migration is safe and migrants are protected in their employment; use of migrant-sensitive planning for urban and industrial zones; and exploration of new ways to leverage internal migration for human development.

# 1. THE NEED FOR INTERNAL MIGRATION DATA TO SUPPORT EVIDENCE-BASED POLICYMAKING



The importance of a solid evidence base for successful social and economic development is well understood among policymakers in Viet Nam. However, there is a significant gap in data on internal migration, which carries widespread implications for understanding and measuring the parallel processes of migration and development, as well as for exploring how migration can be used to enhance

Viet Nam's socio-economic development. This gap needs to be addressed so that effective, evidence-based policies can be designed which adequately address the unmet needs of migrants. These policies would also allow Viet Nam to reap the full development benefits provided by internal migration.

Information on internal migration in Viet Nam is available from national census data, as well as a range of other large-scale surveys, including one specialized migration survey from 2004. While these large-scale surveys seek to be representative of the entire population, it is important to acknowledge that some types of migration, including movements by arguably the most vulnerable internal migrants in Viet Nam, are not being captured. This includes data on short-term, seasonal and return migration. These movements are left out of statistical records mainly as a result of the definition of migration used in

these surveys as well as the under-sampling of mobile people.

One important illustration of this is the decennial Population and Housing Census, conducted most recently in 2009, which is the most representative demographic snapshot of internal migration flows in Viet Nam. Unfortunately, the census defines a migrant as someone who has a different place of residence at the time of the survey as compared to five years prior. As a result, those who migrated and returned within those five years are not recorded as migrants, as they would in fact have resided in the same place on the two dates at the beginning and end of the five-year period. Other seasonal and short-term migrants are also underrepresented in census data because only individuals classified as "usual residents" are interviewed during data collection). This same limitation also applies to data from the Viet Nam (Household) Living Standards Survey (VHLSS) conducted every two years and to the 2004 Viet Nam Migration Survey (VMS), which have either used the same sampling as the census or also include only "usual residents". The VHLSS also excludes worker dormitories from sampling, which are predominantly made up of migrants.

An illustration of the limited sampling of the VHLSS is evident in a comparison with the 2004 Intercensal Survey of Ho Chi Minh City. The intercensal survey found that 20% of residents in Ho Chi Minh City held KT3 or KT4 registration status, while the VHLSS of the same year counted a mere 3.8% from this same group. One estimate of the number of migrants left "uncounted" by the census is 12 to 16 million people. This figure is calculated based on a ratio of *unregistered*

migrants to *registered* migrants of four to one, based on estimates of unregistered migrants in China, where a similar system of household registration is used.<sup>1</sup>

Whilst the sampling of the VHLSS does exclude many temporary and unregistered migrants, the survey has in recent years included questions which allow for the identification of seasonal migrants amongst those who are sampled. This is because since 2004 the household surveys have recorded the number of months each household member has resided in the house for the past 12 months, as well as where each household member is temporarily or permanently registered. This information could be used to better understand internal migration flows in Viet Nam as no representative numbers of seasonal migrants are currently available. Unfortunately, to date little attempt has been made to analyze this data or to make it publicly available.

The limitations of available data on internal migration reflect the understandable difficulties of capturing a (by definition) mobile segment of the population. Nevertheless, it is crucial that greater efforts are made to include this population in national data because there is evidence to suggest that for internal economic migrants in Viet Nam, those likely to be excluded by census and survey data are those vulnerable, most marginalized from social protection programs and the considered in

Government planning. Other implications of the under-sampling of migrants in large-scale surveys include the underinvestment in urban planning (see Part 5) and the underestimated extent of urban poverty in Viet Nam due to only counting the local registered poor and not the migrant poor.

### CALL TO ACTION

- Revise the questionnaires and sampling frames of national surveys to capture and identify all types of migration (including seasonal, short-term and unregistered migrants).
- Carry out specialized surveys to better understand the different types of migration patterns and their relative contributions to development.
- Improve data analysis and dissemination to allow for the integration of comprehensive, quality, relevant and adequate internal migration data in socio-economic planning and policymaking.

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

## 2. REFORM OF THE HOUSEHOLD REGISTRATION SYSTEM: REMOVAL OF INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS TO MIGRANTS' ACCESS



Viet Nam's household registration system presents a systemic institutional barrier for internal migrants in accessing both basic and specialized Government services, contrary to the rights provided to them and all other citizens under the Constitution of Viet Nam. Reform of this system is needed so that the registration status of citizens is decoupled from their access to social services, giving equal

access to everyone and thus fulfilling the rights provided by the Constitution and other international agreements.

The household registration system has a long history in Viet Nam and comprises four categories of registration status: migrants typically possess KT2, KT3 or KT4 registration status, in contrast to those permanently registered in the district in which they reside (KT1). These first three groups of residents are limited to receiving health, schooling and other social services within their district of residence. In addition, those with KT4 registration status are registered as individuals without a family (in contrast to the other three categories), and can only hold a three-month extendable residence permit and cannot own land titles.

The administrative system for re-registering in another location is burdensome, and not uniformly implemented across the country. This was reflected in the 2004 VMS, which revealed that 42% of those surveyed experienced difficulties as a result of their non-permanent residential status. Of those migrants who did

not re-register their temporary status in their destination area, 48% believed that they did not have permission to re-register, while 22% thought it was not necessary to register and 9% did not know how. Significant numbers of internal migrants do not register their movements at all and remain on the household lists in their home communes and wards, despite actually living in another district or province. Others initially register as temporary residents but then fail to re-register after its expiry. The total number of these unregistered migrants remains unknown due to the very fact that they are unregistered and unrecorded.

Whilst initially intended as a mechanism for population management, the registration system has evolved into a device further increasing inequity, which is not in keeping with Viet Nam's current efforts to promote development for all and achievement of the Viet Nam Development Goals. Government-provided services, such as health (including reproductive health), schooling, HIV care and treatment and access to poverty reduction services, are tied to the registration system, which restricts or privileges access to those permanently registered at any given place. Even where migrants are not de jure restricted from accessing certain services, in reality they often are. For example, non-permanent resident children are allowed to attend schools in their district of residence, but only if there is space after permanent resident children have enrolled. In reality, because of the undersupply of schools in many urban districts in Viet Nam, there is evidence to suggest that some migrant children are in fact unable to access schooling.

Often, excluded migrants are especially in need of public services because of increased economic and social vulnerabilities linked to their internal migration. For example, many unregistered migrants work in the informal sector and live in unhygienic and unsafe housing, making them more susceptible to health risks.

Despite this vulnerability they have little income to pay for out-of-pocket health services. Migrants who are not registered are also not eligible for poverty reduction and welfare programmes at their destination area (such as loans). The unavailability of social support for urban migrants is especially alarming given the recent increase in urban living expenses, not matched by an equivalent increase in wages.

In recent years, certain aspects of the registration system have been reformed, most notably through the new Law on Residence, which took effect in 2007. These reforms have lessened the requirements for temporary residents applying for permanent registration in centrally-administered cities, and removed geographical restrictions for registration of births and any legal conditionality of employment for registration. These are commendable steps towards ensuring equity and equality of access to public services.

However, it has also been observed that the implementation of these reforms by local authorities is inconsistent across the country due to differing interpretations of the law. This inconsistency has created confusion regarding the registration procedures required in different places across Viet Nam, meaning that those who are entitled to permanent or temporary residency under the 2007 law may not be able to get it. In addition, many migrants may be deterred from applying in the first place because of uncertainty. In this context it is important to remember that the actual consequence of imposing more restrictions on movement is not a reduction of people migrating, but rather an increase in the vulnerability of these population groups.

The Constitution of Viet Nam guarantees that all Vietnamese citizens are “equal before

the law and have equal rights in all fields – political, economic, cultural and social”.. This includes freedom of movement and residence, the right to access health services, the right to access education, the right to work, the right to access socio-economic services in an equal manner and the right to be free from gender discrimination. These rights are also reaffirmed in many international human rights commitments that Viet Nam has made. It is necessary to remove the barriers preventing non-permanent residents from accessing basic services. This is an important step in ensuring that Viet Nam’s socio-economic development benefits all.

### CALL TO ACTION

- Decouple the registration status of citizens from their access to basic and specialised government services to ensure equitable access and non-discrimination for all Vietnamese people, regardless of permanent or temporary residence.
- Ensure that the Law on Residence is implemented uniformly across the country by building the capacity of local authorities and government officials.
- Empower internal migrants (and prospective migrants) to be informed of their registration rules and procedures.

### 3. SAFE INTERNAL MIGRATION AND PROTECTION OF MIGRANTS IN THEIR EMPLOYMENT



The vast majority of internal migrants recorded by the 2004 VMS move for economic reasons, namely for employment and to improve living conditions. Many succeed and find work with decent pay in a safe environment and are satisfied with life after migration. However, many migrants experience discrimination in the labour market and some also find themselves at

risk of exploitation. One of the main ways in which internal migration policies can be used to enhance development is by supporting and empowering migrants to find safe employment.

Migrants earn less than non-migrants, as shown by the 2004 VMS, with female and ethnic minority migrants at a particular disadvantage in this regard. Part of the difference in earnings is said to result from the concentration of migrants in informal, lower-paid and less-protected jobs compared to non-migrants. Some suggest that this is one of the many indirect consequences of the household registration system, as employers do in practice consider the registration status of prospective employees, although they are legally not permitted to.<sup>2</sup>

Migrants who work in informal and temporary employment are also less able to protect

themselves against unfair and unsafe labour practices because they are less likely to have labour contracts.<sup>3</sup> In addition to providing for the basic rights of workers (such as a minimum wage and a notice period for termination) labour contracts are important for all workers, and migrants in particular, as it is on the basis of these contracts that workers access social, health and employment insurance.

Whilst greater efforts are certainly required to ensure migrants are covered by labour contracts, the existence of labour contracts does not of itself guarantee protection. It is also important to ensure that migrants are well-informed of social insurance schemes and that strong enforcement penalties exist for employers who violate their obligations.

Many migrants are more vulnerable due to their age. This is true for children and adolescent migrant workers under the age of 18 who move away from their families to take up employment in factories, in agriculture or as domestic workers. Studies have demonstrated that, in breach of the Viet Nam Labour Code, many child labourers are not registered by their employers, work many hours per day, and are paid very little or not at all.<sup>4</sup> Isolated from their families, and often from other children as well (e.g. domestic workers), they suffer physical and mental stresses and are more prone to physical and psychological abuse. It is important that the particular vulnerabilities of child migrants in the labour market are better understood and greater protection efforts are made.

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

3 Committee for Social Affairs, National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, *Some critical problems in employment and vocational training*, Report No 482TT/UBXH.

4 International Labour Organisation (2006) *Child Domestic Workers in Ho Chi Minh City: Survey Report*.

Labour exploitation in the sex industry, often amounting to human trafficking, is a further risk which internal migrants or potential migrants are particularly susceptible to. Studies have demonstrated that mobility is often linked to entry into sex work for women and girls (research into the situation of men and boys is notably lacking), suggesting that a large proportion of those working in the sex industry in Viet Nam are migrants. This includes those who only decide to engage in sex work after arriving at their destination, due to a lack of better employment opportunities. It also includes those who are coerced or forced into sex work, such as migrants who are “recruited” from their home area thinking they have been offered a job in a café or bar.<sup>5</sup>

To address these issues of migrant vulnerability in the labour market and the risk of exploitation and trafficking, it is important for Viet Nam to encourage safe migration practices and establish an adequate and well-enforced legislative framework to prevent and address labour exploitation. It is also important that prospective migrants are well-informed about their options and are linked to genuine jobs through legitimate and affordable employment agencies that provide them with information about their destination, their employers, relevant insurance schemes and their rights.

### CALL TO ACTION

- The current Labour Law should be revised to reflect the large informal sector and the changing economic and demographic environments in Viet Nam.
- Continued efforts are needed to strengthen the trafficking prevention framework through the development of the Law on Human Trafficking and the National Targeted Programme.
- Access-to-information mechanisms for internal migrants should be established in departure and destination areas, which can provide advise on migrant labour rights, employment opportunities, administrative processes for household registration, availability of health and other basic social services, and referral information for migrants who have been trafficked or experienced abuse.
- Existing government employment centres should be improved, including adoption of a client-based approach. These centres should first improve the services offered, and subsequently improve their marketing to attract clients.

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5 Rushing, Rosanne (2006) Migration and Sexual Exploitation in Viet Nam, *Asia and Pacific Migration Journal*, Vol. 149(4) pp.471-494; Le, Bach Duong (2002) Viet Nam Children in Prostitution in Ha Noi, Hai Phong, Ho Chi Minh City and Can Tho: A Rapid Assessment International Labour Organization-International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, Geneva.

## 4. NEED FOR MIGRANT-SENSITIVE PLANNING IN URBAN AREAS AND INDUSTRIAL ZONES



In 2009, an additional 7.3 million people lived in urban areas of Viet Nam compared to the prior decade, representing 77% of the country's population growth during this period.<sup>6</sup> According to available data, internal migration is the largest contributor to population growth in urban areas and industrial zones in Viet Nam. Considering the underrepresentation of seasonal and short-

term migrants in the census data, it is almost certain that the actual population residing in urban areas is significantly larger. For example, estimates of unregistered migrants alone suggest that they make up as much as 15% of Ho Chi Minh City's population.<sup>7</sup>

This population increase exerts pressure on existing urban infrastructure, such as water and sanitation, transportation and schooling facilities, and the provision of adequate housing. These infrastructural shortfalls are particularly acute in areas where low-income migrants are concentrated, areas where the price of land is cheaper and which are close to industrial zones where many migrant workers are employed. This

is the case in at least 30 wards in Ho Chi Minh City where migrants make up over half of the residents.<sup>8</sup> Boarding houses have proliferated in these areas where recently arrived migrants initially lodge, buildings that are notorious for poor construction as well as lack of electricity, sewage systems and poor or no connection to public transport. In many of these areas squatter and slum settlements have emerged.

The dire housing situation of many migrants is reflected in the 2004 VMS, which recorded this as the primary cause of dissatisfaction amongst migrant respondents. Women migrants in particular cited their place of living as a problem. These conditions are only worsening, with recent signs showing an increase in urban poverty. It is estimated that 41% of urban households in Viet Nam lack one of the following: durable housing, sufficient living area, access to an improved water source, access to improved sanitation, or secure tenure. Many migrants also live on-site at their place of work, most notably those in the construction sector. In order to save money, they minimize their expenses, paying for essential needs but often spending very little on food and healthcare, further exacerbating the vulnerability resulting from precarious and insecure living conditions.

While migrants bear many of the difficulties associated with urbanization, such as inadequate housing and poor infrastructure, they generally only feature in such discussions

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

7 Le Van Thanh (2002) Population and urbanization in Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam) towards new policies on migration and urban development. Poster paper prepared for the IUSSP Regional Population Conference, Siam City Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand, 10-13 Jun.

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

as the *source* of the problem. This is then used to justify the registration-based disincentives in place.<sup>9</sup> However, experience shows that internal migration in Viet Nam cannot be discouraged in this way. Substantial numbers of Vietnamese migrants are prepared to remain as temporary or un-registered residents at their destination, and accept inadequate housing and limited or expensive access to services that this entails, because for these people migrating remains a better alternative to not migrating.

Given the escalating challenges of urbanization, coupled with ineffective restrictions, it is time to squarely focus on the urban planning processes as the means to address the issues of infrastructure and, especially, housing. In addition to addressing increasing land prices and unofficial building construction, it must be ensured that planning and budgeting are not based on underestimated resident numbers, i.e. temporary and unregistered migrants must be considered. In terms of housing, it is imperative that decent, safe and hygienic dwellings with adequate infrastructure including electricity and water are made available to low income families and migrants.

Appropriate planning which takes into consideration migrant populations is also an important issue for industrial zones, which have increased exponentially over recent decades and serve as the backbone of Viet Nam's strategy for industrial growth. Despite their proliferation, planning for these zones lacks coordination across the various ministries responsible for their preparation and implementation, as well as

with private sector actors. As a result, they are often designed without coherent efforts to ensure that adequate and safe housing is available for factory workers, that sufficient medical services are provided and that facilities exist for workers to enjoy leisure time.

### CALL TO ACTION

- National, provincial and district budgeting and planning should take into account the actual number of migrants, even if they are temporarily registered or without registration, in order to reflect actual population levels.
- Emphasis should be put on funding for pro-poor urban infrastructure, facilities and housing.
- In industrial areas, private employers and local authorities should ensure availability of affordable and adequate workers' housing, including sufficient medical services and leisure time facilities.
- Local governments should be aware of the problems that migrants face upon arrival and support migrants' integration into destination areas and ensure access to poverty alleviation programmes.

9 The Communist Party of Viet Nam Central Committee, *Strategy for Socio-Economic Development 2001 – 2010*, Presented by the Central Committee, 8th Tenure, to the 9th National Congress April 2001; Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, the *Five Year Socio-Economic Development Plan 2006 – 2010*, National Assembly Resolution No. 56/2006/QH11, Term XI, session 9 (From May 16, 2006 to June 29, 2006), Part IV, section 13.

## 5. EXPLORE WAYS TO LEVERAGE INTERNAL MIGRATION FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT



In many ways, the communities which send migrants, and to which they often return, represent the most significant opportunity for leveraging migration for economic and social development (primarily development of the sending communities). Whilst long-term migrants themselves only amount to 7.7% of the population,<sup>10</sup> the percentage of migrant-sending households who typically benefit is much higher. In some

provinces up to 42% of households are estimated to include one migrant member.<sup>11</sup> Of these households, the overwhelming majority feel that migration has positively impacted the household. However, whilst the opportunity for internal migration to contribute to the development of sending communities and households is great, there are notable challenges that they also face, which need to be better understood in order to enhance the benefits of migration for sending communities.

The departure of a family member who migrates affects those remaining behind in many ways. Dependents that are left behind may be disadvantaged by the absence of a

caregiver, though they also may benefit from increased income or gifts that migrants send home. Both these impacts have been found in studies of elderly and children left behind in Viet Nam and other countries. Whilst some elderly dependents feel lonelier as a result of the departure of migrant family members, they also feel more satisfied because of the additional financial support they receive.<sup>12</sup> For children, the absence of one or both parents can be linked to adverse impacts on health and school performance. However, the 2004 VMS also found that the third largest use for remittances received was for children's education, indicating that, education outcomes may be improved for some children as a result of their parents' migration.<sup>13</sup> The relationship between migration and the well-being of those left behind is unclear, yet is an important issue which needs more research and attention. Another social impact of migration that should be leveraged is the opportunity for women's empowerment. Research suggests that internal migration can contribute to gender equality through the redistribution of household responsibilities between men and women while one spouse is away. For example when a male spouse migrates, the female spouse may take on more of the productive workload and financial control of the household, which may lead to more equal gender relations within the household. A corresponding opportunity is believed to arise when female spouses, traditionally responsible for domestic workloads, migrate

10 Population and Housing Census 2009

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

12 Xiang Biao (2007). How Far are the Left-Behind Left Behind? A Preliminary Study in Rural China. *Population, Space and Place Vol.13*, pp 179-191; *Institute of Sociology (forthcoming) Study on the Impact of Migration on Left Behind Families*.

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

and leave this domestic work to the remaining male spouse.<sup>14</sup> The extent to which this is occurring as an impact of internal migration is unclear given the difficulty of measuring such changes. Nevertheless, migration is an important opportunity for increasing women's empowerment in the household and efforts should be made to support women in these situations.

Recognizing these challenges and opportunities, and taking steps to address them, is an important way in which migrant-sending households and communities can be supported and migration can lead to human development – not only in the receiving but also in the sending communities.

One means to this end is supporting the transfer of knowledge and behaviours to their home communities when migrants return. For example, it has often been found that migrants who return bring back vocational skills or knowledge about specific health issues, such as HIV. They are also often found to be entrepreneurial, starting their own enterprises upon returning. Initiatives that lead to the development of the sending areas should be supported, such as further training and access to credit schemes.

A further means to human development in sending communities is supporting migrants to send remittances to their households in the departure area, thereby assisting migrants' own efforts to contribute to their households and communities. Remittances are disproportionately sent to households headed by those aged

50 and older, with those over 70 receiving the highest amounts. Migrants also report that the main uses for remittances are paying for daily needs of most families and for health care and children's education.<sup>15</sup> This shows the important role of migration in supporting dependant household members.

The widespread receipt and use of remittances provides some indication of the extent to which internal migration can contribute to the flow of wealth from richer areas of Viet Nam to those left behind by Viet Nam's recent development. This redistribution has great potential to contribute to poverty alleviation in lesser-developed areas of Viet Nam. To capitalize on the opportunity presented by these flows, efforts should be taken to encourage remittances. One approach is to ensure that remittance-sending mechanisms are accessible and flexible to the particular situation of migrant workers, taking into consideration their mobility, housing locations, sometimes unusual working hours and their temporary registration status or lack thereof. These mechanisms must also be accessible to those receiving the remittances in their place of origin. Enhancing opportunities for remittances to be used to establish small enterprises would also assist in leveraging migration for development. A constructive first step would be to consider international or regional experiences and best practices in this area.

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14 Paris, Thelma R., et al. (2009) *Labour out migration on rice farming households and gender roles: synthesis of findings in Thailand, the Philippines and Viet Nam*, Paper presented at the FAO-IFAD-ILO Workshop on Gaps, trends and current research in gender dimensions of agricultural and rural employment: differentiated pathways out of poverty; Resurreccion, Bernadette and Ha Thi Van Khanh (2007) *Able to Come and Go: Rural-urban Migration of Women in Nam Dinh Province, The Red River Delta*. *Population, Space and Place* Vol.13. pp.221-224.

15 Pfau, Wade Donald and Giang Thanh Long (2009) *Remittances, Living Arrangements, and the Welfare of the Elderly in Viet Nam*. *Viet Nam Development Forum Working Paper 0901*; General Statistical Office, United Nations Population Fund (2005), *The 2004 Viet Nam Migration Survey; Major Findings*, GSO Statistical Publishing House.

## CALL TO ACTION

- Community schemes should be established for elderly people that are left behind, or for “skip-generation” and single parent households to ease the burden on taking care of dependants.
- Returned migrants should be supported to take advantage of their acquired skills and knowledge as well as to transfer these to others in their home community. Special loan schemes are an example of how to provide opportunities for entrepreneurs to start their own business in their home community.
- Accessible and flexible remittance-sending mechanisms need to be developed and implemented.



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