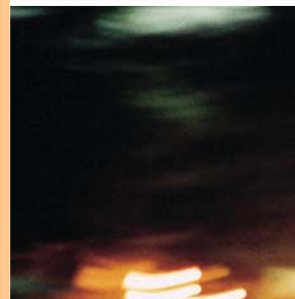


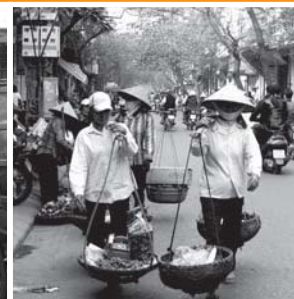


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Internal Migration in Vietnam: The Current Situation

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Á THÔNG MINH



Internal migration in Vietnam: the current situation

Introduction

Controlling the distribution of the population across the different regions of Viet Nam has been an important policy of the Vietnamese Government. The main objective has been to try to keep the growth of urban areas low and to assist people in moving from places with high population density, such as the Red River Delta, to areas where there is land available for agriculture, such as the Central Highlands.

These policies had some success in the 1970s and 1980s and the percentages of people living in urban areas being only 19.4 per cent in 1989. However, the move toward a market economy, which began with the ‘renovation policies’ (*Doi Moi*) officially introduced in 1986, changed the pattern of migration in the country. Economic growth increased rapidly in and around urban areas and many people in the growing rural population moved to cities. At the time of the 1999 Census about *one in four* people in Viet Nam were living in urban areas. In 1999, the Government approved guidelines for urban development and management, which included an estimate of 45 per cent of the population expected to be living

in urban areas by 2020. This figure could only be reached with high levels of rural-to-urban migration.

Despite its recognition of the link between economic growth and urbanization, the Government, both at the national and provincial levels, views the current migration trends with concern. Overcrowding and poverty are very visible in major cities and there has been a general perception that these are made worse by waves of new migrants moving in from the countryside. There has also been concern about migrants contributing to social disorder, including crime, when they come to live in the cities. Thus the household registration system, which previously was able to control movement to some extent, is still seen by many as a necessary tool to regulate population movement.

Yet at the same time, there has been concern about the effect of regulations such as this household registration system on the lives of migrants. Many policymakers and researchers worry that existing policies not only fail to stop people from moving but also have a negative effect on the lives of the migrants, in getting work and obtaining public services like education and health care.

The debate about the positive and negative aspects of migration, especially to urban areas, has therefore become more intense in recent years. Several national conferences have discussed these issues, and there have been recent changes in the household registration system. But at the same time there continue to be calls by some to retain tight control over migration.

The lack of current and reliable information about internal migration in Viet Nam has been one of the factors contributing to slow policy change on migration. The 1999 National Population Census provided valuable information about trends but provided little useful information about the lives of migrants. And while there have been a number of small in-depth studies of migrants, these have focused only on small areas.

To overcome this lack of information, the General Statistical Office, with the support of the United Nations Population Fund, undertook a national survey on migration in 2004. This survey, called the 2004 Viet Nam Migration Survey, was carried out in 10 provinces that serve as major destination areas for internal migrants. The survey was designed to get information in the following areas:

- The process of migration, including the decision to migrate and adjustment of migrants at the place of destination.
- How migrants and non-migrants at the place of destination differ in their characteristics, participation in the labour market and health.
- Impacts of migration on migrants and their families.

The results of the survey have been widely disseminated at meetings and through four publications. *This booklet summarizes the major findings of the results of the survey, as well as information from other reliable sources*, so that non-demographers can have a better understanding of the situation of internal migration in Viet Nam.

Levels and patterns of internal migration in Viet Nam

The most recent information on levels of internal migration in Viet Nam comes from the 1999 Population Census. During the five years before the census (1994-1999), nearly 4.5 million persons changed their place of residence (rural commune or urban ward) in Viet Nam. Among these migrants, 55 per cent moved within a province, and 45 per cent moved across provincial boundaries within the country. About 1.6 million moved from rural to urban areas.

It is clear that migration is a major factor in urban population growth in Viet Nam, especially in the largest cities. An analysis of the 1999 census data found that rural-to-urban migration was responsible for about *one-third of urban population growth* from 1994-1999. This migration out of rural areas helped reduce rural population growth. Migration also provided slightly over one-half of the population growth for Ho Chi Minh City in this period.

Ho Chi Minh City was clearly the centre of migration with the largest increase (410,553 persons) in the five years prior to the census. Hanoi gained 114,617 people. There were also large migration flows to areas of industrial development in the North and in the Southeastern regions and to agricultural areas in the Central Highlands. The areas that lost population through migration were mainly concentrated in the Northeast and the Red River Delta regions.

Map of net inter-provincial migration rate from the 1999 population and housing census

Net inter-provincial migration rate (%o)

Unit: per 1,000



List of provinces/cities

I. Red River Delta

- 17. Ha Noi
- 18. Hai Phong
- 19. Ha Tay
- 20. Hai Duong
- 21. Hung Yen
- 22. Thai Binh
- 23. Ha Nam
- 24. Nam Dinh
- 25. Ninh Binh

II. Northeast

- 1. Ha Giang
- 2. Tuyen Quang
- 3. Cao Bang
- 4. Lang Son
- 6. Lao Cai
- 7. Yen Bai
- 8. Bac Kan
- 9. Thai Nguyen
- 12. Phu Tho
- 13. Vinh Phuc
- 14. Bac Giang
- 15. Bac Ninh
- 16. Quang Ninh

III. Northwest

- 5. Lai Chau
- 10. Son La
- 11. Hou Binh

IV. North Central

- 26. Thanh Hoa
- 27. Nghe An
- 28. Ha Tinh
- 29. Quang Binh
- 30. Quang Tri
- 31. Thua Thien Hue

V. Central Coast

- 32. Da Nang
- 33. Quang Nam
- 34. Quang Ngai
- 35. Binh Dinh
- 36. Phu Yen
- 37. Khanh Hoa

VI. Central Highlands

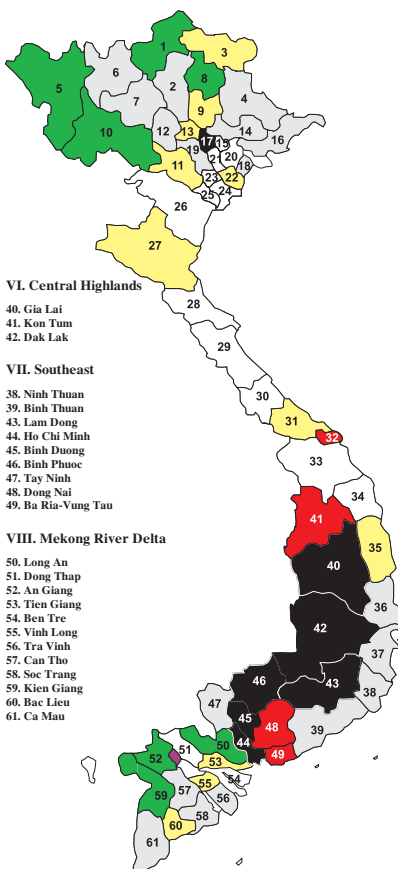
- 40. Gia Lai
- 41. Kon Tum
- 42. Dak Lak

VII. Southeast

- 38. Ninh Thuan
- 39. Binh Thuan
- 43. Lam Dong
- 44. Ho Chi Minh
- 45. Binh Duong
- 46. Binh Phuoc
- 47. Tay Ninh
- 48. Dong Nai
- 49. Ba Ria-Vung Tau

VIII. Mekong River Delta

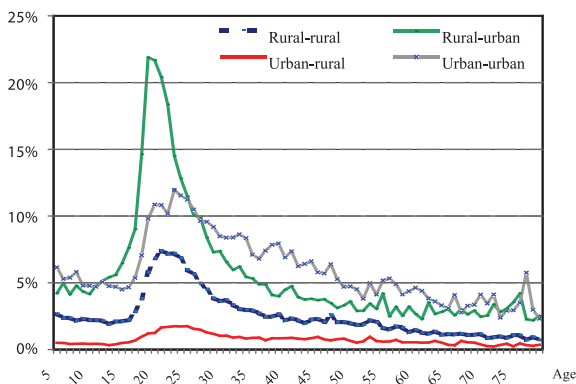
- 50. Long An
- 51. Dong Thap
- 52. An Giang
- 53. Tien Giang
- 54. Ben Tre
- 55. Vinh Long
- 56. Tra Vinh
- 57. Can Tho
- 58. Soc Trang
- 59. Kien Giang
- 60. Bac Lieu
- 61. Ca Mau



Q.B. HOANG SA (DA NANG)

Q.B. TRUONG SA (KHANH HOA)

Most migrants are young adults; with *over one-half of all migrants less than 25 years old*. The information displayed in the figure below shows that the concentration of migrants at young adult ages is highest for migration from rural to urban areas. Women also tend to migrate at slightly younger ages than do men.

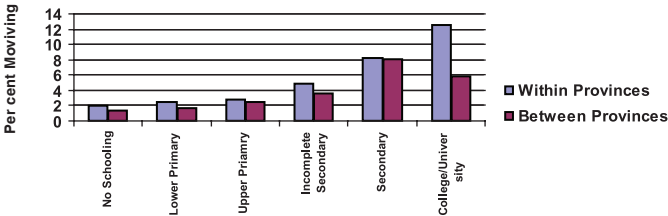


Although most migrants are male, *the level of female migration is increasing and the number of women moving to urban areas and industrial zones has begun to exceed the number of men*. Migrants, because they are young, tend to be single. This is particularly so for migration to urban areas. Migration to rural areas, especially that supported by the government, is more likely to involve families.

Approximately 11.4 per cent of males and 17 per cent of females aged 20-24 changed the place where they lived during the period 1994-1999. This level was even higher for rural-to-urban migration of women, and indicates a high demand for female labour for industrial and service sectors

in the large cities. Jobs creation, especially in industry, is concentrated in and around large cities and this draws young women, who appear to be preferred for factory employment, to cities and industrial areas.

There is also a common perception that migrants from rural areas tend to be the poorest and least qualified of people. But the 1999 Census and the 2004 Viet Nam Migration Survey showed the opposite. *Migrants tend to have higher levels of education than non-migrants living in rural areas and have similar levels of education to non-migrants living in urban areas.* Migrants are not drawn from the poorest and least qualified of the rural population. Rather, they are generally the most qualified of the rural population. Overall, levels of migration increase with levels of education, as can be clearly seen in the following figure using data from the 1999 Census.

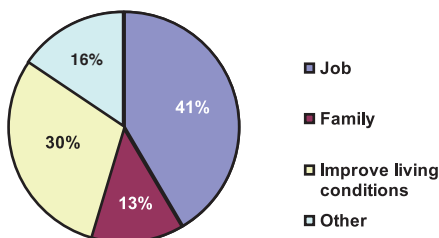


Information from the 2004 Viet Nam Migration Survey found little difference in the educational levels of migrants and non-migrants in the major destination areas. For example, among those aged 15-59, 46 per cent of non-migrants and 44 per cent of migrants had completed Grade 10 education or higher.

Decision to migrate

The first move generally occurs at a young age and is mostly related to employment or education. The first move was made at a younger age for those in provincial and district towns than those living in large cities or rural areas. This is probably related to young people moving from provincial and district towns to cities in order to get higher education.

The importance of economic reasons in the decision to migrate is clearly seen from the 2004 survey data. Seven in ten migrants either moved for employment or to improve living conditions. Only about 13 per cent moved for family reasons and many of these moved because they were moving with other family members, such as a husband, who was probably moving for economic reasons. A smaller percentage moved for marriage. Among the other reasons for migration was a significant proportion that migrated to further their education, while many parents migrated to improve educational opportunities for their children.



Main Reasons for Moving

Overall, the majority of migrants move to improve their working and living conditions, not because they are unemployed. Although migrants mainly move for economic reasons, unemployment in their places of origin is not a major reason for moving. Most migrants were working before they migrated. Slightly less than 10 per cent said that the main reason for migration was because they could not find work in their area of origin.

Most people who move within Viet Nam do not make the decision to migrate solely by themselves. Strong family ties mean that other family members play a major role in the decision to migrate. The involvement of family members in the decision to move can also be expected because migration provides valuable resources to the family. About two-thirds of male migrants and 80 per cent of female migrants reported that other people were involved in their decision to migrate.

The decision to migrate also requires information about potential destination. It is clear that migrants in Viet Nam have many sources of information and that they use this information in the decision about where to move. Most of the sources of information are relatives and friends, and almost 20 per cent had previously visited the place that they moved to. Another 14 per cent reported mass media as their source of information. Only one per cent stated that they had received information from government or private employment offices. *So even though most people move to get a better job, most do not get information from employment agencies before they move.* The spread of mass media into rural areas is providing an additional source of information to potential migrants about where to move.

Results from the 2004 Viet Nam Migration Survey show that 74 per cent of migrants had only moved once. Many were unsure about whether they would stay in the place to which they had moved. Only one in two stated that they would stay permanently in their destination, while most of the others were unsure about whether they would stay permanently. However, only about 13 per cent stated that they would definitely stay less than 10 years. This suggests that the vast majority of migration in Viet Nam results in permanent change of residence and that the authorities should help these new residents lead a settled life in their new destinations.

The survey also found that over 90 per cent of migrants who moved from rural areas to cities came directly to the city, without first moving to smaller urban areas. This shows the strong attraction of large cities for young people in rural areas and also suggests that smaller urban areas do not have the employment and educational opportunities necessary to attract rural migrants.

Adjustment to life in the destination

Migrants do not arrive at their destination without contacts or information. Results from the 2004 Viet Nam Migration Survey showed that three in four migrants already knew someone in the place where they moved. More than one-half moved with other people, usually friends. Only about *one-third* moved alone. The migrants used their personal contacts to help them in the initial period after they arrived in their destination. These networks help draw those from the rural area who have the best opportunities for employment in urban areas.

As a result of the information they had and their social networks at the destination, most migrants did not report any difficulties after they arrived. The percentage reporting difficulties was very high for those migrants who moved to the Central Highlands (around 80 per cent) but much lower for urban destinations. Of those that did face problems, the main problem in most areas related to obtaining suitable housing. Only for migrants to the Central Highlands was getting access to paid employment reported as a problem. *In general, all the evidence from the migration survey showed that migrants to the Central Highlands, many of whom were helped to move by government resettlement schemes, had the most trouble adjusting to their new places of residence.*

About *three in four* migrants who faced problems after migration reported that they had expected these problems. Among the small number of migrants who said that they did not expect to face problems, *two-thirds* said they still would have moved even if they had known about the problems. This suggests that almost all migrants can easily adapt to the difficulties they face when moving.

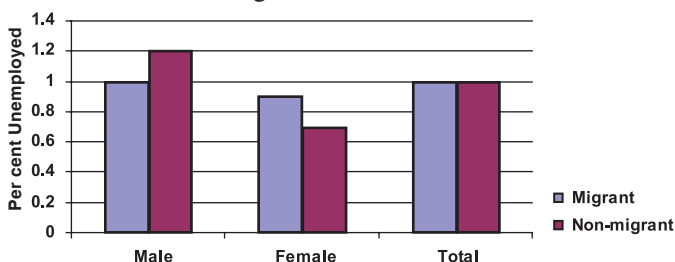
When migrants did face difficulties, almost all relied on their personal networks to solve the problem. Only 11 per cent of migrants who sought assistance to solve their problems approached local government authorities for help. The percentage of migrants that sought assistance from other formal sources (Labour Regulation Office, Trade Union, Projects and/or programmes) was very small. *Thus, it's clear that migrants receive little formal assistance to help them overcome problems related to migration.*

Finding suitable housing after they move was a major problem

for many migrants. At the time of the survey, *62 per cent of migrants were living in semi-permanent housing, with over 55 per cent living in boarding houses or similar rented accommodation. And compared to non-migrants, migrants were less likely to have access to good sanitation and water.*

Once they arrive in their destinations, migrants lose little time in getting a job. For those who moved to obtain employment, almost *nine in ten* had found work in the first month after they arrived, and *one-quarter* had gotten a job in the first week after arrival. Men tend to find work more rapidly than do women, and those migrants, men or women, with permanent household registration were able to get jobs more quickly than those with temporary household registration. Ultimately, it appeared that many migrants had already arranged employment before they moved.

Unemployment rates for those seeking work are generally low and are similar for migrants and non-migrants. At the time of the 2004 Viet Nam Migration Survey, approximately one per cent of migrants and non-migrants were unemployed. Migrants are also more likely than non-migrants to join the labour force, and this is especially so for women, with 87 per cent of female migrants working, compared to only 78 per cent of female non-migrants.

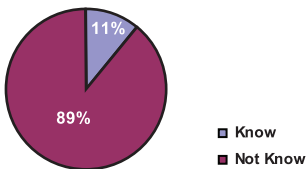


Work and income

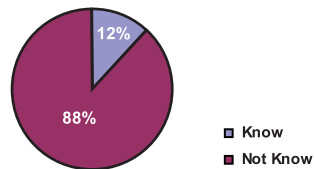
In Viet Nam, both public and private employment agencies have been established to help people find work. As noted above, less than two per cent of migrants used employment agencies to obtain information about the place to where they were moving. In part this appears to result from the information about employment that migrants already have from their friends and relatives. But it is also related to the low awareness of these agencies. In the following figure, only 12 per cent of migrants were aware of government employment agencies and about the same number (12 per cent) was aware of private employment agencies.

Of those who were aware of employment agencies, slightly less than 60 per cent used them. In Viet Nam, employment agencies are not a very effective resource for helping migrants get work. This probably results because they don't make migrants aware of their services. It is also related to registration fees and the requirement that people using the services have formal qualifications. Another barrier is the belief among migrants and agencies that migrants need permanent household registration in the place they are living in order to use the services.

**Knowledge of Government
Employment Agencies**

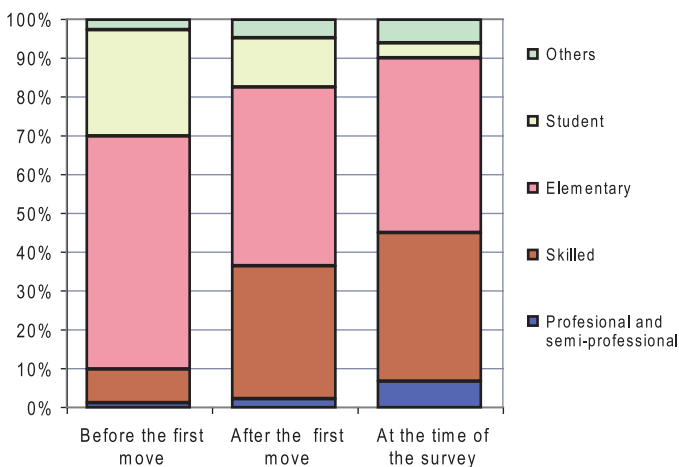


**Knowledge of Private
Employment Agencies**



Most migrants are concentrated in low-skilled work when they first arrive. Sixty per cent of migrants worked in unskilled occupations (elementary occupations) in their first job after arrival. Most of these jobs were located in small-scale enterprises or were self-employment, with 55 per cent of men and 45 per cent of women working in this sector after migrating. About one-quarter of women worked in foreign-invested organizations after migration, indicating the importance of this sector in drawing female migrants from rural areas.

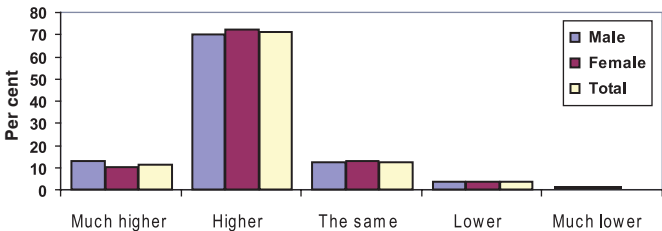
After becoming adjusted to life in their destinations, many migrants move to more skilled work. The figure below shows how the proportion in skilled, professional and semi-professional occupations increased over time after migration. For many people, especially those from rural areas, migration is a way to increase their skills and obtain better jobs.



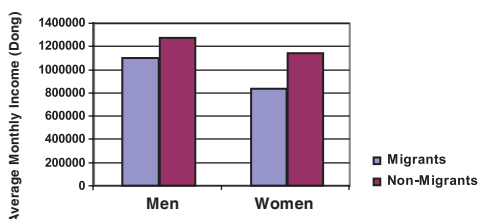
By law, people in paid employment are required to have labour contracts with their employers. These contracts provide some levels of protection for workers. Overall, non-migrants were more likely than migrants to have labour contracts. Approximately 79 per cent of migrants and 83 per cent of non-migrants in the paid labour force had contracts. Female workers were more likely than men to have labour contracts, perhaps because they are more likely to be found in industrial employment.

Migration also increases incomes. *Over 80 per cent of migrants stated that their incomes after migration were higher or much higher than before they migrated.* And increases in income occurred for those from all educational categories, including the illiterate. These increases in income were greatest for those working in skilled occupations. Increases were also high for those with temporary household registration, suggesting that *even without permanent household registration the higher income available in destination areas provides a strong incentive to move.*

Comparison of income before and after migration



Even though incomes increased after migration, the average incomes of migrants were much lower than those of non-migrants. Part of this difference appears to result from migrants being concentrated in certain jobs where non-migrants are concentrated in others, and suggests that there may be some discrimination. *Women migrants appear to be at a particular disadvantage in terms of income, earning much less on average than non-migrant women and much less than men in both groups (migrant and non-migrant).* This difference remains even after factors such as age, education and occupation are taken into account. Thus, more attention needs to be paid to protecting the labour conditions of women migrants.



Although most migrants have strong social networks in their destinations and have generally improved their living standards compared to non-migrants, they remain more economically vulnerable than are non-migrants. Migrants are less likely to have savings than are non-migrants and are more likely to have debt. Non-migrants are more likely to obtain credit than migrants, and among those that do have loans, 46 per cent of non-migrants have loans from formal sources (e.g. banks) compared to only 22 per cent among migrants.

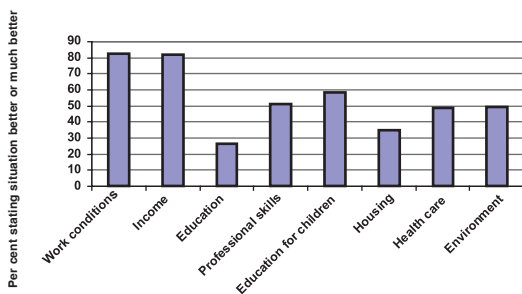
This vulnerability is made worse because migrants are not as well linked to government or other formal support structures

as are non-migrants. Migrants are also less likely than non-migrants to use employment agencies, they have less access to loans and they are much less involved in trade unions.

In the 2004 Viet Nam Migration Survey, migrants were more likely than non-migrants to say that they required assistance. The type of assistance that both migrants and non-migrants were most likely to report a need for was *access to capital*. For migrants this was followed by *assistance with housing and assistance with obtaining household registration*.

Satisfaction with migration

Migrants generally express high levels of satisfaction with their life after migration compared to before migration. This is especially so for satisfaction with income and work conditions, where over 80 per cent of migrants felt that their life was “better” or “much better”. Although levels of satisfaction were less in other areas, only in education and housing did a significantly low number of migrants - *less than one-half* - say that the situation was better or much better. And only for housing did significant number - *more than one-quarter* - say that conditions were worse compared to before migration.



Slightly over 80 per cent of migrants also reported that compared to work at their place of origin, their present working situation was “better” or “much better”. However, more migrants than non-migrants reported that they intended to change their current job, mainly because they wanted to increase their income.

Younger migrants, those who were single and those with higher levels of education were most likely to report satisfaction with improvements in their life after migration. As seen from other information collected in the 2004 Viet Nam Migration Survey, these characteristics are also related to higher income and improvements in occupation.

Many researchers studying migration in Viet Nam have expressed concern about difficulties *migrants face in getting education for their children*. And results from the 2004 survey do show that the proportion of school-age children not attending school is higher for children of migrants than for children of non-migrants. However, apart from the Central Highlands, the differences between migrants and non-migrants are not great and the main reason respondents give for their children not attending school is economic rather than based on migration alone.

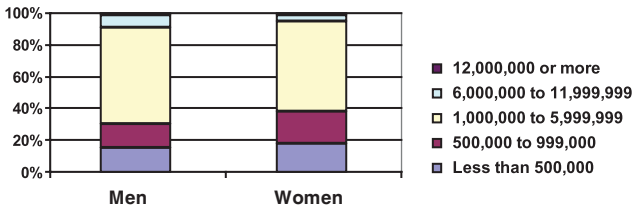
Almost 60 per cent of migrants with school-age children said that their children’s educational opportunities were “better” or “much better” after migration. And only about 15 per cent said opportunities were “worse” or “much worse”. Again, however, there were significant differences among parents with different characteristics. For example, among migrants with education below secondary school level, *one in five* said opportunities were “worse” or “much worse”, while only seven per cent of those with a level - college education or higher said that educational opportunities were “worse” or “much worse”.

Migrant links with home communities

Most migrants remain closely linked with their home communities. These connections are maintained through regular visits and through other forms of communication. Migrants also send money back to their families and this helps many rural families improve their living conditions.

Approximately 48 per cent of male migrants and 54 per cent of female migrants sent money back to their families in the year before the 2004 Viet Nam Migration Survey. The percentage sending money back home was highest for those migrants who moved without other family members. As the figure below shows, the amounts sent can be substantial. Almost 70 per cent sent over VND 1 million in the previous year. *Migrants to urban areas were much more likely to send money back to their families than were migrants to rural areas.*

Amount of money (in VND) sent back home in previous 12 months



Money sent back home is a large share of total income. *Overall, in the 12 months prior to the survey, men sent 10 per cent of their income on average back home while women sent 17 per cent.* In the Southeast Industrial Zone, women sent slightly more than one-quarter of their income back home.

The main use of the money sent back home by migrants was to buy daily necessities. However, the second and third major uses were for health care and education. About one-third of migrants reported that their families used the money to pay for health care costs and about one in five said that the money was used to pay education expenses. *These results show that money sent back home from migrants is a valuable source of income for millions of rural Vietnamese households and that this money helps families keep out of poverty by providing the resources to meet their daily living costs and improve the knowledge and health of family members. This use of remittances not only helps the families of migrants but can also help the development of rural communities.*

Health

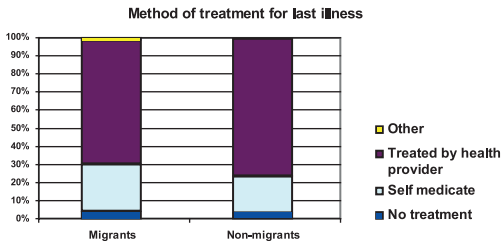
The self-reported health of migrants was a little better than that of non-migrants. Most migrants and non-migrants reported that their health was normal. To some extent, this is a result of migrants being younger, on average, than non-migrants. Migrants to cities appeared to be healthier than migrants to the Central Highlands. A higher proportion of migrants reported that their health had improved rather than worsened after migration. The only exception was for migration to the Central Highlands.

Non-migrants were slightly more likely than migrants to have health insurance. Women migrants were more likely than non-migrant women to have health insurance. This is probably a result of the large numbers of female migrants working in factories, where health insurance is often provided. Among men, migrants were less likely than non-migrants to have health insurance.

Among migrants, a larger percentage was covered by health insurance after migration than before migration. Again, this reflects that many migrants move from occupations such as agriculture, where they do not have health insurance, to jobs in formal employment where health insurance is available. *However, there needs to be a greater focus of concern on the approximately two-thirds of migrants without health insurance. Most of these are concentrated in low-paid work in the informal sector.*

Around one-half of migrants said that health care after migration was “better” or “much better” than before migration. But about 15 per cent said that it was “worse” or “much worse”. Those most likely to say that health care after migration were worse or much worse were those migrants with lower levels of education. This indicates that for the least qualified of migrants, access to quality health care can be a problem.

At the time of last sickness, non-migrants were much more likely than migrants to have visited a health provider, *while migrants were more likely to self-medicate*. A statistical analysis found that the odds of using a health facility when sick were 19 per cent lower for migrants than for non-migrants. *The same analysis also found that a lack of health insurance and low income were major factors for not using a health facility when sick.*



Among those who sought treatment at health facilities, *migrants were more likely than non-migrants to seek treatment at private sources* while non-migrants were more likely to seek treatment at public facilities. Within the public sector, non-migrants were more likely than migrants to seek treatment at health facilities, such as state hospitals, which are perceived as providing better quality services.

Knowledge about sexually transmitted infections (STIs) was high, with well over 80 per cent of migrants and non-migrants reporting that they had ever-heard of gonorrhoea, syphilis and hepatitis. *The groups with the lowest levels of awareness were women migrants and migrants to the Southeast Industrial Zone.* Although there is a high level of correct knowledge about the transmission of STIs, there remain significant levels of incorrect knowledge, with 25 per cent of migrants believing that sharing a toothbrush or towel can transmit STIs.

Levels of awareness of HIV/AIDS are even higher than those observed for STIs, with over 97 per cent of migrants and non-migrants reporting that they know of HIV/AIDS. The mass media, particularly television, is the most cited source of information about HIV/AIDS. The great majority of respondents in the 2004 survey knew of the main modes of transmission of HIV. However, approximately one-fifth believed that the bite of a mosquito could transmit the infection.

Only about 18 per cent of migrants - compared to 23 per cent of non-migrants - had heard about HIV/AIDS from health workers. This result indicates that the government should improve public communication on health information and that it should more effectively target health information at migrants.

Prevalence of contraception among currently married women migrants is lower than that of their non-migrant counterparts. Contraceptive methods chosen are similar among migrants and non-migrants, although migrants are slightly more likely to use IUDs and the pill, and are less likely to use male sterilization.

Sixty-five per cent of current migrant contraceptive users obtained these from the public sector, compared to 14 per cent who obtained them from the private sector; 21 per cent who obtained theirs from other sources (friends/ relatives/ others). As with health care in general, migrants also are more likely than non-migrants to get contraceptives from commune health centers and are less likely to go to government hospitals.

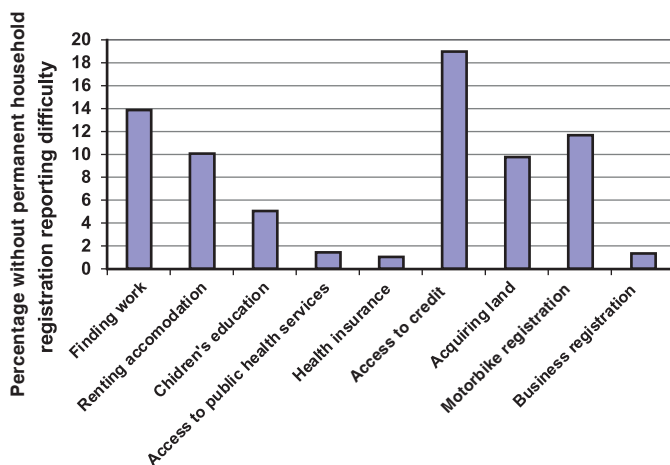
Household registration

The impact of household registration on the lives of migrants seems to have been changing in recent years. Although non-registration of permanent household has been viewed as a barrier to public services, particularly education and health care, few migrants in the 2004 Viet Nam Migration Survey reported this as a problem. Yet it also appears that migrants are less likely to use public services than are non-migrants. And this may mean in fact that they are paying for services because they lack registration.

While many migrants unsure about how long they will stay in their place of destination may not seek more permanent household registration, it is clear that bureaucratic obstacles and refusal of registration is a common experience for many, especially those with limited qualifications. *Among those with no household registration at their destination, 46 per*

cent said they did not have permission to register, almost 20 per cent said that they had applied but the process was not completed, and eight per cent said the procedures were too complicated.

The main difficulty reported by those without permanent household registration was access to credit. They also had difficulty renting suitable accommodation, acquiring land, finding work and even registering their motorbikes. And although the influence of household registration on the lives of migrants, again, appears to be declining, there remains a need to further reduce what barriers exist so that migrants can obtain the same quality of services provided to non-migrants.



Conclusion

The knowledge gained over last decade from census data, in addition to the information from the 2004 Viet Nam Migration Survey, clearly suggests that movement from rural to urban areas will increase in Viet Nam. Both economic policies that concentrate economic growth in and around urban areas and the limited work and education opportunities in rural areas mean that many people from rural areas will look for work in urban areas and many employers in urban areas will actively recruit workers from rural areas.

A minority of migrants to urban areas face difficulties upon arrival and the great majority report that their lives have improved because of their move. Migrants use personal networks that link rural and urban communities in Viet Nam to help them get work and housing when they arrive. Very few people turn to the government or other formal sources for assistance to help them find employment or overcome problems they face as a result of migration. Most migrants also send money and goods back to their rural families. This helps rural people lead better lives and helps them pay for better health care and education.

However, some migrants still face difficulties after they move. Many of these difficulties are the result of administrative regulations, such as the household registration system, which limit migrants' ability to find employment, obtain credit, and find suitable housing. *Elimination of these restrictions would improve the life for migrants and would also improve social and living conditions in destination areas. Strengthening the formal systems that can provide support to migrants who are*

seeking employment and housing, meanwhile, would also make migrants more productive in their new environments.

Migrants may require special attention because of their more limited experience and knowledge in some areas. For example, the survey results suggest that the knowledge among young female migrants on sexually transmitted infections is lacking. *Migrants are also in a more vulnerable position than non-migrants because they have fewer resources, lower incomes, less savings and more debt.* The surveys provide indirect evidence of discrimination against migrants in the labour force as well. Female migrants in particular appear to receive wages that are much lower than what they should receive given their level of education.

One group of migrants that requires special attention is those moving to rural areas. In the 2004 Viet Nam Migration Survey, this group was represented by migrants to the Central Highlands, a major destination for government-supported resettlement. Compared to other migrants, those people that moved to the Central Highlands faced more difficulties, had the least economic success and had poorer health.

Internal migration in Viet Nam affects the lives of all people in the country. All Vietnamese are either migrants or interact with migrants, and migration is an important part of the economic and social development of the country. Because of the central role that internal migration plays in the development of individuals, communities and society as a whole, it is important to continuously update our knowledge about *migration in Viet Nam.* *This knowledge should then be used to enact policies that contribute to improved lives for all Vietnamese, both migrants and non-migrants.*

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