



GENERAL STATISTICS OFFICE



UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND

STORIES BEHIND THE DATA

Photos and stories collected from
the Population and Housing Census
2019



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STORIES BEHIND THE DATA

The 2019 Population and Housing Census was conducted at time point 0:00 a.m. on **1 April 2019** in accordance with Decision No. 772/QĐ-TTg dated 26 June 2018 by the Prime Minister. This was **the fifth Population and Housing Census** in Viet Nam since the country's reunification in 1975. The 2019 Population and Housing Census collected basic information on population and housing throughout the territory of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to inform the country's socio-economic development policies and to monitor progress on the **Sustainable Development Goals** committed to by the Government of Viet Nam.

The 2019 Population and Housing Census provides key indicators of population and housing, allowing us to see not only disaggregated data of population size and structure, but also other areas of population dynamics such as fertility, mortality, migration, education, employment, disability, and housing conditions.

In order to make the collected data from the Census to become talking figures, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Viet Nam has collaborated with the General Statistics Office (GSO) to organize the photo voice exhibition "**Stories behind the data**". This is a three-

month journey through **eight provinces and cities** of Viet Nam, including **Ha Giang, Ha Noi, Bac Giang, Quang Tri, Soc Trang, Ninh Thuan, Tien Giang, and Ho Chi Minh City**, conducted by two photographers Mr. Nguyen Minh Duc and Mr. Vu Ngoc Dung.

This photo voice exhibition consists of 23 stories on nine topics: **Education, Youth and Employment, Fertility, Son Preference, Early Marriage, Migration, Disability, Population Ageing and Housing**.

Those **23 sets of photos and stories** are **thoughtful stories about the lives of people** from all regions of the country. This photo voice exhibition on the 2019 Population and Housing Census **highlights those inspiring stories**, creating a diverse picture about the issues of social concern.

Report on **2019 Population and Housing Census**



TOPIC 1: EDUCATION



In the last 10 years, the gross school attendance rates and net school enrollment rates have significantly improved. The population aged 15 years and over qualified at university level and higher achieved 9.3%, more than doubles in comparison with that in 2009. However, there are still 8.3% children of school age that are out of school.

BAU'S HOPE



My family currently has four people, including my father, my older brother, my sister and me. My mother passed away 5 years ago. Since the day my mother died, my father struggled to take care of us.

My brother has dropped out of school when he was in 9th grade and currently lives with my grandparents in the neighboring village. My sister just dropped out of school last year, when she was preparing to enter the 9th grade, in order to get married. My family is now only my father and myself.

Our house is now too old and broken. Therefore, my father wants to repair it. Dad has told me that he wanted me to take a break from school for a while so he could go down to the lowlands and work as a hired laborer to earn money to repair the house. I was sad but had to quit school this summer, when I was about to enter the 6th grade. Every day, I do housework and take care of two cows.

I really miss my classmates and school. I hope my dad will collect enough money to repair the house so that I can return to school as soon as possible.

*The story of Lu Thi Bau
Hoang Su Phi district, Ha Giang province.*

A WASTE COLLECTION MOTHER RAISES THREE CHILDREN TO ENTER UNIVERSITIES



*The story of Ms. Pham Hoang Nguyen Minh, born in 1977
Binh Chanh district, Ho Chi Minh City.*

The day the oldest son announced that he was admitted to Marketing University, my husband and I were very happy. Twenty years as waste collectors, that day was the happiest day.

Everyday, we get up at 2 am to collect waste. Lock the door gently not to wake up our children. At 5:00 am, I return home to prepare the breakfast for our children before they go to school, and then go back to work.

Apart from the family's general expenses, we spend our income on our children's education. Our education is low, and we have to work like this. But we want our children grow up and have better jobs than ours.

Our children are good at studying and love us. The first three children are in University. The youngest one is in Grade 11 and intends to take exams for Medical University. We usually tell them that our work's environment is not clean, but the money we earn is clean. Our children are proud of us. The oldest son always tells his friends "My parents are waste collectors".

My husband is weaker since last year. He drives for a company now, but still helps me for 2-3 hours every day. I also consider leaving this type of work because my health is becoming worse. But more than twenty years of waste collection, I do not know what else to do. Well, I am still healthy, and I try to work and save money for my children and for us when we get old.

TOPIC 2: YOUTH AND EMPLOYMENT



Young population aged 15 to 24 accounts for 12.6% of the total labor force in the economy. The percentage of youth with a university qualification or higher in the urban areas is four times higher than in the rural areas with 16.7% and 4.1% respectively.

THE GAP



The young people, who have higher education, can go out for work. Others like me, who only finished 7th or 8th grade, stay at home to do cultivation and plant cassava. Besides harvesting, we do extra work as picking up wood. But those are only few days per month, the rest is just staying at home without doing anything. We do not have a job, do not know how to earn money.

Currently, my wife and I live with my parents. They give us a small amount of land for house building. We plan to live on our own. We cannot get their support any longer, but we do not have any money to build a new house.

I like learning about motor repairing and I would like to work for a motor repairing shop. I have been told that it would cost money; also, I do not know where to find a motor repairing shop to work for.

The story of Ho Van Tai, born in 1997 and his wife Ms. Ho Thi Moi, born in 1997 Dak Rong district, Quang Tri province.

PASSION & MOTIVATION LEADING TO SUCCESS

Graduating with a Master's degree in Tourism Management from Bournemouth University, UK in 2010, I decided to return to Vietnam. Partly, it was for family reasons. Finding a proper job in line with our abilities and desires was not easy, the competition among local people and other nationals was huge.

I learned about the benefits of Juice by chance, by making it myself. Then, I started to learn about Juice and its benefits for human health. From my positive experience of using Juice, I started to spread the information to other people through my personal blog. Unexpectedly, the information I shared was responded to and cared on by the community. Many women followed, had positive changes and became healthier. I realized that it was what I was going to pursue, a job that was more meaningful than anything I have ever done.

And my startup was born in 2017 from these simple things.

Currently, we have more than 30 employees working. For the past two years, True Juice has served thousands of customers to help them improve their health through fresh juice daily.

I want more and more Vietnamese people to know, use and benefit from Juice for a happier and healthier life.



*The story of Ms. Tran Thanh Huyen,
born in 1986
Ha Noi.*

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES NOT ONLY IN THE URBAN



*The story of Mr. Nguyen Hong Bao Quyet,
25 years old
Ninh Hai district, Ninh Thuan province.*

In 2012, I stepped into the university gate with so much ambition, expectations of my family and admiration of my friends. I have studied in the faculty of nuclear physics, Da Lat University, with the desire to become an engineer to operate the first nuclear power plant of Vietnam in Ninh Thuan province.

But just before I graduated from university, the Vietnamese government canceled this nuclear power project. We consisted of 36 nuclear physics engineers who graduated in 2016 and could not find a job that we were trained for, so each of us tried to find a different career path, most of my classmates attempted to stay in the big city and accepted jobs, not related to their education.

I have thought a lot and then decided to return to my homeland in Ninh Hai, Ninh Thuan province for building a grape farm with my parents and my older sister. Although I had once dreamed of becoming a nuclear power engineering expert, I'm still full of love for gardening in my heart. My friends and neighbors at the time kept saying that, if you wanted to be a gardener, you didn't have to go to university"

I overcame the initial difficulties, learned and mastered the grape growing technique from my parents and other farmers in the commune. Besides, the research thinking and the practical skills acquired during my university studies have helped me to summarize the experiences and skills I have learned, including self-studying as well as continuous learning and applying new cultivation techniques from other places and countries through information that I learn from the Internet. Currently, I am confident to help my parents manage four family vineyards, with an output of about 20-16 tons of grapes a year.

Sometimes, when I think about the past, I still think that my decision to return back home to build a grape farm was absolutely correct. After all, any work can be successful if done with passion and enthusiasm, while applying science and technology.

TOPIC 3: FERTILITY

Over the last decade, the fertility rate in Viet Nam has maintained stable at fertility replacement level (2.09 children per woman). The South East and Mekong River Delta are the two regions with the lowest fertility rates at 1.56 and 1.80 children per woman respectively.



INVESTING IN EDUCATION FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE



Our little Quynh is at Grade 2 this year. Quynh wants to become a police officer like her dad. We decided not to have more children so that we can focus on caring for her, investing in her education to make her dream come true.

When Quynh was 4 years old, we both started studying Law at Tra Vinh University. We studied right in Soc Trang city. Sometimes, we kept watching the kids playing in the park, and they were so happy. Once, after we had paid the tuition fee, there was only a small amount of 100 thousand VND left but we still took Quynh to the city for playing.

My husband and I are both Kh'me. In this hamlet, no other family has 1 child like we do. Here, children often learn very little, until the working age, then they go to work and drop out of school.

Currently we are working in the commune. My husband is a Deputy Head of Commune Police, and I am the Head of the Commune Farmers Association. Our total monthly salary is nearly 10 million VND, plus the income from raising chickens. Each month we can save about 2 million VND. We tell each other not to have any more children to focus on raising Quynh well, creating best conditions for Quynh to have high education. Quynh wants to become a police officer like her dad.

*The story of Ms. Kim Thi Chanh Da, born in 1988
My Tu district, Soc Trang province.*



FOR THE BEST OF OUR CHILDREN

I am a researcher on Cham culture under the Department of Culture - Information - Sports of Ninh Thuan province. According to the Cham cultural tradition, the Cham families follow the matriarchy, and the wife has a decisive voice in the family. The traditional Cham families often had many children.

I got married in 2010, when I was 28 years old. My wife was 22 years old (my wife is a nurse working at Ninh Phuoc hospital). We are all Cham people. After nine years, we now have 2 lovely little girls: the first one is 8 years old and the second one is 4 years old.

Many of my friends often joked that because I studied Cham culture too deeply, only daughters were born (Cham people follow matriarchy). Many people also asked me and my wife whether since we only had daughters, would we give birth again to have a son? My wife and I always answer that, whether a son or a daughter, we would've loved them the same, and we stopped at these two little princesses and we are happy with this, and decided not to give birth again because we want to dedicate the best things that we get to nurture and educate our daughters.

*The story of Mr. Hai Van Thanh, 37 years old
Ninh Phuoc district, Ninh Thuan province.*

TOPIC 4: SON PREFERENCE

Sex ratio at birth in Viet Nam is 111.5 boys/100 girls, higher than the natural biological level. Sex ratio imbalance at birth has spreaded to remote mountainous areas. This ratio in the Northern midlands and mountainous areas is 114.2 boys/100 girls.



JUST FOR THE DESIRE OF HAVING A SON



The story of Mr. Thao Chan Sai, 55 years old and his wife Mrs. Sung Thi Mai, 49 years old Hoang Su Phi district, Ha Giang province.

At the age of 55 years old for me and the age of 49 for my wife, among Mong people, quite a lot of people have already become great-grandparents. Currently my wife and I also are the grandparents of a bunch of grandchildren but we also have 2 very young children, only 7 years old and 4 years old.

We have 9 children (8 daughters and a son). For H'Mong people, if a family does not have a son, the parents will become hungry ghosts when going to hell because no one worships and feeds them. My wife was giving birth from time to time, from the first daughter (in 1991) until the eighth birth (in 2012) who was the only boy. He is Thao Chi Phung, now he is in grade 2. My wife and I told each other to give birth to one more son, but the last birth was a little girl, and currently she is only 4 years old.

My wife and I sometimes recall those years that had passed with the fear of giving birth to too many children. My wife is no longer healthy, because it lead to many illnesses. Working to take care of 9 children in the family is actually very hard and poor. Parents do not care for them much, and they have been growing up naturally like potatoes, only a little of education. Then at 14 or 15 years old, they have to quit school and get married. Now, my first 5 daughters are married, but my wife and I are still raising the remaining 4 children. My son is just in grade 2 and my youngest daughter is still in kindergarten. Parents spend the whole day in the forest or in the field, and kids have to take care of each other to school and play by themselves.

Sometimes when I think about it, if my wife and I did not give so many births, the whole family would not have to work hard and the children would be better cared for.

Everyone in this Thuy Ung village once said that my family had a huge fortune to have three lovely daughters who study well. My wife and I have always been proud and strive for that. My wife and I are just ordinary workers, we have a small mechanical workshop right at home, and we have worked really hard to take care of and raise our daughters.

My first daughter is a foreign language teacher at a high school of a district town, and my second daughter is in college. My youngest daughter is in 7th grade. I was born in a rural area in the North of Vietnam, where many families have always wished to have a son to rely on him when they grow old. For me, this desire is more special when I am a skilled mechanic, and I had a great desire to have a son in order to teach him the unique techniques that I have acquired over the years. Then when the first daughter got married, my wife and I realized that if we didn't try, we would not achieve our wish of having a son.

Following a friend's recommendation, we went to a specialized hospital in Ha Noi to ask for the intervention of in-vitro fertilization. We were really hoping at first but did not dare to think much about the success because at that time my wife was 47 years old. Then, as a miracle, we succeeded, my wife became pregnant with twins and gave birth to two handsome boys as she wanted. The children are 9 months old now.

For my wife and myself, even though we always want to have a son, we love our daughters and sons the same. More people accumulate more wealth, the happiness of having two more children makes us younger, healthier and more motivated to work harder in order to take care and educate our lovely girls and boys.

MORE PEOPLE ACCUMULATE MORE WEALTH



*The story of Mr. Nguyen Huu Hoan, 54 years old
and his wife Ms. Nguyen Thi Kien, 48 years old
Dan Phuong district, Ha Noi.*

TOPIC 5: EARLY MARRIAGE



The mean age at marriage is 25.2 years old. Yet the proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 18 is 9.1%. Three ethnic minority groups with the highest rates are: Brau (66.7%), Mong (48.0%), and Xinh Mun (44.5%).

IF THERE IS A CHANCE TO DECIDE AGAIN

We liked each other since she was in secondary school. When she was 15 years old and in 9th grade, we decided to get married. The two families also agreed and did not prevent it, because here almost all H'Mong couples get married early.

When we got married, I was 19 and my wife was 15. We just went to the Commune People's Committee to register our marriage, because by law a girl must be 18 years old to register for marriage. The parents cut a plot of land and built a small hut for us.

At first, we had a normal life, there was no need to spend much on family life, until my wife became pregnant with the first child. And the second child was born, and now my family has two sons. The first one is 2 years old and the other one is 11 months old.

Since then, family life has become harder, and there are a lot of things that must be bought; children are often sick; but we often have no money at home. At some point, my wife and I thought we could not overcome the difficulties. Last year, my family was supported by the local government to build a house for poor households, although our house is small and simple, it is still a dream for our family.

If my wife and I had a chance to return to the past to decide again, then surely we would postpone the marriage for a few more years in order to work, save and accumulate more money to help our family life to be less difficult, compared to what happened in the present.



The story of Mr. Ma Thi Seo, 22 years old and his wife Ms. Sung Thi Sa, 18 years old Hoang Su Phi District, Ha Giang province.

TOPIC 6: MIGRATION

7.3% of population aged 5 years and over across the country are migrants, equivalent to 6.4 million persons. The majority of migrants move for jobs or family reasons.



The thing that makes me the happiest is that my 5-year-old can study in a commune public pre-school. A neighbor takes care of my 13-month-old child.

My husband and I work in the same company, but we work different shifts to take care of and teach our children. Every day I finish work at 5 pm and go home to cook for them. My husband always comes home later.

My husband worked for our company for a few years before we got married. Earlier, I worked in farming in the commune. Although the office is 40 km from our home, my husband visited home once a month because he had to do extra work to earn more income for the family.

After working in farming for a few years, I couldn't make enough to live off. I asked my husband to help me get a job in his company so that we could be together and make more money to take care of our children.

I started working in my husband's company and let my parents-in-law take care of our child. But they only looked after her, they weren't actually teaching her anything.

So last month I took my child to pre-school here. At first I was worried that the local authorities would not allow it as we are not registered as permanent residents here. Still, they were flexible and only required temporary residency registrations, birth certificate and registration book.

My 13-month-old child, not old enough for pre-school yet, is taken care of by a neighbor. She was vaccinated at the commune health station. My husband always works on weekends for extra money.

Our biggest wish is to stay healthy and have stable incomes, so that we can give our children better opportunities to study than we had, and that they would not have to endure such hard lives as ours are now.

ONE SMALL CHANGE CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE



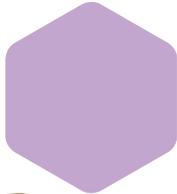
*The story of Ms. Nguyen Thi Hoi, born in 1990
Khoai Chau district, Hung Yen province.*

TOPIC 7: DISABILITY

People with disabilities account for 3.7% of the total population. Many people with disabilities have made efforts to work and, therefore, to stabilize their life, integrate into the community and contribute to the overall development of the country.



I CANNOT BE A BURDEN



*The story of Ms. Le Thi Bich Thi, born in 1987
My Tu district, Soc Trang province.*

Every day I knit 17-18 plastic baskets, and daily income is 90,000-100,000 Vietnamese dong (USD4). Each month, I earn more than 2 million Vietnamese dong (USD90), which helps increase my family's income.

When I learned that I was pregnant, I was very happy. What a beautiful life - I could have a child. But then worried. Could we have enough money to raise our child? Meanwhile, all expenses were covered by my husband by working for others. Could we have enough money to raise our child?

I could not do anything but just stay at home to do housework and take care for my husband and our son. I also wanted to go to work but did not know what to do and could not find a proper job. My husband does every work he can for others. Harvesting rice, construction work, and picking-up bricks. My mother loves us and she supported us to rebuild our house.

When I became pregnant with the second child, I was really scared, really worried. With one child, our life was difficult. Now the second child was coming, how could we do? Fortunately, the village women's union member came to our home and said that the commune would organize a training on knitting plastic baskets for the poor and people with disabilities like me. I agreed to participate immediately. For the first few days, I thought I would give it up as knitting was difficult and needed patience. But thinking of our children and husband, I overcame it.

After studying, I was introduced to a company. They let me do processing at home. They bring the materials to me and when I finish, they come to pick them up. My monthly income is more than 2 million VND, not a lot, but helps my husband. I don't want to be a burden to my husband and my children. I self-overcome my difficulties.



TOPIC 8: OLDER PERSONS



Viet Nam's population is ageing. As of 1st April 2019, there were 11.4 million people aged 60 and over, many of whom still actively work and contribute to the society.



WITH STRONG HANDS AND ACTIVE MIND, I STILL HAVE TO WORK

Currently, I raise 30 bee hives, each year I earn about VND 30 million from it, plus the state's allowance for the people with disabilities of VND 500,000 per month. In addition, my wife and I also raise chickens and pigs. My wife and I live well, and don't need our children's support.

Our children also ask us to rest as we are 70 years old. They will take care of us. But I think, my hands are still strong, and my head is still active. I am still able to work. Otherwise, I feel bored, and my head will be dull. We tell them to let us do what we want until we get too weak that we cannot do anything, then we will ask for their support. Doing nothing makes us bored.

In addition, the daily life of the elderly people is different from our children. They have to do business for their own life. The time for lunch and dinner is different. We cannot follow them. We can eat and sleep at any time we want, and do not want to rely on them.



*The story of Mr. Nguyen Thuong Hien, born in 1947
Son Dong district, Bac Giang province.*

NEVER TOO LATE IF YOU WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIETY



*The story of Mr. Nguyen Duc Minh, born in 1955
Son Dong, Bac Giang province.*

In 2014, I established Son Dong Organic Honey Bee Cooperative. At first, there were only 29 members with 2,700 bee-hives, yielding 70 tons of honey/year. Up to now, the membership reached 44 and 5,500 bee-hives, yielding over 100 tons of honey/year. Members have the highest income up to more than 300 million Vietnamese dong (USD13,600) per year, the lowest also starting at 30 million Vietnamese dong (USD1,360) per year.

Leaving the army after 40 years of service, I also wanted to rest and have fun with my children and grandchildren. With my wife's and my pension (she's a retired teacher), I absolutely do not have to worry about living expenses.

But seeing the lives of many households, including elderly people, was difficult, especially when they have a lot of skills and knowledge about bee-keeping and can improve their lives from this job. A lot of concern. Finally, I decided to set up the Cooperative to gather bee-keepers in the commune, helping them improve their lives.

At first it was very difficult. The members were afraid of the effectiveness, the output of the product, the benefits of participation. I myself had little experience and knowledge of management and economics.

But I did not give up. I paid for the experience and knowledge by learning from cooperatives both inside and outside the province, taking management and economics classes.

Through the first year, everything went smoothly. I opened another clean water production workshop. This workshop currently creates regular jobs for 10 people, with an average salary of 3 million - 5 million Vietnamese dong (150-200USD) per month.

I always think that at any age we can make contribution to society. Old age does not mean that we are old!

LEARNING FOR MYSELF AND FOR HELPING OTHERS

I was a high school math teacher. I felt bored when I retired so I tried to do something to refresh my knowledge for myself and my neighbors. But apart from math, I did not know anything else.

I registered for a psychology course to acquire mediation skills to resolve family conflicts and heal families. Then I gained more legal knowledge to help people resolve their disputes. I am getting older and cannot do hard work, and I continue to learn about agriculture, bonsai, and orchid care.

Now people call me the “operator” as I provide support to my neighbors. People can call me at any time for my support and advice.

Having retired for nearly 30 years, I’m now almost 80 years old, but I have never thought about stopping my studies and research. I think studying is good for myself and for helping others.

*Ms. Nguyen Thi Thanh Ha, born in 1941
District 12, Ho Chi Minh City.*



STICKY RICE AND LIFE

Each day I sell 3 kilos of sticky rice and earn about 30,000-40,000 dong. This amount is just enough for my living. I have been selling sticky rice for over ten years. My family is a poor household, so I was provided with the health insurance for the poor.

My husband passed away more than ten years ago. My son died two months ago. My two daughters got married in Bac Lieu. They are also poor so they cannot help. I have a dog at home as a friend. Wherever I go, he follows. I wish to have good health and a solid house so that I do not get wet when it rains."

*Ms. Ly Thi Diec, born in 1949
My Tu District, Soc Trang Province.*



TOPIC 9: HOUSING

In the last 10 years, housing conditions of the households have been improved. Most of the households live in the permanent or semi-permanent houses. The average housing area per capita is 23.2 m² per person, increasing by 6.5 m² per person compared to 2009.



CHOOSE CONVENIENCE FOR MODERN LIFE



Up to now, the decision to live here is still the right choice for us. All family activities take place on one floor. It helps us to take care of and communicate with our children easier and closer. The urban area provides a full range of life services such as hospitals, schools, shopping malls and entertainment. You do not have to spend hours every day transporting your kids to and from school. You do not have to drive a long distance to entertainment area. Everything is ready within 5 minutes. Security here is also very good. In the building lobby and the surrounding areas, there are always 24-hour security staff.

The utility that comes with it is at high cost. With spending on daily activities and children's education, 45% -50% of total income is not a simple matter. We all have to try hard. In return, we lead a comfortable life. The children have a safe and secure living environment to grow in.

*The story of Nhung Nguyen & Linh Nguyen
458 Minh Khai street, Ha Noi.*

HOPE



*The story Mr. Thao Van Cu and his wife Ms. Giang Thi Pao
Hoang Su Phi district, Ha Giang province.*

I am 28 years old, and my wife is 22 years old. We have two sons. One is 11 years old (with the ex-wife) and another is 2 months old. My wife and I did not have much education, so our life was just growing rice on the terraced fields left by our parents to get rice to eat all year round, and we did not have money to buy a cattle for breeding, so we only raised some chickens to get eggs to eat.

When my wife became pregnant with our second son, I decided to go down to Vi Xuyen district to work as a sawmill worker in order to earn some money for family spending. Unfortunately, I had an accident when riding a motorbike last month, and my leg was broken, but I had no money to go to the district hospital for treatment and had to stay home to apply herbal medicine. It may take a long time for me to come back to work, while my family does not know how to earn for daily life anymore.

The house that my family lives in was the inheritance of my parents. It was built 30 years ago, and it was a mud-wall house and too dilapidated. I also want to repair or build a new house. But what to do now, when my wife and I have no way to make money. My legs hurt even more.

I hope that when our children grow up healthy at a certain point, both my wife and I can leave home to work as hired laborers, and then hopefully we'll be able to save money to repair the house.

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