



YOUNG PEOPLE IN VIET NAM: SELECTED INDICATORS

From the 2009 Viet Nam Population and Housing Census



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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------|--------------------------------|
| ASFR | Age-Specific Fertility Rate |
| GSO | General Statistics Office |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| SMAM | Singulate Mean Age at Marriage |
| UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund |

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INTRODUCTION

In all nations, young people must be prepared to make a meaningful contribution towards achieving sustainable economic and social development. Young people who enter the labour force equipped with appropriate skills can



refresh and improve the quality of their country's human capital. In other words, young people are perhaps the most critical determinant of long-term growth and development. For the purpose of this profile, the youth demographic is defined as the age group between 15-24 years¹. According to the Population and Housing Census conducted in Viet Nam in 2009, youth comprise the largest age group, accounting for 19.4 per cent of the total population of 85.79 million. They not only form the basis for demographic change but represent the future potential of the country.

This booklet is the eighth in a series published by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) during recent years. Information is drawn from the Viet Nam 2009 Population and Housing Census data and from the Major Findings², a series

1. The World Health Organization (WHO) refers to only the age group of 15-24 as youth. The revised Viet Nam Youth Law in 2005 defines youth as Vietnamese citizens aged 16-30. This profile uses the WHO's definition.
2. Central Population and Housing Census Steering Committee (2010), 'The 2009 Viet Nam Population and Housing Census: Major Findings'.

of census data monographs³ developed by the General Statistics Office (GSO) and the UNFPA. The Population and Housing Census, conducted every 10 years, provides a comprehensive survey that identifies crucial information on national and sub-national population structure, educational attainment, employment, migration, housing status, and living conditions. The aim of this booklet is to analyse the Census data and create a profile of indicators highlighting trends among the young population as the generation most vital to Viet Nam's future development.

UNFPA would like to thank Dr Giang Thanh Long, Vice Dean of the School of Public Policy and Management at the National Economics University, for his invaluable contributions to the information contained in this report. In publishing this booklet, UNFPA provides informed opinion, based on Census data, on certain characteristics, trends, and vulnerabilities apparent among young people. It is hoped that readers find this information useful in establishing baseline against which progress can be measured to address the special socio-economic development needs of young people in Viet Nam.

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3. General Statistics Office and UNFPA (forthcoming), 'The 2009 Viet Nam Population and Housing Census: Sex Ratio at Birth in Viet Nam-New Evidence on Patterns, Trends, and Differentials'.

General Statistics Office and UNFPA (forthcoming), 'The 2009 Viet Nam Population and Housing Census: Education in Viet Nam-An Analysis of Key Indicators'.

General Statistics Office and UNFPA (forthcoming), 'The 2009 Viet Nam Population and Housing Census: Migration and Urbanization in Viet Nam-Patterns, Trends and Differentials'.

General Statistics Office and UNFPA (forthcoming), 'The 2009 Viet Nam Population and Housing Census: Age and Sex Structure and Marital Status of the Population in Viet Nam'.

1. DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

The two population pyramids of 1999 and 2009 illustrate the evolution of the Vietnamese population by age and sex, demonstrating a proportional increase among young people aged 15-24 years.



Whereas in 1999 youth took second place, by 2009 this demographic became the largest sector with a recorded population (Graph 1) of 16,640,817. Such an increase is attributable to the baby boom of the 1980s (although it should be noted that in the past 10 years the boom has been followed by a rapid decline in birth rates), resulting not only in the current and relatively high proportion of females of child-bearing age but also a significant increase in the labour force, especially in the 15 -24 age group.

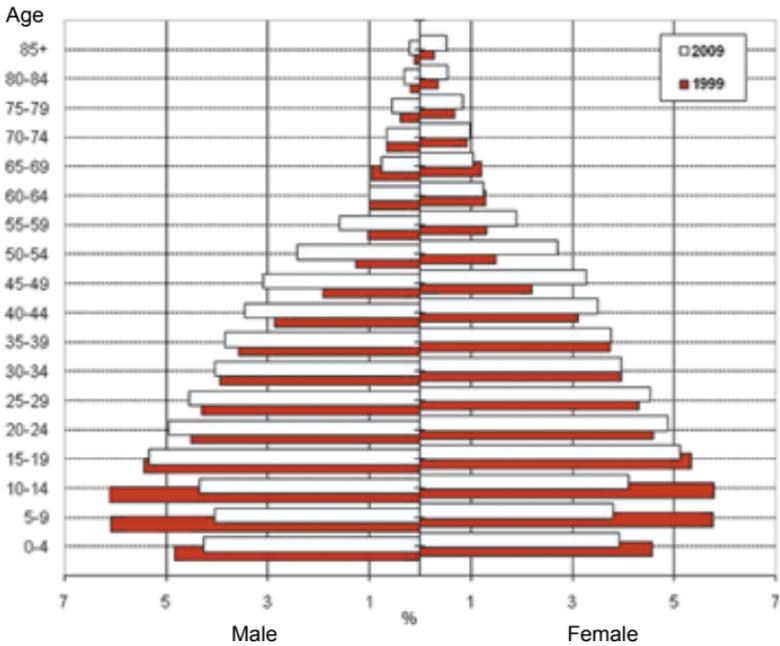
Overall, the 2009 population structure shows a significantly high proportion of working people in the age group 15-59 years compared with other groups such as children, the elderly and dependent, thus establishing a 'demographic dividend' or 'demographic bonus', characterized by the existence of two or more persons of an economically productive age to each person of a dependent age. This correlation represents a unique, "one time only" transition in Viet Nam's demographic history. As documented elsewhere⁴, the demographic bonus in Viet Nam began in 2007 and is predicted to end in 2041.

From an international stand point, this particular period is widely viewed as an opportunity to reap the benefits and meet the challenges of the future in a way that will impact positively on economic growth and development. Accordingly, it is of

4. General Statistics Office and UNFPA (forthcoming), 'The 2009 Viet Nam Population and Housing Census: Age and Sex Structure and Marital Status of the Population in Viet Nam'.

prime importance that the Vietnamese government identifies the most efficient and productive policies to make best use of such unprecedented development opportunity⁵.

Graph 1. Viet Nam's population pyramids, 1999 and 2009



5. UNFPA (2010), 'Taking Advantage of the Demographic Bonus in Viet Nam: Opportunities, Challenges and Policy Options'.

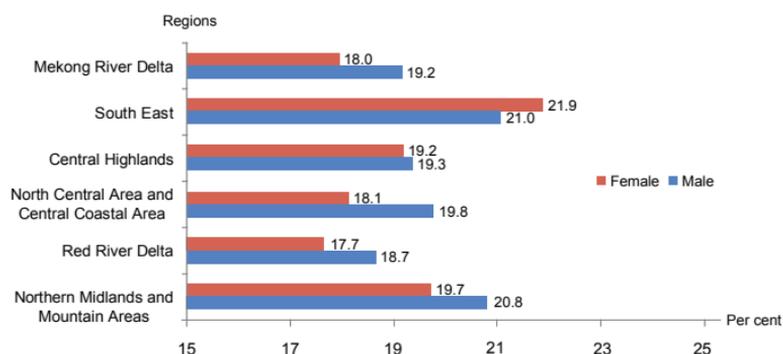
The two population pyramids also illustrate sex ratios for different age groups with younger groups, notably with more males than females, tending towards higher ratios than older demographics. Analysis of the 2009 pyramid shows that, while women are still more numerous in the older age groups, males gradually begin to dominate in the younger groups, especially those under 40 years of age (Table 1).

Table 1. Proportion of each age group and sex ratio by age group, 2009

| Age group | Male | Female | Sex ratio |
|-----------|-------|--------|-----------|
| 0-4 | 9.0 | 7.9 | 111.5 |
| 5-9 | 8.4 | 7.6 | 108.7 |
| 10-14 | 9.0 | 8.1 | 108.5 |
| 15-19 | 10.6 | 9.8 | 105.3 |
| 20-24 | 9.3 | 9.2 | 99.0 |
| 25-29 | 8.9 | 8.8 | 98.4 |
| 30-34 | 8.0 | 7.8 | 100.8 |
| 35-39 | 7.7 | 7.5 | 101.3 |
| 40-44 | 7.0 | 7.0 | 98.9 |
| 45-49 | 6.3 | 6.5 | 94.9 |
| 50-54 | 5.0 | 5.5 | 89.3 |
| 55-59 | 3.3 | 3.8 | 86.3 |
| 60-64 | 2.1 | 2.5 | 82.4 |
| 65+ | 5.3 | 7.9 | 66.1 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 98.1 |

Despite the fact that the largest proportion of the population across all regions in Viet Nam belongs to the youth sector, regional differences continue to exist as shown in Graph 2.

Graph 2. Proportion of young people aged 15-24 by region



The South East area not only records the highest proportion of young people aged 15-24 years but is the only region that shows a higher rate of female youth than male. This may be explained by the concentration of labour-intensive industries in this region, such as the garment and footwear factories in Binh Duong and Dong Nai, which absorb many young labourers, especially young females migrating from other provinces and regions in search of employment. In contrast, the Red River Delta, including Thai Binh province, has the lowest proportion of young people. Most likely, this is a result of a high migration rate among the youth group from Thai Binh, to other provinces, and low fertility rare in this province during the period 1985-1994.

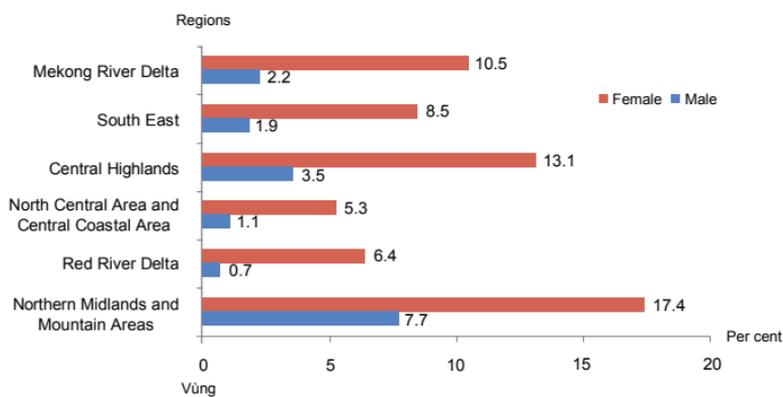
2. MARITAL AND FERTILITY TRENDS

The Census also provides information on the marital status of the youth population. The proportion of ever-married females aged 15-19 is significantly higher than that of males of the same age (Graph 3). At the national

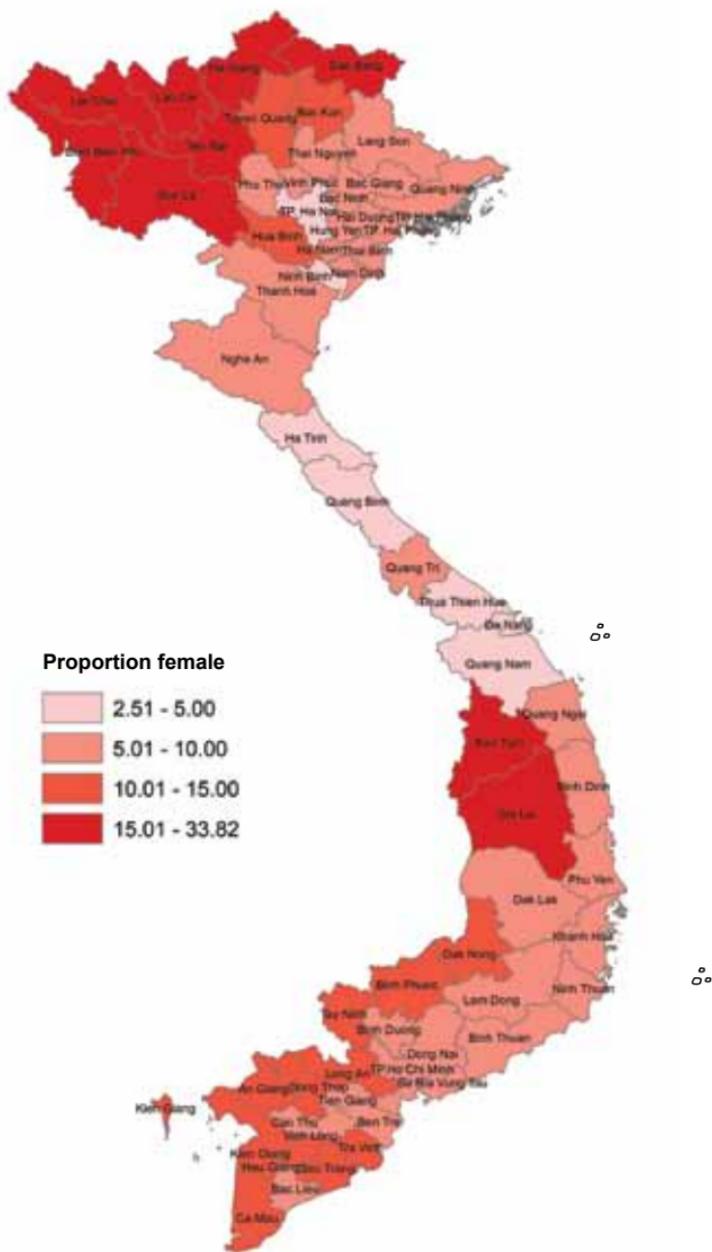


level, only 2.2 per cent of males aged 15-19 were 'ever married', while for females in the same age group the per cent is much higher, at 8.5 per cent. The Northern Midlands and Mountain Areas show the highest proportion of ever-married people aged 15-19 (17.4 per cent female, and 7.7 per cent male), while the North Central and Central Coastal regions are lowest (5.3 per cent female, and 1.1 per cent male).

Graph 3. Proportion of ever-married people aged 15-19 by region

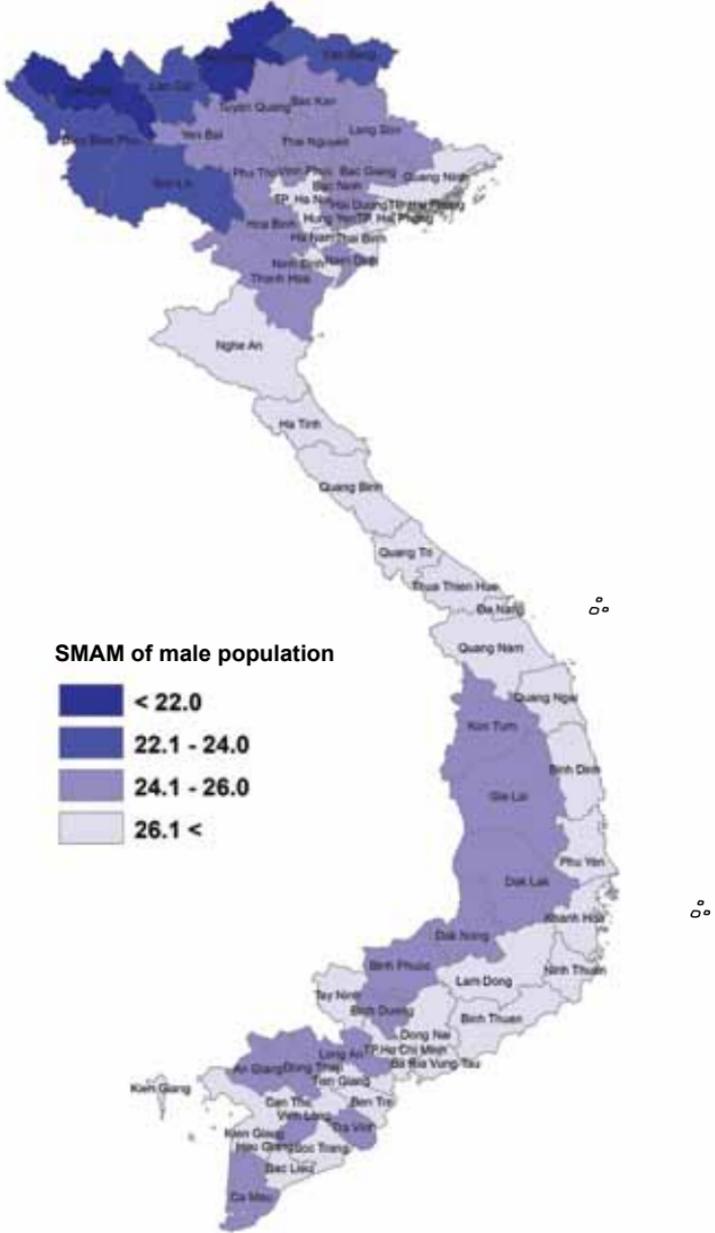


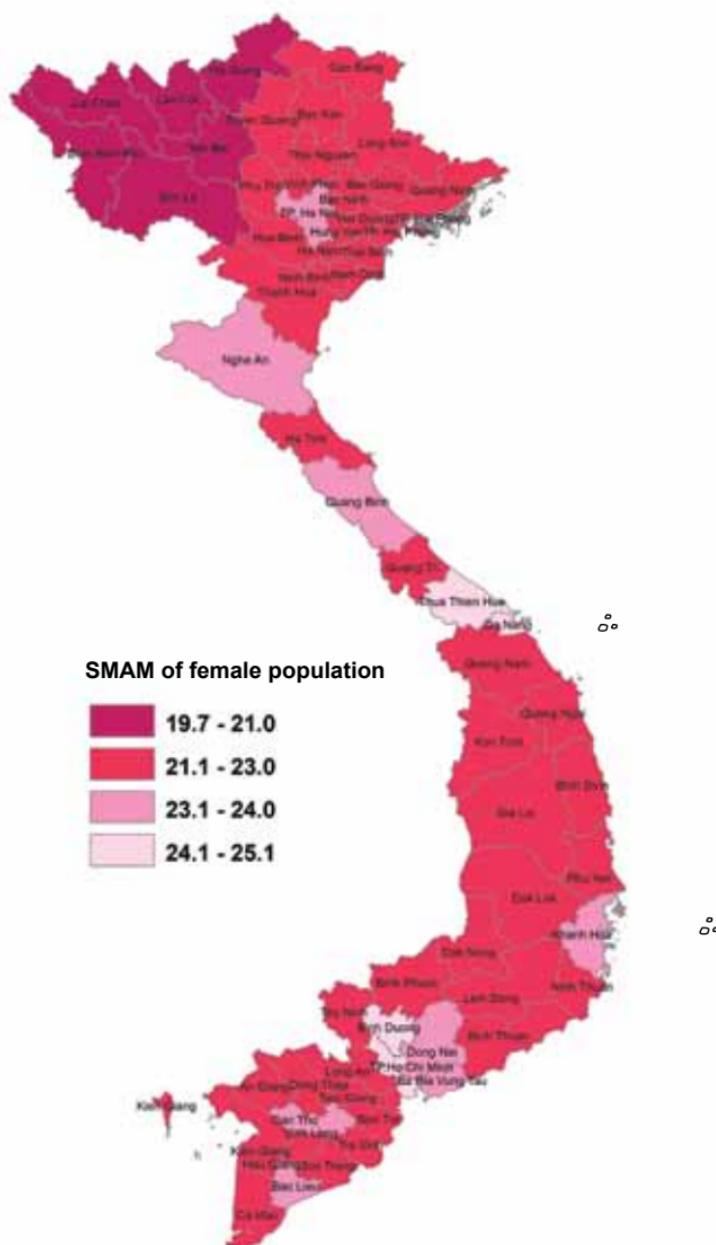
At the provincial level, while there are only six provinces recorded 10 per cent or more males as being married by 20 years of age, there are 23 provinces having over 10 per cent of females in the 15-19 age group either have been or are currently married (Map 1). Certain provinces in the Northern Midlands and Mountain regions, particularly those with relatively high ethnic minority population such as Cao Bang, Lao Cai, Son La, Dien Bien, Ha Giang, and Lai Chau, record high numbers of married people within the age group 15-19 years. Lai Chau shows the highest proportions at 18.7 per cent for males, and 33.8 per cent for females. Similarly, in the 20-24 age group located in ethnic minority areas, high numbers of ever-married people are recorded at 24.1 per cent for males and 48.0 per cent for females. Within this age group, the proportion of widowed, divorced or separated people is significantly low, falling to less than 1 per cent. Apparently, early marriage and especially child marriage among ethnic minority women reduce young women's opportunities for higher education and increases the threat of early confronting with child bearing at younger age and adolescence.



The Singulate Mean Age at Marriage (SMAM) shows a slight increase over the past 10 years. While in 1999, the SMAM was 22.8 for females and 25.4 for males, ten years later in 2009, the SMAM for females remains the same, while the SMAM for males has increased to 26.2. A national comparison shows that women tend to marry at a younger age than men although provincial variation and differences in recorded rates between urban and rural areas, do exist. For example, on average, rural women and men marry at an age two-years younger than their urban counterparts. Similar to the findings on the 'ever married' population above, the lowest SMAMs are identified in the Northern Midlands and Mountain regions with 24.0 for men and 21.2 for women. The highest SMAMs are recorded in the North Central Area and Central Coastal Area (27.1 for males and 23 for females).

Map 2. SMAM by sex and province





The Census data also confirm a continuously changing trend in birth patterns from 'early' to 'late' birth based on analysis of the Age-Specific Fertility Rate (ASFR), (i.e. the number of births for every 1000 women in a given age or age group in a given year). Data from the 1999 and 2009 Censuses illustrate that fertility rates of the population aged 15-24 years has declined rapidly. Indeed, for the 15-19 age group, births fell from 29/1000 females in 1999 to 24/1000 in 2009 and for the age group 20-24 from 158 births/1000 females to 121/1000 during same period. Moreover, the highest ASFR shifted from the age group 20-24 to the older age group 25-29 years. This shift in the fertility pattern reflects a significant and increasing tendency of urban women to bear their children at an older age with the highest rates recorded in the 25-29 age group at 129 births/1000 women. This contrasts with the highest ASFR rate in rural areas recorded among the younger 20-24 age group at 144/1000 women (Table 2). Notably, the fertility rate of rural young women is almost twice that of urban young women and likely a reflection of the fact that, generally, rural women lack the same opportunities for further education as their urban counterparts. While urban women may choose to delay childbearing, rural women continue to marry and give birth relatively early.

Table 2. ASFR, 1999 and 2009

| Age | ASFR | | | |
|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 1999 | 2009 | | |
| | | Total | Urban | Rural |
| 15-19 | 29 | 24 | 13 | 28 |
| 20-24 | 158 | 121 | 77 | 144 |
| 25-29 | 135 | 133 | 129 | 135 |
| 30-34 | 81 | 81 | 91 | 76 |
| 35-39 | 41 | 37 | 41 | 35 |
| 40-44 | 18 | 10 | 10 | 9 |
| 45-49 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 2 |

The ASFR trends among the younger generation endorse the fact that Viet Nam has entered a 'demographic dividend' period recording the highest proportional level of young people in Viet Nam's history. However, not only do the data reveal that young people currently dominate the total population, but also indicate that this particular group is experiencing socio-economic and cultural changes that encourage marriage at a later age and lower fertility rates. This trend is bound to impact significantly on the direction of future population growth and family structure in Viet Nam. The data also reveal key disparities in indicators that could be better addressed through the introduction or adaption of existing policies and programmes affecting young people, such as adolescent reproductive health, education and training, and job opportunities. It is crucial that these programmes take account of geographical differences and sensitivities, particularly those regions that lag behind the rest of the country.

3. LITERACY, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

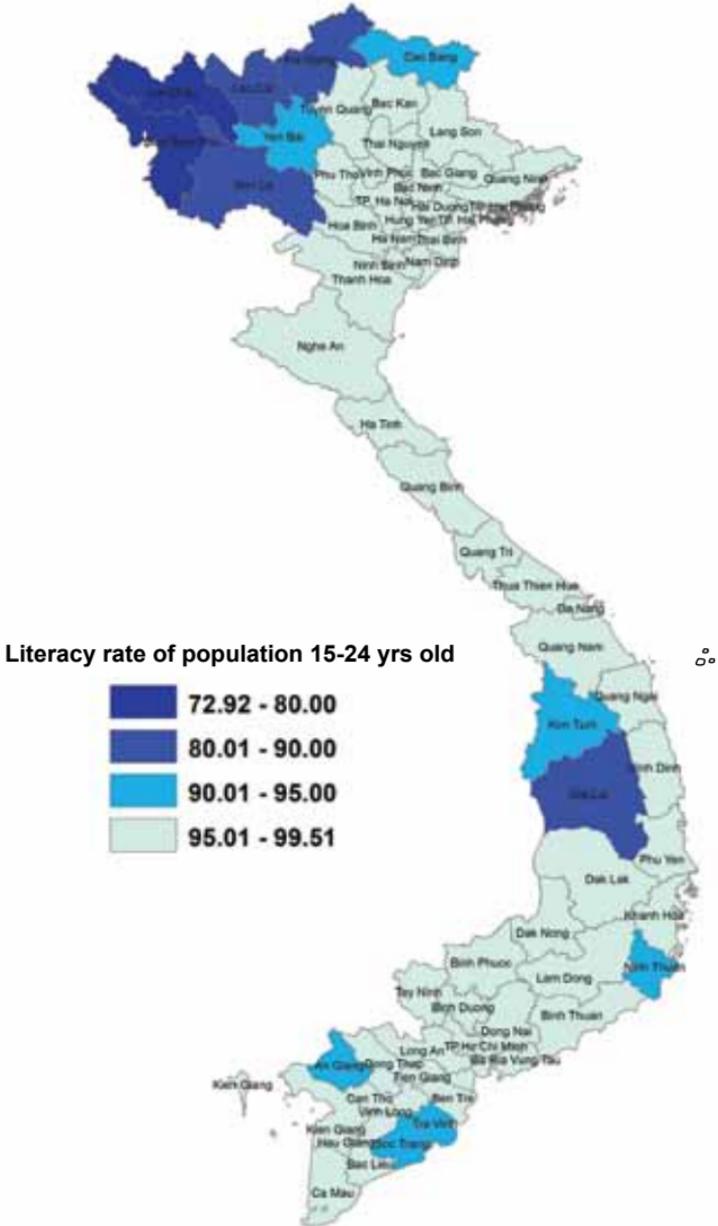
The Census data provide information on educational enrolment, attainment and drop-out rates and reveal that Viet Nam is on the right track towards achieving numbers 2 and 3 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) relating to universal primary education and the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment, respectively.



The literacy rate of the Vietnamese population aged 15 years and over has increased from 90 per cent in 1999 to 93.5 per cent in 2009. The gap between male and female literacy rates has also reduced. In 2009, 95.8 per cent of males over 15 years of age were found 'able to read, write and fully understand Vietnamese or another foreign or ethnic minority language'⁶, in comparison with 91.3 per cent of females in the same age group. For the young population group aged 15 to 24 years, these indicators reveal even better results. In 2009, the literacy rate among youth was 97.1 per cent, confirming a gap of 0.6 per cent points between male and female. The fact that the gender gap for literacy has substantially narrowed within the youth group compared to other population groups, sheds promising light on the potential eradication of male/female discrepancies in literacy levels.

6. Definition of literacy as in the questionnaire of the 2009 Viet Nam Population and Housing Census.

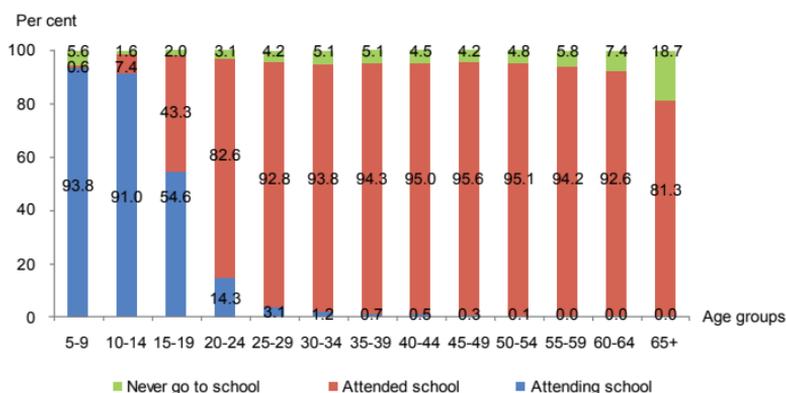
Map 3. Literacy rate of young population by province and Ratio of male/female of young population for literacy rate



Despite these outstanding improvements, geographical variations in youth literacy rates continue (Map 3). This map shows that the less developed areas in Viet Nam generally present with lower literacy rates and wider gender gaps. For instance, the Red River Delta region has the highest literacy rate for youth at 99.2 per cent with only very small differences between male and female. In contrast, the Northern Midlands and Mountain regions record the lowest literacy rate (91.2 per cent), compounded by the largest gender gap. Particularly some provinces in these regions, such as Ha Giang, Lao Cai, Lai Chau, Dien Bien, and Son La, display worrisome gender gaps of, on average, more than 10 per cent points with Lai Chau recording the lowest literacy rates for both young males and females (85.7 per cent and 59.9 per cent, respectively), thus reflecting the biggest gender gap of 25.7 per cent points.

This calls not only for greater efforts towards the elimination of illiteracy in the disadvantaged provinces of the Northern Midlands and Mountain regions, but strongly suggests more emphasis be placed on reducing the literacy gap between males and females. The introduction of more appropriately focused and sensitive education programmes for ethnic minority groups would encourage female empowerment in managing their familial, social and economic lives.

Graph 4. School attendance status by age group



As with literacy rates, the indicators on school attendance show promising results for this and future youth generations and reflect the progress made in Viet Nam, particularly in urban areas, towards achieving Millennium Development Goal Number 2 (MDG2) on primary education (Graph 4).

The overall proportions of people in the age groups 15-19 and 20-24 who 'never go to school' are only 2.0 per cent and 3.1 per cent, respectively. The low rates recorded among the 'never go to school' youth, reveal only slight gender difference. The Vietnamese education system encourages young people aged 15-19 to attend upper-secondary schools, and those aged 20-24 to continue to tertiary level at vocational institutions, colleges or universities. However rates of school attendance among youth aged 15-19 record 54.6 per cent, suggesting that nearly half the youth population aged 15-19 does not pursue higher education following completion of lower -or upper-secondary education.

As mentioned above, improving the quality of the young labour force is key to achieving sustainable socio-economic and human development. Even though the MDG2 indicators on literacy rates and primary school completion for the young show laudable results, geographical disparities and gender differences persist, calling for more concerted efforts to reduce these gaps. Furthermore, the data above demonstrate that the majority of youth does not pursue higher education after completing lower-or upper-secondary school. This data suggest that more efforts are needed to build a high quality and skilled labor force with capacity to meet industrial demand and to sustain Viet Nam's economic competitiveness on the global stage. Again, emphasis should be placed on developing effective reproductive health, education and training programmes that will lead to female empowerment, increased job opportunities and productivity, and improved quality of life for this and the subsequent generations.

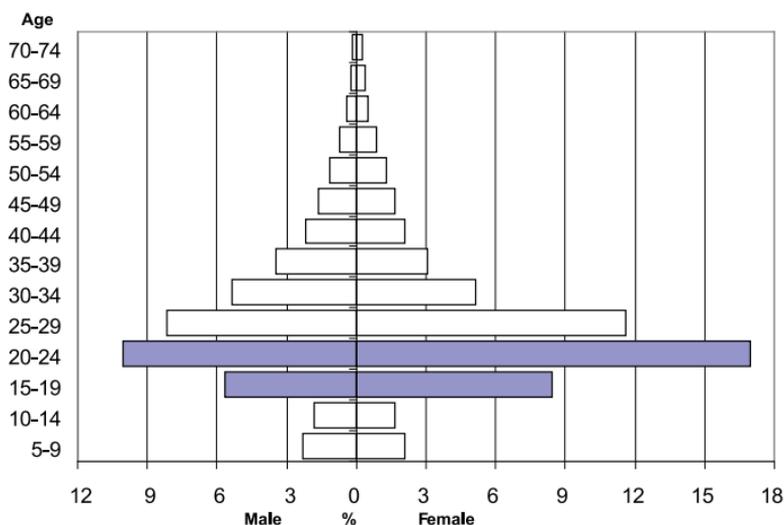
4. MIGRATION

The 2009 Viet Nam Population and Housing Census defines a migrant as a person whose place of residence five years prior to the time of the Census is different from their current place of residence.



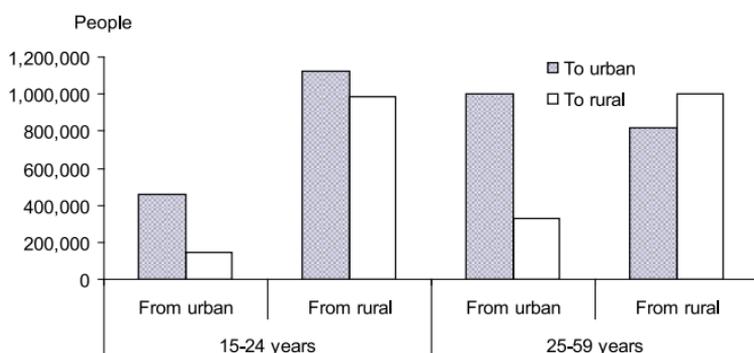
This definition implies those people who have migrated within the 5 years prior to the census enumeration, and is unable to identify certain types of migrant such as temporary and circular migrants and child migrants 5 years of age and under. Despite these limitations, analysis of census data in Graph 5 reveals an interesting picture on the internal migrant population in Viet Nam, namely that the population group aged 15-24 not only accounts for the highest proportion of total migrants, but also shows predominant female representation. It should also be noted that the median age of all migrants captured by the Census is 24 years, just bordering the upper edge of the youth group age definition.

Graph 5. Migrants in 2009 by sex and age



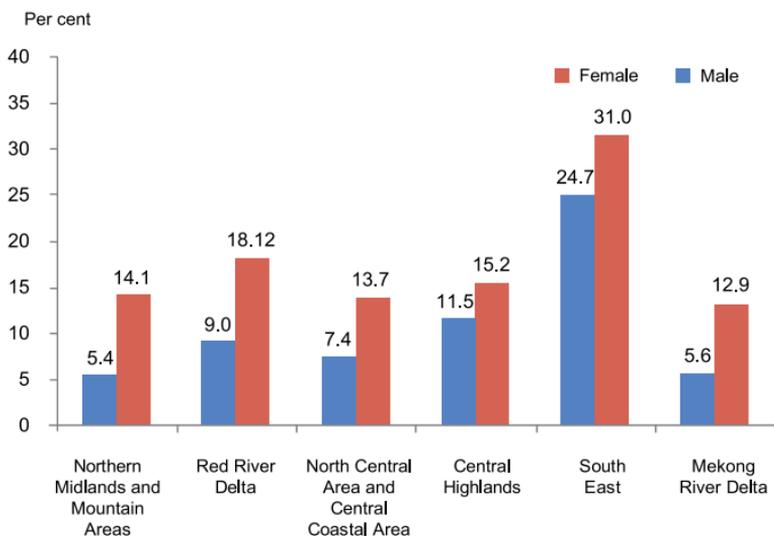
Graph 6 illustrates further findings on the destination of young migrants. Young migrants in the age group 15-24 tend to migrate mainly to urban areas while those aged 25 and over are attracted to both urban and rural areas. These findings indicate that migration of the young population has played a significant role in urban growth in the last decade. This means that only if proper urban development policies take into account migration flows and demographic trends can migrants be assured of suitable access to social services and job opportunities. Importantly, given that females account for a large proportion of young migrants, it is essential they be provided with reproductive health services for protection from unnecessary health risks.

Graph 6. Young migrants by origin and destination, 2009



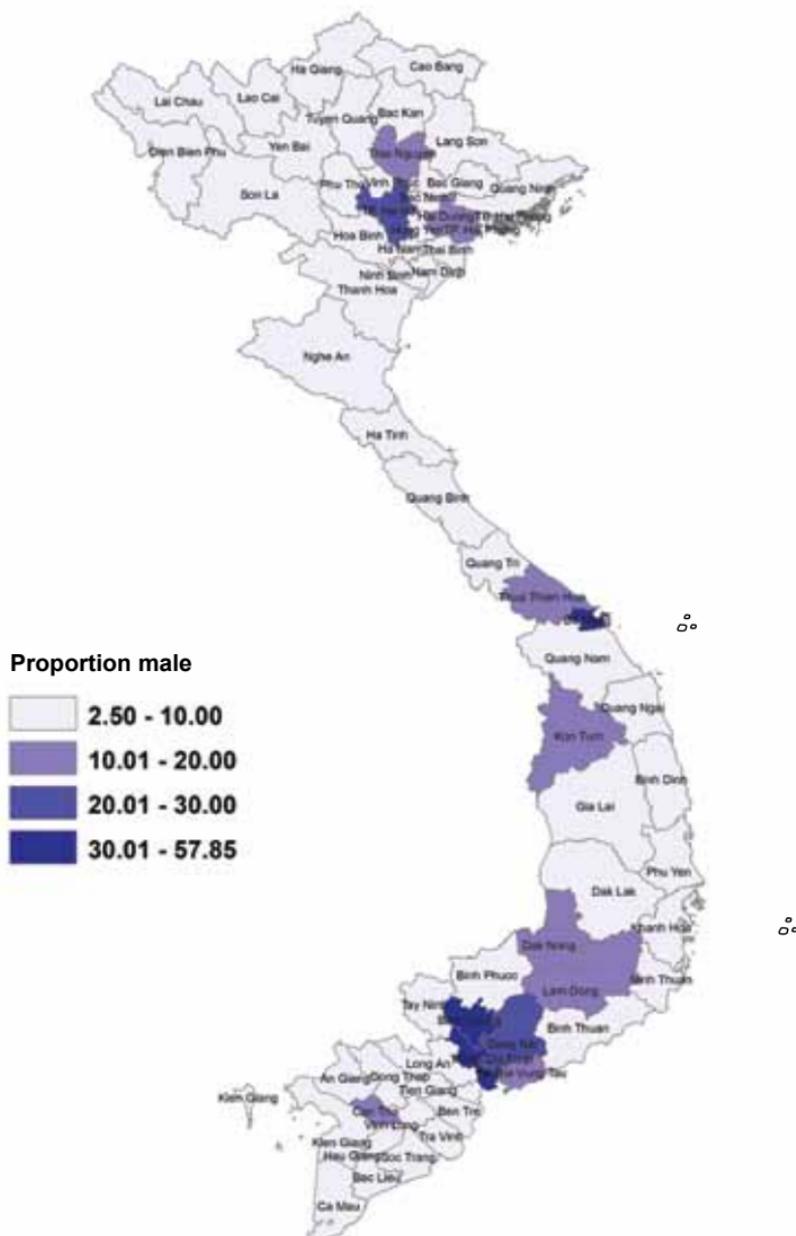
Closer examination of migrants aged 15-24, by region, province, gender, and schooling status provides a number of notable findings (Graph 7). The proportion of young female migrants is higher than that of young male migrants in all the regions. The South East region has the highest proportions of in-migrant youth for both males and females. The Red River Delta region-where the important North East economic zone and major economically developed cities in the North (i.e. Ha Noi and Hai Phong) are located-ranks second in the proportion of female in-migrants, whereas the Central Highlands region ranks second in the proportion of male in-migrants.

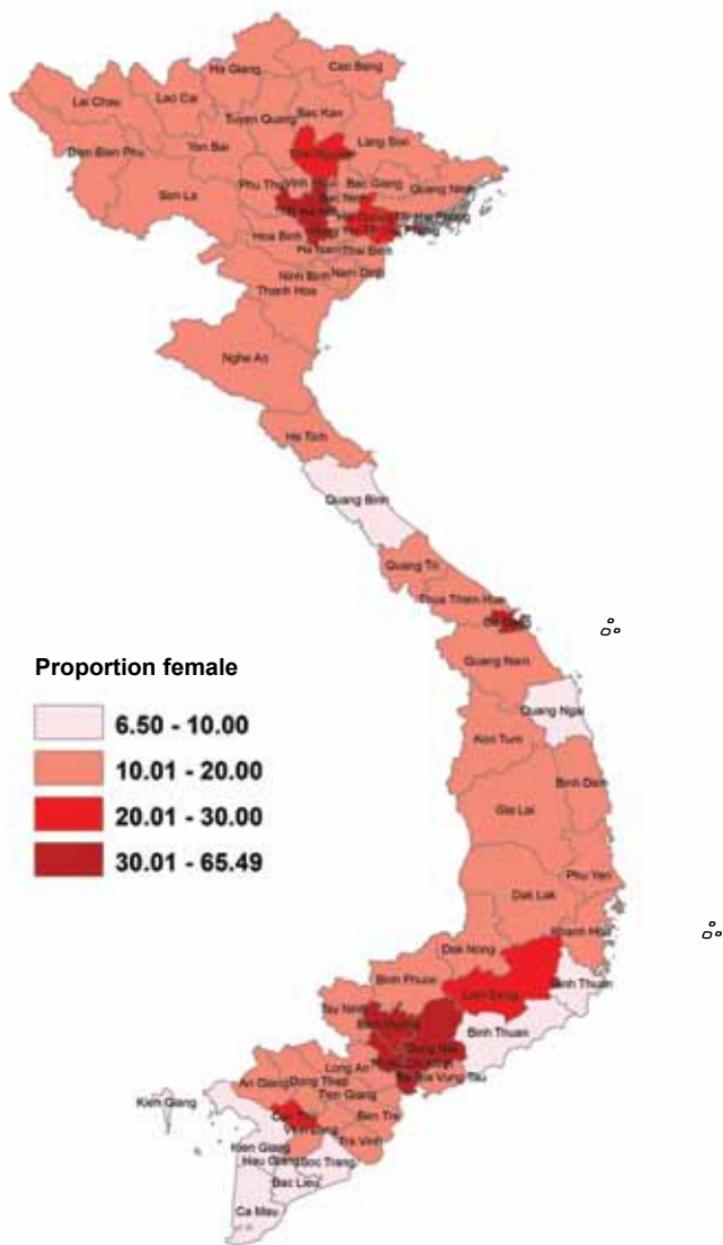
Graph 7. Percentage of migrants aged 15-24 by sex and region



Not surprisingly, Ho Chi Minh City, Ha Noi, Binh Duong, and Dong Nai enjoy high economic productivity and provide a home to numerous enterprises, proving the most popular destinations for young male and female migrants both proportionally and in absolute numbers (Map 4). In addition, Ho Chi Minh City and Ha Noi have capacity to absorb greater numbers of young migrants into their extensive range of vocational institutions, colleges, and universities.

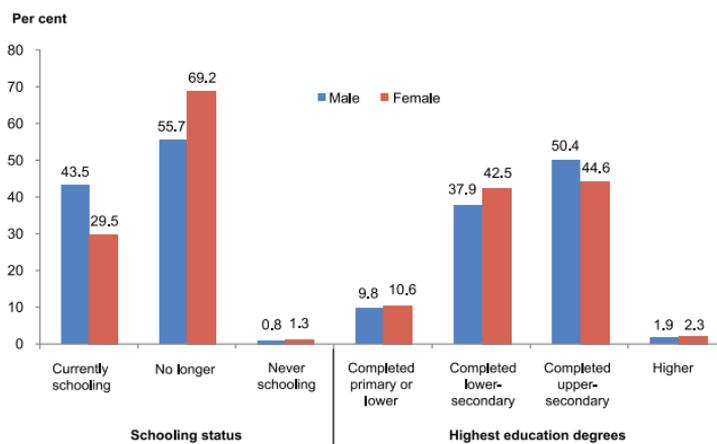
Map 4. Percentage of migrants aged 15-24 by sex and province





Graph 8 provides detailed status of schooling and higher level educational degrees for migrants aged 15-24 by sex. Although the majority of young migrants in all provinces are female, the proportion of migrants currently attending school is significantly higher among male than female. These figures show that young males migrate mainly for training, while females tend to migrate for job opportunities. This highlights the fact that female migrants have less opportunity than their male counterparts to access higher education. However, the majority of young migrants, both male and female, complete lower-secondary or upper-secondary school.

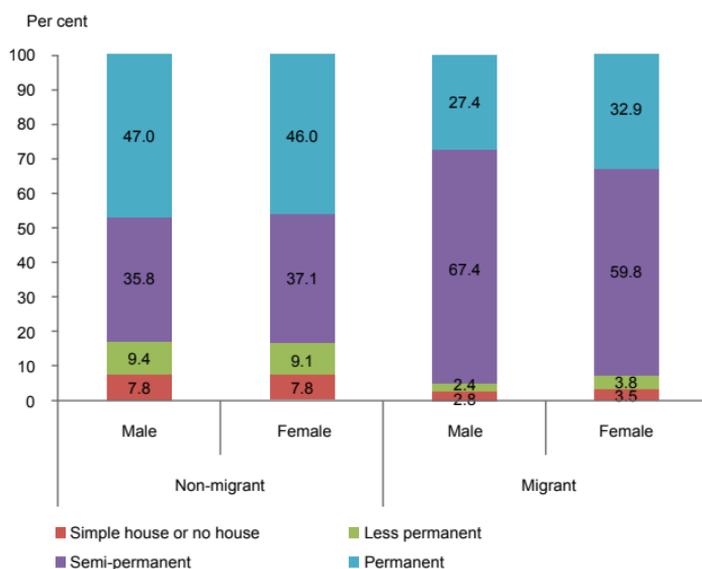
Graph 8. Schooling status and highest educational degree of migrants aged 15-24 by sex



The 2009 Census data provide information on living conditions of households of young migrants aged 15-24 years old. In general, youth migrants tend to migrate mainly to urban areas and more advantaged areas, hereby enjoying better living conditions (such as housing, drinking and cooking water) compared to a large proportion of non-migrant youth living in rural areas. Graph 9 shows that the proportion of youth migrants living in semi-permanent and permanent housing is higher than that of non-migrant youth. However, disparities between young female migrants and young male migrants are observed. Even though females account for a larger part of youth migrants, the proportion of young female migrants

living in semi-permanent and permanent housing is lower than that of young male migrants (the proportions are 93% and 95% for females and males, respectively), while no gender difference is observed in the housing conditions for non-migrant youth.

Graph 9. Housing conditions by migration status and sex



These findings suggest that the youth migrate mainly due to their attraction to ‘pull factors’ of large cities and economically emerging provinces in pursuit of higher education, better job opportunities and living conditions. However, the rising influx of migrants and their growing families is creating significant pressure on destination provinces in providing social services such as health care and education. Unless urban policymakers can identify ways to respond and adapt to increasing population demands, the more popular provinces will experience even greater pressure on infrastructure and unprecedented congestion in all sectors. Conversely, the reduction of human capital in the ‘labour-exporting’ provinces, particularly the loss of significant numbers of the better educated youth, poses a different set of challenges for strengthening economic growth and development.

5. LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION

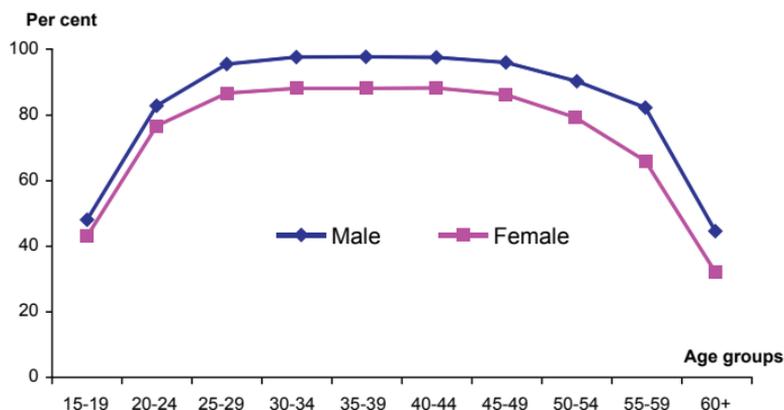
In Viet Nam, the youth population aged 15-24 accounts for a large share of the labour force. According to the 2009 Census findings, over 40 per cent of the youth population aged 15-19 and approximately 80% of the age group 20-



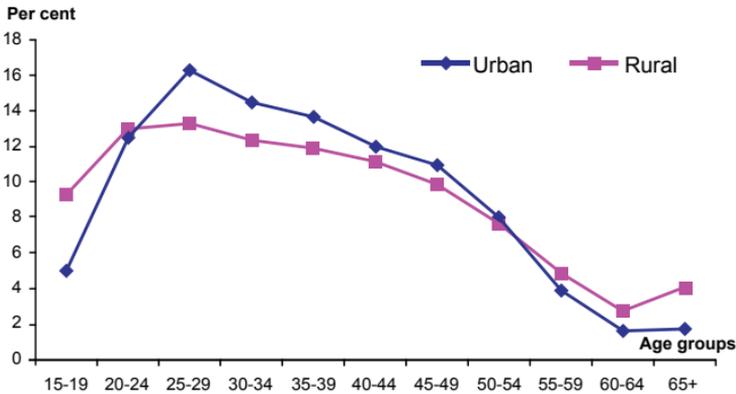
24 participate in the employment sector (Graph 10). The proportion of young females in the labour force is slightly lower than that of young males. The proportion is also lower for the younger, compared to older age groups.

Labour force participation of young people shows significant variation between urban and rural areas (Graph 11). The proportion of young people aged 15-19 participating in the labour force in urban areas is critically lower than in the rural areas, yet notably higher for those in the age group 25-29. These findings imply that youth in rural areas enter the labour force earlier and have less opportunity for continuing education and improving educational level.

Graph 10. Proportion of labour force participation by age group and sex

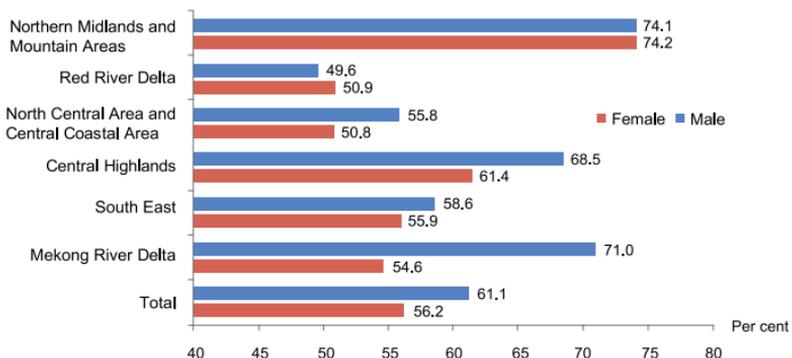


Graph 11. Proportion of labour force participation by residential areas



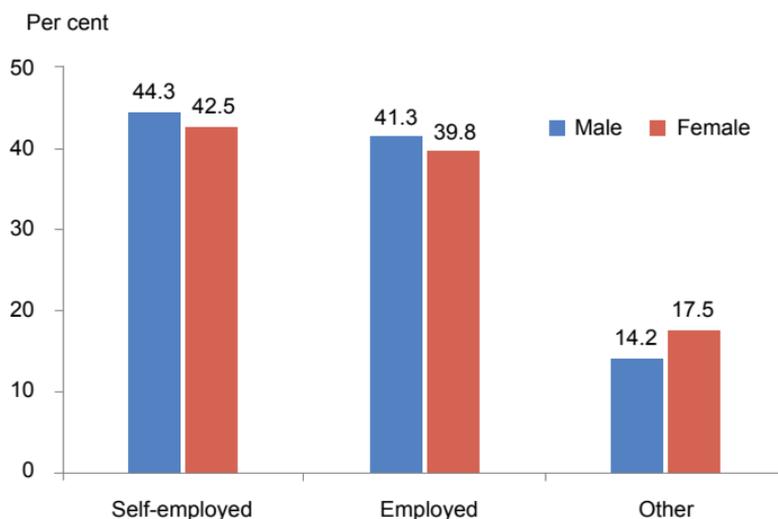
Graph 12 represents labour force participation by region and sex. The graph illustrates generally higher male participation in the labour force than their female counterparts, except Northern Midlands and Mountain Areas and Red River Delta regions. Comparison among regions shows that the Northern Midlands and Mountain Areas have the highest proportion of working youth aged 15-24 but lowest literacy rates. This suggests the need to design and develop policies for youth in these regions to improve their educational level and access to relevant vocational training courses that will broaden the range of job opportunities and strengthen economic productivity.

Graph 12. Proportion of working people among population aged 15-24 by region and sex



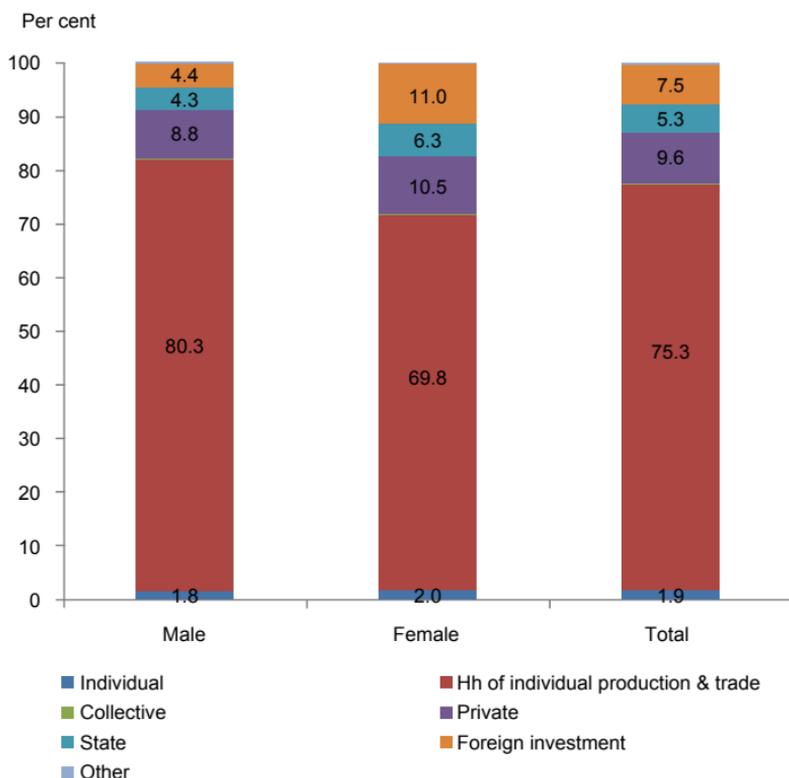
Of the young people qualified as 'working' in the graph above, the majority is self-employed (Graph 13).

Graph 13. Working young people by type of work and by sex



In terms of employment by sector, the data disaggregated by gender shows that most young people either work in household businesses or are employed in the private sector (Graph 14). If the level and quality of productivity within household businesses and the private sector improve, so too will employment opportunities for the younger generation. Data also show that the number of females working in foreign/local joint-venture enterprises is more than twice that of males, suggesting that these types of jobs are more attractive to young women. In other sectors, jobs are shared relatively equally between males and females.

Graph 14. Working young people by economic sector and sex, 2009



6. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Viet Nam has entered a 'demographic bonus' period, which is expected to last for at least the next 30 years. This is a unique time and policymakers should take advantage of this opportunity, viewing the youth generation as key contributors towards establishing sustainable economic growth and development patterns.



This profile, based on the 15 per cent sample data of the 2009 Viet Nam Population and Housing Census, concludes that the youth demographic represents an increasingly important proportion of the labour force in Viet Nam, both now and well into the future. Some indicators, notably education and gender equality, illustrate the progress already made in Viet Nam during the past decade towards achieving the MDGs. It also, however, reflects significant geographical and gender disparities between youth groups regarding marriage age, living conditions and labour force participation.

Analysis of marital status and fertility among the youth population group illustrates that marital and fertility trends are in the process of changing from 'early' to 'late', a fact that will have considerable impact on future population and family structures. Data findings reveal the existence of geographical disparities for these indicators, namely that the youth in remote and rural areas are the most seriously disadvantaged. To remedy this situation, policies and programmes affecting young people, such as adolescent reproductive health, education and training should be developed with sensitivity to geographic differences, particularly those regions and provinces that lag behind the rest of the country.

The indicators on literacy rates demonstrate significant improvement at the national level but also indicate persistent geographical disparities. This calls for greater efforts towards the elimination of illiteracy in the disadvantaged provinces of the Northern Midlands and Mountain regions, and increased emphasis on reducing the existing gender gap. Nearly half of Vietnamese youth aged between 15-19 years do not pursue higher education after completing lower -or upper-secondary school. This suggests that efforts are needed to develop a more highly-skilled labour force that can both satisfy industrial demand and sustain Viet Nam's economic competitiveness on the global stage.

Migration flows within Viet Nam are dominated by young people, and the majority is female. This youth migration not only influences the changes in age and gender structure at regional and provincial levels, but also contributes significantly to the current and on-going urbanization process in Viet Nam. This population dynamic calls for more adaptive sectoral policies and programmes appropriate for regional socio-economic development and adjustment of migration flows. It also calls for a greater policy focus on young female migrants, especially improving living conditions and access to social services of this population group. Fulfillment of the unmet needs of migrant groups in key destination areas should be addressed in tandem with those of provinces affected by out-migrating youth. As documented elsewhere, provinces exposed to serious shortages in the skilled and educated labour force are challenged by 'skip-generation' families whereby children live with their elderly grandparents/carers while young parents migrate in search of economic reward.

Employment indicators in the 2009 Census reveal characteristics of the labour market that impact on Vietnamese youth. Significant geographical variation in the proportion of young people engaged in the workforce reflects fluctuating levels in employment and education opportunities in respective provincial economies. While in the Northern and Mountain Areas, almost 80 per cent of youth is employed, in the Red River Delta this proportion drops to around 50 per cent. Furthermore, young people are predominantly more

likely to seek and find jobs in urban rather than rural areas. Data also confirm that young people are often self-employed or working in household businesses. The surprising factor that emerges from the Census employment indicators is the low level of employment gender disparity.

In summary, this profile of selected indicators from the 2009 Viet Nam Population and Housing Census highlights the limited level of pursuing higher education among youth and the existence of gender and geographical variation and disparities in the 15-24 age group. The profile demonstrates the importance of applying gender and age disaggregated data to ensure the development of effective and evidence-based policies at both the national and sub-national levels. The reaping of the 'demographic dividend' will require greater investment in human capital, particularly the strengthening of education, training and professional skills and opportunities for the younger generation. It is crucial that policies and strategies not only address socio-economic and cultural variations, but also take full advantage of the 'demographic bonus'.

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