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## ABBREVIATIONS

ANAR	Adjusted Net Attendance Rate
DOLISA	Department of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs
GSO	General Statistics Office
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
OOSC	Out-of-school children
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
5DE	5 Dimensions of Exclusion

## 1. Overview

This report presents an analysis of the out-of-school children (OOSC) aged 5-14 in An Giang Province. OOSC are children who have never attended school or had attended but later dropped out.

The report was developed in parallel with the report *Out-of-school Children in Viet Nam: A country study*, which was prepared by the Ministry of Education & Training (MOET), with the support of UNICEF and related consultants. An Giang is among the eight provinces with an in-depth analysis of the OOSC profile. The eight provinces are Lao Cai, Dien Bien, Ninh Thuan, Kon Tum, Gia Lai, Ho Chi Minh City, Dong Thap and An Giang.

The report aims to highlight several key issues related to education disparity in An Giang through analysis of the profile of the out-of-school children in An Giang aged 5-14 and of those who were attending primary and lower secondary school but were at risk of dropping out, and an analysis of the barriers and bottlenecks which limited their school attendance. The report expects to enhance understanding of OOSC, contribute to improved education planning and management, and support policy advocacy in order to remove and reduce the barriers and realize the right to education of all children, with a particular focus on disadvantaged children.

The analysis is based on the 5 Dimensions of Exclusion (5DE) defined in the Global Initiative on Out-of-school Children launched by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Institute for Statistics (UIS) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The 5 Dimensions of Exclusion include:

**Dimension 1:** Children of pre-primary school age who are not in pre-primary or primary school

**Dimension 2:** Children of primary school age who are not in primary or secondary school

**Dimension 3:** Children of lower secondary school age who are not in primary or secondary school

**Dimension 4:** Children who are in primary school but are at risk of dropping out

**Dimension 5:** Children who are in lower secondary school but are at risk of dropping out

The first three dimensions cover out-of-school children. Dimension of Exclusion 1 (DE1) focuses on five-year-old children who are out of school, DE2 focuses on out-of-school children of primary school age, and DE3 focuses on out-of-school children of lower secondary school age.

The remaining two dimensions address children who attend a primary or lower secondary school, irrespective of their age, but are at risk of dropping out.

The data used for the analysis was sourced from Viet Nam's 2009 Population and Housing Census (2009 Census). The sections on barriers and recommendations are based on consultations conducted in April 2013 with education managers from different units of the Department of Education and Training of An Giang Province, the Bureau of Education and Training of An Phu District and representatives of teachers, students, parents and local authorities at C Quoc Thai Primary School and Khanh An Lower Secondary School.

Remarks on the data and key considerations in the analysis:

- The 2009 Population and Housing Census enumerated all the Vietnamese regularly residing in the territory of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam at zero hour on 1 April 2009.
- As per the 2009 Population and Housing Census, respondents were only given credit for the full

years that they had completed by 1 April 2009 (a full year of age is 365 days). This calculation method is different than that used by the education sector, which calculates by deducting the year of birth from the current year. These different calculation methods resulted in a discrepancy in the data from the GSO and the education sector. To address this issue and ensure alignment with the schooling age calculation, age in this report was calculated based on the year of birth against 2008, meaning age was counted by deducting the year of birth as declared in the census. For example, the five-year-old children in this report were those who reported they were born in 2003 (2008 minus 2003 = five years), and the 14-year-old children were those who reported they were born in 1994 (2008 minus 1994). Therefore, the data in this report is comparable to the data used by the education sector for the 2008-2009 school year.

- The education-related questions as asked in the 2009 census included *Are you attending school* and *Did you drop out or did you never go to school?* and there were three response options: *attending school*, *attended but dropped out* and *never went to school*. The responses formed the basis for analyzing school attendance in this report.
- There were four questions in the 2009 census related to disability of the four major functions: vision, hearing, movement (walking) and cognition (learning or understanding). These questions were asked of members of the household who were aged five and over. Answers were based on self-evaluation and were placed into four categories: *No difficulty*, *A little difficulty*, *Very difficult* and *Unable*. A person was considered to have a disability if s/he was unable to do one or more of the four major functions and to have a partial disability if s/he reported having a little difficulty or that it was very difficult to perform any of the four functions. Those who reported having no difficulty doing any of the four functions were categorized as having no disability.
- Migration, as referred to in this report, follows the concept utilized in the 2009 Census, in which a migrant was interpreted as a person who moved from one district to another at least once during the five years before the 2009 Census. In Viet Nam people often move from a rural area to an urban area within a province or move from a rural province to a city outside their province.
- However, there was a data limitation. There was no question regarding the purpose of the migration in the 2009 Census, which made it impossible to identify whether the migration was to look for a job in the city, for casual seasonal work or due to a natural disaster.
- As the 2009 Census does not have data on child labor, this chapter will not analyze the situation of working children.
- When analyzing based on specific disaggregations, weighted cell values less than 50 were omitted from the tables as the sample size was too small. All related cells were left blank. However, one must be cautious when making conclusions based on cells with weighted values that are only slightly higher than 50 observations.
- There are 54 ethnic groups in Viet Nam, among which the Kinh make up the majority of the population and all the other groups are considered to be ethnic minorities. This report analyzes out-of-school children from the Kinh and key ethnic minority groups in An Giang such as the Khmer, the Cham, and the Chinese.

## 2. Characteristics of the children aged 5-14 in An Giang

According to the 2009 Census data, the total number of children aged five in An Giang in 2008 (born in 2003), aged 6-10 in 2008 (of primary school age and born between 1998-2002) and aged 11-14 in 2008 (of lower secondary school age and born between 1994-1997) were 34,641, 164,443 and 152,120 respectively (see Table 1). The number of children in these three age groups in An Giang Province was higher than the national average and it was the second highest in the eight selected provinces, just after Ho Chi Minh City.

The ratio of male to female children in An Giang in all three age groups was about 52:48. This ratio indicates an obvious gender imbalance in the school-age population.

About a quarter of the children of An Giang lived in urban areas. 94-95% were Kinh, about 3.5% were Khmer, about 0.6% were Cham and about 0.3% were Chinese. In An Giang 0.7-0.9% of the children had a disability or a partial disability, and the remaining 99% had no disabilities. Children from migrant families accounted for 1.1-1.5% of the total number of children.

**Table 1: Distribution of children aged 5-14 in An Giang**

AN GIANG		Age in 2008		
		5	6 – 10	11 – 14
<b>Total (person)</b>		<b>34,641</b>	<b>164,443</b>	<b>152,120</b>
Age (person)	5	34,641		
	6		31,361	
	7		33,169	
	8		38,213	
	9		31,754	
	10		29,947	
	11			36,779
	12			38,772
	13			38,321
14			38,249	
Gender (%)	Male	51.68	51.83	51.53
	Female	48.32	48.17	48.47
Urban/Rural (%)	Urban	28.31	26.66	26.08
	Rural	71.69	73.34	73.92
Ethnicity (%)	Kinh	95.35	94.14	94.23
	Khmer	3.73	4.86	4.68
	Hoa	0.31	0.41	0.39
	Cham	0.59	0.56	0.68
Disability (%)	Disabled	0.05	0.22	0.16
	Partially disabled	0.56	0.49	0.69
	Not disabled	99.39	99.29	99.14
Migrant (%)	Yes	1.46	1.43	1.10
	No	98.54	98.57	98.90

### 3. Out-of-school children (OOSC)

#### 3.1. Out-of-school children aged five

OOSC aged five included five-year-old children who did not attend pre-primary school or primary school.

According to data from the 2009 Census, An Giang had 34,641 children aged five in 2008 (born in 2003), of whom 77.29% attended school and 22.71% did not. There were 7,867 OOSC aged five in An Giang. The percentage of five-year-old OOSC in An Giang was nearly double the national average (12.19%) and the highest in the eight provinces (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Children aged five in An Giang attending school and out of school**

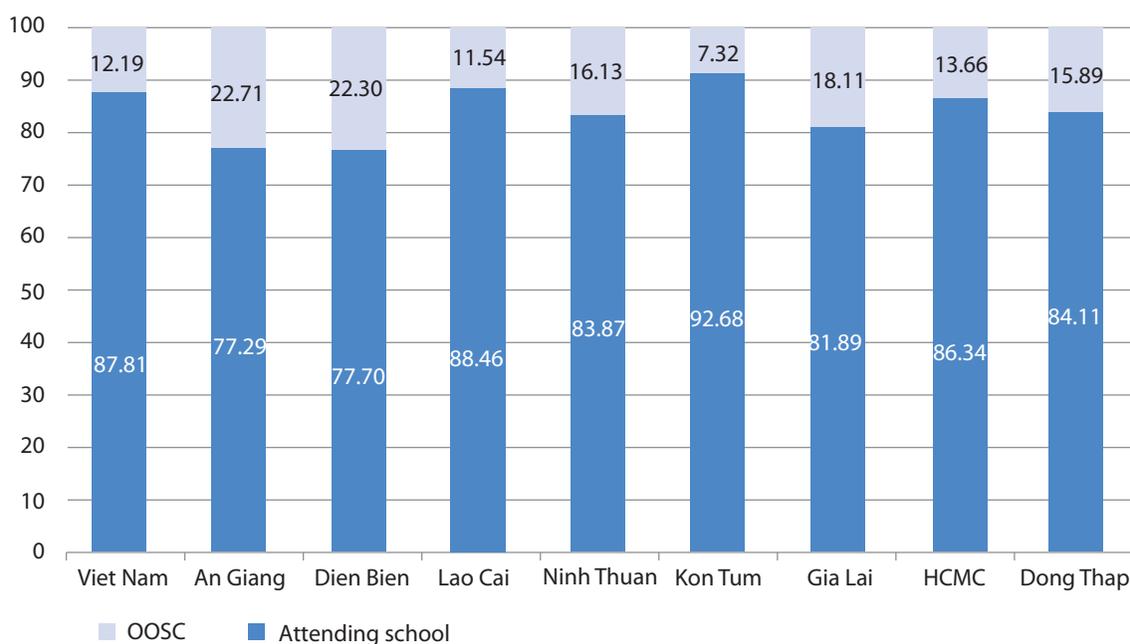
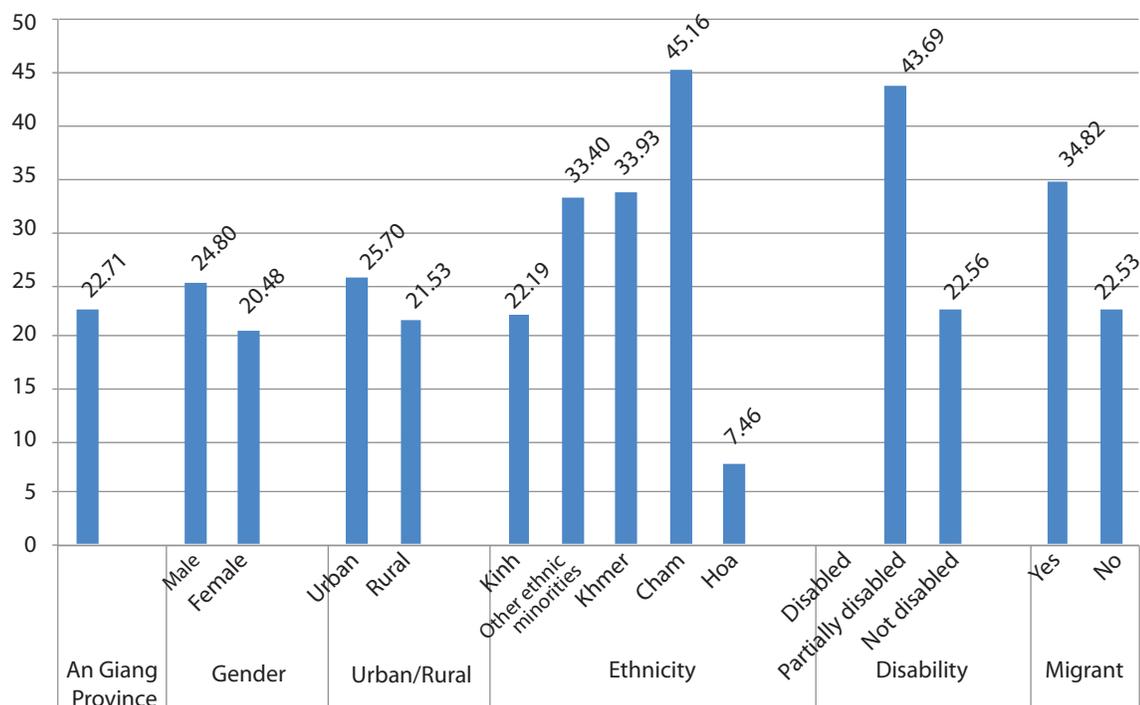


Figure 2 provides a graphical illustration of the data on the OOSC aged five in An Giang classified by the children's characteristics, including gender, residential area (urban or rural area), ethnic group, disability and migration status.

**Figure 2: Percentage of OOSC aged five in An Giang classified by characteristics**



The percentage of male OOSC aged five in An Giang was 1.2 times higher than the percentage of female OOSC, 24.8% and 20.48% respectively. The percentage of OOSC aged five in rural areas was lower than the percentage in urban areas, 21.53% and 25.7% respectively.

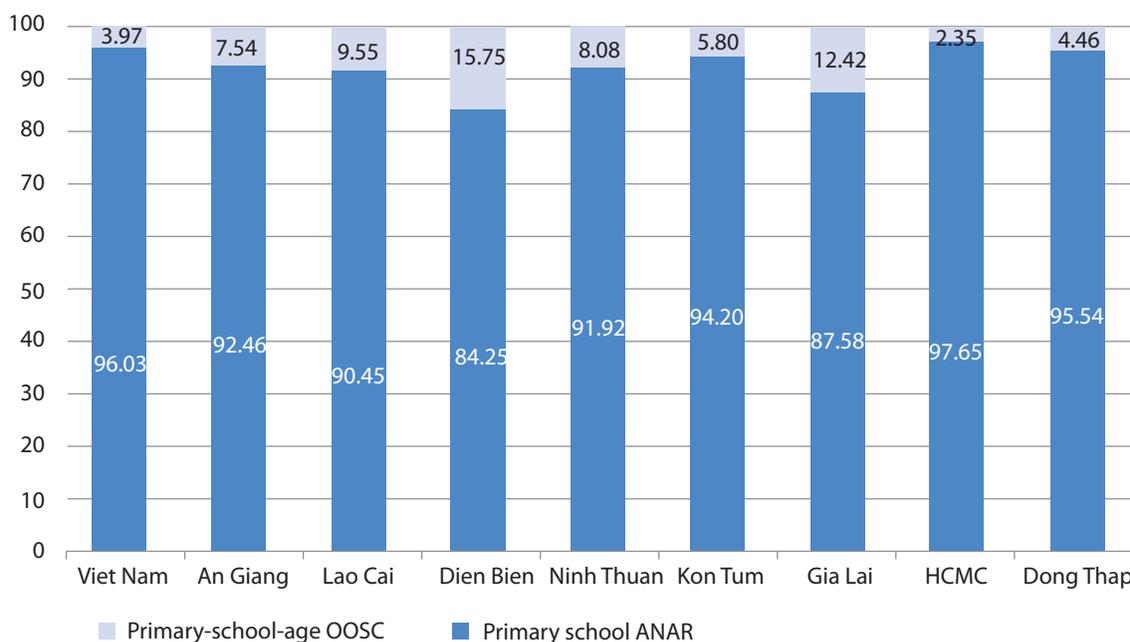
The percentage of five-year-old OOSC among the ethnic minorities in An Giang was 1.5 times higher than the percentage of five-year-old OOSC among the Kinh, 33.4% and 22.19% respectively. The percentage of OOSC among the Chinese five-year-olds was 7.46%, the lowest percentage, the percentage among the Kinh was 22.19%, and among the Cham it was 45.16%, the highest percentage. That means that one out of every two Cham five-year-olds did not attend pre-primary school. The rate of five-year-old Khmer OOSC was relatively high (33.93%), which means that one out of three Khmer five-year-olds did not attend pre-primary school.

### 3.2. Out-of-school children of primary school age

OOSC of primary school age were those aged 6-10 who were not attending primary or lower secondary school.

According to data from the 2009 Census, there were 164,443 children aged 6-10 in An Giang in 2008 (born between 1998 and 2002), of whom 92.46% attended primary or lower secondary school and 7.54% were out of school. This rate was almost double the national average (3.97%) and the fifth highest in the eight provinces (see Figure 3). There were 12,399 OOSC of primary school age.

**Figure 3: Percentage of primary-school-age children in An Giang attending school and out of school**



Note: The primary school ANAR indicates the percentage of primary-school-age children attending primary or lower secondary school.

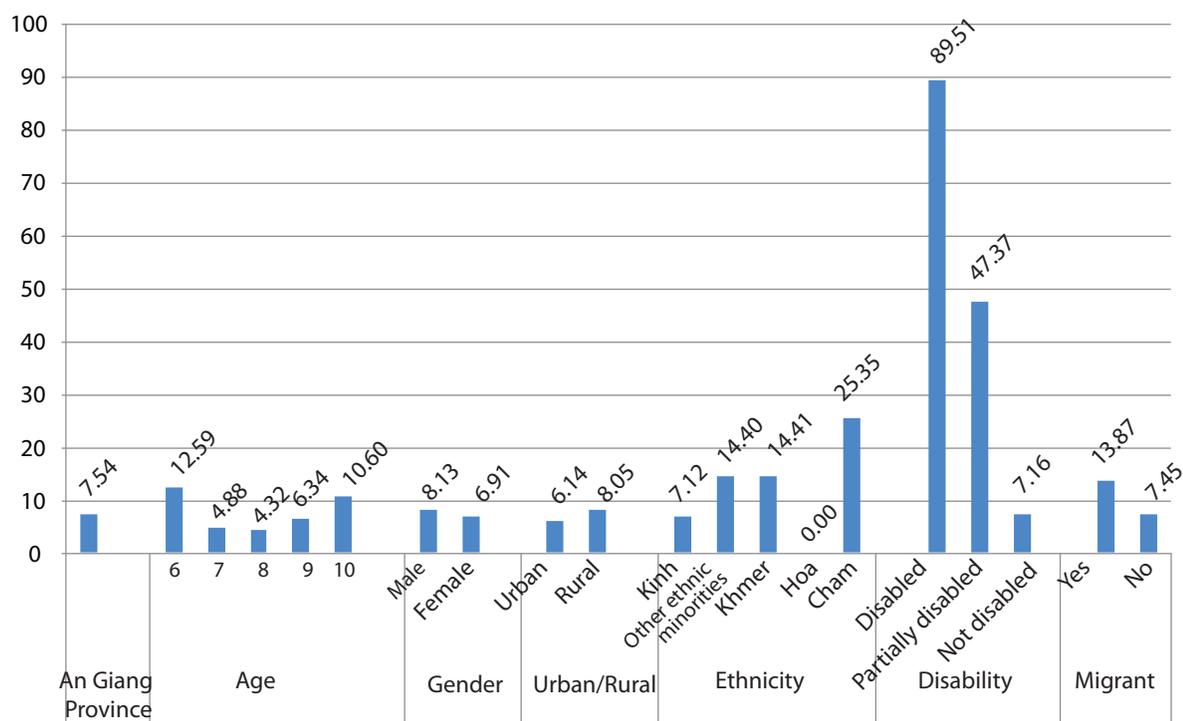
Figure 4 provides a graphical illustration of the data on primary-school-age OOSC in An Giang classified by the children’s characteristics, including age, gender, residential area (urban or rural area), ethnic group, disability and migration status.

The percentage of primary-school-age OOSC in An Giang increased with age and at a faster rate in the final two grades of primary school.

The percentage of primary-school-age male OOSC was insignificantly higher than the percentage of female OOSC, 8.13% and 6.91% respectively, and there was a greater difference in urban and rural areas. The percentage of primary-school-age OOSC in rural areas was 1.3 times higher than the percentage in urban areas, 8.05% and 6.14% respectively. The biggest difference was between the Kinh and the ethnic minorities. The percentage of primary-school-age OOSC among the ethnic minorities was double that of the Kinh, 14.4% and 7.12% respectively. The Cham had the highest percentage of primary-school-age OOSC, 25.36%. That means one out of every four primary-school-age children did not attend primary school.

The percentage of primary-school-age OOSC among children with disabilities was very high, 89.51%. 47.37% of the primary-school-age children with partial disabilities were out of school. That means one out of two children of primary school age with partial disabilities did not attend school. 7.16% of the children of primary school age with no disabilities were out of school.

**Figure 4: Percentage of primary-school-age OOSC in An Giang classified by selected characteristics**

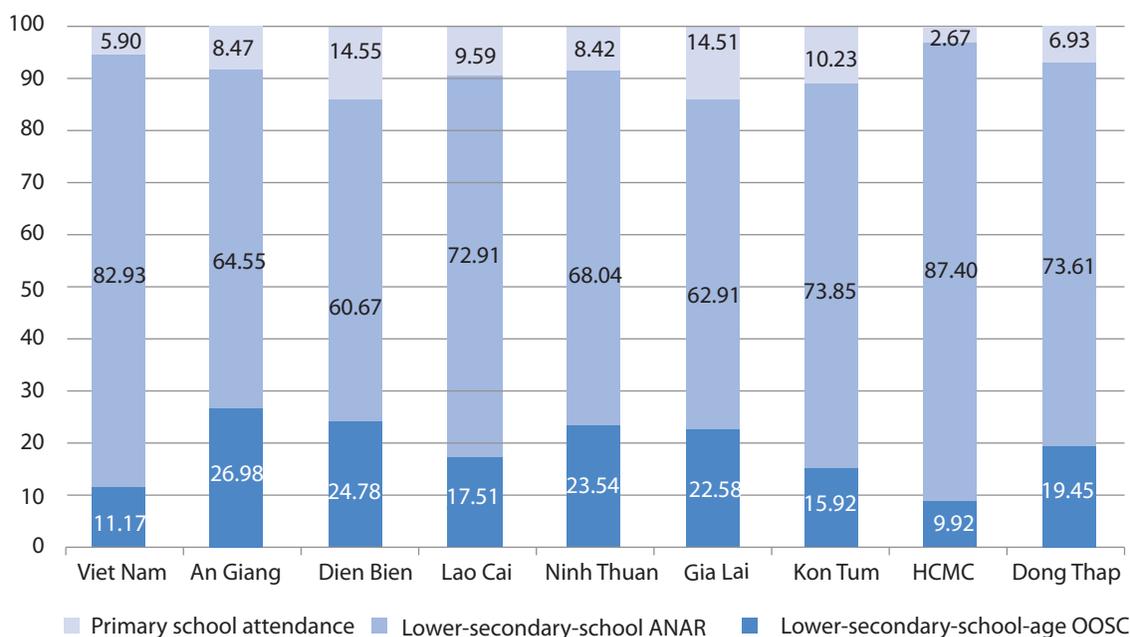


The percentage of primary-school-age migrant OOSC was nearly double the rate of non-migrant OOSC, 13.87% and 7.45% respectively.

### 3.3. Out-of-school children of lower secondary school age

OOSC of lower secondary school age were those aged 11-14 who were not attending lower or upper secondary school or primary school.

**Figure 5: Percentage of lower-secondary-school-age children attending school and lower-secondary-school-age OOSC**



Note: The lower secondary school ANAR indicates the percentage of children of lower secondary school age attending lower or upper secondary school.

According to data from the 2009 Census, in An Giang there were 152,120 children of lower secondary school age in 2008 (born between 1994 and 1997), of whom 64.55% attended lower secondary or upper secondary school, 8.47% attended primary school and the remaining 26.98% were out of school. That means one out of every four children of lower secondary school age did not attend school (see Figure 5). The percentage of lower-secondary-school-age OOSC in An Giang was 3.6 times higher than the percentage of primary-school-age OOSC (7.54%). This rate was higher than the national average (11.17%) and it was the highest in the eight provinces. There were 41,042 lower-secondary-school-age OOSC in An Giang.

At the time of the 2009 Census, there were 33 children of lower secondary school age in An Giang who were pursuing vocational training. This figure is very small and had no effect on the percentage of lower-secondary-school-age OOSC.

Figure 6 provides a graphical illustration of the data on lower-secondary-school-age OOSC in An Giang classified by the children's characteristics, including age, gender, residential area (urban or rural area), ethnic group, disability and migration status.

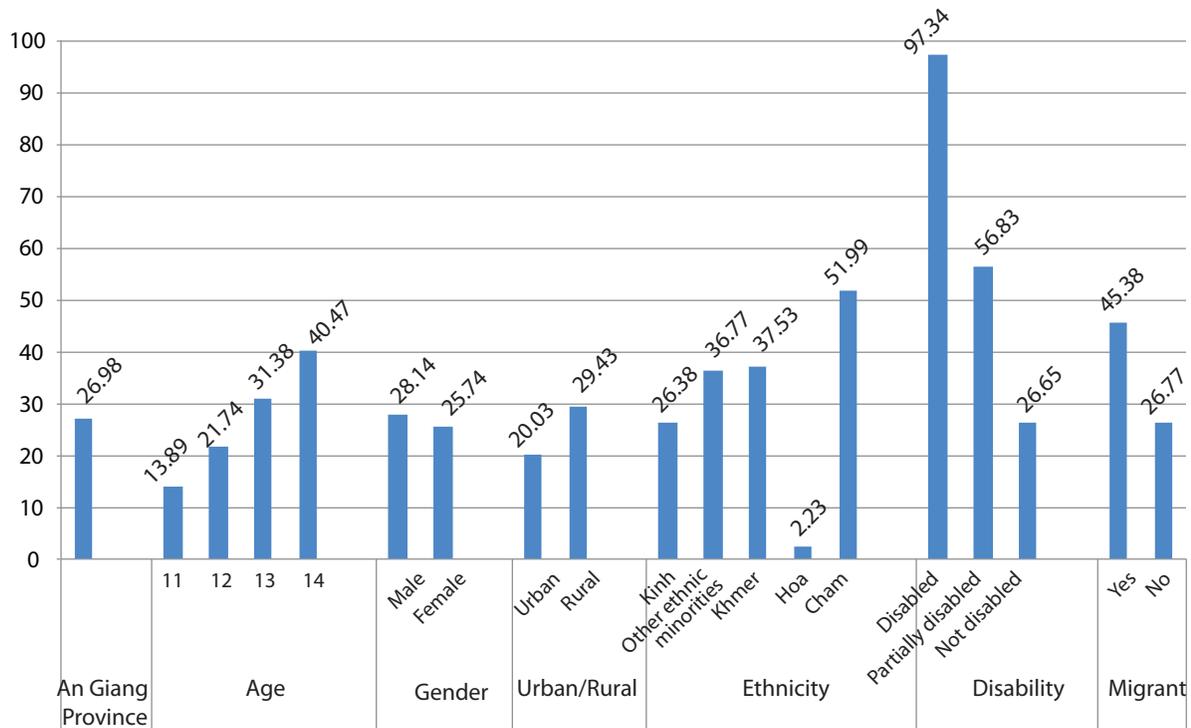
The percentage of lower-secondary-school-age OOSC in An Giang increased with age. The dropout rate increased in the final grades of lower secondary school, as it did in the final grades of primary school, but to a greater extent. 31.38% of the 13-year-olds were out of school and 40.47% of the 14-year-olds were out of school. These rates are three to four times higher than the percentage of ten-year-old OOSC.

Among lower-secondary-school-age OOSC there was not much difference in the rate for males and females, yet there was a considerable gap in the rate in urban and rural areas, among children with disabilities and those with no disabilities, and among migrant and non-migrant children.

The percentage of lower-secondary-school-age male OOSC was nearly 1.1 times higher than the percentage of female OOSC, 28.14% and 25.74% respectively.

The percentage of children with disabilities or partial disabilities who were out of school was much higher than the percentage of children who did not have disabilities who were out of school. The percentage of lower-secondary-school-age migrant OOSC was 1.7 times higher than the percentage of non-migrant OOSC, 45.38% and 26.77% respectively.

**Figure 6: Percentage of lower-secondary-school-age OOSC classified by characteristics**



#### 4. Children at risk of dropping out

Dimensions 4 and 5 cover children in school who are at risk of dropping out, in other words, the potential OOSC of tomorrow. A simple way to do this is to look at the children who have dropped out of school. Understanding the profiles of children who were at risk of dropping out and then dropped out provides insight into the profiles of children currently at risk.

A dropout is defined as a child who had attended school in a particular year but did not attend school the following year even though s/he was supposed to. Such a dropout can be referred to as a single-year dropout. However, school attendance data for two consecutive years is required to determine if that is the case.

The 2009 Census contained no such data, only the educational background of the OOSC, those who had left school, and the students who were overage for the grade they were in. Accordingly, this data was used to analyze children at risk of dropping out.

Included in this analysis were children of primary school age (6-10) and lower secondary school age (11-14) in 2008 who had previously attended school but had dropped out by the time of the 2009 Census.

#### 4.1. Primary-school-age dropouts

As seen in Figure 7, the percentage of primary-school-age children who had dropped out of school in An Giang was 3.1%, the highest rate in the eight selected provinces and 2.6 times higher than the national average (1.16%).

**Figure 7: Percentage of primary-school-age children who had dropped out of school**

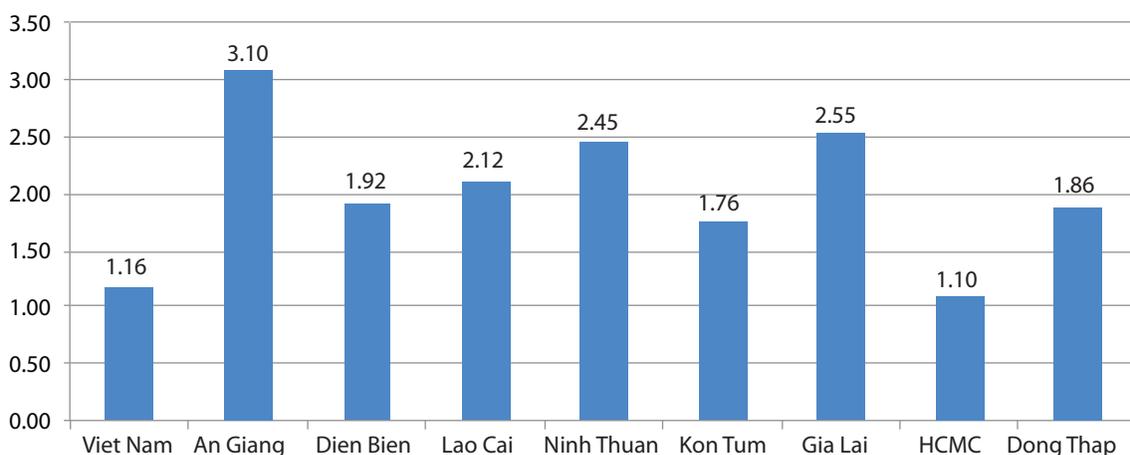
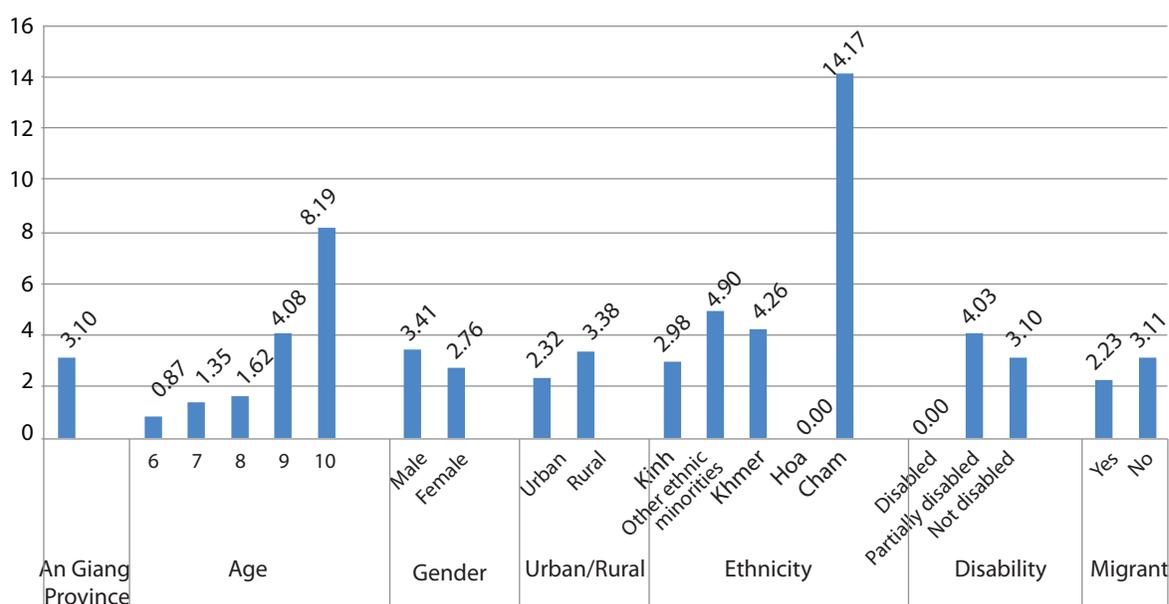


Figure 8 provides a graphical illustration of the data on primary-school-age children who had dropped out of school in An Giang classified by the children's characteristics, including age, gender, residential area (urban or rural area), ethnic group, disability and migration status.

**Figure 8: Percentage of primary-school-age children who had dropped out of school classified by characteristics**



The percentage of primary-school-age children who had dropped out of school in An Giang increased with age, and the dropout rate was highest in the final grades of primary school. The dropout rate among ten-year-olds was 8.19%, and the percentage of primary-school-age males who had dropped out of school was 1.2 times higher than the percentage of females, 3.41% and 2.76% respectively. There

were considerable differences in the dropout rate of primary-school-age children in rural and urban areas, among the various ethnic groups, for children with disabilities and those with no disabilities, and among migrants and non-migrants.

The percentage of primary-school-age children in rural areas who had dropped out was 1.5 times higher than the percentage of those in urban areas, 3.38% and 2.32% respectively. The percentage of primary-school-age ethnic minority OOSC was 1.6% higher than the percentage of Kinh OOSC, 4.9% and 2.98% respectively. The highest percentage of primary-school-age dropouts (14.17%) was among the Cham, and it was 4.7 times higher than the percentage of Kinh dropouts. The dropout rate among primary-school-age children with partial disabilities was 1.3 times higher than the rate among those with no disabilities, and the percentage of primary-school-age migrants who had dropped out of school was lower than the percentage of non-migrants.

#### 4.2. Lower-secondary-school-age dropouts

Children reported in this section as having dropped out were children aged 11-14 who had attended school but were not going to school at the time of the 2009 Census.

According to Figure 9, the dropout rate in An Giang among lower-secondary-school-age children was 24.14%. This was about eight times higher than the dropout rate among primary-school-age children, the highest of the eight selected provinces and 2.5 times higher than the national average.

**Figure 9: Percentage of lower-secondary-school-age children who had dropped out of school**

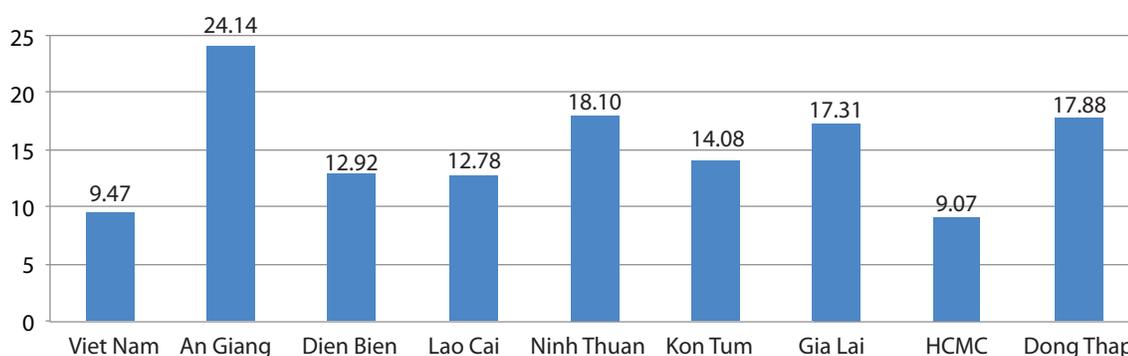
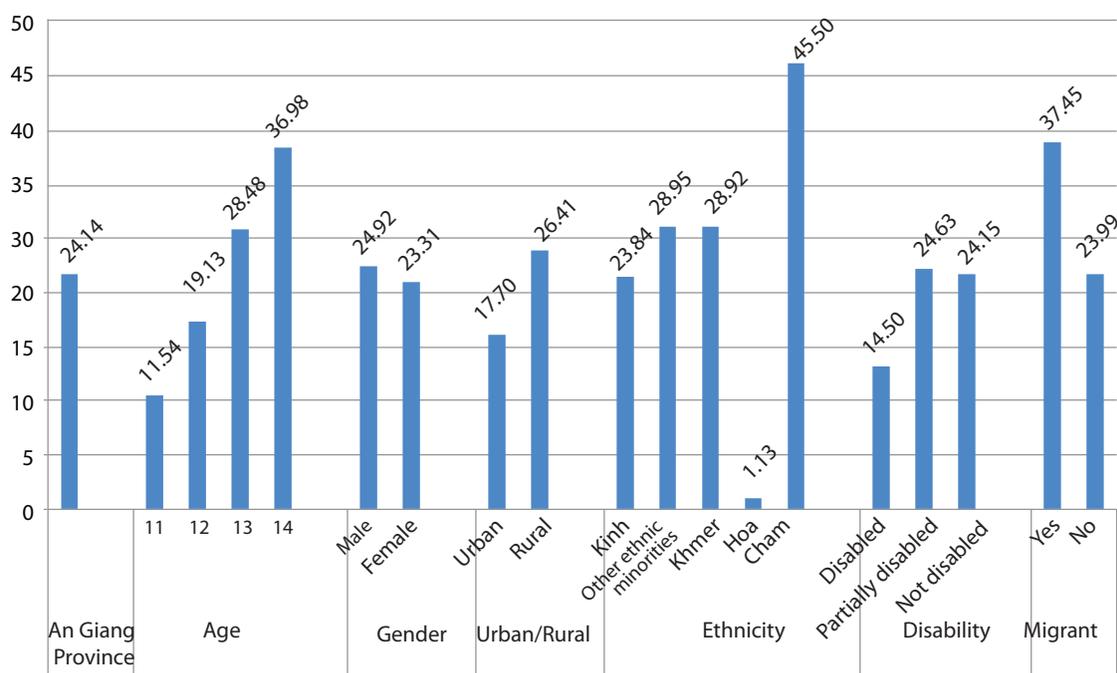


Figure 10 provides a graphical illustration of the data on lower-secondary-age children who had dropped out of school in An Giang classified by the children's characteristics, including age, residential area (urban or rural area), gender, ethnic group, disability and migration status.

**Figure 10: Percentage of lower-secondary-school-age children who had dropped out of school classified by characteristics**



Similar to the dropout rate of primary-school-age children, the dropout rate of lower-secondary-school-age children in An Giang increased with age, and in the final grades it increased to a greater extent. 19.13% of the secondary-school-age children aged 12 (one out of five), 28.48% of the 13-year-olds and 36.98% of the 14-year-olds had dropped out.

The dropout rate of lower-secondary-school-age males was insignificantly higher than that of females, 24.92% and 23.31% respectively. However, the dropout rate of lower-secondary-school-age children in rural areas was considerably higher (1.5 times higher) than that of those in urban areas, 26.41% and 17.7% respectively. Similar to the primary-school-age children, the dropout rate among lower-secondary-school-age ethnic minority children was higher than the dropout rate among the Kinh. The dropout rate was highest among the Cham, 45.5%. That means one out of two lower-secondary-school-age Cham children did not attend school. Both the Khmer and the Kinh had a high dropout rate, 28.9% and 23.8% respectively, which means one out of four children did not attend school. The low dropout rate of lower-secondary-school-age children with disabilities compared to those with no disabilities may be attributed to the small sample size. The dropout rate of lower-secondary-school-age children with partial disabilities was insignificantly higher than that of those with no disabilities. The dropout rate of lower-secondary-school-age children from migrant families was 1.5 times higher than that of non-migrants, 37.45% and 23.99% respectively.

## 5. Overage school attendance

Overage was a reason for dropping out and it was a risk factor for potential OOSC. Being older than one's peers and having to repeat a class resulted in low self-esteem, difficulties in integrating with one's peers and becoming bored with schooling, which eventually led to permanently dropping out.

At the time of the 2009 Census, in An Giang 8.47% of the children of lower-secondary-school age (in 2008) were overage and were attending primary school. This rate was the fifth highest in the eight provinces and about 1.4 times higher than the national average (see Figure 11).

**Figure 11: Percentage of lower-secondary-school-age children attending primary school**

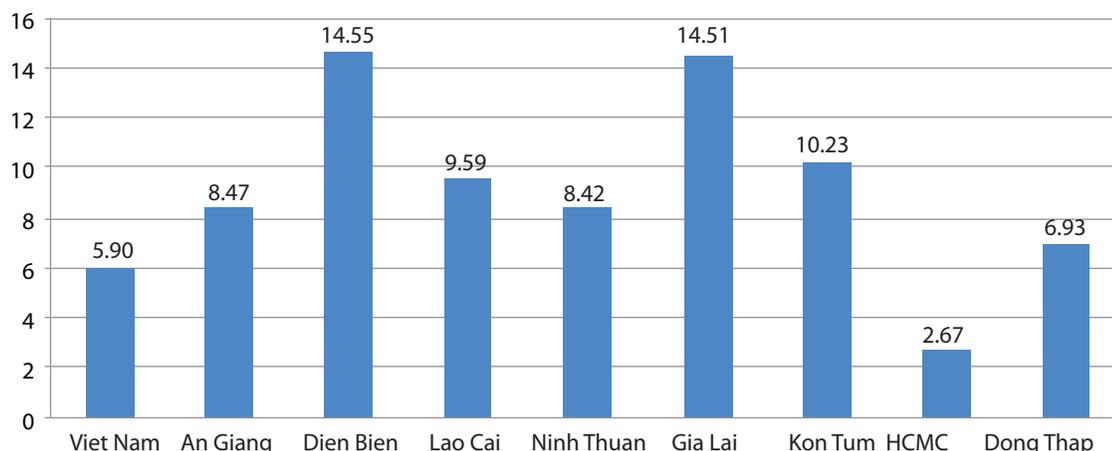
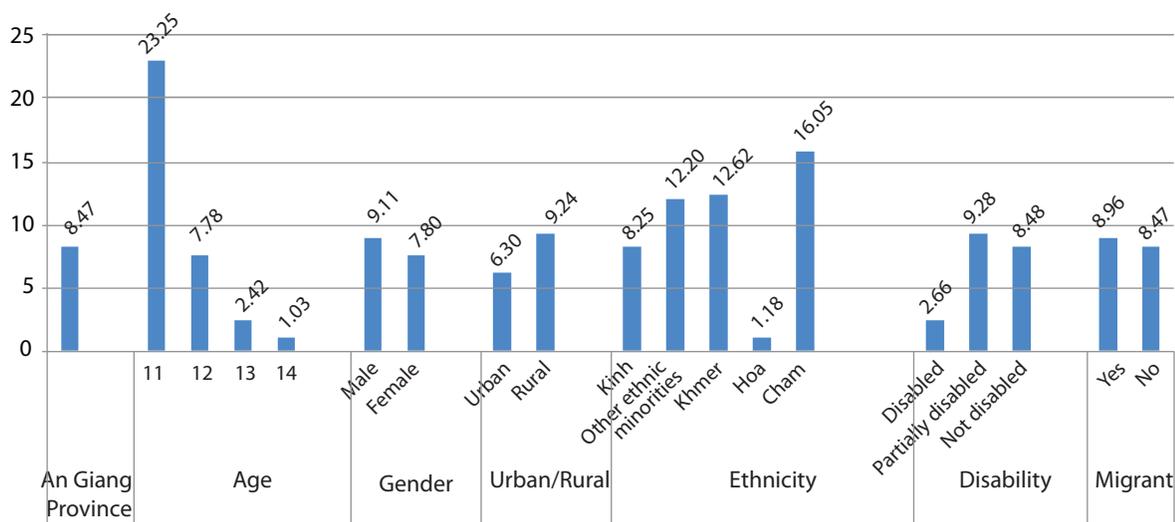


Figure 12 provides a graphical illustration of the data on lower-secondary-school-age children attending primary school in An Giang classified by the children’s characteristics, including age, gender, residential area (urban or rural area), ethnic group, disability and migration status.

**Figure 12: Percentage of lower-secondary-school-age children attending primary school classified by characteristics**



The percentage of lower-secondary-school-age children attending primary school in An Giang decreased with age. 11-year-olds accounted for the highest percentage of overage children in primary school, followed by the 12-year-olds, 13-year-olds and 14-year-olds. 7.78% of the 12-year-olds were in primary school, and 2.42% of the 13-year-olds and 1.03% of the 14-year-olds (the ages at which children are usually in the final grades of lower secondary school) were still in primary school as well (see Table 3). A total of 1,323 children aged 13 and 14 were in primary school, and these children were very likely to drop out.

The percentage of lower-secondary-school-age males attending primary school in An Giang was insignificantly higher than that of females, 9.11% and 7.8% respectively. However, there was a considerable difference in the rate in urban and rural areas. The rate of lower-secondary-school-age children attending primary school in the rural areas was 1.5 times higher than the rate of those in urban

areas. The percentage of lower-secondary-school-age children with partial disabilities attending primary school was higher than the rate of those with no disabilities. The percentage of lower-secondary-school age migrants attending primary school was insignificantly higher than the percentage of non-migrants. The primary school attendance rate of lower-secondary-school-age children with disabilities was lower than the rate of those with no disabilities, but this may be attributed to the small sample size.

## 6. Summary of the key findings from the 2009 Census

- According to the 2009 Census data, the total number of children aged five in 2008 (born in 2003) in An Giang was 34,641, the number of children aged 6-10 in 2008 (born between 1998 and 2002) was 164,443, and the number of children aged 11-14 in 2008 (born between 1994 and 1997) was 152,120.
- The total number of OOSC in An Giang was 61,308 and included:
  - 7,867 five-year-old OOSC, which accounted for 22.71% of the five-year-old children. The percentage of OOSC aged five in An Giang was 1.9 times higher than the national average (12.19%) and it was the highest in the eight provinces.
  - 12,399 primary-school-age OOSC, which accounted for 7.54% of the primary-school-age children. The rate of primary-school-age OOSC in An Giang was almost double the national average (4%) and it was the fifth highest in the eight provinces.
  - 41,042 lower-secondary-school-age OOSC, which accounted for 26.98% of the children of lower secondary school age. The rate of lower-secondary-school-age OOSC in An Giang was double the national average (11.17%) and it was the highest in the eight provinces.
- In An Giang the percentage of OOSC aged five was high, the percentage of OOSC of primary school age was considerably less, and the percentage of OOSC of lower secondary school age was high, even higher than the rate for five-year-old OOSC.
- The rate of OOSC in An Giang was 1.1-1.2 times higher for males than for females across all three age groups.
- The percentage of five-year-old OOSC in rural areas in An Giang was considerably lower than the percentage in urban areas. However, the reverse was true among OOSC of primary and lower secondary school age. The rate of primary-school-age OOSC in rural areas was 1.3 times higher than the rate in urban areas, and the rate of lower-secondary-school-age OOSC in rural areas was 1.5 times higher than the rate in urban areas.
- The rate of OOSC among children with disabilities and with partial disabilities was far greater than that of the group with no disabilities across all three age groups.
- The rate of OOSC among migrants was higher than the rate among non-migrants.
- The OOSC rates at primary and lower secondary schools increased with age. In the final grades at these schools, the percentage of lower-secondary-school-age OOSC was four times higher than the percentage of primary-school-age OOSC, 40.47% and 10.6% respectively.
- Compared to the Kinh, the percentage of out-of-school children among the Cham and the Khmer was very high. The percentage of five-year-old OOSC among the Cham and the Khmer was 45.16% and 33.93% respectively. The percentage of primary-school-age OOSC was 25.36% among the Cham and 14.41% among the Khmer. The percentage of lower-secondary-school-age OOSC among the Cham was 51.99% and among the Khmer it was 37.53%. The OOSC rates for the Kinh across all three age groups was 22.2%, 7.12% and 26.38% respectively.

- The dropout rates in An Giang among children of primary and lower secondary school age were highest in the eight selected provinces and higher than the national average. The dropout rate among lower-secondary-school-age children was eight times higher than the rate among primary-school-age children. The dropout rate increased in the final grades of primary and lower secondary school.
- The rate of overage school attendance in An Giang decreased with age. However, 2.42% of the children aged 13 and 1.03% of the children aged 14 (the ages of children in the final grades of lower secondary school) still attended primary school. These 1,323 children were very likely to drop out.

## 7. Barriers and bottlenecks

This chapter studies the barriers and bottlenecks that can cause a child to be excluded from education. The barriers and bottlenecks may derive from the demand side concerning children and their parents and the supply side of education, which also involves other stakeholders such as communities with different cultural norms and practices and the agencies governing the socio-economic development processes at all levels.

### Children and their parents

In An Giang, economic barriers directly affected children's access to school and their learning. Some families had a low and unstable income because they did seasonal work; some children migrated with their families to industrial zones in Ho Chi Minh City, Binh Duong or across the border in Cambodia; and some lived temporarily on a boat in a river. As a result their schooling was interrupted and this led to them dropping out. Some children from non-migrant families had to work to help their parents, e.g. at small food stalls, at fish businesses or at junk shops. They were often tired, which caused them to do poorly at school, and then they felt bored and finally dropped out.

One of the reasons the percentage of OOSC aged five and OOSC of lower secondary school age was high and the percentage of primary-school-age OOSC was considerably lower was because primary education was free and pre-primary and lower secondary education had to be paid for and a number of parents could not afford the cost of sending their children to pre-primary and lower secondary school.

Several other barriers prevented children from attending school. Some parents did not recognize the value of education, and they did not pay attention to their children's studies or help them with their homework. Children who had dropped out of school or repeated a class had low self-esteem, and this affected their learning outcomes. A lack of encouragement and motivation and poor learning outcomes often led to a decreased interest in learning and to eventually dropping out.

### Infrastructure and school facilities

Pre-primary schools and/or classes were in great shortage, and many of them operated on the premises of primary schools, which affected pre-school education in terms of scale and quality of learning. The number of private pre-schools was growing, but there were not enough of them to meet the demand. Support facilities (e.g. a kitchen, cooking utensils and cooking staff) were limited, and as a result pre-school enrollment had not been maximized.

At primary schools the facilities had been improved, but there were not enough classrooms for full-day schooling or additional classes beyond regular school hours. Some schools were not easily accessible due to geographical features such as rivers and multiple canals. Many schools had poor-quality infrastructure, especially pre-schools in remote areas, and there was no specialized infrastructure for children with disabilities.

## **Teachers**

There was a shortage of pre-primary school teachers for full-day schooling. At lower secondary schools there was often a shortage of teachers for some subjects and there were more than enough teachers for others. The teaching methodology did not motivate students, and a number of teachers were not motivated to teach ethnic minority children or children with disabilities.

## **Management**

The low enrollment rate at pre-primary and lower secondary schools was attributed to management-related barriers.

The pursuit of exaggerated achievements in grade transition and graduation rates at primary schools resulted in some lower-secondary-school students being underqualified and a burden on lower secondary schools, and there was an increased risk of them dropping out.

Some children dropped out due to poor results at school, and this was partially due to the way the education sector was managed. Problems included the quality of education and the school environment; overloaded curricula; outdated teaching methodology; additional support not being provided in a timely manner to students who needed it; and limited cooperation between students' families and local authorities to effectively mobilize children to school and to track and monitor children who were out of school.

Guidance for inclusive education faced many challenges, for example a lack of disaggregated data on children with disabilities, which was needed for education management (children with disabilities were not counted in the universalization data); the limited ability of teachers to support inclusive education for students with disabilities; inconsistencies in the definition of children with disabilities across different departments; and limited cross-sectoral collaboration (e.g. certification of disability type by the health department).

There were difficulties with the decentralized management of education, especially financial management. At the district level the same level of funding for educational facilities was disbursed every month of the calendar year, but schools needed more funds in certain months during the school year and less during the summer holidays. A number of young education managers had limited management qualifications. In certain localities, limited cooperation between students' families and local authorities hindered efforts to accelerate enrollment for children and to track and monitor children who were out of school.

## **Policies**

The provision of lunch subsidies for pre-school children aged five was not in accordance with the school year calendar, and there were challenges in the implementation of policy on the exemption and reduction of school fees. Limited support was offered after many delays, and procedures were so complicated that it was not possible to provide immediate support to eligible families. The use of geographical criteria to determine the amount of support to be given to disadvantaged students was problematic because some poor families that needed support were not eligible because they did not reside in certain geographical areas.

There were many policies and some groups of children were covered by more than one policy; some policies were managed by more than the required number of agencies, posing a great challenge to integration; and policy changes were not immediately implemented. There was often a delay in cross-sectoral collaboration in policy implementation, for instance a delay in the certification of disability type by the health sector which prevented students with disabilities from receiving the benefits of certain policy provisions.

There were challenges in the application of incentives for pre-school teachers, e.g. challenges related to compensation norms for extra hours that they worked.

### **The educational system**

Curricula were overloaded, so teachers and students were under pressure to finish the curriculum by the end of the school year. Students with poor learning achievements did not receive adequate support. Due to a heavy curriculum, students had to study intensively and they did not have much time for recreation, which is necessary to stimulate learning and reduce stress. During interviews a number of students said they felt that teachers were too serious, were not very accessible and did not make an effort to encourage the students. Students were often afraid to speak up or even ask questions when they did not understand the lessons.

A language barrier affected the acquisition of lessons by Khmer and Cham students. In districts with a high concentration of ethnic minorities, ethnic minority students accounted for the majority of the dropouts.

Improvements in the disaggregation of educational statistical data were inadequate. There was a lack of quality data (disaggregated by sex, disability and migration status) on children in difficult circumstances, many of whom were out of school. The data collected for the universalization program had not been widely used in planning, e.g. the data on children with disabilities and migrant children. In addition, children with disabilities were not included in the groups to be mobilized through the universalization program, which affected the tracking of the actual number of out-of-school children with disabilities. There were discrepancies between the data provided by the education sector and that by the statistics unit, and this resulted in inconsistencies in the use and dissemination of statistical data. There was no unified definition of selected statistical data among the related departments, for instance on children with disabilities.

## **8. Recommendations**

The following recommendations are based on consultations held at various levels in An Giang. They concern the demand and the supply side of education, and they cover policy aspects that address some of the above-mentioned barriers and bottlenecks in order to promote education equity in An Giang to ensure the right to education for OOSC.

### **Children and their parents**

- Encourage parents to change their practices and way of thinking and send their children to school. Strengthen communication efforts in each commune and village to help children and parents understand information and the value of education to their children's future development. Revamp the approach to communication in order to enhance the effectiveness of communication initiatives, which have been carried out thus far without making considerable changes in the views and practices of the communities, and take concrete actions such as offering encouragement, providing attention, following up on children's progress, and collaborating with teachers and schools.

### **Teachers**

- Ensure planning for sufficient teacher development across all subjects.
- Strengthen inclusive education training for teachers of children with disabilities. Improve teaching methodology and differentiated teaching, and find ways to improve students' competence in Vietnamese, including bilingual education, so as to address the language barrier faced by ethnic minority students.

- Strengthen cooperation between homeroom teachers and subject-based teachers to ensure timely additional support beyond regular class hours for students at risk of dropping out.
- Provide high-quality training for pre-school teachers. Increase the number of pre-school teachers at private pre-schools. Provide incentives to attract teachers to remote and ethnic minority areas.

### **Schools**

- Provide on-going investment in school facilities, particularly at pre-primary schools. Provide facilities for children with disabilities.

### **Education management**

- Provide guidance for a systematic review of the causes of low enrollment at the various educational levels. Research the differences in enrollment in An Giang and Dong Thap, the dropouts and the issues related to Cham and Khmer students.
- Intensify the effort to increase enrollment at schools and ensure high-quality education; strengthen guidance on how to improve the quality of additional support beyond regular school hours for students with poor learning outcomes who are at risk of dropping out; and provide special attention to those in the first and final grade of a school.
- Encourage students at continuing education centers to stay in school.
- Propose to provincial authorities actions that address the low enrollment in An Giang so as to obtain support for holistic solutions. Integrate OOSC-related issues in sector planning and management in order to put forward specific measures to reduce barriers and the level of complexity of barriers and ensure the right to education for disadvantaged children who have never been to school or who have dropped out.

### **Policies**

- Close the gaps concerning OOSC issues among the different geographical areas by applying contextual policies to each local area, including the Mekong River Delta.
- Align the policy support for students pursuing continuing education with the support for those in the general education system to address the issues of low uptake at continuing education centers.
- Implement policies that support the teachers who offer inclusive education for children with disabilities. Research appropriate teaching methodologies to help children with disabilities to learn effectively in an inclusive environment. Provide policy incentives to pre-school teachers at private schools and facilitate their participation in health insurance and social insurance schemes.
- Create policies to encourage investors and entrepreneurs build pre-schools in factories and other businesses to address the shortage of classrooms and schools.
- Strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration between the Department of Health, the Department of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs and other stakeholders to address the barriers faced by poor children, children with disabilities, and ethnic minority children in a timely manner.

### **Education system**

- Review and strengthen databases related to the universalization of education for use in statistical work and education planning and management, and consider integrating the collection of data on out-of-school children, with a focus on disadvantaged groups such as children with disabilities, children in rural areas and migrant children.

- Address discrepancies in the data on school age groups between the education sector and the statistics branch to ensure timely and accurate data collection for the tracking of out-of-school children.
- Increase the amount of Vietnamese language instruction for children aged 3-5. The current practice, beginning at the age of five, has proven to be insufficient in the case of the Khmer students.

## 9. Conclusions

- According to this research, An Giang achieved relatively low educational outcomes in general, the lowest of the eight selected provinces, but the percentage of poor people and ethnic minorities in An Giang was not among the highest.
- There were a large number of OOSC in An Giang (one out of every five children aged five was not in school, one out of every ten primary-school-age children was not in school, and one out of every five lower-secondary-school-age children was not in school). This made it challenging to universalize pre-school education for five-year-olds, primary education and, especially, universal lower secondary education.
- Disparities were experienced primarily among children in rural areas, children from Cham and Khmer communities, children with disabilities and those from migrant families;
- The high dropout rate at lower secondary schools, especially in the final grade of lower secondary school, requires appropriate measures.
- In the broader context of multiple challenges in education in the Mekong River Delta, the challenge to change the perception, customs and culture of parents and get them to encourage their children to attend school is great, but it is a policy priority. There was a relatively high dropout rate in a number of provinces, the lowest rates of graduation from upper secondary school and college, the lowest rates of children receiving vocational training, and the lowest percentage of people with secondary or tertiary education nationwide (Source: *Education Monograph: Analysis of key indicators*, GSO, 2011).
- Analysis of the 2009 Census data shows that An Giang faced many challenges in the implementation of education equity and ensuring the right to education for all children. There were many ethnic minority children and children with disabilities who were out of school, who had dropped out or who were are at risk of dropping out. These disadvantaged children need to be prioritized in education planning, in budgeting and resource allocation for education, in education management and in the socio-economic development processes at all levels in An Giang.

# ANNEX

**Table 2: Children aged 5-14 in An Giang**

Unit: Persons

		Age 5	Age 6-10	Age 11-14
<b>Total</b>		<b>34,641</b>	<b>164,443</b>	<b>152,120</b>
Age	5	34,641		
	6		31,361	
	7		33,169	
	8		38,213	
	9		31,754	
	10		29,947	
	11			36,779
	12			38,772
	13			38,321
	14			38,249
Gender	Male	17,903	85,230	78,387
	Female	16,738	79,213	73,733
Urban/Rural area	Urban	9,808	43,836	39,677
	Rural	24,833	120,607	112,442
Ethnic group	Kinh	33,031	154,815	143,344
	Khmer	1,293	8,000	7,123
	Chinese	107	669	586
	Cham	203	928	1,027
	Other	8*	32*	39*
Disability status	Disabled	16*	367	248
	Partially disabled	196	808	1,056
	Not disabled	34,429	163,268	150,816
Migrant	Yes	506	2,353	1,676
	No	34,136	162,090	150,443

**Remarks:**

- Age in 2008
- \* Indicates disaggregated groups with less than 50 weighted cell values

**Table 3: Percentage of children aged 5-14 attending school in An Giang**

Unit: %

		Age 5 attending school	Primary school ANAR	Lower secondary school age attending primary school	Lower secondary school ANAR
<b>Total</b>		<b>77.29</b>	<b>92.46</b>	<b>8.47</b>	<b>64.55</b>
Age	5	77.29			
	6		87.41		
	7		95.12		
	8		95.68		
	9		93.66		
	10		89.40		
	11			23.25	62.87
	12			7.78	70.48
	13			2.42	66.20
	14			1.03	58.50
Gender	Male	75.20	91.87	9.11	62.75
	Female	79.52	93.09	7.80	66.46
Urban/Rural area	Urban	74.30	93.86	6.30	73.67
	Rural	78.47	91.95	9.24	61.33
Ethnic group	Kinh	77.81	92.88	8.25	65.38
	Khmer	66.07	85.59	12.62	49.85
	Chinese	92.54	100.00	1.18	96.58
	Cham	54.84	74.65	16.05	31.96
	Other	0	0	0	0
Disability status	Disabled	0.00	10.49	2.66	0.00
	Partially disabled	56.31	52.63	9.28	33.90
	Not disabled	77.44	92.84	8.48	64.87
Migrant	Yes	65.18	86.13	8.96	45.65
	No	77.47	92.55	8.47	64.76

Remark: Age in 2008

**Table 4: Percentage of dropouts classified by age in An Giang**

Unit: %

		Primary school age	Lower secondary school age
<b>Total</b>		<b>3.10</b>	<b>24.14</b>
Age	6	0.87	
	7	1.35	
	8	1.62	
	9	4.08	
	10	8.19	
	11		11.54
	12		19.13
	13		28.48
Gender	Male	3.41	24.92
	Female	2.76	23.31
Urban/Rural area	Urban	2.32	17.70
	Rural	3.38	26.41
Ethnic group	Kinh	2.98	23.84
	Ethnic minorities:	4.90	28.95
	Khmer	4.26	28.92
	Chinese		1.13
	Chăm	14.17	45.50
Disability status	Disabled		14.50
	Partially disabled	4.03	24.63
	Not disabled	3.10	24.15
Migrant	Yes	2.23	37.45
	No	3.11	23.99

Remark: Age in 2008

**Table 5: Percentage of OOSC aged 5-14 in An Giang**
*Unit: %*

		Age 5	Age 6-10	Age 11-14
<b>Total</b>		<b>22,71</b>	<b>7,54</b>	<b>26,98</b>
Age	5	22,71		
	6		12,59	
	7		4,88	
	8		4,32	
	9		6,34	
	10		10,60	
	11			13,89
	12			21,74
	13			31,38
	14			40,47
Gender	Male	24,80	8,13	28,14
	Female	20,48	6,91	25,74
Urban/Rural area	Urban	25,70	6,14	20,03
	Rural	21,53	8,05	29,43
Ethnic group	Kinh	22,19	7,12	26,38
	Other ethnic groups:	33,40	14,40	36,77
	Khmer	33,93	14,41	37,53
	Chinese	7,46	0,00	2,23
Disability status	Cham	45,16	25,35	51,99
	Disabled		89,51	97,34
	Partially disabled	43,69	47,37	56,83
Migrant	Not disabled	22,56	7,16	26,65
	Yes	34,82	13,87	45,38
	No	22,53	7,45	26,77

*Remark: Age in 2008*

**Table 6: Percentage of poor families in 2008**

Number	Province	%	Order Number	Province	%
	<b>Nationwide</b>	<b>13.4</b>	32	Ben Tre	14.2
1	Lai Chau	53,7	33	Bac Lieu	13,9
2	Đien Bien	39,3	34	Thua Thien Hue	13,7
3	Ha Giang	37,6	35	Hau Giang	13,3
4	Bac Can	36,8	36	Ninh Binh	13
5	Son La	36,3	37	Ca Mau	12,7
6	Cao Bang	35,6	38	Ha Nam	11,6
7	Lao Cai	33,2	39	Vinh Phuc	11,3
8	Hoa Binh	28,6	40	Tien Giang	10,6
9	Kon Tum	26,7	41	Nam Dinh	10,6
10	Ha Tinh	26,5	42	An Giang	10,6
11	Quang Tri	25,9	43	Hung Yen	10,3
12	Thanh Hoa	24,9	44	Hai Duong	10,1
13	Gia Lai	23,7	45	Vinh Long	9,8
14	Đac Nong	23,3	46	Thai Binh	9,8
15	Nghe An	22,5	47	Kien Giang	9,3
16	Quang Binh	21,9	48	Binh Thuan	9,2
17	Đac Lac	21,3	49	Khanh Hoa	9,1
18	Tuyên Quang	20,6	50	Binh Phuoc	9,1
19	Yen Bai	20,4	51	An Giang	8,5
20	Quang Nam	19,6	52	Long An	7,7
21	Quang Ngai	19,5	53	Bac Ninh	7,5
22	Ninh Thuan	19,3	54	Can Tho	7
23	Lang Son	19,3	55	Ba Ria-Vung Tau	7
24	Tra Vinh	19	56	Ha Noi (new)	6,6
25	Soc Trang	17,9	57	Quang Ninh	6,4
26	Bac Giang	17,5	58	Hai Phong	6,3
27	Phu Tho	16,7	59	Tay Ninh	6
28	Thai Nguyen	16,5	60	Đong Nai	4,3
29	Phú Yên	16,3	61	Da Nang	3,5
30	Lam Đong	15,8	62	Ho Chi Minh City	0,5
31	Binh Đinh	14,2	63	Binh Duong	0,4

Source: General Statistics Office







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