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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 Dien Bien 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. Dien Bien 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 Dien Bien through an analysis of the profile of out-of-school children aged 5-14 in Dien Bien 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 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 March 2013 with education managers from different units of the Department of Education and Training of Dien Bien Province, the Bureau of Education and Training of Tuan Giao District and representatives of teachers, students, parents and local authorities at Phinh Sang Primary School and Mun Chung 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 major four 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 classified 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 (i.e. the value was changed to zero) 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 analyses out-of-school children among the Kinh and key ethnic minority groups in Dien Bien such as the Thai, the Mong, the Dao, the Kho Mu, and the Lao.

## 2. Characteristics of the children aged 5-14 in Dien Bien

According to the 2009 Census, the total number of children aged five in Dien Bien in 2008 (born in 2003), aged 6-10 in 2008 (of primary school age and born between 1998 and 2002) and aged 11-14 in 2008 (of lower secondary school age and born between 1994 and 1997) were 11,909, 55,198 and 46,120 respectively (see Table 1).

The ratio of male to female children in Dien Bien was about 52:48 for children aged five and children aged 11-14, and it was approximately 51:49 for children aged 6-10. This indicates an obvious gender imbalance in the school-age population.

About 90% of the children aged 5-14 in Dien Bien lived in rural areas, and about 90% of the children aged 5-14 in Dien Bien were ethnic minorities, mainly Mong and Thai. In Dien Bien less than 1.8% of the children had disabilities or partial disabilities, and the remaining 98% of the children had no disabilities. Children of migrant families accounted for less than 2.3% of the total number of children.

**Table 1: Distribution of children aged 5-14 in Dien Bien**

DIEN BIEN		Age in 2008		
		5	6-10	11-14
<b>Total (persons)</b>		<b>11,909</b>	<b>55,198</b>	<b>46,120</b>
Age (persons)	5	11,909		
	6		10,963	
	7		10,358	
	8		12,244	
	9		11,087	
	10		10,547	
	11			11,277
	12			11,584
	13			11,580
	14			11,679
Gender (%)	Male	52.66	51.36	52.74
	Female	47.34	48.64	47.26
Urban/Rural area (%)	Urban	11.02	9.68	10.76
	Rural	88.98	90.32	89.24
Ethnic group (%)	Kinh	13.63	11.18	12.21
	Thái	27.83	30.74	35.73
	Mông	47.42	47.00	41.19
	Dao	1.93	1.82	1.63
	Khơ Mú	3.69	3.82	3.99
	Lào	1.09	1.30	1.54
	Khác	4.41	4.14	3.70
Disability status (%)	Disabled	0.12	0.16	0.09
	Partially disabled	1.20	1.62	1.72
	Not disabled	98.68	98.22	98.19
Migrant (%)	Yes	2.29	1.87	1.72
	No	97.71	98.13	98.28

### 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, Dien Bien had 11,909 children aged five in 2008 (born in 2003), of whom 77.70% attended school and 22.30% did not. There were 2,656 OOSC aged five in Dien Bien. The percentage of five-year-old OOSC in Dien Bien was higher than the national average (12.19%) and was the second highest of the eight provinces (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Children aged five attending school and out of school in Dien Bien**

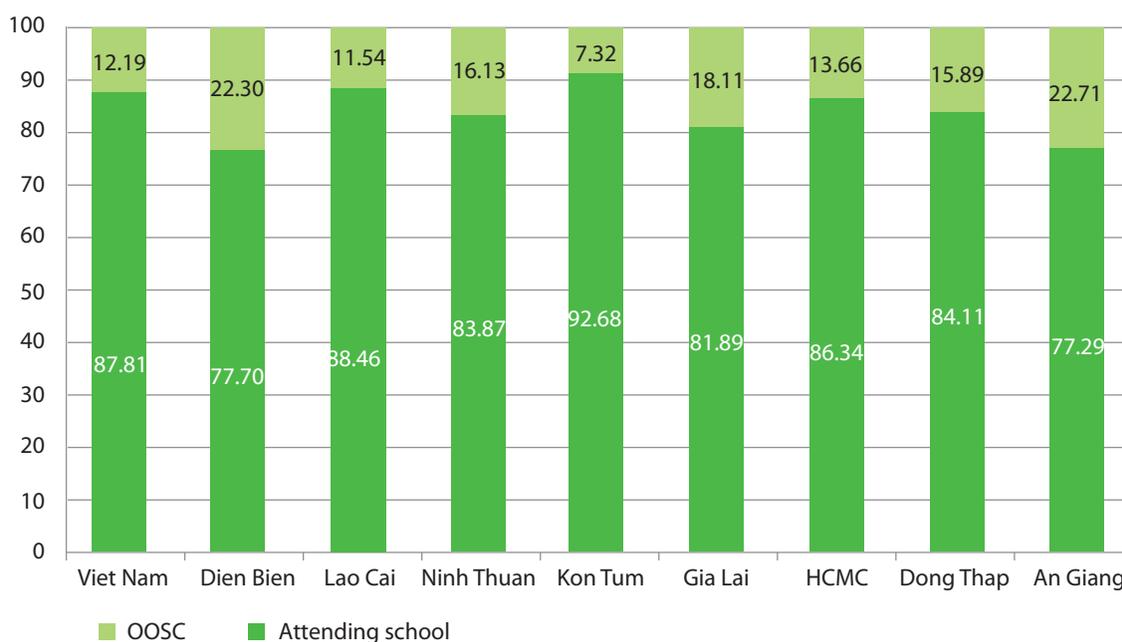
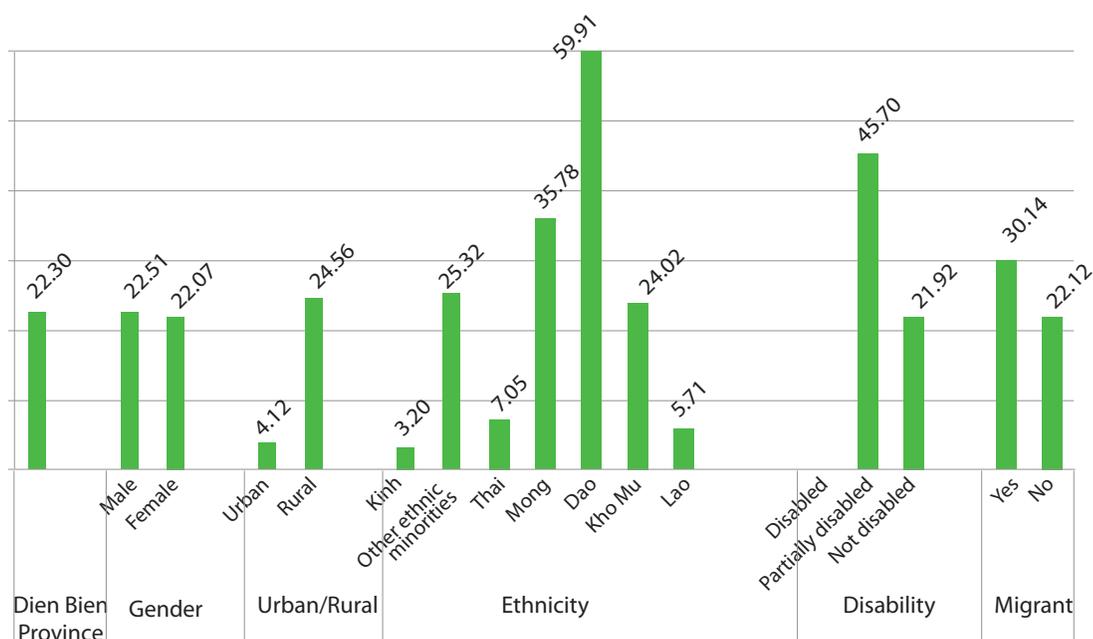


Figure 2 provides a graphical illustration of the data on the OOSC aged five in Dien Bien classified by the children’s characteristics, including gender, residential area (urban or rural area), ethnic group, disability and migration status.

**Figure 2: Percentage of OOSC aged five in Dien Bien classified by characteristics**



The percentage of OOSC in Dien Bien was almost the same for males and females, 22.51% and 22.07% respectively. However, there were big differences in the rates for OOSC aged five in urban and rural areas, between the Kinh and other ethnic groups, between children with disabilities and children with no disabilities, and between migrants and non-migrants.

The percentage of OOSC aged five in rural areas was six times higher than the percentage of OOSC in urban areas, 24.56% and 4.12% respectively.

The percentage of five-year-old OOSC was eight times higher among the ethnic minorities than among the Kinh, 25.32% and 3.20% respectively. The Dao had the highest percentage (59.91%), and it was about 20 times higher than the percentage for the Kinh, followed by the Mong (35.78%) and the Kho Mu (24.02%), ten and nearly six times higher respectively.

There were not enough five-year-old children with disabilities for an analysis to be carried out. The percentage of out-of-school children among those aged five with partial disabilities was twice as high as the percentage of their peers with no disabilities, 45.70% and 21.92% respectively. The number of five-year-old migrant OOSC was nearly 1.5 times higher than the percentage of non-migrant OOSC, 30.14% and 22.12% respectively.

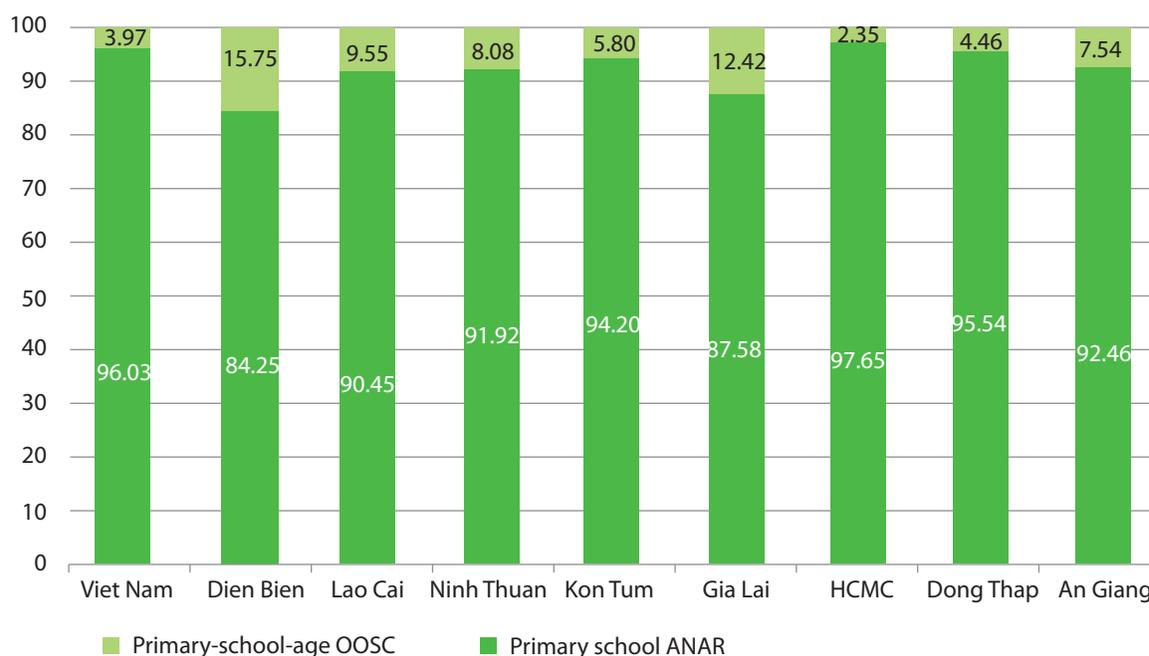
### 3.2. Out-of-school children of primary school age

Out-of-school children 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 55,198 children aged 6-10 in Dien Bien in 2008 (born between 1998 and 2002), of whom 84.25% attended primary school or lower secondary school and 15.75% were out of school (see Figure 3). There were 8,694 OOSC aged 6-10 in Dien Bien. The percentage of primary-school-age OOSC in Dien Bien was four times higher than the national average (3.97%) and it was the highest of the eight provinces.

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

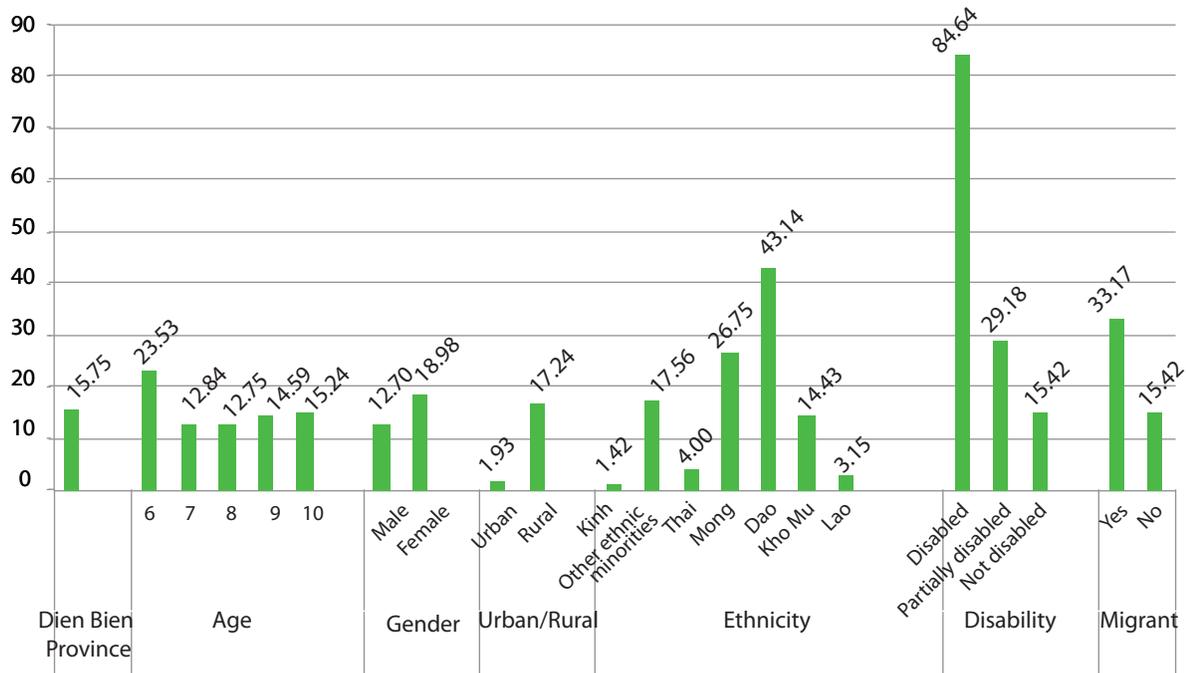
**Figure 3: Percentage of primary-school-age children in Dien Bien attending school and out of school**



The percentage of primary-school-age OOSC increased slightly with age, which means the number of dropouts increased slightly in the final grades of primary school.

There were big differences in the rates for primary-school-age OOSC in Dien Bien between males and females, in urban and rural areas, between the Kinh and other ethnic groups, between children with disabilities and those no disabilities, and between migrants and non-migrants. The rates were 1.5-2 times higher compared to the rates for the five-year-old OOSC.

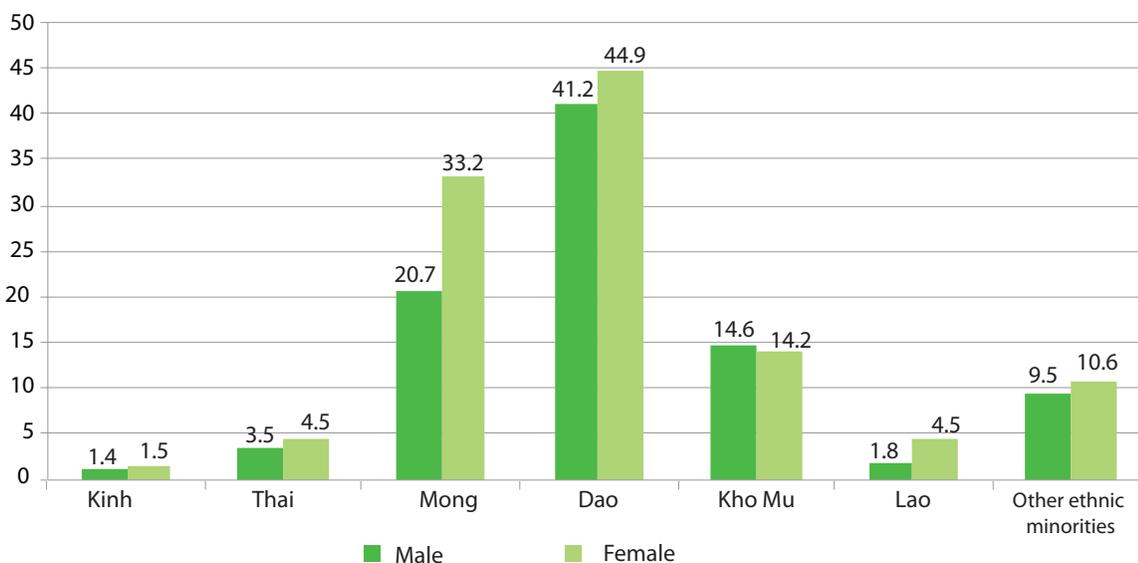
**Figure 4: Percentage of primary-school-age OOSC in Dien Bien classified by selected characteristics**



The percentage of primary-school-age female OOSC was 1.5 times higher than the percentage of male OOSC, 18.98% and 12.70% respectively. This is because nearly half of the primary-school-age children were Mong and the percentage of primary-school-age female OOSC was 1.5 times higher than the percentage of male OOSC (see Figure 5), except for the Kho Mu, among whom the percentage of primary-school-age male OOSC was higher than the percentage of female OOSC of primary school age.

The percentage of primary-school-age OOSC in rural areas was eight times higher than the percentage in urban areas, 17.24% and 1.93% respectively.

**Figure 5: Percentage of primary-school-age OOSC classified by ethnic group and gender**



The percentage of primary-school-age OOSC among the other ethnic groups was 12 times higher than the percentage of Kinh OOSC, 17.6% and 1.4% respectively. The Dao had the highest percentage of primary-school-age OOSC, 43.1%, which means that one out of two did not attend school. The percentage of primary-school-age Raglay OOSC was about 30 times higher than the percentage of Kinh OOSC, followed by the Mong (over 19 times higher) and the Kho Mu (nearly ten times higher).

The percentage of primary-school-age OOSC with disabilities was 84.6%, which means that two out of ten attended school and eight did not. The percentage of primary-school-age OOSC with partial disabilities was twice as high as their peers with no disabilities, 29.2% and 15.4% respectively. The percentage of primary-school-age OOSC among migrant families was twice as high as the percentage among non-migrant families, 33.2% and 15.4% respectively.

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

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

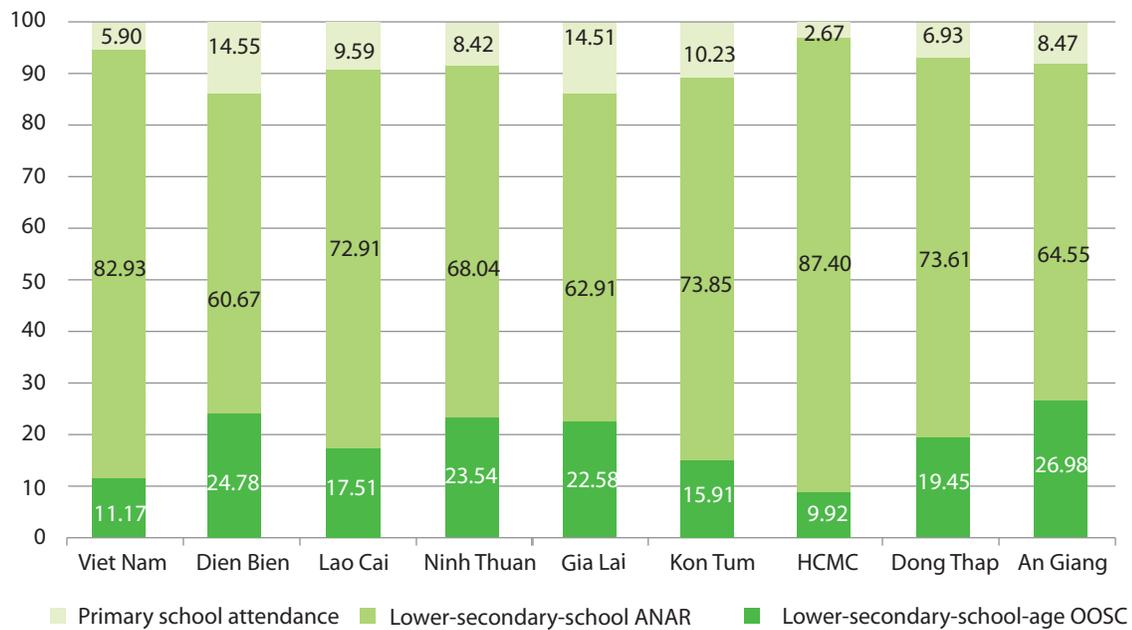
At the time of the 2009 Census, in Dien Bien there were 46,120 children aged 11-14 in 2008 (born between 1994 and 1997), of whom 60.67% attended lower secondary or upper secondary school, 14.55% attended primary school and the remaining 24.78% were out of school. That means one out of every four children of lower secondary school age did not attend school (see Figure 6). There were 11,429 lower-secondary-school-age OOSC in Dien Bien. The percentage of lower-secondary-school-age OOSC in Dien Bien was considerably higher than the percentage of primary-school-age OOSC (15.8%). This rate was twice as high as the national average (11.2%) and it was the second highest of the eight provinces.

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

Figure 7 provides a graphical illustration of the data on lower-secondary-school-age OOSC in Dien Bien 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 Dien Bien increased with age and at faster rate than the percentage of primary-school-age OOSC. 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. At the age of 14, 32.16% (almost a third) of the children were out of school, while only 15.24% (a sixth) of the children aged ten were out of school.

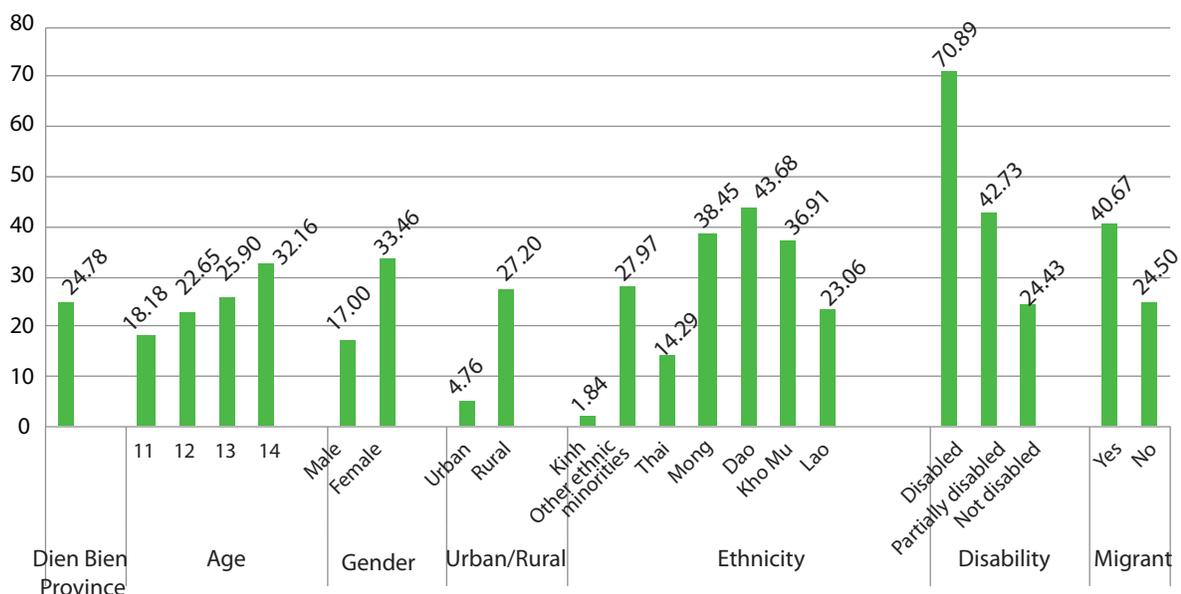
**Figure 6: Percentage of lower-secondary-school-age children attending school and out of school**



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

Considerable differences were found in the rates for lower-secondary-school-age OOSC between males and females, in urban and rural areas, between children with disabilities and those with no disabilities, and between migrants and non-migrants. These differences were much larger than the differences in the rates for primary-school-age OOSC.

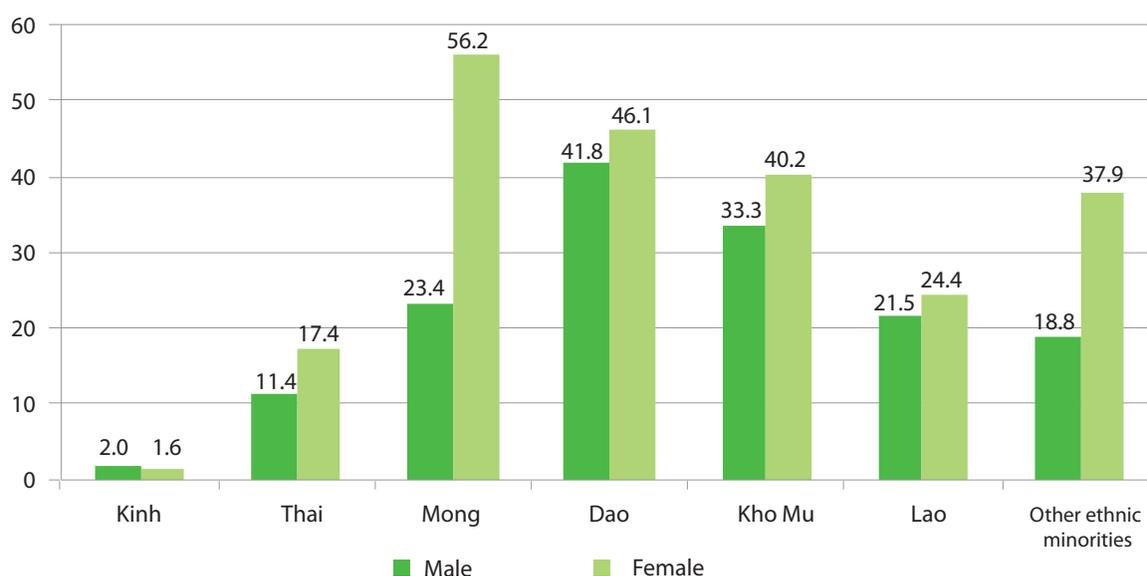
**Figure 7: Percentage of lower-secondary-school-age OOSC classified by characteristics**



The percentage of lower-secondary-school-age female OOSC was twice as high as the percentage of male OOSC, 33.46% and 17% respectively. As with the primary-school-age OOSC, yet to a greater extent,

all the ethnic minority groups had higher OOSC rates for females than for males. The Mong accounted for 40% of the lower-secondary-school-age population and the percentage of female Mong OOSC was double the percentage of male Mong OOSC (see Figure 8).

**Figure 8: Percentage of lower-secondary-school-age OOSC classified by ethnic group and gender**



The percentage of lower-secondary-school-age OOSC in rural areas was nearly five times higher than in urban areas, 27.2% and 4.76% respectively, and the rate for the ethnic minorities was 1.8 times higher than the rate for the Kinh. The Dao, the Mong and the Kho Mu had the highest percentage of lower-secondary-school-age OOSC, and one out of three lower-secondary-school-age Dao, Mong and Kho Mu children did not attend school.

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 twice as high as the percentage of non-migrant OOSC, 40.67% and 24.50% respectively.

#### 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 9, the percentage of primary-school-age children who had dropped out of school in Dien Bien was 1.92%. This was the fifth highest rate of the eight selected provinces and higher than the national average (1.16%).

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

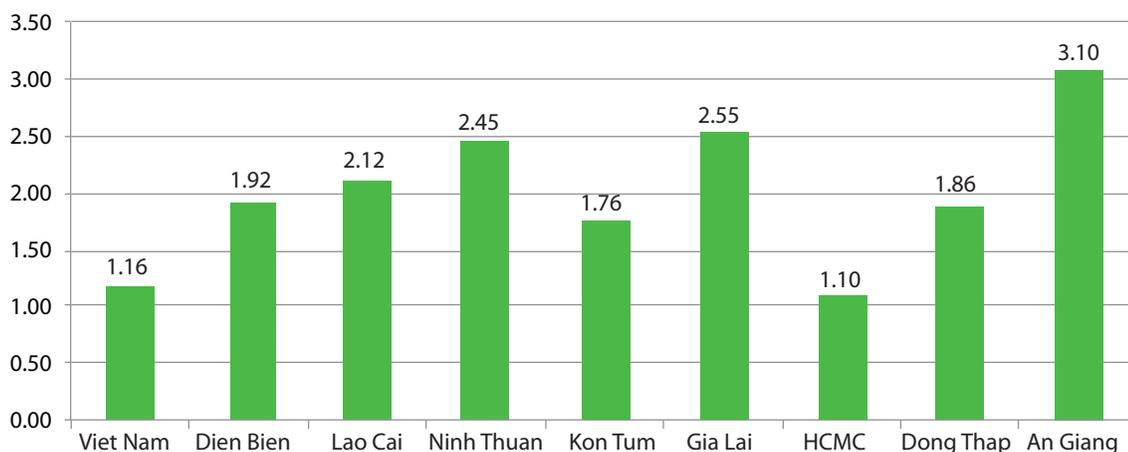
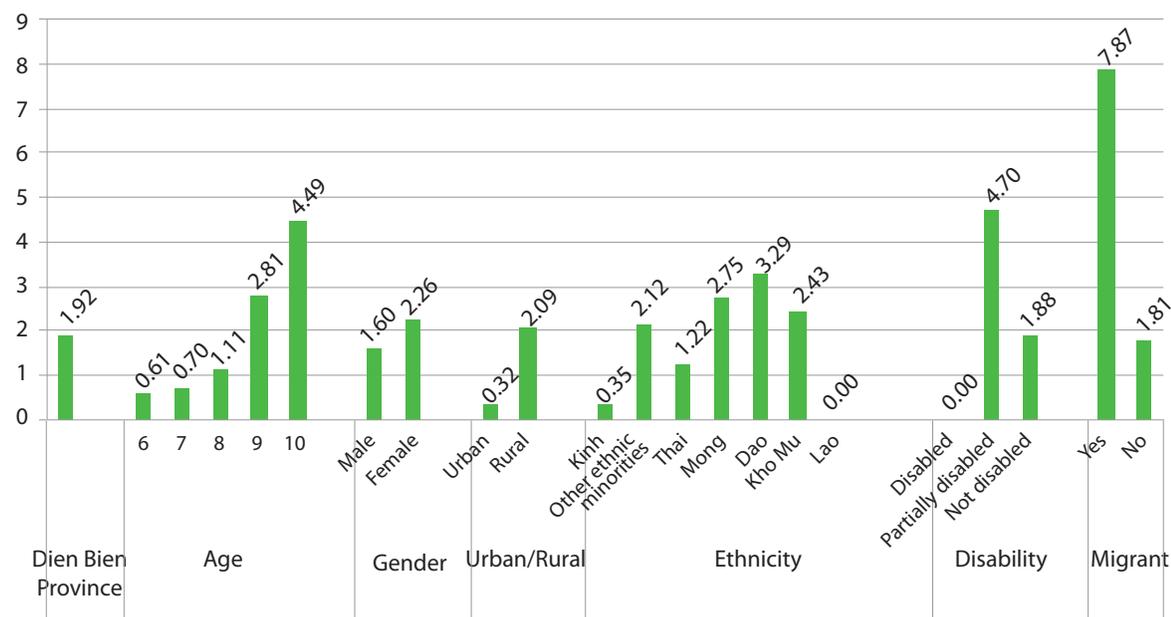


Figure 10 provides a graphical illustration of the percentage of primary-school-age children who had dropped out of school in Dien Bien classified by the children's characteristics, including age, gender, residential area (urban or rural area), ethnic group, disability and migration status.

**Figure 10: 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 Dien Bien increased with age and the dropout rate was highest in the final grades of primary school. The dropout rate among ten-year-olds was 4.49%. The percentage of primary-school-age females who had dropped out of school was insignificantly higher than the percentage of males compared to the big 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 for migrants and non-migrants.

The percentage of primary-school-age children in rural areas who had dropped out was seven times higher than the percentage of those in urban areas, 2.09% and 0.32% respectively. The percentage of primary-school-age ethnic minority OOSC was seven times higher than the percentage of Kinh OOSC, 2.12% and 0.35% respectively. The Dao, the Mong and the Kho Mu had the highest percentage of primary-school-age dropouts, eight to eleven times higher than the percentage of Kinh dropouts. The dropout rate among primary-school-age children with partial disabilities was more than double the rate among those with no disabilities, and the percentage of primary-school-age migrants who had dropped out of school was four times higher than the percentage of non-migrants.

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

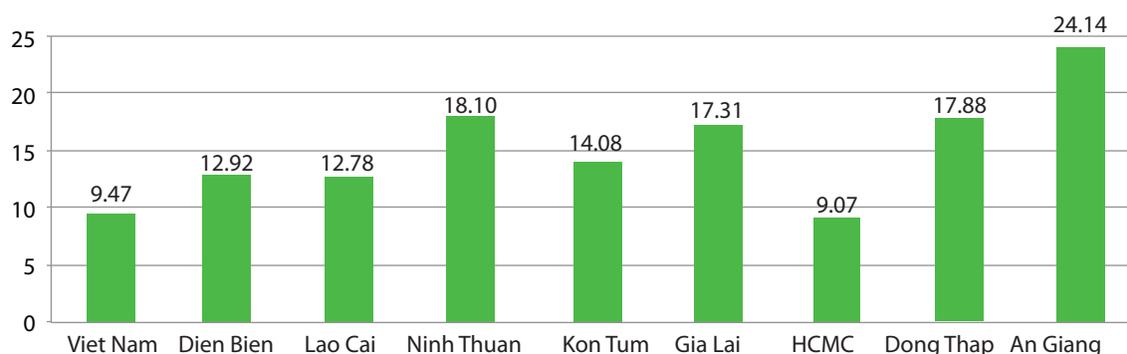
Children reported in this section as having dropped out were children aged 11-14 who had attended school but were not going to school at the time of the 2009 Census.

According to Figure 11, the dropout rate in Dien Bien among lower-secondary-school-age children was 12.92%. This was over six times higher than the dropout rate among primary-school-age children, and it was the sixth highest of the eight selected provinces and higher than the national average (9.47%).

Figure 12 provides a graphical illustration of the data of the lower-secondary-school-age children who had dropped out of school in Dien Bien classified by the children’s characteristics, including age, residential area (urban or rural area), gender, ethnic group, disability and migration status.

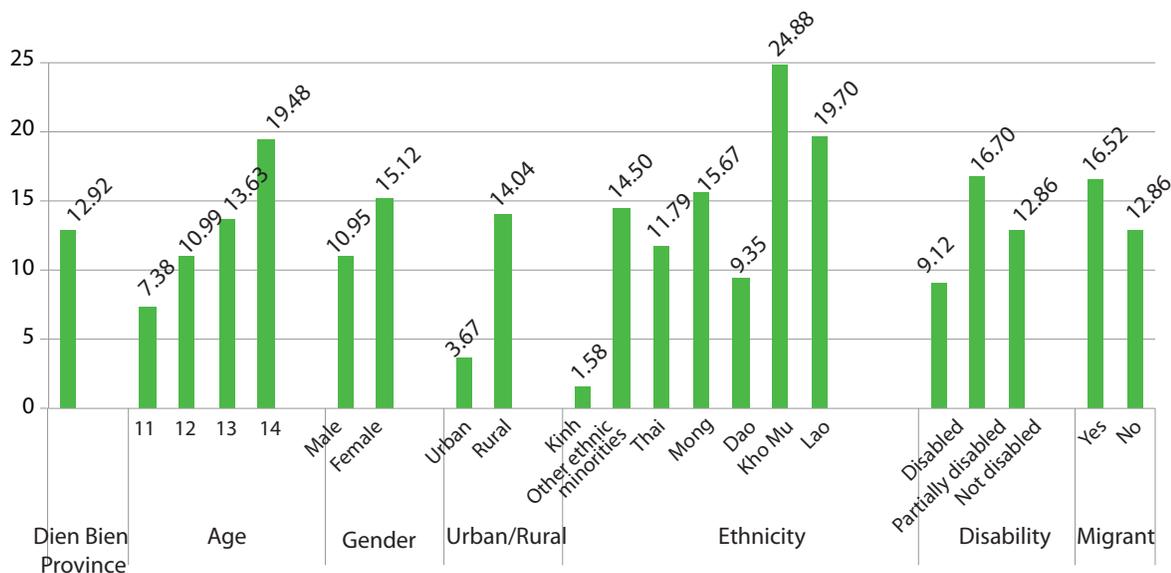
The dropout rate of lower-secondary-school-age children in Dien Bien increased with age, and in the final grades it increased to a greater degree. 19.5% of the secondary-school-age children aged 14 (one out of five) had dropped out. Notably, the dropout rate for lower-secondary-school-age females was more than 1.5 times higher than the dropout rate for males. This is because female ethnic minorities dropped out of school earlier than males.

**Figure 11: Percentage of lower-secondary-school-age children who had dropped out of school**



The percentage of lower-secondary-school-age children who had dropped out of school in rural areas in Dien Bien was three times higher than the percentage of those in urban areas who had dropped out. The dropout rate of the ethnic minorities was nine times higher than the dropout rate of the Kinh children. The low percentage of lower-secondary-school-age dropouts among children with disabilities compared to those with no disabilities is attributed to the small sample size. There was a higher percentage of dropouts with partial disabilities than dropouts with no disabilities, and the percentage of lower-secondary-school-age migrant dropouts was considerably higher than the percentage of non-migrant dropouts.

**Figure 12: Percentage of lower-secondary-school-age children who had dropped out of school classified by characteristics**



## 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 Dien Bien 14.55% of the children of lower secondary school age (in 2008) were overage and were attending primary school. This rate was the highest in the eight provinces and about 2.5 times higher than the national average (see Figure 13).

**Figure 13: Percentage of lower-secondary-school-age children attending primary school**

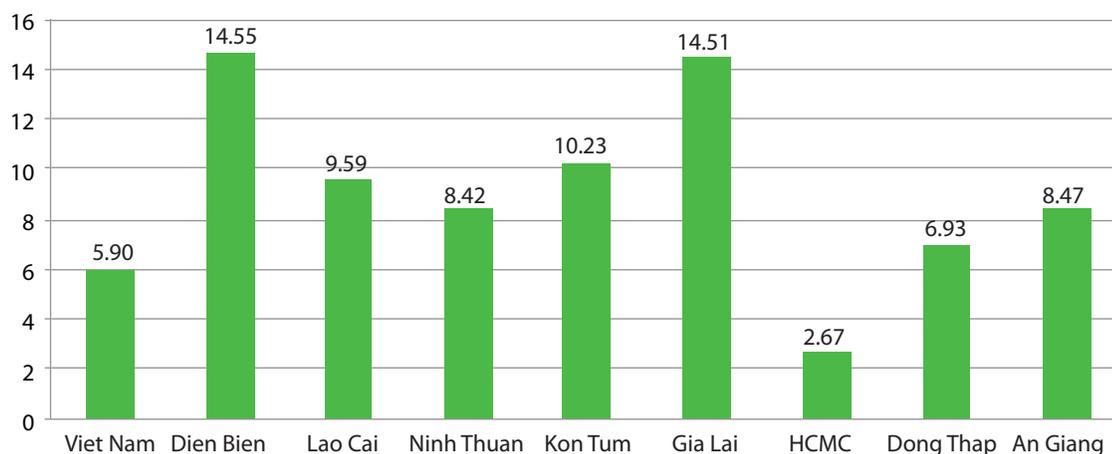


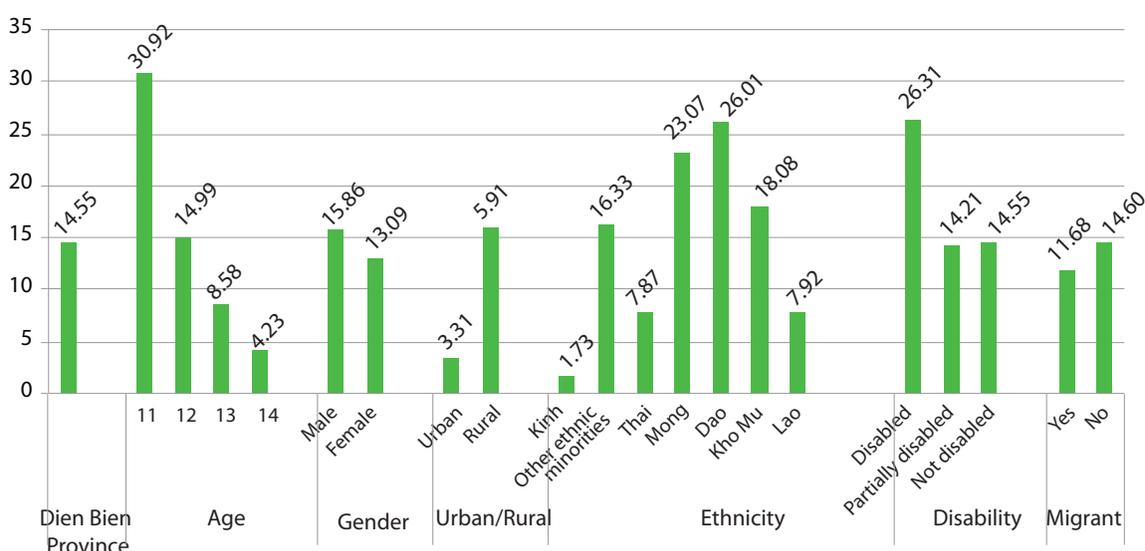
Figure 14 provides a graphical illustration of the data on lower-secondary-school-age children attending primary school in Dien Bien classified by the children's characteristics, including age, gender, residential area (urban or rural area), ethnic group, disability and migration status.

The percentage of lower-secondary-school-age children attending primary school in Dien Bien decreased with age. However, 8.58% of the children aged 13 and 4.23% of the children aged 14 (the ages at which children are usually in the final grades of lower secondary school) were still in primary school (see Table 3). A total of 1,486 children aged 13 and 14 were in primary school, and these children were very likely to drop out.

The difference in the percentage of overage students attending school in Dien Bien between males and females and between migrants to non-migrants was insignificant.

The percentage of lower-secondary-school-age males attending primary school in Dien Bien was insignificantly higher than the percentage of females, and overage school attendance among lower-secondary-school-age males was about 3% higher than the percentage of females, 15.86% and 13.09% respectively. The overage school attendance rates of migrants and non-migrants were similar.

**Figure 14: Percentage of lower-secondary-school-age children attending primary school classified by characteristics**



However, there was a big difference in the rates in urban and rural areas, 5.91% and 3.31% respectively, especially between the Kinh and other ethnic groups. The percentage of overage school attendance among lower-secondary-school-age ethnic minorities was 9.5 times higher than the percentage of overage Kinh, 16.33% and 1.73% respectively. The Dao, the Mong and the Kho Mu had the highest rates of overage school attendance among lower-secondary-school-age children, 26.01%, 23.07% and 18.01% respectively, which means that one out of every four or five lower-secondary-school-age children was overage and was attending primary school.

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

- At the time of the 2009 Census, the number of children aged five in 2008 (born in 2003) in Dien Bien was 11,909, the number of children aged 6-10 in 2008 (born between 1998 and 2002) was 55,198, and the number of children aged 11-14 (born between 1994 and 1997) was 46,120 (see Table 1).
- The total number of OOSC in Dien Bien was 22,779 and included:
  - 2,656 five-year-old OOSC, which accounted for 22.3% of the five-year-old children. The percentage of OOSC aged five in Dien Bien was twice as high as the national average (12.19%) and it was the second highest of the eight provinces.

- o 8,694 primary-school-age OOSC, which accounted for 15.75% of the primary school-age children. The rate of primary-school-age OOSC in Dien Bien was four times higher than the national average (4%) and it was the highest of the eight provinces.
- o 11,429 lower-secondary-school-age OOSC, which accounted for 24.78% of the children of lower secondary school age. The percentage of lower-secondary-school-age OOSC was twice as high as the national average (11.2%) and it was the second highest of the eight provinces.
- In Dien Bien, the percentage of OOSC aged five was high, the percentage of OOSC of primary school age was considerably lower, 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 aged five in Dien Bien was insignificantly higher for males than for females. However, the OOSC rate for females was considerably higher than the rate for males among children of primary and lower secondary school age and the difference increased with age. There were 1.5 times more female OOSC of primary school age than males, and there were twice as many female OOSC of lower secondary school age than males. This difference was most evident in the OOSC rates for the ethnic minority groups: the Dao, the Mong and Kho Mu. The rate for the Mong was especially high.
- The percentage of OOSC in rural areas in Dien Bien was considerably higher than the percentage in urban areas, five to eight times higher. 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 was considerably higher among ethnic minorities than among the Kinh, eight times higher among five-year-olds, 12 times higher among primary-school-age children, and 15 times higher among children of lower secondary school age. The Dao, the Mong and the Kho Mu had the highest OOSC rates, higher than the Kinh, and the rates increased with age.
- The percentage of OOSC among children with disabilities and those with partial disabilities was far greater than the percentage of OOSC among children with no disabilities across all three age groups.
- The percentage of migrant OOSC in Dien Bien was higher than the percentage of non-migrant OOSC.
- The percentage of OOSC at primary and lower secondary schools increased with age, and to a greater degree at lower secondary schools. In the final grades of lower secondary school, the percentage of lower-secondary-school-age OOSC was highest, 32.2%, which means that one out of four children aged 14 did not attend school.
- The dropout rates in Dien Bien among children of primary and lower secondary school age were the fifth and sixth highest respectively of the eight selected provinces, and they were higher than the national average. The dropout rate among lower-secondary-school-age children was seven 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 Dien Bien decreased with age. However, 8.58% of the children aged 13 and 4.23% 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. Overage school attendance was higher among boys, children in rural areas, and children from ethnic minorities, especially the Dao and the Mong.

## 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

Due to poverty, children in Dien Bien had to work to help support their families, and natural disasters caused damage that made their situation even worse. Both poverty and natural disasters were economic barriers that affected children's access to education.

Cultural and social barriers also prevented children from attending school. They did not want to attend school because they or their parents did not recognize the value of education. They felt that education is of secondary importance. Parents sent their children to school, but they otherwise failed to get involved with their children's education. Having poor grades at school sometimes led to decreased self-confidence and eventually dropping out. In addition, some students felt embarrassed and/or had low self-esteem because they were overage, which led to decreased motivation and dropping out. Social norms among certain ethnic minorities placed women in a dependent position, so it was believed that female children did not need an education. The practice of young marriage in these communities was another reason children dropped out. Children with disabilities had low self-esteem and did not want to go to school, and it was also sometimes the case that parents had low self-esteem and did not want to send their children to school.

### Infrastructure and school facilities

Most of the schools in the rural areas in Dien Bien were inadequate in terms of quantity and quality, especially satellite schools in mountainous and remote areas. There was a great shortage of pre-primary schools, and some of the required facilities were not available: There were not enough classrooms, function rooms and learning materials such as toys and equipment; toilets were inadequate; clean water was not available; basic boarding and kitchen facilities were lacking; and infrastructure for children with disabilities was unavailable. Only limited healthcare was available at schools and the staff providing this service was not properly trained. They performed these extra duties, but they were not compensated for taking on the additional workload and given the allowance that is provided to commune health workers. As a result, only limited first aid, checkups and hygiene checks were offered.

### Teachers

In Dien Bien there was a shortage of pre-school teachers, especially ethnic minority teachers. There was also a shortage of teachers at primary schools. At lower secondary schools there was often a shortage of teachers for some subjects and there were more than enough teachers for others. Incentives for teachers who taught multi-age classes were not adequate. Many challenges remained in the deployment and transfer of teachers. Some teachers had limited professional knowledge and experience, so their lessons were of poor quality and they did not inspire the students. A number of children who had poor learning achievements and/or were overage were not supported by their teachers.

### Management

The primary school learning outcomes of a number of ethnic minority children were below the standards set by the Ministry of Education and Training. However, they were allowed to make grade transitions and graduate. This resulted in some lower-secondary-school students being underqualified for the grades they were in, which was a burden on lower secondary schools and increased the risk

that some students would drop out. Some of the school managers were not properly qualified and this hindered fast development of the education sector. There was limited cooperation between students' families and local authorities to effectively accelerate children's enrollment and to bring children back to school.

## **Policies**

There were lengthy administrative procedures concerning residential papers and certification of poverty, which created many challenges in the application for policy support for poor children. The compensation policies applied to teachers and education managers was insufficient for them to support themselves, and this negatively affected their dedication and enthusiasm. In remote areas a lot of effort was required for teachers to travel long distances to teach at satellite schools in villages and for education managers to regularly monitor the quality of teaching and school management, and teachers and education managers were not reimbursed for the costs involved.

There were no policies for the management of student accommodation at semi-boarding schools or those with semi-boarding students. As a result, there were limited funds to run the boarding facilities. Contractual norms were not offered to the kitchen staff, healthcare staff, security guards and dormitory supervisors. Therefore, head teachers and homeroom teachers had to undertake additional responsibilities without additional compensation. While policies for improving boarding facilities were in place, there were no resources to implement them. There was no incentive policy for the teachers who taught children with disabilities who required individual learning programs and separate follow-up records. This presented challenges in the implementation of the inclusive education policy for children with disabilities. The policy on creating resource centers for inclusive education for people with disabilities had not been implemented. Students enrolled in continuing education centers did not enjoy the same policies applied to students in the general education system. No resources were available for investment in community learning centers in communes for things like offices, libraries and compensation for management.

The education budget was mainly spent on personnel wages, and the portion reserved for educational activities was very limited. Dien Bien is a mountainous province with a low population density and the people are scattered over vast areas. The number of students per class was less compared to other areas and there was a need for more teachers. This resulted in increased costs for personnel, but the budget allocation had remained unchanged for three years. The policy and practice of allocating funds based on head count was not appropriate in areas with a low population density. There remained challenges in the mobilization of private support and contributions from families because many of them were poor.

## **The education system**

Language barrier was a challenge for ethnic minority students. The curriculum was intensive, and it was especially difficult for ethnic minority students because they were not fluent in Vietnamese. The language barrier limited their ability to understand the lessons, so they failed to complete all their exercises. This coupled with a high volume of lessons and homework caused difficulties for many ethnic minority children.

Data disaggregated by sex, disability and migration status was often limited. OOSC data was not routinely collected for education management, and data collected for the education universalization program was not widely used for planning. There were discrepancies between the data on age-group population provided by the education sector and that provided by the statistics office, which resulted in inconsistencies in the utilization and publication of statistical data.

## 8. Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on consultations held at various levels in Dien Bien. 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 Dien Bien and ensure the right to education for OOSC.

### Children and their parents

- Enhance recognition of the value of education and implications for their future development among children and their parents. It is important to improve the approach to communication and awareness raising about this issue so as to foster a change in awareness, promote actions that encourage children to study, and get parents to support their children as well as they can and communicate and work with their children's teachers and schools. However, the social norms and perceptions among the various ethnic groups in Dien Bien differ and the approach needs to vary accordingly in order to be appropriate.
- Foster employment, income generation and poverty alleviation in order to reduce the number of OOSC.

### Teachers

- 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.
- Strengthen the quality of inclusive education for ethnic minority teachers, with a focus on addressing language barriers and the learning needs of students with disabilities and supporting children with poor educational outcomes.

### Schools

- Improve the quality of satellite schools. Consider teaching grade 3 at main schools or boarding schools to address the issue of low-quality education at satellite schools. In addition, consider addressing the issue of low attendance at main schools, which was due to the long distance from students' homes to those schools.
- Fund the building of boarding facilities at semi-boarding schools and other schools where students have a boarding arrangement in ethnic minority areas. The facilities should include residential areas, a kitchen, toilets, bathrooms and clean water, and there should be a wall around the boarding facility.
- Gradually facilitate an inclusive learning environment for children with disabilities to reduce the stigma and bias against these children. Provide funds to construct specialized schools for children with disabilities and to establish resource centers for inclusive education and community learning centers.
- Provide on-going financial investment to improve classrooms and teacher accommodation where needed and other school facilities such as offices, laboratories and specialized classrooms. High priority should be given to providing toilets, clean water and a fenced schoolyard.

### Management

- Have plans to monitor students' progress and improve the quality of tutorial support for students with poor educational outcomes and those at risk of dropping out, with special attention given to the first and final grades at schools.
- Review and carry out teacher planning with consideration of ethnic groups, subjects and levels of education, and increase the number of teachers at kindergartens and pre-schools for children aged

3-4 and the number of ethnic minority teachers at pre-primary and primary schools.

- Address the issues concerning the pursuit of exaggerated achievements at primary schools when deciding whether a student should pass a grade and move on to the next level or graduate.
- Strengthen the management skills of young educational officers by supporting good role models.
- Strengthen cooperation with local authorities for the timely tracking and monitoring of out-of-school children, and take measures to remove or reduce barriers so as to efficiently mobilize them to school.
- Propose to provincial authorities actions that address the low enrollment in Dien Bien, especially among ethnic minorities such as the Dao, the Mong and the Kho Mu 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**

- Simplify administrative procedures for policy support, for example eliminate the requirement to have a permanent residential book and require instead a more appropriate document since many households do not have a permanent residential book.
- Decision No. 2123/QĐ-TTg dated 22 November 2010 issued by the Prime Minister approved the 2010-2015 Plan for Education Development for very small ethnic minority groups which stipulates that, “children from very small ethnic minority groups in extremely disadvantaged socio-economic areas are entitled to special support policies for education.” It is proposed to amend this regulation as follows: “Children from very small ethnic minority groups are entitled to special education support policies.”
- 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.
- Offer incentives to teachers who work with children with disabilities and in multi-grade pre-school classes.
- Offer a transportation allowance to teachers and managers serving in remote, mountainous and less-accessible areas.
- Offer policy provisions to teachers and managers serving at ethnic minority semi-boarding schools and other schools where students board. Contractual norms should be offered to the healthcare workers, kitchen staff and security guards at semi-boarding schools and other schools where students board.
- Have policies to attract competent school heads and teachers who possess the required qualifications to work at the district education offices and the provincial Department of Education and Training.
- Address the issue of budget allocations based on headcount in areas with a low population density.
- Take measures to address early marriage.
- Expand the implementation of national target programs such as the Poverty Alleviation Program and Program 135 to strengthen the effort to reduce disparities in education.

## Educational system

- Continuously review the measures designed to help ethnic minority students learn Vietnamese more effectively, and examine and introduce mother-tongue-based bilingual education at pre-primary schools and during the first few years of primary school to address the language barriers faced by ethnic minority students.
- Promote a substantive and effective reduction of the curriculum load for ethnic minority students. Review the existing education curriculum in Dien Bien to integrate the values and typical cultural features of the various ethnic minority groups into the curriculum.
- Strengthen collaboration between the education sector and the statistics branch to address discrepancies in the data on age groups to ensure its timely and accurate collection. Review and strengthen databases on 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.

## 9. Conclusions

- Dien Bien has diverse features in terms of geography, ethnic groups and culture, and nearly 90% of the ethnic minority children aged 5-14 live dispersedly in rural areas and on high mountains. This creates difficulties for education management and the mobilization of students to school. Dien Bien is one of the least developed provinces and it has the highest poverty rate in the whole country.
- According to this research, Dien Bien achieved the lowest educational outcomes in the eight selected provinces, two times lower than the national average.
- Due to a large number of OOSC across all three age groups (2,656 children aged five, 8,696 of primary school age and 11,429 of lower secondary school age), mostly ethnic minorities such as the Dao, the Mong and the Kho Mu and children with disabilities, it has been difficult in Dien Bien to universalize pre-school education for five-year-olds, primary education and, especially, universal lower secondary education.
- Dien Bien is the only province of the eight provinces selected for analysis with a considerably higher percentage of female than male OOSC of both primary and lower secondary school age, and these rates increased with age. This is because because female ethnic minorities, mainly the Mong, were not encouraged to go to school. Changing the perception of the ethnic minorities in order to ensure the right to education for girls remains a challenge in Dien Bien.
- The high dropout rate at lower secondary schools, especially in the final grade of lower secondary school, requires appropriate measures.
- Analysis of the 2009 Census data shows that Dien Bien faces 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 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 Dien Bien.

# ANNEX

**Table 2: Children aged 5-14 in Dien Bien**

Unit: Persons

		Age 5	Age 6-10	Age 11-14
<b>Total</b>		<b>11,909</b>	<b>55,198</b>	<b>46,120</b>
	5	11,909		
	6		10,963	
	7		10,358	
	8		12,244	
	9		11,087	
	10		10,547	
	11			11,277
	12			11,584
	13			11,580
	14			11,679
Gender	Male	6,271	28,350	24,326
	Female	5,638	26,849	21,794
Urban/Rural area	Urban	1,313	5,344	4,962
	Rural	10,596	49,854	41,157
	Kinh	1,623	6,174	5,631
	Ethnic minorities	10,286	49,025	40,489
	Thai	3,314	16,968	16,478
	Mong	5,647	25,943	18,998
	Dao	230	1,004	753
	Kho Mu	440	2,107	1,839
	Lao	130	717	712
	Other	525	2,285	1,709
Disability status	Disabled	15*	89*	40*
	Partially disabled	142	892	794
	Not disabled	11,751	54,217	45,285
Migrant	Yes	273	1030	791
	No	11,636	54,168	45,328

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 Dien Bien**

Unit: %

		Age 5 attending school	Primary school ANAR	Lower secondary school age attending primary school	Lower secondary school ANAR
<b>Total</b>		<b>77.70</b>	<b>84.25</b>	<b>14.55</b>	<b>60.67</b>
Age	5	77.70			
	6		76.47		
	7		87.16		
	8		87.25		
	9		85.41		
	10		84.76		
	11			30.92	50.90
	12			14.99	62.36
	13			8.58	65.51
	14			4.23	63.61
Gender	Male	77.49	87.30	15.86	67.13
	Female	77.93	81.02	13.09	53.45
Urban/Rural area	Urban	95.88	98.07	3.31	91.93
	Rural	75.44	82.76	15.91	56.90
Ethnic group	Kinh	96.80	98.58	1.73	96.43
	Thai	92.95	96.00	7.87	77.84
	Mong	64.22	73.25	23.07	38.48
	Dao	40.09	56.86	26.01	30.31
	Ho Mu	75.98	85.57	18.08	45.01
	Lao	94.29	96.85	7.92	69.02
	Other	81.09	89.98	20.42	50.64
Disability status	Disabled	0.00	15.36	26.31	2.80
	Partially disabled	54.30	70.82	14.21	43.06
	Not disabled	78.08	84.58	14.55	61.03
Migrant	Yes	69.86	66.83	11.68	47.66
	No	77.88	84.58	14.60	60.89

Remark: Age in 2008

**Table 4: Percentage of dropouts classified by age in Dien Bien**

Unit: %

		Primary school age	Lower secondary school age
<b>Total</b>		<b>1.92</b>	<b>12.92</b>
Age	6	0.61	
	7	0.70	
	8	1.11	
	9	2.81	
	10	4.49	
	11		7.38
	12		10.99
	13		13.63
	14		19.48
Gender	Male	1.60	10.95
	Female	2.26	15.12
Urban/Rural area	Urban	0.32	3.67
	Rural	2.09	14.04
Ethnic group	Kinh	0.35	1.58
	Ethnic minorities	2.12	14.50
	Thai	1.22	11.79
	Mong	2.75	15.67
	Dao	3.29	9.35
	Kho Mu	2.43	24.88
	Lao	0.00	19.70
	Other	1.48	16.57
Disability status	Disabled	0.00	9.12
	Partially disabled	4.70	16.70
	Not disabled	1.88	12.86
Migrant	Yes	7.87	16.52
	No	1.81	12.86

Remark: Age in 2008

**Table 5: Percentage of out-of-school children aged 5-14 in Dien Bien**

*Unit: %*

		Age 5	Age 6-10	Age 11-14
<b>Total</b>		<b>22.30</b>	<b>15.75</b>	<b>24.78</b>
Age	5	22.30		
	6		23.53	
	7		12.84	
	8		12.75	
	9		14.59	
	10		15.24	
	11			18.18
	12			22.65
	13			25.90
	14			32.16
Gender	Male	22.51	12.70	17.00
	Female	22.07	18.98	33.46
Urban/Rural area	Urban	4.12	1.93	4.76
	Rural	24.56	17.24	27.20
Ethnic group	Kinh	3.20	1.42	1.84
	Ethnic minorities	25.32	17.56	27.97
	Thai	7.05	4.00	14.29
	Mong	35.78	26.75	38.45
	Dao	59.91	43.14	43.68
	Kho mu	24.02	14.43	36.91
	Lao	5.71	3.15	23.06
	Other	18.91	10.02	28.95
Disability status	Disabled	100.00	84.64	70.89
	Partially disabled	45.70	29.18	42.73
	Not disabled	21.92	15.42	24.43
Migrant	Yes	30.14	33.17	40.67
	No	22.12	15.42	24.50

*Remark: Age in 2008*

**Table 6: Household poverty rate 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 Dong	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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