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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 Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC). OOSC are children who had 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 technical consultants. Ho Chi Minh City was among the eight provinces with an in-depth analysis of the OOSC profile: Lao Cai, Dien Bien, Ninh Thuan, Kon Tum, Gia Lai, Ho Chi Minh City, An Giang and Dong Thap.

The report aims to highlight several key issues related to education disparity in HCMC through an analysis of the profile of the out-of-school children aged 5-14 in HCMC and of those who were attending primary and lower secondary schools 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 out-of-school children, 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 last two dimensions address the children who attended primary or lower secondary school, irrespective of their age, but were at the 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 HCMC, the Bureau of Education and Training of Binh Tan District and representatives of teachers, students, parents and local authorities at Binh Tri Dong Primary School and Binh Tri Dong A 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 a city, for casual seasonal work or due to a natural disaster.

- As the 2009 Census does not have data on child labor, this chapter does 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 in the data table 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 among the Kinh and key ethnic minorities in Ho Chi Minh City such as the Chinese, the Khmer, the Cham, the Muong and the Tay.

2. Characteristics of the children aged 5-14 in Ho Chi Minh City

According to data from the 2009 Census, the total number of children aged five in HCMC in 2008, 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) was 110,015, 427,884 and 350,311 respectively (see Table 1). The ratio of male to female children in HCMC for all three age ranges was about 52:48. This ratio indicates a clear gender imbalance in the school-age population.

About 80% of the children aged 5-14 in HCMC lived in urban areas. Over 92% of the children aged 5-14

in HCMC were Kinh. The rest of the children belonged to other ethnic groups, mainly the Chinese, the Khmer and the Cham. In HCMC less than 2.7% of the children had a disability or a partial disability, and the remaining children (97.3%) had no disabilities. The children of migrant families accounted for less than 12.6% of the total number of children.

Table 1: Distribution of the children aged 5-14 in Ho Chi Minh City

HCMC		Age in 2008		
		5	6-10	11-14
Total (persons)		110,015	427,884	350,311
Age (persons)	5	110,015		
	6		93,368	
	7		88,209	
	8		94,203	
	9		82,051	
	10		70,052	
	11			85,156
	12			86,122
	13			89,015
	14			90,018
Gender (%)	Male	51.54	52.37	52.33
	Female	48.46	47.63	47.67
Urban/Rural area (%)	Urban	80.17	81.24	81.08
	Rural	19.83	18.76	18.92
Ethnic group (%)	Kinh	94.68	93.20	92.44
	Tay	0.03	0.03	0.07
	Muong	0.06	0.03	0.02
	Khmer	0.14	0.13	0,25
	Chinese	5.03	6.52	7,07
	Cham	0.06	0.06	0,07
	Other	0.01	0.04	0.07
Disability status (%)	Disabled	0.13	0.14	0.17
	Partially disabled	1.34	1.45	2.53
	Not disabled	98.52	98.41	97.29
Migrant (%)	Yes	12.63	11.45	11.46
	No	87.37	88.55	88.54

3. Out-of-school children (OOSC)

3.1. Out-of-school children aged five

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

According to data from the 2009 Census, HCMC had 110,015 children aged five in 2008 (born in 2003), of whom 86.34% attended school and 13.66% did not. There were 15,028 five-year-old OOSC in HCMC. The percentage of five-year-old OOSC in HCMC was higher than the national average (12.19%) and ranked sixth among the eight provinces (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Children aged five in Ho Chi Minh City attending school and out of school

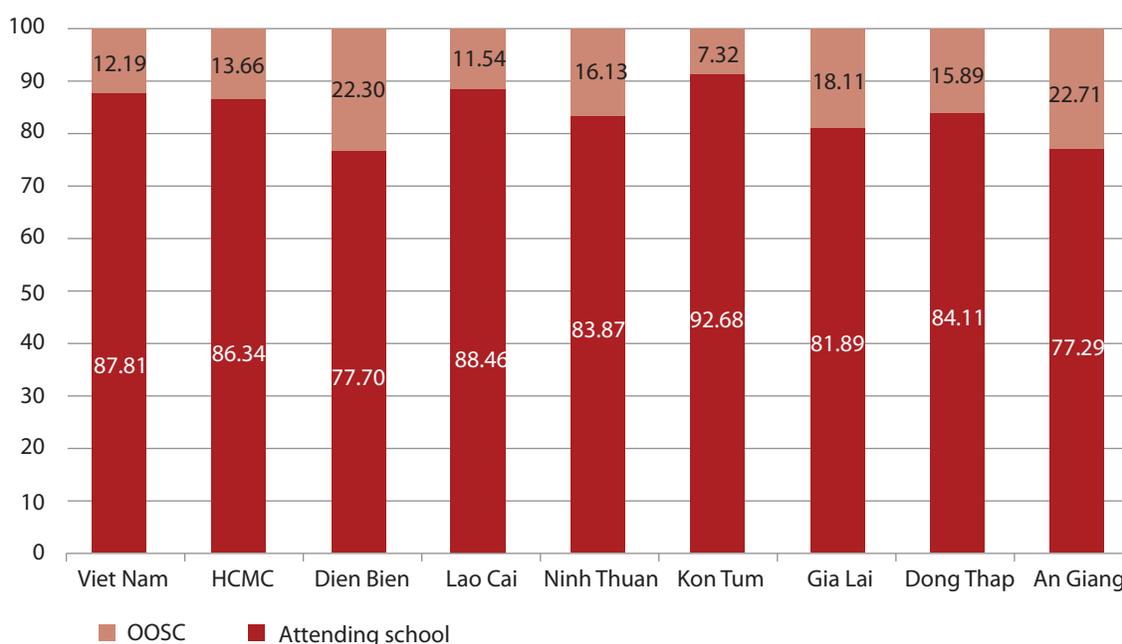
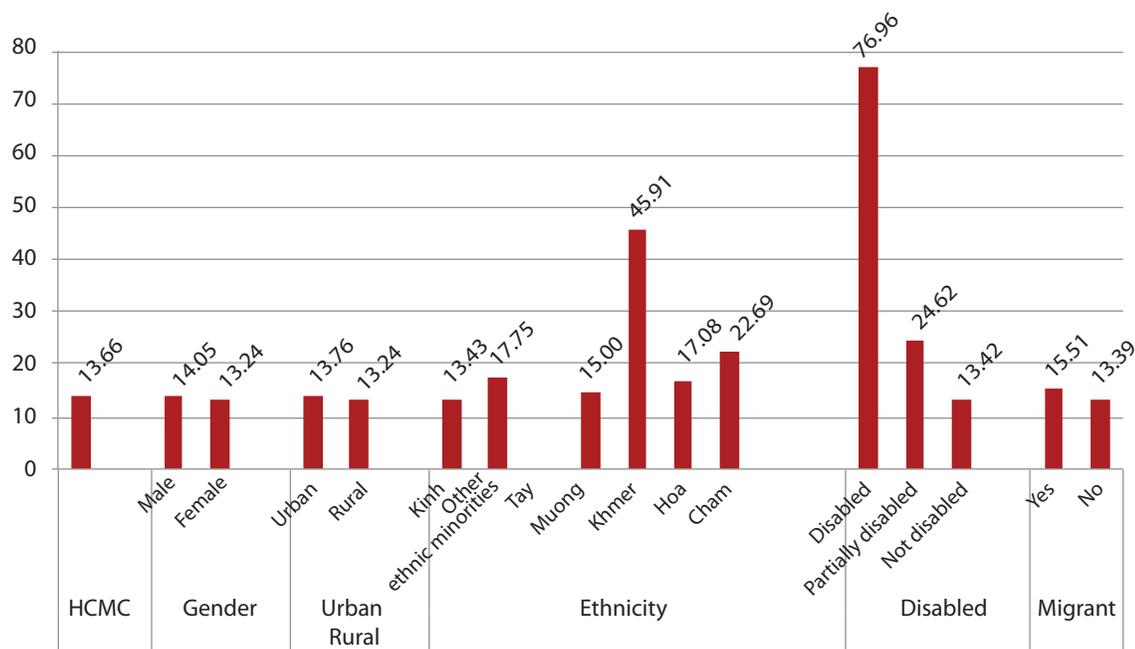


Figure 2 provides a graphical illustration of the relevant data for OOSC aged five in Ho Chi Minh City classified by the children’s characteristics, including gender, residential area (urban or rural area), ethnic group, disability and migration status.

Figure 2: OOSC aged five in Ho Chi Minh City



The percentage of five-year-old male OOSC was insignificantly higher than that of female OOSC, 14.05% and 13.24% respectively. Similarly, there was little difference in the percentage of five-year-old OOSC in Ho Chi Minh City in urban and rural areas, 13.76% and 13.24% respectively. However, there were big differences in the percentage of five-year-old OOSC in Ho Chi Minh City for the Kinh and other ethnic groups, for children with disabilities and for those with no disabilities, and for migrants and non-migrants.

The percentage of five-year-old OOSC among other ethnic groups was 1.3 times higher than that of the Kinh, 17.75% and 13.43% respectively. The five-year-old Khmer OOSC had the highest percentage (45.91%), about three times higher than percentage for the Kinh.

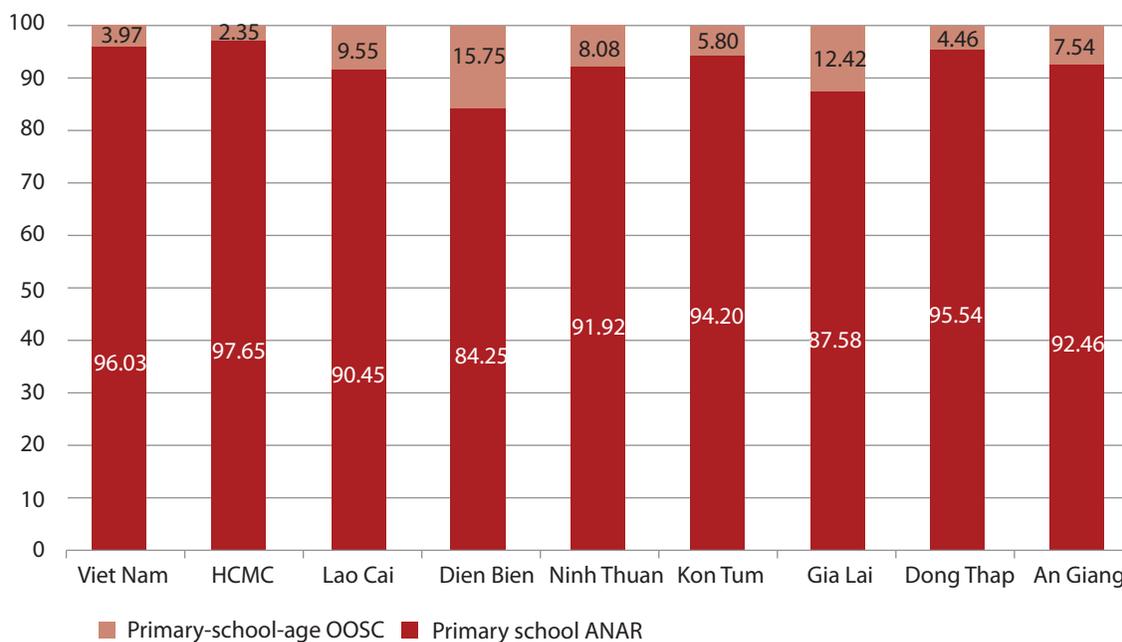
Since the percentage of five-year-old OOSC with disabilities was very small, no analysis was conducted. The number of five-year-old OOSC with partial disabilities was nearly double the number of five-year-old OOSC with no disabilities, 24.62% and 13.42% respectively. The percentage of five-year-old migrant OOSC was nearly 1.2 times higher than the percentage of non-migrant OOSC, 15.51% and 13.39% respectively.

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

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

According to the data from the 2009 Census, there were 427,884 children aged 6-10 in Ho Chi Minh City in 2008 (born between 1998 and 2002), of whom 97.65% attended primary or lower secondary school and 2.35% were out of school (see Figure 3). There were 10,055 OOSC aged 6-10 in HCMC. The percentage of primary-school-age OOSC in Ho Chi Minh City was almost half the national average (3.97%) and ranked the lowest among the eight provinces.

Figure 3: Percentage of primary-school-age children in Ho Chi Minh City attending school and out-of-school



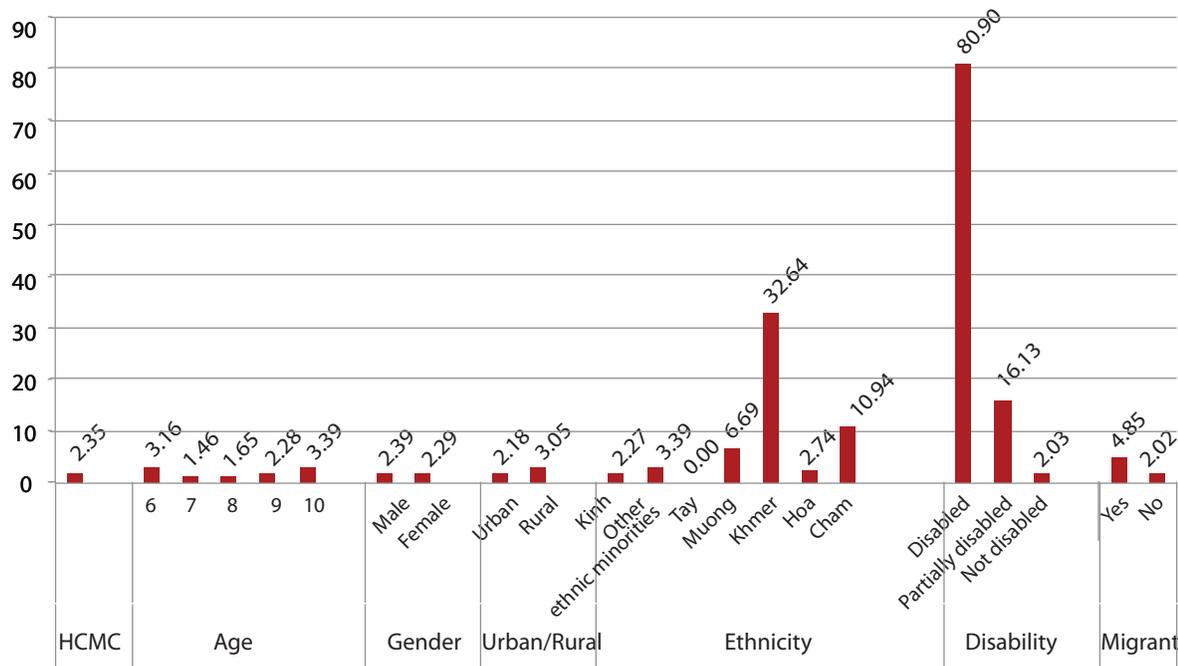
Note: The primary school ANAR indicates the percentage of primary-school-age children attending primary or lower secondary school.

Figure 4 provides a graphical illustration of the relevant data for primary-school age OOSC in Ho Chi Minh City 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 increased slightly with age, which means the number of dropouts in the final grade of primary school increased slightly.

No big differences were found in the ratios of male to female OOSC of primary school age, but the percentage of OOSC in rural areas was 1.5 times higher than in urban areas, and the percentage of ethnic minority OOSC of primary school age was 1.5 times higher than percentage for the Kinh OOSC. The percentage of primary-school-age Khmer OOSC was very high (32.64%), which means one out of three Khmer primary-school-age children did not attend school. This rate was 14 times higher than the rate for the Kinh OOSC. The percentage of primary-school-age OOSC with disabilities was very high (80.90%), while the ratio of primary-school-age OOSC with partial disabilities was eight times higher than those with no disabilities, 16.13% and 2.03% respectively. The percentage of primary-school-age migrant OOSC was double that of non-migrant OOSC, 4.85% and 2.02% respectively.

Figure 4: Percentage of primary-school-age OOSC in Ho Chi Minh City



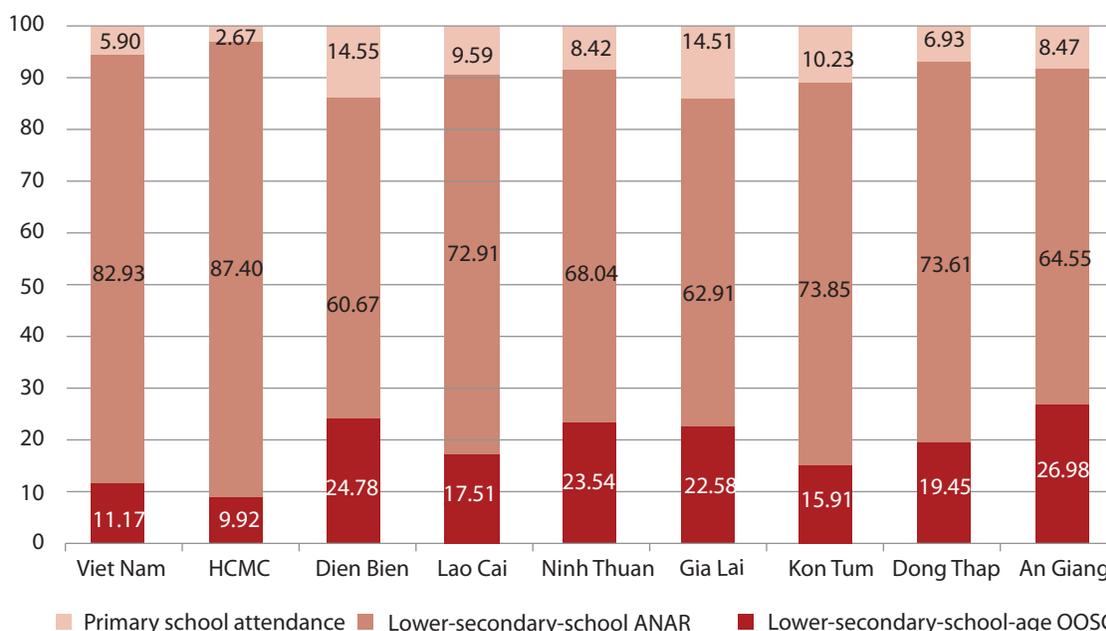
3.3. Out-of-school children of lower secondary school age

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

According to the data from the 2009 Census, there were 350,311 children of lower secondary school age (11-14 years old) in Ho Chi Minh City in 2008 (born between 1994 and 1997), of whom 87.40% attended a lower secondary or upper secondary school, 2.67% attended a primary school and the remaining 9.92% were out of school. That means one out of ten children of lower secondary school age did not attend school (see Figure 5). The percentage of lower-secondary-school-age OOSC in Ho Chi Minh City was nearly four times higher than that of primary-school-age OOSC (2.35%), and it was lower than the national average (11.17%) and ranked the lowest among the eight provinces. There were 34,751 lower-secondary-school-age OOSC in HCMC.

At the time of the 2009 Census, there were 200 children of lower secondary school age pursuing vocational training in Ho Chi Minh City. This is a very small figure, and it had no effect on the percentage of lower-secondary-school-age OOSC.

Figure 5: Percentage the lower-secondary-school students 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.

Figure 6 provides a graphical illustration of relevant data for lower-secondary-school-age OOSC in HCMC 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 HCMC increased with age and at a faster rate than that of the primary-school-age OOSC. This means that the number of dropouts 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, 17.20% of the lower-secondary-school-age children were out of school while only 3.39% of the OOSC aged 10 did not attend school.

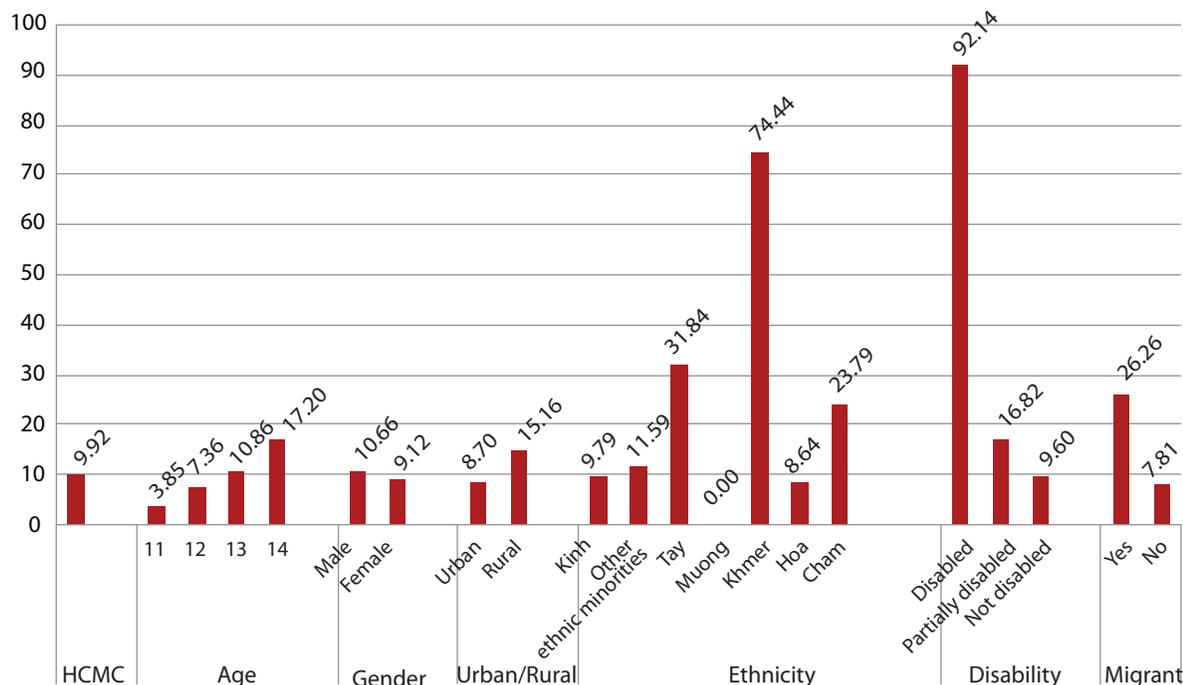
There were considerable differences in the rates for males and females, in urban and rural areas, for children with disabilities and those with no disabilities, and for migrant and non-migrant lower-secondary-school-age OOSC. The differences were dramatically larger than those among primary-school-age OOSC.

The percentage of lower-secondary-school-age male OOSC was 1.2 times higher than that of female OOSC, 10.66% and 9.12% respectively.

The percentage of lower-secondary-school-age OOSC in rural areas was nearly double that of those in urban areas, 15.16% and 8.70% respectively. The percentage of ethnic Chinese lower-secondary-school-age OOSC was lower than the percentage of Kinh lower-secondary-school-age OOSC, 8.64% and 9.79% respectively. The Khmer had the highest percentage of lower-secondary-school-age OOSC, 77.44%, which was seven times higher than the percentage of Kinh lower-secondary-school-age OOSC. The Tay and the Cham also had high OOSC percentages, 31.84% and 23.79% respectively, that were two to three times higher than the percentage for the Kinh.

The out-of-school rates among children with disabilities and those with partial disabilities was significantly higher than the rate for those with no disabilities. The percentage of lower-secondary-school-age migrant OOSC was three times higher than the percentage of non-migrant OOSC, 26.26% and 7.81% respectively.

Figure 6: Percentage of lower-secondary-school-age OOSC



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 had 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 left school and the students who were overage for the grade they were in. Accordingly, this data was used to analyze potential OOSCs in this section. The data on children leaving school was used to report dropouts.

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 shown in Figure 7, the percentage of primary-school-age children who had dropped out of school in Ho Chi Minh City was 1.10%, the lowest percentage among the eight selected provinces and lower than the national average (1.16%).

Figure 7: Percentage of primary-school-age children who had dropped out of school in Ho Chi Minh City

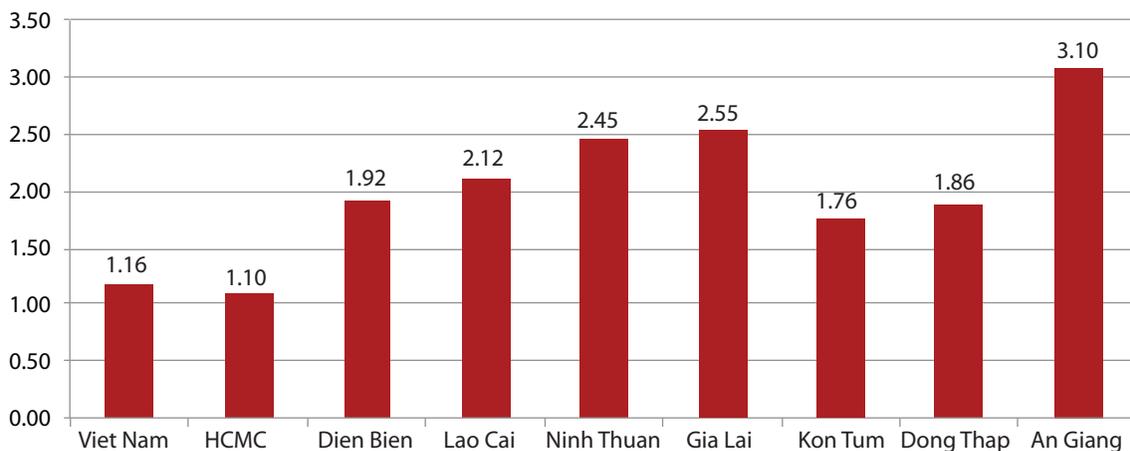
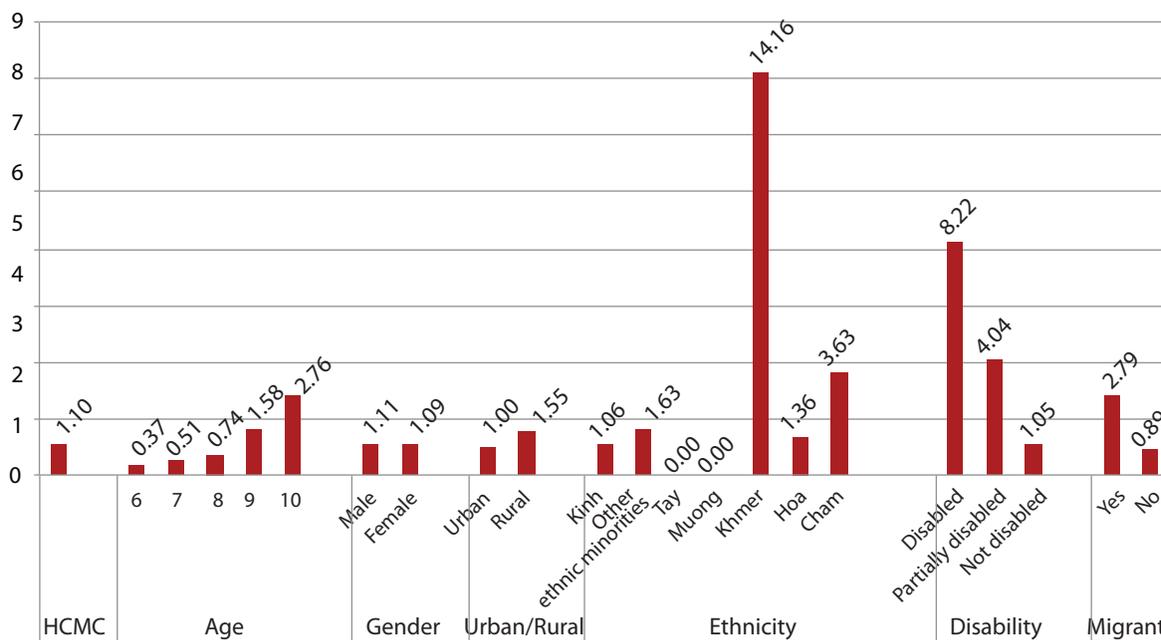


Figure 8 provides a graphical illustration of the data for dropouts among primary-school-age children in Ho Chi Minh City classified by the children's characteristics, including age, gender, residential area (urban or rural area), ethnic group, disability and migration status.

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



The percentage of primary-school-age children in rural areas who had dropped out was 1.6 times higher than the percentage in urban areas, 1.55% and 1.00% respectively. Primary-school-age Khmer children had the highest dropout rate, 14.16%, which was 14 times higher than the percentage of Kinh children who had dropped out. The percentage of Cham primary-school-age children who had dropped out was also high, 3.63%, and it was three times higher than the percentage of Kinh children who had dropped out. The dropout rates of primary-school-age children with disabilities (8.22%) or partial disabilities (4.04%) were significantly higher than the rate of children with no disabilities (1.05%).

The rate of dropouts among primary-school-age children of migrants was three times higher than that of non-migrants, 2.79% and 0.89% respectively.

4.2. Lower-secondary-school-age dropouts

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

According to Figure 9, in Ho Chi Minh City 9.07% of the lower-secondary-school-age children had dropped out of school. This rate was eight times higher than the percentage of primary-school-age children who had dropped out (1.10%), and it was the lowest among the eight selected provinces and it was lower than the national average (9.47%).

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

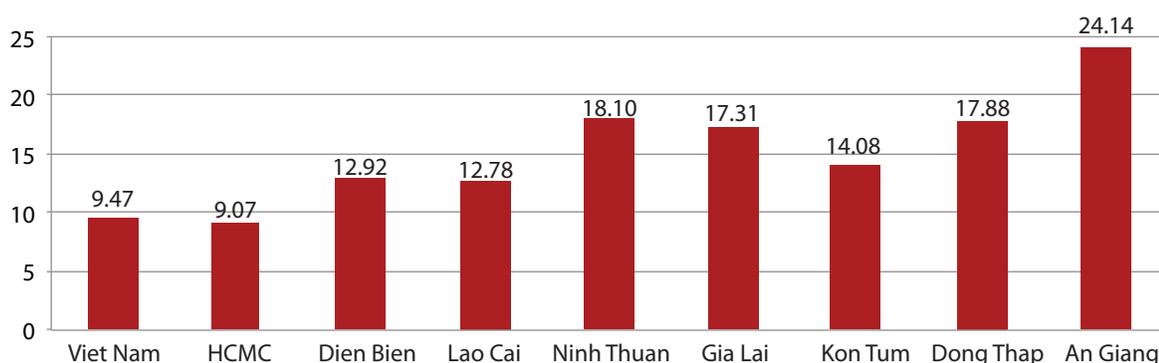
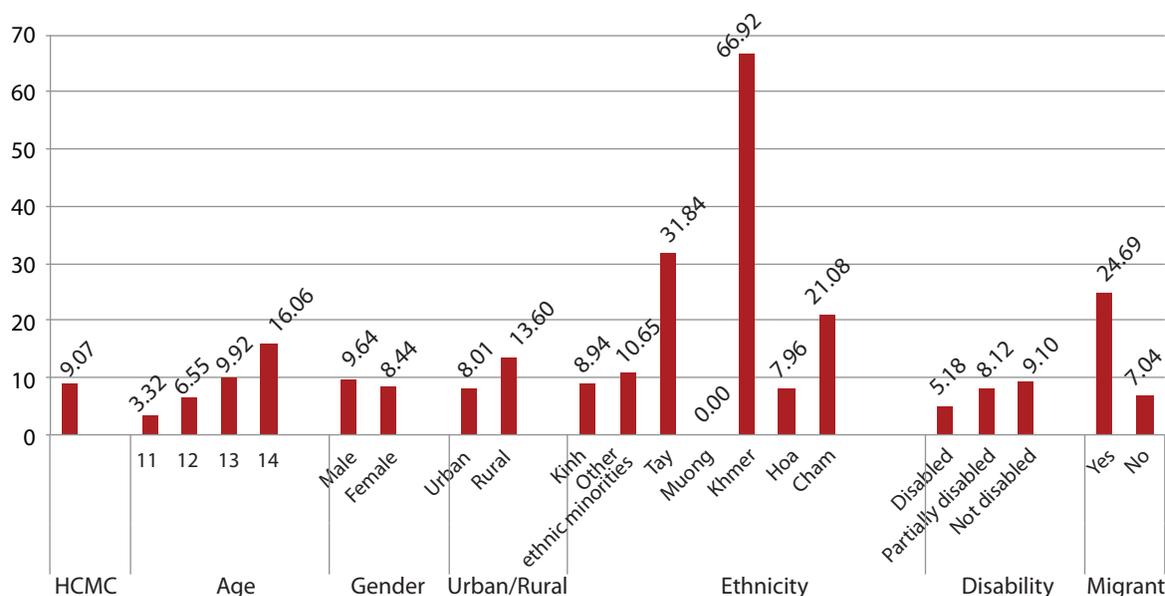


Figure 10 provides a graphical illustration of the data for dropouts among lower-secondary-school-age children in Ho Chi Minh City classified by the children's characteristics, including age, residential area (urban or rural area), gender, ethnic group, disability and migration status.

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



The percentage of lower-secondary-school-age children in HCMC who had dropped out increased with age. The closer they got to the final grades of lower secondary school, the higher the dropout rate. At age 14 (grade nine), 16.06% of the children had dropped out of school. The percentage of children in grade nine who had dropped out of school was six times higher than that of children in grade five.

The percentage of lower-secondary-school-age male children who had dropped out of school in Ho Chi Minh City was insignificantly higher than the rate for females, 9.64% and 8.44% respectively. However, it was 1.7 times higher in rural areas. The Khmer had the highest rate of dropouts among children of lower secondary school age, 7.5 times higher than the Kinh, 66.92% and 8.94% respectively. The Tay and the Cham also had high dropout rates among children of lower secondary school age, 31.84% and 21.08% respectively. The low percentage of dropouts among lower-secondary-school-age children with disabilities or partial disabilities compared to those with no disabilities was attributed to the small sample size. The dropout rate among lower-secondary-school-age migrant children was three times higher than that of non-migrants.

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, 2.67% of the lower-secondary-school age children (in 2008) in HCMC were attending a primary school, which means they were overage. The overage rate ranked the lowest among the eight provinces and it was less than half the national average (see Figure 11).

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

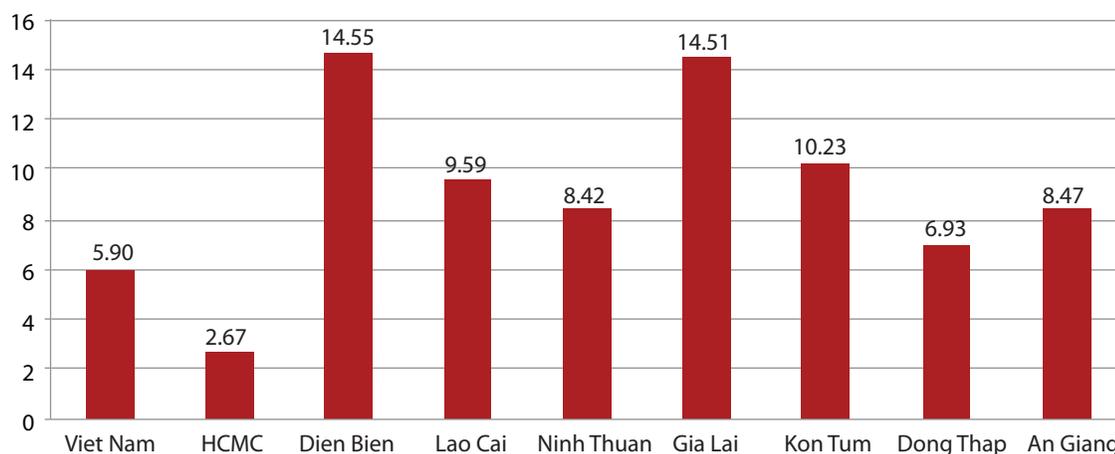
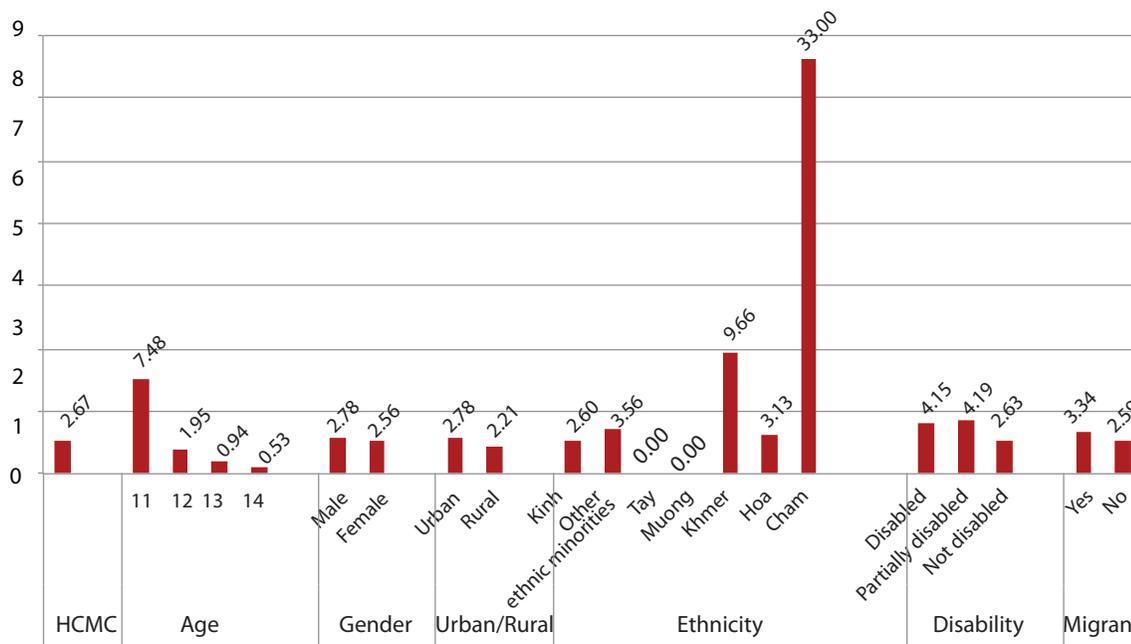


Figure 12 provides a graphical illustration of data on lower-secondary-school-age children attending a primary school in Ho Chi Minh City classified by the children's characteristics, including age, gender, residential area (urban or rural area), ethnic group, disability and migration status.

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



The rate of average attendance at primary schools in Ho Chi Minh City fell as the age of the children increased. However, 0.94% of the children aged 13 and 0.53% of the children aged 14 (1,318 children in total), children who would normally be in the final grades of lower secondary school, were still in primary school (see Table 3). These children were very likely to drop out.

The percentage of lower-secondary-school-age male children attending primary school was insignificantly higher than the percentage of females, 2.78% and 2.56% respectively. There was a greater difference in the rate between students from urban areas and rural areas and between migrants and non-migrants.

However, the percentage of overage attendance among the Kinh at lower secondary schools was much lower (2.6%) than that of most other ethnic groups. The Cham had a very high overage attendance rate (33%) among lower-secondary-school-age children, which means one out of three attended a primary school. The attendance rate of the Khmer (9.66%) was four times higher than that of the Kinh.

The overage attendance rate of children with disabilities and those who with partially disabilities at lower secondary schools in HCMC was 1.6 times higher than the rate of children with no disabilities.

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

- At the time of the 2009 Census, the number of children aged five in 2008 (born in 2003) in Ho Chi Minh City was 110,015, the number of children aged 6-10 in 2008 (of primary school age and born between 1998 and 2002) was 427,884, and the number of children aged 11-14 in 2008 (of lower secondary school age and born between 1994 and 1997) was 350,311.
- The total number of out-of-school children in Ho Chi Minh City was 59,834 and included:
 - 15,028 five-year-old OOSC, which accounted for 13.66% of the five-year-old children. The percentage of five-year-old OOSC in Ho Chi Minh City was 1.1 times higher than the national average (12.19%) and ranked sixth among the eight provinces.
 - 10,055 primary-school-age OOSC, which accounted for 2.35% of the primary-school-age children. The percentage of primary-school-age OOSC in HCMC was almost half the national average (3.97%) and ranked the lowest among the eight provinces.
 - 34,751 lower-secondary-school-age OOSC, which accounted for 9.92% of the children of lower secondary school age. The percentage of lower-secondary-school-age OOSC in Ho Chi Minh City was four times higher than the number of OOSC of primary school age (2.35%), slightly lower than the national average (11.17%) and the lowest of the eight provinces.
- The percentage of five-year-old OOSC in Ho Chi Minh City was high. It dropped considerably among the primary-school-age OOSC and then it rose again among children of lower secondary school age.
- The percentage of five-year-old male OOSC and the percentage of primary-school-age male OOSC in Ho Chi Minh City were insignificantly higher than the percentages for the females in those groups, less than 1.1 times higher. The percentage was slightly higher among OOSC of lower secondary age, 1.2 times higher.
- The percentage of five-year-old OOSC was the same in the rural areas of Ho Chi Minh City and in the urban parts of the city. However, the percentage of primary-school-age OOSC in rural areas was significantly higher than the percentage in urban areas, and the difference increased with age. It was 1.4 times higher among primary-school-age OOSC and 1.7 times higher among lower-secondary-school-age OOSC.
- There was a very small percentage of ethnic minority children in Ho Chi Minh City. However, the OOSC rate among ethnic minority children was 1.2 to 1.5 times higher than that of the Kinh. The Khmer and the Cham had high OOSC percentages.
- The OOSC rates for children with disabilities and those with partial disabilities were much higher than the rates for children with no disabilities across all three age groups.
- The OOSC rate of migrants in Ho Chi Minh City was surprisingly higher than that of non-migrants, and the disparity increased with age. It was 1.2 times higher for children aged five, 2.4 times higher for primary-school-age children and 3.4 times higher for lower-secondary-school-age children.

- The OOSC rates increased significantly in the final grade of primary and lower secondary schools. The rate of lower-secondary-school-age OOSC was four times higher than that of primary-school-age OOSC, 17.20% and 3.39% respectively.
- The dropout percentages among the primary- and lower-secondary-school-age children in Ho Chi Minh City were the lowest among the eight selected provinces and two times lower than the national average. The percentage of lower-secondary-school-age dropouts was eight times higher than that of primary-school-age dropouts. The dropout rate was higher in the final grades at both primary and lower secondary schools.
- The number of lower-secondary-school-age children attending primary school (overage children) in Ho Chi Minh City decreased with age. However, 0.94% of the children aged 13 and 0.53% of the children aged 14 (the ages of the children in the final grades of lower secondary school) were still attending primary school. These 1,318 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. These barriers were analyzed in the context of Ho Chi Minh City, where migration is common and there has been a rapid increase in the migrant population.

Children and their parents

The main reason children migrated to Ho Chi Minh City along with their families was for work. Children also migrated on their own to look for a job, and this was a major economic barrier that limited their access to education. Having unstable jobs and residences also affected their education. In many poor families, the children had to work to help support their families, which constrained their education.

In addition, cultural and social barriers prevented children from attending school. Some did not want to attend school because they or their parents did not recognize the value of education, some felt embarrassed and/or had low self-esteem because they were overage, some had decreased self-confidence due to poor educational outcomes at school, and finally they dropped out. Although parents sent their children to school, they failed to follow up and support them, probably because of an overreliance on the school, because they were busy working or because they were illiterate. These factors contributed to poor learning outcomes and children dropping out, particularly children with disabilities.

Infrastructure and school facilities

The construction and expansion of new schools and/or classes in Ho Chi Minh City failed to meet the demand of the growing population. Therefore, ensuring space for learning for all children was a huge challenge faced by the education sector although the city's authorities had instructed different levels of governance to ensure the right to education for all children, irrespective of their residential status, in compliance with the Law on Residence. There was a great shortage of classrooms, particularly for whole-day schooling, and kindergartens for industrial parks and/or processing zones. Facilities at schools and/or classes were in poor condition, even in the central districts of the city.

Teachers

There were not enough kindergarten teachers in HCMC to conform to the regulations of the Ministry of Education and Training (two teachers for every 30 children). In reality, two teachers were in charge of

a class of 45 children. Even in primary and lower secondary schools, teachers had crowded classes due to a rapid increase in the number of students, and they had to work longer hours to finish all their work (e.g. correcting homework). This affected the quality of teaching of some of the teachers and limited the amount of time and attention they could give to each child, particularly the children with poor learning outcomes. Although the teachers worked longer hours, the subsidy norms and policies applied to the teachers were outdated and failed to respond to socio-economic changes, thus affecting the motivation of the teachers.

Education management

The rapidly growing population in Ho Chi Minh City presented many challenges to ensuring education equity for all children, particularly those of migrants who lived in difficult circumstances. A number of migrants (including seasonal migrants) did not have adequate temporary residential documents, and that affected the timely collection of statistics on age groups, which was needed to ensure the right to education of all children.

The delegation of autonomy to schools was not substantive and was done just as a formality. At some schools the principals had limited competence. The pursuit of exaggerated achievements in grade transition and graduation rates or ranking remained common. Cooperation between schools and local party committees, local governments, related departments, organizations and unions at various levels remained limited and not effective enough in some areas to successfully mobilize children to attend school.

Disaggregated data was often limited for groups classified by gender, disability status and migration status. OOSC data was not collected as part of the routine system to serve education management. Data collected for the education universalization program had not been widely used for planning. Discrepancies remained between the data on the various age groups provided by the education sector and that by the statistics office, resulting in inconsistencies in the utilization and publication of statistical data.

Policies

In general, the compensation policies applied to teachers and educational managers failed to meet the practical demands of life, and this negatively affected their dynamics and motivation. Inclusive education for children with disabilities faced many difficulties.

The mechanism to allocate funds from the district governments to the schools was not homogeneous. Schools in a number of disadvantaged areas enjoyed higher allocation norms than schools in other disadvantaged areas where strict funding allocation per student count was applied, making it difficult to conduct educational activities. The educational budget was spent mainly on personnel and little remained for educational activities.

Policy provisions were applied to public schools but not to privately owned special schools for children with disabilities, which was a disadvantage to children with disabilities.

The education system

The curriculum for general education in the fourth, sixth and tenth grades (primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools respectively) was quite heavy. Students had to work hard and had little time for recreation, which is important to inspire learning. In addition to the hours spent at school, many students in the city attended private classes after school to learn faster, resulting in enormous pressure on them. The children of some migrant families could not afford schooling or were attending school but could not afford private classes due to the economic challenges their families faced.

8. Recommendations

The following recommendations are proposed based on consultations held at various levels in Ho Chi Minh City that were related to the demand side and the supply side of education as well as policy aspects that addressed some of the above-mentioned barriers and bottlenecks and promoted education equity in Ho Chi Minh City to ensure the right to education for OOSC.

Children and their parents

- Enhance children's and their parents' recognition of the value of education.
- Foster employment, income generation and poverty alleviation, and provide support to the children of migrant families. These are the key and long lasting measures needed to reduce the number of OOSC.

Teachers

- Require preliminary and long-term plans in order to deal with teacher surpluses and shortages, and prepare for the renovation of the educational curriculum and textbooks that will be applied from 2015.
- Renovate teaching methodology and improve schools to provide a child-friendly learning environment so that "every school day is a happy day."
- Provide extra tutoring to support the students with poor educational outcomes to reduce their risk of dropping out.

Schools

- Make on-going investments to expand infrastructure and facilities, especially at the pre-primary level; make plans for school and classroom development to ensure full-day schooling; and incrementally improve facilities for children with disabilities.

Management tasks

- Address the issues concerning the pursuit of exaggerated achievements in education.
- Expand the scale of schools and classrooms (including public-private partnerships with interested companies and individuals) to meet the increased demand for schooling.
- Promote the concept of a learning society; foster cooperation between the district education and training divisions with the continuing education centers at the same level when conducting child tracking surveys; collect a wider range of statistical data; and improve the mobilization of children for schooling.
- Report the OOSC situation to the city's authority for holistic solutions and cooperate with the Department of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs and related local departments and unions. Integrate OOSC-related issues in education sector planning and management in order to reduce barriers and ensure the right to education for disadvantaged children who have never been to school.

Policies

- At the pre-primary level teachers' pay should be based on the actual number of students they are in charge of. The payroll should include catering staff as pre-school teachers are now doing the catering work. Lunch subsidies should be provided to all five-year-old children, including those at non-public education facilities.

- At primary schools the current ratio of teachers per class is 1:1 for whole-day schooling. Increase the subsidies to schools by a ratio of 1:5 to better cover the actual workload of the teachers. The number of primary school students per class is supposed to be 35 according to school regulations. However, in reality many classes exceed this norm due to the large number of students, and corresponding policy provisions for teachers are not in line with their actual workload.
- Provide an allowance at lower and upper secondary schools to compensate for the additional workload (e.g. when correcting homework), particularly for the many teachers working with large classes. In addition, incentives should be in place to motivate good teachers.
- Have specific and clear policies for the teachers who teach children with disabilities in inclusive classes.

Education system

- Adjustments should be made by the Government regarding the decentralization of educational financing to be more appropriate and to facilitate the education sector's autonomy in budgeting and ensuring a fine balance for educational activities.
- Substantively and effectively reduce the curriculum load to ensure high-quality education.
- Strengthen collaboration between the education sector and the statistics branch to address the discrepancies in data. Review and strengthen the quality of databases on the universalization of education for more effective use in statistical work and education planning and management, including routine collection of data on out-of-school children. Data for forecasting is available. However, increased investment will be required for more precise forecasts.
- Competitiveness and a growing disparity in the market economy have caused increased wealth gaps and disparity in education, particularly among the children of migrant families and ethnic minority minorities. Therefore, macro-policies and managerial directions are required to ensure equity in access to schooling for all children.

9. Conclusions

- According to this research, of the eight selected provinces Ho Chi Minh City achieved the highest educational outcomes.
- The biggest challenge faced by Ho Chi Minh City in addressing out-of-school children issues concerned migrant children. Disparity issues among ethnic minority children, particularly the Khmer and the Cham, and children with disabilities were also challenges.
- With regard to the children of migrant families, more appropriate measures should be in place, e.g. statistical data management and child tracking, so as to obtain adequate data for educational planning, management and resource allocation.
- To tackle the OOSC issue, cooperation is required between the education sector, the labor, war invalids & social affairs sector, and the statistics branch as well as other related departments, unions and, particularly, local authorities.

ANNEX

Table 2: Population aged 5-14 in Ho Chi Minh City

Unit: Persons

		Age 5	Age 6-10	Age 11-14
Total		110,015	427,884	350,311
Age	5	110,015		
	6		93,368	
	7		88,209	
	8		94,203	
	9		82,051	
	10		70,052	
	11			85,156
	12			86,122
	13			89,015
	14			90,018
Gender	Male	56,701	224,074	183,301
	Female	53,314	203,810	167,010
Urban/Rural area	Urban	88,194	347,627	284,028
	Rural	21,821	80,257	66,282
Ethnicity	Kinh	104,157	398,777	323,820
	Tay	33*	116	235
	Muong	63*	140	87*
	Khmer	152	551	889
	Chinese	5,536	27,888	24,783
	Cham	66*	257	246
	Other	7*	154	251
Disability	Disabled	148	594	605
	Partially disabled	1,476	6,215	8,879
	Not disabled	108,391	4210,75	340,826
Migrant	Yes	13,890	48,997	40,163
	No	96,125	378,887	310,148

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 Ho Chi Minh City

Unit: %

		Five year olds attending school	Primary school ANAR	Lower secondary school age but attending primary school	Lower secondary school ANAR
Total		86.34	97.65	2.67	87.40
Age	5	86.34			
	6		96.84		
	7		98.54		
	8		98.35		
	9		97.72		
	10		96.61		
	11			7.48	88.68
	12			1.95	90.69
	13			0.94	88.19
	14			0.53	82.27
Gender	Male	85.95	97.61	2.78	86.56
	Female	86.76	97.71	2.56	88.32
Urban/Rural	Urban	86.24	97.82	2.78	88.52
	Rural	86.76	96.95	2.21	82.62
Ethnicity	Kinh	86.57	97.73	2.60	87.61
	Tay	0	100.00	0.00	68.16
	Muong	85.00	93.31	0.00	100.00
	Kho Me	54.09	67.36	9.66	15.89
	Chinese	82.92	97.26	3.13	88.23
	Cham	77.31	89.06	33.00	43.21
	Other	0	95.11	0.00	46.76
Disability	Disabled	23.04	19.10	4.15	3.71
	Partially disabled	75.38	83.87	4.19	78.99
	Not disabled	86.58	97.97	2.63	87.77
Migrant	Yes	84.49	95.15	3.34	70.40
	No	86.61	97.98	2.59	89.60

Remarks: Age in 2008

Table 4: Percentage of dropouts aged 5-14 in Ho Chi Minh City

Unit: %

		Primary school age	Lower secondary school age
Total		1.10	9.07
Age	6	0.37	
	7	0.51	
	8	0.74	
	9	1.58	
	10	2.76	
	11		3.32
	12		6.55
	13		9.92
Gender	Male	1.11	9.64
	Female	1.09	8.44
Urban/Rural	Urban	1.00	8.01
	Rural	1.55	13.60
Ethnicity	Kinh	1.06	8.94
	Other ethnic groups	1.63	10.65
	Tay	0	31.84
	Muong	0.00	0.00
	Khmer	14.16	66.92
	Chinese	1.36	7.96
	Cham	3.63	21.08
	Other	0	50.12
Disability	Disabled	8.22	5.18
	Partially disabled	4.04	8.12
	Not disabled	1.05	9.10
Migrant	Yes	2.79	24.69
	No	0.89	7.04

Remarks: Age in 2008

Table 5: Percentage of out-of-school children aged 5-14 in Ho Chi Minh City

Unit: %

		Age 5	Age 6-10	Age 11-14
Total		13.66	2.35	9.92
Age	5	13.66		
	6		3.16	
	7		1.46	
	8		1.65	
	9		2.28	
	10		3.39	
	11			3.85
	12			7.36
	13			10.86
	14			17.20
Gender	Male	14.05	2.39	10.66
	Female	13.24	2.29	9.12
Urban/Rural	Urban	13.76	2.18	8.70
	Rural	13.24	3.05	15.16
Ethnicity	Kinh	13.43	2.27	9.79
	Other ethnic groups	17.75	3.39	11.59
	Tay		0.00	31.84
	Muong	15.00	6.69	0.00
	Khmer	45.91	32.64	74.44
	Chinese	17.08	2.74	8.64
	Cham	22.69	10.94	23.79
	Other		4.89	53.24
Disability	Disabled	76.96	80.90	92.14
	Partially disabled	24.62	16.13	16.82
	Not disabled	13.42	2.03	9.60
Migrant	Yes	15.51	4.85	26.26
	No	13.39	2.02	7.81

Remarks: Age in 2008

Table 6:**Household poverty rate in 2008**

Number	Province	%	Order Number	Province	%
	Nationwide	13.4	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 Dinh	14,2	63	Binh Duong	0,4

Source: General Statistics Office



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