



COMMITTEE FOR ETHNIC
MINORITY AFFAIRS



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women



BRIEFING NOTE ON THE SITUATION OF ETHNIC MINORITY WOMEN AND GIRLS IN VIET NAM



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Briefing note on the Situation of Ethnic Minority women and girls in Viet Nam

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Applications for permission may be addressed to registry.vietnam@unwomen.org

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) Viet Nam Country Office

304 Kim Ma Street, Ba Dinh District, Hanoi, Viet Nam

Tel: +84 4 3850 0100

Fax: +84 4 3726 5520

[http://: www.vietnam.unwomen.org](http://www.vietnam.unwomen.org)

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Viet Nam has 54 ethnic groups, in which Kinh is the largest group (87.3%). The remaining 53 ethnic minority (EM) groups live mostly in the mountainous areas across the country.¹

The gender gap among EMs and between EMs and the Kinh is wide and persistent, especially in regards to education and health. EMs are disadvantaged compared to the majority of the population in terms of education and employment, mobility, access to financial services, productive resources such as land, and access to market due to stereotypes and other cultural barriers.² Among EM people, women and girls are the most disadvantaged groups in terms of access to opportunities, resources and raising voices as social norms belittle and confine them to reproductive activities and household production.

Intersecting patterns of inequalities based on sex and on ethnicity further increase the risk of social exclusion and marginalization of EMs women and girls. As stated in the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, “many women face additional barriers to the enjoyment of their human rights because of such factors as their race, language, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability or socio-economic class or because they are indigenous people, migrants, including women migrant workers, displaced women or refugees.”

With the aim to comply with its international commitments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and other documents such as the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), and Agreed Conclusion of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Government of Viet Nam has taken measures to address gender inequalities. However, EM women and girls are still currently lagging behind in terms of opportunities and access to and enjoyment of their rights.

1 International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, The Indigenous World Report, Viet Nam part from p272-278, 2013

2 World Bank, Country Social Analysis: Ethnicity and Development in Viet Nam, Summary Report, 2009

1. EDUCATION

- In 2012, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) raised its concern about inequalities in education access, quality and results between Kinh students and EM students, and about high illiteracy rates and high never attendance school rate, especially among EM women and girls.³
- In 2015, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women raised its concern about the EM girls' limited access to all levels of education.⁴
- The Government of Vietnam's report on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals states the attainment of gender equality at primary and secondary school levels nationwide; however, this does not cover the case of EM girls.
- Gender disparity in most ethnic minorities happens more often that boys are more disadvantaged than girls, except for H'mong group where an opposite trend is observed. H'mong girls have significantly less opportunity to attend school than boys, especially at lower secondary level. Adjusted Net Attendance Rate Gender Parity Index (ANAR GPI) of girls is 0.85% at primary level and only 0.56% at lower secondary level. The lower secondary net attendance rate among H'mong girls is low, at only 24.36%, equivalent to only one out of every four lower secondary age H'mong girls attending secondary school and half of H'mong boys of same age group attending secondary school. Out-of-school children rates among H'mong girls of primary and lower secondary school age are 1.5 and 2 times higher than those among the boys respectively.⁵ Some of the main reasons for the dropouts, especially for EM girls include poor financial status, long distance to school, especially in mountainous and remote areas, and backward practices such as early marriage or not encouraging girls to pursue



Photo: One UN Viet Nam/Aiden Dockery

higher education.

- In 2014, literacy rate for EM girl adolescents and youth stood at 83.2%, much lower than the figure of 99.1% for Kinh and Hoa female counterparts.⁶
- The percentage of EM girls of primary school age attending school was 92.1% in 2014 compared to 98.9% for Kinh and Hoa girls.⁷ The figures for secondary school were 76.64% and 92.6%, respectively.⁸
- 20% of Kinh women indicated that they had less than elementary school education, whereas the number fluctuates between 41.9%⁹ and 75%¹⁰ among the EM women, 2-3 times as high as that of Kinh women.
- In 2014, the rate of EM trained women workers was 7.2% compared to 17.6% for Kinh-Hoa trained women workers. H'mong women workers' qualification is the lowest among EM groups, with 1.4% trained workers only.¹¹

3 CERD/C/VNM/CO/10-14, paragraph 14

4 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Concluding observations on the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Viet Nam, para. 26, 2015.

5 UNICEF and MOET. Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children, Vietnam Country Study, 2013

6 GSO, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2014

7 *ibid.*

8 *ibid.*

9 Hoang Cam, The exclusion of women's access to land, 2012

10 This number changing depending on the EM concerned 41.9% for women from patrilineal, 58.9% from matrilineal and 75% from bilateral groups

11 GSO, Vietnam Labour Force Survey, 2009-2014

2. ECONOMIC STATUS

Poverty

One of the most persistent patterns of chronic poverty in Viet Nam is poverty within EM people. While only 5.1% of the Kinh/Hoa ethnic population was below the poverty line in 2014, this figure was almost 29.1% for all other EM groups aggregated. EMs that have the highest poverty rate comprise H'mong 61.5%, Thai 38.9%, Dao 30.4%, etc.¹² Besides, EM people have a lower probability of escaping poverty than the ethnic majority.¹³ As the poverty measurement in Vietnam is household-based, available data on gender difference in poverty is still limited. However, the intersection of gender-based discrimination and economic deprivation means that women from poor households represent a particular category of social exclusion, facing greater discrimination in meeting their basic needs than men from poor households, and more likely to slide into greater poverty in situations of crisis.¹⁴

Employment

- EM women tend to start working at a young age. By the age of 15, while many EM girls are working as real adults, the majority of Kinh-Hoa girls are attending high school, and will most likely move on to pursue vocational training school, college or university. Hence, the average rate of EM women participating in the labour market is 82.9%, much higher than the rate of 70.2% for Kinh-Hoa ethnic women. Of which, the rate of H'mong women participating in the labour market is the highest (94.2%), followed by that of Muong ethnic women (89.8%) and Thai ethnic women (88.5%).
- EM people in Viet Nam are less likely to engage in wage employment. The 2014 Vietnam Labour Force Survey shows that the rate of EM women employed as wage workers was 37.9% compared to 43% of Kinh-Hoa women. The lowest rates of EM women groups engaging

in wage employment are found among H'mong ethnic women (23.7%), Muong ethnic women (29.8%) and Thai ethnic women (32.7%). Furthermore, the survey also indicates that the rate of EM women engaging in wage employment is always smaller than that of men.¹⁵

- 77.1% of EM women in rural areas are self-employed or unpaid family workers in agriculture.¹⁶ The highest rates of women who are self-employed in agriculture are found among H'mong (98.7%), Thai (92%), Nung (90.5%) and Muong (90%).¹⁷ Limited access to education and outside communities contributes to fewer opportunities for wage employment or off-farming jobs for EM women.
- Minority women are less involved in business activities compared to their Kinh counterparts. Kinh women are often more skilled as traders and financial managers thanks to their familiarity with markets, language, and other cultural advantages whereas culture and fluency of Vietnamese language are some of the barriers for minority women to take part in trading activities. Limited travel to markets discourages minority women to learn new techniques to improve productivity.¹⁸

Capacity to access land and other resources

- In many EMs, despite the high participation rate in agriculture, women tend to have no guarantee for land use, credit, and other natural and economic resources.¹⁹ It is customary that only men have the rights to inherit land property.²⁰ The percentage of households with men as single land title owners is 40.6% for Kinh versus 74.2% for EM groups.²¹ While 36% of land use right

12 GSO, Household Living Standards Surveys, 2014

13 UN agencies, Breaking the silence on violence against indigenous girls- a call to action, 2013

14 Kabeer, N. 'Social Exclusion and the MDGs: The Challenge of 'Durable Inequalities' in the Asia Region', 2006

15 GSO, Vietnam Labour Force Survey, 2009-2014

16 World Bank, Gender Country Assessment, 2011

17 GSO, Annual Vietnam Labour Force Survey, 2009-2014.

18 World Bank, Country Social Analysis – Ethnicity and Development in Vietnam, 2009

19 Hershkovitz, L., Brief of policy on women's land rights in accordance with Vietnam's humanitarian commitments, 2012

20 UNDP, Access of legal services for EM women, 2009

21 Hoang Cam, The exclusion of women's access to land, 2012



Photo: One UN Viet Nam/Aiden Dockey

certificates held by Kinh bear both the wife and husband's names, this figure decreases to 21% for EMs.²² In many cases, women are not aware of their legitimate right to have their name on the land use right certificate.

- Access to land rights has further implications for economic empowerment such as access to credit, inheritance and property rights, economic resources, and natural resources.²³ The rate of households that have never accessed (concessionary) credit remains higher among EMs compared to Kinh. EM people often obtain credits from the Bank for Social Policy, rather than commercial banks, which usually offers an average loan size of around 5 to 7 million VND.²⁴ This situation is supposed to be more severe with female-headed households due to the lack of assets ownership that can be used as collateral.²⁵

22 Hershkovitz, L., Policy brief on Land rights for women in compliance with Viet Nam commitments to Human rights, 2012

23 *ibid.*

24 World Bank, Country Social Analysis – Ethnicity and Development in Vietnam, 2009

25 *ibid.*

3. HEALTH

- Viet Nam has demonstrated considerable progress in reducing maternal mortality rate (MMR). MMR has been dropping over years, from 80/100,000 live births in 2005 to 67/100,000 in 2011 and 64/100,000 in 2012.²⁶ However, disparities still exist across regions. Particularly, maternal mortality rates remain high in mountainous areas and among ethnic minority women.²⁷ Particularly, MMR in H'mong, Thai, Ba Na, Tay, Dao, Nung ethnic minorities are four times as much as that of the majority Kinh. The disparity is rooted in the limitations of the health care system, especially in remote and poor areas. For example, communal health centers and hamlet/ village health networks have limited capacity to access the community and to provide comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services and basic prenatal care (detection and referral of high-risk pregnancies), obstetric emergency aid and neonatal care. These facilities are also insufficient at the district level.
- EM women often do not seek health care services due to the remote location of health centers, poor quality of health care, language barrier, and inability to pay for services or medicine and preference for female health care workers.²⁸
- The use of solid fuels as a main source of energy for domestic cooking stands at 41.6%. EM households use these health-damaging fuels for cooking more than twice as much as Kinh households do (87.4% versus 34.1%). As women are primarily responsible for domestic chores, they are more likely to be exposed to related health hazard.²⁹
- The coverage of antenatal care for EM women is lower than the national average. Approximately 96% of Vietnamese women

26 Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs, Report No. 28/BC-LDTBXH dated 12 April 2013 on "5 years implementation of the Law on Gender Equality", 2013.

27 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Concluding observations on the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Viet Nam, para. 32, 2015

28 Jones, N., Double Jeopardy: How gendered social norms and ethnicity intersect to shape the lives of adolescent Hmong girls in Viet Nam, 2013

29 GSO, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2014

receive at least one antenatal check-up during their gestation period. However, one in every five EM women had not received any pregnancy checkups during the gestation period.³⁰ In fact, research indicates a direct correlation between EM women with low education and income, and their capacity to access prenatal care services.³¹

- Over 70% of pregnant EM women practice home delivery in some communes and districts. The rate of EM women delivering at a health facility is nearly 67%, while this figure for Kinh women is up to 99%.³² 99% of Kinh women give birth with trained birth attendants³³, whereas this figure drops to only 68.3% in the case of EM women.³⁴
- EM women tend to have more children than their Kinh counterparts. However, infant mortality in EM groups is much higher than in Kinh group (standing at about 43.6% and 10.2% respectively).³⁵
- EM women tend to give birth at earlier age than Kinh/Hoa women. EM adolescents' birth rate is 115 births per 1,000 female adolescents, while among Kinh/Hoa the rate is 30 births per 1000 female adolescents.³⁶
- Young EM couples lack practical knowledge about puberty, safe sex, family planning methods, HIV/AIDS and STDs protection.³⁷ The rate of married or unmarried couples not using any contraception is nearly 30% in EM group versus 23.4% in Kinh-Hoa group.³⁸
- Comprehensive knowledge of HIV transmission among girls and women aged 15-49 years tends to be lowest among EM groups: 29% compared to 47% for the Kinh.³⁹

30 *ibid.*

31 UN in Vietnam, Briefing notes of propaganda and advocacy on prenatal care in Vietnam, 2012.

32 GSO, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2014

33 Trained birth attendants refer to doctors, nurse/ attendances at delivery

34 GSO, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2014

35 *ibid.*

36 *ibid.*

37 UN in Viet Nam, UN Gender briefing kit, gender issues in minority cultures, 2009

38 GSO, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2014

39 UN agencies, Breaking the silence on violence against indigenous girls- a call to action, 2013

4. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND OTHER HARMFUL PRACTICES

Early marriage

Despite the prohibition under the Law on Marriage and Family, results of the Vietnam Population Change and Family Planning Survey 2013 show that the rate of young persons aged 15-19 entering marriage is on gradual increase, from 9.3% in 1999 to 9.8% in 2013. EM groups have an average early marriage rate of 8.4%, six times as high as Kinh group (1.4%) and 3.5 times as high as the national average (2.5%). 25 out of 53 EM groups have early marriage rates higher than 10%. The early marriage rates are much higher in mountainous and EM areas, with 22.6% and 14.8% for the Northern midlands and mountain areas and the Central Highlands, respectively.⁴⁰ In the North West, one in every 10 boys aged 10-19 is married; while one in every five girls aged 10-19 is married. The H'mong ethnic minority group has the highest early marriage rate of 33%, while the rates recorded in Thai and Muong groups are 23.1% and 15.8%, respectively.⁴¹ Typically, there were 1,600 cases of early marriage in the province of Lai Chau during seven years from 2004 to 2011; in 2014, 62% marriages in Loong Luong commune, Moc Chau district, Son La province were early marriage. Inbreeding marriage is also a matter of concern in a number of EMs such as Chut, Mang, La Hu, etc.

Early marriage may lead to negative consequences such as early child bearing, premature birth, prenatal death, and reproductive health complications when women bearing children are too young. The rates of EM girls getting married at the age of under 15 and under 18 are 3 times as high as those of EM boys (4.7% and 15.8% compared to 1.8% and 5.8%). The early marriage practice is tolerated due to the lack of socio-economic opportunities for girls and the misconception that young women are needed to do unpaid work such as household production and other housework.⁴² Early marriage also results in dropping out of school at an early age.⁴³

40 GSO, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2014

41 Committee for Ethnic Affairs (CEMA), 2014

42 UNICEF, Children out of school, Vietnam Country Study, 2013.

43 *ibid.*

Domestic violence

- According to a national study carried out in 2010, domestic violence (DV) is prevalent nationwide, including in EM communities. The current prevalence of physical violence and/ or sexual violence in EM groups (over the last 12 months) ranges from 35% (the case of Muong ethnic) to 8% (the case of H'mong ethnic).⁴⁴
- Among EM women participating in a survey conducted by the UN in 2012, the more frequently acts of physical violence by a partner or husband occur, the more severe those acts would be. This seems to be linked to a tendency among ethnic minority women to only consider the problem serious enough after they have been subjected to severe acts of physical violence.⁴⁵
- Around 22.3% EM women admitted to stand undesired sex by a partner or husband at least once during their lifetime, while the current prevalence figure is 13.3% nationwide. The rate of emotional abuse against EM women by a partner or husband was 48.8%, whereas the average rate is 28.9%.⁴⁶
- More EM women than Kinh women tolerate violence caused by their partner or husband. Up to 58.6% of EM women aged 15-49 agree that it is acceptable for husbands to physically punish their wife for various reasons, compared to 48.5% of Kinh women.⁴⁷



Son preference and sex ratio at birth

Some EM groups, notably the Dao and H'mong, are especially likely to prefer sons over daughters.⁴⁸ Sons are perceived as a “better long-term investment” and “key decision makers” in both patriarchal and matriarchal EM groups.

Child labour

Child labour varies considerably among ethnic groups. The rate of child labour is 26.1% for EM children, nearly three times as high as the rate of 9.2% for Kinh children.⁴⁹ More girls than boys are involved in child labour (11% versus 9%).⁵⁰

44 GSO, *Keeping Silent is Dying - Results from the National Study on Domestic Violence against Women in Viet Nam*, 2010

45 ONE UN study, *Estimating the costs of domestic violence against women in Viet Nam*, 2012

46 *ibid.*

47 GSO, *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey*, 2014

48 Jones, N., *Expanding capabilities: how adolescents Khmer girls in Viet Nam are learning to juggle filial piety, educational ambition (and facebook)*, 2013

49 GSO, *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey*, 2014

50 ILO-MOLISA and GSO, *Research Team calculated from the data of The National Survey on Child Labour*, 2012



Photo: Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs/Nguyen Duc Dat

5. REPRESENTATION

- EM women face a double challenge for representation and participation in formal and informal decision making structures/bodies at community and national levels, due to their ethnicity and their gender.⁵¹ Most H'mong girls have limited space for participation at all levels of decision-making processes that affect their lives as gender hierarchies constrain their options for forming and expressing their own opinions.⁵² Although Programme 135 Phase II (P135-II) has included certain regulations to promote women's participation, extra effort is needed to change community perceptions and social norms that impede women's equal participation as well as to encourage their representation in both public and government bodies.⁵³

- In the National Assembly 13th Term (2012-2016), 122 deputies are women, representing 24% of the total MPs; of whom, 78 deputies (6%) are from ethnic minorities.⁵⁴ For this National Assembly term, there is a lack of data related to the proportion of EM women MPs. Last term figures identified 30% of women NA deputies being representatives of an ethnic group (other than the Kinh).⁵⁵
- Generally, participation of EM people in politics is lower than the Kinh majority. One obstacle identified is the “structural” requirements leaving few slots for women and other groups in the forms of “quota” such as for youth, EM people and non-Communist Party members. As a result, it is common that all the requirements will be combined in one proposed candidate (e.g. a young woman from EM), instead of complying with the spirit of diversity of representation.⁵⁶
- In the political system: 2/16 members of the Polibureau are women, one of them representing an EM; 3 out of 175 (1.75%) members of the Central Party Committee are EM women.⁵⁷ In the Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA), 19.5% are female EM officers. Nearly 30 EM groups do not have female representatives in the state administrative agencies in charge of ethnicity work such as Mang, La Hu, Cong, Co Lao, La Ha, Pa Then, Lu, Chut, Si La, Brau, Ro Mam, etc.

51 IWGIA, Voices of indigenous women from Asia Pacific, 2012

52 Jones, N., Gender Justice: listening to the aspirations and priorities of H'mong girls in Viet Nam, 2013

53 UNDP, Impact of Program 135-phase II through the Lens of Baseline and Endline Survey, 2012

54 Figures from the National Assembly service

55 Palmieri, S. Case Study Parliament Viet Nam, representation from the top EM in the National Assembly of Viet Nam, 2010

56 UNDP, Women's Representation in the National Assembly of Viet Nam – The way forward, 2012

57 Figures from CEMA records, 2013

6. ACCESS TO SERVICES/ OPPORTUNITIES

- According to available records, legal aid cases in the fields of criminal, civil, marital, administrative, appeal, accusation, land, housing laws and policies are largely accessed by men (60%) and marginally by women.⁵⁸ Legal aid refers to the provision of legal services free of charge; four categories of people are entitled to legal aid including EM people residing in particularly socially and economically disadvantaged areas.
- At present, the use of grassroots conciliation is prevalent, even for domestic violence cases.⁵⁹ The Law on Grassroots Conciliation approved in 2013 stipulates that in areas inhabited by many ethnic minority people, a conciliation team need to reflect the ethnic diversity. However, many members of conciliation teams, especially those in remote areas with limited understanding on legislation in general and the Law on Gender Equality as well as Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control in particular, might give biased advice and tend to take discriminative decisions against women.⁶⁰
- Some ethnic minority couples are married without legal marriage certificates and such women face uncertain consequences of legal procedures, including entitlement to child custody and property and land ownership. The uncertainties surrounding legal action against husbands accompanied by the lack of legal support place considerable pressure on women to maintain outward impressions of a stable and happy family life. As a consequence, divorce as an option to escape violence is often rejected and drives women towards



reconciliation measures, even though they often do not provide necessary protection or redress.

- The Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2012 expressed its concern about persistent geographical and ethnic disparities in birth registration rates whereby the lowest ones remain in the two poorest areas, namely the North West and the Central Highlands. Additional concerns were raised about the fact that parents, particularly in remote areas, are not always aware of the birth registration requirements and of its importance.⁶¹

58 Institute for Studies of Society, Economy and Environment (iSEE), Assessment on the Access to and utilization of legal services by EM women, 2010

59 Grassroots conciliation refers to guiding, supporting, convincing related parties to reach an agreement, or to voluntarily agree with a solution for legal breach or dispute to maintain solidarity in the community, helping to protect and limit legal breach, ensuring public order and security in the community. Grassroots conciliation is often used in DV.

60 Institute for Studies of Society, Economy and Environment (iSEE), Assessment on the Access to and utilization of legal services by EM women, 2010

61 Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)/C/VNM/CO/3-4 (2012), paragraph 37.



Photo: One UN Viet Nam/Aiden Dockery

The state management agency on ethnic minority issues is the Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA). Yet, policy and legal framework concerning EMs in Viet Nam is fragmented and overlapped as regulations relating to EM people appear in different legal documents. EM people in general and EM women and girls in particular are facing a plethora of serious challenges in Vietnam. Hence, the Government's data collection and analysis should be improved to better understand particular needs of these groups, and to provide guidance for evidence-based interventions.

Major partners

- **The Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA)** is the state management agency (ministerial-level agency) on ethnic minority issues. CEMA has a Committee for the Advancement of Women (CAW)⁶² and a newly established department on ethnic minority that works on gender equality. They manage data on the participation of EM in politics, public administration and have conducted trainings to build EM people's capacity to increase their participation in the political system. However, the Department on Ethnic Minority has been just established not long ago and has limited gender expertise and capacity for gender analysis and mainstreaming.
- **The Ethnic Council in the National Assembly** supervises and evaluates the implementation of ethnic policies and recommends actions to the National Assembly on socio-economic development issues in the ethnic minority regions. However, sometimes the Ethnic Council has not demonstrated gender-sensitivity or a gender mainstreaming approach.
- **Viet Nam Women's Union** works on social criticism and protects EM women through its Department on ethnicity and religion affairs. The Department's role is to promote gender equality among EM groups by implementing projects especially targeting EM women.

62 Each ministry and province of Viet Nam has its own CAW. These committees have developed their own ministerial and provincial plans of action (POA), which are monitored by the National CAW, set up in 1993. Each CAW is composed of key people from related departments, including personnel, women's affairs, the Women's Union and trade unions.

Policy and programme intervention

- The **Socio-Economic Development Programme for Extremely Difficult Communes in Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas (Programme 135)**⁶³ implemented by the Government since 1998 recognizes EM women among "the poorest people" but has not addressed their vulnerability in terms of gender. Challenges for EM women are understood to be only the limited capacity to access public (social) services due to language barrier. The interaction of multi-dimensional discrimination against EM women is not fully recognized.
- In 2012, the Government also approved the **Programme on Sustainable Poverty Reduction** in 61 poor districts. Most of these districts are mountainous with ethnic minorities. The programme focuses on economic development, job creation and income generation (including labor export); education and training; increasing human resources in local authorities at all levels; and infrastructure development at commune and district levels. The programme does however not take gender inequalities faced by EM women into consideration.
- In the **National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011-2020**, objective 2 and objective 3 specifically refer to the needs of EM women and recognize their vulnerability in terms of gender and high risk of being subject to gender discrimination. However, corresponding activities provided in the Strategy are unclear. Interventions in the **National Programme on Gender Equality 2011-2015** are limited to raising awareness on gender equality without addressing the main roots of gender-based inequalities among EM women and men".

63 The overall objectives of Programme 135: i) to radically accelerate production and promote market-oriented agricultural development; ii) to improve in a sustainable manner the socio-cultural life of ethnic groups in the most impoverished communes and villages to narrow the gap in living standards among Vietnam's ethnic groups and regions; and iii) eradicate hunger in the targeted areas and reduce the poverty rate to below 30%.



Photo: One UN Viet Nam/Aiden Dockery

- Systematically collect data disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity, residence and socio-economic background, as this is the key to a better understanding of the extent of gender inequality within EMs and across different EM groups as a basis for programme and policy development.
- Strengthen the capacity of the Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs to develop evidence-based gender responsive programmes and policies and to implement and monitor these programmes and policies effectively.
- Conduct regular and comprehensive studies on particular needs of EM women and girls with the recognition that intersection of discrimination based on gender and ethnicity causes political, social and economic marginalization unique to EM women and girls.
- Review legal regulations and policies relating to EMs' concerns with the participation of EMs to ensure the relevance of regulations and policies.
- Implement measures to reduce dropout rates among EM girls.
- Expand the bilingual education pilot programme/ Promote school programmes and curricula in EM languages, pursuant to the Constitution.
- Increase access to secondary and tertiary levels of education among girls belonging to ethnic minorities, including through the provision of bilingual education as well as scholarships and subsidies.
- Improve the quality, coverage and cultural/ linguistic appropriateness of health services and health care providers, especially those related to sexual and reproductive health, maternal and neonatal health.
- Enhance efforts to reduce maternal mortality in rural areas and among women from ethnic minorities by improving their access to basic pre- and ante-natal care, emergency obstetric care and presence of skilled birth attendants at births.
- Enforce the minimum age for marriage.
- Promote communication strategies to



Photo: One UN Viet Nam/Aiden Dockery

increase EM women's awareness of their rights, including with respect to land ownership and access to social services and livelihoods.

- Ensure that women from EM groups have access to legal services by reducing the bureaucratic process and language barrier and by providing legal and financial assistance.
- Provide gender sensitive assistance in registering land use certificates, birth certificates and marriage certificates.
- Increase gender sensitivity of vocational training, entrepreneurship development programmes and agricultural extension services available to ethnic minorities to enable better access for EM women.
- Promote EM women in leadership and representation in decision-making in the community and government by introducing special measures including training, and use communication activities to create an enabling social environment that recognizes EM women's leadership.



Department on Ethnic Minority
Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs

80 Phan Dinh Phung Street,
Hanoi, Viet Nam
Tel: (+844) 37349892
Fax: (+844) 37349442
<http://cema.gov.vn>



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women

UN Women Viet Nam Country Office
304 Kim Ma, Ha Noi, Viet Nam
Tel: (+844) 3850 0100
Fax: (+844) 3726 5520
Website: <http://vietnam.unwomen.org>