



HO CHI MINH CITY
PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE



POLICY BRIEF

SITUATION ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN IN HO CHI MINH CITY, VIET NAM 2017

NOVEMBER 2017

SITUATION ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN

IN HO CHI MINH CITY, VIET NAM 2017



Creating Viet Nam's first Child Friendly City in Ho Chi Minh City

In September 2015, the Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee in collaboration with UNICEF committed to creating Viet Nam's first 'Child Friendly City,' at a high-level roundtable conference. Ho Chi Minh City, one of Asia's fastest growing cities, would serve as a model in the region, where every child is given a fair start to life and opportunities to live and thrive in a safe environment; that is the vision

The 2017 Ho Chi Minh City Situation Analysis is a rights-based analysis that provides evidence on the status, trends and overarching situation of children in Ho Chi Minh City, revealing a set of priorities, actions and the need for additional resources to accelerate progress towards the SDGs and achieve child well-being. The analysis integrates children's voices and opinions and promotes broad engagement with multiple levels and branches of government, community-based and youth organisations, academia, civil society and the business community.

This analysis is a critical element of achieving a Child Friendly City, "a local system of good governance committed to fulfilling children's rights. It is a city/community where the voices, needs, priorities and rights of children are an integral part of public policies, programmes and decisions. It is, as a result, a city that is fit for all."¹⁹ Creating a model city in Ho Chi Minh City will ensure that children are active agents and their voices and opinions are taken into consideration and influence decision-making processes.

Every Child – Analytical Framework

The analytical framework draws on the CRC with a focus on 'every child' in Ho Chi Minh City, with four strategic pillars: Every child survives and thrives, Every child learns, Every child is protected, and Every child participates. The analysis identifies shortfalls and disparities across communities in Ho Chi Minh City, in an urban setting, and provides comprehensive causality analyses for each pillar, with a focus on the roles, responsibilities and capacity gaps of duty-bearers and finally recommendations and priorities to accelerate progress towards the SDGs and fulfill children's rights.

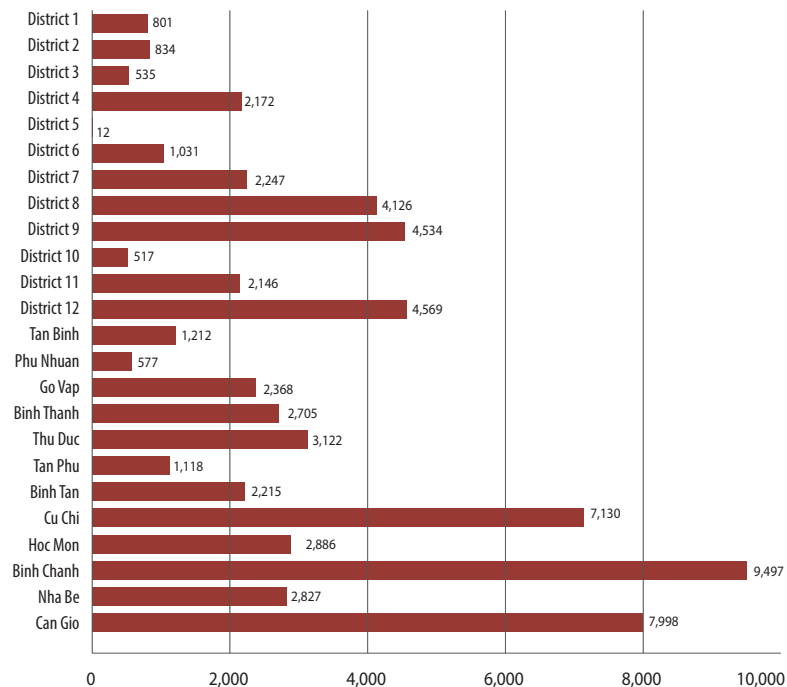
A Contextual Analysis of Children's Rights

Ho Chi Minh City consists of 19 urban and five rural districts. Of its population of 13 million people (80% live in urban areas), 1.5 million are children aged 0-16 (2017). Ho Chi Minh City has the highest population density in Viet Nam, of 3,809 people per square kilometre. Approximately 93.5% of the population are ethnic Vietnamese (Kinh), 5.8% are Chinese (Hoa), and the other minorities include Khmer (0.34%) and Cham (0.1%).ⁱⁱ

Ho Chi Minh City is amongst Asia's largest and fastest growing cities as well as the financial and technology centres of Viet Nam. By the end of 2014, the city's GDP had grown to 9.5%, with GDP per capita reaching USD 5,428 by the end of 2016 to achieve middle-income status.ⁱⁱⁱ Reducing multi-dimensional child poverty is a priority in Viet Nam – the number of children living in income poor households is highest in Binh Chanh, Can Gio and Cu Chi districts. Despite achievements in developing child-sensitive policies and programmes to address child poverty, there is indicative evidence this progress is uneven across the country.

Migration, Urbanization and Climate Change: While rapid urbanization has led to economic prosperity and growth, it has spurred significant challenges that impact the rights of children.

Number of children living in poor households in Ho Chi Minh City Districts (2016)



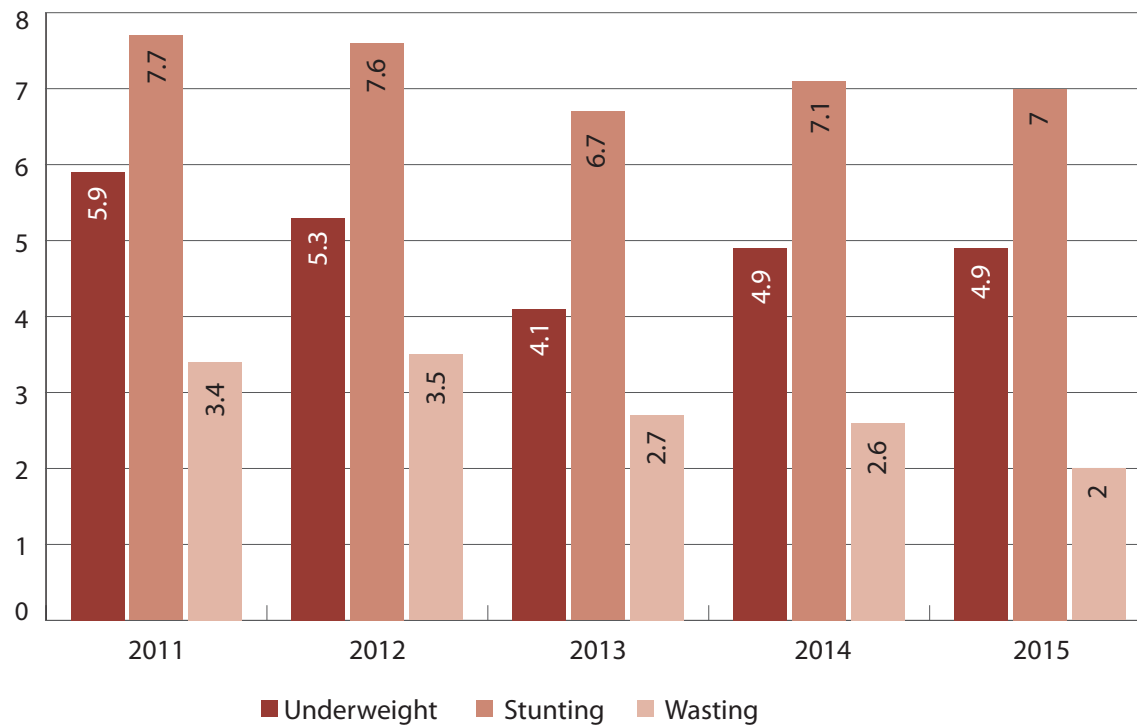


With a growing migrant population comes a larger work force and an expanding economy, with challenges such as ensuring the 'ho khau' system is modified to meet the needs of migrant families and their children and ensure they have equitable access to quality social services. In addition, in recent years, there has been increased incidences of regular and extreme climatic events such as floods, droughts and tropical storms predicted to worsen over the next decade, with detrimental impacts on the lives of the most deprived and vulnerable children.

Every Child Survives and Thrives

The situation of children in Ho Chi Minh City reveals they face and under-nutrition, presented as the 'double burden' of childhood malnutrition in a recent joint UNICEF/WHO ASEAN regional report. Ho Chi Minh City rates of overweight and obesity among under five children, increased from an estimated 9.6% in 2011 to 11.0% in 2015¹⁸.

Although the rate of children aged 0-5 months ever breastfed is 94.6% in Ho Chi Minh City, only 40.4% of mothers continued breastfeeding after one year. In addition, the number of reported teenage pregnancies increased during the period 2011-2015 with a slight reduction in 2016.

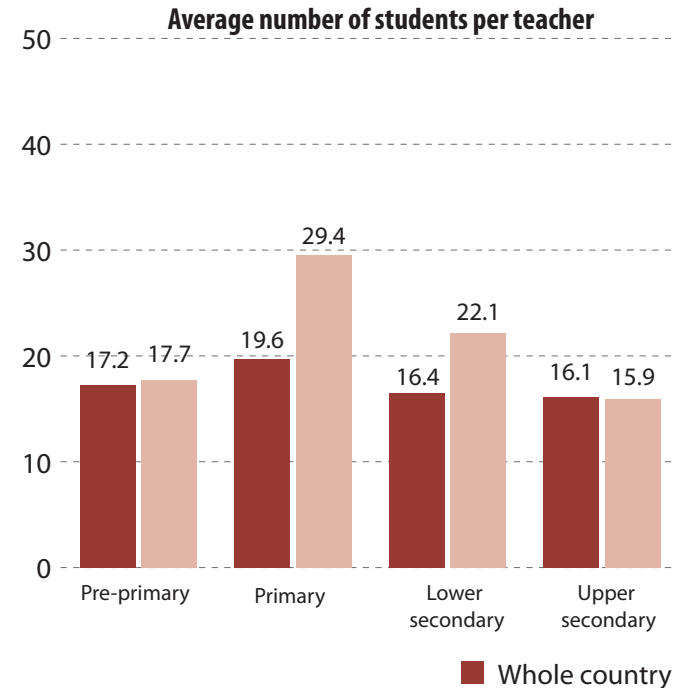
Prevalence of malnutrition 2011-2015 among children under-five years in Ho Chi Minh City (percentage of children)^v

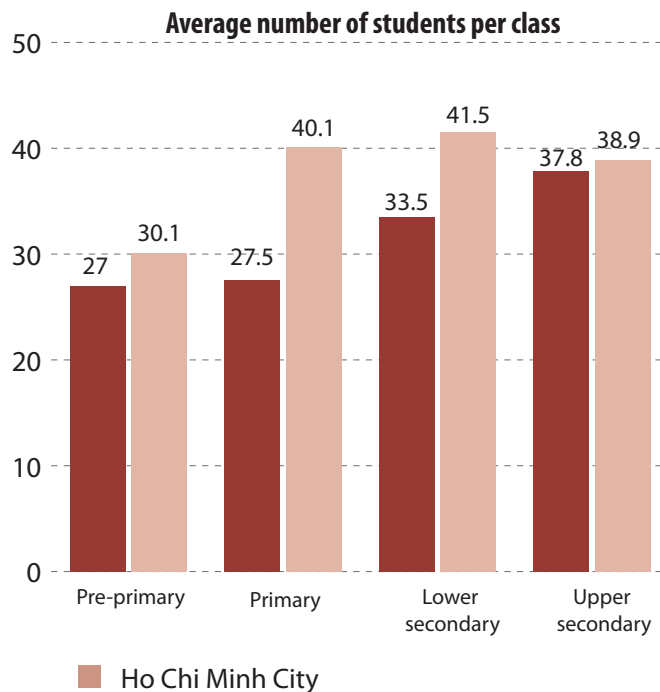
The child mortality rate sharply decreased from 8.2 per thousand in 2011 to 6.3 per thousand in 2012 and stabilized at 7.14 per thousand in 2015, much lower than the national figure of 22.1 per thousand. The leading cause of mortality reported from the community among children aged under five years was drowning. Although there has been an overall decline in children detected with HIV in Ho Chi Minh City since 2011, it increased by 32 cases in 2015 alone.^{vi}

Every Child Learns

The attendance rate of children 3-5 years old in Ho Chi Minh City increased and peaked in 2011-2012 due to the provision of universal education for 5-year-old children. The pre-school ratio of boys to girls was 54 versus 46, higher than the ratio of boys to girls at birth in Ho Chi Minh City.^{vii} Given the policy of universal education for five-year old children, the quality of education in the non-public sector is a concern, as human resources/facilities do not necessarily meet the expected standards. Migrant children make up the majority of out-of-school-children - aged 5 years and in primary schools (92% and 86.4%, respectively). According to the 2009 Population Census, the number of 5-year-old OOSC with disabilities was nearly six times higher than that of children without disabilities.^{viii}

Average number of student per teacher and class in Ho Chi Minh City



(2015-2016)^{ix}

Furthermore, the student-teacher ratio and average number of pupils per class in primary and lower secondary schools in Ho Chi Minh City are higher than the national average.

Every Child is Protected

Among the city's 1.5 million child population (under 16 years of age), approximately 16,054 live in special circumstances.^x These children represent orphans without caregivers, abandoned children, those with disabilities, victims of toxic chemicals, those infected by HIV/AIDS, those working in hard, dangerous, hazardous conditions or in contact with toxic substances, victims of sexual abuse, drug addicts and those in conflict with the law.

In a recent survey on school violence, more than 50% of interviewed students (297 students), been victims of school bullying and more than 80% of students have witnessed school bullying^{xi}. Sexual abuse was the most common type of violence against children in Ho Chi Minh City reported to the police, accounting for 59%^{xii}.

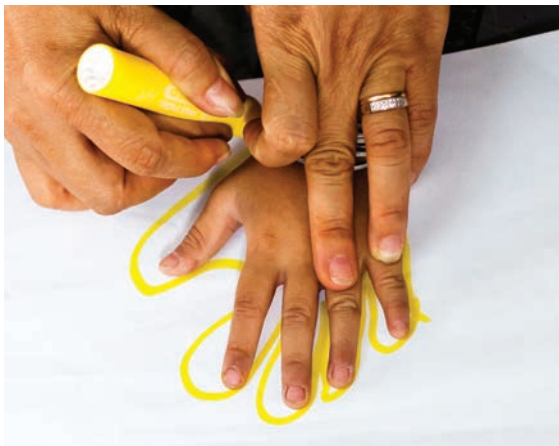
The Viet Nam National Child Labour Survey (2012) estimated 1,754,000 child labourers aged 5-17 years engaged in work with negative impacts on their physical and psychological development.^{xiii} Research indicates that child prostitution among 12-17 year olds is evident in Ho Chi Minh City. Both boys and girls were found victims of sexual exploitation, although girls' involvement in sex work was more visible. Ho Chi Minh City has constantly reported the highest number of juveniles in conflict with the law in Viet Nam.



Every Child Participates

A qualitative survey^{xiii} undertaken for this report, revealed that parents in Ho Chi Minh City often do not see the value of allowing children to participate in day-to-day decisions related to their lives. Even when life-altering decisions are made within the family, such as migration or divorce, parents often do not seek their children's opinions. During discussions with students attending school, less than half (21/45) stated they had opportunities to express their opinions to teachers at schools.

At the community level, while certain mechanisms and opportunities for children to participate exist, as presented in the table below, when assessed through the survey children claim to have limited awareness and strengthening these mechanisms should occur to ensure children take advantage of opportunities to participate in key decisions that affect their lives.



“My mum also asks this and that. She asked what I wanted to learn, they don’t have much money so if I wanted to learn more about something I’d better do it at home. Because my parents work very hard, I have to accept it, we don’t have a lot of money.”

Pathways to Creating a Child Friendly City

The recommendations set out in this report are in line with the CFC approach and aim to establish an integrated multi-stakeholder partnership.

Every Child Survives and Thrives:

- Health system capacity development.
- Strengthen awareness and interventions to tackle child malnutrition and obesity
- Strengthen awareness and interventions to increase the exclusive breastfeeding rate and adolescent reproductive health
- Review social insurance policies for poor and migrant children
- Strengthen communication with children and women on immunisations
- Mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS including strengthening PMTCT
- Mitigate climate change impacts on children’s well-being
- Strengthen WASH in schools, workplaces and community

- Improve data collection, management and reporting

Every Child Learns:

- Improve planning, public financial management and policy-making
- Develop school infrastructure to ensure inclusive education particularly for out of school children from migrant families and children with disabilities.
- Improve human resource management and development
- Enhance educational statistics for more complete statistical data on disadvantaged groups
- Improve coordination, monitoring and evaluation within and between agencies
- Continue promoting education and training support, for example – ensuring teachers are adequately trained in supporting children with disabilities.

Every Child is Protected:

- Build a comprehensive city-wide child protection system
- Strengthen justice for children by enhancing implementation of community-based support for juveniles in conflict with the law



Creating pathways to a 'Child Friendly City' initiative is an opportunity to transform a vision into reality, where child rights are translated into concrete and measurable actions ensuring each child is given a fair and equitable chance in life. This strategic focus requires investments in time and resources in order for Ho Chi Minh City to become Viet Nam's first 'Child Friendly City'.

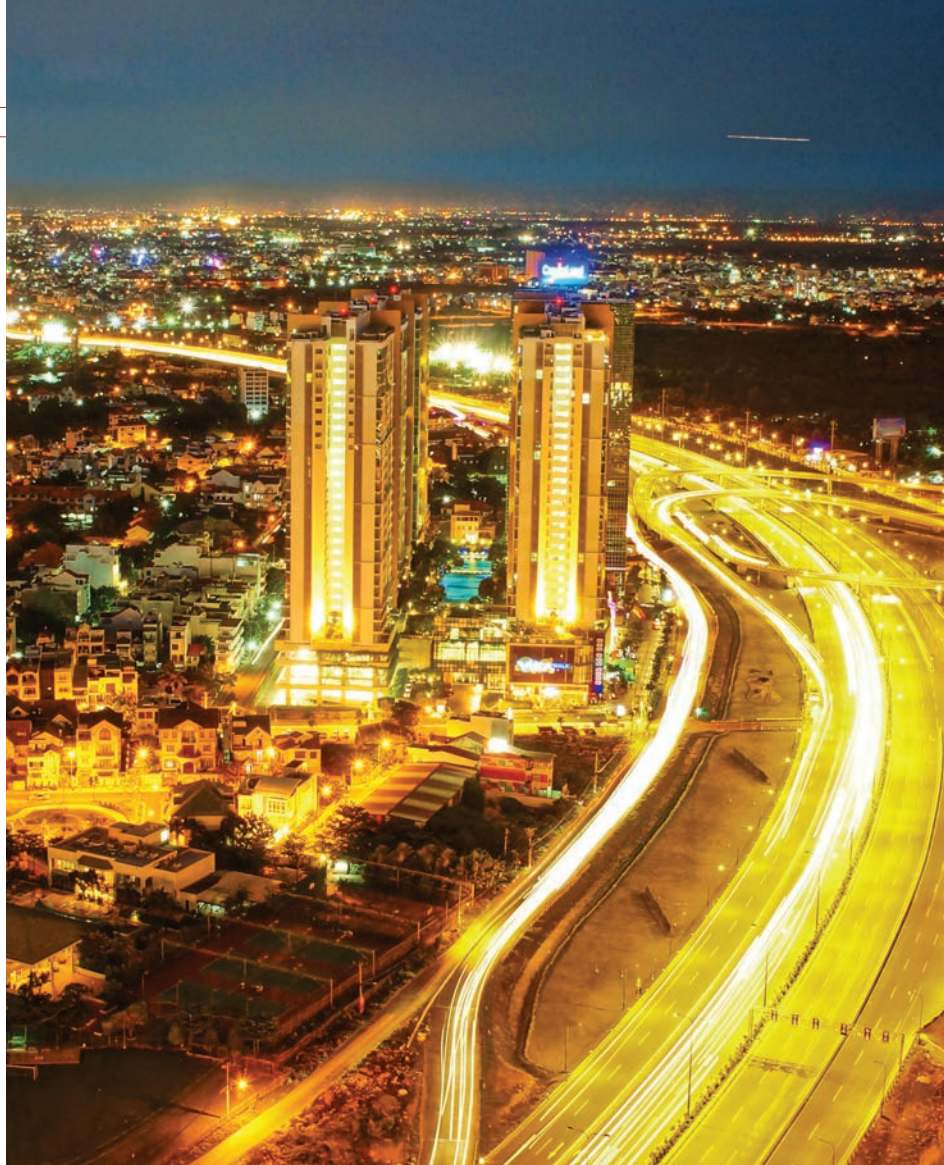
- Support children and families to enhance their own protection through awareness raising activities, early interventions at household level, integrating interventions to support children at risk and by conducting life skills training.
- Improve budget allocations for child protection by making use of disaggregated data to inform city-wide child protection planning.

Every Child Participates:

- Strengthen capacity of children to take a leading role in activities and programmes that directly affect their lives
- Raise awareness and promote mutual understanding within families
- Promote child participation in schools through student fora, councils or social networks
- Develop suitable programmes and activities at community level identifying excluded and disadvantaged children and their families
- Promote innovative partnerships with the business sector
- Strengthen mechanisms to ensure policy and budgetary priorities are responsive to children's needs.

ENDNOTES

- i UNICEF Child Friendly Cities and Communities Toolkit for National Committees, UNICEF February 2017*
- ii General Statistics Office (2015). The 1/4/2015 Time-Point Population Change and Family Planning Survey. Major Findings.*
- iii Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee (2016) Report on the Implementation of 2016 Socio-economic Development Plan*
- iv DOH Statistics 2016*
- v Ho Chi Minh City Statistical Yearbook 2015*
- vi General Statistics Office, Child Mortality Rate, <http://www.gso.gov.vn/>*
- vii <http://www.hochiminhcity.gov.vn/>*
- viii UNICEF and MOET: 2016 OOSC Analysis in Ho Chi Minh City*
- ix GSO website - <http://www.gso.gov.vn/>*
- x Ho Chi Minh City DOLISA's Statistics 2017*
- xi <http://www.ier.edu.vn/upload/product/ky-yeu-hoi-thao-thuc-trang-va-giai-phap-ngan-chan-bao-luc-hoc-duong-o-truong-pho-thong-405429389066.pdf> trang 185, 191.*
- xii MOLISA, Children Indicators in Viet Nam, 2013-2014*
- xiii ILO, MOLISA, GSO, Viet Nam: National Child Labour Survey 2012*
- xiv Survey undertaken by ASSIST for phase 1 of this 2017 Ho Chi Minh City SitAn*
- xv DOLISA Report for 10-year implementation of the childcare and protection law*





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