



LAO CAI PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE
PROVINCIAL CHILD-FRIENDLY PROJECT

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REPORT

ON SITUATION ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN IN LAO CAI

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REPORT

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ABBREVIATIONS

CHC	Commune Health Centre
CPC	Commune People's Committee
DOCST	Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism
DOET	Department of Education and Training
DOF	Department of Finance
DOH	Department of Health
DOLISA	Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
DPI	Department of Planning and Investment
EPI	Expanded Programme on Immunization
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
NTP	National Target Programme
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OOS	Out-of-schooling
PCERWASS	Provincial Centre for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation
PCFP	Provincial Child Friendly Programme
PPC	Provincial People's Committees
PSO	Provincial Statistics Office
SEDP	Socio-Economic Development Plan
TABMIS	Treasury and Budget Management Information System
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VHLSS	Viet Nam Households and Living Standards Survey
WB	The World Bank

FOREWORD

This Analysis is part of a series of provincial situation analyses of children's rights that UNICEF Viet Nam has initiated to support provinces under the Social Policy and Governance Programme. The purpose of this initiative is to provide information to allow for provincial planning and budgeting becoming more child-friendly and evidence-based, especially for socio-economic development and sectorial plans.

This report contributes to a holistic picture of the provincial situation of girls and boys in Lao Cai and provides an in-depth analysis of children's issues, bottlenecks and barriers to the realization of children's rights in a mountainous area with diverse ethnic minority groups.

The report findings have been derived from a desk review, consultative workshops in Lao Cai province held by UNICEF in partnership with the provincial authorities and fieldwork with active involvement of provincial, district and commune-level line departments and agencies. These consultations include representatives of the Party, People's Council, People's Committee, ministries of Planning and Investment; Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs; Health, Education and Training; Justice; Culture, Sports and Tourism; Information and Communication, and socio-political organizations (Fatherland Front, Women's Union, Youth Union). Local sites selected for in-depth analysis include Lao Cai city (Kim Tan and Nam Cuong wards), Muong Khuong district (Muong Khuong town and La Pan Tan commune) and Bao Yen district (Minh Tan and Tan Tien communes).

The study's findings confirm notable provincial achievements in the area of child protection and care, but also point out shortcomings that require stronger efforts.

We hope this report will help local authorities and line departments to enhance planning and implementing interventions in socio-economic and sectorial development plans and provide development partners working in the province and community in general with a reference point for collective resources to support the sustainable development in the province.

Lao Cai authorities and UNICEF Viet Nam would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all the agencies, units and individuals who have made notable contributions to this study.

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KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Key findings

Lao Cai is a mountainous border province characterized by dissected terrain, severe weather and natural disasters - which result in many difficulties for residents, especially in ethnic minority-populated upland areas.

Lao Cai is in the top 10 provinces nationwide with the most ethnic minorities (65.4% in 2009), with more than two-thirds of its communes defined as facing challenging conditions (113/164 communes/wards of the province).

The province has posted numerous economic development achievements in the last five years, with its 2015 total production value 2.4-fold higher than in 2010. However, Lao Cai's budget still depends on central Government support. In fact, budget revenues in the province in 2015 covered only about 55% of local expenses.

The province's monthly capita income in 2014 was just over half the nationwide average, the poverty rate in 2014 was 25.3%, the sixth poorest in the Northern Midland and Mountainous area. Its three poorest districts are Muong Khuong (31.4%), Si Ma Cai (29.5%) and Bac Ha (28.5%), followed by Sapa (25.4%), Van Ban (22.2%), Bat Xat (21.6%) and Bao Yen (17.9%). Bao Thang has a relatively low poverty rate (11%) and the lowest is Lao Cai city (1.2%).

As a result of difficult terrain and weather, low income and high poverty, barriers and limitations in the realization of children rights, institutional and policy environment as well as capacities of right holders and duty bearers, children in Lao Cai - especially in the highlands, remote areas and those from ethnic minorities - are not fully enjoying their rights.

Rights to Health and Nutrition

The number of health facilities in Lao Cai has not been changed during the past 10 years. The number of hospital beds is located unequally among different districts. The districts with the

smallest number of hospital beds (per 10,000 heads) include Van Ban (16), Bao Yen (17) and Bat Xat (19). The remaining districts have less than 27 hospital beds per 10,000 heads (the nationwide average target in 2011-2015), excluding Si Ma Cai (29) and Lao Cai city (87). Despite under - standard condition of health facilities in many regions, Lao Cai has achieved significant results in the healthcare program for children during the last five years. Percentages of children under 1-year-old fully vaccinated are high in all districts and Lao Cai city. Bac Ha and Muong Khuong districts, remote and less developed communes have lower rates of under-1-year fully immunized children.

Healthcare for mothers and children in districts with more favorable conditions (Lao Cai city, Bao Thang, Bao Yen) is better than that in others less well off (Bat Xat, Bac Ha, Muong Khuong and Si Ma Cai). The proportion of women giving birth at home without health worker's assistance remains high, 50-60% in disadvantaged districts. The proportion of women having at least three antenatal care visits during pregnancy was the highest in Lao Cai city, followed by Sapa, Bao Thang, Bat Xat, Si Ma Cai, Muong Khuong, Bao Yen, Bac Ha, the lowest rate was of Van Ban district. The proportion of pregnant women having adequate tetanus vaccination is uneven among districts. The gap was relatively large, with the highest rate in Lao Cai city, followed by Bao Thang, Bao Yen and Van Ban, Bat Xat, Sapa, Muong Khuong and Si Ma Cai in descending order. Bac Ha has the lowest rate. The difference between the districts with the highest percentage (Lao Cai city) and the lowest district (Bac Ha) is two-fold. The proportion of women who delivered at health facilities with medical staff support peaked in Bao Yen, Bao Thang and Lao Cai city. Si Ma Cai district had the lowest proportion. The difference between the highest and lowest groups was three-fold.

Under 1 and under-5-year mortality rates are lower than those of the Northern Midland and Mountainous area. The mortality rates of children under 1 and 5 years in more difficult

districts (Bac Ha, Muong Khuong and Sapa) are higher than those at other districts. The number of children infected with epidemics has not decreased in the last 3 years.

The proportion of children weighing below 2,500 grams at birth remains high, 1 of every 5 children is underweight, and this proportion has been increasing over the last 5 years. The rate of under-5-children under-nutrition has been decreasing. In 2014, Lao Cai in the group of 10 provinces having the highest rates of under-5-year old stunting children nationwide. Bac Ha, Muong Khuong, Si Ma Cai and Sapa have the highest rates of under nutrition children. Muong Khuong has the highest rate of stunting (47.4%) and Lao Cai city has the lowest (12.4%).

Child injury occurring “at home” is spread across all ages, but has declined for those aged 0-4 years, from 70.8% in 2013 to 57.6% in 2014. Traffic accidents ranked second among the most likely causes of accidents to children.

The use of clean water and sanitation has increasingly improved since 2009. The proportion of rural population using clean water increased from 74.1% in 2009 to 83.5% in 2013, higher than the country average (82.5%) and that of the Northern Midland and Mountainous area (79%) and that proportion reached 84.5% and 85.7% in 2014 and 2015 respectively. The proportion of households with sanitary latrines increased from 27.6% in 2009 to 53% in 2013, though lower than the nationwide average (60%) - still higher than the regional average of the Northern Midland and Mountainous area (47%), especially higher than some neighboring provinces like Dien Bien and Lai Chau. The proportion of households with hygienic latrines is 57.9% in 2015. The proportion of schools with clean water and hygienic latrines has increased annually, from 44.6% in 2009 to 54.8% in 2013 and 66.3% in 2015. Over 30% of schools in Lao Cai have not had clean water and sanitary latrines yet, those are mainly primary schools. The percentage of primary schools with clean water and hygienic latrines is the lowest (39.4% in 2009 and 44.5% in 2011) among all education levels, while 100% of upper secondary schools have access to clean water and sanitary latrines. Especially in schools in remote and difficult areas, water shortages frequently occur during

dry season, including upper secondary schools. The proportion of rural population using clean water was lowest in Si Ma Cai and Van Ban districts (76.1% and 75.9%, respectively). The proportion of households with sanitary latrines was lower in Muong Khuong and Sapa districts (35.9% and 32.8%, respectively).

Right to development

Network of schools and classes

During 2009-2014, growth rates at Lao Cai upper secondary schools and classes were higher than other province education levels and higher than the average growth rate in 10 provinces that have more similar characteristics to the Northern Midland and Mountainous region (with the poverty rates in 2014 greater than the regional average or lower population density, from 100 or fewer people over a square kilometre). Second position is pre-school education, with growth rates of schools and classes higher than the average growth rate of 10 provinces and lower only in the growth in schools compared to the region. Third position is primary education, with the growth rate of schools lower than the regional average and the 10 province average. The last position is lower secondary education, with the growth rates of schools and classes lower than the average grade of the 10 provinces.

The distribution network of Lao Cai schools and classes in 2015 differed between the levels of education in districts. Pre-school and secondary school age children in mountainous and sparsely populated districts must travel farther to reach school.

The average of schools and classes per commune of pre-school education are 1.2 and 14.3 respectively. In five districts with a population density of less than 100 people per square kilometre, only Bao Yen has 1.3 schools and 16.9 classes of pre-school education per commune. Bac Ha, Bat Xat, Sapa and Van Ban districts have only 1-1.2 schools and 10.6-15.0 classes of pre-school education per commune.

Primary education has highest average of schools and classes per commune (1.5 schools and 24.0 classes). Van Ban, Bac Ha and Si Ma Cai districts have lowest average of classes per

commune (19.3, 20.7 and 21.2, respectively), the highest is Bao Thang (36.3).

Although lower secondary education is also a universal education level like primary, the network of schools especially with regard to classroom distribution, does not meet the primary education standard. The number of schools per commune only reaches 1.1 (compared to 1.5 in primary) and especially the average number of classes per commune is 9.6, almost three-fold lower than primary (24.1 classes per commune). This characteristic combined with the number of secondary students per class being about 1.2-1.6 times more than elementary schools in districts indicates that the network of secondary classes is not as widely distributed as primary, implying that secondary students must travel farther to reach schools. This difficulty is particularly evident for Lao Cai districts with high mountain terrain, regardless if secondary students are of higher age than those in elementary school. Expansion of semi-boarding schools is a solution, but may not meet all students' needs. This expansion also poses great challenges for the management of students' lives and safety during stays at boarding schools and classes.

The situation is more difficult for upper secondary school age students in districts, with the average number of schools and classes per commune remaining substantially lower than those in Lao Cai city (corresponding to 0.1 to 0.2 schools and 1.6 to 4.6 classes per commune in districts, compared to 0.4 schools and 7.5 classes in Lao Cai city).

Pre-school infrastructure in some remote areas is extremely poor, especially in satellite campuses. Primary and lower secondary schools still have temporary classrooms, lack of function rooms and housing for teachers, kitchens, dining halls for boarding students, toilets at school sites and a lack of clean water.

Teachers

Lao Cai teachers have developed to meet the challenges of establishing and maintaining a robust school and class network. However, Lao Cai lacks pre-school and primary teachers to teach two daily sessions and primary school teachers focused on specific subjects such

as music civic education. Especially, Lao Cai lacks indigenous ethnic minority teachers to teach pre-school and primary schools. In localities with more ethnic minority children, more teachers are needed, especially in pre-school, to help them better learn Vietnamese language, which in turn helps comprehension of other subjects in Vietnamese. Bat Xat, Bao Yen, Van Ban and Sapa districts have a greater shortage of ethnic minority pre-school teachers than other districts. Bat Xat, Bac Ha, Sapa, Muong Khuong, Van Ban and Si Ma Cai have a great shortage of ethnic minority primary school teachers.

In addition, it is difficult to finalise regulations and mechanisms for teachers, such as effectively conduct professional standards assessments for pre-school teachers and teacher rotations in remote areas.

Pupil mobilisation

The percentages of pre-school education mobilisation, particularly of 5-year-old students were high. In the 2014-15 school year, the mobilisation rate of 5-year old children's attendance was 99.9% and 94% for pre-schoolers aged 3-5 years. Ethnic minority children aged 5 in all districts basically had the opportunity to attend school as did Kinh. However, the percentage of children going to kindergarten only hit 15%. How to maintain the number of students attending school and increase the rate of student attendance remain constraints, especially for young children in highland and remote areas where schools are far from home and conditions remain challenging, such as terrain and weather, and people are mainly poor.

In the 2014-15 school year, the percentages of newly recruited students in primary and lower secondary education were high. The percentage of newly recruited students to Grade 1 (compared to 6-year-old population) reached 99.9%. Newly recruited students to Grade 6 reached 99.3% and the mobilisation of children aged 6-14 was 99.5%. The universalisation of primary and lower-secondary education continues to be sustained at all communes. However, maintaining the number of pupils and enhancing the percentage of student

attendance in highlands and remote areas where travel conditions and weather are difficult, sustaining universal secondary education and reducing dropout rates at all levels remains problematic for primary and secondary levels.

Newly recruited students in high schools were much fewer than those in lower levels of education. In the 2014-2015 school year, the percentage of newly recruited students to 10th grade was only 62%.

The number of ethnic minority students in primary and upper secondary schools has increased, with the number of primary school ethnic minority pupils in 2014 having increased 1.16-fold and in upper secondary schools by 1.42 times compared to 2009. However, the mobilisation of lower secondary education students in 2014 did not increase compared to 2009 (0.99 times).

The proportion of female students in all primary, lower secondary and upper schools in 2009 of Lao Cai province were lower than regional averages. The situation in 2014 improved, but only at the primary level with the percentage of female students slightly higher than regionally (47.9% versus 47.6%).

Education quality

The findings from the analysis of test scores to enter 10th grade in the 2014-2015 school year in Lao Cai shows the quality of education in highland and remote areas is still very limited.

The proportion of Kinh students among all students taking the 10th grade exam (48.7%) is higher than the proportion of Kinh in the whole population (34.6%) and the proportion of Kinh population in the 15-17 year of age (26.9%). The proportion of other groups is similar or lower than the general population and the population in the 15-17 year of age. For H'mong group, the proportions are 12.6%, 23.8% and 27.9% respectively. This shows that ethnic minority students in Lao Cai are more disadvantaged than Kinh ones in terms of numbers in the 10th grade entrance examination.

For the whole province, the percentage of male students taking the 10th grade entrance

examination is higher than for female students (54.7% and 45.3%, respectively). Apart from Kinh, Giay and Nung, the gender imbalance appears in all ethnic groups, especially the H'mong group where the number of male students taking the 10th grade entrance examination is double that of female ones.

The average provincial examination score is 19.5, but average scores of ethnic minority students are all below the average. H'mong students have the lowest score (9.4) from half of the general average, the second and third lowest scores are by Dao and Nung students, respectively. Tay and Giay students have examination scores around the general average, with Kinh having the highest.

For all ethnic groups, including Kinh, the female 10th grade entrance examination total score is higher than male's, by 3 to 5 points.

Si Ma Cai district has the lowest score (9.2) and Lao Cai city the highest (29.2). Bao Thang has a score around the general average, while other districts have lower than average scores.

Examination results in districts show differences between Kinh and other ethnic groups, by 3-5 points. In particular, the difference in Muong Khuong is 6 points, in Bac Ha its 10 points and in Sapa its 16 points. Examination results of ethnic minority students in Lao Cai city is highest (24.7) and higher than average (19.5). In Sapa they are lowest (7.8) and only half of the average. Other districts with limited results are Si Ma Cai (9), Bac Ha (11.2) and Muong Khuong (13.3), all districts with results lower than the average score.

Only about 4% of H'mong students belong to the two groups with the highest scores, more than 80% fall in the group with the lowest scores. Dao students have limited results, with only 15% falling in the two groups with the highest scores and nearly 70% in the two groups with the lowest scores. Giay and Tay students have better results than those from other ethnic minority groups. About 30% fall in the two groups with the highest scores and nearly 40% in the group with the lowest scores.

About 35% of Kinh students have the highest scores, while each of other ethnic groups

contributes less than 12%, notably H'mong and Dao contribute less than 2% each. More than 60% of H'mong students have the lowest score, this figure in other groups is more than 50% and among Dao and Nung it is more than 30%.

Out of school children

Findings from the 2009 Census analysis show that inequalities in access to education exist in Lao Cai. A number of ethnic minority children, minority girls and children in special circumstances have no access to education. The updated "Out-of-School Children (OOSC) in Viet Nam: A Country Study" report by the Ministry of Education and Training based on data from the GSO's Inter-census Population Survey 2014 which will be published soon confirms this situation remains.

During the 2008-2009 school year in Lao Cai, the percentage of 5-year-old OOSC was 11.5%, lower than 12.2% nationwide and second lowest of eight provinces (Lao Cai, Dien Bien, Ninh Thuan, Kon Tum, Gia Lai, Ho Chi Minh City, Dong Thap and An Giang). The percentage of primary school age OOSC was 9.5%, more than double the nationwide percentage of 4.0% and third highest among the eight provinces. The percentage of secondary school age OOSC was 17.5%, 1.5 times higher than the nationwide average (11.2%) and sixth highest among eight provinces.

The proportions of OOSC children in rural areas, minority children and children with disabilities are higher than their respective counterparts. The proportions of primary and secondary age OOSC girls were significantly higher than boys (reverse compared to national trends), and the difference is increasing among higher age girls from ethnic minorities (especially H'mong) because more do not attend school. The number of children leaving school in Lao Cai is higher in upper grades of lower secondary. This group of disadvantaged children should be paid more attention in the development planning of education and training, in the management of the education sector and in socio-economic development at all levels.

Viet Nam Escuela Nueva (VNEN)

Lao Cai is a pioneer in the implementation

of the VNEN new school model. However, it needs an independent assessment of this model to promote advantages and overcome any limitations it may have. For example, in discussion groups some teachers said underachieving and timid children lag behind others in this new model's learning environment.

Right to protection

Children in special circumstances

The number of children in special circumstances in 2015 amounted 11,790 persons, or 5.2% of children in Lao Cai. They fell into four groups, children with fatal diseases or diseases requiring long-term treatment and children of poor or near poor households accounted for the greatest number and proportion of total number of children in special circumstances (4,848 persons, 41.1%), followed by those who lost both parents (2,823, 23.9%), children who dropped out of school to earn a living and failed to complete universalisation of secondary education (2,526 persons, 21.4%) and those with disabilities (1,480 persons, 12.6%). The remaining groups are much smaller in terms of number and proportion, but also need special attention as do groups where minimal or no data was recorded potentially due to shortcomings in data collection. In 2015, no exploited children were reported, including those working in contravention to Labour Laws, nor those performing heavy or hazardous jobs or contacting noxious substances. These two types of data are typically collected through a child labour statistical survey not regularly conducted in Viet Nam and the representative sample for this survey is not selected to provincial level. So, Lao Cai may have exploited children or those doing hard, hazardous jobs or contacting noxious substances as analysed in Section 6.2.2 of this report, but data were not collected. Similarly, according to Table 6.2, Lao Cai province in 2015 had no abused and violated children, whereas in Section 6.2.4 in fact a number of children in Lao Cai may have been exposed to violence.

The number of children in special circumstances in 2015 was 11,766 persons or 18.6%. The main groups were children in poor households (34,392 persons, 82.3%), children who dropped

out of school without completing secondary education (2,526 persons, 6.1%), children living in families with social problems (parental divorce, domestic violence, living with people infected by HIV or AIDS) (1,657 persons, 4%), children who suffer injuries and accidents (1,319 persons, 3.2%), children in a family whose member is in judgment execution (993 persons, 2.4%) and children not living with parents during the past six months (879 persons, 2.1%).

As reported, all disadvantaged children and those at risk of becoming disadvantaged children were taken care by State aid policies and other forms. However, it should be noted that while the State aid policy, such as regular monthly assistance, nurtures care in the community, adoption to social protection facilities, medical and education assistance, vocational training and job creation has sustainable effects, other forms of assistance such as gifts only have temporary effects. Therefore, this percentage might not mean all children in special circumstances have been satisfactorily assisted. In the future, data should be disaggregated by more sustainable assistance forms, thereby providing more useful data for users.

Child labour

The results of the National Survey on Child Labour in 2012, conducted by MOLISA in collaboration with GSO and ILO, revealed that 1.75 million children nationwide fell under the child labour group, accounting for 9.6% of children aged 5-17 in Viet Nam.

According to UNICEF and GSO's MICS 2014 study, the country had 16.4% of children aged 5-17 years participating in economic activities or housework exceeding time limits, regarded as child labour. The Northern Midland and Mountainous area was found to have the highest rate of child labour in the country.

The results of a 2011 survey for the "Support for development and implementation of programmes eliminating the worst forms of child labour" project (phase 2009-2013, funded by the Spanish Agency for International Development and Cooperation, operated and technically supported by ILO-IPEC) also showed that in Lao Chai and San Sa Ho, two communes

in Sapa district, 538 children worked in physically heavy conditions, accounting for 21.8% of children aged 5-17 years in the area.

These information sources convey a message that child labour surely exists in Viet Nam and the Northern Midland and Mountainous area in general and Lao Cai in particular. Meanwhile, according to the Department of Childcare and Protection, Lao Cai only has data on child labour in heavy and hazardous conditions¹ with 200 and 180 children in 2010 and 2011, respectively. No data on working times is available. In addition, in 2014 no child labour in heavy and hazardous conditions was reported in Lao Cai. Any reported data, therefore, do not necessarily reflect the real situation of child labour in Lao Cai, particularly in agriculture, construction and services which attract large numbers of child workers.

Trafficking in children

Human trafficking is more prominent in border areas, often in women and female children to China with the primary purpose of sexual exploitation and forced marriage.

According to data from Lao Cai province on human trafficking crimes in Lao Cai, from January 1, 2011 to June 30, 2015, authorities identified, arrested, handled and prosecuted 392 cases with 458 offenders, in which police discovered 155 cases, arrested 319 offenders and border guards discovered 237 cases and arrested 139 offenders. Ethnic minority people are the main targets of human trafficking.

From 2009 to present, the number of returning survivors was 549, 74 of whom were children, accounting for 18.8% (with four survivors male children), 76.4% of survivors were ethnic minorities (Dao, Mong and Thai). Lao Cai had 195 survivors from Bac Ha, Bao Thang, Muong Khuong, Si Ma Cai and Sapa districts aged 15-30 years.

The root cause of this crime is the severe gender imbalance leading to millions of Chinese men not being able to find a wife, thereby stimulating

¹ Definition according to Circular No.10/2013/TT-BLDTBXH promulgating the list of jobs and workplaces prohibited to minor workers.

trafficking in women and female children from Viet Nam to China. In addition, some ethnic minority people have been abused by human traffickers as a result of poverty, lack of jobs and knowledge as well as a desire to change their lives and increase incomes.

Juveniles in conflict with the law

A gradual reduction has occurred over the years in children in conflict with the law. From 2009 to 2014, there were 330 cases in total, mainly in 2009, 2010 and 2011. Some offences such as kidnapping, gambling, dealing and storing illegal drugs or prostitution brokerage did not occur during those years. Most cases involving children are related to stealing property (178 cases), public order offences (59 cases) and physical violence (27 cases). In 2014, 29 cases involved 36 teenagers, of whom 34 were boys.

Lao Cai had the 11th highest number of juveniles violating the law in 14 Northern Midland and Mountainous provinces in 2013, higher than Dien Bien, Hoa Binh and Yen Bai.

Violence and abuse of children

From 2009 to 2014, 122 crimes were committed against children, with slight increases observed over the years. These cases were mainly related to trafficking, kidnapping, exchanging (35 cases), rape (29 cases), sexual intercourse (22 cases) and causing deliberate injury (13 cases).

In 2013, the number of abused children in Lao Cai amounted to 23, as many as the average number of children abused per province in the Northern Midland and Mountainous areas and lower than the national per province average. All abused children in Lao Cai were female, in comparison to 87.2% nationwide and 82.1% in the Northern Midland and Mountainous. In Lao Cai, abused children were largely older than those regionally and nationwide, 82.6% aged 13-16 compared to 64.5% regionally and 65.3% nationwide. As for types of abuse, Lao Cai had a lower rate of sexual assault than the average rate regionally and nationwide (39.1% compared with 75.8% and 64.2%, respectively).

In 2015, 6 children in Lao Cai were reported as abused or experienced violence. Such child abuse and violence statistics do not reflect the

real situation of child abuse in the province because many cases of school violence and child sexual abuse have come to light by the mass media recently.

Right to participation

Children's participation in family

Children's right to participation in families has improved thanks to building in schools. Children know they have the right to express opinions, give comments to parents and express their requests and wishes. However, their right to participation relies on parents' decisions. Language barriers, parents' education levels, differences in home economics, geography and social impacts are often the chief causes limiting children's participation in the family environment.

Children's participation at school

In schools observed during the survey, there was no child perfunctory participation in learning and playing activities, meaning there are differences in levels of child participation by age and area. For smaller children, particularly ones attending Grades 1 or 2, participation was often 'doing instructions provided by teachers', while elder children could take ownership of their study and playground and be encouraged to develop their own initiatives with some orientation from teachers. There is a significant difference in participation levels among children living in rural and urban areas in this study. Children living in urban areas were often more confident, learning more life skills, having more chances to visit places of interest and enjoy life compared with children in rural areas or those belonging to ethnic minority groups. One of the most significant reasons for ethnic minority children's less energetic participation is the language barrier, which makes them hesitant to express ideas. In addition, difficult terrain makes it challenging to travel, so there is a little chance to exchange and learn from other areas.

Children's participation in communities

Children were commonly seen "participating" in community activities. However, there are differences in activities and levels of child

participation in communities. In urban areas, child participation can reach level 6 “adult initiated, shared decisions with children”, but in rural areas, the trend is to reach only level 4 “children assigned and informed”. In general, children’s participation in activities cannot influence policies or programmes.

Recommendations

Key recommendations

General recommendation: Ensure rapid and sustainable economic development; Continue to invest in infrastructure in mountainous areas; When resources are limited, priority should be given to broad-spectrum investment in upland and more disadvantaged areas to achieve tangible breakthroughs rather than spreading the investment out; Further improve awareness and protection of children’s rights in the political system and the public, especially among minority groups; The quality and utilisation of statistics related to children and child-friendly socio-economic development planning should be enhanced.

Rights to survival

Review and build capacity for local health staff, with a special focus on training ethnic minority village birth assistants to become skilled midwives. Village midwives must have a nuanced understanding of ethnic minority languages, cultures and beliefs to create trust and encourage pregnant mothers to access health services. This will lead to improved primary health and maternity care as well as reduce maternal and infant mortality.

Increase the number of patient beds in low ratio of patient bed districts. Improve the quality of maternal care and child nutrition (health services in nutritional and maternal care). In particular expand advocacy and education activities for behaviour change in nutrition, encourage breastfeeding, use clean water, maintain personal hygiene (hand-washing with soap before breast-feeding, cooking, breast cleaning before breast-feeding) and environmental hygiene, implement interdisciplinary and inter-level coordination in prevention of under nutrition.

Develop the family economy, ensure food security and increase production to improve the quality of meals for people, especially children, to prevent stunting and under nutrition.

Improve the management capacity at grassroots level, prioritise resources to repair and upgrade damaged and degraded water supply works.

Encourage community involvement in the protection of clean water and sanitation. Establish community-led and managed regulations and a convention on water and sanitation.

Evaluate and share good practices from models of care of mothers and young children which rely on the community, the Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition (IMAM) model and one on community to commune hygiene employed outside the project area(s).

Right to development

Continue to prioritise the development of education in remote and disadvantaged areas. Build schools and class networks matching the specific characteristics of population distribution and local cultural features; maintain a reasonable number of schools in worse off areas. Create facilities for children with disabilities.

Develop a pool of teachers and education managerial to meet the requirement of comprehensive and basic reform.

Continue to seek solutions to improve the quality of ethnic minority education in line with limited resources. Prioritise to replicate the results of the Bilingual education programme based on the mother tongue in the most difficult areas, in which the official teaching H’mong language is in line with the 2015-2016 Guidelines for the education of EM issued by MOET. Conduct independent evaluation on the effectiveness of the VNEN model. Discover reasons for the higher academic achievement of ethnic minority groups in Bao Thang, Bao Yen and Van Ban districts as well as continue to innovate teaching methods for application in other districts. Implement a movement of “Building friendly schools, active students”,

strengthen life skills education; integrate the traditional culture of ethnic minorities into teaching programmes.

Strengthen coordination between schools, families and society to raise children and parents' awareness of the value of education and communicate that not going to school or dropping out is future self-renunciation. Also, resolutely handle cases of child marriage, dropping out of school and other backward habits.

Provide sufficient and timely policies for teachers and education managers working in remote mountain areas.

Continue research to (i) overcome ineffectiveness of budget allocation per capita in localities which have low population density, (ii) develop mechanisms to support boarding students, students living in especially disadvantaged areas in accordance to education performance (percentage of students graduating from secondary schools) and (iii) promote socialisation activities to suit all parties concerned with education.

Child protection

Policies

Continue to improve policies at national and provincial levels which support cure/treatment costs post-medical examinations for women and children returning as trafficking victims, support H'mong children whose fathers have died and mothers sold in China or those not allowed to follow mothers to live with a stepfather's family.

Better integrate child protection goals into local socio-economic development plans. Sanctions should be stricter, especially regarding child trafficking, violence and abuse. Early application of Decree No.136/2013/ND-CP which provides social support policies for social protection subjects is necessary. Shorten processing times for administrative procedures to determine orphan status.

Childcare and protection services system

Continue to improve the capacity of the social work centre in Lao Cai province to broaden coverage of services with higher expertise. Maintain and expand the assistance and reintegration model for human trafficking victims, such as "Nhan ai" (compassion) houses. Conduct annual assessments of effectiveness and efficiency of existing childcare and protection models for replication.

Child protection organisational structure

Establish psychological counseling centres for children and a telephone help line at provincial level as well as psychological counseling centres for children at district level. Assess performances of eight counseling points in the community and 133 points in schools for replication.

Boost the role of stakeholders through decentralisation and empowerment associated with responsibility for creating local, agency and unit initiatives, enhance interdisciplinary coordination and strengthen inspection, control and supervision. Strengthen questioning of the National Assembly and People's Council on childcare and protection. Supervisory agencies should involve and empower children and have sufficient authority, strong voices and independence.

Resources

Continue training and capacity building for DOLISA officers, especially at grassroots level. Improve a system of specialised staff for childcare and protection in communes, wards and towns as well as build a network of collaborators for childcare and protection in villages/hamlets.

Reasonable allocation and effective use of budget provided in each area with priority given to remote areas.

Strengthen awareness

Continue to strengthen communication, propaganda, dissemination and education on laws to raise people's awareness of child protection in society. Improve the quality of

communication by using pictures as visual aids, best practice models and practices. Promote education on self-defense and soft skills.

Continue to enhance levels of responsibility for Party committees and local authorities for the protection of children, particularly in ethnic minority, remote and areas facing special difficulties.

Guidance and support from central level

There should be better multi-sectoral coordination at all levels from central to grassroots levels to create consistency in implementation methods. A coordination and guidance mechanism is needed for the implementation of the National Action Programme for Children.

Improvements in coordination with international, private and civil society partners

Continue to coordinate and collaborate in the provision of child protection services in the province.

Children's right to participation

In families, parents should be a traveling companion for children. Parents must attend training on friendly relationships with children, listening, problem solving, gender and educational skills. Parents should pay attention to each child's development stage for suitable orientation. Empower youth, listen, offer advice and guidance for children to behave in appropriate ways.

Teachers have great influences on children. Teachers must be friends and respected role models for children. Schools must listen to children's opinions more and let children be involved in determining activities related to them. Schools, families and society should strictly implement the right to protection, especially for girls. Gender education should be taught in schools with innovated teaching methods so children are not shy to receive them, get children interested and able to understand the necessity to protect themselves. Teach life skills to children so they can adapt to life environments. Schools should periodically conduct surveys/investigations to identify the wishes and opinions of students to meet their needs.

Widely disseminate information through switchboards and counseling centres to assist public and answer questions about children's rights, children's rights awarded and to provide psychological counseling for troubled children. Organise meaningful, rich and diverse activities, in which children hold "the stage and the forum" and listen to their opinions. It is important to then respond with specific actions.

CHAPTER

1

INTRODUCTION



CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research objectives

The purpose of the research is to provide a holistic picture of the provincial situation of girls and boys in Lao Cai province in order to inform policy making, improve the planning and influence budget allocation through SEDP and sectoral plans that are more child sensitive and evidence based.

Specific objectives include:

- To improve the understanding of the current status of implementation of children’s and women’s rights in the province and the causes of shortfalls and inequities, as the basis for recommending actions;
- To strengthen the local capacity in monitoring the situation of children and women, particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged groups;

- To provide practical recommendations on improvement of the situation of children and women in Lao Cai under immediate, intermediate and long-term development processes.

1.2. Analytical framework and research methodology

Analytical framework

The table of a cross-check matrix of analysis below illustrates the framework of the analysis process of four groups of children’s rights, which are analysed by topics such as: the realisation of child rights, the institutional and policy environments to facilitate the implementation; the role, responsibilities, and capacities of right holders and duty bearers; other related elements (existing social factors, concerned stakeholders); the reasons for success and failure; and finally the recommendations for improvements.

Table 1.1. Matrix of Lao Cai SitAn Analysis

Child rights	Situation (context and trend)	Policy and institutional environment	Role and responsibilities	Capacity	Others	Causes	Recommendations for changes
Survival							
Development							
Protection							
Participation							

The child rights based approach is a basic approach which helps consider children’s issues in the development context of Viet Nam in general and Lao Cai Province in particular. Child rights are always considered equally with that of other groups in the society. This point of view requires the research to review how

child issues are considered in development programmes, plans and national and local policies. Furthermore, the research must show which needs of children are met and which are not; how children access public services such as health, education; how they are protected and cared for.

The analysis follows the more specific children's rights below:

- Right to survival: including right to normal lives and basic needs to survive and grow up. This could mean an adequate living standard, having shelter, adequate nutrition and healthcare. Birth registration must be completed as soon as a child is born.
- Right to development: including conditions for a child's comprehensive development, both mentally and ethically, education, recreation and entertainment, cultural activities, access to information, freedom of thought, freedom of belief and religion. Children need the love and sympathy of the parents to develop harmoniously.
- Right to protection: children must be protected against all forms of labour exploitation, sexual exploitation and abuse, drug abuse, neglect and abandonment, kidnapping and trafficking; be protected from unjustified interference in their mail and privacy; protected against torture, beatings and abuse when violating a law or detained.
- Right to participation: right for children to freely express their views and opinions on issues related to their own lives; have the right to make friends and to join social groups, right to facilitated access to information sources and appropriate information.

Methodology

The Human-Rights Based Approach (HRBA) is used in this research, supplemented by gender equality analysis and bottleneck/barrier analysis.

Four steps of analysis across each thematic area are applied in order to implement the HRBA:

- Causality analysis, which explores different levels of causes of the current challenges (and concerns) and find out root causes. Causality analysis examines the underlying and structural causes of the problem;

identifies the bottlenecks and barriers relevant to the critical determinants in the provision and use of essential interventions and services for children and women in order to support the establishment of a baseline for action in reducing inequities and accelerating progress towards child development goals. The main tool for causality analysis is the problem tree.

- Role-pattern analysis which analyses the current functioning and capabilities of duty-bearers and right-bearers. Tools for role-capacity analysis are based on the analytical framework and determinants of responsibilities, rights and resources of duty bearers. Venn charts and SWOT analysis could be used as appropriate (strength, weakness, opportunities and challenges).
- Capacity-gap analysis which tells strengths, weaknesses, and capability gaps of duty-bearers and right-holders in fulfilling their roles.
- Analysis of the enabling environment affecting children examines the strengths and weaknesses of the institutional arrangement and its management coordination mechanism, social norms, social policies, legislative and budgetary system. The analysis of the enabling environment is meant to examine the strengths and weaknesses, coordination mechanism, social norms and policies, legal framework and budget. The tool for environment analysis is SWOT.

Additionally, Gender Equality Analysis is mainstreamed in the SitAn with a special focus on presenting gender disparities as affecting the full realisation of children's rights.

In this analysis, both duty bearers and right holders are "encouraged/mobilised" to be involved. Right holders include children and women. The related aspects are social norms, resources available to them, education level and health status, accessibility to the information and rights, awareness about their rights. Duty bearers are parents. The related aspects include social norms, resources

available to them, habits and customs regarding raising children, awareness about parents' duty towards their children.

1.3. Fieldwork location and research participants

This report focuses on in-depth analysis of three priority issues, including:

Social Policy and Governance: The implementation of the Social Economic Development Plan (SEDP) (balance between economic and social issues), sectoral plans, programme targets/ indicator and budgets which place priorities on children and women, particularly vulnerable groups, such as children with disabilities, children living with HIV/ AIDS, children in contact with the law, ethnic minority groups (budget allocations and expenditures at the provincial level, whether or not they involve increases in social sectors, and whether they are linked with priorities or not). Links between the provincial SEDP and sectoral plans relating to children (health, education, protection, etc.).

Survival: Malnourished children and mothers, the disparity between socio-economic classes and ethnic groups; the access of mothers and children from ethnic minorities to maternal and new born healthcare, nutrition, water supply and sanitation.

Education: Quality of education for ethnic minority children including relevant curriculums, teaching materials, teachers, classrooms, dormitories, multifunction rooms, kitchens, toilets and support staff. The district, communes/wards which are selected for research must be in sufficient enough number to represent the province in terms of (i) socio-economic conditions and features; (ii) structure of ethnic groups and demography in the province; and (iii) child-related issues.

Based on geographic location and socio economic development, after two consultative meetings with representatives from line departments at province and district levels of Lao Cai province, three districts were selected to conduct the survey on the three priority issues. These are Lao Cai City (high level of socio-economic development and urban area) and

two districts representing rural areas, including Muong Khuong District (low level of socio-economic development) and Bao Yen District (average level of socio-economic development).

In each chosen district, two communes were selected; one of the communes is closer to the district centre, with higher socio-economic development level than others and another is relatively poor. These communes include ethnic minority groups of the province. Two wards selected for in-depth analysis in Lao Cai City have Kinh and other ethnic minorities. These are:

- Lao Cai city: Kim Tan and Nam Cuong wards
- Muong Khuong district: Muong Khuong town and La Pan Tan commune
- Bao Yen district: Tan Tien and Minh Tan communes

Detailed information about the selected districts and communes can be found in Appendix 1. The participants in the meetings/discussions at the district level are the representatives of the District People's Committee and its related units, and socio-political organisations in the district. Qualitative information which needs to be collected is focused on the situation of child rights in districts, the shortfalls, causes of the shortfalls and solutions. The target groups at the commune level of focus group discussions are: group of commune full-time officials; group of mothers; group of children; group of teachers.

The group of full-time staff of the commune/ward: officials of the Commune/Wards People's Committee responsible for culture and social issues, the people's Council, commune politburo, health station, justice staff, police, the women's union, youth union, and health staff of the village, population staff of the commune and population collaborators in the village.

The topics of this group are focused on the implementation of four groups of children's rights, specifically: how the activities and budgets for children are integrated into the commune/ward socio-economic development plan; which children rights have been realised

and what have not in comparison with the targets and plans/programmes; what are the short falls in realisation of the child rights in communes, their causes and solutions and/or recommendations.

The group of parents: include parents whose children are from 0-18 years-old from normal households and disadvantaged households such as poor households, households having children with disabilities, households with out-of-school children and households with young child labour. Both Kinh and ethnic minority parents are invited to the discussions.

In this group, the topics to be discussed focus on children's rights to survival and protection: the shortfalls of knowledge in bringing up and protecting children; nutrition status of children under 5 years old; reproductive healthcare of adolescents; the status which the child has to work early; the risks to injury that children face with (traffic, disaster, etc.); the accessibility of new born and maternal healthcare services, water supply and sanitation.

The group of teachers: include teachers at the public nursery, primary, lower and higher secondary schools; representatives of school management boards; representatives of teachers from day-boarder classes at all education levels (if any).

For this group, the topics to be discussed focus on the realisation of the rights to protection, development and participation, which includes the situation of the out of school children, school violence, issues and problems related to shortages of facilities and education equipment, teaching and learning materials, capacity and qualifications of teachers,...; activities and teaching methods which promote the expression of personalities of each pupil, expression of personal ideas, complaints and enhancing the social relationship of children through team activities inside or outside school, through forums, sport/show competitions and festivals.

The group of children: including children from three education levels. The selection of children will involve both boys and girls, children of different ethnicities and different learning capacity (good, fair, average and poor).

For this group, the discussion topics focus on the groups of rights to development, protection and participation. Specifically, how families and schools create favourable conditions and opportunities for children to study; have the children ever faced with any dangers or been in danger on the way to school, when they are playing and working; the children's knowledge on the prevention of sexual harassment and accidents; the violence on the child in the family, school or outside family and school; dietary intakes for children at families and schools; how the child has enjoyed favourable conditions and opportunities to express his/herself, express ideas and criticism, enhance social relationships in the school or community;

The consultant team conducted a rapid assessment of the realisation of children's rights using UNICEF's data collection tool (introduced to Lao Cai in the SitAn consultative meeting on 10 January with 20 boys and girls from Bac Ha and Sa Pa districts and to the consultant team in the meeting with UNICEF on child participation on November 05th 2014) with 72 questions.

1.4. Brief introduction of key contents of each chapter and limitations of the research

This report comprises eight chapters, the conclusion and recommendations part, and two appendixes.

Chapter 1 provides general introduction to the research. Chapter 2 introduces the development context of Lao Cai province, including geographical characteristics, environment, natural disasters and climate change; demographic characteristics and trends which present diversity and difference among ethnic minorities; main features of socio-economic development, infrastructure; current status and trends of living standards and poverty; gender equality and women empowerment. This information will contribute to the explanation of achievements and shortcomings in the next chapters.

Chapter 3 presents the state governance and institutional environment of Lao Cai Province regarding child protection and care. Contents include: multi sector policies, programmes

that promote and protect children's rights and ensure children's well-being; policy making, planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation mechanism of programmes for children; roles and capacities of key duty bearers; management, coordination, monitoring, reporting and evaluation mechanism.

Chapter 4 to 7 analyse the fulfilment of children's rights in Lao Cai.

Chapter 4 analyses the situation, reasons and recommendations about the status of children's rights to health and nutrition, including maternal and child health, water and sanitation.

Chapter 5 analyses the situation and causes and puts forward recommendations related to achievements and issues in the education sector in Lao Cai province. This chapter also provides an in-depth analysis of the quality of education for EM students and out-of-school children (OOSC) of Lao Cai province.

Chapter 6 analyses the situation, reasons and recommendation about achievement and shortcomings in achieving children's rights to protection and care in Lao Cai Province. Contents include: the current status of the child protection programme in Lao Cai Province; the status quos, legal and policy framework, bottlenecks and barriers priorities and recommendations.

Chapter 7 analyses children's rights to participation, main status quos and challenges for the fulfilment of children's rights to participation, and discusses some issues related to children's participation. Chapter 7 is structured as follows: child participation and children's rights to participation, status of children's participation, policy and legal framework related to the children's right to participation, bottlenecks and barriers, priorities and recommendations.

Chapter 8 is the final one in this report and presents newly raised issues related to child protection in Lao Cai.

The report includes two appendices: Appendix 1 on detailed information on the three selected districts for in-depth analysis and Appendix 2 on out-of-school children in Lao Cai using data from 2009 Population census.

The Lao Cai SitAn report has some shortcomings

The 2014 data on population are not disaggregated by ethnicity, so the report had to use data from the 2009 Viet Nam population and housing census. However, there are minor changes in population structure in different censuses so this does not affect the analysis result.

This report only analyses available data, and does not discuss other issues related to child protection and care such as: HIV, child labour, etc.



CHAPTER 2. DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

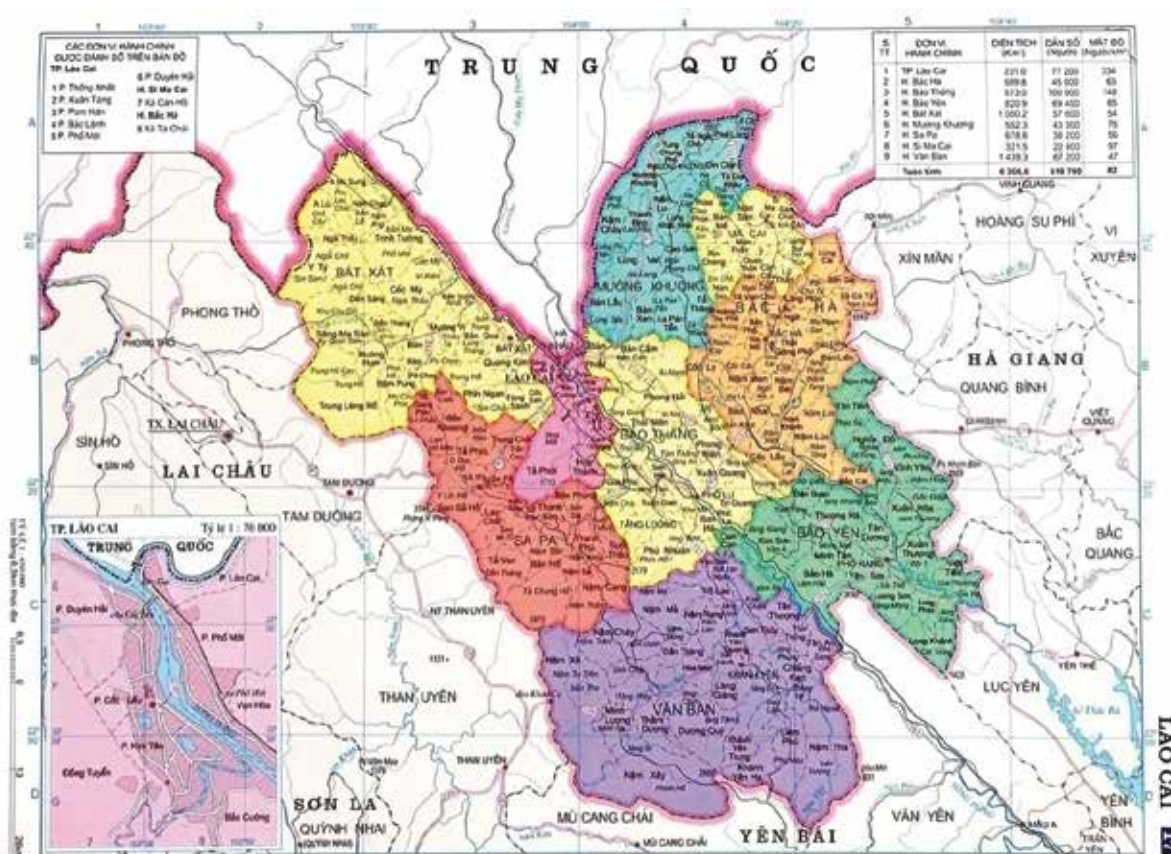
2.1. Geographical setting, environment, natural disasters and climate change

2.1.1. Geographical setting of Lao Cai province and research locations

Lao Cai is a mountainous and high land bordering province of the northern

mountainous area of Viet Nam. Lao Cai is 296km from Hanoi by railway and 264 km by road. It borders Ha Giang Province to the east, Yen Bai Province to the south, Lai Chau province to the west and Yunnan Province, China to the north with an inland border 187 km long. The natural area of the province is 638,389.59 ha, accounting for 1.93% of the total area of Viet Nam, ranking 19 out of 64 provinces and cities.

Figure 2.1. Administrative Map of Lào Cai province



Source: Lao Cai Provincial Statistics Office (PSO)

The average height of districts and towns is from 100-200m (Lao Cai City, Bat Xat, Bao Thang, Bao Yen Districts) to 1000-1200m (Muong Khuong, Bac Ha District). In particular, Sapa District has an average height of 1,600 m. Some high mountain peaks include: Phan

Xi Pang (3,143m), Lang Lung (2,913m) and Ta Giang Phinh (2,850m).

Main rivers running through the province include: the Red River flowing from Yunnan, China (with a length of 120km along Lao

Cai Province); the Chay River flowing from Kunlunling, China (with 124km along Lao Cai Province) and the Ngoi Nhu River (with 68 km along the province).

Based on topography and climate, the province can be divided into two different natural areas:

- The high area with height above 700m is formed by two main ranges of mountain-Hoang Lien Son and Con Voi. The slope of the area is rather steep, from 150-200m. There are 7 climate and 12 bio-climatic types which classify into 10 types of bio-climate zones and 43 microclimate zones. The average temperature is from 230C to 290C, and the average rainfall is from 1,00mm to 2,000mm.
- The low area with height of 700m and lower mainly consists of valleys along with big rivers, streams and terrain area with changeable surface. Additionally, there are narrow valleys, covered by upland and mountain ranges. The average temperature is from 230C to 290C, and the average rainfall from 1,400mm to 1,700mm.

Lao Cai Province has a tropical monsoon climate. The dry season starts in October of a year and lasts to March of the following year; the rainy season starts from April to September. Rain and storms often strike in April and September. The province has a complex and dissected terrain which creates different and harsh climates zones. In particular, fog and even heavy fog occurs across the province. During the freezing period high mountains and valleys are frozen. (Source: Lao Cai PSO, Committee of Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA)).

Lao Cai Province consists of 8 districts, one city, 143 communes, 12 wards and 9 towns.

The population of Lao Cai Province is of 665,152 persons (source: Lao Cai PSO 2014), with 35 ethnic minority groups living together, of which 65.4% consist of ethnic minorities (Lao Cai PSO, the 2009 Population and Housing census); the rural population accounts for 77.1% (2014).

The province has the advantage of temperate crops, especially flowers, fruit, herbs and fish of cold countries. The province has large

mineral potential (iron ore in Lao Cai City, Van Ban District, Bao Yen district; kaolin, fenspat, graphite, apatite in Lao Cai City; copper ore in Bat Xat district; molybdenum in Sapa) and potential for tourism and economic development on the border.

2.1.2. Climate change, water resources and environment

Lao Cai is facing climate change. Complex developments have occurred in natural disasters² in the province in recent years such as: snowing much more in December; more frequent severe hailstone storms with large size stones, flash floods, landslides; record temperatures.

Two big rivers flow across Lao Cai, however, due to dissected terrain, steep slopes, pressure from socio-economic development and construction in the province and complex developments of the global climate change, the water resources of Lao Cai are suffering higher and higher pressure.

The rapid growth of economic industries has caused a high pressure on the environment and ecological landscape of the region. There are three industrial zones in Lao Cai Province including Dong Pho Moi, Bac Duyen Hai and Tang Loong industrial zones. The activities from the factories and workshops have cause environmental pollution.

There is investment in infrastructure in urban and residential areas but it is not comprehensive. Rural environmental pollution is more and more serious because of the fact that domestic waste, waste water, and agricultural waste have not been collected and treated. The recession of forest resources and biodiversity is still an alarming problem. Soil, water, and air tend to be contaminated³.

2.1.3. Adaption to Climate change and environmental risks

Facing obvious impacts of climate change, the province issued an action plan for implementing the National Target Programme

² <http://laocai.gov.vn/sites/sotnmt/Tintucsukien/tintrongtin/Trang/20150813082611.aspx>

³ Viet Nam Environment Administration

on Climate change adaptation, and an action plan for climate change preparedness of Lao Cai City for the period of 2014 - 2020, with an orientation toward 2030 in the Decision No. 1895/QD-UBND dated 07/7/2014.

According to Lao Cai leaders, planting and forest protection measures remains a top priority, especially maintaining the forest water shed to protect water resources, along with irrigation infrastructure investments.

Besides, Lao Cai has undertaken concrete measures for disaster prevention and adaptation to climate change: enhancing knowledge, enhancing adaptive capacity livelihood security for the people of the areas frequently affected by natural disasters; updated climate change scenarios; demonstration models of agro - forestry to agricultural development toward an adaptation to climate change, consistent with the characteristics of the local ecosystem; implementing high-tech projects, new models to cope with climate change, such as water saving irrigation models, agriculture project VINECO - Sa Pa; eliminating 54 hydropower projects in the development plan for small and medium hydropower by 2020 to avoid affecting the ecological environment; developing monitoring networks and technologies

of meteorological forecasting, automated hydrological stations in the province to improve forecasting, hydro - meteorological services for disaster warning and prevention in a climate change context.

In order to manage water resources properly, the Lao Cai PPC approved the plan for water resource management of Lao Cai Province for the period of 2014-2020, with a view to 2030 in the Decision No. 169/QD-UBND dated 14/01/2014.

2.2. Demographic characteristics and trends⁴

2.2.1. Population size and ethnic structure

The average population of Lao Cai in 2014 was of 665,152 persons, ranking 11 in the Northern Midland and Mountainous area and 55 in the whole country by population size (see Table 2.1)

The general population density of the province is 104 people/km²; the lowest is in Van Ban (59 people/km²) and the highest is in Lao Cai (469 people/km²).

⁴ Including the diversity and differences of ethnic minorities

Table 2.1. Population size and density in Lao Cai Province in 2014

	Population (persons)	Urban population (person)	Rural population (persons)	Percentage of urban population (%)	Percentage of rural population (%)	Population density (persons/ Km2)
Total	665,152		513,189	22,90	77,10	104
Lao Cai City	108,211	83,758	24,453	77,40	22,60	469
District						
Bat Xat	75,145	4,491	70,654	6,00	94,00	71
Muong Khuong	57,438	8,033	49,405	14,00	86,00	102
Si Ma Cai	34,714	0	34,714	0,00	100,00	148
Bac Ha	59,831	5,484	54,347	9,20	90,80	87
Bao Thang	106,632	24,584	82,048	23,10	76,90	156
Bao Yen	80,937	9,065	71,872	11,20	88,80	98
Sa Pa	58,214	10,159	48,055	17,50	82,50	86
Van Ban	84,030	6,389	77,641	7,60	92,40	59

Source: Lao Cai PSO

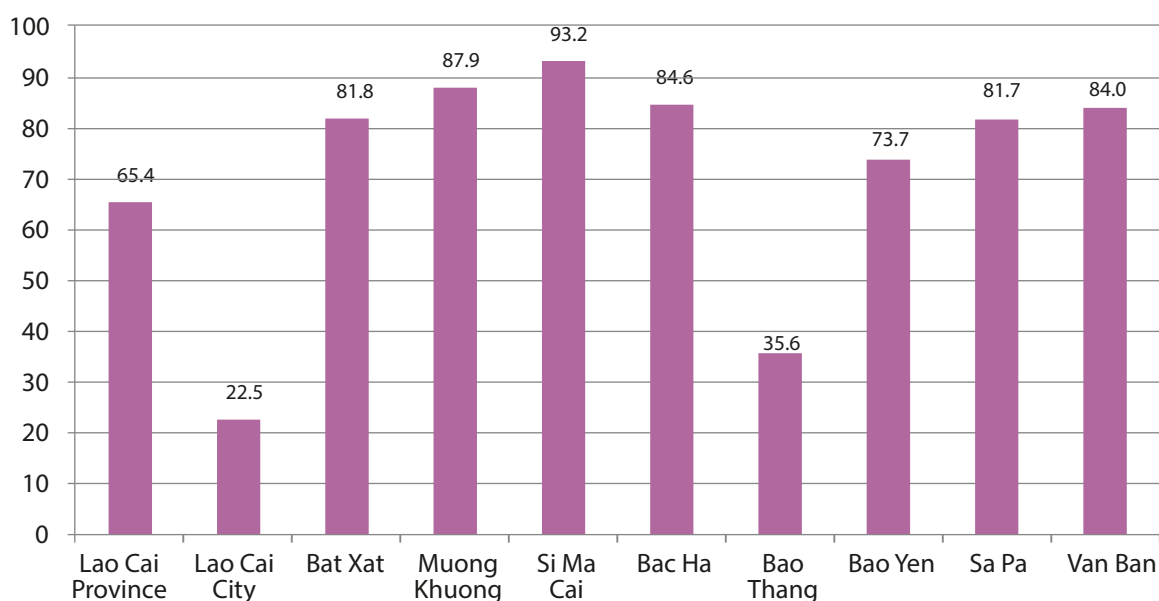
The only and updated data source on the ethnic group structure of Lao Cai province is the 2009 Population and Housing Census conducted by the GSO. This report uses the data on the ethnic structure of the 2009 census, with the assumption that there are minor changes in the ethnic structure of Lao Cai from 2009 to 2015.

According to the 2009 census, Kinh people accounts for 34.6% of the total population in the province and most of them live in Lao Cai

City (77.5%) and Bao Thang district (64.4%).

The ethnic minorities account for 65.4% of the population of the province; the largest proportion of the people are in Si Ma Cai (93.2%), the second largest is in Muong Khuong District, followed by Bac Ha district (84.6%), Van Ban (84%), Bat Xat (81.8%), Sa Pa (81.7%), Bao Yen (73.2%); the proportion of ethnic minorities in Bao Thang District is rather low (35.6%) and the lowest is in Lao Cai city (22.5%).

Figure 2.2. Population distribution by district in 2009

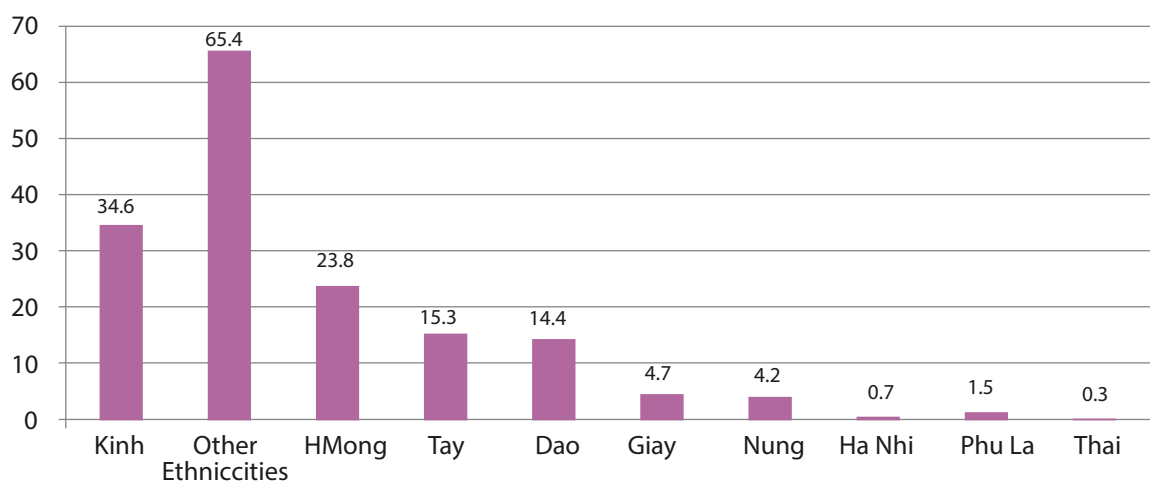


Source: 2009 census

In the province, H'mong people account for the highest proportion (23.8%) among ethnic minorities, followed by Tay (15.3%), Dao

(14.4%), Giay (4.7%), Nung (4.2%), Phu La (1.5%), Ha Nhi (1.5%) and Thai (0.3%).

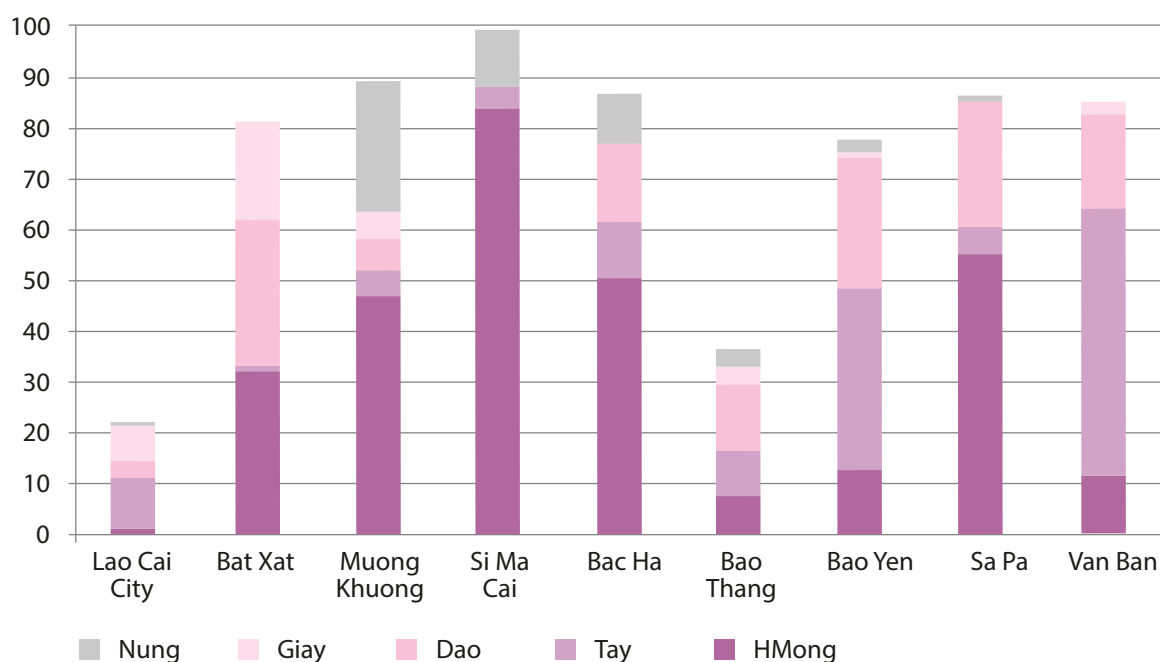
Figure 2.3. Population distribution by ethnicity, 2009 census



Source: 2009 census

The H'mong people live in highest proportion in 5 districts: Si Ma Cai (77.8%), Sa Pa (51.3%), Bac Ha (46.8%), Muong Khuong (43.5%), and Bat Xat (29.9%).

Figure 2.4. Percentage of ethnic minority population by district



Source: 2009 census

Tay people live in highest proportions in Van Ban (48.8%) and Bao Yen districts (33.2%). Most of the Dao people reside in three districts of Bat Xat (26.4%), Bao Yen (23.9%), and SaPa (22.9%).

The Giay live in highest proportions in in Bat Xat (18.3%) while most of Nung people live in Muong Khuong (23.7%).

Table 2.2. Population divided by ethnic groups and district in 2009

	Total	Lao Cai City	Bat Xat	M/ Khuong	Si Ma Cai	Bac Ha	Bao Thang	Bao yen	Sa Pa	Van Ban
Total (people)	614,595	98,363	70,015	52,149	31,323	53,587	99,974	76,415	53,549	79,220
Percentage in total (%)	100.0	16.0	11.4	8.5	5.1	8.7	16.3	12.4	8.7	12.9
Kinh (%)	34.6	77.5	18.2	12.1	6.8	15.4	64.4	26.3	18.3	16.0
Other ethnic group (%)	65.4	22.5	81.8	87.9	93.2	84.6	35.6	73.7	81.7	84.0
H'mong (%)	23.8	0.9	29.9	43.5	77.8	46.8	7.1	11.7	51.3	10.9
Tay (%)	15.3	9.5	1.0	4.9	4.3	10.3	8.2	33.2	4.8	48.8
Dao (%)	14.4	2.9	26.4	5.5	0.1	14.5	12.3	23.9	22.9	17.0
Giay (%)	4.7	6.3	18.3	5.0	0.0	0.1	3.3	1.0	1.4	2.7
Nung (%)	4.2	0.7	0.1	23.7	9.9	8.9	2.9	2.2	0.1	0.1
Thai (%)	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.1	1.6

Source: GSO, 2009 census

According to the 2009 census, the proportion was of 21% of urban population and 79% of rural population. Notably, while the Kinh people have an equitable distribution of 50:50 in urban and rural areas, only 5.6% of ethnic minorities live in urban areas and 94.4% live in rural areas. Most of H'mong people (97.3%) live in rural areas.

By 2014, the urban population of Lao Cai has increased to 22.9% (Table 2.1). It does not change the situation much because most of the ethnic people live far from the urban area. The population distribution with ethnic minorities living mostly in rural areas, especially in highlands, and in remote rural areas is a basic feature which explains the differences in development extension among the ethnic groups in this report.

2.2.2. Migration

Migration is measured by the in-migration rate⁵, out-migration rate⁶ and net-migration rate⁷. According to Table 2.3, in the last 10 years out-migration of Lao Cai has been greater than in-migration. In 2014, the net-migration rate of Lao Cai was -2, meaning that Lao Cai lost 2 persons per 1000 population, which is as high as the level of the Northern Midland and Mountainous area. The net-migration rate of Lao Cai increased from 2005 to 2014.

5 In-migration rate indicates the number of in-migrants from another territorial units arriving in the territorial unit during an observed period per 1,000 persons at that destination.

6 Out-migration rate indicates the number of out-migrants departing from a territorial unit during an observed period per 1,000 persons at that territory.

7 Net-migration rate is the difference between in-migration rate and out-migration rate. This figure has positive value if number of in-migrants is more than number of out-migrants; that has negative value if number of in-migrants is less than number of out-migrants.

Table 2.3. Migration of the Northern Midland and Mountainous area and Lao Cai

	In-migration rate			Out-migration rate			Net-migration rate		
	2005	2009	Preliminary for 2014	2005	2009	Preliminary for 2014	2005	2009	Preliminary for 2014
Whole country	5.0	8.7	9.2	5.0	8.7	9.2	...	...	...
Northern Midland and Mountainous area	1.9	1.8	2.3	2.3	5.4	4.3	-0.4	-3.6	-2.0
Lao Cai	1.2	3.9	2.0	2.4	4.5	4.1	-1.2	-0.6	-2.0

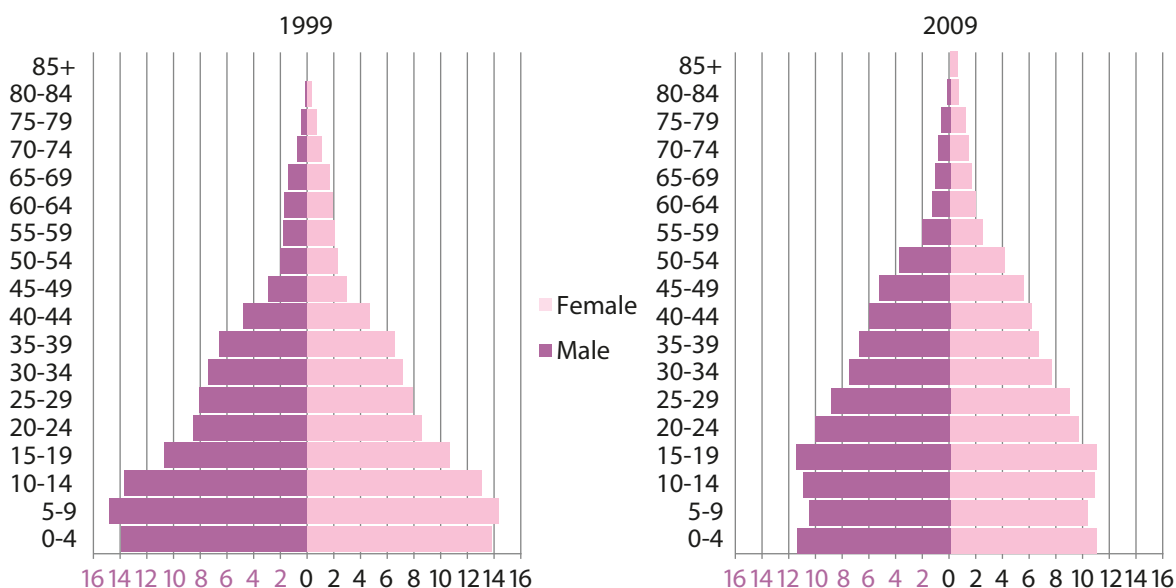
Source: GSO

2.2.3. Structure of gender, ages and education of the population

The updated data on population by age of

Lao Cai Province was available only in the 2009 census. The population pyramids below describe the 1999 and 2009 population of Lao Cai by five groups of ages and gender.

Figure 2.5. Population pyramid of Lao Cai, years 1999 and 2009



Source: 1999 and 2009 census

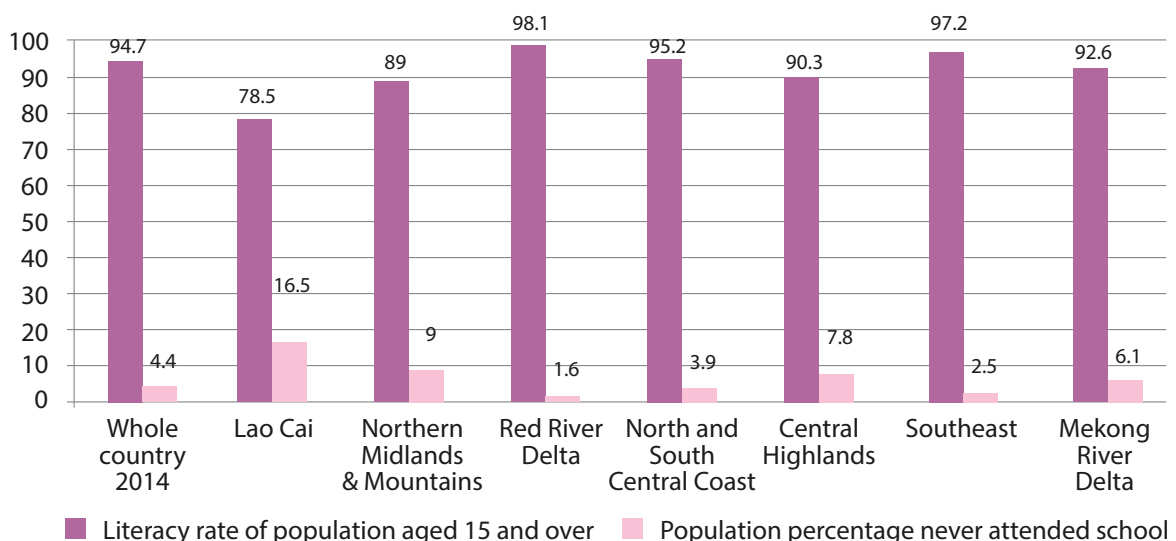
The population pyramid is an overall picture reflecting population groups by sex and age groups, from newborn babies to adults of working ages and older people. It also shows the number of women of reproductive age, fertility, mortality and the population increase of the population groups.

the population in young ages declining and the proportion in working age groups increasing, with a narrowing of the three bars at the base of the pyramid. The 2009 population pyramid indicates that the number of people entering working age is high, the number of newborn children is low and the number of elderly is medium.

There have been critical changes in the size and structure of the Lao Cai population. The 1999 population pyramid reflects a young structure of population by three wide bars at the base of the pyramid including population group from 0-14 years of age. In 2009 its pyramid changed dramatically, with the proportion of

Regarding the gender structure, there were bigger differences between male and female proportions in the five bottom bars of the 2009 pyramid compared to the 1999 pyramid. This proves a greater gender unbalance for the age group 20-24 and below in 2009 compared to that in 1999, especially for the age group 0-4.

Figure 2.6. Literacy of population aged 15 and over, 2014

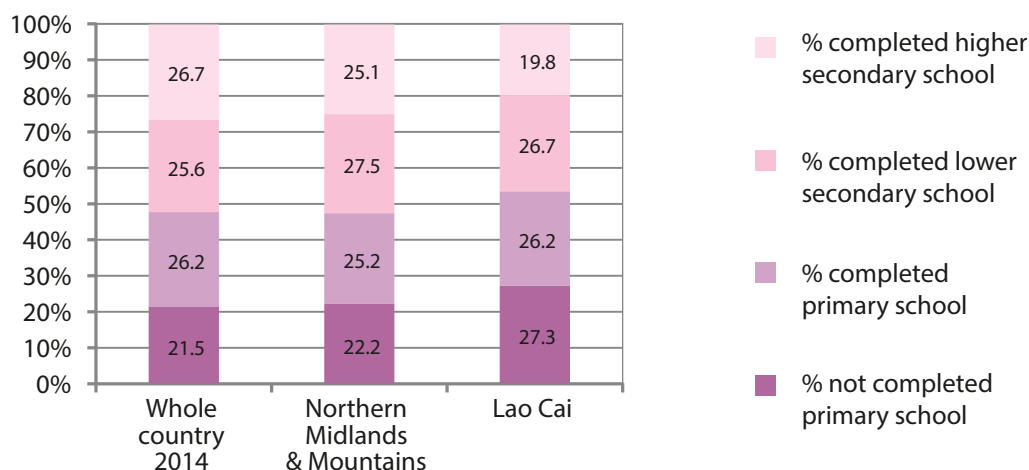


Source: 2014 Intercensal Population and Housing Survey

The literacy rate of the population aged 15 and over in the Northern Midlands and Mountains Region is the lowest among 6 regions (89%), of which Lao Cai reached 78%, 10% lower than in the Northern Midlands and Mountains Region.

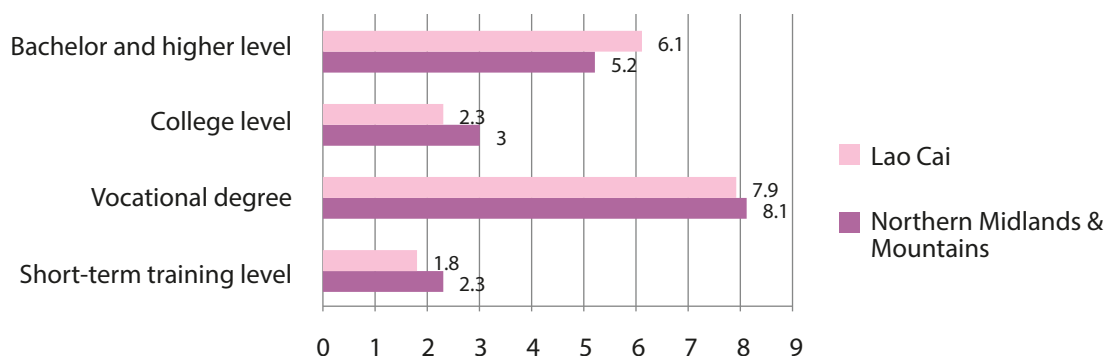
Similarly, the percentage of the population who completed lower secondary school in Lao Cai is also lower than the average rate in the Northern Midlands and Mountains Region.

Figure 2.7. Population aged 15 and over by basic education level



Source: 2014 Intercensal Population and Housing Survey

Figure 2.8. The highest professional and technical qualifications of the population aged 15 and over



Source: 2014 Intercensal Population and Housing Survey

The percentage of population aged 15 and over who have a college or lower level degree in Lao Cai is lower than the average proportion of the region. However, the percentage of the population aged 15 and over who have a bachelor or higher level degree in Lao Cai is higher than the average proportion of the region. This should be an advantage for Lao Cai in socio-economic development in the future.

2.2.4. Sex ratio at birth

Sex ratio at birth in 2014 in Lao Cai reduces 1.3 percentage point compared to that of 2013. In

particular, in 2013, the ratio was 112.6 boys/100 girls; while in 2014, this ratio was 111.3/ 100, lower than the national average (112.2/ 100). However compared to the benchmark of 105, Lao Cai still faces gender imbalance at birth⁸.

2.2.5. Fertility rate and population growth rate

Table 2.4 shows that the crude birth rate of Lao Cai in 2010 was 24.4 live births per 1,000 people, much higher than the crude birth rate of

⁸ Lao Cai Department for Population and Family Planning

the Northern Midlands and Mountains Region (19.3%) and of the Whole Country (17.1%). In 2014, the crude birth rate of the Northern Midlands and Mountains Region considerably increased (21.1%), and that of the whole country only slightly increased (17.2%), yet the crude birth rate of Lao Cai decreased to 20%. In short, in 2014, the crude birth rate of Lao Cai was higher than the rate of the whole country,

yet the difference had considerably decreased compared with that in 2010. Moreover, the crude birth rate of Lao Cai was lower than the rate of the Northern Midlands and Mountains Region in 2014. A similar trend occurred with the total fertility rate. The fertility rate was in a downtrend within the period of 2010-2014 which may show the positive impact of population and family planning activities in Lao Cai.

Table 2.4. Crude birth rate⁹ and Total fertility rate¹⁰

	Crude birth rate			Total fertility rate		
	Whole Country	Northern Midlands and Mountains	Lao Cai	Whole Country	Northern Midlands and Mountains	Lao Cai
2010	17.1	19.3	24.4	2.00	2.22	2.73
2014	17.2	21.1	20.0	2.09	2.56	2.36

Source: Statistical Yearbook 2014, GSO

⁹ Crude birth rate in the past 12 months indicates the number of live births per 1,000 persons in 12 months prior to the survey.

¹⁰ Total fertility rate in the past 12 months is the average number of children that would be born to a woman by the times she ended childbearing if she were to pass through all her childbearing years conforming to the age-specific fertility rates of 12 months preceding the survey.

However, there is an uptrend in the population size of disadvantaged districts within this period since the following analysis shows that the decline of fertility rate may occur unevenly among districts. According to the 2014 statistical source of the Lao Cai PSO, the 2010 population of Lao Cai increased by 1.63% compared with

that in 2010, then the rate of population growth dropped gradually year by year to 1.41% in 2014 in comparison with that in 2013. The population growth rate in some districts increased much more than the average growth of the province (2014 vs. 2010): Bac Ha (9.18%), Muong Khuong (7.76%) and Si Ma Cai (7.61%).

Table 2.5. Population growth rate of Lao Cai Province

	2011/2010	2012/2011	2013/2012	2014/2013	2014/2010
Total	101.63	101.50	101.45	101.41	106.12
City					
Lao Cai	102.29	101.84	101.47	100.95	106.72
Districts					
Bat Xat	101.48	101.45	101.48	101.16	105.69
Muong Khuong	102.27	101.77	101.62	101.89	107.76
Si Ma Cai	101.40	102.11	101.17	102.73	107.61
Bac Ha	101.31	102.00	102.42	103.16	109.18
Bao Thang	102.12	100.90	100.96	100.67	104.73
Bao Yen	101.25	101.04	101.19	101.14	104.71

	2011/2010	2012/2011	2013/2012	2014/2013	2014/2010
Sa Pa	100.92	102.02	101.65	101.54	106.27
Van Ban	101.00	101.18	101.46	101.25	104.99

Source: GSO

2.2.6. Household size

According to the Household Living Standards Survey of the GSO (Table 2.6), the household size of Lao Cai decreased from 4.9 people/household in 2008 to 4.27 people/household in 2014. However, the household size of Lao Cai has for years been higher than the household size of the Northern Midlands and Mountains Region, and higher than the average size of

the whole country. At the national/regional level or in Lao Cai, the size of poor households is larger than the size of rich households. This is true for all ethnic groups. However, the difference is not as large for the Kinh as for other EM groups (HLSS 2014); the household size of the Kinh is also smaller than that of other ethnic groups. This is also a major cause of poverty for EM groups.

Table 2.6. Household size by income quintile

	Total	Group 1 (The poorest)	Group 2	Group 3 (average)	Group 4	Group 5 (the richest)
Whole country						
2008	4.12	4.41	4.30	4.15	4.03	3.77
2010	3.89	4.18	4.10	3.96	3.82	3.47
2012	3.85	4.10	3.99	3.96	3.82	3.46
2014	3.81	4.08	3.93	3.89	3.77	3.44
Northern Midland and Mountainous area						
2008	4.32	4.95	4.35	4.09	3.82	3.44
2010	4.17	4.97	4.58	4.24	3.99	3.41
2012	4.12	4.87	4.49	4.17	3.88	3.46
2014	4.07	4.98	4.35	4.07	3.85	3.41
Lao Cai						
2008	4.9	5.4	5.7	5.4	4.5	3.9
2010	4.5	4.9	4.8	5.3	4.3	3.6
2012	4.2	4.8	4.9	4.5	3.8	3.3
2014	4.27	5.33	4.86	4.41	3.85	3.45

Source: Statistical Yearbook 2014, GSO

2.3. Main characteristics about the infrastructure and socio-economic development of the province

2.3.1. Infrastructure

Transportation

The transportation network in Lao Cai is mainly by road. There are four national highways running through the province (4D, 4E, 279, 70) with a total length of over 400 km; 8 provincial roads with 300 km and 1,000 km of inter-

commune and village roads. The transportation network ensures relatively convenient transportation. Lao Cai has a motorway to all commune centres in the province.

There are two inland waterways including the Red River and the Chay River through the province. However, many cascades have not been treated, so the capacity for transportation is limited.

The Hanoi - Lao Cai highway has been put into operation, creating new opportunities for economic and tourism development in Lao Cai.

The railway of Hanoi - Lao Cai is 296 km long, with 62km in Lao Cai province, and connects with the China railway. There is also a railway from Pho Lu to the apatite mine in Cam Duong, and a branch connects Xuan Giao with the Tang Loong Plant of Ore Processing with a total length of 58 km and 50 pairs of rails/ day.

Electricity and water infrastructure

All of the 164 communes, wards and townships of Lao Cai are connected to the national power grid. However, about 5.4% of rural households do not have access to electricity. The figure has reduced to 4.4% in 2014. These households live in 453 villages of 100 communes of all 8 districts

(Source: Lao Cai PSO 2014).

Safe water supply is currently available in Lao Cai city and most of the district centre. However, only about 80% of households in Lao Cai are using safe water sources, of which nearly 88% are in urban and 77% are in rural areas. There is a lack of water for highland and remote areas, especially during the dry season.

Communication and information technology infrastructure

The number of phone subscribers per 100 people increased by 109%, from 77 to 84 subscribers, of which the number of mobile phone subscribers grew faster than the number of landline phone subscribers, from 59 subscribers in 2010 to 78 subscribers in 2014, an increase of 134%. The number of internet subscribers also increased by 236% from 3 subscribers/100 people in 2010 to 9 subscribers/100 people in 2014 (Statistical Yearbook 2014, Lao Cai PSO). The rapid increase of the number of mobile phone subscribers in recent years has helped the Lao Cai Department of Education use mobile phones as a mean of communication between schools and students' families to report on students' academic results and increase student attendance.

Table 2.7. Phone and Internet Subscribers

	Total of Phone Subscribers/100 people	Mobile Phone Subscribers/100 people	Internet Subscribers/100 people
2010	77	59	3
2011	93	77	5
2012	64	54	6
2013	64	56	6
2014	84	78	9
2014 vs 2010 (%)	109	134	286

Source: Statistical Yearbook 2014, GSO

The information technology infrastructure has developed in a stable manner. The urban LAN project with modern technology and scale ensures that Lao Cai province will have a transmission infrastructure to meet demand until 2020 and will be able to move to the next phases. Provincial departments

and agencies have been focused on the development of ICT infrastructure by investing in internet connections for management and administration. The web portal of <http://www.laocai.gov.vn/> is the formal online information channel of Lao Cai Province.

Tourism infrastructure

In recent years, Lao Cai has developed roads to foster tourism in some key areas of the province such as Sa Pa-Cat Cat, Sapa - San Sa Ho; Thon San Il-Lao Chai to Ta Van; Phec Bung – Coc Ly (Bac Ha district), a tourist route from provincial road 153 to Trung Do village, Bao Nhai (Bac Ha district), a tourist route to Ba Me Con (mother and children) Mountain (Bac Ha). The province has also developed a convenient transportation system and diverse and increasingly professional tourism service to welcome domestic tourists.

Recently, the demand for travelling to Sa Pa rose sharply after the highway from Noi Bai - Lao Cai was completed. The province has developed strategies and a tourism development plan for

Sapa, Lao Cai city and other tourist attractions in the province; invested and developed thematic tours through heritage terraces in 3 regions: Mu Cang Chai (Yen Bai) - Sa Pa - Bat Xat (Lao Cai) - Yuanyang (Yunnan - China).

The strong development of tourism will contribute to the improvement of the local economy and the increase in people's incomes. However, this may also lead to consequences that affect the cultural characteristics and landscapes of the province, and create social and children issues such as child labour.

2.3.2. Economic development

According to the Lao Cai Department of Planning and Investment (DPI), during the period of 2010-2015, the economic structure shifted towards industry and services:

Table 2.8. GDP Structure of Lao Cai 2010-2015

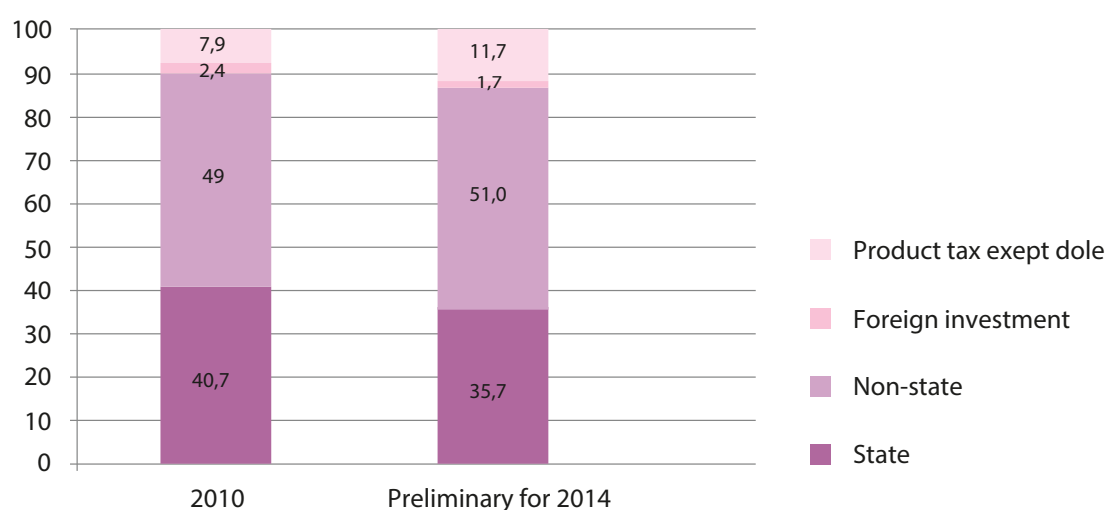
	Ago-forestry and aquaculture	Industry and construction	Service
2015	15.7	43.1	41.2
2010	28.3	37.8	37.9

Source: Lao Cai DPI

GDP (current prices) reached VND 39.4 million/ person/ year (about \$ 1,876/ person/ year), 2.4 times higher than in 2010, exceeding the 2.6% of target.

Both State and non-State sectors contribute around 90% of total GDP in the province, in which the contribution of the non-State sector is less and in a downtrend (see Figure 2.9).

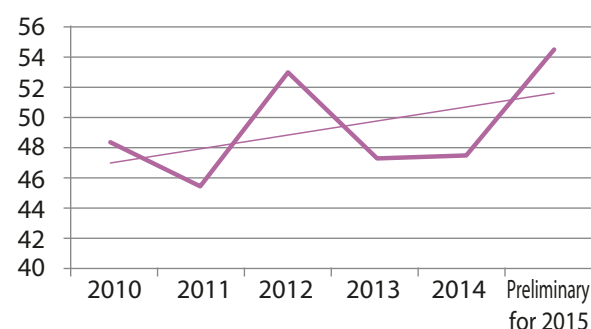
Figure 2.9. GPP Structure at current price in Lao Cai, 2010 and 2015



Source: Statistical Yearbook 2015, Lao Cai PSO

However, Lao Cai still depends on the budget provided by the Government. Budget revenues in the province in 2015 were estimated at 6846.84 billion and only covered about 55% of the budget expenses, although this percentage has tended to increase between 2010 and 2015 (see Figure 2.10).

Figure 2.10. Budget revenues compared to Budget expenses (%)



Source: Statistical Yearbook 2015, Lao Cai PSO

The sectors contributed the most to the GDP of the province are Ago-forestry and Aquaculture (2010: 19%, 2014: 16.1%); Mining (2010: 14.5%, 2014: 12.4%); Construction (2010: 9%, 2015: 11.1%).

The project “Development of tourism economy in Lao Cai phase 2011 – 2015” sets a target of bringing tourism and services to become a key economic sector of the province. However the accommodation and catering service sector contributed only 1.6% to the province’s GDP in 2014, down from 1.8% in 2010¹¹.

2.3.3. Health sector

Lao Cai already has a relatively well-developed health network to take care of its people’s health, including children. Currently, the province has 213 health facilities under the Department of Health, including 12 hospitals, 36 regional polyclinics, 1 sanatorium and rehabilitation hospital and 164 commune health centres. The number of patient beds per 1,000 inhabitants is 44 (beds) and ranks 2nd in the Northern Midland and Mountainous area Northern Midland and Mountainous area ; the number of doctors per 1,000 inhabitants is 8.3 (doctors) and ranks 6th in the Northern Midland and Mountainous area Northern Midland and Mountainous area .

11 Statistical Yearbook 2014, Lao Cai PSO

Table 2.9. Health facilities of Lao Cai and Northern mountainous and midland region, 2014

	Total	Of which				Patient beds per 10,000 inhabitants (excluding CHCs)	Doctors per 10,000 inhabitants	Population density (Person/ km2)	Household poverty rate 2014
		Hospital	Regional polyclinic	Sanatorium and rehabilitation hospital	Commune health centre / Medical service unit in offices, enterprises				
Northern Midland and Mountainous area Northern Midland and Mountainous area	2970	197	215	8	2548	27	7.8	122	18,4
Ha Giang	212	15	19	1	177	28	7.5	100	28,2
Cao Bang	234	17	18		199	34	11.2	78	27,0
Bac Kan	133	9	2		122	26	12.5	63	19,0
Tuyen Quang	168	14	12	1	141	22	6.3	128	18,6

	Total	Of which				Patient beds per 10,000 inhabitants (excluding CHCs)	Doctors per 10,000 inhabitants	Population density (Person/km ²)	Household poverty rate 2014
		Hospital	Regional polyclinic	Sanatorium and rehabilitation hospital	Commune health centre / Medical service unit in offices, enterprises				
Lao Cai	213	12	36	1	164	31	8.3	104	25,3
Yen Bai	215	15	20		180	28	5.5	114	21,4
Thai Nguyen	209	14	13	1	180	26	7.7	332	11,1
Lang Son	266	14	25	1	226	30	9.1	91	18,0
Bac Giang	250	16	3	1	230	25	7.7	422	9,8
Phu Tho	294	16		1	277	29	8.0	385	9,7
Dien Bien	161	14	17		130	31	8.8	56	33,0
Lai Chau	134	11	15		108	29	9.8	46	35,3
Son La	236	16	14	1	204	19	5.4	82	25,5
Hoa Binh	245	14	21		210	28	7.3	177	18,3

Source: GSO

The number of patient beds and doctors per 10,000 inhabitants, and the rate of commune/ward health centres having doctors have increased in the past 5 years; 100% of commune/ward health centres have female midwives; the under nutrition rate in children under 5 years old tends to decrease.

However the rate of newborns weighing <2,500g is still high: for each five newborns, one is underweight; this rate has tended to increase in the past 5 years. The number of cases infected by epidemics has not decreased in the last 3 years (see Table 2.10).

Table 2.10. Some health indicators of Lao Cai 2010-2014

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Doctors per 10,000 inhabitants (Pers.)	7.67	7.53	7.68	8.06	8.60
Patient beds per 10,000 inhabitants (Beds)	39.2	40.31	40.2	43.26	43.75
Rate of commune/ward/town health centres having doctors (%)	34.15	34.76	38.41	39.02	39.56
Rate of commune/ward/town health centres having female midwives (%)	95.73	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of cases infected by epidemic (Cases)	79,865	83,542	55,281	45,036	57,512
Number of people die from epidemic (Pers.)	125	135	5	9	5
Rate of new-borns weighing <2,500g (%)	3.8	4.5	3.92	4.38	6.8
Under nutrition rate in children under 5 years old (%)	24.24	24.0	21.89	20.32	20.00

Source: Statistical Yearbook 2014, Lao Cai PSO

The number of health facilities in Lao Cai has not changed in the last 10 years (see Table 2.11), an issue Lao Cai should be concerned about in the coming years.

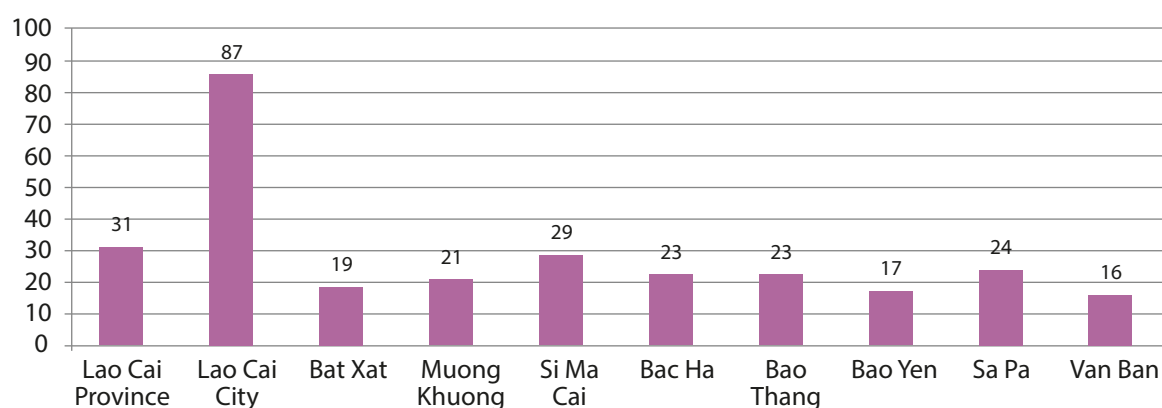
Table 2.11. Number of health facilities in Lao Cai, 2005-2014

		2005	2009	2014
Total	Northern Midland and Mountainous area Northern Midland and Mountainous area	2.923	2.923	2.97
	Ha Giang	207	208	212
	Lao Cai	213	213	213
	Yen Bai	216	210	215
	Lai Chau	109	107	134
Hospital	Northern Midland and Mountainous area	171	182	197
	Ha Giang	11	13	15
	Lao Cai	12	12	12
	Yen Bai	11	12	15
	Lai Chau	8	9	11
Regional Clinic	Northern Midland and Mountainous area	268	230	215
	Ha Giang	21	20	19
	Lao Cai	35	36	36
	Yen Bai	26	19	20
	Lai Chau	11	8	15
Sanatorium and rehabilitation hospital	Northern Midland and Mountainous area	7	7	8
	Ha Giang	..	..	1
	Lao Cai	1	1	1
	Yen Bai	..	..	..
	Lai Chau	..	..	..
Commune health centre / Medical service unit in offices, enterprises	Northern Midland and Mountainous area	2.47	2.498	2.548
	Ha Giang	175	175	177
	Lao Cai	165	164	164
	Yen Bai	178	178	180
	Lai Chau	90	90	108

Source: GSO

The number of patient beds is not evenly distributed across districts. The districts with the smallest number of patient beds per 1,000 inhabitants are Van Ban (16), Bao Yen (17), Bat Xat (19). The remaining districts all have numbers of patient beds per 1,000 inhabitants less than 27 (average number of national target in 2011-2015), except for Si Mai Ca (29).

Figure 2.11. Patient beds per 10,000 inhabitants by district (excluding health commune stations)



Source: Statistical Yearbook 2014, Lao Cai PSO

2.3.4. Education and training

In recent years, Lao Cai has developed a network of schools, pre- and secondary schools to serve the needs as well as the right to education of

children. However, the network mainly belongs to the public sector, and the private sector has not yet invested in the basic education and training sector (Table 2.12).

Table 2.12. Number of educational and training institutions in Lao Cai, 2013-2014 academic year

	Schools/ Centre	Public	Private	Classes
Preschool	201	191	10	2167
Primary school	231	231		3.935
In which: Ethnic semi-boarding school	42	42		
Lower-Secondary school	189	189		1.573
In which: Ethnic semi-boarding school	73	73		
Upper-secondary school	36	36		505
In which:				
- Province-level ethnic boarding upper-secondary school	1	1		
- District-level ethnic boarding lower and upper-secondary school	8	8		
Province-level general technical - careers vocational and continuing education centre	1	1		
District-level continuous training centre	9	9		
College	3	3		
Vocational secondary school	1	1		
Vocational training Centre	15	15		
Sport Training Centre	20	20		
Foreign languages/computing centre	164	164		
Community learning centre (1 per commune)	201	191	10	2167

Source: Lao Cai DOET

In addition, Lao Cai still faces many difficulties in education development: School and class network is scattered, there are many satellite campuses, many schools in the high areas are of small and scattered scale while the size of education continued to grow resulting in investment spread, difficult concentrating resources to carry out the school and classroom standardisation and modernisation, and the improvement of the comprehensive quality of education; limited budgets, lack of teachers; a number of managers, teachers who have not met the new requirements yet; lack of facilities in schools in highland areas; lack of boarding houses for students, lack of public accommodations for teachers; lack of facilities for specialised classrooms, sanitation, clean water, still high a number of classrooms without a strong structure.

Lao Cai Department of Education and Training has advised the Lao Cai provincial People's Committee to build a project on the school and classroom network plan for preschool education, basic education and continuing education in Lao Cai province, the period 2015-2020, driven by 2030 in order to concentrate the investment and to improve the quality

of education.¹² However, if the plan is not to proceed with caution, it can cause a situation that children in the remote areas may have to go to school farther as the analysis in Chapter 5 of this report.

2.4. Income and poverty

2.4.1. Income

Per capita income per month reached VND 1,468 in Lao Cai in 2014 which was equivalent to more than 91% of the average figure for the Northern Midland and Mountainous area and only more than half (56%) of the national average figure.

The income of the richest group was 7.9 times higher than that of the poorest, a ratio equal to that of the region and lower than the national average ratio.

Low incomes of the province and poor households are the main barrier to efforts to ensure a better implementation of the rights of children, especially the rights of poor children.

¹² Decision No. 2760/QĐ-UBND of the Provincial People's Committee dated 08/27/2015

Table 2.13. Per capita income per month in 2014 at the current price by five groups of income (thousand dong)

	Total	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 5 compared with Group 1
Whole country	2,640	659	1,313	1,971	2,832	6,426	9.7
Northern Midland and Mountainous area	1,613	467	718	1,158	1,919	3,805	8.1
Ha Giang	1,121	468	564	712	1,104	2,763	5.9
Cao Bang	1,252	351	535	782	1,397	3,213	9.1
Bac Kan	1,203	359	626	870	1,422	2,757	7.7
Tuyen Quang	1,570	506	770	1,192	1,943	3,458	6.8
Lao Cai	1,468	474	594	872	1,702	3,720	7.9
Yen Bai	1,385	438	684	1,032	1,576	3,210	7.3
Thai Nguyen	2,238	637	1,185	1,829	2,626	4,937	7.7
Lang Son	1,437	480	709	1,023	1,649	3,362	7.0
Bac Giang	2,173	709	1,306	1,832	2,509	4,531	6.4
Phu Tho	1,954	630	1,039	1,546	2,200	4,377	7.0

	Total	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 5 compared with Group 1
Dien Bien	1,200	446	534	675	1,251	3,105	7.0
Lai Chau	987	359	502	622	862	2,592	7.2
Son La	1,178	431	575	724	1,101	3,069	7.1
Hoa Binh	1,597	479	880	1,272	1,900	3,471	7.2

Source: GSO

2.4.2. Poverty trends

Poverty is the main cause of under nutrition of children and of children not attending school or dropping out of school. The Viet Nam Household Living Standards Surveys show that poorer households have more children than other households, so poverty has more impact on children in poor households.

According to the result of the Household Living Standards Survey of the GSO announced in the Statistical Yearbook of GSO, the preliminary poverty rate in 2014 of Lao Cai was 25.3%, being ranked 6th among the poorest provinces of the Northern Midland and Mountainous area.

Table 2.14. Household poverty rate

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Whole country	14.2	12.6	11.1	9.8	8.4
Northern Midland and Mountainous area	29.4	26.7	23.8	21.9	18.4
Ha Giang	50.0	45.5	38.5	33.8	28.2
Cao Bang	38.1	35.5	32.9	30.6	27.0
Bac Kan	32.1	28.6	24.3	21.2	19.0
Tuyen Quang	28.8	26.8	24.9	23.9	18.6
Lao Cai	40.0	36.6	32.9	29.7	25.3
Yen Bai	26.5	25.2	24.0	23.5	21.4
Thai Nguyen	19.0	16.9	15.1	13.3	11.1
Lang Son	27.5	25.0	22.5	20.4	18.0
Bac Giang	19.2	16.7	14.1	12.1	9.8
Phu Tho	19.2	17.0	14.1	12.0	9.7
Dien Bien	50.8	46.4	42.3	38.6	33.0
Lai Chau	50.2	46.8	43.5	40.6	35.3
Son La	37.9	34.8	32.0	29.4	25.5
Hoa Binh	30.8	27.7	24.5	21.8	18.3

Source: Statistical Yearbook 2014, GSO

According to the Statistical Yearbook of the Lao Cai PSO, the poverty rate of Lao Cai in 2014 was 17.61%. This differs from the figure

published in the Statistical Yearbook of the GSO because the data were collected from the Lao Cai Department of Labour and Social Affairs.

The poverty rates of the whole country and provinces published by MOLISA are lower than the poverty rates published by the GSO mainly because MOLISA does not adjust for the impact of the annual CPI on the poverty line.

The poverty rate in rural areas is higher than in urban areas by about 7 times; the pace of

poverty reduction in 2014 compared to 2010 in rural areas is slower than in urban areas.

Similar to the low-income barrier, high poverty rates, especially in rural areas (mainly in the highland and remote regions), are the main barrier hindering poor children from fully enjoying their rights.

Table 2.15. Poverty rate of Lao Cai by urban and rural area

	Total	Urban	Rural
2005	38.84	8.9	48.95
2010	42.9	11.2	53.4
2011	35.29	9.84	44.89
2012	27.69	7.19	35.01
2013	22.21	5.25	28.19
2014	17.61	3.76	22.47

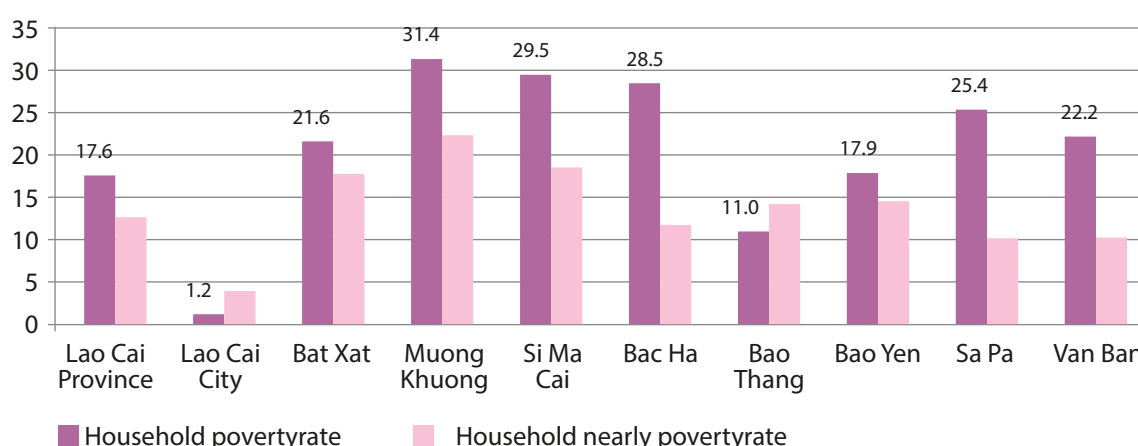
Source: Statistical Yearbook 2014, Lao Cai PSO

The three poorest districts are Muong Khuong (31.4%), Si Ma Cai (29.5%) and Bac Ha (28.5%), followed by Sa Pa (25.4%), Van Ban (22.2%), Bat Xat (21.6%), and Bao Yen (17.9%). The poverty rate of Bao Thang District was relatively low (11%) and the poverty rate of Lao Cai city was

lowest (1.2%) (see Figure 2.12).

Figure 2.12 also shows that the household near poverty rate was generally quite high in all districts and Lao Cai city; this means that the possibility of recurrent poverty among poor households in Lao Cai is quite high.

Figure 2.12. Household poverty rate and nearly poverty rate by district, 2014



Source: MOLISA

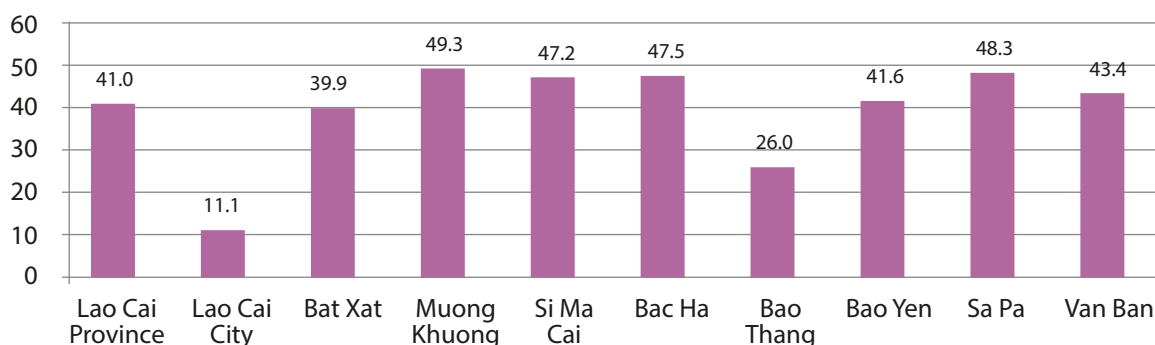
The pace of poverty reduction in the period of 2010-2014 can be measured by the ratio of the poverty rate in 2014 to that in 2010. The smaller this number the faster the pace of poverty

reduction is. Lao Cai city has the fastest pace of poverty reduction, followed by Bao Thang, Bat Xat, Bao Yen, and Ban Van; the remaining 4 districts with the slowest pace are Muong

Khuong, Sa Pa, Bac Ha and Si Mai Ca (see Figure 2.13). The slow pace of poverty reduction means

that poverty persistently clings to children and women in these districts.

Figure 2.13. Poverty rate in 2014 compared with in 2010



Source: MOLISA

2.5. Gender equality and the empowerment of women

2.5.1. Achievements of gender equality and the empowerment of women in Lao Cai

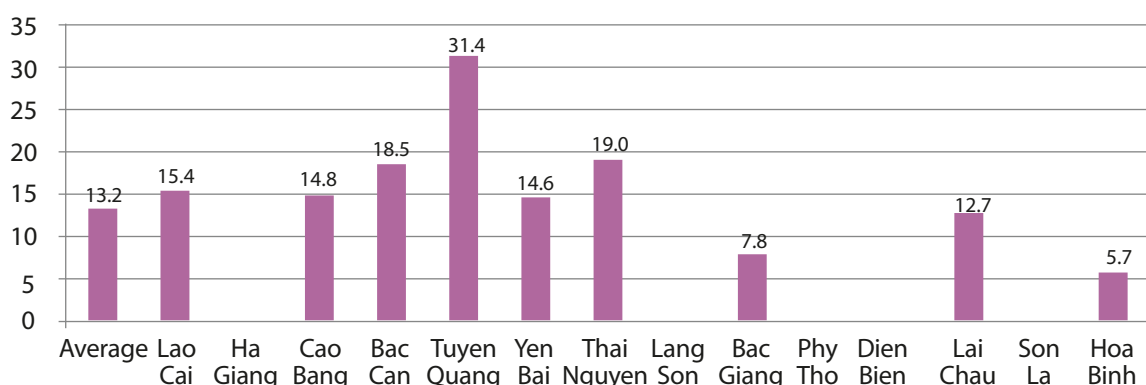
In Lao Cai, gender equality and the empowerment of women have been paid attention by the executive committees of the party and local authorities. There have been some considerable achievements in the field, especially in the past five years.

The Lao Cai Provincial Party Committee issued Directive No.19 on understanding thoroughly and implementing Resolution No. 11 dated

27/4/2007 of the Political Bureau on “women related works in period of strengthening industrialisation and modernisation of the country”. (Lao Cai was one out of 43 provinces and cities implementing this work). The Lao Cai Provincial Party Committee directed the Provincial Women’s Union to enhance the executive and standing committees according to proper process and quality assurance.

According to the Figure 2.14, the rate of female participation in the Lao Cai Executive Committee of the Party was 15.4%, higher than the average of the Northern Midland and Mountainous area (13.2%), and ranked 4th out of the nine provinces with reported data.

Figure 2.14. Rate of female participation in Lao Cai Executive Committee of the Party by June 2015

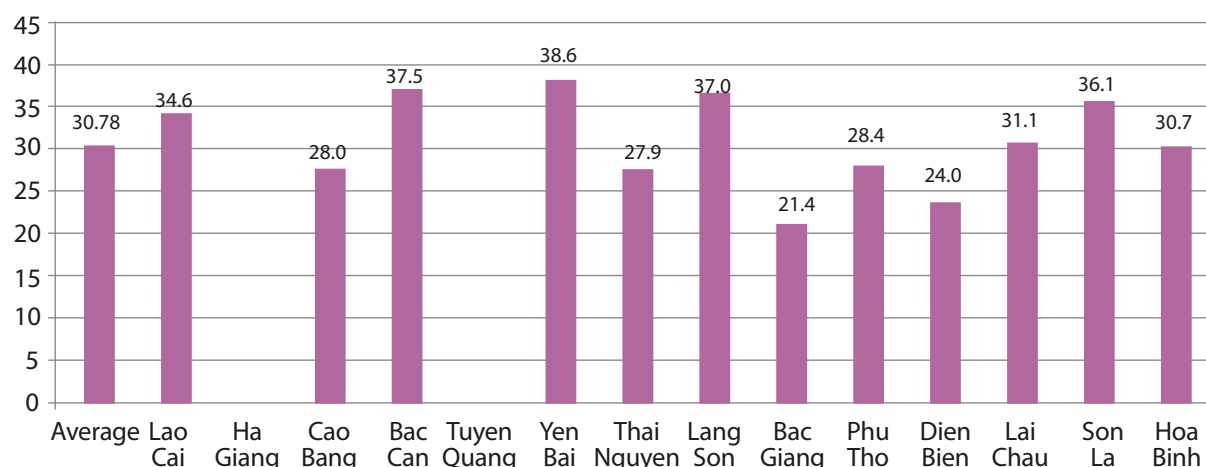


Source: web portal of the provinces

Figure 2.15 shows that the rate of female participation in the Lao Cai People's Council was 34.6%, higher than the average for the

Northern Midland and Mountainous area (30.78%), ranking fifth out of the 12 provinces with reported data.

Figure 2.15. Rate of female participation in Lao Cai People's Council by June 2015

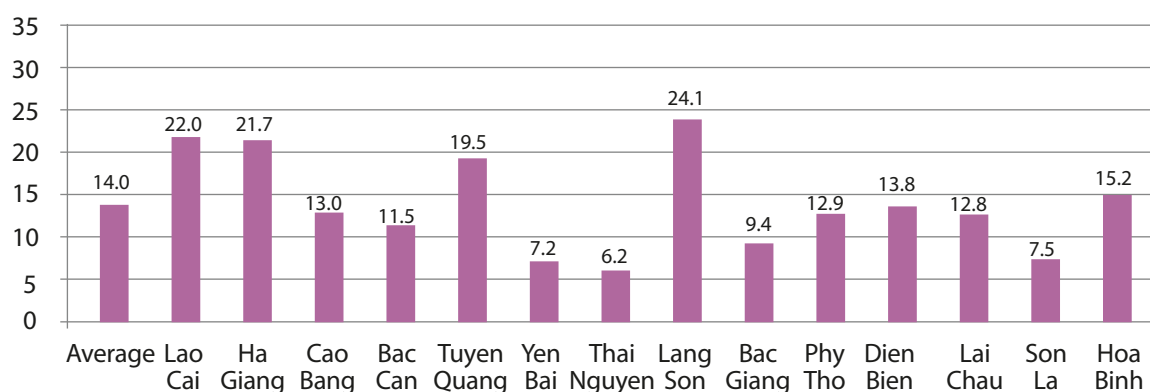


Source: web portal of the provinces

Figure 2.16 shows that the rate of female leaders of provincial departments was 22.0%, remarkably higher than the average for the

Northern Midland and Mountainous area (14.0%), ranking second out of 12 provinces with reported data.

Figure 2.16. Rate of female leaders of the Lao Cai Provincial Departments by June 2015



Source: web portal of the provinces

2.5.2. Gender inequality and limitations in the empowerment of women

According to the report on the feasibility study of the Second Northern Mountainous Poverty Reduction Project in Lao Cai province (2010-2015) - World Bank (WB) loans, in spite of the benefits from the achievement of economic and social, infrastructure and agricultural development that both women and men enjoyed, many instances of gender

inequality in the northern mountainous region in general and Lao Cai province in particular have remained. Women continue to be disadvantaged in all aspects, from accessing agricultural extension services to healthcare, education and production resources.... The illiteracy of ethnic minority women has been hindering their participation in social activities in general and socio-economic development activities invested in by the Government/donor in particular. Many ethnic minority

women have had no chance to go to school and cannot read or write the Vietnamese language, obstructing them from participating actively in the new economic development opportunities of the market economy. Ethnic minority women, especially those who come from remote villages have had few opportunities to participate in community meetings, which has minimised their social exposure and opportunities to express their voice or needs.

The first Northern Mountainous Poverty Reduction Project (2002 - 2007) also showed that the needs and priorities of women had not been paid proper attention to, especially in the agricultural model which attracted the most female participation.

Chapter 5 of this report also shows that girls of ethnic minorities are more disadvantaged than boys in access to education at higher levels.

2.5.3. Customs and awareness barriers

Cultural norms in some ethnic minority groups put ethnic minority women in secondary position in the family. Sometimes, the voice of women has not been considered important in their families and community (WB). Similarly, in accordance with the report on Viet Nam Rural Children Poverty announced by the Ministry

of Education and Training, cultural norms in some ethnic minorities put women and girls in a position which makes them dependent on men. This has increased gender inequality and has been a reason for EM girls to leave school and get married early. Also, in minority communities, the youth has had to shoulder socio-economic imperatives due to traditional kinship relationships; for example, in EM minority families with many children, mothers were often illiterate and daughters do not go to school at higher level or drop out of school and get married early.

LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS



CHAPTER 3. LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

3.1. Multi sector policies, programmes that promote and protect children’s rights and ensure children’s well-being

3.1.1. Provincial socio-economic development plan of Lao Cai

The Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP) is understood to be a document setting out socio-economic development activities of the country or of a specific locality. It is a tool of economic management of the State by objectives, represented by the goal-oriented social and economic development to be achieved within a certain time period of a nation or of a locality, including solutions, policies and resources to achieve the objectives set out in the most effective ways.

The short term SEDP (annual) is a specification of the medium term plan (5 years) with the

objectives, activities and specific progress for 1-2 years. The annual plan is an action plan, meant to serve the direction and administration of the central government and local government in economic and social activities.

For children’s rights to be implemented in a planned, systematic and sustainable manner, the integration of indicators related to children in the SEDP is particularly important. The indicators related to children taken into the Lao Cai SEDP period 2011 - 2015 and the SEDP 2011, 2013 and 2015 are presented in Table 3.1.

Compared with the indicators recommended by UNICEF to be included in a child-friendly plan, the number of indicators related to the children of Lao Cai is very modest. This is explained by the fact that the Lao Cai SEDP includes only the main indicators, and the sectoral indicators, for example health or education are assigned to the respective sector.

Table 3.1. Child related indicators 2011-2015, Lao Cai

	SEDP 2011-2015	2011	2013	2015
Right to survival (Health care, Nutrition, Water, sanitation)				
The natural growth rate of population	x	x	x	
The rate of fertility decline				X
Under 1 mortality rate	x			
Under 5 mortality rate	x			
Under 5 under nutrition rate	x	x	x	x
Percentage of communes, wards and towns meet national standards on health	x			
Percentage of children under 1-year old fully immunised	x	x	x	
Number of villages with active medical staff	x			
The proportion of urban population access to clean water	x	x		x
The proportion of rural population access to sanitary water	x	x	x	x
Number of patient beds per 10,000 people (not include beds at commune health centres)				

	SEDP 2011-2015	2011	2013	2015
Right to development (Basic education, recreation)				
The proportion of children aged 3 to 5 years old attending kindergarten	x		x	x
Net primary school enrollment rates	x	x	x	x
Net lower secondary school enrollment rates	x	x	x	x
The number of communes meet the standards of secondary school universalisation			x	
Primary completion rates			x	
Percentage of schools meeting the national standards by level kindergarten, primary, lower secondary, upper secondary			x	
Right to Protection				
The proportion of children in special circumstances access to help and care			x	
Annual poverty rates	x	x	x	x
Right to participation				

Source: SEDP of Lao Cai

The Project Management Unit “Strengthening capacity of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation of child-friendly SEDP” supported by UNICEF for 2012-2016 has conducted an assessment of the level of expressing and solving the problems of children in the provincial 2013 SEDPs in project sites in Dien Bien, Ninh Thuan, Dong Thap, An Giang, Ho Chi Minh City, Kon Tum, Gia Lai and Lao Cai. Based on that, there are specific recommendations for 2014 SEDPs to be more child-friendly. According to this assessment, in the analysis and assessment of the implementation of the 2012 plans the elements related to children, gender or ethnic minorities were not seen clearly. Except for Dien Bien, the other provinces including Lao Cai has no separate component about child care and protection as instructed by Document No 233, but child care and protection were reflected in the performance of child-focused sectors such education and child protection.

3.1.2. Social Protection Policies of Lao Cai province

Lao Cai mainly bases its implementation of social protection policies on the provision of policy about supporting the beneficiaries of social protection in the province (issued under Decision No. 47/2010/QD-UBND,

dated 22/12/2010). The provision specifies beneficiaries of social protection as beneficiaries receiving monthly subsidies and beneficiaries receiving emergency subsidies (once). It also specifies social assistance subsidies as regular subsidies, emergency subsidies, food subsidies as well as specifies the rate of subsidy. During the implementation process, Lao Cai has issued Decision No. 51/2011/QD-UBND, dated 30/12/2011, (together with Decision No. 47/2010/QD-UBND, dated 22/12/2010 of the People’s Committee of Lao Cai province) on adjusting the monthly food allowance for beneficiaries of social protection living in social protection centres of Lao Cai (see Appendix 03 for more details).

Having six out of nine districts and cities who benefited from the Government’s policy for extreme difficult localities, Lao Cai has actively implemented poverty reduction policies issued by both central and local authorities. Lao Cai has developed a Scheme for Sustainable Poverty Reduction for the 2006-2010 and 2011-2015 periods. This is a tool to integrate all poverty reduction policies into one focal point for effectively implementation. Lao Cai has also established the Provincial Steering Committee for Poverty Alleviation with operation regulations

to help the Province in poverty alleviation work.

In addition, policies to develop border economic zones, tourism and poverty reduction projects financed by World Bank loans are main economic development and poverty reduction policies of Lao Cai that have been brought into effect.

3.1.3. Provincial Programme of Actions on Children of Lao Cai

The National Action Programme for Children and Action Programme for Children in Lao Cai province are important common strategic frameworks at the national and provincial level, gathering policies and programmes of the state concerning children. These programmes are structured into four groups associated with children's rights and related sectors, including health care, nutrition, clean water, sanitation, education, child protection, culture, sports and recreation, and the participation of children; they include targets and indicators to supervise and monitor the implementation of these objectives.

The People's Committee of Lao Cai has approved the Action Programme for the Children of Lao Cai for the 2001-2010 and the 2013-2020 periods.

According to the province, over the 10 years of implementing the Action Programme for the on Children of Lao Cai for the 2001-2010 period, while the protection and care of children of Lao Cai has been significantly improved in terms of the four pillars of children's rights, limitations still persist; for example the under-five under nutrition rate remains high; the access to health services of poor children and children with special needs still meets with difficulties; the quality of education in remote, mountainous areas is limited; some poor children and children with special needs lack access to education; cases of child abuse and of children in conflict with the law are still occurring; early marriage still happens in some ethnic minority areas; many localities in the province lack facilities for cultural activities and recreation, for purposes of entertaining children; the children's right to participation in social activities is still limited.

Causes of such limitations include: (i) lack of capacity of organisations and personnel engaged in the protection and care of

children, especially at the grassroots level; communication about children is not yet extensive to all audiences; (ii) budget spent on the protection and care of children fails to meet demand; (iii) inequality of opportunities for development due to inequality between children in urban, rural, ethnic minorities, remote, mountainous areas, children in extremely difficult circumstances; (iv) the socialisation of the protection, care and education of children helps change the face of the system which provides health services, education, protection and recreation, entertainment for children, but the change happens unevenly, with children in remote, mountainous areas lacking access to quality services; and (v) the management and coordination of the Programme cannot be implemented effectively as it has no separate budget and most of the objectives of the Programme are integrated into other programmes. In addition, issues such as the direction and leadership of the Party and authorities at all levels, the involvement of political and social organisations, economic organisations, families and schools, the active search for resources, and the strengthening of institutions and human resources need to be paid more attention.

The Action Programme for the Children of Lao Cai for the 2013-2020 period have overall objectives to better enforce children's rights, to create equal development opportunities for all children, with special attention to ethnic minority children, poor children and girls. The main activities of the programme include: communication, education, social mobilisation to raise awareness and behavior change to implement children's rights; development and implementation of programmes and plans for the protection, care and education of children; consolidation of the organisational system; capacity building for staff working with children; and monitoring, inspection and evaluation of the programme. The departments related to children and the District People Committee (DPC) responsible for the implementation of the programme through the Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs constitute a focal point for reporting to the Provincial People's Committee (PPC).

However, according to our observations of

the group discussions and interviews, without the renewal of the operating mechanism and funding, the constraints in the implementation of the programme of the previous period may occur again at this period.

3.2. Policy formulation, planning and budgeting of programmes for children

3.2.1. Links between policy formulation, planning and budgeting

Policy making, planning and budgeting processes are closely linked to one another, towards the common development goals. At the end of the process, policies, plans and budgets are formulated. For each and every specific development goal, sectoral agencies, planning and investment and financial authorities all are able to estimate the cost to achieve the target. As the resources are limited, these agencies shall collaborate and come to a consensus of identified priorities in the short-term, mid-term and long-term, in order to achieve sustainable, comprehensive and inclusive development outcomes in which no one is left behind. Development goals are feasible only if they are set on the basis of scientific evidence, by a participatory method and with a good estimate of available resources. It is necessary to carefully consider possible implications, including the implementation cost/ budget and expected results, before issuing any policies. It is highly subjective to formulate a plan or issue a policy without the estimation of the implementation cost.

To fulfill children- targeted objectives (increasing school enrollment rates, decreasing child under nutrition rates, increasing the number of unprivileged children cared for in social centres), planning – investment and financial sectors collaborate with education, health and social sectors in the process of policy making, planning and budgeting at different degrees.

First, it must be noted that the Finance and Planning sectors in Lao Cai are more advanced than in many other provinces, with an integrated investment management system and a participatory planning method applied

widely in the province. This helps the province monitor, supervise and prioritise resources more efficiently. Hence, in the long run, the link among planning, budgeting and policy making will be improved and strengthened.

Education, health and social agencies consult the provincial authority for the timely issuance of policies that help achieve children – targeted objectives mentioned in the socio – economic development and sectoral development plans.

There is a close link among policy making, planning and budgeting in the education and training sector. Budget estimates of budget spending units are discussed between the Education – training agency and the Finance agency. Under no circumstances do budget spending units (schools) directly discuss their budget with the Finance agency (except Bat Xat district where the Finance-Planning bureau manages schools's budget).

For healthcare, sector-wide planning is coordinated by the Department of Health, but the implementation is assigned to various agencies and units who directly discuss their budgets with the financial sector, without the DOH's participation. Therefore, in the healthcare area, the link between planning and budgeting is less close.

The Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs department is responsible for providing social support and care for children. The agency plays a crucial role in protecting children's rights. However, according to their report, the budget allocated to carry out children related missions is very limited. Coordination and cooperation with related sectors face challenges. So, the link among policy making, planning and budgeting here is the least close.

Child Budget: the entire educational budget is for children. In the Health sector and Social security sector, the sectoral budget is estimated and allocated according to tasks/ duties, where child related tasks are intergral parts. Current law provisions do not require sectors to have a separate child budget, apart from the budget provided by and via the Child Care and Protection unit of MOLISA and DOLISA.

Result-based budgeting: Budget estimation

and final account in Viet Nam in general and Lao Cai in particular have been done in traditional way, based on inputs¹³. For example, education budget is prepared based on the number of teachers and budget for health is prepared based on the number of hospital beds. According to experts, Viet Nam is strengthening legal framework, information technology, and human resource etc. to enhance result-based budgeting and medium term expenditure framework.

3.2.2. Decentralisation in planning and budgeting

Decentralisation in planning during a developing period can be understood as the transfer of authority and power to plan and implement development plans from central organisations to local ones. Decentralising authority and responsibility need to couple with decentralising resources so as to obtain planned outcomes and encourage local capability to set objectives, expected outcomes and improve local resources.

The socio – economic development planning of Lao Cai province is decentralised based on the level of administration, meaning that the higher level is responsible for guiding and compiling plans proposed by the lower levels. This process happens similarly in other sectors, including social and children – focused sectors. Decentralisation in planning in Lao Cai seems to be more advanced than that in other provinces thanks to the province’s earlier implementation of participatory planning methods at the commune level, despite the absence of legal framework provided by the Central government for planning reforms. This decentralisation is strictly linked with decentralisation in budgeting and is restricted by limited capability to predict available resources in the medium term, especially at the commune level.

According to the 2002 State Budget Law, the local budget comprises 3 levels: provincial,

district and commune. The decentralisation of revenue and expenditure in local budgets follows the State Budget Law. The decentralisation of local budgets is regulated by Resolution 25/2010 and Resolution 26/2013 of the Lao Cai Provincial People’s Council, and more details are mentioned in section 3.2.3. The province of Lao Cai faces budget deficits and has received supplementary transfer from the central budget to cover the shortage. With a total budget received from different sources, the Provincial Councils have the right to allocate the budget and decide the allocation to districts. They may also set cost norms for budget allocation to districts and communes (Resolution 26/2013 / HDND dated on 17/12/2013).

At the provincial level, the current decentralisation process is not effective as expected due to limited resources and absence of an integrated management information system (with timely inputs, outputs and results indicators). So it is difficult to identify and prioritise investment and recurrent expenditure. This negatively impacts the effectiveness and efficiency of public spending. More details can be found in chapters 4, 5 and 6.

3.2.3. Local budget revenue and spending

Since the child budget is not prepared separately but integrated in budgets of ministries and localities, this part presents the overall fiscal trend and budget allocation for social sectors of the province. The revenue and expenditures for children will be mentioned and discussed where information is available.

Local budget revenue

Budget revenues of Lao Cai province include (1) decentralised budget revenue (revenues with 100% entitlement and shared revenue); (2) Supplements from the central budget; (3) surplus budget balance from the previous year; (4) investment mobilisation under clause 3 - article 8 of the State Budget law; (5) carried-over revenues; (6) Grants and (7) off-budget balance revenues including tuition, medical insurance, security charges and other fees. Supplements transferred from central budget include balancing transfer and targeted transfer, are

¹³ Budget management, International experience and Viet Nam, Associate Prof., PhD. Tran Thi Lan Huong, Hanoi University of science and technology. http://www.mof.gov.vn/webcentre/portal/vclvcstc/r/m/ncvtd/ncvtd_chitiet?dDocName=MOF14821&_afLoop=21072684423896654#!%40%40%3F_afLoop%3D21072684423896654%26dDocName%3DMOF148214%26_adf.ctrl-state%3Dbbnllswls_4

crucial revenues to the province, accounted for 52% to 59% in 2009-2014 period. In the period 2009 -2014, total revenues in Lao Cai doubled from VND 4,800 billion to VND 10,800 billion.

Local budget spending

Budget spending includes 9 groups: (1) Capital expenditure; (2) Recurrent expenditures; (3) Payment of investment liabilities under clause 3, Article 8 of the 2002 State Budget Law (4) Provisions; (5) Financial reserve; (6) Salary Reform; (7) Brought forward expenditures; (8) budget balancing (transfer to higher level and lower level); and (9) off-balance budget expenditure.

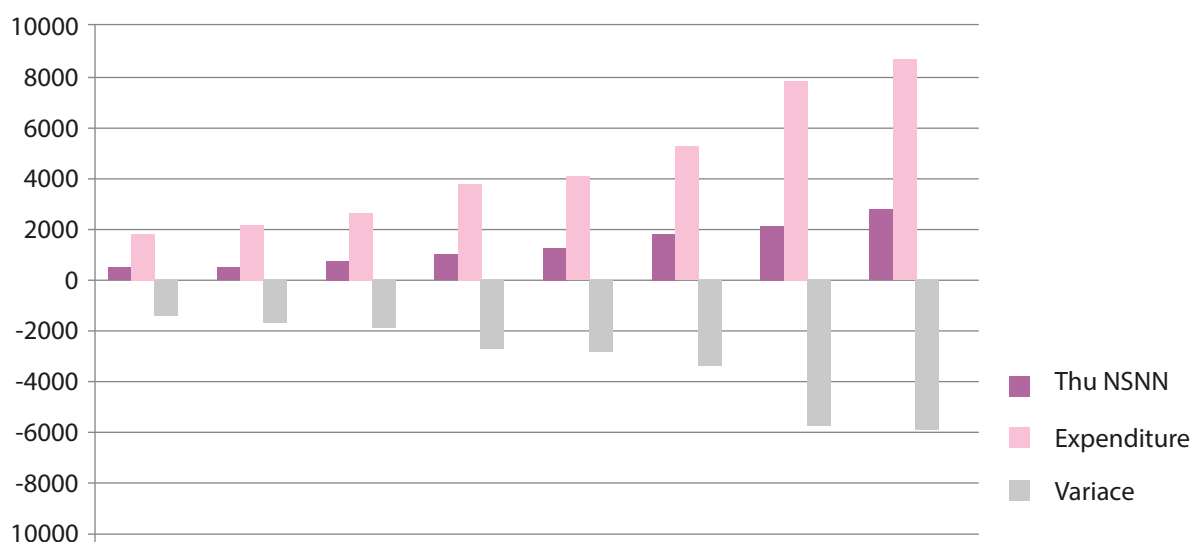
The local budget spending of Lao Cai province from 2009 to 2014 has increased steadily.

Actual spending (item 1, 2, 3 and 9) increased from VND 3,700 billion in 2009 to VND 9,600 billion in 2014. Capital expenditure accounted for 25%-35% of local spending, increasing from VND1,500 billion in 2009 to VND 2,700 billion in 2014. Recurrent expenditures accounted for more than 60%, increasing from VND 2,200 billion in 2009 to VND 6,900 billion in 2014¹⁴.

Fiscal discipline does not allow authorities to borrow for recurrent expenditure (total budget deficit must be less than capital expenditure), and the maximum debt balance is 30% of the total provincial annual capital expenditure¹⁵.

14 Disclosure of final budget accounts of Lao Cai province, <http://www.laocai.gov.vn/stc/1234/27698/44797/207827/Cong-khai-quyet-toan/So-lieu-chi-tiet-Cong-khai-quyet-toan-ngan-sach-nam-2012.aspx>

15 Article 8, the 2002 State Budget Law



Public spending for Health and Education

Local budget spending accounted for 56.7% of Lao Cai province's GDP in 2009. This share

reduced to 40.7% in 2010 and 2011 and increased to 50.1% in 2012. In 2009-2012, public health spending accounted for 3% GDP while education spending accounted for 10% to 12%.

Figure 3.1. Share of budget expenditure for Health and Education to GDP of Lao Cai province

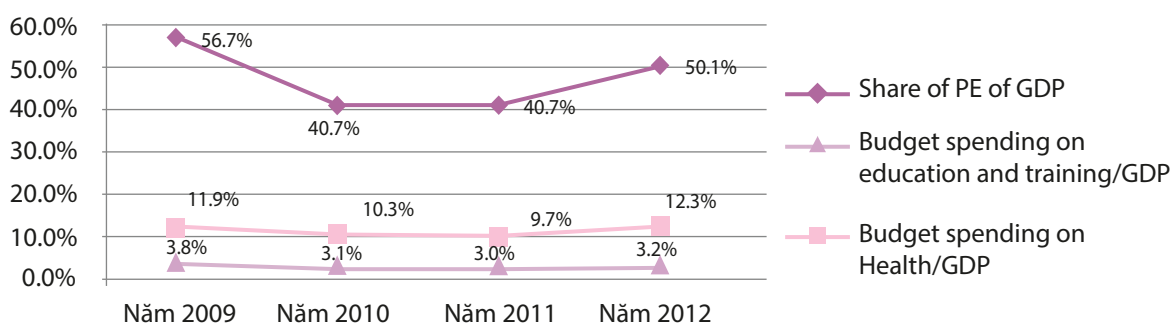
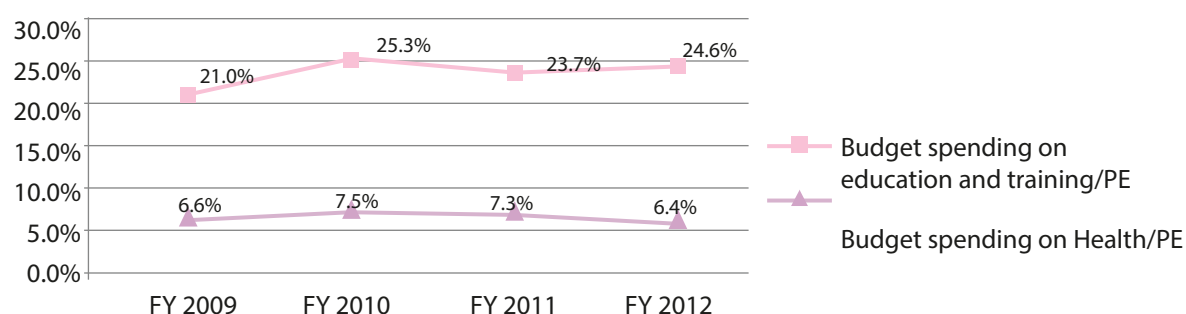


Figure 3.2. Share of budget spending on Education and Healthcare in Lao Cai



Source: Calculation from data for Lao Cai PER 2015

Education and Science - Technology are two prioritised areas in the Government's public spending. Budget estimates and outturns for these two areas are publicised. Resolutions of the National Assembly stipulate that provincial public spending on education and training must not be lower than 20% of total budget spending.

In Lao Cai province, Education is the most prioritised sector (consistent with strategic priorities at the national level and similar to other provinces). Budget spending on education and training accounted for 25% of total public spending (2012), increased from VND950 billion in 2009 to VND 2,219 billion in 2012.

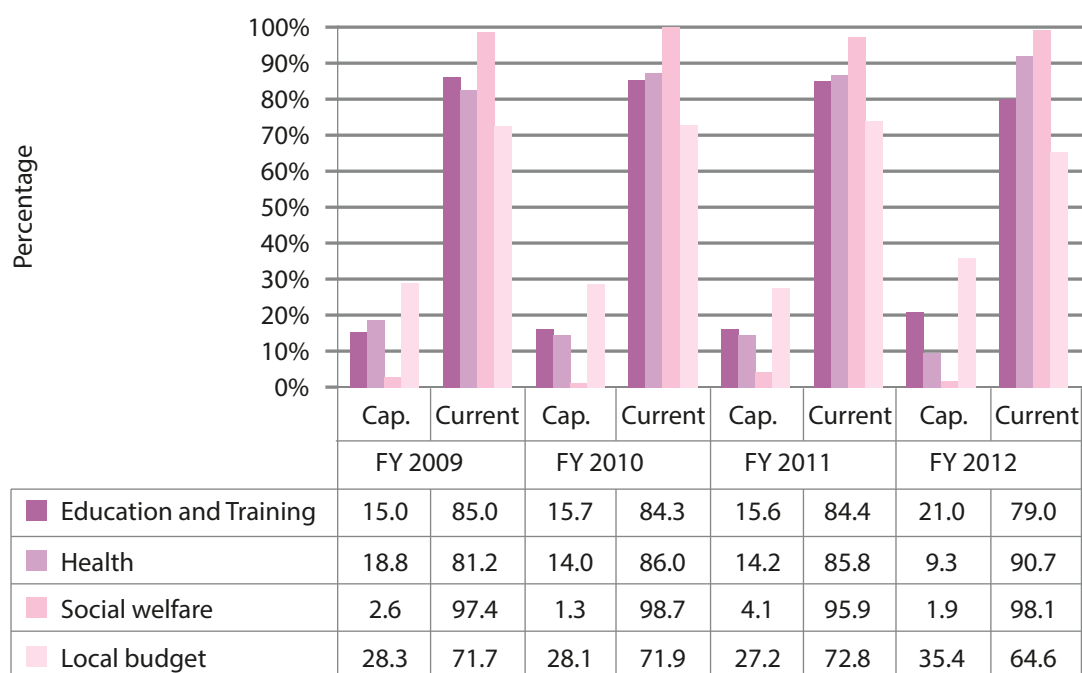
Healthcare is one of the four sectors that receive the biggest share of public spending of the province (after Education and Training, and Agriculture, swapping positions with the Transportation sector, over the years). Public spending on health increased steadily every year during the period 2009-2012, accounting for 3 to 3.8% of GDP and 6.4 to 7.5% of local budget spending with the amount increasing from VND300 billion to VND574 billion.

The link between investments and expenses is not close. An investment project could be approved without a secured source for

operation and maintenance of the asset. The use of the integrated investment management system of Lao Cai in connection with public asset management software and the Treasury and budgetary management information system (TABMIS), can generate a quality database for public investment and expenditure management, including information on investment projects, operating assets and related recurrent expenditure. Thus, average cost per output unit can be calculated, supporting result – based budgeting.

In 2009-2012, the shares of capital and recurrent public spending in each of the 3 social sectors (healthcare, education and social welfare) are different. The overall rates of the province were 28.3% and 71.7% respectively in 2009. In the social sectors, capital expenditure in education accounts for the largest share, reaching 17% on average. This reflects the national and provincial priorities in education to improve educational infrastructures, contributing to primarily comprehensive improvement of education quality. The share of capital expenditure in public health spending and Social welfare accounted for 9% and 2% respectively in 2009 – 2012. More details are presented in Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.3. Share of capital and recurrent expenditure in social sectors in Lao Cai



Source: Calculation from data for Lao Cai PER 2015

Socialisation of resources for healthcare and education is a challenge in Lao Cai province. Many local people do not have the money for private services or negotiated contributions. Users' fee is limited (e.g. tuition fees contributed 1-2% of the total local budget spending on Education).

The results of policies and/or programmes will be presented in the following chapters. There exist disparities among districts. Narrowing the outcome gaps and ensuring equitable access to social services for children, boys and girls, especially disadvantaged ones are the targets that the provincial authorities have been strived for.

3.3. Roles and Capacity of the key duty-bearers

This section analyses the results of self-assessment on roles and capacities in the protection and care of children in Lao Cai province of the provincial, district and communal authorities.

The data for this analysis are obtained from three sources: (i) evaluation reports of relevant departments and branches of Lao Cai province; (ii) comments from participants

of the Consultation Workshop for the Term of Reference for the situational analysis of children's rights in Lao Cai province (this workshop was co-organised by UNICEF and Lao Cai province on April 24 2014; and (iii) results of self-assessment forms from relevant agencies' representatives participating in group meetings or in-depth interviews with authorities from Lao Cai province and Muong Khuong and Bao Yen districts in the field research conducted from January 5 to 16, 2015.

This assessment's purpose is to understand functions, responsibilities and capacities of agencies that are responsible for the protection of children's rights so as to provide solutions tackling any limitations found. The agencies involved in provincial, district and commune levels, as planned, include: the Party bodies; People's Council, PPC, sectors of planning and investment, education and training, labour, justice and social affairs, health, justice, culture, information and communications, political and social organizations (Fatherland Front, Women's Union, HCM Youth union).

The afore mentioned self-assessment form used in the field research consists of: (i) Functions and responsibilities to implement four groups of children's rights; (ii) Gaps or areas for

improvement in awareness; human resources (number, technical capacity, managerial capacity, communication capacity, advocacy, working methods); material resources (budget, facilities); monitoring tools; coordination; organisations and systems; institutions and

legal frameworks; others; and (iii) Solutions.

The following table summarises the main comments on the capacity gap of agencies at provincial, district and communal level in the implementation of children’s rights in Lao Cai province.

Main functions/ responsibilities	Gaps/areas for improvements (Awareness, human resources, material resources, management capacity, working methods, monitoring tools, cooperation procedures)	Solutions
Party bodies at all levels		
Directing relevant agencies and units to implement the Law of Protection and Care of Children in the province	<p>Several Party bodies have limited awareness of and capacities in the implementation of goals relating to children.</p> <p>The leadership and guidance of several Party bodies in some localities have not really been effective (Source: Report on Education and Training Development Plan of Lao Cai province in 2015).</p> <p>The participation of several Party bodies in some localities has not been fulfilled following Decree No.115/ND-CP in 2010.</p>	<p>Enhancing responsibilities of Party bodies at all levels in the protection and care of children, especially in extremely difficult and remote areas and places featuring ethnic minorities.</p> <p>Relevant agencies (Labour, Health Care, and Education) should provide their advice in children-related issues to local Party bodies.</p> <p>Improving leadership and monitoring at all levels.</p> <p>There should be guidance for the implementation of Decree 115.</p>
People’s Councils at all levels		
Monitoring the implementation of children-related goals in their localities.	Monitoring has not been systematically conducted. There is a lack of capacities in and tools for monitoring children-related goals.	Improve the capacity to monitor the child goals for the Councils: organising training workshops and provide guidance and monitoring tools; organising integrated, interdisciplinary monitoring.
People’s Committee at all levels		
Directing the implementation of Children’s rights under the law; organising the National Action Programme for Children throughout their province	<p>PCs of a number of districts / communes lack awareness and capacity in dealing with children’s issues.</p> <p>Some staff do not fully understand the 4 groups of Children’s rights.</p> <p>Management in some communes is still limited.</p> <p>There is a lack of staff who are specialised in the protection of mothers and children. In addition to these children-related duties, most current staff have to undertake many other duties.</p> <p>The connection with people at the communal level is limited.</p> <p>Staff capacities and advocacy methods are limited.</p>	Professional training for departments of the PCs on the work of children. Continue to have specific mechanisms for communes in disadvantaged areas; province electricity for villages without electricity to improve the lives and communication about the rights of the children; Build cultural houses for the village to have a play area for children; provide loudspeakers and leaflets, funding for the law propaganda events for the village.

<p>Directing the implementation of Children's rights under the law; organising the National Action Programme for Children throughout their province</p>	<p>There is a lack of specific solutions, for example, solutions for attracting investment in playgrounds or entertainment centres for children.</p> <p>There are difficulties in the collection and summarising of children-related information. There is not enough data on children's statuses by groups of age in required indexes.</p> <p>Cross-sectional coordination is limited. There is a lack of contact among point agencies.</p> <p>The publicising of laws about children's rights has not been regularly implemented.</p> <p>Material resources such as electricity, roads, schools, water, communal and village cultural houses, playgrounds of the village, communication means (e.g. loudspeakers) have not been provided. This situation occurs especially in mountainous areas. There is a lack of financial resources, especially for preventing under nutrition.</p>	<p>Take measures to prevent early marriage; against infringement of the rights of children. Going more frequently to the villages to promote the rights of children, to give timely intervention to the cases of children being abused. Strengthening coordination on the basis of division and review of responsibilities.</p>
Department of Planning and Investment		
<p>Summarising and connecting plans including action programmes towards children's goals so as to build and implement monitoring procedures for socio-economic plans at local levels.</p>	<p>Lack of consultation with communities and their local people as well as stakeholders.</p> <p>Several staff members, especially communal ones still lack capacities in carrying out monitoring and evaluation of annual socio-economic plans.</p>	<p>Develop a roadmap for innovation in formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of SEDP across the province.</p>
Department of Health		
<p>Being responsible for state management of protection and care of people's health, including children's.</p>	<p>Competencies on pregnancy management of village midwives at the grassroots level are weak and inadequate; capacities of nutrition collaborators are limited; the reputation of health stations in some communes is not good enough to attract patients to use medical services.</p> <p>There is a lack of personnel with high qualification and capacity in pediatrics, obstetrics, nutrition, food, hygiene, preventive health and HIV prevention. Communication capacity for health education and family planning at the grassroots level is weak. Water and sanitation management after investment is limited.</p>	<p>To review and consolidate the team and the capacity of local health workers, including midwives at villages; Providing and rotating specialised staff at grassroots levels; Continuing new training, retraining and training at all levels; Management capacity building at the grassroots level; Reduce 5 focal points at district level to 2: district hospitals and the district health centre; Provide missing equipment; Investing in sync for Commune Health Centre, especially reproductive health services; Prioritise resources to repair, fix broken water supply works; Invest a quality water testing laboratory; Provide nutritional products with high quality and effectiveness for children</p>

<p>Being responsible for state management of protection and care of people's health, including children's.</p>	<p>Facilities and equipment (scale, measures etc.) for communication on health education, HIV prevention, reproductive health, and food, nutritional products at the communal level are insufficient. Many clean water and sanitation infrastructures are working inefficiently.</p> <p>Funds for programmes on food hygiene, reproductive health, family planning, preventive health and HIV prevention are limited.</p> <p>The health system currently has too many intermediaries at the district level. There are 5 intermediaries, including district hospitals, health care and family planning centres, department of health, food and hygiene centres.</p>	<p>Increase the budget for the mountainous province; Increase fund for monitoring; subsidies for nutrition collaborators.</p> <p>Enhance communication and provide services at commune level; Provide leaflets about child care in ethnic languages</p> <p>Continue initiatives each division of provincial office helps one difficult commune.</p> <p>Continue the movement of promoting and supporting internal strength of local human resources (preschool teachers cook for children and parents alternately mobilised to cook, to plant vegetables, livestock to strengthen the quality of children's diets)</p>
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Department of Education and Training

<p>Being responsible for state management of education and training including children's right to development in their province,</p>	<p>The numbers of kindergartens and elementary teachers, administrative and security staff, healthcare and pensions are inadequate. The qualifications and capacities of teachers are limited; they have been slow in reforming their teaching methods.</p> <p>The quality of school facilities and equipment are very poor. There are many temporary classrooms but not enough room for the school management board, and other kinds of facilities such as multi-functional room, functional room, and public room. These rooms, if any, are of low quality. Besides there is a lack of room for day boarding and other constructions such as clean water and rest room (dining room, kitchen, bathroom, toilet). There also lacks modern teaching equipment (e.g., computers, projectors, interactive boards). The application of information technologies in education is still limited.</p> <p>The kindergartens lack supporting facilities such as teachers' rooms, function rooms (art education, kid smart, and movement development education), kitchen, and toilet. Daily meals for preschool children only meet the minimum standard, that is, they are enough calories but they are not balanced and sufficient in term of nutrition.</p>	<p>Distributing enough teachers, especially for mountainous area schools. Keeping the education reform continuing comprehensively, in which, applying active teaching methods. Training and retraining teachers. Implementing well staff rotation. Training for youth union's activities. Providing documents on children's rights to schools. Teachers who teach temporary combined classes should be given incentives. Kindergarten teachers should be treated based on Circular number 71/2007/TTLT-BGDDT-BNV dated November 28 2007.</p> <p>It is proposed that the government should keep implementing the programme of concretisation of schools, classes, and teacher public rooms in the period of 2016-2020. Improving the support for the target programme of education for mountainous, ethnic minority areas. Continuing the policy offering lunches for children aged 3 to 5 and providing support for children aged 2. Supporting food for local kindergartens.</p> <p>Provincial and district authorities should arrange more financial resources for education. Building restrooms should be given priority in all schools, especially in mountainous areas, public rooms, kitchens and dining rooms for students staying half-day at school, functional rooms. There should be specialised centres for disabled children. More funds should be arranged for youth activities.</p>
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<p>Being responsible for state management of education and training including children's right to development in their province,</p>	<p>Funds for youth union's activities are insufficient. There is no mechanism to encourage teachers to teach in remote areas. Propaganda coordination with other sectors is still limited</p>	<p>Improving learning quality by giving direct support from the Department of Education and Training to some poorest communes, helping them mobilise resources and reform teaching methods.</p> <p>Providing more land areas for building infrastructures such as playgrounds or gardens for students.</p> <p>Increasing the participation from organizations.</p>
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Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs

<p>Performing state management of the protection and care of children</p>	<p>Awareness of children's rights of some government agencies at all levels is still limited.</p> <p>Although the number of specialised staff is limited, they have to take over many other tasks, so the quality of operations has not met expected requirements. The number of staff responsible for children's care and protection fluctuate; they lack enthusiasm and it is very hard to recruit them. There is no collaborator in villages; this position is taken by persons who are supposed to be responsible for another area; they receive no allowance. Some staff's professional knowledge is limited.</p> <p>Facilities for social protection beneficiaries degrades, which creates more difficulties for their life. Most localities in the province lack entertainment places and places for the organisation of cultural activities for children. The right to participation of children in social activities is limited.</p> <p>Funds for children's care and protection are still insufficient to meet the requirements set out. Funds for communication and advocacy are inadequate. Funds for long term social protection beneficiaries and orphans; child trafficking; medical care; clothes for cold weather; transportation for the families of the victims with very disadvantaged conditions; assistance for victims with psychological trauma; toys and entertainment tools...are very limited.</p> <p>Agencies responsible for children's care and protection have not enough authority and roles in independently supervising children's issues. Hotlines and the involvement of children have not been taken into consideration.</p>	<p>Continue to advise the government about leadership roles and responsibilities of directing/coordinating activities related to the implementation of children's rights.</p> <p>Organising the implementation of regulations/policies on development of the system of social work profession at all levels.</p> <p>Suggest support for collaborators working on social work as servants of the same level (coefficient of salary, social insurance, health insurance and other allowances).</p> <p>Institutionalising legislation policies about children into Party documents and resolutions of the National Assembly and People's Council; should be one of the topics frequently been questioned in the National Assembly and People's Council sessions.</p> <p>Allocate, prioritise resources to address problems of children with accountability.</p> <p>Strengthening the role of hotline and special power given to the role and responsibilities of the hotline for child in order to support children when needed.</p> <p>Establishment of an independent oversight body to exercise the rights of children</p>
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<p>Performing state management of the protection and care of children</p>	<p>Some provisions on criteria for children with no fostering sources are very difficult to implement.</p> <p>The contents of the propaganda have not been changed, propaganda materials are very boring and without clear guidelines, documents of the Centre are inappropriate.</p> <p>Collection and updated information on children, particularly at the grassroots level are limited.</p>	
<p>Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism</p>		
<p>Performing the State management of the children's right to participation.</p>	<p>Most localities in the province lack places for entertainment and the organisation of cultural activities for children. There are no communal and village cultural houses, means of communications such as speakers, radios in the village; therefore, culture officials have not performed their functions and duties properly, thus the children's right to participation in social activities is limited. Funds to carry out propaganda in the village are limited.</p>	<p>Continue to advise the government leadership to overcome the gaps, deficiencies: Stepping up advocacy, communication, inter-agency coordination, construction of district children houses, organise more children competitions: tournaments, storytelling competitions and book introduction...</p> <p>Suggest separate investment policy for children at uplands; Bringing the internet to villages; More advocacies on violence against children on the media.</p>
<p>Department of justice</p>		
<p>Disseminating and educating law, especially law related to children; ensuring the registration of birth for children.</p>	<p>Judicial staff are too few and their capacity is limited, and they have to take on many other tasks and duties. Funds for propaganda, especially in the areas of ethnic minorities are inadequate. The propaganda to raise the awareness of highland people with special difficulties is very important, however, the qualification, advocacy capacity and method of advocacy of staff are insufficient and limited.</p> <p>Funding for propaganda, especially in ethnic minority areas is insufficient.</p>	<p>Open more training courses for propaganda officials to raise awareness of the legal organization...</p> <p>Capacity building for officers working on propaganda; renew the methods of propagation; Materials with the content of laws should be available and delivered people.</p> <p>Increase funding for propaganda; suggest appropriate policy for propaganda cadres in the villages, the rewarded policy for unit doing good propagation.</p> <p>Provide loudspeakers for village for more effective propaganda.</p>
<p>Committee for Ethnic Affairs</p>		
<p>Providing advice, helping the People's Committee perform state management in ethnic affairs tasks.</p>	<p>The coordination between departments, agencies and organizations involved in the implementation of ethnic policies with ethnic minorities is limited.</p> <p>There is a lack of funds for monitoring activities.</p>	<p>Policies should clearly define the tasks, the coordination mechanism. Suggest specific policies for the Committee for Ethnic Minorities</p>

Women's Union		
Mobilising different groups of women to join in social activities, public activities protecting women's rights and preventing discrimination against women.	Propaganda and mobilisation of people have been limited to direct means. There have been no uses of visualised means. Local languages, e.g. H'mong language, have not been taken into those communication activities. There is a lack of funds for propaganda and public competition.	Provide projector for projection images to facilitate people and members to understand more easily through visual images. Open ethnic language classes Provide flip with illustration images for easier propagation Support and organise study tours to learn experiences. Provide propaganda books, tapes, disks for more effective propagation
Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union		
Mobilising youth people into social activities and by doing so, educating legal awareness for them.	Capacity to organise big events is limited. There is a lack of funding for their activities.	Provide training on skills for organising event for union officials

3.4. The mechanisms for management, coordination, monitoring, reporting and evaluation

The protection and care of children in Lao Cai is managed, coordinated, monitored, reported and evaluated by the People's Committee and People's Council at all levels; the Department of Labour - Invalids and Social Affairs acts as very important focal agency.

The organisation and operation of the People's Committee and People's Council at all levels are specified in the Law on the organisation of People's Councils and People's Committees No. 11/2003/QH11 promulgated by the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam on 26 May 11 2003.

DOLISA is the specialised agency of the provincial People's Committee; it advises and assists the provincial People's Committees in performing state management on social protection, including children and on the protection and care of children.

DOLISA is under the direction and management of the provincial People's Committee in terms of its organisation, staffing and activities; and under the direction, guidance and inspection

of the Ministry of Labour - Invalids and Social Affairs.

Specifically, in the protection and care of children, DOLISA has the following functions:

- Providing guidance and implementing programmes and plans on protection and care of children in the province;
- Providing guidance and supervising the implementation of the provisions of the law on the protection and care of children under the scope of the Department; build communes and wards appropriate for children;
- Monitoring, supervising and evaluating the implementation of child's rights in accordance with laws, regulations and policies on the protection and care of children;
- Managing and making use of provincial funds for the protection and care of children as prescribed by the law.

The departments and agencies, People's Committees of districts and cities, the Viet Nam Fatherland Front and organisations in the province also strictly follow the children's rights

to care and protection in the province under their assigned functions and tasks.

Periodically as regulated, DOLISA collects data and results on the situation of the protection and care of children of departments, agencies and People's Committees of districts and cities, the Viet Nam Fatherland Front and organisations in the province to report to the Lao Cai People's Committee and summarise to MOLISA.

These mechanisms of management, coordination, monitoring and evaluation are also applied in implementing the Programme for Children of Lao Cai province in 2013- 2020. To concretise more, the Lao Cai provincial People's Committee issued the Regulation on the operation of the system of protection and care of children in Lao Cai (Decision No. 2172 / QD-UBND dated 08/29/2013). According to this regulation, the child protection and care system of Lao Cai province includes the Executive Board and the Inter-sectoral Working Group for child protection and care at the provincial level; the Executive Committee and the Inter-sectoral Working Group for child protection and care at the district level; and the Board for child protection and care at the commune level. Regulation specifies the principles of operation, functions, responsibilities,

coordination mechanisms and activities among the components of the system and related units; it specially assigned to the inter-sectoral working group at the provincial level the focal role of advising and receiving information, and the coordination of child protection and care in the province. The units of the system consist of the departments of Labour - Invalids and Social Affairs, Education and Training, Health, Justice, Culture, Sports and Tourism, the Provincial Police, the Provincial Women's Union, the Provincial Youth Organisation, the People's Committees of districts, cities and other related agencies.

However, group discussions suggested that the agency for child protection currently does not have enough power and not enough of an independent role in monitoring children's issues.

RIGHT TO SURVIVAL AND DEVELOPMENT



CHAPTER 4. RIGHT TO SURVIVAL AND DEVELOPMENT

Chapter 4 describes policies and programmes that have been implemented in Lao Cai for the right to survival and development of children, their status, causes and recommendations to improve the outcomes of the programmes.

4.1. Legal framework and public expenditure for the health sector

4.1.1. Legal framework and policies

The international convention on children's rights has prompted nations to consider that children are immature physically and mentally, need protection and special care, including appropriate legal protection before as well as after birth. In accordance with the convention, article 15 of the 2004 Children care and protection Law stipulates that children have the right to be cared for and to have access to healthcare. Children under the age of 6 are provided with necessary public health care and treatment at public healthcare centres. The Law also stipulates that (a) parents and guardians are responsible for following health regulations, providing their children with vaccinations, medical checkups and treatment; (b) public health care centres are responsible for giving adequate guidelines and

information and providing postnatal health care, disease prevention, and cure to children; (c) the Ministry of Education and Training is responsible for providing in-school health clinics; (d) the Ministry of Health is responsible for collaborating with the Ministry of Education and Training in guiding on the prevention of infections and other diseases in schools; (e) policies must exist to develop the health sector, diversify health services and subsidise children's health care, treatment and rehabilitation, and ensure a sufficient budget for the health care of children under 6 years old.

The Child Law adopted in March 2016 was advocated with the "right to be cared for with comprehensive development from the early stages of life"¹⁶. This emphasises the role of health care and nutrition in the first 1,000 days (3 years), from pregnancy, in accordance with Article 24 of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Lao Cai province has implemented the following programmes for child survival and development, as shown in Table 4.1.

¹⁶ Document of the Advocacy Workshop on "Revising the Law on Children for early childhood care and development", by RTCCD and EBHPD, on 6 October 2015

Table 4.1. Policies and national programmes for children in 2012-2020¹⁷

Nutrition	<p>Decision 641/QD-TTg dated 28/4/2011 approving the master plan on the physical development of Vietnamese people in the 2011 - 2030¹⁷ period, which aims to improve reproductive healthcare, maternal health and newborn care, significantly reduce the rate of under nutrition in order to improve basic indicators of 5-year old children and reach the targets for the physical development of Vietnamese adults and teenagers.</p> <p>Decision No. 226 / QD-TTg (dated 22/2/12) approves the national strategy on nutrition from 2011 to 2020 and vision to 2030.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Component: Project on communication, nutrition education, training of human resources; Project on the prevention of under nutrition of mothers and children; Project on the prevention of micronutrient deficiency; School Nutrition Programme; Project on the control of overweightness - obesity and the prevention of non-communicable chronic diseases related to nutrition; Programme on Improving nutrition security, household food and supply of nutrition in emergencies; nutritional surveillance project.

¹⁷ The project is piloted Ha Noi, Hai Phong, Da Nang, Ho Chi Minh, Lao Cai, Thanh Hoa, Gia Lai, Quang Ngai, Bac Lieu, Binh Duong

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget: Budget mainly from 3 Projects in the National Programme on Health from 2012 to 2015.
National target programme on Health	Decision No. 1208 / QD-TTG (dated 04/09/12) approved National target programme on Health in 2012-2015
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project 1: Prevention of diseases which are dangerous to the community; Project 2: Expanded immunisation; Project 3: Maternal health care and improvement of the nutritional status of children; Project 5: Enhancing the capacity of communication, monitoring and evaluation of programme execution (including communication on school health and rehabilitation support for people with disabilities). Budgets: Central budget: 52% (90% of investment capital / 10% of development investment); Local budgets: 27.7%; International cooperation: 10.3%; Other sources 10%.
Population and Family Planning	Decision No 1199 / QD-TTg (dated 31/8/12) approved the National Programme on population and family planning from 2012 to 2015.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project 1: Ensuring logistics tasks and provide family planning; Project 2: Screening for diseases, disabilities, birth defects and controlling unbalanced sex ratio at birth (SRB); Project 3: Enhancing the capacity on communication and monitoring and the evaluation of programme implementation; Scheme on population control in the seas, coasts and islands. Budgets: Central budget: 46%; local budgets: 32%; Loans, grants: 11%; Other sources 11%.
HIV/AIDS	Decision No. 84 / QD-TTg (dated 04/06/09) approved the National Action Plan for Children Affected by HIV / AIDS to 2015 and vision to 2020
	Decision No. 1202 / QD-TTg (dated 31/8/12) approved the National Programme on HIV / AIDS prevention in 2012-2015
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Component of Decision 84: Research, review and promulgation of legal documents and guidelines on the protection and care of children affected by HIV/AIDS; Establish security services and the protection of child care affected by HIV/AIDS; Provide information and knowledge on the protection and care of children affected by HIV/AIDS; Develop a favourable social environment for children affected by HIV/AIDS; Increase the accessibility to social services for caregivers of children affected by HIV/AIDS and increase their participation in the prevention of HIV/AIDS; Complete the information system, test, and evaluate the situation of children affected by HIV/AIDS. Component of Decision 1202: Project on information, education and communication for behaviour change on HIV/AIDS; Project on monitoring HIV / AIDS, interventions for the reduction of dangers and HIV prevention; Project 3 Support for the treatment of HIV / AIDS and prevention of HIV transmission from mother to child; Scheme 4: Strengthening of the capacity of the centre for HIV / AIDS prevention. Budgets: The budget for the Decision 84 is incorporated in the NTP on HIV/AIDS.
Water and sanitation	Decision 366/QD-TTg dated 31/3/2012 on the approval of the National Programme on Clean water and rural sanitation for the period 2012-2015. Decision 800/QD - TTg dated 04/6/2010 by the Prime Minister approving the National Programme on building New Rural areas; Scheme 435 / KH - BCDXDNTM dated 20.09.2010 of the Central Steering Committee of the New Rural Programme on the implementation of the New Rural Programme for the period 2010-2020. The Lao Cai Provincial Party Committee issued Resolution 03 - NQ/TW dated 10/10/2011 approving and executing 7 programmes and 27 projects intended for the period 2011-2015. The New Rural Programme is the framework for all programmes and projects focused on agriculture and rural development.

- Decision No. 366/QĐ-TTg dated 31/3/2012, Sub-project 1 – water supply for domestic use in rural areas; border posts with population groups in border areas and prisons, giving priority of water use to those in areas which are seriously short of water: High mountains, high salinity areas, Arsenic polluted areas, dioxin and other toxic polluted areas (ARD sector chaired and coordinated with the health sector); Sub-project 2: Construction of the clean water system and sanitary latrines for nursery schools, primary and secondary schools (assigned to the sector of Education and Training, in collaboration with the Health Sector) of Project 1 – supplying potable water to households and the rural environment. The health sector is in charge of implementing Project 2 on Rural Sanitation.
- Children-focused contents in Decision 800 of the New Rural Programme: Development of socio-economic infrastructure including classrooms, health centres, cultural houses to contribute to the normalisation of cultural and sports activities, health and education; Development of education - training in rural areas; Health development, health care of rural residents; Building cultural life, information and communications in rural areas and supplying clean water and rural sanitation.

Local investments

- Budget source:

National Target Programme on Water supply and Sanitation for rural areas for the period 2012 - 2015: total financing 27,600 billion VND, for which the State budget finances 14.9% (4.100 billion VND), the local budget funds 11.2% (3.100 billion VND), international aid finances 29.7% (8.200 billion VND), preferential credit 9.100 billion VND, accounting for 33.0% and individuals and enterprises donating 3.100 billion VND or 11.2%.

New Rural Programme: Funds from national programmes and supporting programmes and projects, which are in operation within the local region: about 23%; direct funds 17%, credit funds 30%; funds from enterprises, cooperatives and others 20% and 10% from individuals.

The central and provincial policies and programme frameworks lay the foundation for activities to improve the access to and use of healthcare, nutrition, safe water and sanitation services for children at home, schools and in the community. The outcomes, bottlenecks and barriers are synthesised and analysed in the following parts of this chapter.

Healthcare¹⁸ network

The organisation, arrangement and categorisation of public service suppliers affect their supply capacity and service quality. In recent years, Lao Cai's Healthcare System has experienced some positive changes. As in other provinces, the Lao Cai Healthcare System³ is organised into three levels: provincial, district and commune (including village health workers/collaborators). The provincial level includes the Provincial Department of Health, Provincial General Hospital, Traditional Medicine Hospital, Sanatorium and Rehabilitation Hospital,

Hospital of Endocrinology, Obstetrics and Paediatrics Hospital; Centre for Preventive Medicine, Centre for HIV/AIDS prevention, Centre for International Quarantine; Centre for Reproductive Health; Centre for Health Communication and Education; Centre for Medical Examination and Forensics; Centre for Prevention of Malaria - Insects - Parasitology; Centre for Forensic Psychiatry (which is recommended to be established in the period of 2016 - 2020), Department of Food Safety and Hygiene, Department of Population and Family Planning.

The Department of Health is responsible for provincial health care, is decentralised and allocated with a budget for public health administration and management. Budgets for disease prevention and treatment are decentralised to specialised units. For example, the Centre for HIV/AIDS prevention is funded to implement national programmes on HIV/AIDS cure and prevention; and the Department of Population and Family Planning receives a budget for running population and family

¹⁸ <http://laocai.gov.vn/sites/soyte/bomaytochuc/donvitructhuoc/Trang/20130308141134.aspx>

planning programmes and activities. The decentralisation spreads resources and reduces the opportunities for coordinating health sector activities.

The biggest challenge is that the DOH does not manage the sector-wide budget. Budget estimates of health specialised units (centres, hospitals, bureaus) are negotiated with finance agencies or the Central NTP offices without participation of the DOH whilst the plans are discussed and agreed between these agencies and the DOH. The separation of plan and budget makes it hard for monitoring and evaluation. (Health group discussion on 05/01/2015)

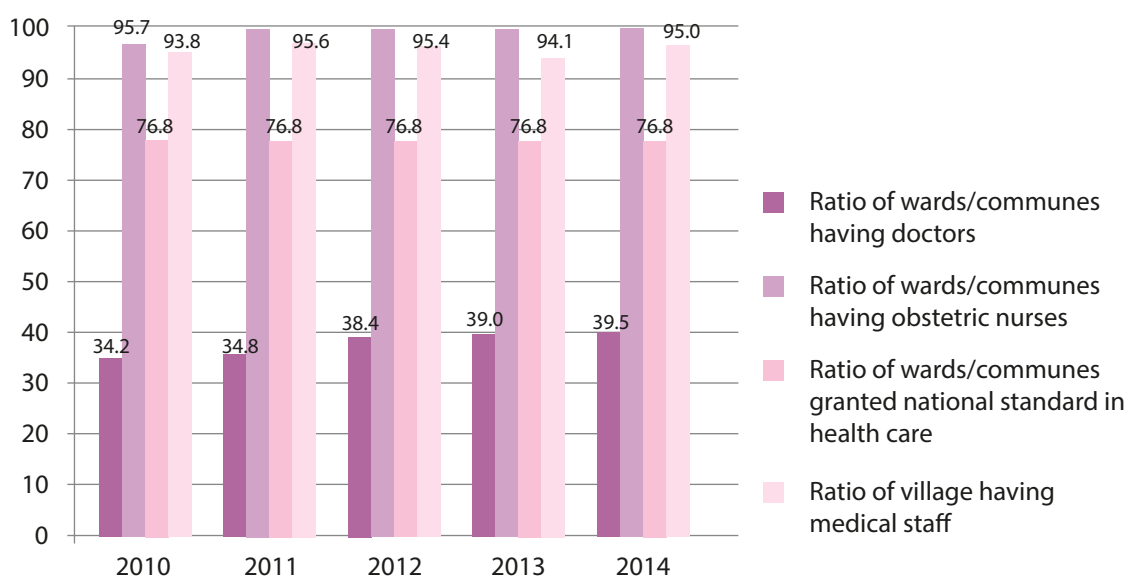
District level: Medical Centre (including the Division of Food Safety and Hygiene, Nutrition and Food), Centre for Population and Family Planning, Centre for Food Safety and Hygiene (in Lao Cai City, Sapa and Bao Thang districts); Division of Health (under DPC); District General Hospital (except for Lao Cai city) with Regional polyclinics (commune cluster).

Commune Health Centres (CHC) with village health workers, population collaborators, nutrition collaborators and the Division of Health employ health workers at the commune level who are responsible for primary health care for people, including maternal care, child health and nutrition care.

In the province 100% communes have a commune health centre (CHC) and by the end of 2014, 53.6% of CHC have reached the national standards stipulated under the Decision 3447/QD-BYT¹⁹ dated 22/9/2011 of the Ministry of Health. The percentage of CHC having doctors has increased over the years, reaching 39.56% in 2014. The percentage of villages with health workers has increased over the years, from 93.84% in 2010 to 95.06% in 2014. 95.73% of CHC had midwives/ obstetric physicians in 2010 and this proportion was 100% in 2014.

¹⁹ Replacing the decision No 370/QD-BYT with former standards and replaced with Decision No 4667/QD-BYT dated 7/11/2014 on the national standards on Health in the period of 2011-2020.

Figure 4.1. Situation of commune health in Lao Cai Province in the period of 2010-2014



Source: Statistical Yearbook in 2014 and Lao Cai DOH

The quality of health infrastructure and facility and resources has not improved evenly among districts. Districts with higher economic development are able to provide better health services, for instance Lao Cai city and Bao Thang districts (area 1). Districts with moderate socio-economic conditions (area 2) and those

with restricted conditions (area 3) have less developed health infrastructure, facilities and resources. There is no clear difference between group 2 and 3. The proportion of communes satisfying National Health Standards stated in Decision 370/QD-BYT in area 3 is higher than that in area 2. By the end of 2014, 100%

of communes had midwives/ obstetrical physicians. The infrastructure conditions and human resources are summarised in the following tables.

Table 4.2. Percentage of communes with doctors by district

Unit: %

District (area)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Overall	34.15	34.76	38.41	39.02	39.56
Lao Cai City (1)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Bat Xat(3)	26.09	34.78	34.78	43.47	44.01
Muong Khuong (3)	31.25	18.75	25.00	26.50	27.30
Si Ma Cai (3)	15.38	23.08	30.77	30.77	31.11
Bac Ha(3)	23.81	33.33	38.10	42.85	43.02
Bao Thang(1)	53.33	66.67	66.67	100.00	100.00
Bao Yen (2)	16.67	22.22	22.22	22.22	25.13
Sa Pa (2)	22.22	33.33	44.44	44.44	45.03
Van Ban (2)	26.09	34.78	34.78	35.20	36.02

Source: Lao Cai Province Statistics 2014

Table 4.3. Percentage of communes with national standardised CHC by district

Unit: %

District (area)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Overall	76.83	76.83	76.83	76.83	76.83
Lao Cai(1)	94.12	94.12	94.12	94.12	94.12
Bat Xat(3)	73.91	73.91	73.91	73.91	73.91
Muong Khuong (3)	68.75	68.75	68.75	68.75	68.75
Si Ma Cai (3)	84.62	84.62	84.62	84.62	84.62
Bac Ha(3)	80.95	80.95	80.95	80.95	80.95
Bao Thang(1)	86.67	86.67	86.67	86.67	86.67
Bao Yen (2)	66.67	66.67	66.67	66.67	66.67
Sa Pa (2)	66.67	66.67	66.67	66.67	66.67
Van Ban (2)	73.91	73.91	73.91	73.91	73.91

Source: Lao Cai Province Statistics 2014

In addition to national and local investments, projects of international organisations, NGOs also contributed to capacity building for health care networks at the grassroots level. The

Northern Mountainous Provinces Development Project supported the training of nurses and doctors from provincial to commune levels through long-term and short-term training

courses on primary health care for children, and advanced training for midwives etc. The GAVI Project supported medical equipment at the district level. The Commune Health Sector Capacity Support Project funded by the European Union organised training courses for nurses, village midwives, commune health collaborators and provided equipment for the CHC. The northern mountainous health support project (WB Loan) helped improve the quality of health services at the district level through training and strengthening the capacity of health workers, repairing and upgrading district hospitals and providing equipment; it developed and implemented health policies for the poor that improve access to public health services and make this access more equitable. The Child friendly project (UNICEF) supports the programme on the prevention and treatment of severe under nutrition (IMAM), the expanded immunisation programme (EPI), new born care, the mother tongue-based bilingual training programme and hygiene sanitation that includes the Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) programme. Other direct programmes support communes in extremely disadvantaged areas.

4.1.2. Public expenditure for the health sector

Budget for child healthcare

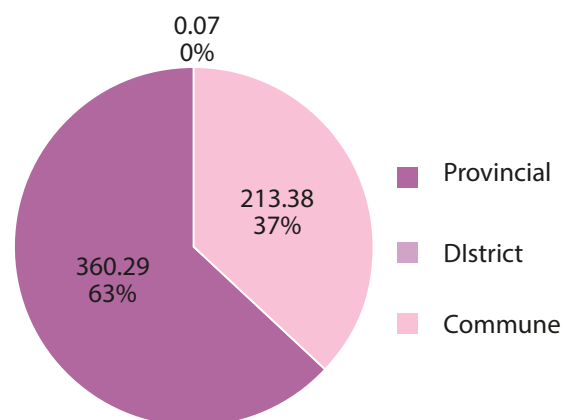
The under - five child mortality rate for ethnic minority children is 3 times as high as that of Kinh children. Over one third of children under five are stunted. Child stunting primarily results from nutrient deficient feeding practices of the mother, newborn baby, infant, and poor hygiene sanitation, especially affecting poor EM mothers from mountainous areas. Limited financial resources are one of the barriers in providing healthcare services and quality nutrition to mothers and children. Constrained financial resources are one of the barriers to the provision of quality healthcare and nutrition services to mothers and children²⁰. Under these circumstances, the optimisation of resources through prioritising is essential.

Budget allocation for recurrent health

²⁰ UNICEF Viet Nam, "Đảm bảo công bằng cho tất cả trẻ em Việt Nam",

expenditure is decentralised. Health activities at the provincial level are funded by the Provincial budget, and those at the district level are funded by District budget. The operating cost of commune health centres (CHC) comes primarily from the district budget (the commune budget only covers minor expenses such as small repair and hospitality). Final account data on local budget expenditures of the health sector in 2012 showed that 37.19% of the health sector expenditure comes from the provincial budget (this figure of the Education sector is 19.95%). Elsewhere, the district budget on the health sector plays a major role, accounting for 62.8% of total expenditures (meanwhile this ratio in the education sector is 79.97%). The health sector budget at the commune level only accounts for 0.01% of the total state budget for this sector (whereas this ratio in the education sector is 0.08%).

Figure 4.2 .Public health expenditure by administrative level (VND billion)



Source: Calculation from data for Lao Cai PER 2015

Linkages between planning and budgeting

The Department of Health (DOH) prepares the health sector plan. The annual plan is the background document for the health units at each health level to use for drafting the budget Centre. The DOH does not prepare the sector-wide budget. It consolidates the budgets. Provincial level health units (e.g. the centre for HIV/AIDS control, preventive medicine) prepare and negotiate budgets with the provincial department of finance. The absence of a representative from the DOH in the discussion on budget estimates of provincial level health

units loosens the linkage between planning and budgeting.

The budgetary process for the health sector is similar to that of the education sector. The Department of Finance guides budget spending units (Guidance No. 553 / STC-QLNS dated 26/04/2014) in accordance with the resolutions of Provincial People’s Council No. 26/2013/ NQ-HDND dated 13/12/2013 and the resolution No.25/2010/NQ-HDND guiding budget preparation, executive and final accounts of state budget, which include the norms to allocate recurrent expenditure for the Health sector.

Allocation norm of budget for recurrent expenditure

According to Decision No.59/2010/QD-TTg, the norm for budget allocation of recurrent expenditure for Lao Cai province is based on population and is VND 186,940/person/year. This norm includes specific allowances for the health sector and funding increase for preventive medicine to implement Resolution No. 18/2008/QH12 of the National Assembly but does not include the followings:

- Budget for the implementation of Decree No. 64/ 2009/ ND-CP dated 30 July 2009 of the Government issuing a policy for health workers and officials working in extremely

difficult socio-economic areas.

- Budget for health insurance card for children under 6 which is determined on the basis of the General Statistics Office’s data;
- Budget for health insurance card for the poor determined on the basis of the number of poor and the number of ethnic minorities people currently living in extremely difficult socio-economic areas as per the Law on Health Insurance;
- Health Insurance for the near poor, pupils, and students (annual targeted support);
- Additional allocation for regional hospitals (provincial hospital receiving extra 30% of 2010 budget from the central for accommodating extra patients from the region, according to the regulations of the Ministry of Health).

Norms for the allocation of local budget for recurrent expenditures of the Health sector are different for health treatment and prevention, and among district groups (more difficult districts have higher norms).

Specifically, the budget for health examination and treatment is based on hospital beds and preventive medicine is budgeted based on the number of permanent staff. Norms applied in the period 2009-2015 are as follows:

Table 4.4. Budget norms for health examination and treatment based on hospital beds

Unit: ND mil/ bed/ year

Health facilities	2007-2010	2011-2013	2014-2015
General hospital I, II, Obstetric – Pediatric Hospital	30	70	75
BaoThang District Hospital	30	62	68
Traditional Medicine Hospital, Endocrinology Hospital	26	50	58
Nursing and Rehabilitation Hospital	26	47	54
District Hospital - Zone 2	27	56	60.5
District Hospital - Zone 3	31	58	63
District clinic – Zone 1	23	41	44
District clinic – Zone 2	24	43	46
District clinic – Zone 3	26	45	48.5

Source: Resolution dated 25/2010 and 26/2013- Lao Cai Provincial People’s Council

These norms cover salary and salary based contribution (basic salary of VND 730,000/month), overtime payment, administration, regular repairs of assets, fuel for patient transportation etc. In addition, the health establishments receive a budget for purchasing and major repairs of cars, facilities, and medical equipment; government contribution for ODA projects; on-duty, surgery and operation allowances; health sector preference allowances; allowance for information technology staff; industrial sanitation; health solid waste disposal; and equipment purchase/rental/periodical maintenance.

Preventive medicine and operation of health facilities

The budget for preventive health spending units and CHC include (1) norm-based recurrent expenditures based on the number of staff according to the table below; (2) budget for salaries, wages and salary-based contributions; (3) and extra budgets include (i) office services for provincial entities who have to rent an office at VND 2 million/payroll/year; (ii) IEC material and activities, chemical substances for testing, food hygiene and safety, population activities, forensic medicine, prevention of under nutrition etc. subject to annual approval; (iii) Support for village health workers, village medical bag: VND 2 million/year; and (iv) Budget for disease and epidemic prevention in districts of VND 130 million/district/year.

Table 4.5. Norm-based recurrent expenditures based on the number of staff

Unit: VND mil/permanent staff/year

Health facilities	2007-2010	2011-2013	2014-2015
The health facilities	7.3	12.0	18.0
District – zone 1 (Lao Cai city, Bao Thang district)	5.4	9.0	13.0
District – zone 2 (Van Ban, Bao Yen, Sa Pa)	6.4	9.5	13.5
District – zone 3 (Bac Ha, Bat Xat, Muong Khuong, and Si Ma Cai)	7.7	10.0	14.5
District health station – zone 1	5.2	6.5	8.5
District health station – zone 2	5.5	7.0	9.5
District health station – zone 3	5.1	7.5	10.5

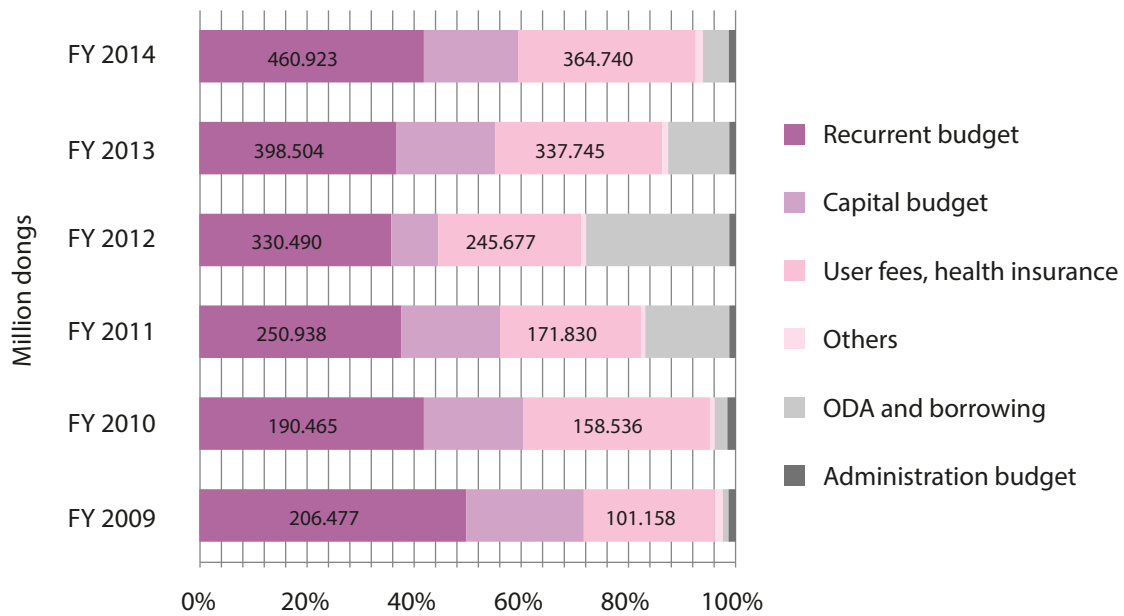
Source: Resolution dated 25/2010 and 26/2013 Lao Cai Provincial People's Council

Funding sources and trends of public expenditure for health

Public Health operations in Lao Cai province are financed by the local budget, NTPs (central budget), aid from foreign/international organizations, user fees, health insurance and other fees managed through the budget. The share of user fees and health insurance has

increased and accounted for 24%-35% of public health expenditure in the period 2009-2011. Effective estimation and management of via-the -state budget revenues is very important, helping to improve financial autonomy and boost efficiency and effectiveness of public health expenditure, especially when there are fewer aids coming since Viet Nam has become an average income country.

Figure 4.3. Public expenditure on health 2009-2014 by financial source (VND million)

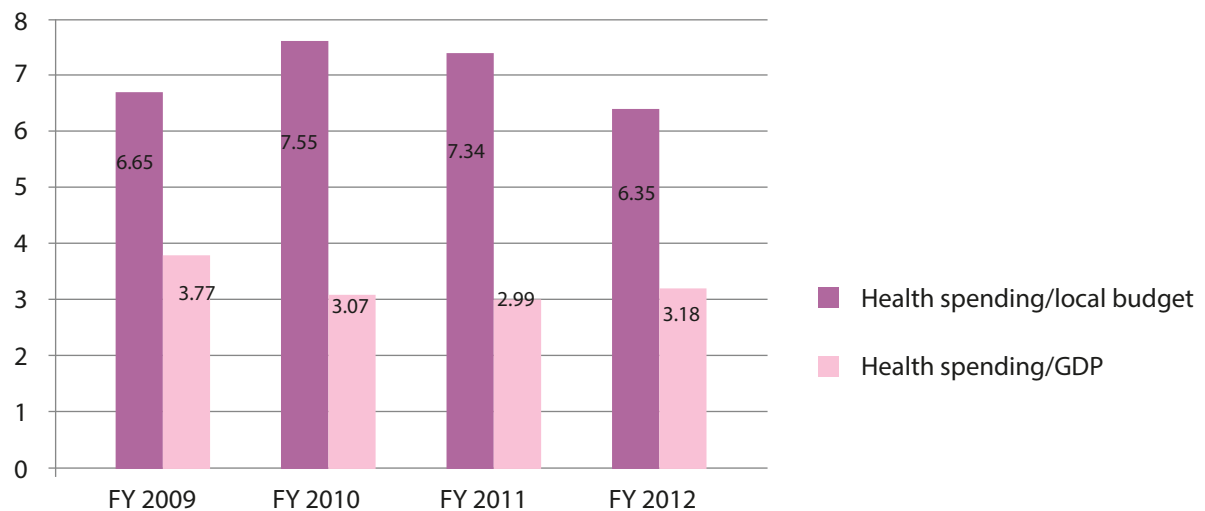


Source: Department of Health, Health statistics

Figure 4.3 showed that budget (recurrent, capital, administration) is the largest source for public health spending. This source covered 46% to 73% health expenditure. In 2009, ODA and borrowing accounted for 1.05% and reached a peak in 2012, at 27% of public health spending. The share of health spending from ODA and borrowing source tends to decrease, reaching 5% in 2014.

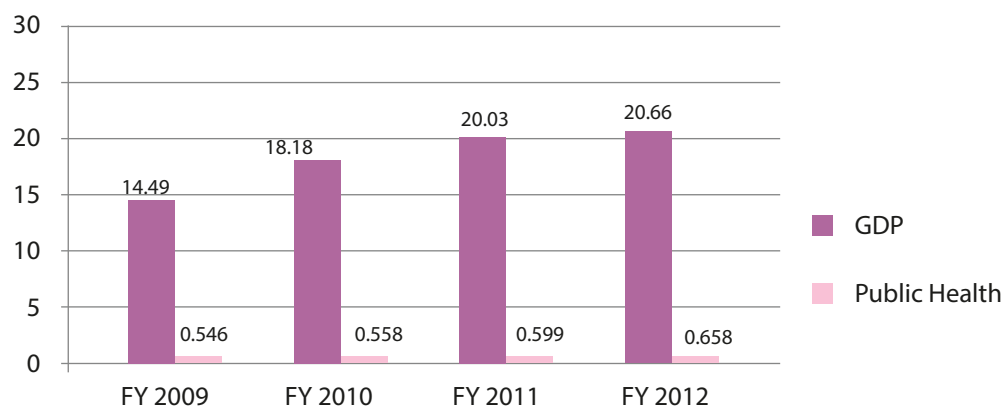
Public Expenditure on Health in Lao Cai was relatively stable during the period 2009-2012, accounting for 3% of GDP and 6% of the local budget. Health expenditure per capita increased from VND 546 thousand in 2009 to VND 658 thousand in 2012 (2010 price). No data on the cost of medical examination and treatment for children under 6 years old in the period 2010-2012 are available (this cost accounts for 4% of total public expenditure on health in 2009).

Figure 4.4. Public expenditure on health in 2009-2012



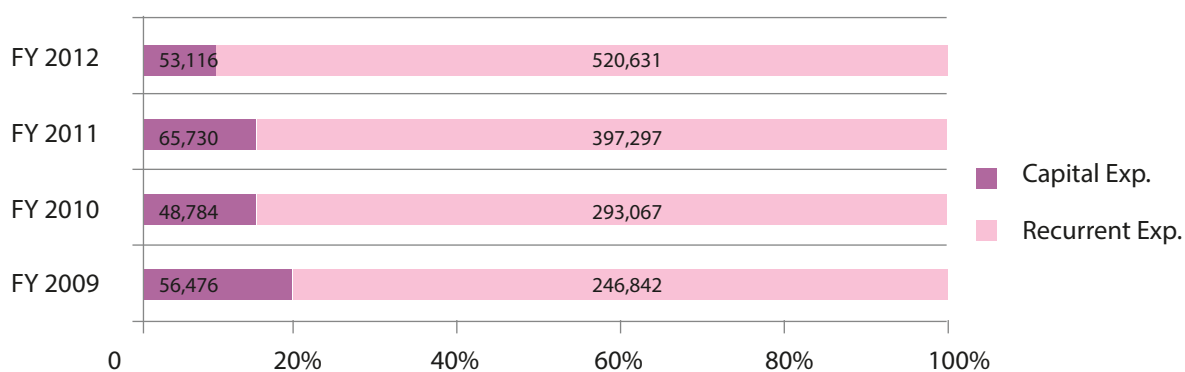
Source: Calculation from data for Lao Cai PER 2015 and the Lao Cai province statistics 2011 to 2013

Figure 4.5. GDP and public health spending per capita in 2009 - 2012



Source: Calculation from data for Lao Cai PER 2015 and Lao Cai province statistics Yearbook of Lao Cai province from 2011 to 2013

Figure 4.6. Public expenditure on health by economic classification (VND million)

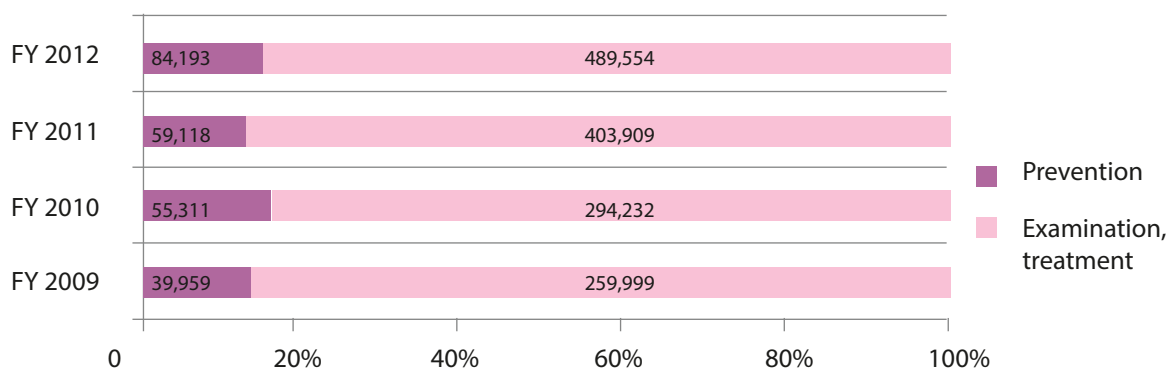


Source: Data from the MOF

The proportion of capital expenditure decreased in the period 2009-2012, from 18.8% to 9.3%. If the data fully and timely reflect the volume of completed construction, this trend reflects the direction of the province in tightening management of public investment and prioritising public investment for projects

that face difficulty in attracting investment from other areas. Unlike in the Education sector, expenditure on goods and services is the major spending item, accounting for 47-51% of recurrent spending, and salaries/wages accounted for 41 – 48%.

Figure 4.7. Public expenditure on health by economic classification (VND million)

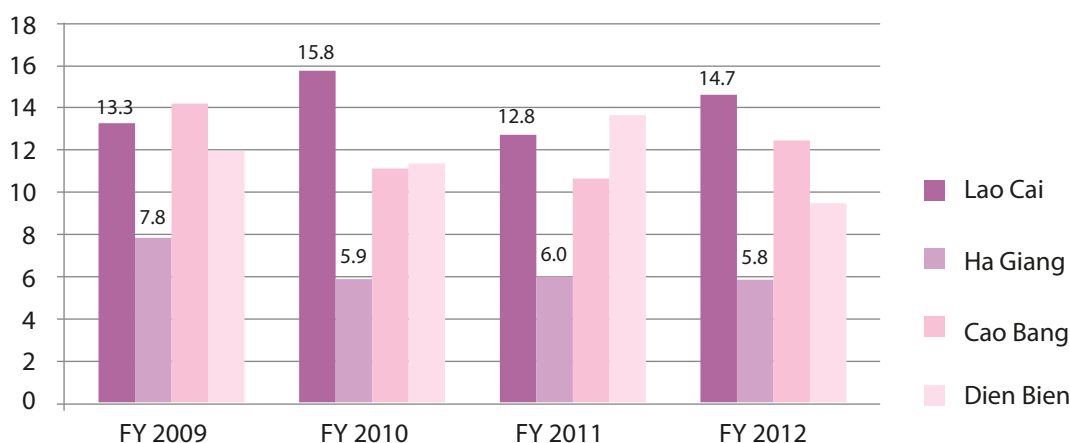


Source: Calculation from data for Lao Cai PER 2015

Health check-ups and treatments account for a large proportion (over 80%) of public health spending. The share was relatively stable in the period 2009-2012, at around 84% with a margin

of 3%. The share of public health expenditure for prevention in Lao Cai is higher than that of neighboring provinces, as shown in the figure below.

Figure 4.8. Percentage share of Preventive Health in Public Health Expenditure in Lao Cai and other mountainous provinces



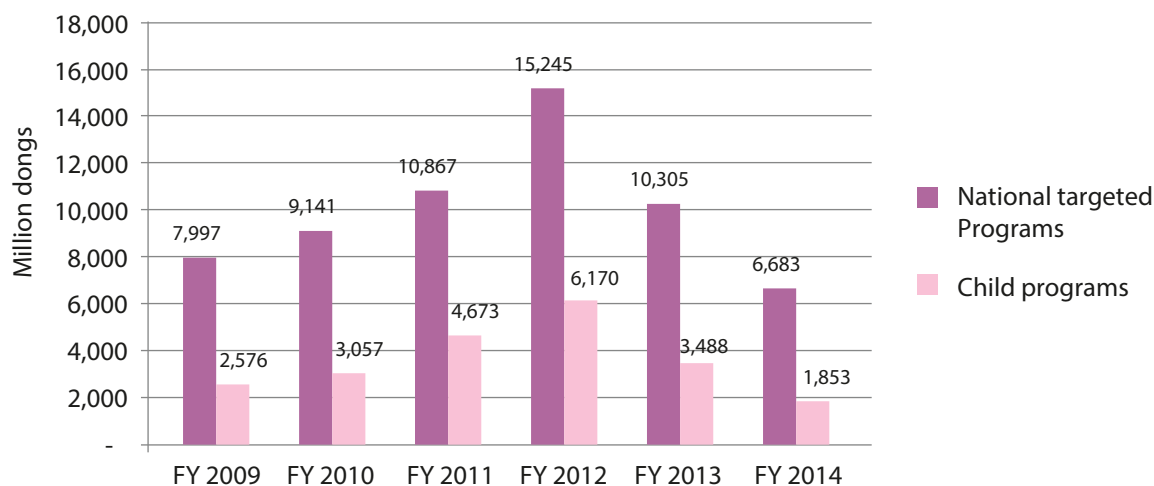
Source: Calculation from data for Lao Cai PER 2015

National health programmes for children

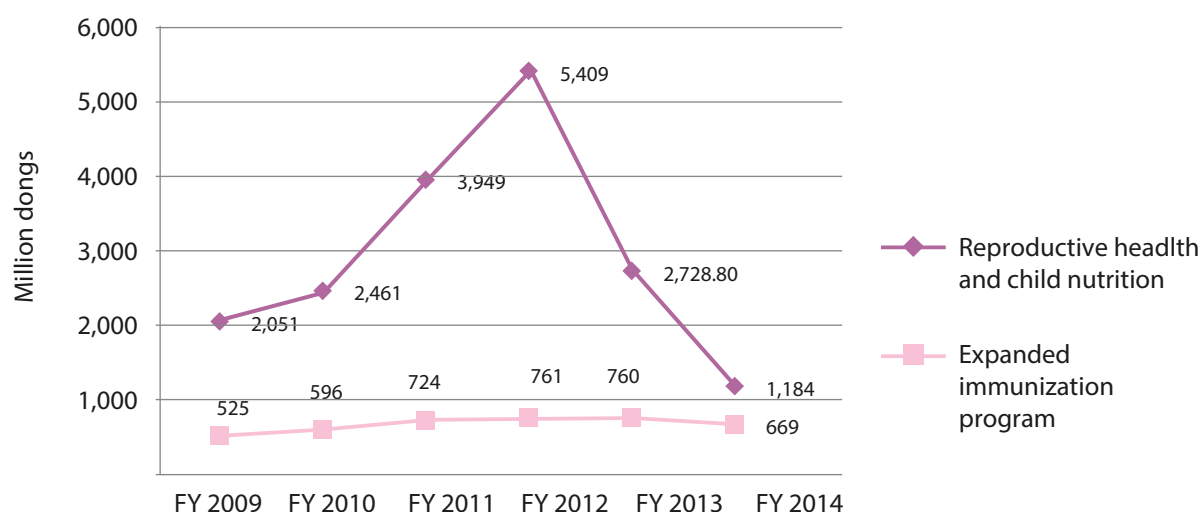
In 2009-2014, Lao Cai implemented 12 projects. Health projects exclusively for children were Project 2 (expanded immunization), and Project 3 (reproductive health care and nutrition for children). One of the goals of the expanded programme on immunization (EPI) is to maintain immunization coverage for under-1 children of exceeding 90% and to improve immunization service quality. The objectives of the reproductive health and child nutrition

project include: reducing the maternal mortality rate to 58.3/100,000 live births, 90% of pregnant women to be monitored during pregnancy, 80% of pregnant women to receive 3 check-ups in 3 trimesters, 85% of mothers to receive at least one post natal check-up, an infant mortality rate of 10‰, an under 1 child mortality rate of 14‰ and an under 5 child mortality rate of 19.3‰. In the period, the expenditure of national targeted programme for children accounted for 36% total NTP expenditure.

Figure 4.9. State Budget spending on health for children by programme



Source: Lao Cai Department of Health



Public health spending for children in Lao Cai has significantly decreased since 2012, after the province achieved most of the health objectives by 2015 in nutrition, maternal/ infant mortality, and under nutrition. The objective of the final year of the 5-year Plan 2011- 2015 is to maintain and improve the achieved results. The annual average expenditure per child for vaccination was VND 60,000. The cost was same in the three districts of Muong Khuong, Bao Yen

and Bat Xat, at VND 40,000/child/year. Average spending per child in the reproductive health project was VND 360,000. The cost in Bao Yen district (VND 160,000) was higher than that in the two remaining districts (VND 130,000). Causes of the differences include unallocated expenses at provincial level and the number of under-nutrition children cared in each district. Detailed data are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.6. NTP expenditures on child health 2012 (VND million)

Content	Provincial level	Lao Cai City	Muong Khuong	Bao Yen	Bat Xat
Project 3: Reproductive health care and improvement of the nutrition status of children	4,945 ²¹	62.7	162.7	262.7	244.3
Project 2: Expanded immunization	761	42	57	57	74
Number of children under 1-year old	13,727	2,000	1,280	1,597	1,904
Average expenditure for children under 1-year old					
Project on reproductive health care and nutrition improvement for children	0.36	0,03	0,13	0,16	0,13
Child immunization	0.06	0.02	0.04	0.04	0.04

Source: Lao Cai Department of Health and calculation from data for Lao Cai PER 2015

4.2. Implementation situation

The maternal and child health care situation was studied and the performance of health activities/projects and programme was analysed, including (1) reproductive health care for pregnant women; (2) nutrition for mothers and children; (3) expanded immunization for

children; (4) health insurance for children under 6; (5) HIV/AIDS and children; (6) child injuries, including food poisoning, hygiene and safety; and (7) water supply and sanitation.²¹

²¹ The project is piloted Ha Noi, Hai Phong, Da Nang, Ho Chi Minh, Lao Cai, Thanh Hoa, Gia Lai, Quang Ngai, Bac Lieu, Binh Duong

4.2.1. Maternal and child healthcare

Lao Cai province has made great efforts to implement the guidelines of the Party and the Government on the reproductive, maternal and child health care. Overall, maternal and child health care in the province achieved targets. However, statistics on maternal and child health care in the period of 2009-2014 showed that the performance of the programme has

changed over the time. The province achieved and exceeded some targets stated in the Strategy on population and reproductive health of Lao Cai Province in the period of 2012-2015 (Plan No. 72/ KH-UBND dated 22nd May 2012) such as the percentage of pregnant women having at least 3 prenatal visits in trimesters of pregnancy, the infant mortality rate, and the under 5 mortality rate.

Table 4.7. Result of the Maternal and Child health care programme implementation

No.	Indicators	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
1	Population growth rate (%) ²²		16.91	15.47	14.48	13.78		
2	Crude birth rate (‰) ²³		21.53	20.61	19.07	18.02		
	Target in 2012-2015			20.58	19.98	19.48	18.98	18.48
3	Rate of expecting women attending 3 or more prenatal visits (%) ²⁴	58.48	52.48	60.31	72.61	64.97	63.5	
	Target in 2012-2015			61.7	62	63	64	65
4	Rate of expecting women getting the second tetanus vaccination (%)	90.0	75.09	85.73	90.39	89.58	84.05	
5	Rate of women with pregnancy management (%)	-	80.37	93.37	94.75	92.95	85.91	
6	Rate of birth delivery at district/commune health facilities (%)	61.95	66.50	46.60	71.18	72.65	59.18	
7	Rate of birth delivery with technical support (%)	81.79	81.11	61.20	84.62	85.16	71	
8	Rate of low birth-weight <2,500g (%) ²⁵	-	3.85	4.52	4.71	4.39	5.70	
9	Rate of maternal mortality per 100,000 live births	-	29.46	57.57	-	33.55	35.22	
	Target 2012-2015			120	105	90	80	78
10	Infant mortality per 1,000 live births	-	11.93	19.16	14.19	15.77	20.08	
	Target 2012-2015			19.78	23	23	23	23
11	Under 5 mortality rate per 1,000 live births	-	29.75	30.51	19.49	21.55	26.59	
	Target 2012-2015			25.36	25.3	25.2	25.1	25
12	Sex ratio at birth male per 100 female babies	-	-	-	-	-	-	
13	Rate of mother/baby receiving post natal health care (%)	56.84	64.18	54.52	55.99	56.97	67.89	

Source: 2013 Statistical Yearbook of Lao Cai Province; Lao Cai DOH

²² Provincial Statistic Year Book, 2013

²³ Provincial Statistic Year Book, 2013

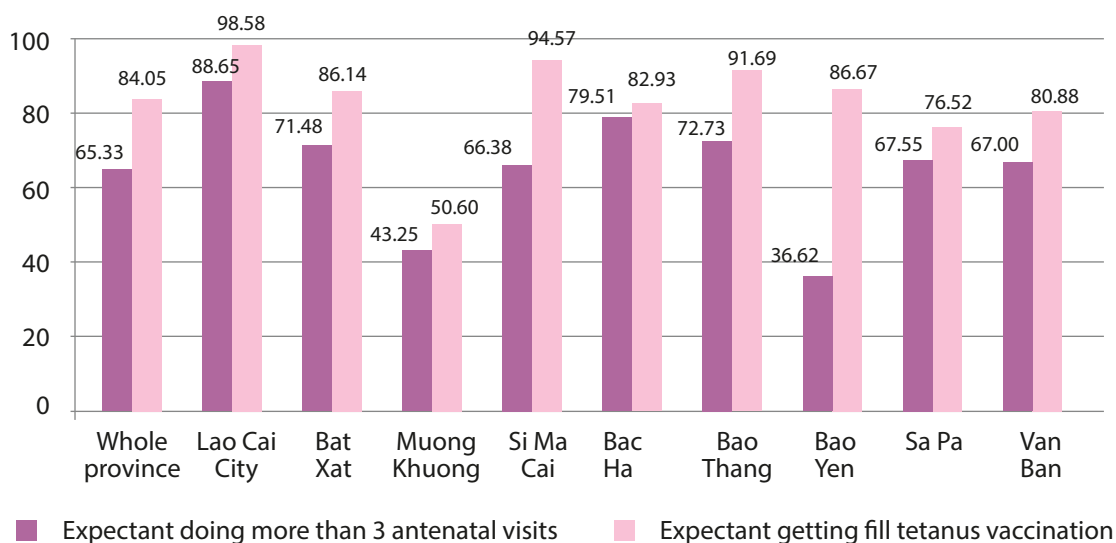
²⁴ Number of expecting women attending a prenatal visit more than 3 times/number of pregnant women

²⁵ Number of low weight infant/number of weighted infants

There were differences in maternal and child health care among districts in the province. The highest percentage of women with more than or 3 prenatal visits times during trimester of pregnancy was in Lao Cai City, followed by the districts of Sa Pa, Bao Thang, Bat Xat, Si Ma Cai, Muong Khuong, Bao Yen and Bac Ha. The lowest rate was in Van Ban District which was equal to ½ of the highest one, which Lao Cai city. Similarly, the highest rate of expecting women

who were vaccinated with two doses of tetanus was in Lao Cai City, followed by Bao Thang, Bao Yen and Van Ban, Bat Xat, Sapa, Muong Khuong and Si Ma Cai. The lowest rate was in Bac Ha district. The highest rate (in Lao Cai City) was about two times higher than the lowest one (in Bac Ha District). There are big differences in percentage points among districts. These results are presented in Figure 4.10 below.

Figure 4.10. Situation of maternal and child health care by district in 2014



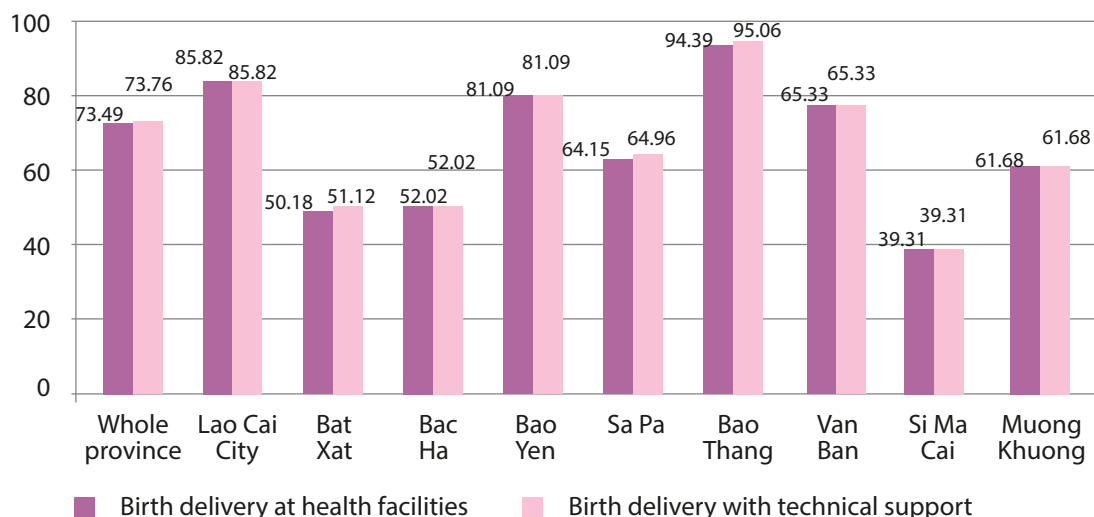
Source: Synthesised in according to data provided by Lao Cai DOH

The above-mentioned results correspond to socio-economic conditions of the districts, except for Bao Thang (group 1) and Van Bang (group 2). The result in Bao Thang is lower than those of group 2 (Bao Yen for tetanus vaccination and Sapa for 3 pregnancy check-ups). Similarly, Van Ban has the lowest rate of occurrence of 3 pregnancy check-ups in 3 trimesters even though the district belongs to group 2 (average socio-economic development). The results of prenatal care in Bac Ha district is the worst in the province, with 43% of pregnant women receiving 3 trimestral check-ups and 50% receiving tetanus vaccination.

Health statistics point out that the rate of women delivering babies in health facilities and the rate of women delivering babies with the assistance of health workers was similar in each district. This probably means that only mothers who gave birth at health facilities

received assistance from health workers during delivery. Districts with a high rate of mothers who delivered at health facilities and were supported by health workers include Bao Thang District, Lao Cai City (group 1) and Bao Yen District (group 2). The district with the lowest rate was Si Ma Cai (group 3) and districts with an average rate were Bac Ha and Bat Xat (group 3). The difference between the highest and lowest groups was about 3 fold. The causes of a high rate of mothers delivering at home without support from health workers (50%, Si Mai Cai has the highest rate – 60%) include poor transportation/ road (hard to reach places), custom, shame and reserved attitude of local people, especially EM.

Figure 4.11. Situation of women delivering babies at health facilities and assisted by health workers in 2014



Source: Synthesised in according to data provided by Lao Cai DOH

The results show that the situation of maternal and child health care in districts with more favourable conditions (Lao Cai City, Bao Thang and Bao Yen Districts) was better than that in the districts with more difficult conditions (Si

Ma Cai, Bat Xat, Bac Ha and Muong Khuong Districts). This result also revealed that the rate of women giving birth at home and without health workers' support was high, accounting for 50% to 60% in disadvantaged districts.

Box 4.1. Situation of women giving birth at home and positive response in disadvantaged communes²⁶

Tan Tien is a commune in a region (group3) of Bao Yen district with 13 villages and 4 ethnic groups (Kinh, Tay, Giay and Dao), covering a wide area. The commune centre is 15km away from the farthest village of the commune.

In 2014, the number of live births was 47, of which 6.3% were delivered at CHC, 42.5% in clinics and hospitals and 51.2% at home. Thus, more than half of women gave birth at home. Results from interviewing health workers and women with small children showed that there were no statistics on the proportion of mothers delivering at home with the assistance of health workers or midwives.

According to CHC staff, the rate of home delivery remained high because: (1) Transportation was inconvenient and distance from households to CHC was far; (2) It has been customary to deliver at home in a number of ethnic minorities (shame and fear of contact with strangers of some ethnic minorities, H'mong and Dao for instance)

"Initiative" of home antenatal visit²⁶

In late 2013, early 2014, in Tan Tien commune, Bao Yen district there were three cases of maternal mortality at birth. All causes of the three cases were identified to be complications at birth, late detection and not being taken to health facilities in time. Health workers confirmed if these cases had been monitored and had benefited from prenatal visits they would not have resulted in mortality. Learning from the cases, leaders of Bao Yen Centre for Health and health workers determined to increase the rate of pregnant women getting prenatal care, in order to detect the risk and reduce mortality.

²⁶ "initiative" – the word of a health worker of Bao Yen District health centre

In March 2014, the idea of home prenatal visit for pregnant women, especially those who were far from CHC and with inconvenient transportation was implemented in Tan Tien Commune. By January 2015, 18-19 out of 30 pregnant women had received prenatal visits (the data would not be remembered exactly), increasing the percentage of pregnant women with prenatal visit from 0% to 48%.

However, it is difficult to maintain the idea because of the lack of health workers, inconvenient transportation and limited allowance for the health workers.

Source: in-depth interview of health worker in Tan Tien Commune and staff of Bao Yen District Health Centre

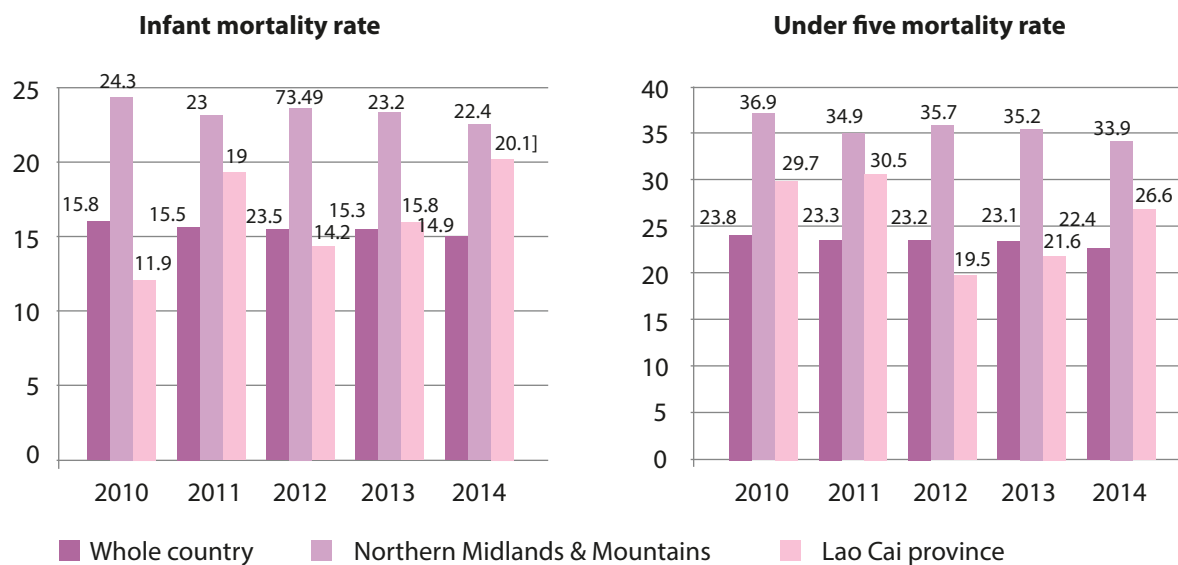
Child mortality

Child mortality rate, including infant mortality per 1,000 live births and under five mortality per 1,000 live births, is one of the important health indicators to assess the quality of maternal and child health care. Medical statistics show that the infant mortality rate and under-5 mortality rate of Lao Cai have changed between 2010 and 2014, and are lower than that of Northern

Midland and Mountainous area but higher than that of the whole country. Specifically, the 2014 data showed that the infant mortality rate of Lao Cai province, the whole country and the Northern Midland and Mountainous area were 20.1‰, 14.9‰ and 22.4‰ respectively. Similarly, the under-five mortality rates were 26.6‰, 22.4‰ and 33.9‰ respectively²⁷.

²⁷ According to the data of MICS 5 in 2014, the infant mortality was 15‰ and the under-five mortality rate was 20‰.

Figure 4.12. Comparing infant and under-five mortality rate for the whole country, region and provinces



Source: GSO Statistical Yearbook 2014 and synthesised from data of Lao Cai DOH

There are differences in the results of child health care. Infant and under five mortality rates of the districts in Lao Cai differ. The infant and child mortality rates in disadvantaged districts (Muong Khuong, Sa Pa, Bac Ha) were higher than those of advantaged districts (Lao Cai City, Bao Thang, Bao Yen). The rate in Bao Thang district was the lowest and highest in Sa Pa district. The difference between the districts

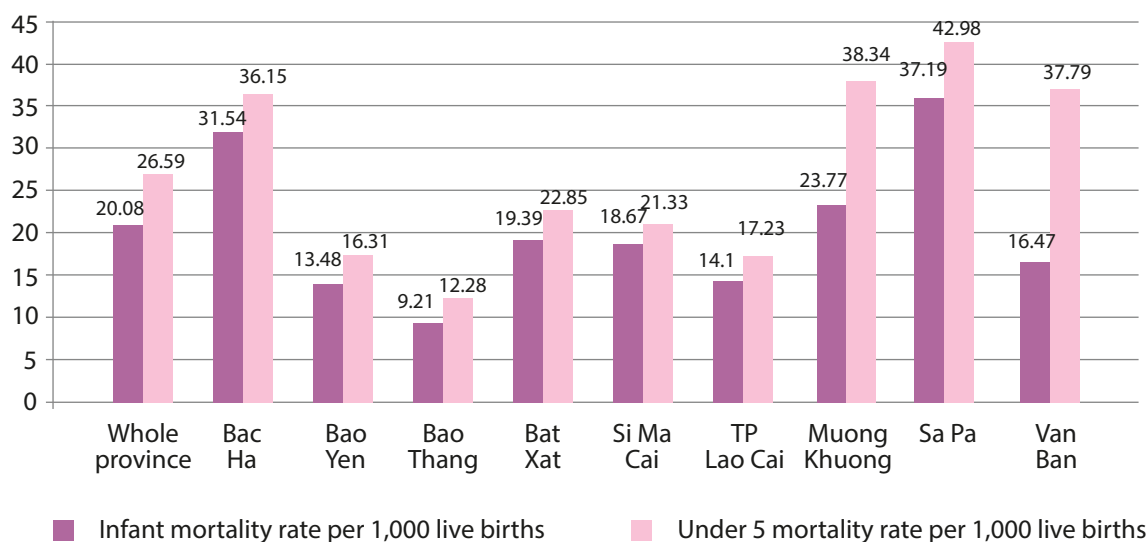
with the lowest rate and the districts with the highest one was relatively large. Detailed data are shown in Figure 4.5 – Infant and child mortality rate by districts in 2014.

The rate of child mortality in Lao Cai has tended to increase since 2012, whereas the national rate and the rate in the Northern midlands and highlands have declined. MICS

and some other research show that most of the mortality of children under age 5 occurs at less than 1 year of age. Similarly, the mortality of newborns within their first 7 days and infants accounted for the majority of deaths before the first birthday. While the rate of home - birth is still high, postpartum care in remote areas is

limited. Umbilical tetanus remains a cause of death, which partly explains the rising trend of infant mortality. However, to achieve a scientific intervention for this problem, an in-depth study must be conducted to correctly and objectively examine the cause of this rising rate.

Figure 4.13. Infant and child mortality rate by districts in 2014



Source: Data of Lao Cai DOH

4.2.2. Maternal and Child Nutrition

Child under nutrition is the result of different causes, separate or combined, that include poor dietary intakes, poor care practices for women and children before, during and after delivery and disease status, especially during the period since pregnancy until 2 year after birth. Under nutrition impacts the survival and development of children. In particular, under nutrition in children under 5 makes them vulnerable to diseases, especially communicable diseases, potentially causing death. Under nutrition can also cause delayed physical and mental development.

In Lao Cai, reducing the under nutrition rate among children is a target of the socio-economic and health development plan at government levels (province, city/district / commune). To accomplish this target, the province follows the Scheme 101/KH - UBND dated 10/09/2012 of the People’s Committee of Lao Cai province on the deployment of integrated activities on nutritional health

care for mother and child in the province in 2013-2016, the implementation plan of the National Strategy on fighting under nutrition in Lao Cai province in 2011-2015, Scheme 408 of the Department of Health May 2012 building a national action plan on nutrition for 2011-2020 and toward 2030, and Scheme 72 / PPC executing strategies on the reproductive health of the population for the period 2012-2015.

Programmes on Nutrition and Programmes on the Prevention of under nutrition

Child under nutrition is an issue not only in Lao Cai but also in the Northern Midlands and Mountainous areas as well as in the country. The prevention of child under nutrition is one of the national targets and is already included in the annual SEDP of People’s Committees at all levels (province-district-commune). Following are the activities of nutritional care for pregnant mothers and children currently being implemented:

- Pregnant women get pregnancy check-ups at least three times in three trimesters and receive adequate doses of vaccination against tetanus and supplementary iron/micronutrient pills.
- Weighing children: Monitoring child growth by weighing, measuring weight and height or even the Up Mid Arm circumference (MUAC) in communes with IMAM services. Grassroots health officials (village health workers, village midwives, and nutritional collaborators) weigh children to detect malnourished ones. For children under 2 years old, this work is performed every trimester. For children under 5 year old, this work is performed once a year. When children are detected as malnourished, they are weighed monthly (for both children under 2 years old and children under 5 years old).
- Giving vitamin A capsules (for children aged 6-60 months).
- Integrated Communication: propagandise through practice sessions on nutrition - also called practice of colouring powder bowls. Propaganda is regularly performed by grassroots health officers. In addition, propaganda is performed during the peak months of nutrition, for example on June 1st (the micronutrient day), Breastfeeding Week, Nutritional Development Week.
- Implementing interventions: in communes with high under nutrition rates to prevent and combat under nutrition (in particular in the five communes of Muong Khuong District (2014); eight communes of Bao Yen District: Kim Son, Vinh Yen, Xuan Hoa, Xuan Thuong, Thuong Ha, Tan Tien, Dien Quan).
- Treatment of under nutrition: When children suffer from severe under nutrition, treatment by nutrition-fortified products (Multi-micronutrient-fortified biscuits, sweet micronutrient powders, salty micronutrient powders, multi-micronutrient packets, enzymes, high-energy packets, multi-micronutrient pills, etc.). District health centres distribute these products to commune health

centres and commune health centres then give instructions on how to use them for children.

- Organise annual training on nutritional programmes for nutritional staff and collaborators.

In addition to programmes led by central and local authorities, programmes supported by NGOs also contribute to reducing the under nutrition rate in the province. For example, the Provincial Child Friendly Programme (2012-2016) with the component on preventing and combating child under nutrition and the IMAM project which successfully piloted a community-based model for the management and treatment of child acute under nutrition in 10 communes. The early care model (IYCF) implemented in Thao Chu Phin (Si Ma Cai) and Ban Pho (Bac Ha) helps pregnant mothers improve their knowledge on care for children and women, hence improve health and physical development of the new-born.

One of the mass media campaigns meant to improve children's nutritional status is the campaign "Breast Feeding - Let's Talk about Love!". Breastfeeding children in their early years of life protects them against infection, provides an ideal source of nutrients, and is also very economical and safe. As recommended, mothers should breastfeed their children within 1 hour of birth and engage in exclusive breastfeeding during the first 6 months.

Over the past years in Lao Cai province, the underweight rate of children under 5 years old (weight for age) and the stunting rate (height for age) have continued to decline. The underweight rate decreased from 27.9% in 2009 to 20% in 2014, down nearly 8% within 6 years, reaching an average of 1.3%/year, exceeding the target of 1.2%/year indicated in the Health Plan for the 2011-2015 period (under Lao Cai's planning for health system development from now to 2020 and a vision to 2030). The stunting rate dropped from 41.9% to 35.2%, down 6.7% in the 2009-2014 period.

Table 4.8. Results of nutritional care for children under 5 years old for the 2009-2014 period

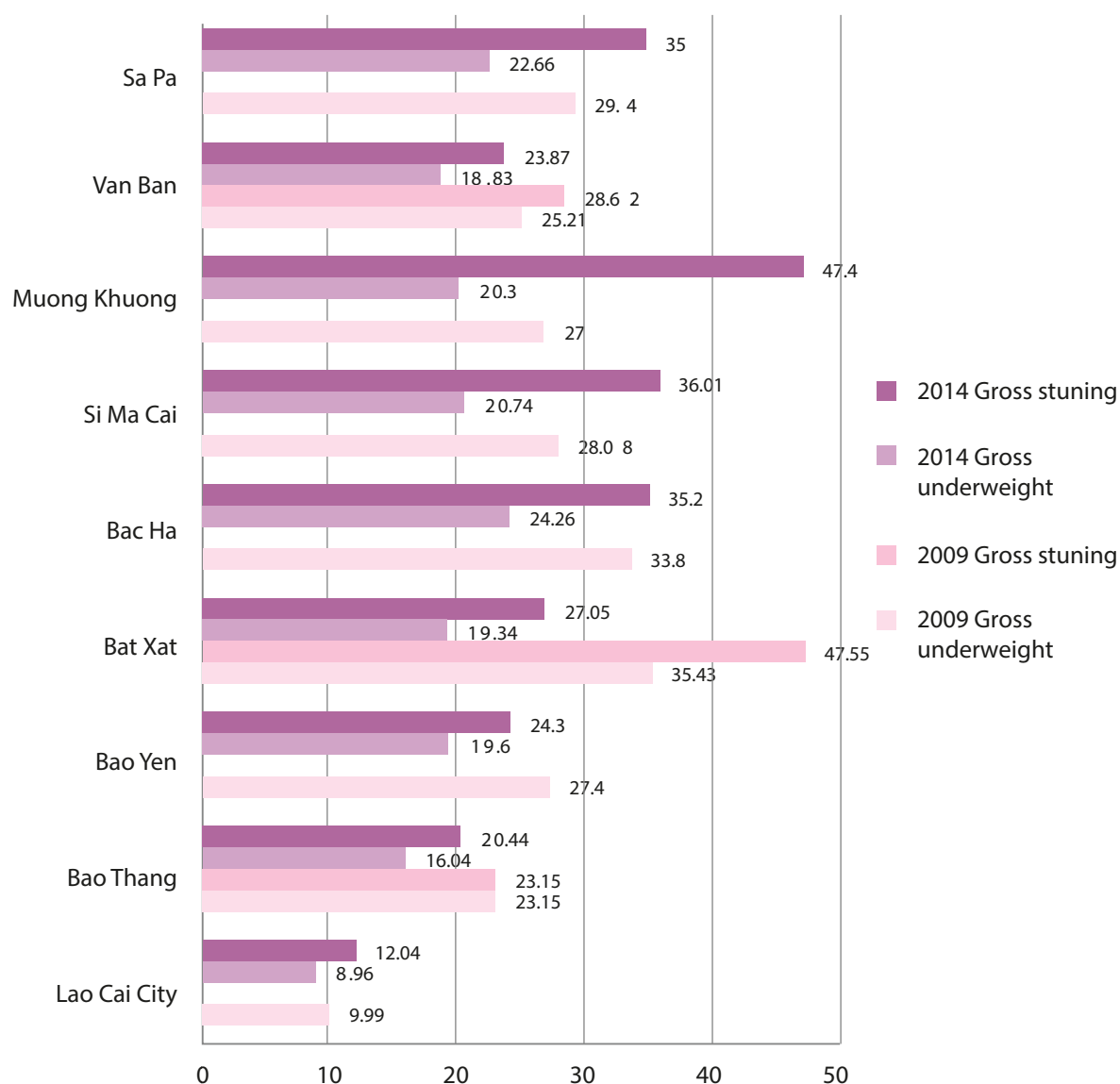
No.	Indicator	Province wide					
		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
1	Gross Underweight rate	27.9	26	24	23.2	22.1	20.0
2	Net Underweight rate	3.1	3.6	2.8	2.7	3.5	3.4
3	Gross Stunting rate	41.9	40.7	38.9	37.8	37.3	35.2
4	Net Stunting rate	17.1	15	14.8	14.7	13.6	13.4

Source: Lao Cai DOH

There is a disparity in the child under-nutrition rate between districts in the province, especially between districts with different economic conditions. In districts with difficult economic conditions, poor districts (Muong Khuong, Bac Ha, Si Ma Cai and Sa Pa), the child under nutrition rate is higher than in districts with more favourable conditions such as Lao Cai City, Bao Thang, Bao Yen. In 2009, the child stunting rate was highest in Bat Xat district (47.5%) and lowest in Van Ban District (23.2%). Notably, Lao Cai City and Sa Pa, Muong Khuong, Si Mai Cai, Bac Ha, Bao Yen District did not have statistics on child stunting rate in that year. However, in that year, there were statistics on child underweight rates in 9 district-level administrative units, revealing that with Lao Cai City had the lowest rate, 10% and Bat Xat district had the highest rate, 35.4%. For 2014, the statistics on under nutrition rates are more complete; all 9 districts/ city have statistics on child underweight and

stunting rates. The district with the highest child stunting rate is Muong Khuong (47.4%) and the lowest rate is Lao Cai city (12.4%). Among the 3 districts with sufficient statistics on child stunting rates, Bat Xat district achieved the most positive improvement, down by 20.5%, from 47.5% in 2009 to 27.1% 2014. The situation of underweight in children has also improved significantly during this period in all districts, with outstanding results from Bat Xat District (its underweight rate decreased by 16.1%, from 35.4% in 2009 to 19.3% in 2014). Bac Ha and Bao Yen District reached positive results, with underweight rates decreased to 9.5% and 7.8% respectively during this period. Detailed statistics of each district are shown in Figure 4.14 below.

Figure 4.14. Results of child nutrition care 2009 - 2014



Source: Lao Cai DOH

Although the under nutrition rate of children under 5 across the province and districts has continued to decrease, the child under nutrition rate of Lao Cai still remains high. According to the Nutrition Surveillance Profiles of Viet Nam in 2014, the underweight rate of children under 5 of Lao Cai province ranks 8/63 nationwide and 3/14 among Northern mountainous

areas; while the province's stunting rate ranks 5/63 nationwide and 2/14 among Northern mountainous areas; its wasting rate (weight for height) ranks 37/63 nationwide.

Table 4.9. Under nutrition rate in children under 5 years old nationwide, by region and by province in 2014

No	Location	Underweight (%)	Wasting (%)	Stunting (%)
	Nationwide	14.5	24.9	6.8
	Northern midlands and mountainous areas	19.8	30.7	8.2
1	Lai Chau	23.2	36.7	6.9
2	Ha Giang	23.1	35.2	9.8
3	Son La	21.7	34.4	10.3
4	Lao Cai	20.0	35.2	5.8
5	Dien Bien	19.2	32	7.5
6	Cao Bang	18.9	32.4	6.9
7	Lang Son	18.9	26.8	10.4
8	Bac Can	18.5	29.7	7.0
9	Yen Bai	18.4	28.6	9.8
10	Tuyen Quang	18.1	26.1	8.6
11	Hoa Binh	17.7	25.6	5.8
12	Bac Giang	15.2	27.1	7.8
13	Phu Tho	14.5	26.8	6.4
14	Thai Nguyen	13.8	24.1	9.1

Source: National Institute of Nutrition, Statistics on Child Under nutrition, 2014

Table 4.8 below shows that “the rate of children with early breastfeeding” and “the rate of children with exclusive breastfeeding during the first 6 months” are not counted or monitored in some districts (Muong Khuong and Bac Ha do not have statistics on these two indicators) even though these are two “must have” indicators. However, the data were collected by village collaborators who have no standard technique while collecting them at the grass root level. Because of that those data are often not reliable or objective. In the long run, it is better to undertake a cross-sectional survey to determine the situation.

According to health officials of the province, the cause of under nutrition in children include “Children are not exclusively breastfed during the first 6 months, not fed proper supplements, and still eat chewed-cooked rice early” (quick

response of health officials of Lao Cai DOH).

Some districts monitor the status and have statistics showing that the breastfeeding issue have gradually improved from 2009 to 2014. However, there is still great disparity between districts.

Indicators on supplying services show that the number of grassroots nutritional collaborators has increased over the years from 2009 to 2014 in all districts; only in Lao Cai city has this indicator decreased significantly from 195 in 2009 to 120 people in 2014. This is consistent with the socio-economic development trend and child under nutrition situation of the city (being the area with the most developed economic conditions of the province, mothers easily access mass media channels and better health facilities as well as nutritional services.

This leads to the decrease of the number of nutritional collaborators to give priority to other activities and other areas.).

Currently, districts of the province have established nutrition clubs and models to help mothers access to necessary information on nutrition, child and maternal health, and injury prevention for children. However, in general, the prevention of and fighting against child under nutrition in Lao Cai is still an urgent and difficult-to-solve issue.

The causes of under nutrition

Scientific research shows that causes of child under nutrition include a deficiency of nutrition before and during pregnancy and after delivery, especially due to micronutrient deficiency. Under nutrition is also derived from household food insecurity, poor diet and childcare (methods of processing food, quality of meals, etc.), which includes not breastfeeding the child completely in his/her first 6 months. In addition, under nutrition is also caused by personal hygiene and environmental conditions, water quality and infectious diseases. Therefore, the child under nutrition rate represents the quality of health care for mothers, children and the economic - living conditions of households.

The in-depth interviews (IDI) and focus group discussions (FGDs) were reviewed and identified the main causes of child under nutrition, among which economic conditions of households are the primary cause.

“Economy is the main reason leading to under nutrition. Witness a family meal laid on the tray consisting of pumpkin leaves, vegetable soup and chili salt, how can children have enough nutrients.”

IDI an Officer of Bao Yen district health centre

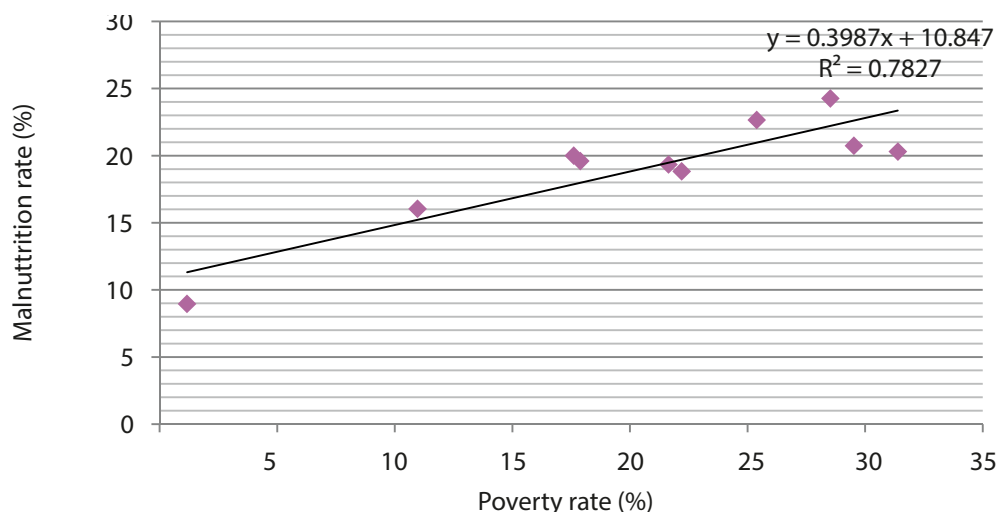
Tan Tien and Bao Yen communes have the highest proportion of malnourished children in the district (22% underweight and 30% stunting), primarily because of households’ economic conditions, according to the Director of the commune health station.

“There’s nothing to eat. I am in charge of guiding cooking session, using ingredients to “color” the rice soup, but hardly have such kind of soup in my family. We cook a 6-liter porridge big pot in a nutrition practice session, the pot becomes empty in few minutes. In fact, the soup is so delicious and nutritious, they have never eaten it at home. Without glucose, we have to eat more vegetable, hardly do we have pork and fat if we kill our raised pig”.

IDI officer of Tan Tien commune health, Bao Yen district

As such, we found that economic constraint and poverty can lead to an insufficient daily intake or nutrient deficiencies for mothers and children, which cause a under nutrition situation in Lao Cai. Statistics on the poverty of households and underweight children show that under nutrition correlates to economic condition: the higher the poverty rate, the higher the under nutrition rate.

Figure 4.15. Correlation between poverty and under-weight children in 2014



Source: MOLISA, DOH

The analysis of the situation of children in Dien Bien province also revealed that one of three main causes of child under nutrition is maternal, infants and children nutrient deficiencies. This shows the similarities of causal factors of child under nutrition in Lao Cai province and neighboring provinces as well as the provinces of the Northern Midlands and Mountainous area.

Parents lack knowledge about nutrition and children and the care of pregnant women:

“Media say a lot but people do not follow. According to me, people’s behavior should change. Communication changes behavior but changing behavior is not easy and does not happen overnight.”

IDI an Officer of Bao Yen district health centre

The quantity and quality of nutrition collaborators are still limited:

“For example, your Department has 5 people, among those one person specialised in nutrition, how can he/ she go to conduct propaganda in all 307 villages? All rely on a team of collaborators but their qualifications are weak. Training courses on basic nutrition knowledge and communication skills should be opened annually for those collaborators in the village “.

IDI an Officer of Bao Yen district health centre

In the health reports of the survey communes of Muong Khuong and Bao Yen districts, child under nutrition is caused by limited knowledge of mothers on food processing, and child nutrition and by economic difficulties.

As a result, there are many causes of under nutrition in children, however, within the scope of the survey and survey areas in Lao Cai city, Muong Khuong and Bao Yen districts, the survey team presented 3 groups of reasons as follows:

- Shortage of food or in-nutritious food source (difficult economic conditions, poor families who cannot afford / provide nutritious food for pregnant women and children – and even practice “bowl coloured”).
- Habits, behaviour and understanding about pregnant women and children are not systematic (no prenatal care and inadequate oral iron, breast-feeding is not exclusive during the first 6 months, the habit of feeding children with chewed rice, food processing and nutrition for children are inappropriate, parents are too busy to follow correct instructions on nutrition practice).
- Resources of the health sector are not guaranteed for nutrition and under nutrition prevention (underweight, inaccurate weight technique, lack of nutrition specialists, and different levels of qualifications and competence of nutrition officials who have limited knowledge and communication skills on nutrition), which thus affects growth and communication monitoring. This can be considered as a barrier and bottleneck in the work of nutrition and under nutrition prevention.

Box 4.2. Stories of infant weighing

According to a health official of Bao Yen district, at present, inadequate equipment and inaccurate techniques in infant weighing caused wrong identification of malnourished children, since the under nutrition rate was actually bigger than 20% in fact.

Bao Yen district has 307 villages respectively with 307 scales, while 4-5 villages share 1 scale. As a matter of fact, the villages are so far apart that it is hard to weigh children.

According to district health workers, children weighing is performed by nutrition collaborators and guided specifically by a district specialised in weighting infants but when our team conducted community monitoring, we still found wrong techniques in weighing children, e.g. final weighing results did not deduct the scale’s pan, did not take off warm clothes or subtract the weight of those warm clothes in winter.

Source: In-depth interview with Bao Yen District Health Centre official

Table 4.10. Nutritional Status of Mothers and Children by Administrative Units in 2009 and 2014

No.	Admin. Unit	2009								2014							
		Indicators on supplying services				Indicators on status quo				Indicators on supplying services				Indicators on status quo			
		No. of wards/towns/districts/communes	No. of grassroots nutritional collaborators	No. of communes/wards/towns having nutritional collaborators	No. of communes/wards/towns having nutrition clubs and models	Rate of breastfeeding mothers taking Vitamin A postpartum (%)	Rate of children with early initiation of breastfeeding (%)	Rate of children with exclusive breastfeeding during first 6 months (%)	No. of wards/towns/districts/communes	No. of grassroots nutritional collaborators	No. of communes/wards/towns having nutritional collaborators	No. of communes/wards/towns having nutrition clubs and models	Rate of breastfeeding mothers taking Vitamin A postpartum (%)	Rate of children with early initiation of breastfeeding (%)	Rate of children with exclusive breastfeeding during first 6 months (%) ²⁸		
1	Lao Cai City	17	195	17	0	92.70	0	0	17	120	17	0	96.74	72.40	7.73		
2	Bao Thang	15	264	15	0	97.58	91.55	18.10	15	264	15	1	83.30	91.99	17.54		
3	Bao Yen	18	306	18	0	56.80	87.00	0	18	307	18	0	87.40	98.50	0		
4	Bat Xat	23	234	23	0	30.00	45.00	0	23	246	23	1	85.00	55.00	0		
5	Bac Ha	21	236	21	0	89.00	0	0	21	236	21	1	75.00	0	0		
6	Si Ma Cai	13	93	13	0	98.00	100.00	0	13	98	13	1	70.00	100	100		
7	Muong Khuong	16	200	16	0	63.30			16	231	16	1	75.60				
8	Van Ban	23	268	23	0	68.10	0.00	0	23	271	23	0	84.30	17.30	0		
9	Sa Pa	18	94	17	0	29.95	31.60	0	18	94	17	1	64.50	81.00	8.00		

Source: Lao Cai DOH ²⁸

²⁸ This data column comes from the current MCH reporting system (MOH). However, those data are not really reliable because they were collected by village collaborators who have no standard technic in data collection.

4.2.3. Expanded Programme on Immunisation

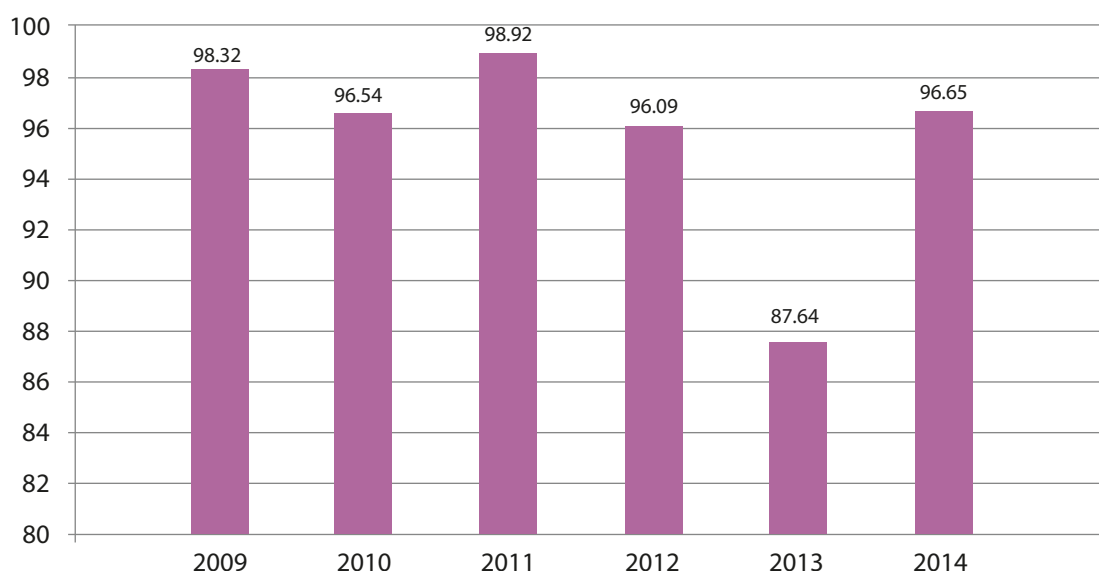
The Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI) plays an important role in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) to reduce child mortality rates. The EPI must ensure that the full immunisation rates of children under 1-year-old reaches 90% across the country and at least 80% in each district/equivalent administrative unit. Under the guidance of the Ministry of Health, children under 1-year old should receive the following vaccines: BCG vaccine against tuberculosis, hepatitis B vaccine at birth, three doses of vaccines against diphtheria, pertussis and Tetanus; three doses of the hepatitis B vaccine; three doses of vaccine against polio and vaccine against measles. Since June 2010, the change from 3 vaccines in 1 to 5 vaccines in 1 (DPT-HBV-HIB) has helped decrease the time spent for vaccination by households and health authorities.

The expanded programme on immunisation in Lao Cai province over the past 2 decades has obtained remarkable results:

- The EPI which was implemented only in some districts and communes has now been implemented in 100% of communes and wards.
- Starting with immunisation rates of just 20-30%, the national coverage is now over 95 per cent (while the target by the central Government is greater than 90%).
- The rate of vaccination against tetanus for pregnant women started from less than 10%/year, but has now reached over 80%.

According to the Lao Cai Department of Health, the rate of vaccinated infants in the province for the 2009-2014 period reached over 90%, with a fluctuation range at 2%/year. In 2013, the rate of fully vaccinated infants was lower than in other years because the Quinvaxem vaccine (5 in 1 vaccine) was stopped for 5 months under the direction of the Ministry of Health. There is a difference between data from the 2013 Statistical Yearbook and data from the Department of Health of the province. Respective data from the Statistical Yearbook for 2010-2013 are 98.35%, 98.48%; 98.39% to reach 98.23% in 2013).

Figure 4.16. The rate of fully vaccinated infants in Lao Cai in the 2009-2014 period



Source: Lao Cai DOH

There is no significant difference in the rate of fully vaccinated infants between districts in the province in 2014. All nine districts in the province have a high rate of fully vaccinated

infants. However, poor districts such as Bac Ha and Muong Khuong have lower rate of fully vaccinated infants than more developed districts such as Lao Cai City and Bat Xat.

Figure 4.17. The rate of fully vaccinated infants by areas in 2014



Source: Lao Cai DOH

The rate of fully vaccinated children is uneven across communes. There is a difference in immunisation rates between remote, mountainous, disadvantaged communes and developed communes/towns. Causes of this situation include (i) parents' limited knowledge and awareness, doubting the effectiveness of vaccines on their children's development; (ii) inconvenient transportation and long waiting times; (iii) underfed and weak children being unfit for vaccination, (iv) side – effects after

vaccination (unconsciousness, death) causing worries among the public.

Since the number of fully vaccinated children has declined recently, communication and publicity have been intensified. Besides publicising at Health centres and via public speakers, health sectors at communes and villages have integrated relevant content into local meetings. Health workers also conduct home visits to consult and advocate vaccination for children.

Box 4.3. Vaccination in La Pan Tan Commune, Muong Khuong District

La Pan Tan is a highland commune. It is one of the poorest communes of Muong Khuong district. The commune has 9 villages, with five ethnic groups (Kinh, Tay, H'mong, Dao, Nung).

The commune has implemented EPI for years, however, the programme encountered a lot of difficulties at the beginning. Currently, the vaccination for infants is conducted by commune health centres at least once per month at village-based vaccination stations. Besides the vaccination station at the commune health centre, there is one in each village. The vaccination at the commune health centre is conducted alternately for each village.

The publicity campaign is integrated in community meetings by village health workers and village heads; village health workers notify villagers of the vaccination schedule. In some difficult cases that need repeated persuasion, village health workers and commune health workers sometimes have to go together to the households to convince villagers to get their children injected with vaccination.

In late 2014, the campaign for vaccination against rubella and measles had to be held 3 times to reach the target. The reason was that Cao Son commune (next to La Pan Tan Commune) had 1 incident – a child fainted while being vaccinated. Therefore, villagers were afraid and determined to not let their children receive vaccination. At that time, some even threatened to kill and sue health workers if they kept giving vaccination to their children.

Source: Socio-Economic Report and In-depth interview with officials of La Pan Tan Commune

4.2.4. Health insurance for children under six years old

The analysis of health insurance for children under six years old is limited because of the inconsistent data between the health sector and social insurance sector. In accordance with social insurance sector data, the number of under - six children in 2011 was 81,911 children while this figure reported by health sector was 81,560. Similarly, these two figures of the two sectors in 2014 was 89,774 and 89,809 respectively. Other limitation is that the data are not disaggregated by ethnicity. Statistics on the frequency of using health insurance cards (once, many times or not using the card) have been recorded by health establishments but have not been used by other agencies for analysis or consolidation. There should be a further study on the excess (10%) of health

insurance cards for children under 6, especially when many children do not have a card.

The issuance and the use of health insurance cards for children under 6 years old in the province also depend on the issuance of birth certificates (in some parts of the province, health insurance cards are not granted to children without birth certificates) as well as the knowledge of parents on the benefits of free medical treatment for children under 6 years old. According to the CRC survey²⁹ conducted in 6 communes (that included La Pan Tan) in the 4 districts of Sa Pa, Si Ma Cai, Muong Khuong and Bac Ha, 55% of children with a birth certificate have a health insurance card.

²⁹ Survey on customers' satisfaction on birth registration service in difficult communes of Lao Cai province, 6/2015, MPI - Lao Cai PPC - UNICEF

Box 4.4. Children do not get health insurance cards because of the lack of birth certificates in Muong Khuong

Case 1: In a H'mong household, Ms. A aged 64 is raising two children under 6 years old without health insurance cards because the children's mother left for China and did not obtain birth certificates for them.

Case 2: A child under 1-year-old is not granted a health insurance card because his mother was involved in a child marriage (married at 14 years old).

Source: In-depth interviews in La Pan Tan commune, Muong Khuong district

General demographic review in Lao Cai City

The issuance of health insurance cards for children under 6 years old relates to the issuance of birth certificates for children. In cases where the issued birth certificates have an incorrect date of birth, name of the child, or of parents, caregivers ... the child is not granted a health insurance card. The Division of Justice and Public Security together with the judicial system of communes/wards have been asked to review the issuance of birth certificates for children and have already reviewed this issue holistically for every village and hamlet. We went door to door to find children under 6 not having birth certificates or having incorrect birth certificates to be adjusted or replaced. We assign the responsibility to village heads/hamlet heads, therefore they are directly responsible for any missing case.

The Public Security/Justice Division directly issued birth certificates at those families. Now that we have basically completed the review, no inhabitants of communes/wards in Lao Cai city are missed, all information on birth certificates and identity cards is matched with each other. "We don't care how the child was born. But if he/she was born here, he/she must have birth certificate and be entitled to a regime of health insurance."

Source: Quick response of Lao Cai City's official

4.2.5. HIV/AIDS and children

In general, HIV/AIDS infection was under control in the 2009 –2014 period. In this period,

only three new infections occurred in children under 1-year old, and were detected in 2012.

Table 4.11. Situation of HIV/AIDS infections in 2009-2014

No	Indicators	Year					
		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
1	Number of newly detected HIV/AIDS infections	327	217	266	303	245	258
2	Number of detected HIV/AIDS infections in children under 1-year old	0	0	0	3	0	0
3	Rate of new HIV infections per 100,000 people	53.17	34.70	42.00	46.70	37.10	39.20
4	Number of accumulated HIV/AIDS infections	1,579	1,796	2,062	2,365	2,610	2,868
5	Number of accumulated children under 16 years old infected by HIV/AIDS	4	6	4	9	6	9
6	Number of HIV transmissions from mother to children detected	3	5	3	10	2	7

Source: Lao Cai DOH

The number of pregnant women aged from 15 to 25 detected with HIV in the province in 2013 is much higher than that of the previous years (Table 4.12). The number of cases was mainly detected in Lao Cai City and Bao Thang district. Despite the small number of cases, increasingly

convenient trading in the local area may pose threats to the current situation which requires publicity and consultancy on voluntary testing for early and timely prevention, detection and treatment.

Table 4.12. The number of pregnant women with HIV from 15-25 years old by administrative unit

No	Administrative unit	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013
	Total	2	9	5	10	18
1	Lao Cai	0	2	1	3	5
2	Bat Xat	0	0	1	1	1
3	Muong Khuong	0	1		0	1
4	Si Ma Cai	0	0	0	0	0
5	Bac Ha	0	1		1	
6	Bao Thang	2	2		2	5
7	Bao Yen	0	1		1	2
8	Sa Pa	0	0	1	0	1
9	Van Ban	0	2	2	2	3

Source: Lao Cai statistical yearbook, 2013

These results show that the efforts to prevent HIV/ AIDS in the province in general and in the health sector in particular have achieved

positive results. The centre for HIV / AIDS prevention has organised training courses on consultancy, voluntary HIV testing for pregnant

women in communes/wards, encouraging pregnant women to take voluntary HIV testing, and educating them about HIV transmission from mother to child.

The prevention of HIV/AIDS in Lao Cai has faced many difficulties and obstacles since Lao Cai is a border province with an international border, and is an important place for commercial exchanges in the North. The province also attracts both domestic and international tourists (Sa Pa, Bac Ha), causing fluctuations in population. The management of HIV/AIDS cases is difficult and complicated.

4.2.6. Child injury and accident

This section discusses child injury by age groups, by places of injury/ accident, by causes, among which food poisoning is presented in detail.

According to data reported by district authorities to DOLISA, 1,308 children were injured in 2012. In 2013, 1,026 out of 219,707 children got injured, including 9 cases of mortality (7 cases of drowning, 1 case of road accident and another case). The major causes of child injuries were falls, animal bites, road accidents, burns and poisoning by chemicals and food. No cases were recorded related to bombs, electric shocks, suffocation/strangulation and violence. While the number of cases tends to decrease, the number of children who died of injury has increased.

Statistics of the Department of Health show that people with injury or accident admitted to hospital are monitored by age (0-4 years old; 5-14 years old; 15-19 years old; 20-60 years old; over 60 years old) and by gender, by place of injury and type of injury; and by the degree of "Wounded" and "Dead". The data on children's injury accidents are extracted from data on injuries in 0-4 years old; 5-14 years old and 15-19 years old.

In the 2009-2014 period, the number of injured boys was larger than that of girls. However, the number of girls who died due to the accidents is larger than that of boys.

The table below on child injury/accident in the years of 2013-2014 shows that, "home" is where children (at all ages) got injured the most. The percentage of children's injuries/accidents decreased from 70.79% to 57.55% (2013 compared to 2014) in the 0-4 year old group while the proportion of accidents which occurred in other places increased in these 2 years. Other common places where child injuries often occur are at school, on street and at lakes, ponds, rivers and streams. Specifically, lakes, ponds, rivers and streams are very dangerous places for children from 0-4 years old; the proportion of children with injuries in these locations rose from 7.46% in 2013 to 27.95% in 2014. By cause, "traffic" ranks second, accounting for 26,51% of accidents in 2014, after "falls", with 28.07% of the cases.

Table 4.13. Child injury by age group and location in 2013-2014

No	Place of injury/accident	2013			2014		
		0-4 years	5-14 years	15-19 years	0-4 years	5-14 years	15-19 years
	Total of accidents	469	1,309	1,754	669	1,143	1,286
1	Road	7.25	17.65	27.31	9.72	26.51	34.84
2	Home	70.79	44.39	30.39	57.55	46.98	32.81
3	School	12.37	21.93	14.88	3.29	11.11	8.24
4	Working place		6.04	17.45	0.15	4.72	11.90
5	Public place	2.13	2.14	4.73	1.35	4.37	4.90
6	Lakes, ponds, rivers, streams	7.46	7.87	5.25	27.95	6.30	7.31

Source: Lao Cai DOH

Statistics show that the main cause of accidents is due to falls, accounting for 28% to 57% by different age groups. Child mortality rates due to suicide increased from 0% in 2013 to 2.7%

in 2014 in the age group of 15-19 years old. It is hence very necessary to find out the causes of this situation to support and consult for children when necessary.

Table 4.14. The causes of children’s injury accidents by age group in 2013- 2014

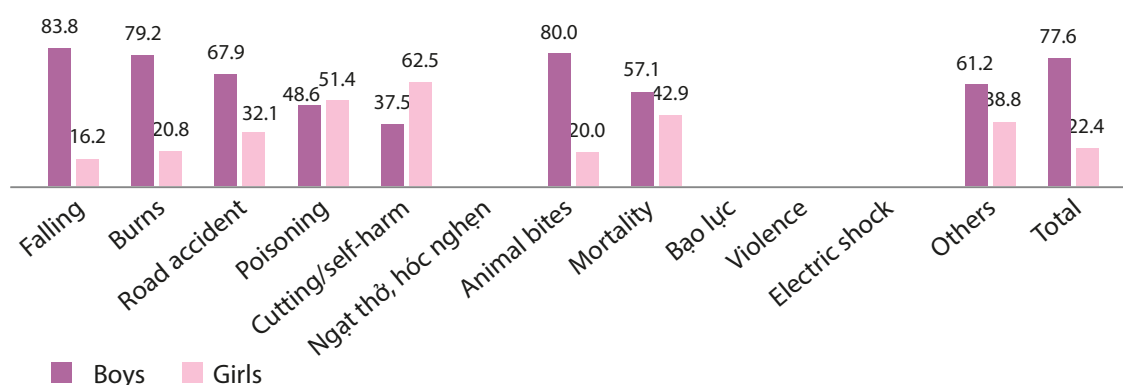
No.	Causes of injury accidents	2013			2014		
		0-4 years	5-14 years	15-19 years	0-4 years	5-14 years	15-19 years
	%/ Total of accidents	469	1,075	1,066	692	1,143	1,286
1	Traffic accident	1.28	0.09	0.09	3.61	12.95	22.01
2	Work-related accident	-	-	-	-	10.06	21.07
3	Bitten by animal	1.71	3.26	3.66	9.97	5.07	4.67
4	Fall	57.36	56.28	53.19	39.74	56.17	28.07
5	Drowned	0.64	0.74	0.09	1.01	0.7	0.16
6	Burned	11.73	1.49	1.78	10.12	1.31	0.7
7	Poisoned by chemicals/food	1.92	0.93	-	4.62	2.01	2.64
8	Suicide	-	0.09	-	0.14	0.17	2.57
9	Assault and battery	-	1.12	6.75	0.87	2.71	8.48
10	Others	25.37	36	34.43	29.77	8.84	9.64

Source: Lao Cai DOH

The boy injury rate (77.6%) is higher than the girl injury rate (22.4%). Falling (83.8%), animal bites (80%) and burns (79.2%) were common causes of boys’ injuries; by contrast, cutting/

self-harm (62.5%), poisoning by chemicals and food (51.4%) and drowning (42.9%) were common causes among girls.

Figure 4.18. Child injury by gender and by cause in 2013



Source: Report of Lao Cai DOLISA

In-depth interviews and group discussions indicate that children are involved in house chores such as babysitting, carrying water,

collecting wood, feeding domestic animals and harvesting. In particular, the workload rises during summer holidays; in boarding schools,

children are even assigned school duties such as collecting wood and carrying water. Yet there were no labour-related accidents reported in this research; the risks of accidents and injuries remain potential in this context. However, this also shows the potential for accidents which may occur during child domestic work and school.

There were many causes of child injury in the province as well as at research areas, including the lack of safety knowledge among children and adults, as well as non-compliance with laws and safety regulations, leaving children (especially 0-4 year old) carelessly unattended even at homes. In addition, as local people are unaware of the potential risks, they have no idea how to prevent child accidents. Accidents also occurred in many families in rural and mountainous areas where parents and caretakers left their children alone at home, out of watch.

Injury prevention still faces difficulties, mainly due to language barriers, causing ineffective results of IEC and irregular education and training. They altogether have led to the hesitation in carrying out prevention plans by practitioners.

The injury differences between boys and girls, between groups of children under 6 years old and older than 6 years old, between different locations indicated the need to find out the reasons of the differences in order to develop appropriate interventions to minimise the number of injuries in each environment, each group of children, and each child's age.

Food Hygiene & Safety (FHS) and Food Poisoning

Ensuring food hygiene and safety contributes to the improvement of health and nutrition for children. The statistics of Lao Cai province showed that food poisoning still occurs every year, even with fatal cases (4 cases in 2011 and 2 cases in 2013). A number of 4-11 poisoning cases occurred annually in the period of 2005-2010. However, collective poisoning increased, especially in 2013, when there were four cases with a total of 251 people poisoned, among which the first cases with 102 poisoned people occurred in Muong Khuong district and the remaining cases with 145 poisoned people occurred in Si Ma Cai district.

Table 4.15. Number of cases/number of food poisoned people by administrative unit

No	Administrative unit	2005		2010		2011		2012		2013	
		No of case	No of people	No of case	No of people	No of case	No of people	No of case	No of people	No of case	No of people
1	TP Lao Cai	1	1	1	1	3	61		0		
2	Bat Xat			1	43	0			0		
3	Muong Khuong			2	12	1	2		0	1	102
4	Si Ma Cai	1	2						0	1	145
5	Bac Ha	2	3	1	6			1	5	2	4
6	Bao Thang	1	2	1	29	3	7	4	21		
7	Bao Yen	3	47	1	8	1	4	3	15		
8	Sa Pa	1	1	1	19	3	30		0		
9	Van Ban			1	1				0		
	Total	9	56	9	119	11	104	8	41	4	251

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Lao Cai

The Agency of Food Hygiene and Safety is under the management of the provincial DOH, responsible for state management of food hygiene and safety in the province. There were a number of programmes to ensure food hygiene and safety for people including communication, advocacy and dissemination/information on health care, protection, and improvement regarding FHS, and to inspect and supervise food producers and enterprises working in the food industry, strictly handling violations.

Data on children's injury accidents (aged 0-19) show that the number of children poisoned with "chemical / food" increased in 2009-2014, from 23 cases in 2009 to 130 cases in 2014.

Quality control of student meals

Schools directly control the quality of the meals by monitoring the ingredients for cooking and controlling the quality of food provided for students. School leaders, staff and cooks were selected for training on hygiene and food safety. Schools commit to ensuring hygiene and food safety; the Department of Education directly manages these schools and supervises the implementation of hygiene and food safety in them. Besides, district health centres (division of hygiene and food safety and nutrition) and the department of food hygiene and safety are responsible for inspecting boarding secondary schools; the division of hygiene and food safety at the district level is responsible for inspecting high schools by organising interdisciplinary inspection teams in these schools. Inspection contents are: (1) facilities and equipment (kitchen, bowls ...), human conditions (whether the school's cooks are healthy enough to perform the task or not), material conditions (whether there are contracts with suppliers of inputs/materials or not), records on diary of meals and materials; (2) Sampling food which is in doubt; (3) implementation of sanctions if violations occur. These measures have helped Lao Cai control hygiene and food safety conditions in schools. The Department of Education has implemented and coordinated well the implementation of hygiene and food safety with functional departments; has inspected school kitchens twice per year at the beginning and in the middle of the school year.

Food hygiene and safety issues in relation with children's health

Lao Cai in particular and the country in general are facing a food safety problem related to children's health. Since Lao Cai is a border and mountainous province with difficult economic conditions and many ethnic minorities and poor people, the implementation of food safety measures here is really limited. To improve children's health, authorities have controlled, but not intensively, unlabelled products (Ex: candy priced only at 500-1,000 dongs, water bottles priced at few thousand dongs). The inspection and supervision of commodity products according to Circular 3 are implemented by the Department of Industry and Trade, however, the number of the department's staff is not sufficient to guarantee the inspection of every village.

Food shortage is also a problem. Villagers still have the habit of gathering food from the forest, which may cause poisoning due to natural poisons.

Knowledge of parents, caregivers about nutrition, hygiene and food safety

It is difficult to give an exact idea about the knowledge of caregivers / childcare persons of hygiene and food safety, because so far, there are no studies or official surveys. However, there have been changes in the awareness and practice of people on food safety. Previously, according to customs, children were fed with chewed cooked rice. But at present, people know how to cook nutritional porridge for children, take note of expiration dates when purchasing foods and use local ingredients to cook for their children.

Local governments are very concerned with the issue of hygiene and food safety. The province has issued plans and policies on food safety and allocated funds for food safety programmes. Training, advocacy and support for the staff in charge of food safety were organised.

Agencies at the district level implement the strategies/policies/plans of the province and inspect if the communes comply with provincial plans, and develop interdisciplinary programmes on hygiene and food safety in the district.

Agencies at the commune level: Commune health stations advise commune authorities about food safety. The effectiveness of the implementation of food safety is different among communes, depending on the consultation of commune health centres and on inspections of common canteens and kitchens at boarding schools. At festivals, funerals, weddings etc. local authorities must make sure of the commitment of householders in ensuring food safety to avoid mass poisonings.

Schools are very interested in the issue of hygiene and food safety. They are also worried if any of their students are poisoned by food in school, which will affect the school's reputation. The schools consult with food suppliers and assign staff/school's cooks to training courses on food safety and regular inspect school kitchens. Schools in mountainous areas have to inspect their kitchens more regularly. Although the kitchens in these schools are very simple, sometimes there is only one rice cooker, one pot of vegetables, one kitchen, but the inspection is very necessary to ensure the hygiene of kitchen tools.

Usual causes of food poisoning are: (1) people's habit of consuming food such as poisonous mushrooms or plant roots, especially among ethnic minorities ; (2) a notable proportion of people lacking knowledge about food safety and hygiene, thus processing food in a careless and unhygienic manner, especially in crowded places (weddings, festivals, common cooking areas); (3) Profit driven food producers not taking into account food safety; lacking inspection and monitoring of food production due to the large number of producers and their seasonality; (4) not sufficiently dissuasive handling and punishment of violations of food safety.

4.2.7. Water supply and sanitation

Access to clean water and environmental sanitation is one of the fundamental rights of human beings in general and children in particular. Water and sanitation (WATSAN) is one of the factors related to the right to survival of children because clean water and sanitation (personal hygiene and environmental sanitation) can reduce the risk of diarrhea and the impact of morbidity, child under nutrition and mortality possibilities.

State management agencies in local governments which ensure the right to survival of children include the Provincial Centre for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (PCERWASS) (under the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development - DARD), play a key role, while the DOH participates in the implementation of "sanitary latrines." Indicators of clean water and rural environment sanitation are monitored and evaluated through a set of indicators to monitor and evaluate the implementation outcomes of NTP on Water and Sanitation approved by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and implemented by the National Centre for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (NCERWASS) in 2009. As such, the data system is systematically monitored and managed nation-wide; data sources are available and reliable.

Use of clean and hygienic water³⁰

Water sources regarded as clean water or hygienic water include: tap water (at home, in the yard, in the garden, public tap), wells, protected dug well, protected spring water, rain water and bottled water. As reported by Lao Cai province, water supply sources at present comprise: centralised water supply stations, wells, dug wells, gravity water gutters, rainwater tanks and tap water; among those, sustainable centralised water supply schemes have tended to decrease from 24.8% in 2010 to 17.2% in 2013 but increased recently, reaching 30.7% in 2014 and 31.6% in 2015. The model of centralised water supply schemes is mainly managed by the community, even though the percentage has decreased over the years, but at a very low rate (from 99.44% to 96.5% within 2009-2013).

According to some indicators of clean water and rural sanitation provided by PCERWASS, aligned with the WATSAN indicators and national monitoring systems, the situation of clean water usage and environment sanitation is increasingly improved. The proportion of rural people using clean water has increased over the years from 74.1% in 2009 to 83.5% in 2013.

³⁰ Clean water is the water used directly or after filtration that satisfies these quality requirements: no color , no smell , no taste, no ingredients affecting human health , can be used for drinking after boiled , Circular 41/2013 / TT - BNN dated 04/10/2013 guiding the national criteria of new rural development.

This rate is higher than the national average rate of 82, 5%, the average rate of the Northern Midlands and Mountainous areas (79%) and of some neighboring provinces (Figure 4.19). As such, it shows progress in hygienic water supply to people in Lao Cai. This proportion was 84.5% in 2014 and increased to 85.7% in 2015.

The proportion of rural people using clean water as per MOH's standards³¹ has increased

³¹ Clean water has higher quality than hygienic water. It not only satisfies a basic need of people but also protects and improves people's health. It meets the National Technical Regulation on domestic water quality (QCVN: 02:2009/BYT) issued by the Minister of Health in Circular No. 05/2009/TT - BYT dated 17/6/2009 including 14 criteria, 7 of which are perceptible criteria (colour, taste and odour, turbidity,

over the years from 13.2% in 2009 to 29.4% in 2013. However, in some localities, people still depend on natural water sources such as river water, spring water and face water shortages in the dry season.

"In our province at present, scarce water areas such as Si Ma Cai, Muong Khuong, in the next 1-2 months even run out of water, and have to wait for the rainy season. Water sources become exhausted or insufficient in this season "

(IDI a staff from PCERWASS)

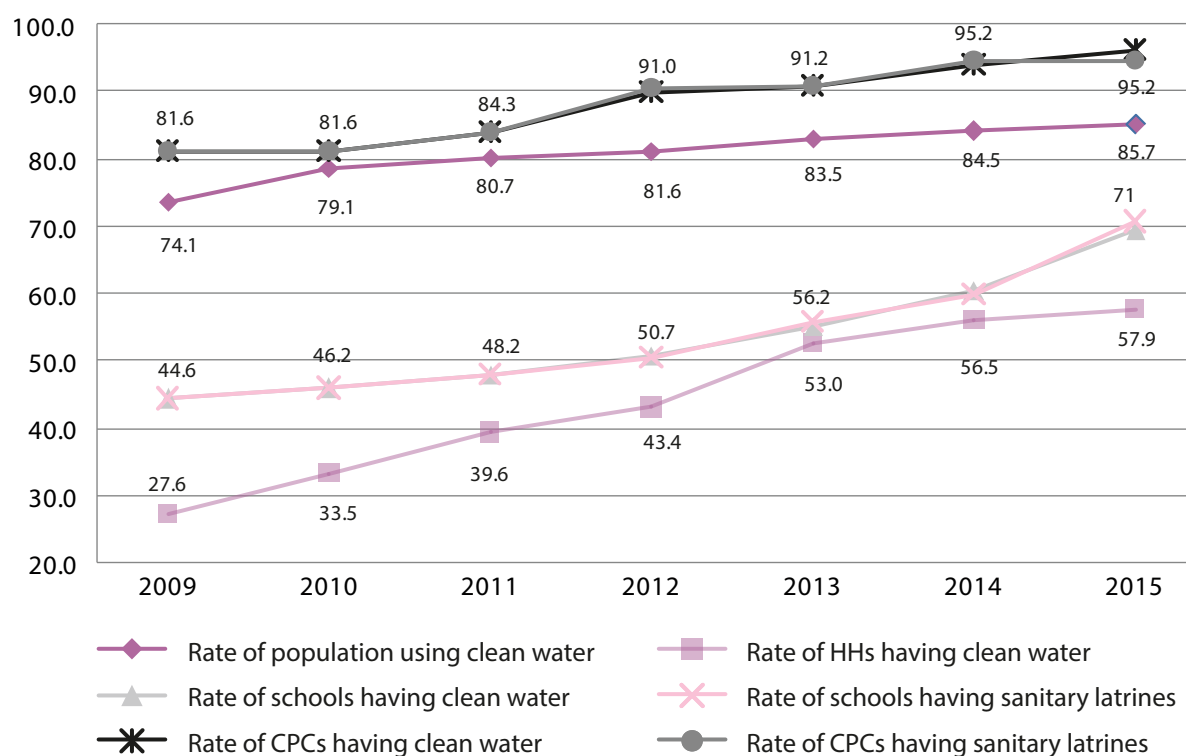
pH, Ammonia, hardness calculated by CaCO₃, and should be tested before providing conclusion on quality;

Table 4.16. Rural water supply and sanitation indicators in the 2009-2013 period

Indicators		Percent (%)						
		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
1	Rural population with access to safe drinking water	74.1	79.1	80.7	81.6	83.5	84.5	85.7
2	Number of rural households using clean water by MOH's standards			13.2	28.3	29.4	29.4	30.2
3	Schools with clean water and sanitary latrines	44.6	46.2	49	51.0	54.8	56	66.3
3.1	Primary school	39.6	41.3	44.5				
3.2	Lower-secondary school	87.2	90.4	90.2				
3.3	Upper-secondary school	100	100	100				
4	Health stations with clean water and sanitary latrines	81.6	81.6	88.2	89.1	90.5	93,8	94.5
5	Markets with clean water and sanitary latrines	41.3	41.3	42.9				
6	CPC offices have clean water and sanitary latrines	78.9	78.9	87.5				
7	Rural households with hygienic latrines	27.6	33.5	39.6	43.4	53.0	56,5	57.9
8	Craft villages with sewage and waste water treatment systems	100	100	100				
9	Sustainable centralised water supply facilities	21.8	24.8	24.7	19	17.2	30,7	31.6
10	Models of management of centralised water supply facilities							
10.1	Community Management	99.44	99.46	99.13	98.28	96.5	99,1	99,1
10.2	PCERWASS's management	0	0			0	0	0
10.3	Private sector Management	0.56	0.54	0.62	0.98	0.96	0.1	0.1
10.4	Cooperative management	0	0	0.25	0.74	2.54	0.8	0.8

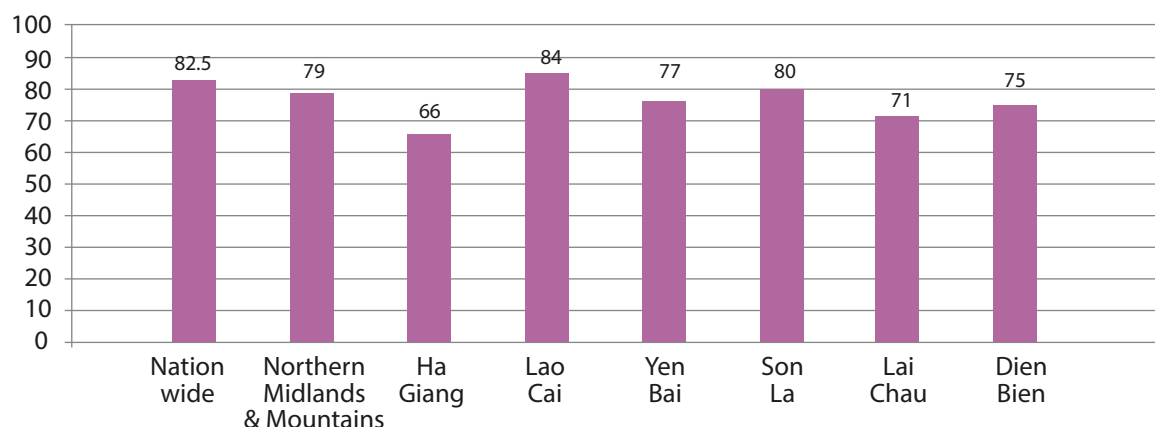
Source: PCERWASS

Figure 4.19. Some indicators of water and rural environmental sanitation in the 2009-2015 period



Source: PCERWASS

Figure 4.20. Comparison of rates of clean-water-used population nationwide, by region and by province in 2013



Source: The results of implementing WATSAN NTP in 2013

Although the quality of supplied water has improved over the years, the quality of sanitary water sources is not stable, and depends on management, operation and maintenance costs of the supply system.

“Places provided with new technology are temporarily fine, or upstream water taken from

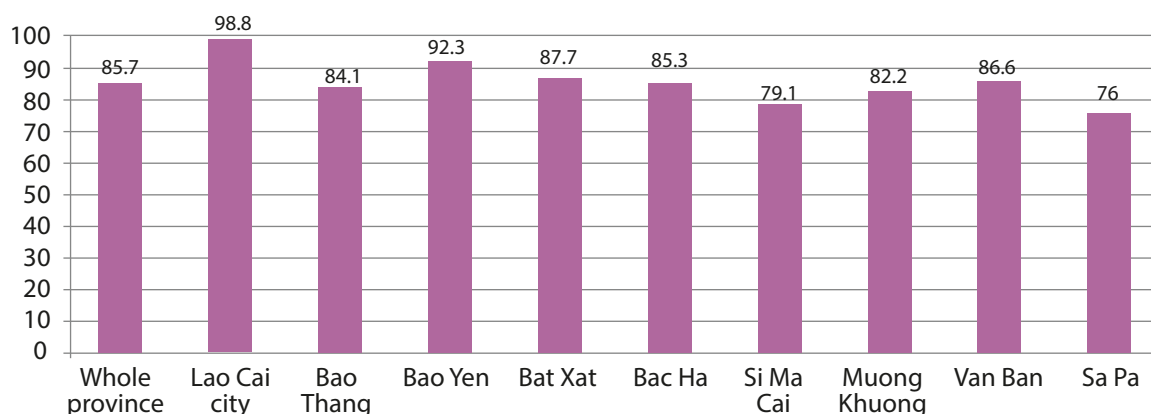
an outcrop of the canyon in the hills is safe enough, meanwhile water taken from springs, via raw filtration, gone to pipes, would become hygienic water if you met technical requirements, and good management. But without sufficient funding for management, the manager does not have funds to do the dredging and to clean filters, consequently the system is fully filled and stuck in

the flood season. Furthermore, when being filled in, it should be dredged and cleaned; however many places do not use a filter, but directly take spring/ stream water, which causes a situation of limpid water during the dry season, and muddy water as spring water during the rainy season. As a result, it is not hygienic enough. In other areas where a water fee is collected, and people pay sufficiently for their used water, water supply facilities are hygienic; in contrast, facilities with no fee collection, and lacking management, water becomes opaque in the rainy season, and hygiene is not guaranteed “.

Source: In-depth interview with an official of PCERWASS

The proportion of rural people using hygienic water varies across districts in the province and changes by time. In 2013, the districts with the highest proportions are Lao Cai city and Muong Khuong district (96.1% and 95.6% respectively), while the group with the lowest rates comprises Van Ban district and Si Ma Cai district (75.9% and 76.1% respectively). The difference between these groups is 20%. In 2015, the group of districts with the highest proportion of people using hygienic water included Lao Cai city and Bao Yen, which led to Muong Khuong transition to group 2. Group 3 with the proportion of rural people using hygienic water less than 80% included Sa Pa và Si Ma Cai. The proportion of rural people using hygienic water in Van Ban increased from 75.9% to 86.6% during 2 years.

Figure 4.21. Percentage of households using clean water by district in 2015



Source: PCERWASS

Sanitary latrines³²

The percentage of households with sanitary latrines increased from 27.6% in 2009 to 53% in 2013, which is lower than the national average (60%) and higher than the average ratio of the Northern highland and mountainous areas (47%), in particular much higher than in some neighboring provinces such as Lai Chau and Dien Bien (Figure 4.20). However, the

proportions of households with sanitary latrines are also uneven across the region. Actually, the proportion of households with sanitary latrines is lower in remote and ethnic minority areas including: Nam Khanh and Ta Van Chu (Bac Ha district) 0% and 6.8% respectively; San Chai and Lu Than (Si Ma Cai district) 5.6% and 7.0% respectively. This proportion took up 56.5% in 2014 and 57.9% in 2015.

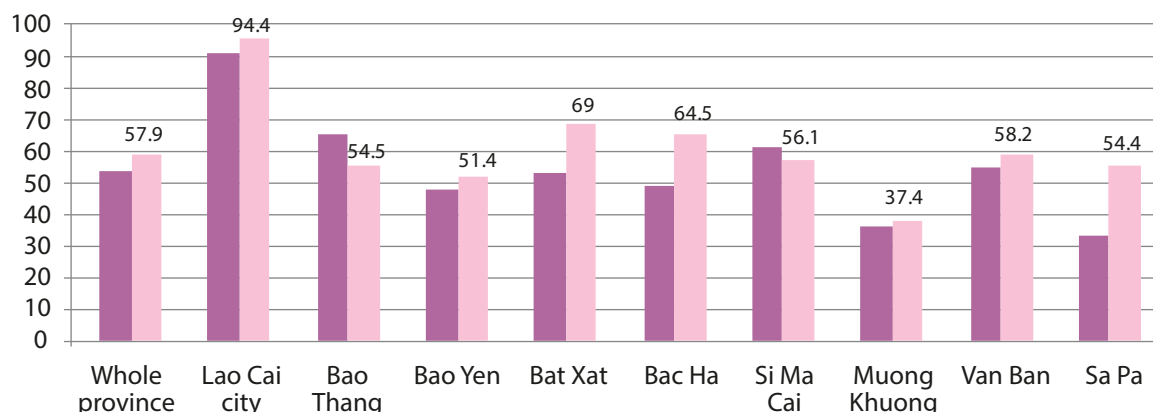
The proportions of rural households having hygienic latrines differ. Lao Cai city has the highest proportion of households with sanitary latrines (89.4%), while Sa Pa and Muong Khuong districts obtain the lowest rates (32.8% and 35.9%). It is possible to realize that the percentage of households with sanitary latrines relates to the economic conditions of

³² Hygienic latrine (According to QCVN 01: 2011/BYT) ensures the isolation of human feces and the prevention of untreated feces from contact with humans, animals and insects. Destroying infectious agents in the feces and not polluting the environment around. It consists of two types: dry latrine and flush latrine. Flush latrine is one that uses water to flush after being used. Feces are stored and treated in water environment. Dry latrine is one that does not use water to flush after being used. Feces are stored and treated in dry condition.

each district. Lao Cai city is the most favorably developed place, whereas Sa Pa and Muong

Khuong districts are two out of the four poorest districts in Lao Cai province.

Figure 4.22. Percentage of households with sanitary latrines by district in 2013-2015

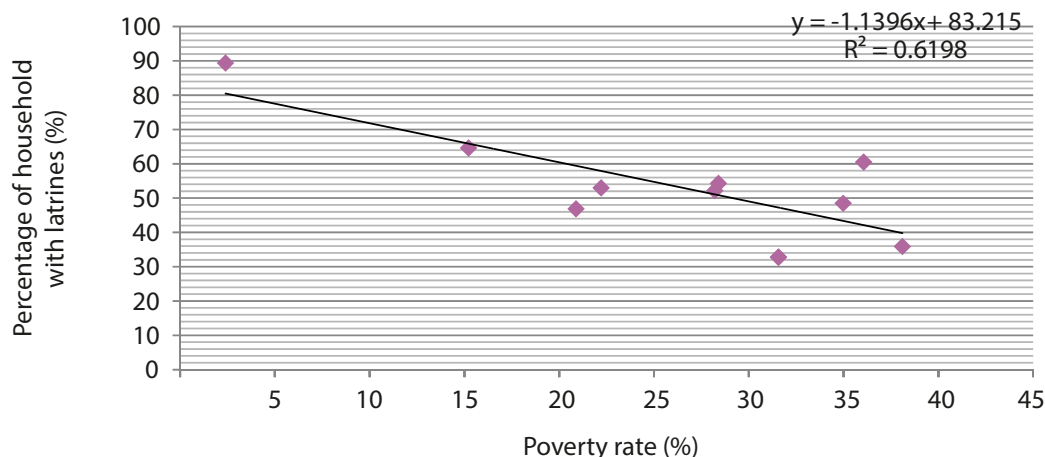


Source: PCERWASS

Number of rural households having hygienic latrines accounted for 57.9% in 2015 in which Sa Pa (from 32.8% to 54.4%), Bat Xat (from

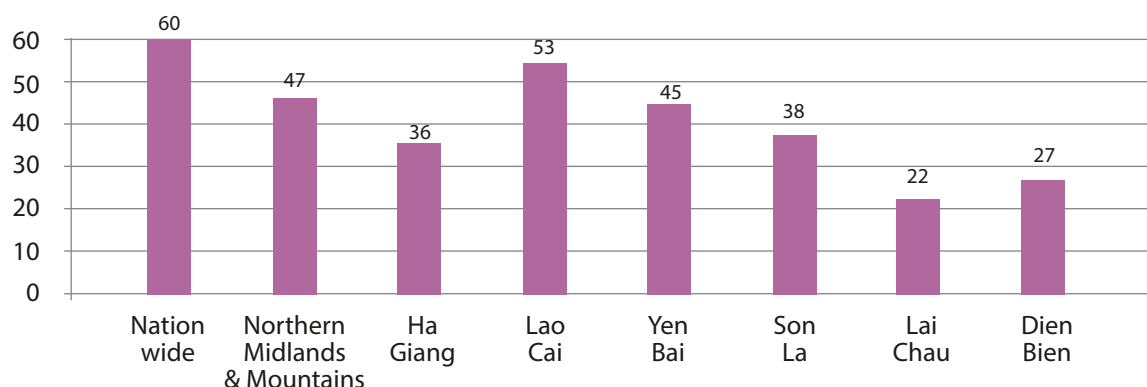
52.2% to 69%) and Bac Ha (from 48.5% to 64.5%) recorded the highest increase between 2013 and 2015.

Figure 4.23. Correlation between poverty rates and having sanitary latrines



Source: Lao Cai DOH

Figure 4.24. Proportion of rural households with hygienic latrines by region, in 2013



Source: The results of implementing WATSAN NTP in 2013

Currently, in Lao Cai province there remains the habit of cattle grazing, unhygienic living habits of residents such as building cattle sheds adjacent to the house (even located higher than the house), having no or incomplete sanitary latrines.

In order to improve the environment in rural areas, the provincial People's Committee has made a proposal, called Proposal 14, to "Promote the cultural life of residential areas, focus on mobilizing people to renovate outdated practices in 2011-2015" authorizing the provincial Fatherland Front to chair and coordinate with provincial agencies (People Campaign Committee, Propaganda Department, Committee for EM, Department of Planning and Investment, Department of Finance, Department of Health, Department of Education and Training, Department of Culture - Sports and Tourism, all the political and social organizations of provinces and districts such as Party Committees and People's Committees). Up to now, the implementation of Proposal 14 has achieved certain results in improving rural environment sanitation. In particular, the Department of Health has advised the PPC on additional funding to support the construction of household latrines, supporting 18,902 households to build latrines, specifically:

4,148 septic tank latrines; 2,513 ventilated pit latrines; 9,899 pour flush water sealed latrines; 2,342 double vault composite latrines.

According to the National Target Programme (NTP) for Clean Water and Rural Environment Sanitation in the 2012-2015 period, with regards to the water supply: 85% of rural people use hygienic water, of which 45% use standard-based clean water (QCVN 02-BYT) with the amount of at least 60 liters / person / day. A percentage of 100% of pre-schools, primary and secondary schools (main schools) can afford adequate clean water and sanitary latrines, to be managed and used well; 45% of livestock farmers use hygienic breeding facilities. With regards to rural environment sanitation: 65% of rural households have sanitary latrines; 100% of CHCs afford adequate clean water and sanitary latrines, managed and used well.

To implement the NTP, the Lao Cai PPC has set the objectives below: a proportion of households supplied with clean water of 85%; a proportion of households with sanitary latrines of 70%; a rate of cages and hygienic husbandry waste treatment facilities of 45%; a rate of schools, and a rate of CHCs having water supply facilities and sanitary latrines of 100%.

Box 4.5. Water supply in mountainous area

There are two phases of investment:

- From 2012 backwards: concentrated water supply: connecting pipes to a reservoir from upstream to bring water to residential clusters, so that a few households share one common water tank from which the households themselves get water for usage.
- From 2013 up to now, some water supply facilities have installed water-meters and brought water to the households, but such facilities are still few.

With regards to connections, there are several types which are different from connections in the city, through the sewer system, with water-meters to the households. Indeed, connection here is an investment from the source to households, and water-meters are also supplied to households, however such facilities are still few. While there are more schemes to bring water to residential areas, this type cannot connect from the tank to households due to the lack of gravity, and households thus have to get water from this tank, etc.

Source: IDI PCERWASS

Children with access to clean water and sanitation at school

Children have access to clean water and sanitation through 2 channels mainly at home (mentioned above) and at school. According to the data of PCERWASS, the proportion of schools having clean water and sanitary latrines has gradually increased over the years from 44.6% to 54.8% (Table 4.12). However, the rate is still low, and the data show that half of the schools in Lao Cai have no clean water and have unhygienic latrines; this ratio is higher for lower grades. According to the data, 100% of upper-secondary schools have clean water and sanitary latrines, while primary schools have the lowest rate and even lower than the overall rate (39.4% in 2009 and 44.5% in 2011); in particular schools in mountainous, remote and difficult areas often face water shortages in the dry season.

Within the scope of the Child Friendly Project, a community-led total sanitation model has been introduced since May 2013 in six communes of four project districts, with the aim to permanently eliminate public defecation through community awareness enhancement and behavior change. The project targets a wide range of audience, including residents and students. The project has trained masons, equipping them with knowledge and skills to help people build clean latrines. Commune health workers are instructed to provide counseling for families on the construction of latrines matching local and household's conditions. After completion of the construction, medical staff from communes and districts is to assess and examine the level of hygiene of the building. After 2 years of implementation, the CLTS model has contributed significantly to improve people's habitat, changing their perceptions and behaviors in daily activities. In particular, the proportion of people using latrines and sanitary latrines has significantly increased. Ban Pho commune in Bac Ha district is a typical case. Before the model implementation, the proportion of people using a latrine was 52.1%, after 2 years it was 83%; the rate of using sanitary latrines had increased by 20%. In San Chai Commune, Si Ma Cai District, the proportion of people using a latrine increased

by 32.6%, and the number of sanitary latrines increased by nearly 30%. In communes like Ban Xen (Muong Khuong), Ta Phin (Sa Pa), Thao Chu Phin, Sin Cheng (Si Ma Cai) the proportions also increased by 15-20%³³.

4.3. Analysis of barriers and bottlenecks

Limited Resources:

Operational budget is very limited.

"It is very challenging for us to fulfill a fixed percentage target within a very limited budget. For example project B was funded VND750 million last year from the central budget, but 488 mil VND was spent on only 1 midwife class and the rest is to fund all other activities of the year, with 6 mil VND for monitoring activity. In 2014, programme C was funded VND202 million, which was enough to pay for only one health activity in each commune/village. Thus, this amount of budget is insufficient to execute under nutrition prevention programme." – 5 January 2015.

Facilities, teams of doctors and nurses, service equipment for the health care of mothers and children and the prevention of child under nutrition remain weak and inadequate. Seven out of nine of the district hospitals have not established a neonatal unit, but only a newborn corner in the delivery room. There is a lack of medical staff specialising in obstetrics and pediatrics in districts and communes while the professional skills of health workers at the district and commune levels in newborn care and safety are still weak. The number of village midwives is not guaranteed and unstable. The prestige of CHCs in some areas is not high enough to attract patients to examination and treatment. The rate of birth delivery at home without the assistance of health workers remains high. In addition, there is a lack of medicine, equipment and tools for maternal and infant care such as iron folic acid /multi-micronutrients, neonatal resuscitation equipment and skills, and tested proteinuria.

³³ Increase the proportion of highland people using hygienic latrines, <http://laocai.gov.vn/sites/soyte/tintucsukien/Trang/20150730083913.aspx>, accessed on 1/11/2015

Unreasonable link between planning, budgeting and coordination: this link is weak and inappropriate at times. Technically, annual plans and midterm plans are assigned by the DOH to bureaus and offices at the district level. However, proposed budgets to the Department of Finance are defended by units at the province level, so the amount of grant is decided by their ability to defend. If the budget allocated is less than expected, they have to prioritise tasks and make corresponding plans. The Department of Health is not involved in the budget defending process, and therefore meets difficulties in management and monitoring.

Management: Information reporting system is limited and the statistics are incomplete. The ability by health statisticians to analyze data is limited; this cannot help managers make prompt and efficient decisions. The process of planning is passive, mainly applying a top down approach and not local need-based planning (bottom up approach), without the participation of children at the stage of identifying needs and implementation solutions. Management of the project at grassroots level after its investment is limited, many works are corrupt or operate inefficiently.

Socio-economic conditions and people's awareness: The poverty rate is still relatively high in Lao Cai province (17.61%) with four districts benefited from the national poverty

reduction Programme 30A consisting of Muong Khuong, Si Ma Cai, Sa Pa and Bac Ha. These are large and poor areas with a scattered population, making it difficult for people to access public healthcare, nutrition, water and sanitation services. The ratio of mothers having more than 2 children (from 3-5 children) is still increasing. The province has a high ratio of ethnic minorities; the language barrier is still a challenge to the dissemination of policies and programmes in general, including policies on health and reproductive health care, and child under nutrition prevention. People have difficult lives, especially those in remote areas, so investing in infrastructure and household water supply as well as paying water bills is challenging and limited.

Local health workers and midwives (with limited profession and wages) face difficulties and challenges. According to Circular No. 07/2013/TT-BYT dated 08/03/2013 of the Ministry of Health, village midwives are persons who have completed training courses with a length of at least 6 months following the Midwife Training Framework by the Ministry of Health. Village midwives are responsible for providing information and advice on reproductive health care, handling home birth for normal delivery cases, counseling and nutritional care for mother and newborn, and support birth registration when needed.

Box 4.6. Works and difficulties of village health workers

There were nine villages with nine male village health workers in La Pan Tan Commune, Muong Khuong District. A village health worker, 24, H'mong man, completing grade 11, has worked as a village health workers since 2009, when he was 19-year-old said that his main job was: conducting population census, weighing children and advocating on diseases prevention, hygienic food.

"I do advocacy once a month, sometimes advocacy with leaflets, sometimes with nothing. I receive over VND 500 thousand per month for this job."

I've been trained a lot, mainly about advocacy. I have learned about midwifery in 2009. I have done midwifery many times. If a husband asks for me to do midwife, I also agree to do though I am a male midwife. If the husband does not ask for me, I advise them to go to CHC. If I were them, I also hesitate to ask for a male midwife to support in delivery. I do midwifery for free. The complicated cases must be taken to CHC immediate. However, I have not seen any bad case since I do a village health workers

The most difficult issue now is that most of the people cannot speak Vietnamese, so I have to advocate with H'mong language. However, I do not know how to translate many sentences into H'mong language. The second is low allowance".

Source: in-depth interview with a male village health worker in La Pan Tan Commune, Muong Khuong District

Budget: The state budget for the health national target programmes tends to decrease (from 2014 and subsequent years); aid and assistance has also decreased in recent years, while local funding for professional activities is very limited. Water supply stations lack operational funds (some existing stations no longer operator preserve the quality of water due to the lack of fund). Pollution is likely to happen in concentrated water supply.

Backward customs, traditions, habits in maternal care (no ANC, no vaccination, no birth delivery at health facilities), health care and nutrition for children (nursing mothers have not fully breastfed for the first six months, inadequate food supplements, feeding rice early, no vaccination for children ...), uncontrolled waste discharge, grazing cattle, construction of sheds near the house, lack of sanitation habits such as using sanitary latrines (have a latrine but do not use or know how to operate and maintain; do not know the proper design and techniques to build sanitary latrines) or hand-washing with soap. The majority of people are using water directly from untreated water sources; households do not have water containers or have water containers but have never cleaned them; water containers have no cover. Therefore, water is not hygienic or gets contaminated during use.

4.4. Priorities and Recommendations

- Lao Cai is a province of mountain and upland, fragmented terrain, difficult transportation, a scattered population and many ethnic minority residents. Therefore, it is necessary to develop and deliver home-based services, such as midwifery, pregnancy check-ups, and reproductive health care.
- Review and strengthen capacity for local health staff, with a special focus on training village birth assistants among ethnic minorities to become village skilled midwives. Village midwives need to understand the language, culture and beliefs of the minority; this will create trust and encourage pregnant mothers to access health services, thereby improving primary health care, maternity care and

reducing maternal mortality and infant mortality.

- Improve the quality of care for maternal and child nutrition (health services on nutritional care and maternal health care); expand advocacy and education activities for behaviour change on nutrition: encourage breastfeeding, using clean water, maintaining personal hygiene (hand washing with soap before breast-feeding, cooking, breast cleaning before breast-feeding...) and environmental hygiene; interdisciplinary and inter-level coordination in the prevention of under nutrition.
- Enhance communication activities to parents and caregivers of under-2-year old children in the province so that they understand their rights and responsibilities, inform on the benefits of immunization, vaccines, on vaccinations timetables for children in the expanded programme on vaccination; encourage parents to take their children to get immunized completely and promptly.
- Develop the local and family economy: ensure food security, increase production to improve meal quality for people especially children, in order to prevent stunting and underweight malnutrition.
- Conduct research to assess food safety and hygiene. There is inadequate ability to execute legal documents on food safety and hygiene. It is necessary to have evidence-based recommendations on the situation and on results of central and local policies and regulation execution.
- Improve the management capacity at the grassroots level. Prioritise resources to repair and upgrade damaged and degraded water supply works.
- Advocate, communicate to people on hygienic living habits (use clean water, do not defecate indiscriminately, use sanitary latrines, avoid cattle grazing near water sources etc.), and prioritise behavior changing communications (IEC). Develop a team of collaborators to advocate

about water and sanitation (WATSAN) in communities and at schools.

- Encourage the participation of communities in the preservation of clean water and environmental sanitation. Develop grassroots rules, and regulations on clean water and sanitation, so that communities are all committed and participate in the implementation process.
- Evaluate and disseminate good practices from the community-based mother and childcare model (IYCF), the IMAM model and the community-led total sanitation model to other areas beyond Child Friendly Project's sites.



CHAPTER 5. RIGHT TO EDUCATION

5.1. Legislative framework, policies and public expenditure on education

5.1.1. Legislative framework and policies

Law

Assuring equal opportunity to access to pre-education and secondary education is clearly stipulated in the Constitution and Laws of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

The Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam in 1992 and the revised Constitution in 2001, Article 36 says that the State prioritises investment for education, encourages other investment sources, with priorities for ensuring the development of education in mountainous ethnic minority areas and extremely difficult areas. The 2013 Constitution which was recently approved by the National Assembly continues to confirm this priority.

The Viet Nam Law on Education in 2005 requires creating a child-friendly learning environment for children, including general education methods which affect students' emotions, and bring excitement and inspiration to student learning. According to the Law, groups who receive privileges of being cared and given access to education include: children at preschools, primary school students; poor, ethnic minority children, children in families located in extremely disadvantaged socio-economic areas, target groups eligible for priority policies of society, the disabled, handicapped, and other social policy beneficiaries.

The Law on Protection, Care and Education for Children in 2004 highlighted the principle of non-discrimination and best interests of the child; ensuring the right to education of children in general and children in special circumstances in particular.

Policies at the national level

Table 5.1. Consolidation of national policies

Policies		Programme budget (billion VND)	Implementation budget of LC in 2014 (million VND)
Education and Training National Target Programme 2012-2015. The Program includes four projects. They are:	Decision No.: 1210/QD-TTg dated 5/9/2012 approves Education & Training Target Programme period 2012 - 2015	Total: 15,200 National budget: 12,300 Local budget: 2,470 Other: 430	34,590
Project 1: Universalise 5-year-old nursery education, eliminate illiteracy and prevent re-illiteracy, maintain achievements of primary education universalisation, implement right-aged lower-secondary education universalisation, and support secondary education universalisation;		Total: 2,910 National budget: 2,600 Local budget: 260 Other: 50	8,070
Project 2: Strengthen teaching and learning foreign language in national education system;		Total: 4,146 National budget: 3,260 Local budget: 786 Other: 100	3,930

	Policies	Programme budget (billion VND)	Implementation budget of LC in 2014 (million VND)
Project 3: Support education in mountainous, EM and difficult areas; provide infrastructure and facilities for gifted schools, and pedagogical schools;		Total: 7,992 National budget: 6,300 Local budget: 1,412 Other: 280	22,420
Project 4: Enhance capacity for programme management officers, and monitoring and evaluation officers.		Total: 152 National budget: 140 Local budget: 12 Other: 50	170
Expenditures of ODA project (details by programme, and project)			49,247
Quality assurance programme			15,564
Viet Nam new school modality			19,700
Secondary Education Development Programme			1,320
Child-Friendly Project			2,640
Child – Centered Development Programme			1,023
Upper-secondary Education Development Project – Phase 2			9,000
Policies			674,389
Policy in accordance with the Decision No.239/QD-TTg (lunch support for 5-year-old students)			15,934
Policy in accordance with the Decision No. 60/QD-TTg (lunch support for 3 and 4-year-old students)			17,100
Policy in accordance with the Decision No. 85/QD-TTg (Support for semi-boarders at primary and lower-secondary schools)			68,922
Policy in accordance with the Decision No. 12/QD-TTg (Support for semi-boarders at upper-secondary school)			19,592
Policy in accordance with the Decision No. 36/QD-TTg (Rice support)			34,585
Policy in accordance with the Decision No. 2123/QD-TTg (Support EM people)			836
Policy in accordance with the Decision No. 54/ND-CP (teacher's seniority)			90,721
Policy in accordance with the Decision No. 74/ND-CP (Support for Learning expense)			31,395
Policy in accordance with the Decision No. 61/ND-CP (extremely difficult area)			345,000
Policy Circular No. 109/BTC-BGD&DT (incentives for EM boarding students)			32,349
Decision No. 50/2013/QD-UBND (Support semi-boarding, stationeries and textbooks)			16,500
Decision No. 879/QD-UBND (Support teachers and students of Specialised school)			1,455

Provincial main policies

The Proposal “Develop and improve the quality of education in the period 2011- 2015” issued by the Lao Cai Provincial Party has set the following objectives: Strengthen and reasonably develop classes, school scale and network; diversify learning methods, lay the foundation for a learning society; universalise nursery education for children at the age of 5, maintain and improve the quality of primary education, universalise lower-secondary education, and aim at secondary education universalisation in favorable areas. Focus on improving, creating a visible change in comprehensive education quality and education efficiency, in order to gradually approach the quality and efficiency of education in developed regions of the country; focus on education development in ethnic minority areas, and extremely difficult areas; establish the University of Lao Cai. Solidify, standardise, socialise, internationally integrate and gradually modernise schools; build key high-quality institutions in developed economic and social areas.

The Proposal plans implementation measures in four domains: politics and ideology; mechanisms, policies and resources; promoting socialisation; and professional services.

Decision No. 291/QD-TU dated 15/11/2011 of Lao Cai PPC Office to approve Proposal on Education Quality Development, and Improvement of Lao Cai province in the period 2011-2015

Programme 153 - CTr / TU dated 11/6/2014 of the Provincial Committee of Lao Cai (PPC Lao Cai) on the implementation of the programme of action to implement the Resolution No. 29 / NQ / TU, eighth plenum of the Party Central Committee session XI stated: “Basically and comprehensively renovate education & training, meeting the needs of industrialisation and modernisation in the condition of a market economy, with a socialist orientation and international integration.

The Lao Cai provincial Programme of Action for Children in the period 2013-2020 sets overall objectives to better practice children rights and to bring equal opportunities for all children to develop, with special attention to

ethnic minority children, poor children and girls. Educational priorities in the Programme include mobilizing 5-year-old children to attend preschool; increasing the proportion of people aged 15-18 who graduated from lower-secondary school, with a focus amongst those on EM children and children with disabilities.

Every year, Lao Cai Provincial Department of Education and Training (DoET) plans its education and training programme in Lao Cai province with very crucial objectives as follows:

- Reasonably develop classes, school network and education size.
- Focus on the development and enhancement of education quality in EM area, and areas with extremely difficult socio-economic conditions, focus on disadvantaged children, children in difficult circumstances; promote equality in education, especially for disadvantaged children: gender equality, ethnic education, inclusive education, child labour and migration, enhance the quality of comprehensive education; pay more attention to ethics education, law-respecting lifestyle, enrich language and information technology capacities.
- Sustainably maintain education universalisation: primary education universalisation at the right age, lower-secondary education universalisation, and universalisation of education for 5-year-old children, decrease drop-outs rates at all educational levels.
- Develop and strengthen the quality of teaching staff and education management officials.
- Invest in school infrastructure and equipment in the direction of solidification, standardisation and modernisation. Such investment focuses on increasing the number of schools which meet national standards, associated with the movement “creating learner-friendly schools in the period 2011-2015, and making students more active”, particularly amongst those schools covered by the provincial New Rural Programme; build high quality pilot schools in Lao Cai City.

- Enthusiastically mobilise the participation of the community in education.

The Department of Education and Training continues to advise the provincial People's Committee to issue a number of mechanisms and policies to support students and teachers: policies to support learning materials for students in areas with socio-economic difficulties; policies to support schools with semi-boarding students; mechanisms to build accommodation for teachers and houses for semi-boarding students; policies to support EM people to study in languages of ethnic minority groups; policies to support freshwater for teachers in difficult areas.

5.1.2. Public expenditure on Education

International studies show that an increased literacy rate and improved education quality contribute to a reduction in multi-dimensional poverty³⁴. An investment in education is a strategic investment that has received attention and due care by the Party and government at various levels. Budget spending on education in general and capital investment in particular have increased in the past 5 years and will probably stay on that trend in the coming years. Part 5.1.2 addresses budget and education decentralisation, linkages between planning and budgeting in the education sector, public spending trends, characteristics and results.

Decentralisation in budget and education management

The Department of Education and Training is a specialised³⁵ agency of the provincial People's Committee (PPC) tasked to consult with the PPC in undertaking the state management of education and training in the province. The DOET is directed and managed by the PPC in organization and staffing whilst directed and managed by the Ministry of Education and Training in substantive areas. Since the 2013-2014 schoolyears, in addition to state

management functions, the Department of Education and Training has taken over high schools and four continuing education centres from district education and training bureaus. The Education and Training bureaus in Lao Cai City and eight districts manage preschool, primary, lower secondary schools and district continuing education centres. Since 2008, there are two models of financial decentralisation in the province, where Bat Xat district is different from the rest. Budget and expenditures of schools and district continuing education centres are managed by the finance and planning bureau. In other districts, budget and expenditure of the schools and centres are managed by the Department of Education and Training.

The budget spending report by budget classification for education in 2012 shows that 19,85% of public expenditure on education is financed by the provincial budget, 80.07% of funds come from the district budget and that the commune budget contributes 0,08% to public spending. The share has changed since 2014, with a bigger share to the provincial budget as the upper schools' budgets were transferred from district budgets to the provincial budget and thus the district share has become smaller. Based on 2012 data, the expenditure structure in 2014 is of 75% from the district budget and 25% from the provincial budget.

Decentralisation in investment management

The 2012 budget spending report shows that the investment capital for education accounted for 20.35% of total local spending for education, in which provincial units manage 82.9% of investment expenditure and the remaining 17,1% are invested from and managed by district (17,07%) and commune (0,03%) budgets:

Linkage between planning and budgeting in education sector

Lao Cai is one of the provinces using a participatory and bottom-up approach to socio-economic development planning based on socio-economic development indicators of the province, districts and communes. The

³⁴ Return on Investment: Cost vs Benefits, James J. Heckman, University of Chicago; The productivity Argument for Investing in Young children, James J. Heckman and Dimitry V. Masterov

³⁵ Decree 115/2010 / ND - CP dated 24/12 /2010 and Inter-ministry Circular# 47.

province so far has achieved encouraging results. The annual plans of the sectors are developed on the basis of their respective five-year plans. The annual plan of Department of Education and Training is aligned with the district five-year socio-economic development plan and also consistent with the Education sector's five year plan.

The process of planning and budgeting is performed simultaneously and interdependently. Basically, the budget estimation is based on the number of permanent teachers which in turn is determined by the number of classes and pupils. Annually, the Provincial Department of Education and Training conducts an assessment of target completion in relation with the five-year targets. The Department then accordingly adjusts the plan/targets to achieve the overall results. Targets will be carried over into the following year if the plan is not completed. Budgeting is in line with targets in the plan, to help achieve the expected results.

At the district level, Divisions of Education and Training and Divisions of Planning - Finance provide instructions to schools on developing teaching-learning plans and budgets, then consolidate and submit them to District People's Committees, Department of Finance (for recurrent expenditures), Department of Planning and Investment (investment capital) and Department of Education and Training (teaching-learning plan and budgets for the

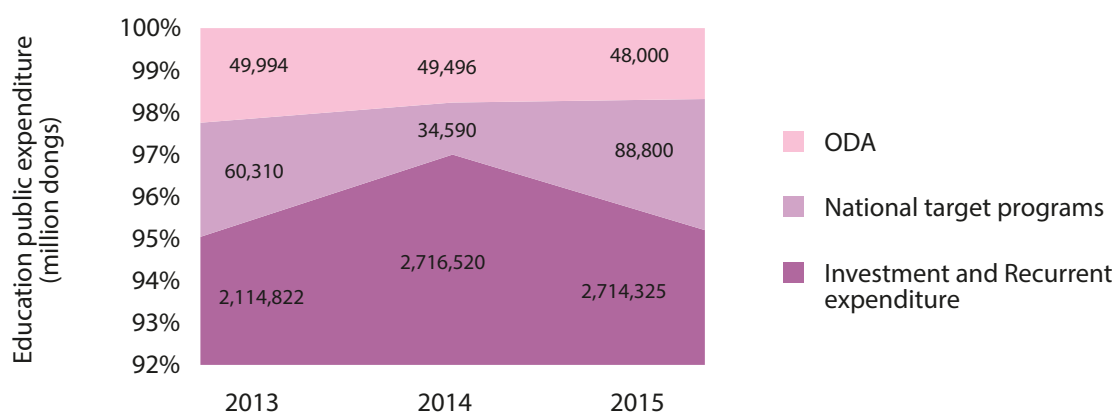
next year). In June-July, the Department of Education and Training also issues instructions for district divisions, high schools and centres for continuing education to develop educational plans and consolidate budget estimates of all educational units, and to then send them to the Department of Planning and Investment (investment expenditures in developing the education sector) and the DOF (recurrent expenditures within the education sector). The education sector has a good coordination with the DOF and DPI.

Financing sources and public expenditure on education

The investment and operation of public education establishments are financed by the State Budget (including income from lottery and borrowing, tuition, fees, and grants under programmes/projects) and by contributions from students, either negotiated or voluntary. In another classification, public spending on education includes recurrent expenditure and capital expenditure, National Target Programmes on Education and Training, and ODA Projects. The share of these financing resources has changed over time and ODA³⁶ has tended to decrease (from 2.25% in 2013 down to 1.77% in 2014 and only at 1.68% in 2015).

³⁶ UNICEF provides the largest amount of grant for Education sector in Lao Cai, contributing 9.98%, 6.06% and 10.42% of total ODA fund for Education-Training sector and 0.22%, 0.11% and 0.18% of total public spending for Education – Training in 3 years consecutively from 2013-2015.

Figure 5.1. Public expenditure on Education and Training by sources of fund, 2013-2015



Source: DOET, Plan numbered 102/KH- SGD-DT dated 13/06/2014

Tuition fees: The Education and Training Department collaborates with the Department of Finance and other related departments and agencies to set up tuition fees that are later approved by the provincial People's Committee. In the 2013-2014 school-year, tuition rates complied with Decision 29/2013/QĐ-dated 07/31/2013 of the People's Committee of Lao Cai province. Tuition and other fees met 1.6% of education expenditures in 2013 and was estimated to cover 1.3% of that in 2014 and 2015.

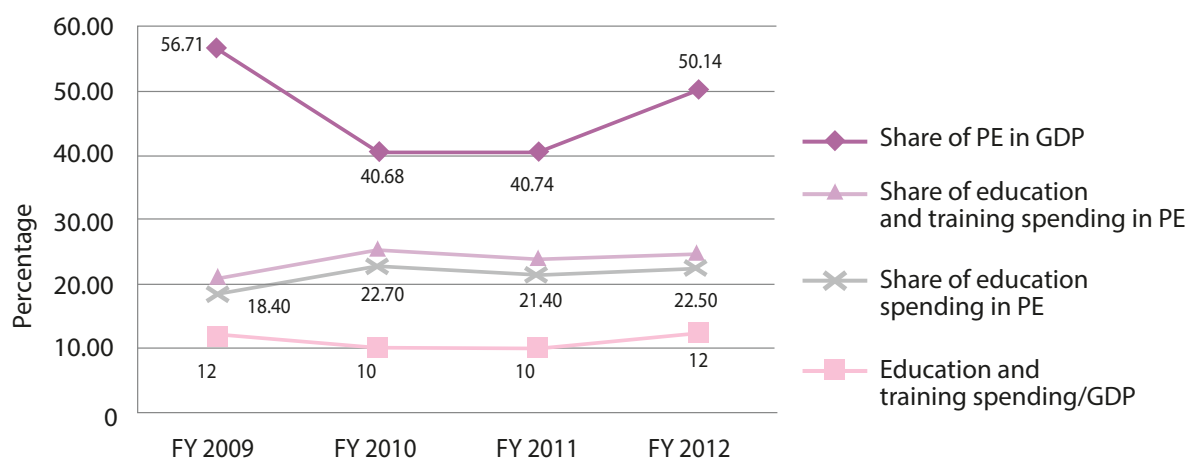
Grants/aids: Schools are allowed to collect contributions from individuals and organizations and can use donations or other contributions from parents according to the agreed purposes of these donations. The guidelines on mobilizing and using contributions for education are regulated by the Circular 29/2012/TT-BGDĐT.

Situation and public spending results on education in Lao Cai province

Public expenditure in Lao Cai accounted for 40-47% GDP between 2009 and 2012. Public expenditure on education and training increased from VND 950 billion in 2009 to VND 2,219 billion in 2012 nominal terms or from VND 1,065 billion to VND 1,650 billion in real terms, fixed price in 2010³⁷. The share of public expenditure to total government expenditure (TGE) increased from 21% in 2009 to 24.6% in 2012. Within the sector, education spending accounted for 87.6% (2009) to 91.7% (2012) of total spending on Education and Training. Education spending per capita increased from VND 1.51 million in 2009 to VND 2.33 million in 2012 (fixed price in 2010).

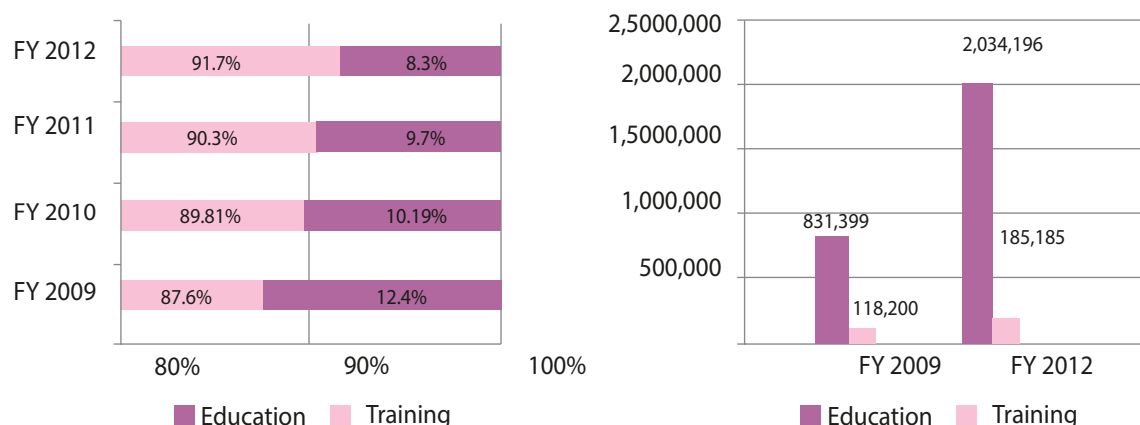
³⁷ Source: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.DEFL.ZS?page=1>

Figure 5.2. Share of Public Expenditure and Education PE of GDP in 2009-2012



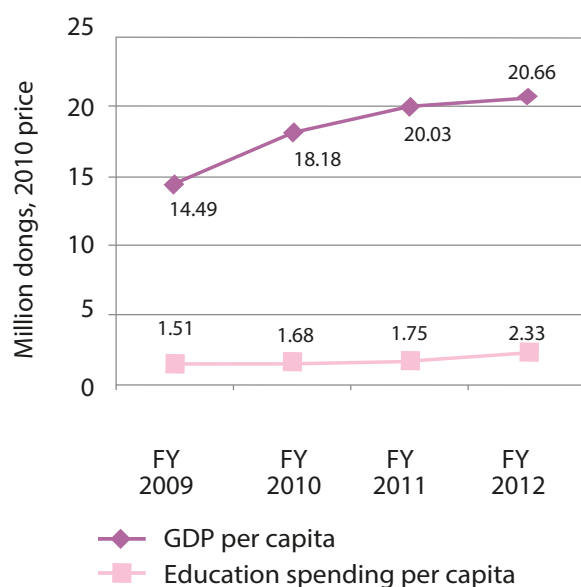
Source: Data for PER 2015 and Lao Cai Province Statistics 2011-2013

Figure 5.3. Share of education expenditure in the education and training sector



Source: Data for PER2015, Lao Cai province statistics 2011-2013

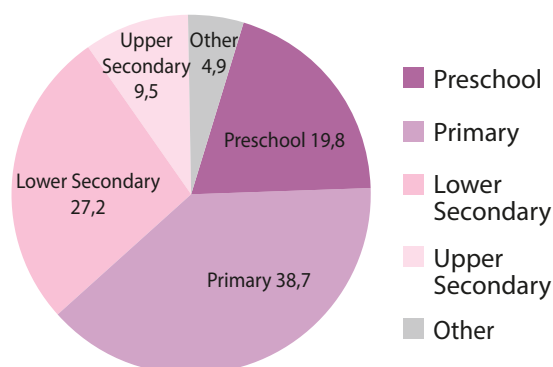
Figure 5.4. Public spending on Education and GDP per capita



Source: DOF, Lao Cai province statistics 2011-2013

Public expenditure on education reflects government policies in this sector. Education is the first priority of the country and spending on education is considered as an investment for the future. The Government has set educational goals and promulgated policies to achieve these goals. The increase is related to new policies for pupils (rice to students in special difficult areas, support to upper secondary students, training materials and textbooks for children aged 5, meals for full day schooling pupils etc.) and also to remuneration to educational staff/teachers as a consequence of base salary increases. Between 2010 and 2013, there were 4 adjustments, that took the minimum salary from VND 730,000/ month to VND 1,150,000/ months in 2013 (it was VND 830,000/ month in 2011 and VND 1,050,000/ month in 2012). Recurrent budget sufficient for the level of 730,000 dong/month and the shortfall is compensated by various sources including tuition revenues.

Figure 5.5. Total budget spending on Education in Lao Cai province 2009-2012



Source: Calculation from data for PER 2015

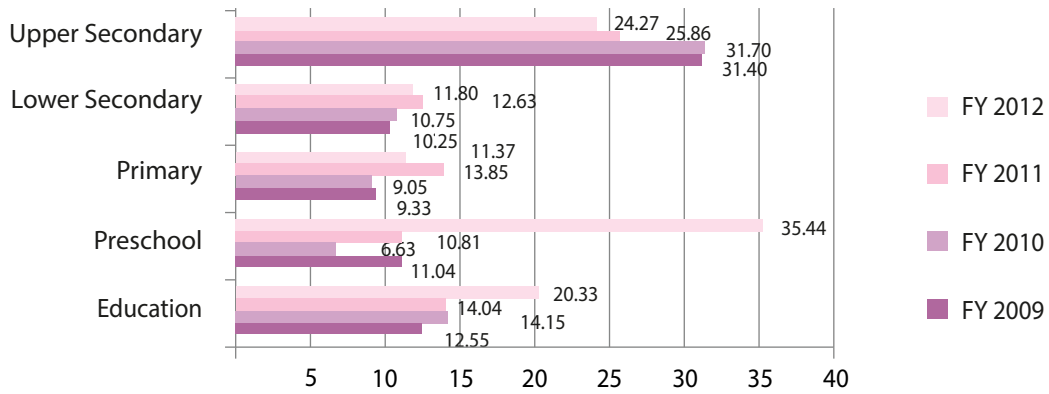
The total budget spending on education in the period of 2009-2012 of Lao Cai province is VND 4,610 billion (2010 price), in which spending for primary education accounted for the biggest share, 38,7% or VND 1,584 billion.

Capital expenditure for education

The share of capital investment in public expenditure for education varied from year to year in 2009-2012. During the review period,

capital investment was more prioritised at the upper secondary level and accounted for 24-32% of public spending. Capital investment for preschool education soared in 2012 and accounted for 35.44% of the sub-function expenditure. These rates reflect activities of programmes on improving the education infrastructure and developing education.

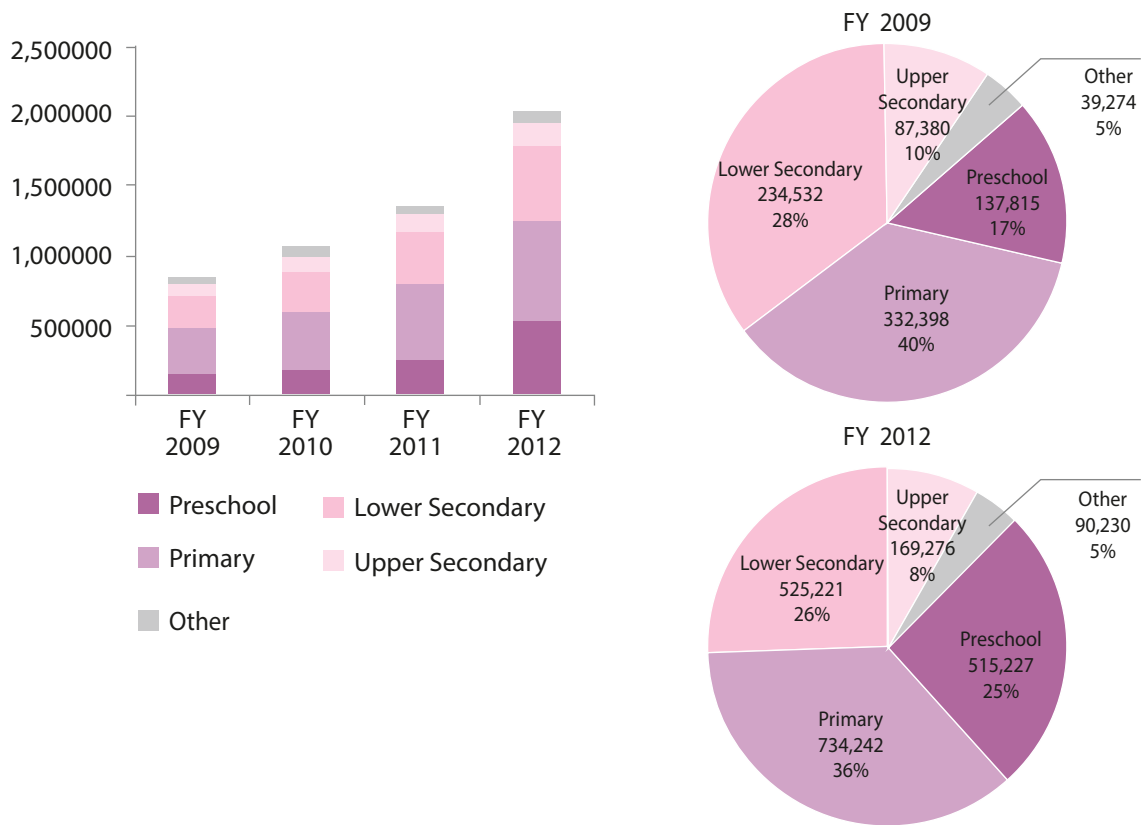
Figure 5.6. Investment expenditure by education levels 2009-2012



Source: Calculation data for 2015 PER

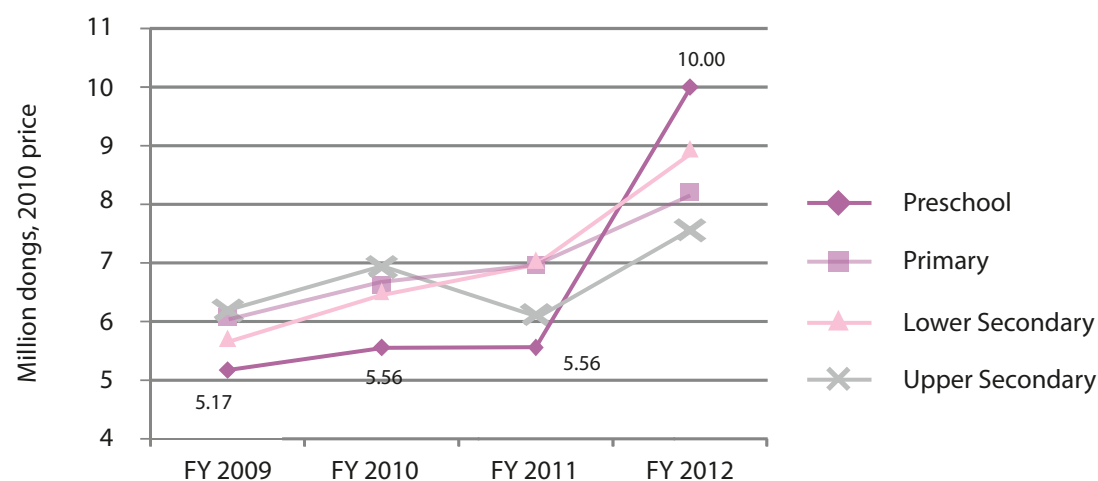
Public expenditure by education levels

Figure 5.7. Public spending on education by levels 2009-2012



Source: Calculation from data for PER 2015

Figure 5.8. Public spending per student in 2009-2012



Source: Calculation from data for PER 2015

In 2009-2012, the average spending per student differed across education levels, and that at the primary level was higher. The average spending per student for kindergarten increased quickly in 2012 compared to 2011, from VND 5.56 million/student to VND 10 million/ student (fixed cost in 2010). This figure is certainly

related to the universal education programme for 5-year-old children that help children to be well prepared for enrollment into primary schools. The detailed figures for each level in the 2009-2012 period are presented in the table below.

Table 5.3. Typical financial indicators in 2009-2012

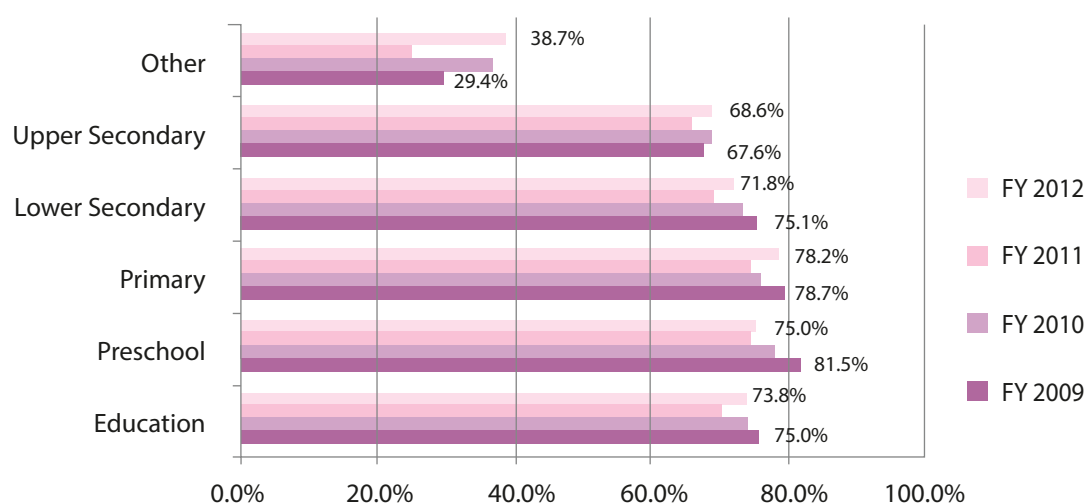
Indicator	2009	2010	2011	2012 (TABMIS)				
				Province	Bat Xat	Lao Cai city	Bao Yen	Muong Khuong
Capital expenditure per student (million dong, 2010 price)								
Kindergarten	0.57	0.37	0.60	3.54	0.34	0.59	0.11	0.21
Primary	0.57	0.60	0.97	0.93	0.22	0.93	0.18	0.23
LSS	0.59	0.70	0.89	1,06	0.07	0.45	0.15	0.56
USS	1.94	2.20	1.58	1.83	0.21	0.07	0.06	0.10
Recurrent expenditure per student (million dong, 2010 price)								
Kindergarten	4.60	5.19	4.96	6.46	6.25	5.5	5.57	7.01
Primary	5.51	6.02	6.00	7.28	7.96	4.05	6.34	9.25
LSS	5.13	5.82	6.16	7.89	7.95	6.11	7.53	8.62
USS	4.25	4.73	4.53	5.72	5.22	3.65	4.93	6.37
Share of salary/ wages and personal payment in recurrent expenditure for education (%)³⁸								
Kindergarten	81.51	77.71	74.35	83.38	79.26	85.49	90.05	90.78
Primary	78.73	75.58	74.04	89.04	87.92	90.62	93.65	89.58

³⁸ 2012 data for 2015 PER shows the share of personal payment of 74,96; 78,24; 71,75; and 68,63 (5) for kindergarten, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary respectively

Indicator	2009	2010	2011	2012 (TABMIS)				
				Province	Bat Xat	Lao Cai city	Bao Yen	Muong Khuong
LSS	75.12	72.96	68.86	84.69	76.82	88.48	88.89	89.10
USS	67.60	68.39	65.75	82.49	71.67	85.04	84.64	87.68
Share goods/services payment in recurrent expenditure for education (%)³⁹								
Kindergarten	8.1	8.6	13.8	12.93	15.66	10.73	9.56	8.75
Primary	7.1	7.0	10.6	8.32	10.61	9.19	6.00	9.96
LSS	11.6	10.9	15.5	10.83	12.33	10.64	10.67	10.44
USS	17.2	16.2	18.9	15.27	16.58	13.12	14.51	11.31

Source: Calculation from data for PER 2015

Figure 5.9. Share of salary/wages payment in Education recurrent spending 2009-2012



Source: Calculation from data for PER 2015

³⁹ 2012 data for 2015 PER shows the share of 13,6%; 8,6%; 11,2% and 15,6% for kindergarten, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary respectively.

Data from the MOF show that the share of salary/wages in recurrent expenditure for education meets the requirement (except in 2009 at the pre-primary level, which accounted for 81.5%) of reaching up to 80% of total recurrent expenditure. However, as other expenditures accounted for more than 5%, it could be the case that some spending items, instead of being recorded under salary/ wages, were moved to others. The share of expenditures on goods and services (sub-group 130 of the budget classification) in recurrent spending for education was of around 10%. The limited share of goods and services expenditures partly explained poor learning conditions,

especially at satellite schools, e.g. the classroom is equipped with 1-2 bulbs, poor training and visual aids etc.

Lao Cai province has 35 ethnic groups, in which ethnic minorities account for 65.4%⁴⁰, and a poverty rate of 17.61%⁴¹. The Party and government at all levels have paid special attention to the education sector and have supported children, especially ethnic minorities and disadvantaged children through preferential policies, such as tuition exemption,

⁴⁰ 2009 census, Kinh 34,6%, H'Mong 23,8%, Tay 15,3%, Dao 14,4%, and other 11,9%

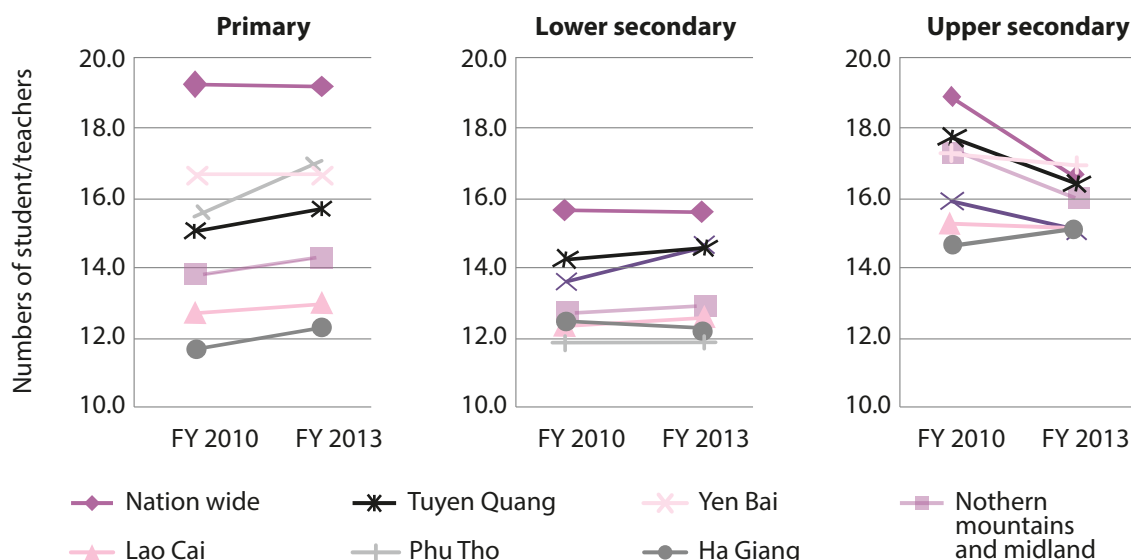
⁴¹ Poverty monitoring report of MOLISA

reduction, scholarship, support meals, rice supply, and learning tools/ materials etc. This provides children with a better access to education.

In the province, 120 thousand pupils among a total of 184 thousand pupils live in the

mountains. This make the education cause much more difficult compared to plain areas. Teachers have many additional tasks such as propaganda and taking care of pupils' lives because they study and live at the day-boarding school. Education spending is in line with central and local government's priorities.

Figure 5.10. Average number of students per teacher in 2010 & 2013

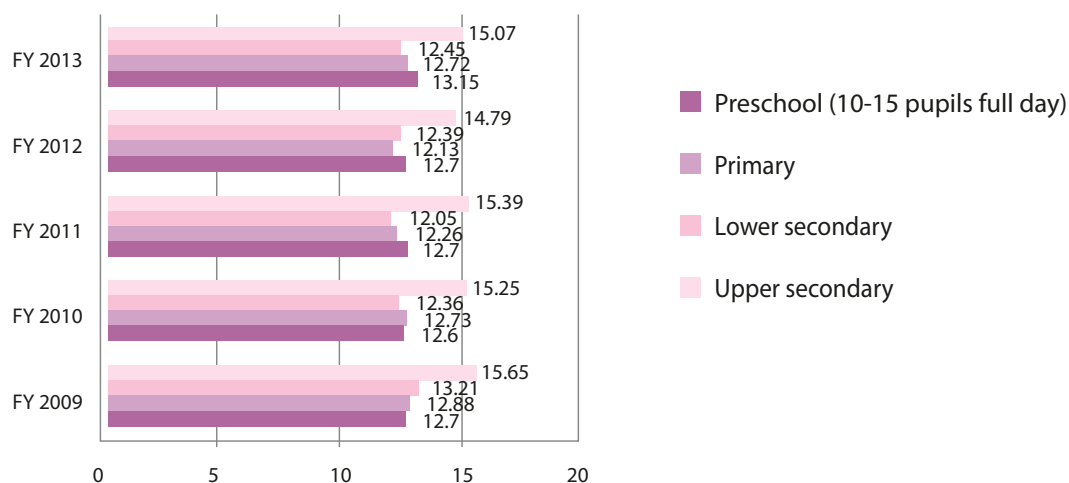


Source: Statistical Yearbook 2010 and 2013, GSO

Figure 5.10 shows that the student/teacher ratio nationwide in 2010-2013 was stable for primary education and lower secondary, and decreased for upper secondary education. The situation in Lao Cai is similarly to that of the Northern midland and mountainous area, with ratios increased at primary and lower secondary levels, and decreased at upper secondary level.

Ha Giang is a different case where the trend is opposite at lower and upper schools, reducing the ratio at the lower secondary level and increasing at the upper secondary level. This ratio partly reflects the direction of improving education quality, in which primary and lower secondary levels are prioritised to attract more students to learning.

Figure 5.11. Student/teacher ratio in Lao Cai in 2009-2013



Source: Lao Cai provincial statistics

Table 5.4. Some efficiency indicators, 2013

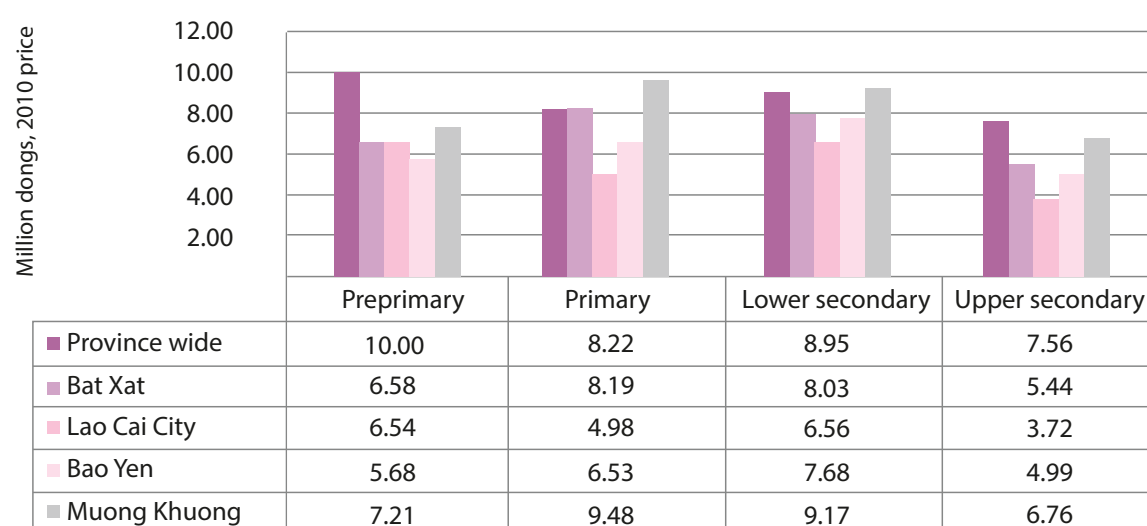
Education level	Teachers/ class		Students/ class	
	Lao Cai	Norm	Lao Cai	Norm
Pre primary	1.7	1.0	22.1	20-25
Half day schooling		2.0		25-30
Full day schooling				
Primary	1.4	1.2	17.3	35
Half day schooling		1.5		
Full day schooling				
Lower Secondary	2.3	1.9	28.9	35
Upper Secondary	2.3	2.25	34.8	35

Source: Lao Cai provincial statistics 2012

Table 5.4 shows that the teacher/class ratio in Lao Cai is in line with the norm for pre-primary, primary and upper secondary but higher at the lower secondary level. The ratios of students per class and students per teacher are lower than the norm, particularly in primary education. The number of teachers per class has changed slightly over the period of time, responding to local needs as well as to policies for sector development. The focus of development is at the basic education level (from pre-primary to lower secondary).

Reducing the number of satellite schools is a proposed measure to improve the efficiency of public expenditure for education in northern mountainous provinces. This, however, is a challenge to the education sector in Lao Cai as (i) it requires increasing investment at the main schools for full day schooling and/or boarding schools; (ii) enrollment rates and school attendance may reduce due to customs and habits of ethnic minorities and (iii) boarding schools are not appropriate for primary school students, especially EM students.

Figure 5.12. Public expenditure per student in 2012



Source: Calculation from data for PER 2015 and provincial statistics

Average expenditure per student differs from district to district. This difference is not because of different financing mechanisms in each

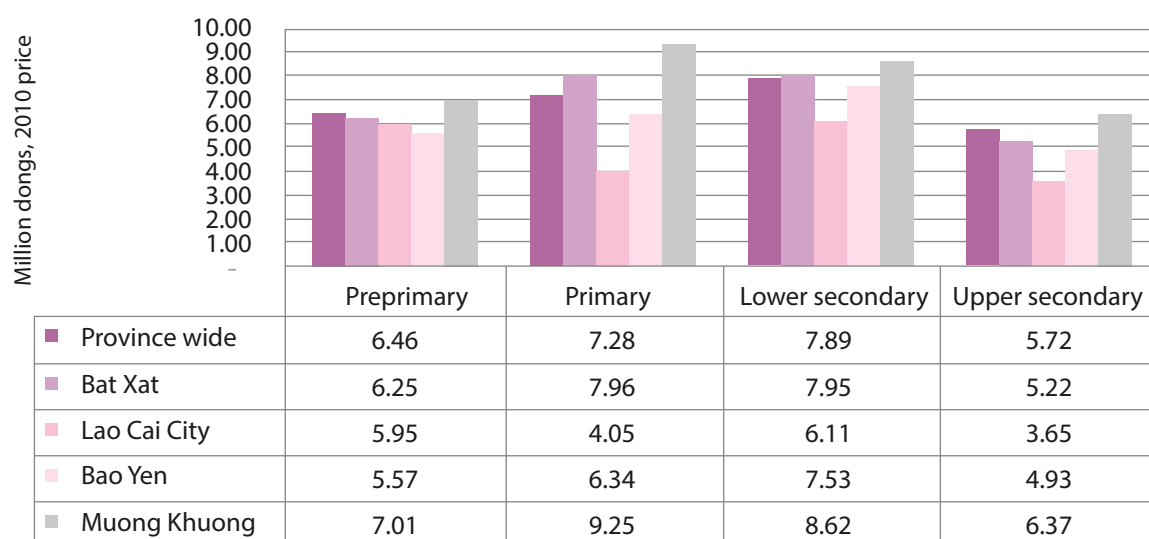
district but is derived from an expenditure structure/component where salary and salary-based allowances account for a large share of

the expenditure. The seniority of the teachers affects the unit cost significantly. In addition, the geographical location of the school also has an impact on the unit cost (the same teacher will receive a higher pay if s/he teaches at a school in Bat Xat district instead of a school in Lao Cai city).

Lao Cai city is the most developed district in the province so the teachers' allowance is much lower compared to other districts. Allowances and subsidies to students are also lower than

in other districts (smaller number of policy-benefit students). As a result, the recurrent expenditure per student of Lao Cai City was lowest in the province, only 66% compared to the average cost of the whole province. This reflects preferential education policies, giving higher priority to those areas which are more difficult to ensure a better access for children. There is a strong correlation between the level of recurrent expenditure on education and local poverty.

Figure 5.13. Recurrent expenditure per student 2012



Source: Calculation from data for PER 2015

The recurrent budget is mainly allocated by inputs and not gender sensitive. This study does not consolidate and review data on public expenditure on out of school children (OOSC).

5.2. Education development status of Lao Cai province

5.2.1. Size and network of schools, classes, teachers and students at pre-school and secondary schools

Thoroughly grasping the viewpoint that education and training is the first national policy, that investment in education is also investment in development, and as a top priority among

socio-economic development programmes, Lao Cai has increased its public budget on the education and training sector and training from 21% in 2009 to 24.6% in 2012 and 19.42%⁴² in 2014. According to the Lao Cai DoET, Lao Cai had a total of 668 schools in 2014. Table 5.5 lists the number of schools, classes, teachers and students at pre-school and secondary schools of Lao Cai in 2014.

⁴² Data on State Budget expenditure from Statistics Year book of Lao Cai 2014; State budget expenditure on education in accordance with data of Lao Cai DoET (Education development plan in 2016 of Lao Cai).

Table 5.5. Number of Schools, classes, teachers and students in preschools and secondary schools in Lao Cai as of 09/30/2015

	No. of schools	Public	Private	Classes	No. of teachers	No. of students
Preschool	201	191	10	2,167	3,742	50,425
Primary school	231	231		3,935	5,930	73,271
Lower-Secondary school	189	189		1,573	3,432	46,341
Upper-secondary school	36	36		505	1,160	17,017

Source: Lao Cai DOET

The construction of schools meeting national standards is defined as a key task of education sector for raising the quality of education. By the end of the academic year 2015-2016, for the whole province 301 out of 657 schools have reached national standard, accounting for 45.8% , an increase of 46 schools compared to the 2014-2015 school year (preschool education: 74 schools , accounting for 36.8 %; primary education: 150 schools , accounting for 64.9% ; lower secondary education: 68 schools, accounting for 36.0%; upper secondary education: 9 schools, accounting for 25%, of which 9 preschools and 29 primary schools meeting the level 2 national standards)

By the end of the school year 2014-2015, Lao Cai had 47.2% schools who had reached the national standard (pre-school: 69; primary schools: 147; lower-secondary schools: 70; upper-secondary schools: 8). The ratio of new solid classrooms achieved 62%.

Table 5.6 compares the growth rate in 2014 with that of 2009 on the number of schools, classes, teachers and students of nursery and secondary schools in Lao Cai with that of the Northern highland area. Besides, to more clearly understand the realistic investment efforts compared to provinces with similar characteristics in the region, the table also compares Lao Cai with 10 provinces who have poverty rates in 2014 higher than the average regional ratio or have less scattered population density (less than or equal to 100 people/km²).

Table 5.6 shows that the upper-secondary education level of Lao Cai achieved strongest development of schools, and classrooms network, teachers and students mobilisation, with the higher pace of schools, classes, teachers and students development than those of other education levels, and higher than average growth rates of 10 provinces. Nursery education ranks 2nd, with a pace of schools, classes, teachers and students development higher than the average growth rate of 10 provinces and lower than the growth of the number of schools in the region. Primary education ranks 3rd, with a development pace on school numbers less than that in the region and 10 provinces. Lower-secondary education ranks at the bottom, with development pace of schools and classes less than the average pace for 10 provinces. From this analysis it appears that Lao Cai should put more efforts in developing classes and schools at the primary and lower-secondary education levels.

Table 5.6. Size and development pace of Lao Cai nursery and secondary education in 2014 vs 2009

	Northern Highland Area				Lào Cai				10 provinces			
	Number of school	Number of class	Number of teachers	Number of students	Number of school	Number of class	Number of teachers	Number of students	Number of school	Number of class	Number of teachers	Number of students
2014												
Pre-primary	2,889	26,309	41,717	672,913	208	1872	3343	42,971	1,512	14,487	20,645	328,127
Primary	3,077	52,934	72,170	1,042,096	243	4,270	5,498	69,964	20,525	35,893	48,108	653,136
LS	2,548	23,836	51,487	696,126	191	1,620	3,503	44,900	1,652	14,619	31,104	419,293
US	416	8,508	19,751	310,858	30	494	1,143	16,810	2,565	4,867	11,340	169,500
2009												
Pre-primary	2,435	22,149	27,922	476,100	184	1,562	2,115	31,300	1,339	12,789	15,687	263,300
Primary	2,986	51,473	66,456	933,675	236	3,897	4,760	61,298	1,964	35,381	43,905	586,062
LS	2,467	24,852	53,199	721,608	187	1,577	3,483	45,997	15,855	15,121	32,066	428,237
US	406	8,536	19,656	346,627	26	427	1,011	15,826	2,345	4,693	11,043	181,501
2014/2009 (%) growth												
Pre-primary	118.64	118.78	149.41	141.34	113.04	119.85	158.06	137.29	112.92	113.28	131.61	124.62
Primary	103.05	102.84	108.60	111.61	102.75	109.57	115.50	114.14	104.51	101.45	109.57	111.44
LS	103.28	95.91	96.78	96.47	102.14	102.73	100.57	97.62	104.19	96.68	97.00	97.91
US	102.46	99.67	100.48	89.68	113.46	115.69	113.06	106.22	109.38	103.71	102.69	93.39

Source: Annual Statistical year book 2014, GSO

Table 5.7 shows the growth rate of the size of the 3-level minority students in 2014 compared to 2009. The size of ethnic minority student attendance in primary and upper-secondary schools has progressed; the EM student ratio at primary schools in 2014 increased by a factor

of 1.1 compared to that in 2009; at upper-secondary schools in 2014 it increased by a factor of 1.4 times compared to 2009. However, the mobilisation of upper-secondary school students in 2014 is similar to that of 2009 (0.99).

Table 5.7. Number of EM students as of 30/9/2014 compared to those in 2009

Total	Primary level	Lower-secondary level	Upper-secondary level
111.6	116.3	99.0	141.5

Source: Statistics Yearbook, GSO

Table 5.8 shows that the percentage of female students in the total number of students in all 3 education levels from primary, secondary and high schools in 2009 were lower than the average regional ratio. The situation in 2014 has improved, but only at the primary level,

where the percentage of female students is slightly higher than the regional percentage (47.9% versus 47.6%). This also means that it is necessary to put more effort to mobilise more girls to attend lower and upper secondary schools.

Table 5.8. Female students

Location	No.	2009				2014			
		Total	Primary	Lower-secondary	Upper-secondary	Total	Primary	Lower-secondary	Upper-secondary
Northern Highland & mountainous area	Total	2,001,910	933,675	721,608	346,627	2,049,080	1,042,096	696,126	310,858
	Female	961,884	444,059	338,257	179,568	984,552	496,519	329,957	158,076
Lao Cai	TS	123,121	61,298	45,997	15,826	131,674	69,964	44,900	16,810
	Female	57,724	28,631	21,332	7,761	62,788	33,544	21,166	8,078
Northern Highland & mountainous area	% female	48.0	47.6	46.9	51.8	48.0	47.6	47.4	50.9
Lao Cai	% female	46.9	46.7	46.4	49.0	47.7	47.9	47.1	48.1

Source: 2014 Statistics Yearbook, GSO

The figures in Table 5.9 on the allocation of classes, and the school network of primary and secondary schools at the district level of Lao Cai in 2015 showed that except for children of primary school age, those of kindergarten,

preschool, secondary and high school age in highland and sparse population districts faced difficulties traveling to school.

For preschool education, the average numbers of schools and classes per commune are 1.2

and 14.3 respectively. In five districts with population densities of less than 100 people per 1 km², only Bao Yen has 1.3 school and 16.9 preschool classes per commune; the remaining 4 of Bac Ha, Bat Xat, Van Ban and Sa Pa barely have 1-1.2 school and 10.6-15.0 preschool classes per commune. Therefore, achieving a sufficient number of preschool schools and classes, especially for kindergarten and preschools in highlands and remote areas remains a challenge.

Primary education achieves the highest average number of schools and classes per commune: 1.5 and 24.1 respectively. This result can be accounted for the universal primary education policy: encouraging student enrollment in school by allocating schools or teaching facilities near the student residency. A number of districts enjoy a higher than average number of classes per commune compared to Lao Cai city due to the sparse distribution of the population. Van Ban, Bac Ha and Si Ma Cai have the lowest average number of classes per commune while Bao Thang has the highest.

Although Lower Secondary Education is also a universal education level as is primary, the network of schools, especially with regard to classroom distribution, does not meet the standard as does that of Primary Education. The number of schools per commune only reaches 1.1 (versus 1.5 in Primary) and especially the average number of classes per commune is

only 9.6, almost three times lower than that in Primary (24.1 classes per commune); and the number of secondary students per class is about 1.2-1.6 times more than those of primary schools in districts. This indicates that the secondary students must go further to get to schools. This difficulty is particularly visible for the districts of Lao Cai with high and divided mountain terrain, regardless of the fact that secondary students are of higher age than those in elementary school. Expansion of semi-boarding school system is a solution but may not be able to meet all the needs of students. This expansion also poses great challenges for the management of life and the safety of students during their stay in the boarding schools and classes.

According to Table 5.9, the situation is more difficult for high school age students in districts, with the average number of schools and classes per commune remaining substantially lower than those in Lai Cao city.

Table 5.9. School allocation by education level

	Nursery education level					Primary education level					Lower-secondary education level					Upper-secondary education level					Resident density (persons /km ²)
	# of school in a village	# of classes in a village	# of teachers in a class	No of students per teacher	# of school in a village	# of classes in a village	# of teachers in a class	No of students per teacher	# of school in a village	# of classes in a village	# of teachers in a class	No of students per teacher	# of school in a village	# of classes in a village	# of teachers in a class	No of students per teacher	# of school in a village	# of classes in a village	# of teachers in a class	No of students per teacher	
Overall	1.2	14.3	21.9	1.7	13.2	1.5	24.0	18.6	1.5	12.6	1.1	9.6	29.5	2.2	13.1	0.2	3.1	33.7	2.4	14.2	104
Lao Cai district	1.7	15.7	29.5	1.5	19.8	1.3	20.6	30.3	1.8	20.2	1.1	12.2	33.7	2.1	16.0	0.4	7.5	31.6	2.2	13.3	469
District																					
Bat Xat	1.0	15.0	17.8	1.4	12.5	1.0	22.7	16.9	1.4	11.5	0.9	7.9	30.3	2.2	13.5	0.1	1.7	34.3	2.9	14.4	71
Muong Khuong	1.3	16.1	20.6	1.7	12.3	1.4	27.2	15.9	1.4	10.9	1.2	9.7	27.5	2.2	12.6	0.2	2.6	32.9	2.4	13.3	102
Si Ma Cai	1.2	14.4	16.4	1.9	8.8	1.3	21.2	16.4	1.5	11.0	1.0	8.5	28.5	2.2	13.0	0.2	2.4	35.4	2.7	13.8	148
Bac Ha	1.0	10.6	23.3	1.8	13.0	1.3	20.7	17.1	1.5	11.7	1.1	7.4	28.5	2.2	13.0	0.1	2.0	37.7	2.9	15.3	87
Bao Thang	1.4	17.3	25.1	1.8	13.8	2.5	36.3	18.0	1.4	12.4	1.5	14.7	28.6	2.3	12.6	0.2	4.6	32.6	2.3	14.5	156
Bao Yen	1.3	16.9	20.2	1.6	12.9	1.7	26.1	17.7	1.5	11.9	1.4	10.4	28.1	2.3	12.1	0.2	3.3	33.6	2.3	14.7	98
Sa Pa	1.1	11.6	24.6	1.7	14.5	1.3	25.5	18.5	1.4	12.4	1.1	8.8	29.1	2.2	13.4	0.1	1.6	34.8	2.7	13.2	86
Van Ban	1.2	13.0	20.7	1.8	11.7	1.6	19.3	18.8	1.5	12.5	1.1	8.6	29.4	2.4	12.1	0.2	3.0	35.4	2.4	15.6	59

Source: Statistics Yearbook of Lao Cai 2015

5.2.2. Pre-school education

Percentages of preschool education mobilisation, particularly the mobilisation of 5 years old students were high. Lao Cai province in 2013 achieved standards on preschool education universalisation for 5-year old children (2 years earlier than Party Congress Resolution, Session XIV in Lao Cai Province). In the 2014-15 school year, the mobilisation rate of 5-year old children's attendance was

99.9%, achieving 99.8% as per the target of the Proposal "Development and improvement of education quality in the period 2011- 2015 " of Lao Cai province. The rate for pre-schoolers at the age of 3-5 was 94.45%.

Table 5.10 shows that EM children aged 5 in all districts basically had the opportunity to go to school as did Kinh children, except those in Bac Ha and Si Ma Cai districts in which about 3% of ethnic minority children aged 5 years old do not attend kindergarten.

Table 5.10. School attendance rate of 5-year-old children in 2015

	Total	Among those	
		Female	EM
Total	99.90	99.53	99.35
Lao Cai city	100.00	100.00	100.00
District			
Bat Xat	100.00	100.00	100.00
Muong Khuong	100.00	100.00	100.00
Si Ma Cai	99.45	98.04	97.08
Bac Ha	99.81	96.59	96.64
Bao Thang	100.00	100.00	100.00
Bao Yen	100.00	100.00	100.00
Sa Pa	100.00	100.00	100.00
Van Ban	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: 2015 Statistics Yearbook of Lao Cai

Table 5.11 shows that the proportion of children aged 3-5 attending preschool also peaked in difficult districts such as MK, SMC, Bac Ha.

Table 5.11. 3-5 year old kindergarten students in 2015

	Total	Among	
		Female	EM
Total	94.45	92.90	92.27
Lao Cai city	98.64	95.66	95.04
Bat Xat	91.54	88.36	94.60
Muong Khuong	96.62	92.77	93.70
Si Ma Cai	98.93	98.69	98.70
Bac Ha	96.50	95.04	95.50
Bao Thang	95.24	91.69	87.10
Bao Yen	92.79	92.34	89.50
Sa Pa	92.25	91.14	91.00
Van Ban	89.43	86.20	88.60

Source: 2015 Statistics Yearbook of Lao Cai

Despite achieving children attendance mobilisation, preschool education of Lao Cai still faces many difficulties. Firstly, the percentage of children going to kindergarten only achieved 15%; Secondly, maintaining the number of students going to school and increasing the rate of student attendance is difficult. These 2 constraints have become more difficult for young children in highland, remote areas where schools are far away from home while the geographical condition has slopes and scattered population, along with severe weather, and where the majority of people are poor; Thirdly, the infrastructure and facilities of pre-schools in some remote areas are still very limited, especially in branch schools (no electricity, no clean water to cook for the children, insufficient books, notebooks and school supplies for the students, lack of basic teaching sets, lack of toys, outdoor play areas, function rooms, and simple public houses, ...); Fourthly, it is difficult to implement regulations and mechanisms for teachers, for example, effectively conduct professional standards assessment for preschool teachers, lack of EM teachers and teacher rotation in remote areas.

Figure 5.14 gives the ratio of EM teachers of preschool level out of EM people ratio in each

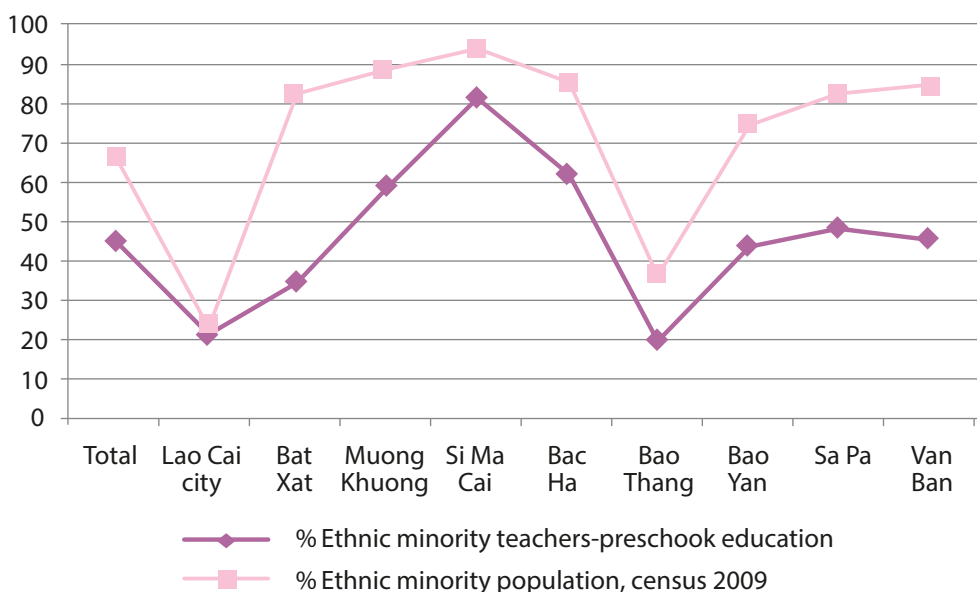
district. In localities with more EM children, more EM teachers are needed, especially in preschool, to help children learn Vietnamese better, which in turn helps students learn other subjects in Vietnamese better. In addition, because professional competencies and teaching methods of some teachers including teachers from ethnic minorities are limited, academic quality of students is not high.

In Figure 5.14, triangular dots stand for the rates of EM preschool teachers, while square dots represent the proportion of ethnic minority population of each district.

In each district, the closer to the triangular dots the square dots are, the better it is. That also means those districts have more EM teachers. On the contrary, the further from the triangular dots the square dots are, the less EM teachers those districts have.

Accordingly, Bat Xat, Muong Khuong, Bac Ha, Bao Yen, Van Ban and Sa Pa are 6 districts with a higher shortage of EM preschool teachers compared to other districts. Raising the number of EM teachers at all levels and districts is a matter of concern in Lao Cai. This analysis will be better if we have data on EM teachers and EM population at the commune level.

Figure 5.14. Percentage of EM preschool teachers by district in 2015



Source: 2014 Lao Cai Statistics Yearbook, 2009 census

Box 5.1. Difficulties of preschool education

Kindergarten at La Pan Tan commune, Muong Khuong district: Infrastructure & facilities: difficulties in the state/public house for teachers in primary school. The current 3 rooms are all temporary. Difficulty in clean water sources to cook for the students; Lack of necessary things for students to eat and sleep in school such as blankets, pillows, warm clothes; No function rooms, for example, music room, physical room, computer room for children ...; Outdoor toys for children are not enough, there are 2 kinds of toys in primary schools now, but not in village branch schools; students do not have enough textbooks, notebooks, and learning equipment; Inadequate water for students and teachers in the dry season; Students' meals are not nutritious enough because their family has no good conditions; Teachers in mountainous area have not been rotated in 5 years.

Kindergarten No. 1 at MK town: Some EM children are malnourished; Existing facilities and infrastructure of the school are not adequate; Children do not have a place to visit, play and entertain themselves; Currently the school lacks teachers and employees; EM students are not poor, nearly poor families, thus they have no policy to support them; Equipment for periodic health examinations for children are not modern; Facilities for teaching duties are available but inadequate.

Minh Tan preschool: Not all classes have 2 teachers/ class as per quota, in addition to the fact that we have multi-grade classes with children aged 2 who are too young, so it is difficult to manage and care for all classes; School has medical staff but no medical equipment, medicine ... to meet demands of initial childcare; Infrastructure and facilities are still in short, because school has 6 branch schools, they should have equal sharing; The function room is in short and not guaranteed; People are poor, so unable to care for the children, then mobilisation for students to go to school faces many difficulties, especially for 2-year-old children; Education socialisation is limited because of poor people, and low awareness; School facilities and function rooms are not permanent.

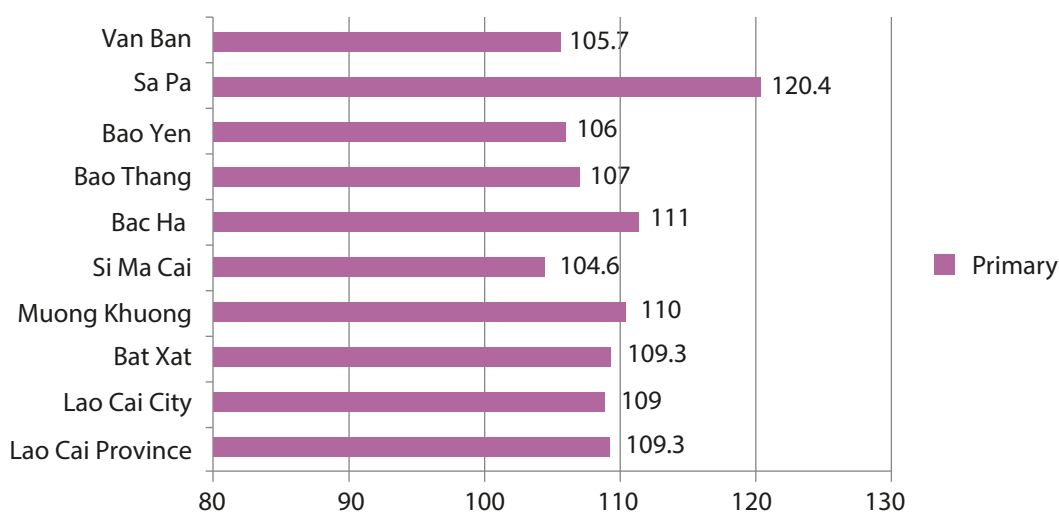
5.2.3. Primary education

According to the Lao Cai DoET, in the 2014-15 school year, the percentage of newly recruited students in grades 1 (compared to the 6-year-old population) reached more than 99.9%; The ratio of 6 to 10-year old children attending school reached 97%.

Nevertheless, the results of primary school

student mobilisation were not the same among districts during the period 2011-2014. According to Figure 5.15, the mobilisation of primary school students in the districts all increased by 5-10%, particularly Sapa reached the highest ratio: increased 20% in 2014 compared to 2011. Further research is needed on the causes of mobilisation increase in Sapa, which can have also caused by time-series data problems.

Figure 5.15. Mobilisation of primary school students in 2014 vs 2011



Source: Statistics Yearbook of Lao Cai 2011, 2014

Although universalising primary education at the right age is maintained, primary education in Lao Cai province still faces many difficulties, including: maintaining the number of students and enhance the rate of student attendance in mountainous and remote areas where the travel conditions and weather are quite severe; lack of teachers, especially to teach 2 sessions/day; a number of teachers has limited teaching, education capacity; hard to achieve standards of primary education universalisation at the right age at the 2nd level under the provincial Proposal: "Development, and improvement of education quality in 2011-2015"; nearly half of primary schools have no computer facilities, more than 80% have no equipment in language learning rooms, no effective implementation of professional capacity assessment for primary school teachers; lack of function rooms, and state houses.

Figure 5.16 presents the proportion of ethnic minority teachers for primary school in each district compared to the percentage of ethnic minority population of the district. In localities where there are many children from ethnic minorities, more teachers from ethnic minorities is needed, especially for primary school to help minority children learn

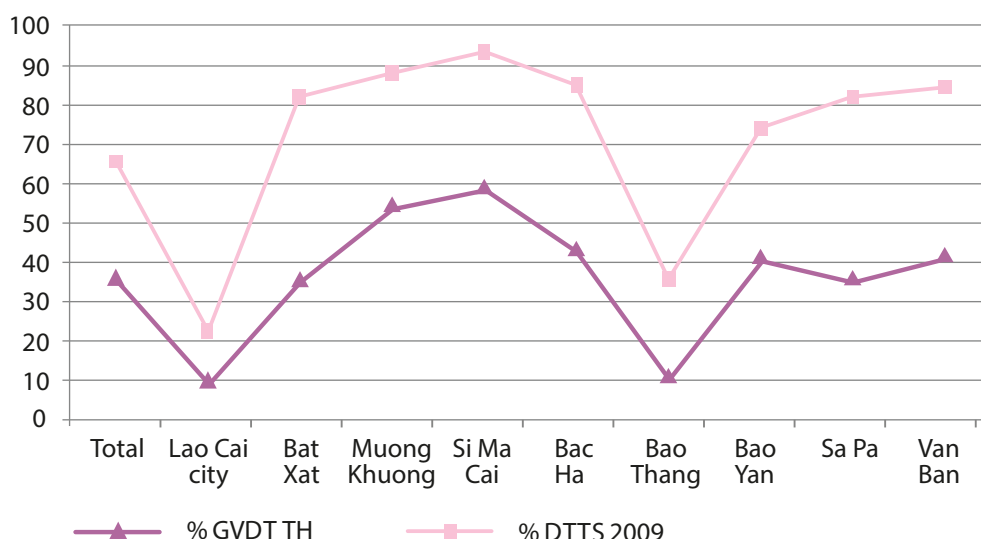
better Vietnamese, which helps lean school subjects in Vietnamese better. Also, similar to pre-school education, because professional competencies and teaching methods of some teachers including teachers from ethnic minorities are limited, academic quality of students is not high.

In Figure 5.16 the triangular dots denote the proportion of primary school teachers from ethnic minorities while the square dots denote the proportion of ethnic minority population of each district.

In each district, the closer to the triangular dots the square dots are, the better it is because this means those districts have more EM teachers. On the contrary, the further from the triangular dots the square dots are, the less EM teachers those districts have.

Accordingly, Bat Xat, Muong Khuong, Si Ma Cai, Bac Ha, Sa Pa, Van Ban are districts with a higher shortage of EM primary school teachers. Raising the number of EM primary school teachers at district level is a matter of concern in Lao Cai. This analysis will be better if we have data on EM teachers and EM population at the commune level.

Figure 5.16. Percentage of EM primary school teachers by district in 2015



Source: 2015 Lao Cai Statistics Yearbook, 2009 census

Box 5.2. Difficulties of Primary education

Primary School No. 1 Minh Tan, Bao Yen district: No State/ public house for teachers, so they still had difficulty in staying at school; no equipment room; Low people awareness, so many families totally hand over their children's learning to schools.

Primary School No. 2 Minh Tan, Bao Yen district: lack music teachers, health officer, guardian and computer teacher; Funding for education socialisation is limited; Lack of a toilet, lack of art education room, computer room, medical room, and room for guardians; Mai 1 branch school: no electricity, and 1 temporary classroom

Primary School No. 1, Muong Khuong district: No Multi-function room, music classrooms, a room for the students to do extracurricular activities; Lack of teachers to teach 2 sessions/ day; No particular documents/materials on child rights for the students; Medical Office has incomplete first-aid equipment; The conditions, and teaching equipment are not modern, and meet students' requirement.

Nam Cuong Primary School, Lao Cai city: Economic conditions of some students' families are still difficult (parents travel far to be employed, child's sickness, orphans living with Grandparents), so less attention is paid by their families; Lack of function rooms.

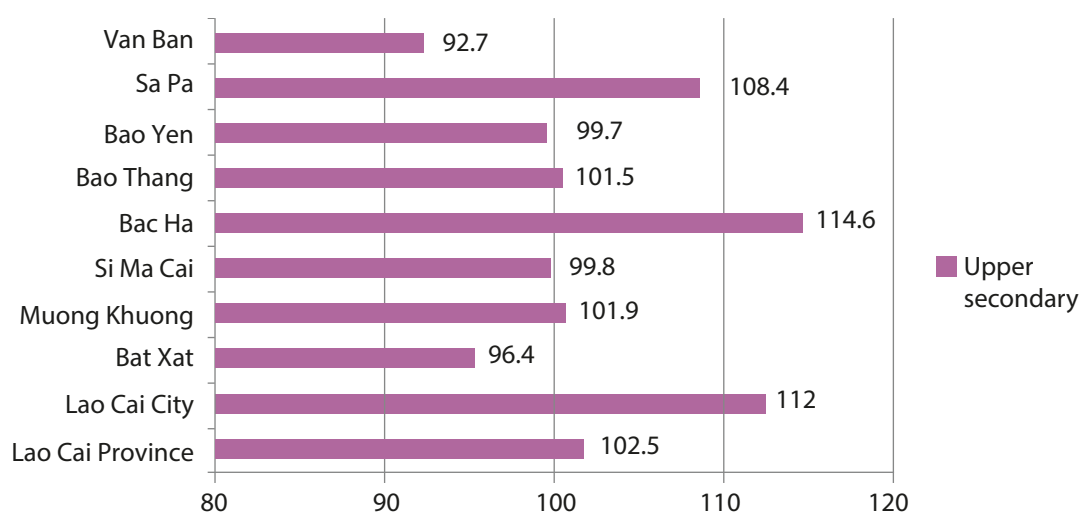
Le Van Tam Primary School, Lao Cai City: Percentage of teachers is not enough, no state budget, the periods taught more than regulated time as per Circular 28; Some older teachers are lazy with teaching methods changing; Big number of students in class.

5.2.4. Lower-secondary education

According to Lao Cai DoET, the ratio of newly recruited students at 6th grade are high: 99.3%; Rate of mobilisation of children aged 6-14 is also high: 99.5%. Universalisation of lower-secondary education continues to be sustained at 164/164 communes, districts 9/9. The percentage of adolescents aged 15-18 who have a graduation diploma is 90.16%.

The results of mobilising lower-secondary school students differ between districts during the period 2011-2014. As Figure 5.17 shows, mobilising lower-secondary school students in 2014 vs 2011 in three districts increased by 8-12%, including Bac Ha, Lao Cai city, Sa Pa; decreased in 2 districts Van Ban (-7.3%) and Bat Xat (-3.6%); and remained constant in 4 districts, including: Bao Yen and Bao Thang, Muong Khuong and Si Ma Cai. Further research is needed on the causes of mobilisation decrease, which can have also caused by time-series data problems.

Figure 5.17. Mobilisation of lower-secondary school students in 2014 vs 2011



Source: Lao Cai Statistical Book in 2011, 2014

However, lower-secondary education of Lao Cai still faces difficulties: low percentage of student attendance at lower-secondary school in mountainous areas on some special occasions of festivals, before and after the Lunar Tet Holiday; sustaining lower-secondary education universalisation and reducing the dropout rate at all levels; Vietnamese language capacity of

students is limited; lack of professional teachers for some specialised subjects such as music, civil ethics education; temporary classrooms, lack of function rooms, lack of housing for teachers, kitchens, and canteens for semi-boarding students, latrines at branch schools; lack of portable water.

Box 5.3. Difficulties of lower secondary education

Minh Tan Lower-secondary Bao Yen: Lack of functional classrooms

Tan Tien EM semi-boarding school, cum lower-secondary school, Bao Yen district: there are three temporary classrooms; No function room, no separate rooms for thematic, and professional teams, and trade unions; Lack of teachers of some specialised subjects such as music, civil ethics education; Attendance rate is not high so that the students' quality of education is low; Vietnamese of students is still limited; Lack of land for students to plant vegetables, to play or do exercise; Lack of latrines in all branch schools; Lack of state houses for teachers, kitchen, and canteen for semi-boarders; Economic conditions remains difficult, so parents do not pay much attention to the study of their children; The distance from home to school of the students in hamlets ineligible for the semi-boarding mechanism is far.

La Pan Tan EM semi-boarding school, cum lower-secondary school–MK district: Lack of funding support for chef who cooks for semi-boarding students; Shortage of water for collective activities of students; Lack of State houses for teachers.

Nam Cuong lower-secondary school, Lao Cai City: Infrastructure and facilities have not met the criteria of standard schools, lack management board building, standard latrines, playground, and gymnasium; A group of teachers is aging, their abilities to access, update new methods and modern technologies are slow.

Kim Tan lower-secondary school, Lao Cai city: need 1 multifunction house to organise extra-curriculum educational activities, physical education activities, club activities; lack of playground and gymnasium for students; no regulations on specific financial support for teacher training and excellent, and gifted student training at school level; school administrative staff are not regular members of school; bike parking fee for students (VND 30,000/month) is too high.

5.2.5. Upper-secondary education

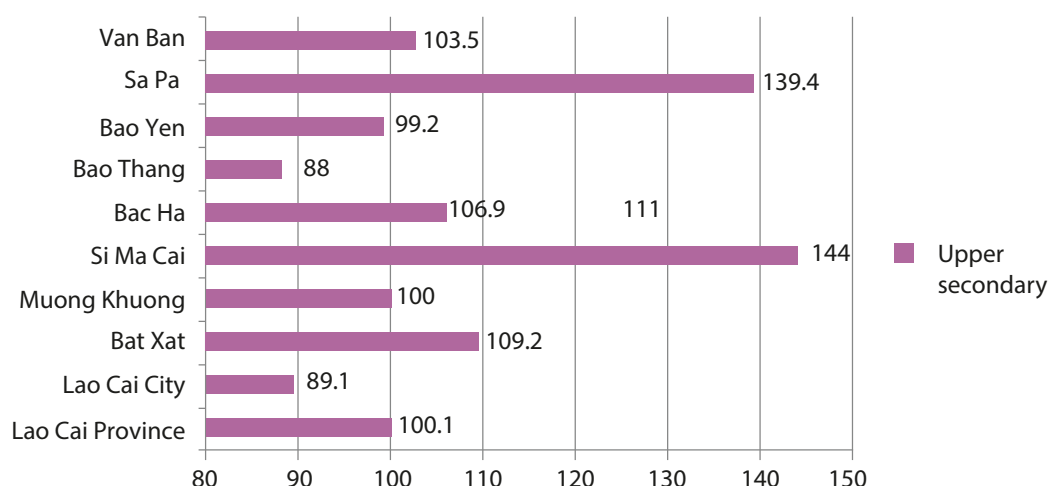
According to the DoET, the 2014-15 schoolyear had 7,387 newly recruited students at Grade 10, reaching 62% and 100% of the targeted plan.

The mobilisation of high school students in 2014 compared to 2011 in 2 districts increased, including Si Ma Cai (44%) and Sapa (39%); 3 districts who increased by below 10% are Van Ban (3.5%), Bac Ha (6.9%) and Bat Xat (9.2%); 2 declining districts included Bao Thang district (-12%) and Lao Cai city (-10.9%); and 2 districts which stayed the same were Bao Yen and Muong Khuong. Similarly to primary education,

further research is needed on the causes of mobilisation decrease, which can have also caused by time-series data problems.

According to the results of several studies, OOS children including children at the last grade of high school often dropout because of poverty, and because they have to work to earn money for their families. This case does not follow the above trend since Lao Cai city and Bao Thang district has more favourable socio-economic conditions than other districts. Further case studies are necessary to understand this phenomenon.

Figure 5.18. Mobilisation of high school students in 2014 vs 2011



Source: Lao Cai Statistical Book in 2011, 2014

5.2.6. Analysis of education quality for EM children

Lao Cai has synchronously implemented various solutions in recent years to improve the quality of education.

Developing a system of ethnic boarding schools, semi-boarding and EM high school ethnic education is a solution. In the school-year 2014-15, the province had 104 semi-boarding secondary schools, among which 36 primary schools and 68 lower-secondary schools followed the model EM semi-boarding schools contribute to improving the education quality of mountainous and EM areas. Lao Cai ranks second nationwide in the number of EM semi-boarding secondary schools, just behind Ha Giang. In particular, Bac Ha district has the most semi-boarding schools in the province (35 schools), followed by the districts of Si Ma Cai (25 schools), Sa Pa (14 schools), Muong Khuong (10 schools).

In regards to preschool education, Lao Cai has implemented a new preschool education programme with 2 shifts / day including for highland and mountainous schools. It has shown a good performance on the “strengthening Vietnamese” project, especially for EM children aged 5 before entering the 1st grade; it has promoted the application of information technology to encourage students’ confidence, bravery, and passion to go school.

In regards to primary education, Lao Cai has implemented teaching according to standards

of knowledge and skills; revising the content of teaching and assessment, and classification based on psychosocial and physiological characteristics of students; it has implemented bilingual education in the mother tongue and national language and many other application methods which have helped EM students be more confident and brave.

In regards to lower-secondary education: Lao Cai has innovated and improved the capacity and effectiveness of the direction and management of lower-secondary education by the Department of Education & Training and professional management of school principals; it has continued to direct and implement the Proposal “control, ensure and improve the quality of lower-secondary education”; has implemented innovating teaching methods, assessment, and has reduced the volume of teaching content based on standards of knowledge, skills needed in each subject and suitability for students. It continues to improve the quality of teaching, training, to help weak students, find and foster gifted students; it has implemented the Proposal on high-quality schools; it actively implements androgenizes new events, introduces advanced education measures such as contests on technical sciences, interdisciplinary knowledge to solve practical problems and exam-based learning integrated themes. It actively performs and innovates on educational activities outside of class, collective education, focusing on life skills education, and applies active education measures.

In regards to upper-secondary education, Lao Cai teaches standards of knowledge, skills, and teaching content; continues to implement the motto “Realistic teaching, learning, exams, and quality”; implements solutions for improving the quality of teaching, especially in consolidating and improving knowledge for Grade 12 graduation exams; improves the quality of formal teaching sessions, along with improving the effectiveness of extra teaching and learning on demand. It continues to adjust the content of teaching in simplified methods; builds and deploys the teaching of integrated interdisciplinary topics. It positively innovates in management, teaching, assessment methods in an objective manner and raises the awareness of good students nationwide.

Lao Cai is the first province in the northern mountainous areas, and the seventh province over the country to be recognised to meet national standards for the universalisation of preschool education for children aged 5. In the 2013-2014 schoolyear, the Lao Cai Education & Training Sector was recognised by the Ministry of Education and Training as having successfully completed 16/16 working fields; among which 11/16 excellently completed and rewarded an excellent Emulation Flag of the Ministry of Education and Training.

However, according to Lao Cai DoET’s assessment, the quality of education for EM students is still limited.

This section will help to clarify the evaluation through the analysis of 10th grade entrance

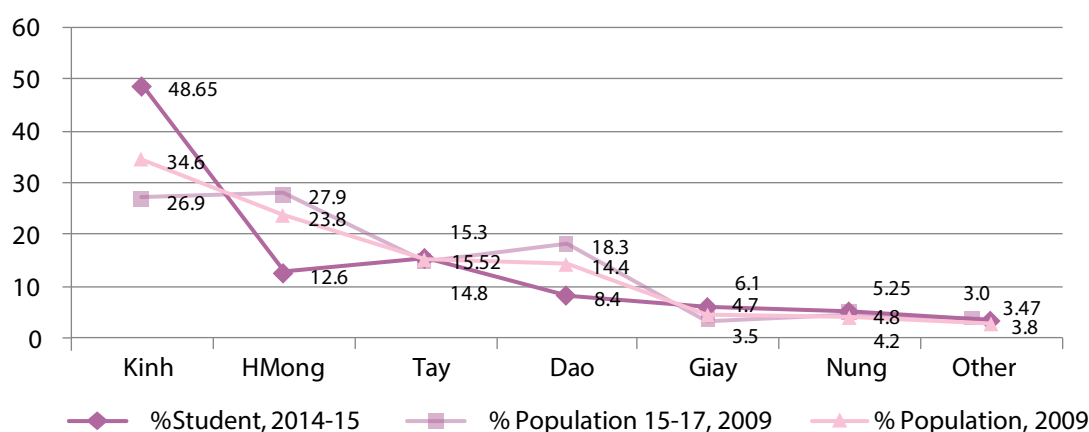
examination results in 2014-15 of High Schools and EM boarding schools of Lao Cai province. The number of schools participated in the data analysis is 19/29. Data include anonymous information on each student, including gender, ethnicity, yearly final achievement rank, as well as test results in math’s, literature and geography.

This analysis also used population data by age and ethnicity of the National Population and Housing Survey in 2009. Such data of the year 2009 were used since these were the most recent population data by age and ethnicity. However, if we are assuming that the structure of the population by ethnic group and age did not change much from 2009 to 2014, this data source is still valuable when analysing the results achieved in the education of EM students.

Figure 5.19 shows the proportion of students taking the entrance exam into the 10th grade of the 2014-15 school-year by ethnicity, compared to the population proportion of each respective ethnicity and the percentage of the population aged 15-17 in 2009.

Kinh have a higher proportion of students among all students taking entrance exam to grade 10 than the proportion of Kinh in the whole population and the population aged 15-17, while other ethnicities have the same or lower ratio of students entering grade 10 as in the general population and the population aged 15-17. This shows that EM students in Lao Cai are more disadvantaged than Kinh students when taking the entrance exam into the 10th grade.

Figure 5.19. Student allocation to enter 10th grade by ethnicities, 2014-15

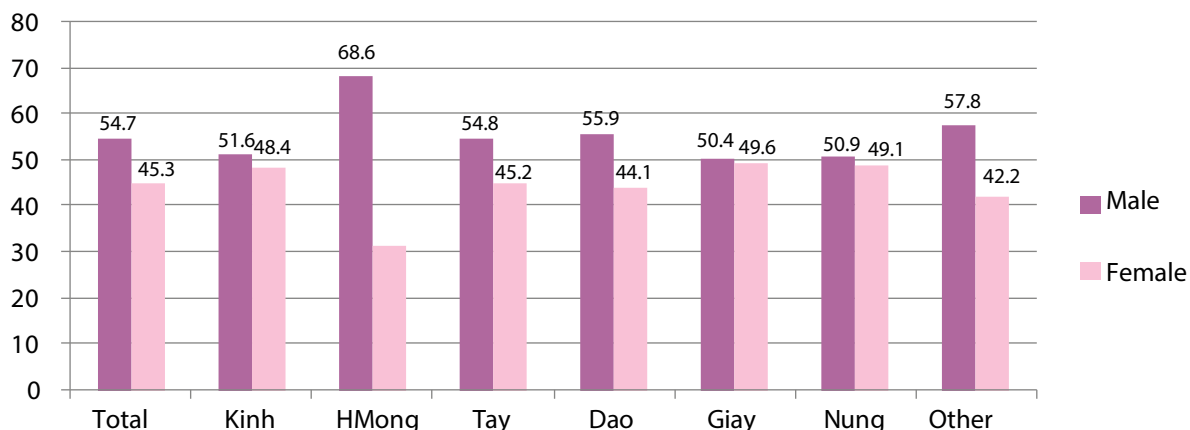


Source: Calculation of consultants based on the data on entrance exam into 10th grade of Lao Cai DoET

Figure 5.20 shows that more male students took part in entrance exam into 10th grade than female students did (54.7% versus 45.3%). Number of Kinh, Giay and Nung girls taking entrance exam into high school is similar to

number of boys did. The gender imbalance occurs in other EM groups, particularly in H'mong EM, with number of boys is twice as many as girls.

Figure 5.20. Allocation of students taking entrance exam into 10th grade by gender and ethnicity, 2014-15

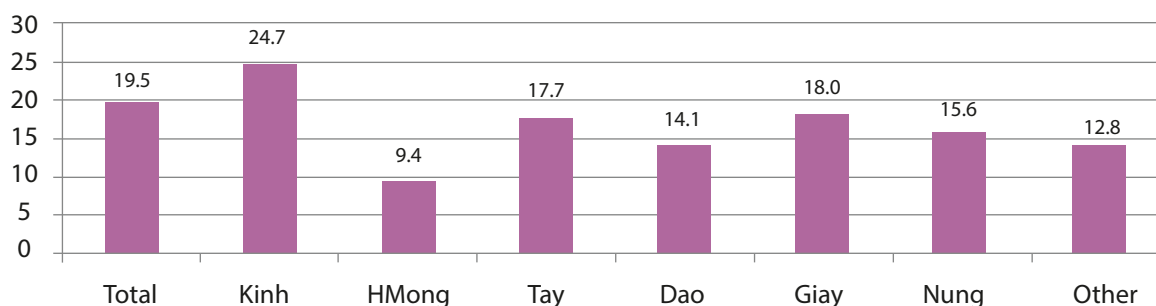


Source: Calculation of consultants based on the data on entrance exam into 10th grade of Lao Cai DOET

According to Figure 5.21, the total average exam scores of the province is at 19.5 points; scores of EM students were all lower than average. Mong students have the lowest scores (9.4), half lower than the average score; the 2nd lowest rank

was Dao, and 3rd rank was the Nung ethnicity. Students of Tay and Giay ethnicities achieved equivalent test results and are close to average score. Kinh students achieve the highest scores.

Figure 5.21. Scores entrance exam into 10th grade of Lao Cai high schools by ethnicity

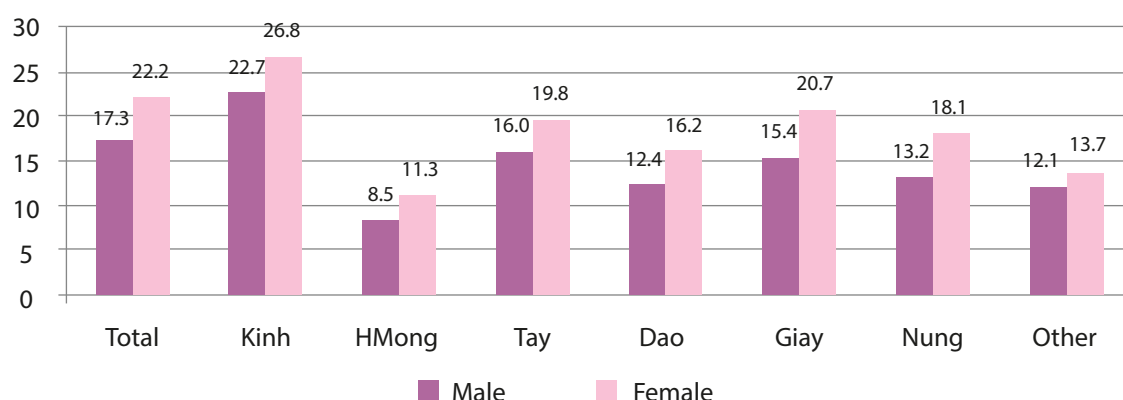


Source: Calculation of consultants based on the data on entrance exam into 10th grade of Lao Cai DOET

Figure 5.22 shows that for all ethnic groups, including Kinh, scores of female students are

higher than for male students by 3-5 points.

Figure 5.22. Scores of the entrance exam into 10th grade of Lao Cai high schools by ethnicity and gender

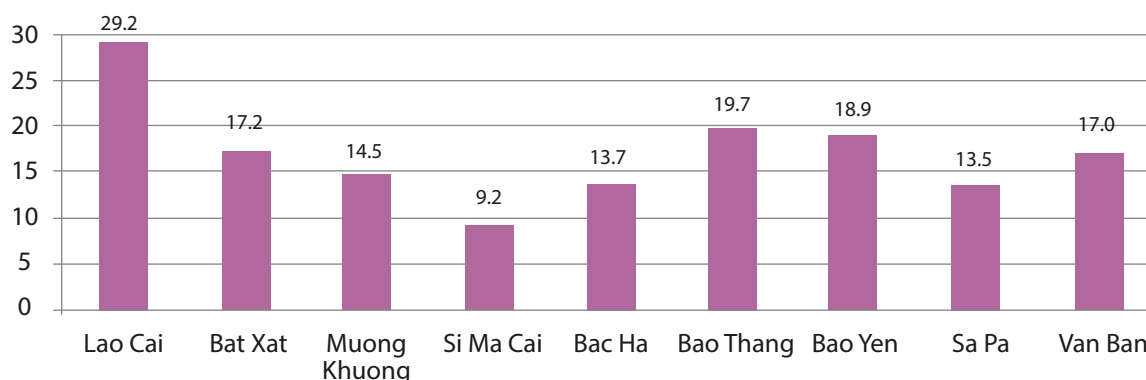


Source: Calculation of consultants based on the data on entrance exam into 10th grade of Lao Cai DOET

According to Figure 5.23, Si Ma Cai district had the lowest scores (9.2) and Lao Cai city had the highest scores (29.2). Among the rest,

Bao Thang district has scores equivalent to the average level of the province, while other districts were lower than average.

Figure 5.23. Scores of the entrance exam into 10th grade of Lao Cai high schools by district

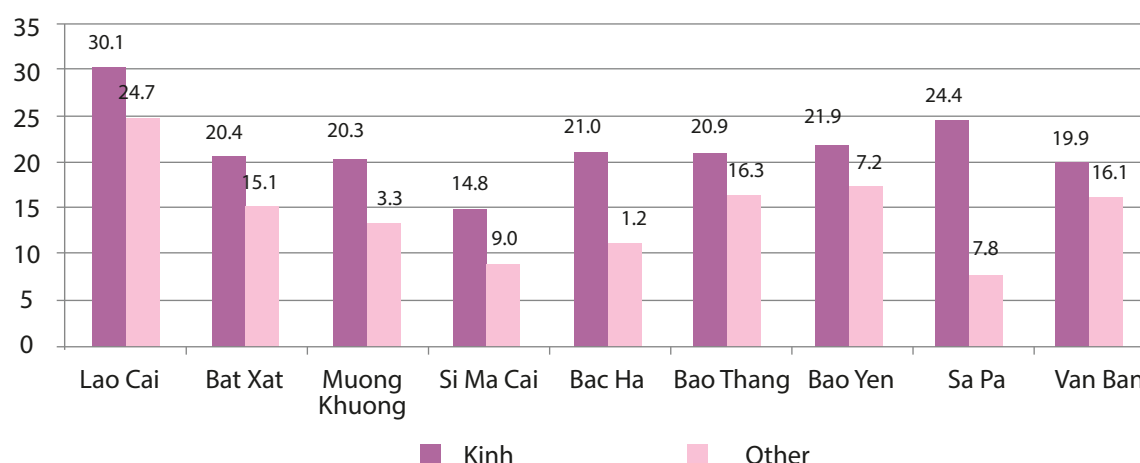


Source: Calculation of consultants based on the data on entrance exam into 10th grade of Lao Cai DOET

Figure 5.24 indicates that the scores of the districts with a gap between Kinh students and EM students ranging from 3-5 points. In particular such differences in Muong Khuong, Bac Ha, and Sa Pa districts were respectively 6 points, 10 points and 16 points. Scores of ethnic minority students in Lao Cai city was the highest (24.7), higher than the average (19.5); scores in Sa Pa were lowest (7.8), half lower

than the average score; other districts having relatively low scores include Si Ma Cai (9), Bac Ha (11.2) and Muong Khuong (13.3); all these districts' scores were lower than average.

Figure 5.24. Scores of the entrance exam into 10th grade of Lao Cai high schools by district and ethnicity



Source: Calculation of consultants based on the data on entrance exam into 10th grade of Lao Cai DOET

Table 5.11 presents the percentage of students allocated into 5 groups of total scores. The five groups are built by stacking all total scores of students from the lowest to the highest, each point corresponding to one student, then dividing the entire population into five groups with an approximately equal number of students, and count the average score for each group. This table shows that over 60% of Kinh students fall into the two groups achieving the highest scores. In contrast, only 4% of Hmong students fall into 2 groups which achieved the

highest scores, while more than 80% fall in the group having the lowest scores. Dao students also had low exam scores, with only about 15% falling into the two groups achieving the highest scores, while nearly 70% fall into the two groups with the lowest test scores. Students of Tay and Giay EM won highest scores in the competition among ethnic minority groups, with 30% falling into the two groups with the highest test scores, and more than 40% falling into the group with the lowest test scores.

Table 5.12. Allocation of students taking the exam into 10th grade of Lao Cai high schools divided into 5 total score groups and ethnicity

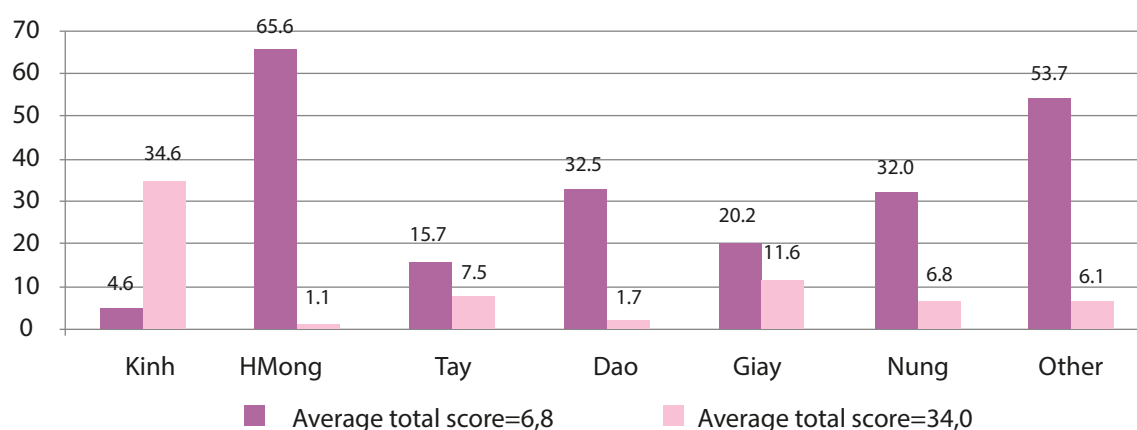
	Kinh	Mong	Tay	Dao	Giay	Nung	Other
Total average score=6,8	4.57	65.61	15.68	32.49	20.16	31.98	53.74
Total average score =13,2	13.5	22.8	28.16	34.46	26.36	23.42	16.33
Total average score =18,8	20.4	7.66	28.16	17.23	22.48	22.52	12.24
Total average score =25,2	26.95	2.8	20.55	14.12	19.38	15.32	11.56
Total average score =34,0	34.58	1.12	7.46	1.69	11.63	6.76	6.12

Source: Calculation of consultants based on the data on entrance exam into 10th grade of Lao Cai DOET

Figure 5.25 represents the percentage of students by ethnicity under the group of 20% of the highest total scores and 20% of the lowest total scores. About 35% of Kinh students belong to the group with the highest total test scores. The rate of other ethnic groups was just under 12%; notably the rates of Hmong and

Dao were just under 2%. In contrast over 60% of Hmong students belonged to the group with lowest total scores and other ethnic groups were above 50%, Dao and Nung are above 30%.

Figure 5.25. Rate of students taking entrance exam into 10th grade of Lao Cai high schools by ethnicity and group of 20% lowest score (average =6.8) and highest score (average=34.0)



Source: Calculation of consultants based on the data on entrance exam into 10th grade of Lao Cai DOET

5.2.7. Analysis of Out-of-school (OOS) children

In 2014, Viet Nam published for the first time a report on OOS children: A Study of Viet Nam⁴³ implemented by the Ministry of Education and Training, with the support of UNICEF which used data from the 2009 Population and Housing Census (2009 Census) to analyse the situation of the whole country and 8 provinces/cities, including Lao Cai, Dien Bien, Ninh Thuan, Kon Tum, Gia Lai, Ho Chi Minh City, Dong Thap and An Giang. Along with the main report at the national level, 6 detailed reports analysing the situation of OOS children at the provincial level were also produced, including Dien Bien, Ninh Thuan, Kon Tum, Ho Chi Minh City, Dong Thap and An Giang.

Out-of-school children (OOSC) in this report include those at the age of 5, primary school age (from 6 to 10 years of age), and at lower secondary school age (from 11 to 14 years of age), that is, children aged 5 to 14 years who have never gone to school or went to school and then dropped out. OOSC are analysed by such characteristics as: age, ethnicity, gender, rural-urban, disability and immigration status. The analytical results show that there were OOSC among children aged 5-14 years, in which the percentage of children with disabilities, children from ethnic minorities and migrant children who have never attended school or

dropped out remains high and highest among OOSC. The results of this analysis have added valuable information for the statistical system of the education sector which does not have this information, thus helping to improve the management, planning education and training as well as strengthening advocacy to reduce OOSC, implementing the right to education of children in general and especially disadvantaged children.

Based on the methodology of the national report and the data source mentioned above, the Consultative Team of T&C has analysed the details of Lao Cai OOSC (see Appendix 2). Results showed that in the 2008-2009 school year there were still OOSC in Lao Cai:

- The percentage of OOSC at 5 years old was 11.5%, lower than the 12.2% of the country and was 2nd lowest in 8 provinces.
- The percentage of primary school age OOSC was 9.5%, more than 2 times higher than the 4.0% of the country's, and was 3rd highest among 8 provinces.
- The percentage of secondary school age OOSC was 17.5%, 1.5 times higher than the average level of the country (11.2%) and was 6th highest among 8 provinces.
- Children in rural areas, children with disabilities and children from ethnic minorities, including the Hmong and Dao have the highest OOSC rate.

⁴³ [http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/viet-nam-oosci-summary-Viet Name.pdf](http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/viet-nam-oosci-summary-Viet%20Name.pdf)

Viet Nam MICS 2014⁴⁴ conducted by the GSO, with technical and financial support from UNICEF shows that the primary and secondary OOSC rates of the Northern midlands and mountainous areas were reduced by more than half in 2014 compared to 2009. However, due to the small sample size, Viet Nam MICS 2014 could not give good estimates at the provincial level.

MOET is also cooperating with the GSO to update the announced report on OOS children with data of the Inter-Census Population Survey in 2014 and plans to announce the results on OOS children at the provincial level in 2016. We will then know how much progress Lao Cai has made after five years of efforts to mobilise children to go school, which also means to minimise the number of OOS children.

5.3. Barriers and bottlenecks

This part aims at analysing barriers preventing children from school attendance, as well as bottlenecks weakening school attendance capability and learning results of students. Those barriers and bottlenecks are caused by many factors: family conditions of students themselves and parents, representing the learning demand side, and education service providers and other relevant entities, for example: communities with different social

norms, and agencies managing the socio-economic development process at all levels.

In Lao Cai, due to economic difficulties and poverty, children have to work for the family which constitutes a barrier directly affecting their ability to access education.

Additionally there are cultural and social barriers such as: children do not want to go to school because the child or parents themselves think that schooling is meaningless; or children are ashamed to go to school at a higher age; parents leave everything to the school without monitoring and mentoring so their children's learning outcomes are low, leading to dropping out of school; the concept of the male heir of some ethnic minority groups, which stipulates that girls do not need to go to school; the evil of child marriage in ethnic communities and disability also cause dropouts. For some minority groups, getting married at the age of 13-15 is usually arranged by parents. This arises from the shortage of labour, thus the groom's family is more interested in having more labour in house than bringing happiness to their child. Some families, when asking a young bride who is still in 7th or 8th grade for marriage commit to let the bride continue studying. In fact, after getting married, the bride stops going to school and just stays at home doing housework. The bride's family rarely questions this issue because they think that now their child is under the management of her husband. The disability issue is also a major barrier.

44 http://www.unicef.org/Viet Nam/resources_24623.html
<http://www.gso.gov.vn/ItemPreview.aspx?ItemID=15117>

Box 5.4. Economic, culture, and social barriers

An officer in Tan Tien village said:

...“Parents have hard life and want children stay at home to help them. They stay at home to look after their siblings and buffalos. Their school attendance is not regular; sometimes they have a day off once a week. Because of their condition, some children quit school.

...“the biggest challenge is their low awareness, parents’ care is insufficient. Children are allowed to absent from school; that is the reason for low learning quality.

The principle of La Pan Tan's Upper Secondary School commented:

“Some students quit school after a short time. The first reason is to earn for a living. The second reason is to get married, particularly girl students of H'mong, although boy students are not exception. In 2014, 30 students quit school in which 19 students quitted school in term 1. The main reason was to help family to earn a living and get married. Three to four of them were girls. Boy students quit school to help their family.

... "The teaching quality of this school is at the bottom, while Muong Khuong Upper Secondary School number 2 is the most qualified, followed by School number 1. School number 2 is located in Ban Long 20 km from Lao Cai. Students in this village have good learning conditions because they come from rich families; their parents care about their children's learning, their awareness is high, therefore, the students get much investment from parents in their learning.

... "students and teachers play a decisive role in education quality. In comparison with low areas, teachers in this school are younger; their teaching experience ranges from 1 to three years. They graduated from the Hanoi teacher training university and one or two of them graduated from Teacher training university 2. The qualities of these universities are equal. Teachers in this school may have less experience than those in the low areas. However, education quality depends much on students, while their learning ability is low.

The vice principal of Muong Khuong Upper Secondary School number 1 said:

... "some parents do not care about their children, they do not cooperate with the school in their children's learning. They think their children need to work to earn a living, learning is not important. Some children go back to school when they get support from the school and the community. Some children with many siblings and drunken fathers are not getting care from family for their learning.

... "In H'mong culture, if a family has many children, boys are have priority to go to school, while girls stay at home to get married.

... "Students who are old enough often stay at home to help parents to do the harvest, cut grass or look after their siblings. This is the difficulty of children in remote areas. Some of them quit school to get married.

Vice Chairman, Board of ethnic Minorities, Lao Cai Province:

... "Normally older children at season peak have to help their parents either take care of younger brothers or sisters, grazing cattle, cutting the grass or doing upland cultivation, this is also a difficulty, or taking the children to go to school together. These are the difficulties that students in remote areas have to bear. Some children near the age of consent are not able to focus on learning, turning to help their parents or being ready to get married."

Other barriers for children in Lao Cai include a scattered population, a long distance to school, inconvenient traffic, and bad weather. These difficulties have an adverse impact on

the mobilisation of students, even for Lao Cai city, which has the smallest number of disadvantaged communes in the province (see Box 5.5).

Box 5. 5. Distance to school

The vice principal of Nam Cuong Primary School, Lao Cai city said: "Pupils have difficulty in commuting, some of them live 7 km far from school"

The Vice Head of the Bureau of Education of Lao Cai city stated "Some children are not hardworking due to their hard life and inconvenient traffic (for example, Ha Phoi and Hop Thanh communes)"

In a group interview, teachers in La Pan Tan Commune described:

... "Due to the distance from village to village, the traffic is a barrier to encourage children to go to school"

... "We have difficulties in getting children to school. The rate of children going to school is maintained at grade 4 and 5 at the centre campus, although some of them stop going to school for a long time. In 2014, no children quit school, only stopped going to school for a long time. If we come to encourage, they go back to school. Small kids have to go over rocks/stones to school. We reported this situation and asked for a road to be built, but it has not happened.

Language is another barrier for minority children in mountainous and remote areas.

Box 5.6. Language barriers

The vice-principal of Nam Cuong Primary School, Lao Cai city said:

... *"Ethnic minority pupils accounted for 20%, but they can communicate in Vietnamese well because they were born and grew up here in the city. So it is not a burden for teachers of Grade 1"*

The Vice Head of Bureau of Education of Lao Cai city reported:

There are about 24% of minority pupils in Lao Cai city. Most of them were born and grew up in contact with the Vietnamese language early, therefore, teaching them their minority language is not the focus"

One officer of the Tan Tien Commune People Committee said:

...*"H'Mong language is difficult to pronounce, learning Vietnamese is also difficult. If they pronounce incorrectly, they will do it incorrectly in written form"*

The principal of La Pan Tan Upper Secondary School said:

"Minority language has a negative impact on speaking Vietnamese and English as minority pupils speak Vietnamese and English incorrectly. This leads to incorrect written form and makes them feel unconfident. Pupils at grade 10 are shy, but these at grade 12 are more confident. I am not sure if their lesson understanding is affected. However, their awareness is slower. When we compare to lower regions, it is slower. A few outstanding pupils are of a minority group. This cannot be confirmed by language. But it will limit the way of wording and speaking, limit vocabulary so that sentences are not smooth. They are short of words when they want to express deeper emotional feelings. Using simple words is easier for the children.

The Vice Chairman, Board of Ethnic Minorities, Lao Cai Province reported:

"The disadvantage of minority children is the environment of social access is difficult. Simply, to go to school requires the Vietnamese language, but they don't know it. There is no story about quality or learning well if they do not speak Vietnamese".

... *"Recently the H'Mong language has been integrated into bilingual language teaching, but it is just a sample model, not popular, in some sites only. The rest is difficult. In general, minority children do not have the environment to access society".*

... *"In low areas, ethnic minority people live with Kinh, thus children teach each other to speak Vietnamese, but here in such isolated areas they just learn Vietnamese when entering school. Therefore, the quality of learning can be unacceptable, or very limited. "*

Limited budgets area challenge for the development of education. Financial reports during 2009-2013 showed that the budget for people and other activities was very limited. Lao Cai lack budget for building schools, departments for teachers, offices for principals, multimedia rooms, toilets, yards, roads, and fences. There is insufficient investment in hostels, kitchen, dining rooms, toilets, clean water, and fences for schools for minority students. Facilities for disability students are poor. There has not been any policy to support teachers who are in charge of teaching disability students. There is lack of connection between the recurrent budget and the investment budget. The recurrent budget is only limited to individual expenses. The rate of expenses for service and goods is limited, only 10%.

According to allocation norms for regular expenditures of the state budget in accordance with Decision No. 59/2010/QĐ-TTg, allocation norms of education have not had priorities for upland, mountainous and disadvantaged areas. These areas have low population density, thus the number of students in each class is quite low but it still needs enough teachers for each class. On the other hand, in these areas, in addition to the same regular teaching duties as teachers in the plains have, the teachers usually need to visit each village, each house to encourage children to go to school. Allocation norms are also not enough to guarantee the maintenance of multi-grade classes because many outlying campuses have very low student attendance.

Box 5.7. Physical infrastructure barriers

An officer of Tan Tien People Committee said:

... *"I recommended providing Tan Tien commune with electricity because it is the condition for people in this commune to be exposed to media."*

... *"four out of 13 villages do not have electricity. At the moment eight out of nine villages have electricity high tension lines, but the low tension line has not been installed. The most remote village has no high tension line. We have discussed this issue and suggest proceeding as soon as possible"*

An officer of La Pan Tan People Committee stated:

... *"It is very hard. Most villages do not have sufficient electricity. Four villages do not have electricity."*

... *"school has toilets, but the school is located on the top of the hill so it is hard to provide water for toilets regularly. Four kindergartens at the centre of the commune have enough water, however, primary and lower secondary schools lack water in the dry season. In the morning or afternoon, children have to go a long distance to get water to clean the toilets. We are asking the People Committee to invest in a water system. This system has started today (7th of January).*

... *"Due to the humid weather, the tables and chairs are broken quickly. We have fixed them but they are made of plywood, it was hard to do. This equipment cannot ensure learning quality"*

A kindergarten teacher in La Pan Tan village described:

We do not have a clean water supply system and the water we are using is from natural sources. These natural sources do not provide water in dry season. Teachers have to get water themselves or buy water pipes.

The vice-principal of La Pan Tan Lower Secondary School said:

... *"we have difficulties with the water supply because this place is 1560m higher than sea level. The hygiene of the students is a difficult issue. The students have to carry a bucket of water to cook. At the moment each student has to carry water three times a day for cooking. It means they need to go 4.8 km a day for carrying water. It takes a lot of time. It is more difficult when there is no water in the dry season due to forest damage. There are pipes to get water to schools, but there is no water in dry season."*

Lao Cai lacks teachers at the kindergarten level, particularly minority teachers; also lacks primary school teachers. There is a lack and redundancy of teachers according to subjects. The practice of rotating teachers is challenging. According to the school size, Lao Cai lacks 3000 teachers⁴⁵. The teaching of some teachers is not motivating. The teaching quality at higher areas is low.

Learning achievements of some EM students is at a lower level compared to MOET knowledge and skill standards, leading to the fact that secondary education must receive low-capacity students on the one hand, and create risky opportunities for them to drop out on the other hand. The management capacity of some young officials is still limited due to a very rapid development need in education. In some places the cooperation between schools and committees, local authorities and mass organisations at all levels to mobilise children to school is still limited and inefficient.

In Lao Cai, no allowance is given for teachers for teaching at mountainous and remote branch schools, for managers to monitor; and no allowance for staying in remote villages/hamlets to grasp the ideological propaganda of local people. There are no allowances for teachers of students with disabilities, who have to develop their own teaching curricula/syllabuses, and use separate monitoring books. It is very difficult to implement integration policies. Students at continuing learning centres do not benefit from privileged policies as do high school students. The budget for education is primarily allocated to human resources; the budget for other activities thus is very limited. Financial resources socialisation is uneasy, especially in local people. No policy of integration education centres has been deployed. There has not been any resource for community learning centre investment at the commune level: no headquarter/ facilities, bookcases, or as management allowance. The policy of providing rice has value but its implementation is inappropriate.

⁴⁵ Interview with representative of Lao Cai DoET on 23/12/2014.

Box 5.8. Difficulties in policy implementation

A teacher from Tan Tien primary school, Bao Yen district commented:

... *"We received rice twice a year and that is the problem. We have to use our rooms for storing rice. Last year we had rice twice, but this year may be three times. We plan to lend rice to the students' parents to avoid the rice becoming moldy.*

A teacher from La Pan Tan commune shared:

... *"the best time is when rice comes at the beginning of the school year, on the 15th of August. At that time, the schools do not have any difficulty in preparing paper work for payment/balance-sheet. When a lot of rice arrives at the same time, we do not have containers and it gets damaged. It would be better if money is provided instead of rice. Shipping makes rice more costly than buy it locally. Sometimes they cannot transfer rice due to far distance; they sell it with for 5-6 thousand VND per kilogram, and this wastes money. The transport fee from district to schools is paid by schools.*

...*"The large amount of rice causes problem of containers. The weather also hinders the quality of rice in a long time. Providing rice to students earlier is not an appropriate solution.*

Curriculum content is quite overloaded, especially for EM students who face difficulty when learning in the Kinh language (standard Vietnamese). Language barriers limit their abilities to follow lessons in class, in addition to the big volume of learning programme, and many exercises, consequently many EM students can be left behind. There is a lack of data on special populations: e.g. data by gender, disability, migration, OOS, for service management purposes. Survey data has not been universally used in planning.

5.4. Priorities and Recommendations

On the occasion of preparing for the new school year (2015-2016), the National Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs Deputy Chief and Deputy Minister Phan Van Hung had exchanges with a reporter from the CEMA web portal about the status of education in the current period in ethnic minority areas, and said: "In spite of a number of achievements, education for children of ethnic minorities still faces many limitations and weaknesses, such as: facilities, study conditions for preschools and primary schools in remote village areas which is not guaranteed; the education quality in the highlands is still low, the number of EM students passing exams for colleges and universities is not high. Very few EM students pass exams for universities such as: Medicine, Technology, Foreign Trade, National Economics or specialised telecommunications, information technology ... Many ethnic minority students have graduated, but have not found work yet.

The percentages of vocational training workers are still very low, that is not matching with actual needs. Achieving literacy is still difficult for ethnic minority people. In the coming years, all branches and levels should overcome the limitations and weaknesses mentioned above. We should have priority policies and solutions for investing in education facilities especially for highlands and disadvantaged areas; we need to improve the education quality for EM regions, implement a standardised curriculum, and improve minority ethnic teachers to meet the standard. Comprehensive reform is needed and we must synchronise in the field of education and training. Policies are needed to help minority students who graduated from universities find a suitable job. We must apply scientific and technological advances in teaching and training, and create conditions for ethnic minority youth to access a high quality education."

In that spirit, based on the guidance of the Ministry of Education and Training on the education of ethnic minorities in the school year of 2015-2016, and based on the results of research and field work in Lao Cai, the Advisory Group recommended priorities and recommendations as follows:

Regarding socio-economic development

In the long term, mountainous ethnic minority areas remain disadvantaged areas and still have more difficulties than the average level, so the most common recommendation is

to continue research strategies, focusing on priority policies for ethnic minority people, so that this area can grow faster. On specific strategies, investing in communities and infrastructure remains one of the most basic strategies.

Regarding the school network

Investment priorities are needed to maintain

a reasonable number of upland branch schools, so that children do not have to go to school further than before. Strengthen the construction of infrastructure in the direction of solidification, procurement, supply enough equipment to meet the needs of teaching and learning, enable teachers and students to promote all possibilities for teaching and learning abilities, contribute to improving the effectiveness of training in schools.

Box 5.9. School network to villages

Vice Chairman, Board of Ethnic Minorities, Lao Cai Province reported:

"In here, one village is scattered over several mountains. So I suggest continuing education network development to the village level. A 6 years old child cannot go several km to school, so we have to develop a school network not just only stick to the criteria of a sufficient number of students, but also take specific characteristics into account, it must be practical."

Regarding teachers

Implementation of sufficient and timely policies for teachers and managers working in educational institutions in ethnic minority areas, mountains and students; take care of training and retraining to increase the ability for management staff and teachers; ensure the quality, sufficient quantity, synchronous structure, increase the ratio of teachers from EM, local people; direct the ethnic minority language education for cadres and civil servants, teachers working in ethnic minority areas; build enough duty houses for teachers.

Ensure the quality of teachers and education managers; ensure a sufficient quantity, a synchronous structure, political stability, professional environment. Focus on inspecting and checking schools; create conditions to help teachers in implementing regulations seriously; improve the quality of education.

Regarding education quality

Continue to actively find solutions to improve the quality of education at all educational levels of the mountain areas and ethnic minority (EM) and the system of EM boarding high schools, EM semi-boarding high schools, specifically:

- Prioritise to replicate the results of the Bilingual education programme based on

the mother tongue in the most difficult areas, in which the official teaching H'mong language is in line with the 2015-2016 Guidelines for the education of EM issued by MOET. Undertake independent evaluation of the VNEN model before deciding to continue replication.

- Prioritise to learn the cause of higher academic achievement of some ethnic minority groups in the three districts namely Bao Thang, Bao Yen and Van Ban to apply them to the ethnic minorities groups that have lower academic achievement in the 3 districts Si Ma Cai, Bac Ha, Sa Pa, in which we note that these 3 districts have some schools with the most EM semi-boarding students.
- Maintain reviews and classification of learning capacity of the students at the beginning of the school year to have a plan on teaching, mentoring, and fostering students.
- Continue innovating in teaching methods that promote a positive, proactive, creative, self-discipline in the student learning process, which take into account particular characteristics for disadvantaged, remote areas where most of the students are ethnic minorities so the ability to absorb the education are limited. Teachers must

invest more; find multiple solutions to help ethnic minority students to study better. Teachers must learn the lifestyle, habits and circumstances of the student; thereby, seek appropriate educational methods to arouse passion and interest in learning. Teachers should provide opportunities for ethnic minority students to be more active in speaking and encourage sharing so that ethnic minority students can be more confident in accessing knowledge. Do not put pressure on learning and homework, do not cram in the knowledge but combine tests of their knowledge with extracurricular activities, fun and informative opportunities; give honorable titles that students can strive for; praise and reward student weekly, monthly, care for and pay attention to every student.

Regarding coordination

Organisations and unions should have specific services and a practical positive impact on parents in bringing students of school age to school, attend school frequently, and resolutely handle cases of child marriage, dropout and the other bad habits.

Strengthen the coordination between schools and local authorities especially with the representatives of parents associations, Study Promotion Association and the mass organizations related to each family with dropouts to mobilise children to go to class. Establish a committee of mobilizing students in the village: the members are village cadres, the village's Secretary of the cadres, local teachers ... often check the schools for dropouts, determine the cause of dropouts in recent times, and timely propose measures to restrict to a minimum the dropout number in the near future.

Regarding schools

Implement well the movement of "Building friendly schools, active students", strengthen life skills education and bring in ethnic traditional culture to teach in schools to create educational environments; ensure both mental and physical conditions so that the students are excited, and interested in going to school

to study, including organising activities with positive fun and play, appropriate to their age, and organise student's activities associated with their cultural and spiritual life in the local environment.

Raise awareness for children and parents of the value of education; do make them aware that school dropout and non-attendance mean self-destroying their future. However the initiatives and methodologies should be appropriate with ethnic groups in Lao Cai province since there are different social norms and perceptions, such as beliefs that girls do not need much schooling and education.

Gradually build up facilities and equipment for CWDs. Financial support to build school for CWDs, inclusive education centre, and community learning centres.

Regarding policies

Think over preference/privileged policies for students in Area 3 (as per National Geographical Category), and for EM students, so that they do not have to pay tuition fees, which helps to relieve the financial burden for their families, and bring more opportunities for children to go to school.

Develop policies to support students at continuing education centres equally as for students at lower and upper secondary schools; support textbooks and notebooks, increase allowances and stipends for semi-boarding students.

Develop policies to support teachers in CWD class, and multi-grade classes at preschool. Strive to have more appropriate teaching methodologies so that they are more inclusive for students with disabilities.

Grant mobile allowances for teachers, managers working in areas with rocky and sloping mountains, with far-from-centre branch schools.

Continue investigations to overcome the irrationality of budget allocation per capita in the localities which have low population density.

Continue implementing other NTPs such as Programme 135, poverty reduction programmes, and other social support programmes, aimed at bringing more effort to narrow the gap of education disparities.

Implement practically and effectively the guidelines of reducing pressure and overload of learning curricula for EM students. Review and finalise the existing education programme of Lao Cai to continuously improve such programme by integrating cultural values and dignities of each EM into education.

In order to match the characteristics of upland education, the areas of special socio-economic difficulties, with many ethnic people, it is proposed to establish ethnic boarding upper secondary schools and ethnic boarding lower and upper secondary schools; invest in equipment for this school system.

To suit specific upland education, we suggest that the Ministry of Education and Training study and issue charters for inter Preschool-Primary schools, inter Preschool-lower secondary- Upper secondary schools; guide the implementation of ethnic boarding schools at many levels.

Issue policies for education universalisation, illiteracy eradication according to claim 5, Article 32 of Decree No. 20/2014/ND-CP dated 03/24/2014 on education universalisation and illiteracy eradication. We suggest that Ministry of Education and Training issue a programme of education universalisation and illiteracy eradication and its implementation guidelines.

We propose that the Province People Committee (PPC) give policies for financial support for cooking at students boarding schools; policies to support students for gifted students and students with difficult circumstances at secondary boarding schools.

We propose that PPC continue directing the DPC to:

1. Further enhance the functions and responsibilities of the State management of education in the local under Decree No. 115; implement well the socialisation of education.
2. To have effective solutions for continuing enhancing the rate of student attendance, overcoming outmigration and early marriage leading to dropout in the highland areas of ethnic minorities.
3. Continue to mobilise the resources, integration of resources, programmes, projects, priority investment and development of education, especially for schools in upland ethnic minority areas of socio-economic difficult conditions.
4. Further strength the inspection, control, and monitoring of the performance of the revenues and expenditures budget in educational institutions in the province according to the Document No. 139/UBND-VX dated 14/01 / 2015 of the People's Committee of Lao Cai province.

RIGHT TO CARE AND PROTECTION



CHAPTER 6. RIGHT TO CARE AND PROTECTION

Chapter 6 analyses the current status of care and protection for children in Lao Cai province. This analysis was based on the results of a field survey and data collected from the MOLISA's Department of Child Care and Protection and from provincial departments, agencies and units such as those from DOLISA, Department of Public Security, Department of Justice, Provincial Supreme People's Procuracy, Lao Cai city, Bao Yen and Muong Khuong districts. This chapter consists of four sections: (i) Legal and Policy Framework, (ii) Current Situation, (iii) Bottlenecks and Barriers and (iv) Recommendations.

6.1. Legal and Policy Framework

According to Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, children have the right "to be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse".

Article 14 of the Law on Child Protection, Care and Education of 2004 clearly states that children have the right to be respected and have their life, body, dignity and honor protected by respective families, the State and society.

The revised Child Law, adopted by Viet Nam's 13th National Assembly on April 5, 2016 and coming into force from June 1, 2017, defines child protection as the implementation of appropriate measures to ensure a child's safety and health, to prevent and address child abuse as well as help children in special circumstances. The rights of children to be protected against "sexual abuse, labour exploitation, violence, abandonment, neglect, trafficking, kidnapping, sale, dispossession, narcotics, natural calamities, disasters, environmental pollution, armed conflict" and to be protected "in the proceedings and handling of administrative violations" are referred to in Articles 25 to 31 of the Child Law.

The National Programmes on Child Protection for 2011-2015 and for 2016-2020 share the same general objectives, to reduce the rate of children in special circumstances, to protect them from abuse, provide support and care for those in special circumstances to help them rehabilitate and reintegrate into the community and have development opportunities. These two programmes are also noteworthy as they set specific objectives. Specifically, they are to (i) to reduce the rate of children in special circumstances to below 5.5% and 5% of the total number of children in 2015 and 2020, respectively, (ii) provide support and care for 80% of children in special circumstances in 2015 and 90% in 2020 to help them rehabilitate and reintegrate into the community and have development opportunities and (iii) manage and provide early intervention/support for children at risk of falling into special circumstances.

The National Action Plan for Children for 2012-2020 aims to achieve the comprehensive goal to build a safe and friendly living environment for better accomplishment of child rights, close the gap in living conditions between groups of children and those in different regions and areas, enhance quality of children's life and achieve equal development for all children. In addition to the specific objectives for children in special circumstances mentioned in the National program on Child Protection for 2011-2015, this action plan intends to reduce the rate of children subjected to violence by 20% in 2015 and 40% in 2020.

At provincial level, Lao Cai province has issued a series of policies and implemented programmes on child care and protection, such as:

- The Child Protection Programme in Lao Cai 2011-2015;
- Lao Cai province's Action Programme for Children 2013-2020;

- Plan 216 dated December 31, 2013 on implementing Scheme No.647/QD-TTg in 2013-2020 period⁴⁶ and programmes related to Social Protection Policy (including Decree No 28/2012/ND-CP dated April 10, 2012 detailing and guiding a number of articles of the Law on the Disabled; Scheme No.32 on development of social work careers; Decree No.67/2007/ND-CP dated April 13, 2007; Decree No.13/2010/ND-CP amending and supplementing some articles of Decree No.67/2007/ND-CP dated April 13th 2007; Joint Circular No.24/2010/TTLT-BLDTBXH-BTC guiding the implementation of some articles of Decree No.67/2007/ND-CP dated April 13, 2007 and Decree No.13/2010/ND-CP dated February 27, 2010);
- Decision No.92/2014/QD-UBND dated December 31, 2014 on the issuance of the regulation on coordination in the reception, verification, protection and support of returning people trafficking victims.

In addition, Lao Cai has also prepared documents to implement Decree No.136/2013/ND-CP dated 21/10/2013 on the regulation of social protection policies for social protection beneficiaries and Circular No. 29/201/TTLT-BLDTBXH-BTC dated 24/10/2014 on guiding the implementation of some articles of Decree No.136/2013/ND-CP.

6.2. Local implementation of programs and policies

Lao Cai province's programme on child protection for 2011-2015

The programme's general target is similar to that of the National Programme on Child Protection. Specific targets include reducing the rate of children in special circumstances to below 5.2% of the total number of children, providing support and care for 80% of children in special circumstances to help them rehabilitate

and reintegrate and have development opportunities, identifying and providing early intervention for 70% of children at risk of being in special circumstances to mitigate and eliminate such risks and establishing and putting into effect operational child protection service systems in two districts.

This Programme consisted of four following projects:

Project 1: The project on communication, education and social mobilisation was implemented province-wide to improve the awareness and change behaviors toward child protection for 90% of families, schools, communities and children.

Brochures were printed on standards in communes, wards and towns for children and delivered to staff, teachers and collaborators working in the protection and care of children in the province. However, other activities were only implemented in some places, such as hanging banners and slogans in Bao Thang and Gia Phu districts and on the main road to Lao Cai city during the Month of Action for Children or disseminating messages in ethnic communities in villages and schools. Dissemination of the Law on Child Protection, Care and Education was conducted in the villages, primary schools and secondary schools of Ban Me commune. Moreover, due to the lack of data, the project's objective to improve the awareness and change behaviours towards child protection for 90% of families, schools, communities and children could not be evaluated⁴⁷.

Project 2: This project's objective was to build the capacity to manage and organise the implementation of child protection and care programmes, plans, schemes and projects for 100% of child protection and care workers from central to district levels in the province. It was also to build child protection capacity for 95% of commune-level child protection and care workers and child protection and care collaborators and volunteers in villages, hamlets and city wards.

⁴⁶ Decision No.647/QD-TTg dated 26/04/2013 by the Prime Minister on approving the scheme on caring for orphans, neglected children, HIV-AIDS-infected children, victims of toxic chemicals, seriously disabled children and children influenced by natural and other disasters that rely on community assistance during 2013-2020.

⁴⁷ Consolidated report on assessment of five-year implementation of childcare and protection programme during 2011-2015 in Lao Cai province.

During five years of implementation, the project organised 45 training courses on child protection for more than 1,500 participants at province, district levels and at communes deployed child protection model. The training has helped enhance the professional skills and competencies of staff working in child protection at all levels in management and implementation of programs, plans, schemes and projects on child protection. However, the two quantified objectives of the project have not been evaluated.

Project 3: This project was to build and develop child protection service systems to build and operate child protection service systems. They were comprised of a provincial-level executive committee and inter-disciplinary working group for child protection, a provincial social work service centre, district-level executive committees and inter-disciplinary

working groups for child protection and child counseling offices, commune-level child protection committees, community- and school-based counseling points and networks of child protection and care collaborators and volunteers in villages, hamlets and population areas. This project was carried out in Bac Ha and Sapa districts and in all communes, wards, towns of the two selected districts.

Table 6.1 illustrates the child protection service provision system in Lao Cai province in 2015. The province has only one social work centre, affiliated to DOLISA. It manages and nurtures more than 100 persons, including 82 children who are orphans, children with mental health issues, children with disabilities and mainly ethnic children (Dao, Mong, Nung and Tay). However, due to the centre's limited capacity, it cannot receive all types of children.

Table 6.1. Child protection service provider system in Lao Cai province in 2015

No.	Items	Unit	Quantity
I	Number of child protection facilities		
1	Public provincial social work centre	Facility	1
	In which: - Number of staff	Persons	34
	- Number of nurtured children	Persons	82
	- Budget	VND million	2,250
2	Non-public child protection facilities	Facility	0
II	Child protection models/initiatives		
3	Total number of districts/city where child protection programme is piloted:	District/city	9
	In which: - National model/initiatives	District/city	6
	- Provincial model/initiatives	District/city	9
4	Total number of communes where child protection programme is piloted	Commune/ward	164
	In which: - National level programme	Commune/ward	6
	- Provincial level programme	Commune/ward	158
5	Number of the executive committee and interdisciplinary working group for provincial child protection	Committee/Group	1
6	Number of districts/city with the executive committee and interdisciplinary working group for district child protection	District	9
7	Number of districts/city with a district child counseling office	District	0

No.	Items	Unit	Quantity
8	Number of communes issued the decision on establishment of child protection committee	Commune	164
9	Number of communes with network of collaborators involved in child protection in villages/hamlets/population groups	Commune	8
10	Number of community counseling points	Point	8
11	Number of school counseling points	Point	133

Source: Department of Child Protection and Care, MOLISA

As of 2015, the executive committees and interdisciplinary working groups for child protection at provincial and district levels were established. Child protection committees were established in all 164 communes/wards in the province. Child protection service systems have been implemented in Bac Ha and Sapa districts. The networks of collaborators and volunteers involved in child protection have been widely established in villages/hamlets province-wide. Currently, there are more than 1,460 people in Lao Cai province participating in executive committees and interdisciplinary working groups and more than 1,000 part-time collaborators in villages/hamlets/population groups.

However, Lao Cai province has no psychological counseling centres for children at district level. Only 8 out of 164 communes/wards have networks of collaborators involved in child protection in villages/hamlets. There are only eight counselling points in the community and 133 counselling points at schools. There is also no help telephone line for children at provincial level. Limited data collection also narrows the ability to gain a true understanding of how many children benefit from these service provision systems.

Project 4: This project was designed to build and expand models on community-based support for children in special circumstances, to create access to healthcare, orthopedic, rehabilitation, educational and other public services for 90% of disabled children. It was also to intervene and provide support for children sexually abused or survivors of violence, to provide care for abandoned children and orphans. As planned, the project would be implemented in selected areas to suit each model.

During 2011-2015, Lao Cai province developed two child protection pilot models: "Preventing, providing support for children working at the early ages, children working hard in hazardous and dangerous conditions" and "Providing support for abandoned children, homeless orphans, disabled children". These models were implemented in seven communes of seven districts⁴⁸.

Within the framework of these two models, 19 training courses on building capacity for 950 collaborators as well as volunteers participating in childcare and protection work at grassroots level were organised; 25 information sessions about the Law on Protection, Care and Education were organised for 1,250 people; 24 information sessions were organised in 10 primary and secondary schools, attracting more than 1,920 students; 14 "Core Children Groups" were established at primary and secondary schools participating in communicating childcare and protection work; 10 "Children Forums" were organised in communes selected to pilot the model, attracting more than 2,000 students and parents; and one "Provincial Children Forum" was held with more than 200 students, teachers and parents.

Though these models contributed heightening the awareness of Party committee and government agency leaders at all levels and strengthening collaboration between departments, unions and social-charity organisations in implementing childcare and protection work, the awareness raising of these activities was limited in scope. The future replication of these models is essential

⁴⁸ Ban Vuoc (Bat Xat), Thuong Ha (Bao Yen), Hoang Thu Pho (Bac Ha), Muong Khuong town (Muong Khuong), Ban Me (Si Ma Cai), Minh Luong (Van Ban) and Phu Gia (Bao Thang).

to achieve the project's objectives related to access to services.

Implementation plan of Child Protection Programme of Lao Cai province during 2016-2020

During implementation of the Child Protection Programme during 2016-2020, Lao Cai province will issue the implementation plan for the Child Protection Programme of Lao Cai province during 2016-2020 with a view to "Creating a safe and healthy living environment for all children, protecting children from the risk of falling into special circumstances and abuse, providing timely support and rehabilitation for children in special circumstances to create opportunities for them to reintegrate and have equal development opportunities".

Specific objectives include:

- Reduce the rate of children in special circumstances in 2015 to below 4.2%, out of the total number of children.
- Reduce the number of children abused to promptly manage and support children in risk of falling into special circumstances.
- Strive to support 100% of children in special circumstances to help them recover and reintegrate themselves into society for further development.
- Continue to maintain and expand the child protection model, providing professional child protection services and community-based support for children in special circumstances.

National Programme on Developing Social Work as a Profession during 2010-2020

Lao Cai People's Committee developed an implementation plan for the Development of Social Work as a Profession during 2010-2020⁴⁹ in the province to help develop social work as a profession. Under the plan, Lao Cai would build one pilot centre to provide social work services

in Lao Cai city during 2011-2015 and build nine new centres offering social work services in districts and colleges, vocational schools in the next phase. Lao Cai strives to have up to two social work officers/professionals (with unspecialised titles) or social work collaborators per commune, ward, and town by 2015. The province will also increase its network of social work civil servants, officers, employees and collaborators with secondary to post-graduate qualifications to more than 1,900 people.

Achievement of these objectives will challenge Lao Cai, because as of 2015 it only had one social work centre with limited capacity. There are only 255 people who are full-time and part-time staff assigned to take charge of children, collaborators and volunteers involved in child protection in villages/hamlets⁵⁰.

Social protection policies for children

Lao Cai has implemented social protection policies relating to children based on the Regulation on Social Protection Policies for Social Protection Beneficiaries in Lao Cai province, issued under Decision No.47/2010/QD-UBND dated December 22, 2010. Social protection beneficiaries who are children include orphans, abandoned children without parental care, children who lost parent(s) under provisions of the Civil Code's Article 78 or are incompetent, unable to provide care as prescribed by law, children whose parent(s) are imprisoned and have no caregivers, children affected by HIV and/or belong to poor households.

Like other provinces, Lao Cai is preparing to implement Decree No.136/2013/ND-CP issued on October 21, 2013, that regulates social protection policies for social protection beneficiaries, including children. This decree replaces Decree No.67/2007/ND-CP and Decree No.13/2010/ND-CP with the normal subsidy raised to 270,000 VND/person/month. In addition to beneficiaries who are orphans, children abandoned without care, living in social protection centres, affected by HIV and belonging to poor households are also entitled

49 <http://www.socialwork.vn/lao-cai-phat-tri%E1%BB%83n-cong-tac-xa-h%E1%BB%99i-tr%E1%BB%9F-thanh-m%E1%BB%99t-ngh%E1%BB%81/>. Accessed www.socialwork.vn

50 Source: Department of Childcare and Protection. Data were collected to calculate the index for ranking provinces in implementation of children's rights in 2015.

to social assistance policies defined by this decree.

Other child protection projects/ programmes

Lao Cai province has implemented activities under the "Child Friendly Project" sponsored by UNICEF Viet Nam to ensure children's right to protection against abuse, exploitation and neglect in Lao Cai. This contributes to the achievement of general objectives of the provincial Socio-Economic Development Plan and National Action Plan for Children during 2011-2020. The project's information campaign is designed to create a safe environment for children, focusing on strengthening and consolidation of child protection systems in the locality in terms of structure, capacity and service providers to effectively prevent and address the concerns and critical issues of child protection. The project pays special attention to children in special circumstances, such as those without parental care, with disabilities, affected by HIV/AIDS, victims of exploitation and trafficked as well as those living in poor households. This project prioritises the protection and care of children in the poorest rural areas and ethnic children.

Lao Cai implemented the model for the prevention and elimination of child labour sponsored by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) from 2011 to 2013. The project was implemented in Lao Chai and San Sa Ho communes of Sapa district. The project strengthened communication activities in communities and schools against child labour, organised a number of capacity building activities for staff of provincial departments, agencies, unions and leaders of travel companies, restaurants and hotels. It also worked with officials from different departments, agencies of Sa Pa district as well as officials, teachers, heads of Ho Chi Minh Pioneers' Organisation at school level at the two project communes – Lao Chai, San Sa Ho and Sapa town to improve trainers' teaching skills in Sapa district.

The provincial Party and People's committees helped generate newspaper coverage, with themes such as "For the border sovereignty

and security" and other initiatives with the mass media to highlight the crimes and methods of criminals to raise awareness of self-protection for people, especially women and children in rural areas and remote areas at risk of being trafficked.

Lao Cai province approved the project "Support victims of trafficking for reintegration - phase 2", approved to implement the project "Establishment of the residential facility for trafficking victims in Lao Cai province" sponsored by the British Embassy in Viet Nam and approved the project "Assistance to victims of trafficking for reintegration - phase 3" from 2015-2017.

The province also collaborated with the Pacific Links Foundation to highlight the risks, consequences and how to prevent human trafficking and circulate documents (brochures, comics) at fairs for highland ethnic minority people, organised training classes on life skills education for returning trafficking victims and capacity building trainings for staff who receive and support victims. The Pacific Links Foundation also supported the construction of Nhan Ai shelter for victims of human trafficking.

6.3. Current Situation of Child Protection in Lao Cai province

6.3.1. Disadvantaged children

According to the Child Law 2016, "Disadvantaged children refer to those who are unable to exercise their rights to life, protection, nurture and education, and need a special assistance and intervention of the Government, families and society so that they can live safely and fall in line with their families and the community."

Table 6.2 aggregates data related to children in special circumstances and those at risk of falling into special circumstances and those who were taken care of in Lao Cai province in 2015.

The number of children in special circumstances in 2015 is 11,790 persons, accounted for 5.2% children in Lao Cai; mainly fell into 4 groups, of which children who have fatal disease or disease requiring long-term treatment and are children of poor or near poor households accounted for

a greatest number and proportion of the total number of children in special circumstances (4,848 persons, 41.1%); followed by children who have lost their both parents (2,823, 23.9%); children dropped out to earn their living and fail to complete the universalisation of secondary education (2,526 persons, 21.4%); and children with disabilities (1,480 persons, 12.6%). The remaining groups are much smaller in terms of the number and proportion, but are the group that needs special attention. In addition, the groups with number zero maybe due to data can not be collected. In 2015, no exploited children were reported, including children working against the law on labor. Similarly for children performing heavy or hazardous jobs or contacting noxious substances. These two types of data are typically collected through a child labor statistical survey, not regularly conducted in Viet Nam and the representative sample for this survey is not selected to provincial level. So in Lao Cai may have exploited children or children doing hard or hazardous jobs or contacting noxious substances as analysed in Section 6.2.2 below, but the two types of data were not collected. Similarly, according to Table 6.2 in 2015 Lao Cai province has no abused and violated children, whereas in Section 6.2.4 as analysed in fact a number of children in Lao Cai may have been exposed to violence.

The number of children at risk of falling into special circumstances in 2015 of Lao Cai province is 41,766 persons, mainly fell into group of Children in poor families (34,392 persons, 82.3%), followed by groups: Children dropped out school without completing

secondary education (2,526 persons, 6.0%); Children living in families with social problems (parents' divorce, domestic violence, living with people infected with HIV/AIDS) (1,657 persons, 4%); Children with injuries and accidents (1,319 persons, 3.2%); Children living in a family whose member is in judgement execution (993 persons, 2.4%); and Children not living with parents during past six months (879 persons, 2.1%).

In addition, Table 6.2 shows that all children were taken care of through the State aid policies and other forms. However, it should be noted that while the State aid policy, such as regular monthly assistance, help to nurture and care in the community, adoption to social protection facilities, medical and education assistance, vocational training and job creation has sustainable effects, other forms of assistance such as gifts only have temporary effects. Therefore, this percentage might not mean all children in special circumstances have been satisfactorily assisted. In the future, data should be disaggregated by more sustainable assistance forms, thereby providing more useful data for users.

Consulting group has collected data of children with special circumstances of 2009 and 2010 in Lao Cai province for the purpose of comparison with 2015, but different sources of data give different numbers and are not reliable enough.

Table 6.2. Children in special circumstances and at risk of falling into special circumstances, Lao Cai, 2015

	Indicators	Total number of children	Percentage of number of children	Rate of children cared for	Of which:	
		(Persons)		(%)	Number of children receiving care through State aid policy (Persons)	Number of children receiving other forms of care (Persons)
I	Children in special circumstances	11,790	100	100	1,413	10,377
1	Children who lost their both parents	2,823	23.94	100	275	2,548
2	Abandoned children	0	0	0	0	0
3	Homeless children	0	0	0	0	0
4	Children with disabilities	1,480	12.55	100	463	1,017
5	Children affected by HIV/AIDS	29	0.25	100	29	0
6	Children committed illegal acts	13	0.11	100	4	9
7	Children who are drug addicts	0	0	0	0	0
8	Children who dropped out to earn their living and fail to complete the universalisation of secondary education	2,526	21.42	100	0	2,526
9	Children who suffered seriously physical and mental harm due to violence	0	0	0	0	0
10	Exploited children	0	0	0	0	0
11	Sexually abused children	6	0.05	100	0	6
12	Trafficked children	27	0.23	100	0	27
13	Children who have fatal disease or disease requiring long-term treatment and are children of poor or near poor households	4,848	41.12	100	634	4,214
14	Immigrant and refugee children whose parents are not yet identified or those who have no caring person	0	0	0	0	0
15	Children who are victims of toxic chemicals	8	0.07	100	8	0
16	Children doing hard or hazardous jobs or contacting noxious substances	0	0	100	0	0
17	Street children	7	0.06	100	0	7
18	Children working far away from home	23	0.20	100	0	23

	Indicators	Total number of children	Percentage of number of children	Rate of children cared for	Of which:	
					(Persons)	(%)	Number of children receiving care through State aid policy	Number of children receiving other forms of care
		(Persons)	(%)	(%)	(Persons)	(Persons)
II	Children are at risk of falling into special circumstances	41,793	100	100	34,392	7,401
19	Abused and violated children	0	0	100	0	0
20	Children with injuries and accidents	1,319	3.16	100	4	1,330
21	Children in poor families	34,392	82.29	100	34,392	0
22	Children dropped out from school without completing secondary education	2,526	6.04	100	0	2,526
23	Children living in families with social problems (parental divorce, domestic violence, living with people infected with HIV/AIDS)	1,657	3.96	100	0	1,657
24	Children living in a family whose member is in judgment execution	993	2.38	100	0	993
25	Children not living with parents during past six months	879	2.10	100	0	879

Source: Department of Child Care and Protection, MOLISA

6.3.2. Child labour

Although there is no common and uniform definition of child labour, many countries and international organizations usually determine child labour according to working hours, nature (economic or non-economic activity), banned work or hazardous working conditions.

The National Survey on Child Labour in 2012, conducted by MOLISA in collaboration with GSO and ILO, applied the ILO's definition of child labour that "Child labour means children involved in economic activities exceeding the time limit provided for the respective age group or prohibited occupations for child employment". The survey showed that there were 1.75 million child labourers nationwide, accounting for 9.6% of children aged 5-17 in Viet Nam.

The MICS survey conducted by GSO and UNICEF in 2014 applied UNICEF's definition

of child labour, including children engaged in economic and non-economic activities (housework), or doing dangerous, hazardous work. According to MICS 2014, the country had 16.4% of children aged 5-17 years participating in economic activities or housework exceeding the time limit, regarded as child labour. This was especially so, as 7.8% worked in dangerous, toxic conditions. The Midlands and Northern Mountainous areas were found to have the highest rate of child labour in the country (36.2% exceeding the time limit and 20.8% working in dangerous, toxic conditions).

The results of the 2011 survey for the project "Support for development and implementation of programmes eliminating the worst forms of child labour" (phase 2009-2013, funded by the Spanish Agency for International Development and Cooperation, operated and technically supported by ILO-IPEC) also showed that in Lao Chai and San Sa Ho, two communes in Sapa district, 538 children worked in physically heavy

conditions, accounting for 21.8% of children aged 5-17 years in the area.

Three sources mentioned above convey a message that child labor surely exists in Vietnam and the Midlands and northern mountainous area in general and in Lao Cai in particular. Meanwhile, according to the Department of Child Care and Protection (Table 6.2), Lao Cai only had data on child labour in heavy, hazardous conditions⁵¹ with 200 and 180 children in 2010 and 2011 respectively, but there were no data on their working time. In addition, in 2014 no child labour in heavy, hazardous conditions was reported. The reported data, therefore, does not necessarily reflect the real situation of child labour in Lao Cai, particularly in agriculture, construction and services - occupations that attract large numbers of child workers.

6.3.3. Trafficking in Children

Lao Cai province borders China and has many commercial border gates and trails, that facilitate trafficking in persons. Human trafficking is more prominent in border areas, mainly the trafficking of women and female children to China with the primary purpose of sexual exploitation and forced marriage.

According to data on human trafficking in Lao Cai, from January 1, 2011 to June 30, 2015, authorities identified, arrested, handled and prosecuted 392 cases with 458 offenders, in which police forces discovered 155 cases, arrested 319 offenders and border guards discovered 237 cases, arrested 139 offenders. Targets of human trafficking are mostly ethnic minority people⁵².

During this time there were 531 victims of human trafficking, in which 494 returned home. More than 50% of victims returned in the form of bilateral handover between Viet Nam and China, 43.6% were rescued and only 1.8% escaped themselves to return.

From 2009 to present, 549 victims were

recorded, 74 of whom were children, accounting for 18.8% (including four boy victims), 76.4% of victims were ethnic minorities (Dao, Mong and Thai). Lao Cai had 195 victims from Bac Ha, Bao Thang, Muong Khuong, Si Ma Cai and Sa Pa districts, aged 15-30, living in rural, remote areas with low literacy levels and limited social, legal knowledge, unemployed and in economic hardship. Some of them are students from Lao Cai junior high or vocational training schools. The majority of victims faced psychological or health problems after return, some had psychotic symptoms, were pregnant or brought small children or injured.

The root cause of this crime is the severe gender imbalance leading to millions of Chinese men not being able to find a wife, thereby stimulating the trafficking in women and female children from Viet Nam to China. In addition, some ethnic minority people have been abused by human traffickers as a result of poverty, lack of jobs and knowledge as well as a desire to change their lives and increase incomes. "Ethnic minority people here have low literacy levels and human traffickers have taken advantage to make promises that living in China will result in no suffering, no need to work and there is only joy with tens of millions of dong to be earned daily, leading to many unfortunate circumstances"⁵³.

6.3.4. Juvenile in conflict with the law

In recent years, new approaches in juvenile justice have been made that juvenile violators shall be mainly rehabilitated in communes, wards and towns. Also, coercive measures and restrictions in freedom shall only be applied after exhaustion of other preventive and educational measures. In the case of children being applied administrative, civil or criminal liability, laws for minors⁵⁴ must be followed.

Viet Nam has two separate systems for handling a minor violation of law, the administrative system under the Ordinance on Handling of Administrative Violations in 2002 and the penal system to handle more serious violations under the Penal Code.

51 Definition according to Circular No.10/2013/TT-BLDTBXH promulgating the list of jobs and workplaces prohibited to minor workers.

52 <http://enternews.vn/nong-buon-ban-nguoi-o-lao-cai.html>, last accessed XXX date and month

53 <http://enternews.vn/nong-buon-ban-nguoi-o-lao-cai.html>

54 Law on Protection, Care and Education of Children, 2004,

In 2013, there were 10,603 children and minors nationwide violating the law, of whom most were male (94.3%) and the majority aged 14-16 (71.8%). Children and minors who violated the

law in Northern Midland and Mountainous area and Lao Cai were also mostly male (95.8% and 100%, respectively), at the older age group, from 16-18 years (71.1% and 72.7%, respectively).

Table 6.3. Juvenile in conflict with the laws by age group, 2013

Content	Total (people)	Age group (%)			
		Females	Under 14	14- 16	16-18
Nationwide	10,603	5.7	22.5	71.8	5.7
Northern Midland and Mountainous area	1,196	4.2	3.6	25.3	71.1
Lao Cai province	55	0	1.8	25.5	72.7
Red River Delta	1,286	2.3	13.8	84.0	2.3
Northern Central Coast	2,983	7.2	26.9	66.0	7.2
Central Highlands	1,039	2.9	18.9	78.3	2.9
Southeast	2,234	5.5	21.9	72.6	5.5
Mekong River Delta	1,865	9.0	22.5	68.5	9.0

Source: MOLISA, Department of Child Care and Protection – Child indicators 2013-2014

According to Table 6.5, children and minors violating the law in Lao Cai had lower education levels than those in Northern Midland and Mountainous area and nationwide. The majority had secondary education (63.6%) and only 10.9% had upper secondary education, compared to 38.3% and 35.9%, respectively for the Northern Midland and Mountainous

area and 44.4% and 25.1%, respectively for the country. In particular, children and minors violating the law in Lao Cai had barely left school (3.6%), while almost half of law-violating children and minors from Northern Midland and Mountainous area and nationwide had dropped out of school (40.6% and 47.7%, respectively).

Table 6.4. Juvenile in conflict with the laws by educational levels, 2012

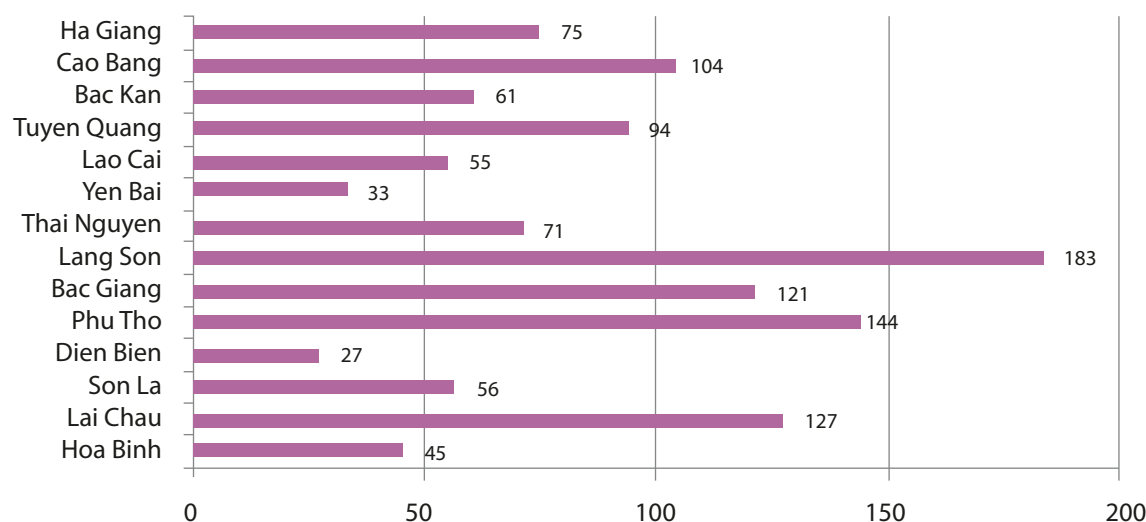
Content	Total (People)	Literacy (%)				
		Illiterate	Primary	Secondary	Upper Secondary	Dropouts
Nationwide	10,603	4.2	17.1	44.4	25.1	47.7
Northern Midland and Mountainous area	1,196	1.6	6.1	38.3	35.9	40.6
Lao Cai province	55	0.0	21.8	63.6	10.9	3.6
Red River Delta	1,286	0.5	3.7	48.3	35.1	42.4
Northern Central Coast	2,983	3.5	12.2	51.3	25.5	48.9
Central Highlands	1,039	2.5	24.1	45.8	27.6	77.7
Southeast	2,234	7.9	20.3	41.4	23.6	31.2
Mekong River Delta	1,865	6.3	33.6	37.2	10.8	57.2

Source: MOLISA, Department of Childcare and Protection – Child indicators 2013-2014

Figure 6.1 shows the number of children and minors who violated the law in 2013 in the Northern Midland and Mountainous area. Lao Cai had the 11th highest number of children

and minors violating the law in 14 provinces of the Northern Midland and Mountainous area in 2013, higher than Dien Bien, Hoa Binh and Yen Bai.

Figure 6.1. Number of juvenile in conflict with the the laws, 2013 (Unit: People)



Source: MOLISA, Department of Child Care and Protection – Child indicators 2013-2014

Table 6.6 aggregates the number of children violating the laws in Lao Cai province from 2009-2014. From 2009 to 2014, the number of children in conflict with the law tended to decrease. In total, 330 children in conflict with the law, more than half were charged with theft

(178 children, equivalent to 53.9%), followed by public order disturbances (59 children, equivalent to 17.9%) and intentionally inflicting injury (8.2%) and other offenses accounted for a small proportion.

Table 6.5. Number of children in conflict with the law from 2009-2014 in Lao Cai province

No.	Content	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total	% of the total
1	Murder	1	2	1	5	0	1	10	3.0
2	Robbery	0	2	5	5	0	0	12	3.6
3	Pinch	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
4	Rape, forcible sexual intercourse	1	0	1	1	1	1	5	1.5
5	Wounding with intent	16	2	4	1	3	1	27	8.2
6	Theft	64	27	26	14	33	14	178	53.9
7	Robbery with sudden snatching	0	0	2	1	0	0	3	0.9
8	Public order disturbances	20	15	14	7	2	1	59	17.9
9	Gambling	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
10	Drug use	2	3	0	0	0	0	5	1.5

No.	Content	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total	% of the total
11	Purchase, possession of illegal drugs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
12	Sex work brokerage	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
13	Others	3	3	2	3	9	11	31	9.4
	Total	107	54	55	37	48	29	330	100.0

Source: Lao Cai province Department of Public Security, Division PC45 – 2015

6.3.5. Violence and abuse of child

According to the Law on Children, “violence against children is an act of maltreatment, mistreatment, beating; injury of body or health; revilement, insult of honor and dignity; isolation, banishment and other intentional acts causing harms to children physically or mentally”. Also under this law, child abuse is “an act harming physically, emotionally, psychological aspects, honor and dignity of a child in the forms of violence, exploitation, sexual abuse, trafficking, abandonment, neglect towards children and other forms of harm”; and child sexual abuse includes the use of force, threats of using force, coercion, enticement, seduction to engage children in sexual activities, including rape, forcible sexual intercourse, sexual intercourse, salacity and use of children for the purposes of prostitution, pornography in any forms”.

According to the MOLISA, the number of children sexually abused is on the rise nationwide. In 2011 and 2012 1,045 and 1,209 children were sexually abused respectively, (In 2013 and 2014, 1,326 1,544 children were sexually abused respectively.

Lao Cai has attracted attention of the mass media recently due to incidents of school violence and child sexual abuse, such as the 8th grade schoolgirl in Bao Thang district beaten up⁵⁵, a teacher at Trung Ho primary school in Phin Ngan commune (Bat Xat district) having beaten a 1st grade pupil causing injury,

a security guard of La Pan Tan ethnic semi-boarding elementary School (Muong Khuong district) sexually abusing some students over a long period of time and a teacher from Ban Khoang primary school (Sa Pa district) having sexually abused several 5th grade students. These are serious, prolonged cases that have caused significant physical and psychological impacts on students, violating the law on child protection and provoking public indignation⁵⁶.

However as indicated in Table 6.2, in 2015 a few cases of children (6 cases) in Lao Cai were abused or experienced violence. Such statistics on child abuse and violence do not reflect the real situation of child abuse in the province.

Table 6.7 aggregates the number of crimes against children in Lao Cai province in 2009-2014. From 2009 to 2014, 122 crimes against children, with slight increases observed over the years. These cases were mostly on trafficking, kidnapping, exchanging (35 cases), rape (29 cases), sexual intercourse (22 cases) and causing deliberate injury (13 cases). Data from Muong Khuong district shows that child sexual abuse and abductions occurred most often during child abuse-related crimes. Over six years, the number of child abuse-related cases was 13, of which more than half were related to sexual intercourse, rape (seven cases) and tended to increase over the years.

55 <http://soha.vn/xa-hoi/nu-sinh-bi-danh-hoi-dong-o-lao-cai-chung-con-muon-coi-ao-20151213144623522.htm>. Accessed on 3/5/2016. <http://vnexpress.net/tin-tuc/giao-duc/nu-sinh-danh-ban-tan-nhan-nam-sinh-dung-quanh-co-vu-3324563.html>. Accessed on 3/5/2016

56 <http://www.tienphong.vn/xa-hoi/lam-ro-cac-vu-xam-hai-tinh-duc-tre-em-tai-lao-cai-988881.tpo>

Table 6.6. Number of crimes against children in Lao Cai province 2009-2014

No	Content	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
1	Murder against children	1	2	1	2	0	0	6
2	Assault against children	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	Rape	3	3	7	6	4	6	29
4	Sexual intercourse	4	2	1	2	3	10	22
5	Other sexual abuse acts	0	2	0	0	2	3	7
6	Intentionally inflicting injury	5	4	2	2	0	0	13
7	Purchase, kidnapping, fraudulently swapping	4	2	9	4	9	7	35
8	Enticement, harboring, illegal actions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	Others	0	8	1	1	0	0	10
	Total	17	23	21	17	18	26	122

Source: Department of Public Security/Lao Cai province, Division PC45 – 2015

Table 6.7 shows that in 2013 the number of abused children in Lao Cai was 23, as many as the average number of children abused per province in the Northern Midland and Mountainous area and lower than the national per province average.

By gender, all abused children in Lao Cai were female, in comparison to 87.2% nationwide

and 82.1% in the Northern Midland and Mountainous area. In Lao Cai, abused children were largely older than those regionally and nationwide, 82.6% aged 13-16 compared to 64.5% regionally and 65.3% nationwide. As for types of abuse, Lao Cai had a lower rate of sexual assault than the average rate regionally and nationwide (39.1% compared with 75.8% and 64.2%, respectively).

Table 6.7. Percentage of child abuse by gender, age group and types of crimes, 2013

	Total (People)	Average number of abused children per province	Gender (%)		Age group (%)			Types of crimes (%)	
			Male	Female	Under 6	6- 13	13- 16	Sexual abuse	Other types of abuse
Nationwide	1,898	30	12.8	87.2	8.4	26.3	65.3	75.8	24.2
Red River Delta	250	23	25.6	74.4	16.8	20.8	62.4	54.8	45.2
Northern Midland and Mountainous area	324	23	17.9	82.1	7.1	28.4	64.5	64.2	35.8
Lao Cai	23		0	100	4.3	13	82.6	39.1	60.9
North Central Coast	268	19	17.2	82.8	6.3	23.5	70.1	63.1	36.9
Central Highlands	186	37	17.7	82.3	9.7	25.8	64.5	74.7	25.3
Southeast	430	72	5.8	94.2	6.3	25.6	68.1	84.4	15.6
Mekong River Delta	440	34	3.9	96.1	7.5	30.7	61.8	95.9	4.1

Table 6.8 shows that perpetrators in Lao Cai province were older than respective average ages of the region and nationally. Perpetrators

aged more than 18 years in Lao Cai accounted for 94.4% compared to 77.9% for the Northern Midland and Mountainous area and nationwide.

Table 6.8. Percentage of persons abused children by age group, 2013

Content	Age group		
	Under 16	16-18	over 18
Nationwide	6.1	16.1	77.9
Northern Midland and Mountainous area	4.8	17.3	77.9
Lao Cai province	0	5.6	94.4
Red River Delta	5.8	19.7	74.5
North Central Coast	8.4	13.9	77.6
Central Highlands	6.8	24.2	69.1
Southeast	4.5	13.6	81.9
Mekong River Delta	6.9	13.0	80.1

Source: MOLISA, Department of Child Care and Protection – Child indicators 2013-2014

According to the Department of Public Security in Lao Cai province, causes leading to child sexual abuse and children in conflict with the law include:

Some agencies, unions and social organisations have little awareness and are unconcerned about the management, education and psychological and mental development of children. This is especially so for families who have children in conflict with the law and lack attention, care and education. The negative sides of the Internet, online games and video tapes have also had significant impacts on perceptions, lifestyles of the youth.

Tasks related to information, reporting and coordination have not been done regularly and properly. In some cases, statistics are limited and unsuitable for synthesis and accurate assessments of situations to propose preventive measures and effectively combat juvenile crimes and those against children.

Funds allocated to provincial police to implement such tasks are limited.

6.4. Analysis of Barriers and Obstacles in the Protection of Children

Difficulties in implementation of policies:

Orphans: According to regulations, only orphans whose parents are dead and certified by local authorities and courts are eligible for regular financial support. This certification period lasted up to 3 years which causes late for some children to be recognised as orphans, which in turns delayed or did not allow them to receive benefits. In fact in Lao Cai, sometimes infants are actually orphans, but unable to receive financial aid as: (a) father died, mother went to China and disappeared, child lives with grandparents and (b) father died, child is not allowed to live with mother if she remarries. In the first case, there should be a certification of the police on missing status of his/her mother, but in fact his/her family fails to do so because they know that missing mother is still alive, but does not return to Viet Nam. In the second case, according to Mong ethnic minority customs, if another wants to include her child when remarrying, she must get accepted by her husband's family line. If not approved, the child is in fact an orphan, but is certified late or never by the authority.

National Action Programme for Children for 2012-2020: The National Action Programme for Children for 2012-2020 was initiated in 2012, but DOLISA is currently experiencing difficulties in implementing the programme due to a lack of specific guidance from central government.

Poor healthcare for sexually abused children: According to regulations, women and children trafficking victims returning home are eligible to receive VND 50,000 for the first visit, but not supported if needing treatment and medication after the medical examination. In fact, there are cases where testing and treatment costs were up to VND 7-8 million, or children were aborted late endangering lives physically and mentally, but not supported.

Identifying children with disabilities: The MOLISA sector is assigned to define disabilities, but in the course of implementation has faced difficulties due to a lack of professional health staff and the concept of disabilities is unclear. Scoring sheets to determine disabilities are inadequate when implemented at the facility.

Funding for protection and care of children is limited and not met requirements. Level of initial support for children staying at social services centre is not suitable for seasons. Children staying for 30-60 days will receive equal amounts of initial support as much as VND 400,000 to purchase essential personal items. This support is not appropriate for winter due to costs to buy warm clothes.

Awareness and dissemination are limited. Some committees, local authorities, residents and children are not fully aware of child protection. Ignorance of laws, inadequate awareness of child rights violations have led to child abuse, even by relatives in terms of sexual abuse and violence. A lack of understanding of social and legal knowledge creates favorable conditions for offenders to lure children into people trafficking.

Information has not changed in content and form, nor disseminated widely among people due to differences in ethnic minority languages and customs. The multifaceted harms and long-term serious consequences of sexual abuse, violence against children have not been properly communicated to

remote communities. UNICEF's communication materials and other resources have been brought to grassroots level, but the ability to understand such documents is limited.

Lack of quantity and quality staff. At local level, there still a lack of professional staff capable of implementing the tasks to detect, intervene and assist children in special circumstances and other vulnerable ones. Professional capacity of social workers at the centre is still weak.

Coordination among sectors, districts has not been regularly deployed.

Poverty leads to neglect of children, thereby creating favorable conditions for abuse, mistreatment, violence and exploitation of children or children becoming in conflict with the law.

Collecting and updating of information about the situations of children is still limited. There is no or insufficient data to assess the objectives and results of providing services, care and support to children. A typical example is the absence of data to assess the goal of "90% of families, schools, communities and children being raised awareness and changing behaviors concerning the child protection".

6.5. Recommendations

6.5.1. Policies and programmes

Continue to improve policies at national and provincial levels which support cure/treatment costs post-medical examinations for women and children returning as trafficking victims, support H'mong children whose fathers have died and mothers sold in China or those not allowed to follow mothers to live with a stepfather's family.

Better integrate child protection goals into local socio-economic development plans. Sanctions should be stricter, especially regarding child trafficking, violence and abuse. Early application of Decree No.136/2013/ND-CP which provides social support policies for social protection subjects. Shorten processing times for administrative procedures to determine orphan status.

6.5.2. Child Care and protection system

Continue to improve the capacity of the social work centre in Lao Cai province to broaden coverage of services with higher expertise. Maintain and expand the assistance and reintegration initiatives for human trafficking victims, such as “Nhan ai” (compassion) house. Conduct annual assessments of effectiveness and efficiency of existing child care and protection initiatives for replication.

6.5.3. Child protection organisational structure

Establish psychological counseling centres for children and a telephone help line at provincial level as well as psychological counseling centres for children at district level. Assess performances of eight counseling points in the community and 133 points in schools for replication.

Boost the role of stakeholders through decentralisation and empowerment associated with responsibility for creating local, agency and unit initiatives, enhance interdisciplinary coordination and strengthen inspection, control and supervision. Strengthen questioning of the National Assembly and People’s Council on childcare and protection. Supervisory agencies should involve and empower children and have sufficient authority, strong voices and independence.

6.5.4. Resources

Continue training and capacity building for DOLISA officers, especially at grassroots level. Improve a system of specialised staff for childcare and protection in communes, wards and towns as well as build a network of collaborators for childcare and protection in villages/hamlets.

Reasonable allocation and effective use of budget provided in each area with priority given to remote areas.

6.5.5. Strengthening awareness

Continue to strengthen communication, awareness raising, dissemination and education on laws to raise public awareness of child protection. Improve the quality of communication by using pictures as visual aids, good practice. Promote education on self protection and soft skills.

Continue to enhance levels of responsibility for Party committees and local authorities for the protection of children, particularly in ethnic minority, remote and areas facing special difficulties.

6.5.6. Guidance and support roles of central levels

There should be better multi-sectoral coordination at all levels from central to grassroots levels to create consistency in implementation methods. A coordination and guidance mechanism is needed for the implementation of the National Action Programme for Children.

6.5.7. Improvements in coordination with international, private and civil-society partners

Continuing coordination and collaboration in the provision of child protection services in the province.



CHAPTER 7. RIGHT TO PARTICIPATION

Chapter 7 analyses the enforcement situation of children's rights in participation at home, in school and the community they live in. This chapter also points out the implementation of children's rights to participation from perspectives of different researched groups, the current situation and challenges in implementing rights to participation and problems arising related to children's participation. This chapter consists of (1) Legal and policy framework on children's right to participation, (2) Current situation of children's participation, (3) Obstacles and barriers to child participation and (4) Priorities and recommendations.

7.1. Legal and policy framework on children's right to participation

Children's right to participation is the right to contribute, express views and opinions on decisions affecting them or the community in which the child lives. It is the means by which a democracy is built and it is a standard against which democracies should be measured. Participation is the fundamental right of citizenship⁵⁷. Right to participation, therefore, is a basic right that needs to be realised for the best interest of the child.

Although rights to participation is not particularly defined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), some articles in the convention are related to this issue ("articles on the rights to participation") include Respect for the views of the child (Article 12), Freedom of expression (Article 13), Freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 14), Freedom of association (Article 15), Right to privacy (Article 16) and Access to information (Article 17).

The 2013 Constitution of Viet Nam, the highest piece of legislation in country, states that "children shall be protected, cared and

educated by the State, family and society; shall be allowed to participate in child related issues" (Article 37). More specifically, the Law on Protection, Care and Education of Children 2004 regulates that: (1) children have the rights to access information suitable with their development, to express their views and opinions and (2) children are allowed to participate in social activities suitable to their demand and capacity (Article 20) and families, State and society have the responsibilities to enable, support children to access to suitable information, creative development and freedom of expression of their wishes, expectations and have a responsibility to listen and respond to children's legitimate requests" (Article 32).

The Children Law states "Children are entitled to access to information in a sufficient, timely and appropriate manner. They have the right to retrieve and obtain information in all forms as regulated by the law and engage in social activities in conformity with their age level, maturity level, demands and capacity" (Article 33) and have the "Right to access to information and social activities" (Article 34). Together with the Children Law, other laws have been promulgated and/or amended to enhance child's voices in child-related issues. Children's right to participation was regulated in the Civil Procedures Code (2005) and the Law on Complaints and Denunciations (2005) states that citizens including children are entitled to complain about illegal acts. The Ordinance on Handling of Administrative Violations (2002) also outlines that juveniles have the right to complain about administrative disciplinary decisions upon them.

At operational level, Decision No.03/2004/QD-DSGDTE by the Minister-Chairman of the Viet Nam Committee for Population, Family and Children, issued on June 1 2004, regulates criteria and indicators for child-friendly communities (communes, wards conducive to children), that directly relates to child

⁵⁷ Roger A. Hart, *Children's Participation: From tokenism to citizenship*, 1992

participation, such as criteria III “children have access to information, right to express their views and opinions, and participate in suitable social activities”.

On August 3, 2015, the Prime Minister signed Decision No.1235/QD-TTg approving the “Programme to promote child participation in child issues during 2016-2020” to create an enabling environment and enhance children’s capacity in enforcing children’s right to participation in matters relating to children in accordance with the law in Viet Nam and the UN’s CRC. Programme performance will be measured by specific indicators including: (i) All laws and policies related to children at central, provincial and district levels will be consulted on by children, (ii) 90% of all decisions relating to children in schools are consulted by children, (iii) 90% of all decisions relating to children in the community, society are consulted by children and (iv) all provinces and cities directly under the central government will implement at least two models to promote children’s right to participate in children’s issues. This is the most detailed and specific enforcement of children’s right to participation as of December 31, 2015.

Such documents form a solid legal framework for the enforcement of children’s right to

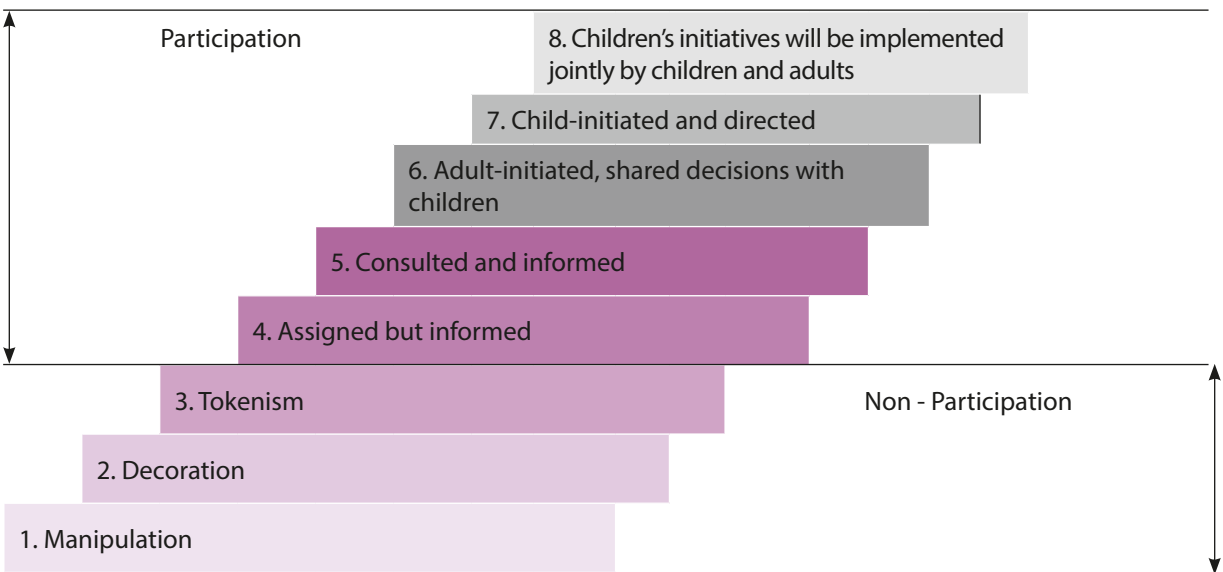
participation, with provisions for families, related organizations and State to initiate and implement activities and policies that suit children’s needs, aspirations and are in their best interests.

7.2. Current situation of children’s participation

Child participation is generally recognised as a multi-dimensional phenomenon that may include activities such as searching for information, expressing demand for learning, expression of views and opinions, provided with information and be consulted before any child-related decision is made. Enforcement of child participation is not only the increased number of children that participate in an activity, but also the enabling environment, facilitated and optimised opportunities for children to be informed, consulted and to express their views on the activity. Only by this way, can activities for children be in the best interests of children. The more children grow up, the further they should be involved in the decision-making process.

The Roger Hart “ladder of participation” describes the different scenarios of power relations between adults and children using the ladder metaphor.

Figure 7.1. Ladder of child participation



Source: Children’s Participation, from the tokenism to citizenship, Hart, Roger. (1992)

This ladder shows the degrees of participation from lowest to highest. The higher the stage, the stronger the child is empowered in child-related decisions. The first to the third stage was determined as non-participation and from the fourth to the eighth is participation. The ladder of participation also shows the degrees of child empowerment respective to the degrees of child participation. Specifically:

1. Manipulation is the title of the lowest rung of the ladder of participation. Children are absolutely passive and do whatever adults assign them, even though they are under the control of adults.

2. Decoration is the situation when children participate in an event or forum under the arrangement of adults as a kind of decoration.

3. Tokenism is used to describe instances where children are apparently given a voice, but in fact have little or no choice about the subject or the style of communicating it as well as little or no opportunity to formulate their own opinions.

4. Assigned, but informed: Children were assigned with tasks and made clear why they were involved. Adults make decisions on what to do and children volunteer to do them as the latter understand the intentions of the project and make decisions for participation.

5. Consulted and informed: A project designed by adults, but children are involved as consultants. Children understand the project thoroughly and are truly listened to.

6. Adults-initiated, shared decisions with children: Projects at this level are initiated by adults and decision-making is shared with young people from planning, designing to implementing. In this scenario, children are asked, their voices are heard and they work with adults to decide ways to implement projects.

7. Child-initiated and directed: Children initiate and are directed by adults. At this point, children initiate projects and decide the way they implement them. Adults just play a support role and do not manage projects.

8. Child-initiated, shared decisions with adults: Children initiate and implement projects themselves, while adults share expertise, assistance and experience for their consideration and decision-making.

The ladder is the basis for defining children's participation in the family, school and social circumstances for appropriate responses.

Data from MOLISA's Department of Child Protection on December 2015 revealed that children's participation in Lao Cai had improved during 2014-2015. Specifically, the number of children consulted through various channels in the province had risen from 318 in 2014 to 560 in 2015, equivalent to an increase from 14.2 to 25 per 10,000. These statistics do not connect with the common goal of all countries in the implementation of children's right to participation during 2016-2020 (Indicator (i) All laws and policies related to children at central, provincial and district levels will be consulted on by children, (ii) 90% of all decisions relating to children in schools are consulted by children, (iii) 90% of all decisions relating to children in the community, society are consulted by children. However, the proportion of children who were consulted as reported reveals a limited level of participation.

UNICEF quick evaluation toolkits used six statements (see first column of Table 7.1) to evaluate children's right to participation. Some 180 children aged 8-15 years and youth aged 16-18 in three surveyed districts and city were selected under different socio-economic characteristics to know if the statements were correct with regards to their right to participation. There were four options: the statement was (i) incorrect, (ii) not entirely correct, (iii) correct and (iv) have no idea.

According to Table 7.1, evaluation results show that people were well aware of child's rights. Some 84.4% of 180 surveyed children selected "correct" if they had heard about child's rights on TV and radio, 75.6% selected "correct" if they participated in projects/activities to change communities. The indicators of the "Internet" and "making friends" showed that children were free to make friends. Some 70.6% of children selected "correct" if they were free to

make friends and access the Internet. However, children have not actively participated in making decisions on child's rights, with only 18.3% selecting "correct" that local authorities asked their opinions about their lives and communities. Only 19.3% selected "correct" and that their comments on budgets for

programmes and services for children were heard. About 23% of children choose "correct" that they participated in planning and making decisions in communities. In particular, their opinions in the quick evaluation survey on the rights of the child are as follows:

Table 7.1. Opinion of the children on the right to participation

Participation and civil rights	Total of surveyed people aged 8-18	Incorrect (%)	Not entirely correct (%)	Correct (%)	Have no idea (%)
1. I participated in projects/activities to change community	180	3.9	17.2	75.6	3.3
2. I participated in planning and making decisions in community	180	24.4	40	22.8	12.8
3. Local authorities asked my opinion about lives and community	180	42.2	25	18.3	14.5
4. I knew about child's rights on TV and radio	180	2.8	11.1	84.4	1.7
5. I accessed the Internet and was free to make friends	180	20.6	6.1	70.6	2.7
6. I was asked for my opinion about budgets for programmes and services for children	180	65.9	8	19.3	6.8

Source: Right to participation enforcement by UNICEF CFC tool

Children's right to participation can be expressed, enhanced and promoted via models such as (1) children's forums, (2) children's opinion surveys, (3) children's councils, (4) child's right to participation clubs and (5) programmes, activities initiated and implemented by children. The following part of this chapter analyses the enforcement of the right to participation according to the local environment and combined with existing activities/models if any.

7.2.1. Child participation in families

A family is the natural environment for children to be nurtured and developed as well as form characteristics of future citizens. Parents' decisions directly impact on children and their understanding of how to listen and solve conflicts. Therefore, education in a family plays an important role in forming children's characteristics. The UN always encourages parents to deal with rights issues "...in a manner

consistent with the evolving capacities of the child" (CRC's Article 5).

However, children's participation in families, especially in ones with a ethnic minority parent(s) or in remote areas, are limited.

Parents often impose their opinions on their children. *"I let my children raise their voice, but not decide. They are not mature enough to understand issues. I will never watch my children become naughty because I am the one who will be blamed,"* said a mother in Tan Tien commune.

"When I was in Grade 3, my mother wanted me to move to another class for better a educational environment. She said nothing, but told me to join the new class the following day. Then I was scolded by friends, but my mother was only concerned about the environment. It turned out to be a better environment, but my mother did not ask for my opinion beforehand," said a male student in Lao Cai city.

Mrs. M. is illiterate, but had a different view: *“My family was too poor, so I did not get an education. My parents only covered my two younger brothers’ primary education. They worked hard on terraces from 5am, but still gave birth to too many children. My father had mental problems from the war, he got angry easily. He even threatened that if I went to school, he would never feed me. I have a different opinion to him. Despite the poverty, my children need to go to school for a better life than mine. I am just afraid if I do not have enough money for their studies”* (In depth interview of the Tan Tien commune mother). However she did not share her thoughts with her children, who were not studious. The decision to go to school was still made and imposed by the mother.

In addition to going to school, children did not participate in making marriage decisions. *“Child marriage remains, but is not noticeable. During the training on Gender Equality and Toward Women’s Advancement, some leaders of hamlets shared their experiences. We went to their families to encourage them not to advocate for child marriage, but they often replied that marriage was needed so a husband can take care and protect the daughter. They thought if you did not allow the marriage, the daughter could be sold to China?”* said a DOLISA representative



However in some cases, interventions from local authorities and children helped change parents’ opinions about child marriage. During

the quick surveys of students aged 13-18 years, an 11th grader shared: *“When I was 15 preparing for high school, my parents wanted me to drop out of school and get married. I cried, telling them that I wanted to continue studies instead of getting married. My teachers and communal officers came to persuade my parents, eventually my parents changed their minds,”* said Ly Thi D, a schoolgirl in class 11A3, number 3 at Bao Yen High school. D is not only a sound academic student, she is also talented in art. Her picture (above) won a prize in a contest and was auctioned for VND5 million. This illustrates how her dream of going to school is paying dividends.

In contrast with the situation in La Pan Tan, Tan Tien and Minh Tan communes, in areas surrounding Lao Cai city and Muong Khuong town families were more democratic. *“My parents planned to move to a urban area where the population was still sparse three years ago. They even prepared enough money. One day they asked me if I wanted to live there. I said I was not ready to move until I attended college. After that they changed their mind, we will wait till next year when I attend college. I felt happy because they listened to me and respected my opinion. They make me feel like an important person in the family. I believe that my parents love and respect me,”* said a student at Lao Cai high school for gifted students.

“When my parents intend to buy something at home, they often ask if my brother and I want it,” said a student in Muong Khuong town.

It is to be expected that Vietnamese parents show love, protection and care for their children and the need to consult them as is the case in many countries. However, this is not always the case. *“I rarely share my feelings with my parents. Instead, I talk with my teacher Ms. Khanh and ask for advice. My parents act as if I were a small kid, without considering my feelings,”* said a high school student in Kim Tan ward.

Children learn about their own rights at school, then apply them in the family context. Children are aware of their rights to receive and share ideas, to discuss with parents and to ask for their needs or expectations. However, parents’ limited knowledge of children’s right

to participate and other causes are obstacles for children to actively participate within families. According to Roger Hart's *"ladder of participation"*, children's participation between the third "tokenism" and fourth *"assigned but informed"* staves: Children are allowed to express their thoughts about an issue, but they have little or no choice about participation or expression of their opinion. They voice their opinion under the arrangement of adults. In some families, children are assigned and informed clearly about the reasons for the assignment. Adults decide jobs for children and children voluntarily do them because they understand their jobs and participation.

7.2.2. Child participation at schools

School is where children receive education and safe entertainment, where love for family members is nurtured and nourished and where they are taught to follow the law and school regulations. The role of schools in forming children's characteristics and attitudes, education and training to become good citizens for society is equally important to the family.

Regarding children's participation at schools expressed via Youth Union and club activities, the extent of children's participation at school increases with age, from the fourth stage "Assigned but informed" at primary school to the seventh *"Child-initiated and directed"* stage at senior high school.

Box 7.1. Student regular activities at Lao Cai provincial high school for gifted students

Students express their thoughts to the school and teachers during weekly Youth Union meetings in class. In addition, there are learning clubs for each subject organised during self-study time, art and sports clubs covering baseball, football, guitar and English and other activities organised by classes through the Youth Union at school during Vietnamese Teachers' Day and Youth Union Foundation Day (March 26). Regarding the learning clubs, there are seven subject-specialised clubs run by subject groups for talented students and other interested students.

Youth activities at Muong Khuong high school, Muong Khuong district

Youth Union activities are prepared ourselves. The internet is searched for topics/activities of interest, then shared with teacher(s) (counsellor(s)) for his/her opinions. Youth meetings are organised month by month by students on Saturdays with cultural shows, entertaining games. We extract the class fund to buy reward for the correct answer. Through the Youth Union meetings we have learned a lot of useful information.

Activities of La Pan Tan lower secondary school, Muong Khuong district

We have a logbook to keep track of activities and what to do each event/in each month, for example, what to do on Teacher's Day (November 20). The Youth's secretary participates in all activities and directs students. Excursions are held once or twice a year to visit the forest, to visit war memorials and visit friends' homes in far hamlets to encourage them to attend school. We do not often get away, visiting only in commune.

At primary school, children's participation is at tokenism (third stage) or assigned, but informed (fourth stage) through activities of Young Pioneer Organisation (students aged 9-15 years). Students with good academic records are assigned leadership roles, such as acting Young Pioneer, class president or moderator/host for a number of school-wide activities. Similarly at upper secondary school, Young Pioneer Organisation members play important roles in celebrating public days such as International Women's Day, Vietnamese Teachers' Day, International Children's Day, Mid-Autumn Celebration and Vietnamese Families'

Day. Young Pioneer Organisation leaders are bridges to attract the participation of students in activities. Students can also work on plans and provide advice and orientation for teachers. Through such activities, students' creativeness is developed.

"We wanted our own script to be cheerful and light-hearted. However, teachers asked us to add moral lessons and even a poem by one of the teachers. They changed the script a lot," said a student at Lao Cai high school for gifted students.



Schools pay attention to transfer knowledge, rather than develop life skills such as communication, critical thinking and creativity. Children are trained in skills which make them more confident to comment and express ideas to teachers, friends and make decisions if necessary.

The rapid evaluation of a group of students aged 8-12 years at Le Van Tam primary school in Lao Cai city was undertaken when students prepared for English speaking contests the following day. Students practiced on their own, observed by teachers who gave consultations. Freedom of expression is reflected through such activities. Many students expected more extracurricular activities, especially in remote rural areas.

The Education Law 2005 prohibits any acts of violence and mistreatment against students at schools (Article 118). However, there is no clear guidance for children mistreated in educational institutions, child support, health and medical and social rehabilitation centres to access confidential advice and make official complaints. The results of the rapid assessment with children in Lao Cai city, Bao Yen and Muong Khuong districts revealed that no hotline was in place for children to obtain psychological consultations and support when needed. "We come to policemen and teachers when we want to report. There is no hotline to denounce," said a student in Muong Khuong town.

The Education Law 2005 prohibits any act of child "mistreatment", but does not define the word. It is unclear whether "mistreatment" includes all acts of physical punishment. Meanwhile, the physical punishment is considered as a means of educating children to become a good citizen by parents, family

members and some teachers. Prevention of child abuse requires coordinated efforts from law enforcement agencies, especially at educational institutions, social support centres and welfare institutions as well as raising the awareness of family members and society. Children have not participated in denouncing mistreatment.

At schools the survey team visited, children were taught rights to participation. However, the learning was deprived from practice, so children lacked needed skills. While children can express opinions on entertainment activities, their views on learning plan and budget. "At school, teachers formulated extra curriculum activities and asked for students' opinions for implementation. We shared our views on minor things/activities and important/major activities are decided and done by teachers".

"Teachers have professional knowledge, but their soft skills are limited. Therefore, integration of the right to participation into teaching is ineffective," said a teacher from La Pan Tan School.

Students do not participate in their learning programme. Children in cities and towns have extra class after school. They must follow a learning schedule made by the parents and teachers without being consulted.

"Some teachers assigned more than 40 exercises as homework. Some students even have more to prepare for the contest for gifted students. I study at school in the morning, three extra classes in the evenings, two classes for the contest and one self-study in a week. Grade 10 students always suffer from "study-shock", but they get used to it gradually. If you lag behind with the GPA under 6.5, you will be kicked out. If children were consulted and informed, their choices may be different to their parents' and teachers'.

Meanwhile, boarders/day-boarders collect wood, carry water and plant vegetables after class hours, to the detriment of study competitiveness. "Teachers sometimes try to encourage students by giving rewards for excellent students or those getting a prize in a contest. But, it does not seem to work. Due to the lack of study competitiveness, students are not interested in rewards," said a teacher from Tan Tien junior high school.

Table 7.2. Timetable of boarding students at La Pan Tan lower secondary school

Time	From Monday to Friday
5:00 – 5:30	Get up, do morning routines Get up at 5:00 in summer and 5:30 in winter
5:30 – 6:00	Do exercises
6:00 – 6:30	Tidy up the areas
6:30 – 7:00	Have breakfast, do the dishes
7:00 – 11:45	Study at school
12:15	Have lunch, do the dishes
12:30 – 1:30	Take a nap
13:30 – 15:30	Carry water or collect wood if no rain. If no rain, collect wood twice a week. Self-study or tidy up the school
15:30	Work on vegetable fields
16:15 – 18:15	Relax, watch TV, play football, play badminton, play bird fly. Recreation at school only and without internet. Go around the neighborhood to watch TV. No internet café within 3km

Table 7.3. Timetable of students of Lao Cai provincial high school for gifted students

Time	From Monday to Saturday
6:15	Get up, do morning routines, have breakfast
6:45	Go to school
7:05 – 11:15	Study at school
11:30 – 13:00	Have lunch and take a nap
13:15 – 17:15	Study at school Take extra classes, attend training sessions for the contest for gifted students, and join student club activities depending on the day.
18:30 – 20:00	Have dinner, watch TV, surf the web
20:00 – 23:00	Study Some students study until 24:00 or 1:00
23:00 – 6:15	Sleep
Sunday	Oversleep, hang out, watch movies, surf the web, participate in extracurricular activities, help parents

In discussions, La Pan Tan lower secondary school students estimated that 60% of their time was to study, 20% to relax and 20% to help parents. In contrast, pupils from Lao Cai provincial upper secondary school for gifted students spent more than 75% of their time to study, 15% to relax and 10% for housework. Though these were estimates, they reveal timetable imbalances. The time for studying accounted for the biggest share and children

were not explained, encouraged or given opinions on how to use of their time effectively. Degrees of participation differed by level of education. Students with higher grades were more participatory.

7.2.3. Child participation in the community

During 2011-2015, Lao Cai implemented many

activities to encourage children's participation in community. DOLISA was in charge of in coordination with other departments to organise two children forums including Children Forum in the communes which implemented models under the National Programme on Children Protection and Provincial Children Forum in according to the direction of MOLISA with topic of "Listen to children's voice".

Regarding the first children's forum in communes as part of the National Programme on Children Protection under Decision No.267 of the Prime Minister for 2011-2015, DOLISA organised children's forum in seven communes, in seven districts under the child protection model. The forum was held with participation from 44 children and 14 masters of ceremonies who were officers from Labour, Invalid and Social Affairs, Training and Education from Ban Vuoc (Bat Xat), Minh Luong (Van Ban), Gia Phu (Bao Thang), Thuong Ha (Bao Yen), Hoang Thu Pho (Bac Ha), Muong Khuong town (Muong Khuong) and Ban Me (Si Ma Cai) communes. The forum topic was "Children with targets of National Programme on Child Protection during 2011-2015". Participants conveyed messages via skits and dramas which reflected children's desires for the national programme in their localities.

A second forum at provincial level was organised by Lao Cai DOLISA in combination with UNICEF Viet Nam under the direction of MOLISA with the topic "Listen to children's voices" in Lao Cai province. Children were given the opportunity to share ideas, concerns and expectations about child's rights enforcement with leaders so children's needs and investment in children are met. Some 62 children from 10 districts and the Centre for Social Work were coached with knowledge, skills and content to join the forum. At the provincial forum, participants conveyed their messages via skits/dramas with four principles: "no discrimination", "in the best interests of children", "for survival and development of children" and "respect children's opinions". Managers, policy-makers and other participants listened and absorbed children's comments to be included in socio-economic development plan for 2016-2020, to better promote child's rights. Six children were selected from the provincial forum to present

for Lao Cai province in the national one.

In general, in all surveyed locations local authorities and communities paid attention to children's entertainment. Children mostly played the roles of beneficiaries (festivals, International Children's Day, Mid-Autumn Festival, summer activities) rather than contribute in producing expected benefits (via comments, giving opinions on entertainment types and places, group types and frequency of meetings). Children's participation varied by area. In urban areas, children's participation was at the fifth stage (consulted and informed), while that of rural children's participation was at the fourth one (assigned, but informed).

7.3. Obstacles and barriers to child participation

7.3.1. Commitments of leaders

With limited resources, competitive development targets, no systems for monitoring and evaluation of policy-making, work and services for children have not been prioritised properly. While forums were organised, children's participation was limited. There are no entertainment places for children with disabilities and a lack of culture houses in rural residential areas. According to Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism reports, the current number of residential culture houses only covers 50% of communes/wards/towns. There are Centres for Culture and Sports in nine districts, but only two children's houses in Bat Xat and Bac Ha districts. Village/culture houses are not well equipped. In many culture houses, there is only a house and tables and stools, without equipment, bookshelves/library for the community and children. Therefore, children's access to information is still limited. "Boring content of summer activities have not satisfied children's needs. There is no separate playing area for children in residential areas, which makes it difficult for them to enjoy".

7.3.2. Legal framework

There are deficiencies in current regulations due to limited stakeholders' awareness about child's right to participation.

The Law on Marriage and Family has not expressed the principle of respecting children's opinions. In the family, parents and other adults should consult, listen and respect children's opinions.

Minors have not been involved in the handling of administrative decisions that directly impact on children's rights, such as decisions on taking a young offender to reform school or educating her/him at the locality.

The Law on Complaints and Denunciation has not regulated obligations on mandatory denunciation. Cases must be reported and sanctions can be made if obligations are breached for those regularly exposed to children, such as father, mother and teacher.

At execution level, the programme to promote child rights during 2016-2020 has ignored the important group of under six-year-old children. Obviously, such children are unaware and incapable of participating. This means this group of children do not receive education and orientation about participation.

7.3.3. Awareness and capacity of children and related people.

Not all children are knowledgeable and practice their right to participation. In order to participate, children should know participation skills, be guided to practice participation relevant to socio-economic and cultural environments. With such skills, they can positively influence children-related decisions. As shown in Section 7.2.1, parents have limited knowledge of child's right to participation. There is also a lack of teachers and Youth Union officers for social activities who have professional experience in child's right to participation, especially in remote areas. Local officers working in child-related activities do multiple tasks and are inexperienced in promoting children to participate in child-related decisions.

7.3.4. Language and culture

One of the key obstacles preventing ethnic minority children from joining in school activities is cultural differences, which includes linguistic difficulties. Many ethnic minority children can speak little or no Vietnamese when

they enter schools, which causes difficulties when accessing basic information and expressing opinions in classes and meetings.

There are further communication difficulties in classes with different ethnic minority students. Some students said they played with friends from the same ethnic group and was a lack of unity among ethnic groups.

At home, children have not been engaged by parents due to language barriers. "My parents as well as my friends' parents don't care about our studies because they don't speak Vietnamese and are less proficient than us. Therefore, we find it difficult to share our stories or ask for help," said a student in La Pan Tan commune.

"In Mong minority culture as well as other minorities, boys are prioritised over girls in getting educated because they will be the leader of the family. Girls when grown up will get married and leave the family," said a teacher at Muong Khuong high school. This parents' thinking has been deprived educational opportunities to a higher grade for the girls eager to learn and facilitate lazy school girls leave school early. The girls have not been explained and are unaware that knowledge or skills will enhance their development. So they decided to leave school or to accept a decision leaving school quickly, easily. "Girls graduating from a lower secondary school do not study more. They are supposed to get married. There is no point in attending higher school as they will live with their husband's family. Boys need more education," said a parent in La Pan Tan commune.

Moreover, economic factors makes differences in children's groups and their right to access information is implemented conditionally. *"I only have five story books. When I went downtown, I was attracted by car toys, games, pictures and story books. I asked my mother, but she said we were too poor to buy such things. Then, she promised to buy me one if I got good results in the next end of term exam,"* said a primary student in Minh Tan commune.

Surveys show that access to information and mass media, by using a cellphone or internet is limited in remote areas. "The internet café is four kilometers away, too far for us to get access. During IT classes, teachers often allow

us to search for references on the internet for 10 or 15 minutes,” said a secondary school student in La Pan Tan commune. It is different in Lao Cai city and Muong Khuong town, where children can easily access information, via different channels such as television, newspapers and the internet.

7.4. Priorities and Recommendations

In recent years, child’s rights have been enforced in many places in Viet Nam, including Lao Cai province. Children have been supported to found clubs, forums and organise many activities by themselves. However, children’s participation in rural and urban areas and by Kinh and ethnic minority groups varies. Types of participation differ, from expression of opinions to selection of issues affecting their lives, families or communities.

Great efforts have gone into involving children’s participation, but the level of children’s participation has been low, mostly at the fourth (assigned but informed) and third staves (tokenism). It is necessary to have new opportunities to improve children’s participation as regulated and instructed in Decision No.1235/QĐ-TTg dated August 3, 2015 of the Prime Minister on approving the programme to promote child participation during 2016-2020. The following recommendations are based on ideas from children in the survey and interviews with parents and line agencies.

7.4.1. Families

- Parents should get more skills in being parents and children’s friends
- Parents should take care of each development stage of the child for an appropriate orientation and information provision
- Combine with teachers, neighbors and stakeholders to identify child capabilities to not over expect or put learning pressures on children
- Parents should let children do things on their own, and just observe and prevent actions if they are dangerous for them

- Parents should talk with the child about gender education to provide full information, avoid being seduced, engaged in sexual abuse behaviors or making decisions harming themselves, families and communities.

7.4.2. Schools

- Should conduct periodic surveys on students’ opinions about academic programmes, extracurricular activities, knowledge, skills to learn, meals, accommodation and classrooms
- Should update teachers’ knowledge and skills so they can play the role of a psychologist and are trusted and consulted by students
- Should evaluate and replicate bilingual education models for ethnic minority students
- Should coordinate with stakeholders to organise models that promote child’s right to participation
- Should remain in regular contact with students’ families to educate students to be good citizens
- Improve ethnic minority students’ Vietnamese language skills to create favorable conditions for them to enforce the right to participation.

7.4.3. Community, authority and other duty bearers

- Develop principles on respecting child’s ideas. This is one of the basic principles in the Law on Marriage and Family because the child has a relationship with parents and other adults in the family
- Supplement child’s right to express opinions about appointing a guardian for minors, restricting the right of parents to their minor children, allowing minors to participate in administrative decisions directly affecting child’s rights such as making decisions on taking an young

offenders to a reform school or educating her/him at the locality

- Guide and coordinate in organising children's forums
- Coordinate with Yen Bai province to learn the Children's Council model to actively implement reasonably
- Survey children's opinions on activities (such as constructing Culture Houses, play yards, organise summer activities), develop legal document, policies, decisions on children or affecting children (Law on Children, Law on Marriage and

Family, Criminal Law, Law on Complaints and Denunciations, the programme to promote child's rights to participation)

- Suggest and guide children to initiate programmes and activities for them
- Organise training courses in skills for parents, such as making friends with children, listening to children and problem solving skills.

CHAPTER

8

EMERGING ISSUES



8.1. Climate Change has an impact on school attendance

In recent years, climate change has become apparent in Lao Cai and has negatively affected the lives of EM people including regarding school attendance. In very cold weather with frost and ice, mobilizing students to go to school is a very complicated matter for the teachers. As per the rule, preschool and primary students will be off-school to avoid the cold if the temperature is below 10°C, and lower-secondary students will be off-school if the temperature is below 7°C. However, many mountainous areas of Lao Cai often have temperature below 10°C in the winter, so if students are absent from school that often, the school programme will be delayed.

Despite freezing weather, teachers still regularly go to villages to encourage students to go to school. Nevertheless, mobilizing students encounters many obstacles, notably in remote villages. Given the fact that pre-schools and primary schools have their own branch schools in villages/hamlets, the percentage of students attending is still over 90%. Lower and upper secondary schools do not have as wide a school network as primary schools, thus the situation seems to be more difficult. At lower-secondary school, the percentage of students attending is maintained at over 70% in inclement weather.

8.2. New School Modality (VNEN)

The New Primary School Modality (VNEN) is a teaching model, in which the classroom is decorated in a new school model style, more vivid, more beautiful, with a study corner, and a class library arranged by themes which helps students search information easily and do research. Thanks to this model, students can express themselves via adventurous activities to explore, discover and actively acquire knowledge from the school curriculum. Teachers do not give lectures in a traditional way but instruct students to work as per

the Study Guide; students self-study and have group discussions together, combining the application of school materials for their knowledge acquisition.

In theory, this class model and teaching methodology have raised excitement among both teachers and students. Factors such as a lively classroom atmosphere, self-management mechanisms, activeness enhancements, developed self-learning abilities all make students much keener to learn. They become more confident, more flexible and pro-active in learning and communication. Also, students can practice their life skills, convey their ideas, observe and care about their friends' study, express their opinions in their own language.

Being a pioneer in applying the new school model, Lao Cai was selected for filming to serve as an example for other provinces.

However, an independent assessment of this model should be conducted after a period of time of its application in Lao Cai to promote the advantages and overcome the limitations that might arise. For example some children might fall further behind compared to other students in the learning environment of this new model.

8.3. Narrow branch school network

Referring to new requirements on the development of education, particularly basic and comprehensive education innovations, the Provincial Department of Education and Training (DOET) finds that the school network of Lao Cai is currently failing to meet those requirements. Specifically: the school network is still scattered, has many branch schools; many schools in highland areas are small and scattered and have difficulty investing in the standardisation and modernisation of schools and classrooms and in improving the quality of comprehensive education. Therefore, the Department of Education and Training has advised the provincial People's Committee

to develop a proposal on the pre-school, secondary school, and continuing education network planning of Lao Cai province in the period 2015-2020, with targets to 2030.

According to the Planning Proposal, by 2020, Lao Cai province will have a basic and appropriate school network (which both meets immediate needs and ensures stability and sustainable development). On that basis, Lao Cai will continue to invest in standardisation and modernisation; students will focus on school attendance and will have good conditions to improve their learning; Lao Cai will implement mountainous education standardisation, and will improve the quality of comprehensive education, will modernise key schools and strive to make the Lao Cai Education Sector be among the top of 15 in the Highland and Northern provinces; Lao Cai will take lead in EM education nationwide by the year 2020.

However, as per the Planning Proposal, the number of branch schools will be reduced to 138. The branch school network is one of solutions to making primary education universalisation successful in recent years, and is internationally recognised. It has made schools closer to students, enabling them to attend. Lao Cai province has a scattered population, sloping geographical conditions and a harsh climate. A branch school network is thus very appropriate. The distance from home to school is a barrier causing dropouts. Transferring 100% of students in grades 3, 4 and 5 to the central schools under the direction of the People's Committee of Lao Cai Province (Official Paper No. 218/UBND-VX dated 24 Jan. 2013) would make it difficult for a possibly not small number of students in most remote areas to attend classes, especially for those students who are not in a boarding school. On the other hand, the management of boarding for young students on a large scale is not easy, which may raise new difficulties. Therefore the intention of decreasing the number of branch schools should be carefully considered so as not to create barriers for ethnic minority children.

8.4. Internet and potential impacts on children

Internet has been set up and developed in Viet Nam since 1997. Since then Viet Nam has always been internationally considered as one of the countries with the highest rate of annual increases in the number of internet users. Viet Nam has been continuously ranked in the top 20 countries with the largest amount of internet users in the world and ranked 7th in Asia.

In reality, children have a quite easy access to the internet in two among the 6 investigated areas which are Lao Cai city and Muong Khuong town. Moreover, the usage of telephones and computers in households which connect into the internet shows it clearly. In cafés and Food and Drink service location there is a Wi-Fi connection. There are advantages and disadvantages of internet access in the implementation of children's right to participation. On the one hand, diaries and forums in websites are channels where children may express their opinions. However, some children are not monitored sufficiently by their parents and families, thus they spend so much times on the internet that they may be at risk of becoming internet or Facebook addicts and many unpredictable potential effects may occur... This matter has been analysed by the Consultants in the earlier part of the report.

As of the investigation time, children in rural areas do not face these potential risks. However, due to the current popularity of the internet and of smartphone usage, these factors may impact children if there is no orientation. Many parents in rural areas such as the investigated Minh Tan, Tan Tien, La Pan Tan communes express their concerns about the risks that their children may be influenced by older teenagers.

"The children here are kind, well-behaved, but we are afraid that they will imitate the older male teenagers. Since the older ones don't go to schools anymore, they go out to work far away and come back to the village during the weekend or by the end of the month. Each time when they come back, they bring many new things, new phones, new ideas which children might easily follow if they want to" (Parent TLN from Tan Tien Commune).

8.5. The changes in parent-child relations in the modern era

Nowadays, the tendency of the nuclear family has been set up clearly. Due to the effect of urbanisation, differences in opinions among generations have arisen more often, and the family scale tends to be reduced in terms of member numbers. Families with 3-4 members tend to be the norm among current Vietnamese families, even in the studied locations. The most predominant sign appears in municipal areas and towns. The family environment is changing with differences in points of view of youth, parents and grandparents displaying a clearer “generation gap”. Long term cultural values may gradually fade away and new values will be developed. This matter also means that conditions for children’s participation to family life have been changing, creating the new opportunities for children to express their opinions, while possibly generating between parents and children.

Moreover, “silence” gaps in families have gradually arisen. Parents and children have less time during the day to discuss matters and talk with each other. In a number of households, the work of the individual is performed by himself/herself. Many children have fallen into silence and a tendency of autism among children has increased while there is a lack of psychological experts or and of a psychological counseling switchboard for children in many local areas. In addition, due to parents’ expectations of the success in school of their children, there is a pressure to compete with friends carried upon not only by the parents, but also by the child. This makes children become confused and anxious; this heavy stress can cause them to become depressed and fed up, to want to get away, to use drugs and alcohol and engage in other destructive behavior.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Child care and protection work has been improved drastically during the last few years in terms of four children's rights groups:

- Child health care has improved; the grassroots health network has been strengthened and upgraded, poor children and under 6 children can access free-of-charge health check-ups and treatment, the number of cases of under nutrition and of child and maternal mortality has decreased.
- Education for children has evolved in positive ways: the national education system has been developed quite comprehensively, physical facilities for the development of education have been reinforced; a friendly and safe studying environment has been strengthened; ratios of age appropriate pupils attending kindergartens, primary schools and lower secondary schools have increased. Social equity in education has been a focus in implementation work and is getting much better, especially for girls, children of ethnic minorities and poor children.
- Child protection has moved to a demand based approach so as to meet the fundamental rights of the child. Prevention and mitigation of child mistreatment, abuse, violation, exploitation and falling into special circumstances as well as assistance and restorative programmes for the reintegration into the community of children having special circumstances and vulnerable children all have changed for the better.
- Entertainment activities for children have received more attention and care from families and authorities at different levels. Child awareness has gradually improved, and children are better equipped with the necessary knowledge and information to express their ideas and participate in community activities in different manners and at various levels as in schools and in

local and national activities related to children.

However, child protection and care in Lao Cai face a number of bottlenecks and issues as follows: the under nutrition rate is still high among under 5 children; it is still difficult for poor children and children in special circumstances to access high quality health services; the quality of education for ethnic minorities is limited; a number of poor children and of children in special circumstances have no access to education yet; cases of child abuse and of children in conflict with the law still happen; early marriage cases still occur in some ethnic minorities areas; areas lack for playing, entertainment and spiritual culture activities for children in many localities in the province; children's right to participate in social activities is limited.

The obstacles and limitations mentioned above are related to the following points: Lao Cai is one of the 5 poorest provinces in the country; therefore potential resources from the province and citizens for child care and protection investment are limited, especially for children in rural, ethnic minorities, or remote areas and in especially difficult circumstances; the harsh natural conditions plus poor infrastructure have constrained development in remote areas, generated inequity in development opportunities and affected access to social services; citizens, institutions and branches at different levels are not fully aware of children's rights and child protection and care; the leadership and engagement of some local authorities have not yet been decisive and strong; organizations and human resources in child protection and care have been reinforced only slowly, especially at the grassroots level; coordination among agencies at different levels and sectors is poor; communication at the grassroots level has not occurred regularly, widely and effectively; child education, care and protection have not been evenly socialised, and only in urban areas; it is difficult to carry out the management and coordination of the Child Care and Protection Programme since the targets of the Programme have been

integrated into other programmes, and there is no separate budget resource.

Key Recommendations

General recommendation: Faster and lasting economic development. Continue to invest in infrastructure in mountainous areas. When resources are limited, priority should be given to broad-spectrum investment in upland and more disadvantaged areas to achieve tangible breakthroughs rather than spreading the investment out. Further improved awareness and protection of children's rights in the political system and the public, especially among minority groups. The quality and utilisation of statistics related to children and child-friendly socio-economic development planning should be enhanced.

Rights to health and nutrition

Review and build capacity for local health staff, with a special focus on training ethnic minority village birth assistants to become skilled midwives. Village midwives must have a nuanced understanding of ethnic minority languages, cultures and beliefs to create trust and encourage pregnant mothers to access health services. This will lead to improved primary health and maternity care as well as reduce maternal and infant mortality.

Increase the number of patient beds in low ratio of patient bed districts. Improve the quality of maternal care and child nutrition (health services in nutritional and maternal care). In particular expand advocacy and education activities for behaviour change in nutrition, encourage breastfeeding, use clean water, maintain personal hygiene (handwashing with soap before breast-feeding, cooking, breast cleaning before breast-feeding) and environmental hygiene, implement interdisciplinary and inter-level coordination in prevention of under nutrition.

Develop the family economy, ensure food security and increase production to improve the quality of meals for people, especially children, to prevent stunting and under nutrition.

Improve the management capacity at grassroots level, prioritise resources to repair

and upgrade damaged and degraded water supply works.

Encourage community involvement in the protection of clean water and sanitation. Establish community-led and managed regulations and a convention on water and sanitation.

Evaluate and share good practices from models of care of mothers and young children which rely on the community, the Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition (IMAM) model and one on community to commune hygiene employed outside the project area(s).

Right to development

Continue to prioritise the development of education in remote and disadvantaged areas. Build schools and class networks matching the specific characteristics of population distribution and local cultural features, maintain a reasonable number of schools in worse off areas. Create facilities for children with disabilities.

Continue to seek solutions to improve the quality of ethnic minority education in line with limited resources. Prioritise to replicate the results of the Bilingual education programme based on the mother tongue in the most difficult areas, in which the official teaching H'mong language is in line with the 2015-2016 Guidelines for the education of EM issued by MOET. Conduct independent evaluation of VNET's effectiveness. Discover reasons for the higher academic achievement of ethnic minority groups in Bao Thang, Bao Yen and Van Ban districts as well as continue to innovate teaching methods for application in other districts. Implement a movement of "Building friendly schools, active students", strengthen life skills education; integrate the traditional culture of ethnic minorities into teaching programmes.

Strengthen coordination between schools, families and society to raise children and parents' awareness of the value of education and communicate that not going to school or dropping out is future self-renunciation. Also, resolutely handle cases of child marriage, dropping out of school and other backward habits.

Provide sufficient and timely policies for teachers and education managers working in remote mountain areas.

Continue research to (i) overcome ineffectiveness of budget allocation per capita in localities which have low population density, (ii) develop mechanisms to support boarding students, students living in especially disadvantaged areas in accordance to education performance (percentage of students graduating from secondary schools) and (iii) promote socialisation activities to suit all parties concerned with education.

Child protection

Policies:

Continue to improve policies at national and provincial levels which support cure/treatment costs post-medical examinations for women and children returning as trafficking victims, support H'mong children whose fathers have died and mothers sold in China or those not allowed to follow mothers to live with a stepfather's family.

Better integrate child protection goals into local socio-economic development plans. Sanctions should be stricter, especially regarding child trafficking, violence and abuse. Early application of Decree No.136/2013/ND-CP which provides social support policies for social protection subjects. Shorten processing times for administrative procedures to determine orphan status.

Childcare and protection services system:

Continue to improve the capacity of the social work centre in Lao Cai province to broaden coverage of services with higher expertise. Maintain and expand the assistance and reintegration model for human trafficking victims, such as "Nhan ai" (compassion) houses. Conduct annual assessments of effectiveness and efficiency of existing childcare and protection models for replication.

Child protection organisational structure:

Establish psychological counseling centres for children and a telephone help line at provincial

level as well as psychological counseling centres for children at district level. Assess performances of eight counseling points in the community and 133 points in schools for replication.

Boost the role of stakeholders through decentralisation and empowerment associated with responsibility for creating local, agency and unit initiatives, enhance interdisciplinary coordination and strengthen inspection, control and supervision. Strengthen questioning of the National Assembly and People's Council on childcare and protection. Supervisory agencies should involve and empower children and have sufficient authority, strong voices and independence.

Resources:

Continue training and capacity building for DOLISA officers, especially at grassroots level. Improve a system of specialised staff for childcare and protection in communes, wards and towns as well as build a network of collaborators for childcare and protection in villages/hamlets.

Reasonable allocation and effective use of budget provided in each area with priority given to remote areas.

Strengthen awareness:

Continue to strengthen communication, propaganda, dissemination and education on laws to raise people's awareness of child protection in society. Improve the quality of communication by using pictures as visual aids, best practice models and practices. Promote education on self-defense and soft skills.

Continue to enhance levels of responsibility for Party committees and local authorities for the protection of children, particularly in ethnic minority, remote and areas facing special difficulties.

Guidance and support from central level:

There should be better multi-sectoral coordination at all levels from central to grassroots levels to create consistency in implementation methods. A coordination

and guidance mechanism is needed for the implementation of the National Action Programme for Children.

Improvements in coordination with international, private and civil society partners:

Continuing coordination and collaboration in the provision of child protection services in the province

Children's right to participation

In families, parents should be a traveling companion for children. Parents must attend training on friendly relationships with children, listening, problem solving, gender and educational skills. Parents should pay attention to each child's development stage for suitable orientation. Empower youth, listen, offer advice and guidance for children to behave in appropriate ways.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Main characteristics of the three districts/city and six communes/wards selected for conducting the field survey

Lao Cai city is a northern border city and capital of Lao Cai province. The city has a big national and international border gate, which plays an important role in the Kunming-Lao Cai-Ha Noi-Hai Phong economic corridor. As a result, the city is an important hub for trade, economics, tourism services and handicraft development. Currently, the city has 17 wards and communes with 25 ethnic groups, in which the majority is the Kinh group and a poverty rate of 5.3%⁵⁸. Hop Thanh and Ta Phoi communes are located in remote areas, hence local people's lives are difficult, backward customs and habits

Kim Tan ward is the political and social centre of the city. Local people's living standards are relatively stable, household income is VND 42 million per capita per year, people are well educated⁵⁹. The ward covers 2.48ha, with a population of 17,453 - mainly Kinh people.

Nam Cuong ward covers 11.75ha, has a population of 3,457 people and is divided into 18 residential clusters, with nine ethnic groups (Kinh, Tay, Giay, Dao, Ko Tu, Thai, Nung, Muong, Cao Lan), most of whom are Kinh.

Muong Khuong is one of the country's 62 poorest districts, is mountainous border district which has an important position on defense - security. The district has 16 commune-level administrative units, with 14 ethnic groups living together, ethnic minorities accounted for 88%, the poverty rate remains high, accounting for 31.39%. The topography of the district has many chasm separating strips alternating narrow valley creating transportation difficulties and inclement weather. The district has little agricultural potential but have the

potential of forest land (accounting for 38.46%) and minerals.

La Pan Tan is a highland commune of Muong Khuong district, is one of difficult communes (under 135 Programme) in the district. There are nine villages with five ethnic groups, H'mong is the majority (94%) and four others are Kinh, Tay, Dao and Nung. Local people mostly rely on agriculture in a self-sufficient manner, with a per capita income of VND5.3 million/person/year. The percentage of poor households is 48.59%, near poor is 38.84%⁶⁰.

Muong Khuong town is in the north, a township of Muong Khuong district, with 28 villages, populated by 14 ethnic groups, of which Nung, H'mong, Thai and Kinh are the majority. The poverty rate accounts for 25.6%⁶¹.

Bao Yen district is located in the southeast of Lao Cai province, with 18 administrative units (one town, 17 communes) and 15 ethnic groups, in which Kinh, Tay, Dao are the majority. Poor households account for 17.89%, near poor household is 14.54%⁶². The district relies on forestry, with forests and forest land occupying 70% of its natural area, 51% of forestry covered land (2009). Natural land in Bao Yen district is suitable for industrial crops and fruit trees. The district has great advantages for tourism development.

Tan Tien is a third region commune of Bao Yen district, a farthest commune from the centre of the district (40km). The commune covers a large area, resulting in big distances between villages. There are 13 villages, with four ethnic groups in the commune. Local people live on forestry and agriculture and the poor household rate is high at 37.55%⁶³.

58 Data table provided by Lao Cai City People Committee to the research team

59 2014 report on review of child-friendly ward criteria implementation

60 Report on socio-economic situation in 2014 and socio-economic development plan in 2015

61 Data provided by Muong Khuong District People's Committee to the research team

62 Data provided by Bao Yen District People's Committee to the research team

63 Data provided by Bao Yen District People's Committee to the research team

Minh Tan is another third region commune of Bao Yen district, with 12 villages and four ethnic groups (Tay, Kinh, Dao, H'mong). Agriculture and forestry are the main economic activities (accounting for 88%) and poor households amount to 18.04%⁶⁴.

Appendix 2. In-depth analysis of OOSC in Lao Cai

Introduction

This section analyses out of school children (OOSC) in Lao Cai province aged 5 years old, primary school (6-10 years old) and lower secondary school (11-14 years old). OOSC includes children who have never gone to school or have attended school, but dropped out.

Data sources for this analysis were taken from the Viet Nam Population and Housing Census in 2009 (2009 Census), a good source of data to analyze OOSC based on the characteristics of age, ethnicity, gender, urban or rural, disability and migration. These OOSC analytical results complement valuable information for the statistical system of the education sector not available until now, despite about the situation 5 years ago.

The analysis draws on the methodology applied to the "Out-of-school Children: Viet Nam's Study" report conducted by the Ministry of Education and Training with technical support from UNICEF and consultants, in which Lao Cai was one of eight provinces/cities analysed, (Lao Cai, Dien Bien, Ninh Thuan, Kon Tum, Gia Lai, Ho Chi Minh City, Dong Thap and An Giang).

The analysis aims to provide a critical review on the statistics and characteristics of OOSC aged 5-14 and children who attend primary and lower secondary schools but at-risk of dropping out in Lao Cai, analyse barriers to school and bottlenecks that hinder their ability to attend schools. The results from this analysis will help raise the awareness on OOSC, improve the management and planning of education and training as well as promote policy advocacy for OOSC reductions, realise child's right to education for all children, including the disadvantaged.

⁶⁴ Report on summary of health 2014.

The analysis is based on the Five Dimensions of Exclusion Model in the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children conducted by UNICEF and UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS).

The five dimensions of exclusion are:

Dimension 1: Children at preschool age not attending preschool or primary education

Dimension 2: Children at primary school age not attending primary or lower secondary education

Dimension 3: Children at lower secondary school age not attending primary or secondary education

Dimension 4: Children at risk of dropping out of primary school

Dimension 5: Children at risk of dropping out of lower secondary school

The first three dimensions address OOSC. Dimension 1 includes OOSC aged five, Dimension 2 covers children at primary school age and Dimension 3 includes children at lower secondary school age.

The two remaining dimensions address children attending primary or lower secondary school, regardless of age, but at risk of dropping out.

The section on barriers and recommendations are informed by field work results in Lao Cai City, Bao Yen and Muong Khuong districts.

Some considerations in data and analysis:

- 2009 Census counted all Vietnamese regularly residing in the territory of Viet Nam on April 1, 2009.
- Data on the population age in the 2009 Census was the exact age in April 1st 2009, that is 365 days by April 1st 2009 will be counted as one year of age. This calculation is different from the calculation by year of

birth of the education sector, in which, the age will be the current year minus the year of birth. Two different methods of calculation explain the statistical difference between statistics and the education sector. In order to fix this, the calculation of age in this report will take 2008 as the current year, which means that the age will be 2008 subtracting the year of birth stated in the 2009 Census. For example, children aged five in this report were those who reported their year of birth as 2003 (2008-2003=5), or children aged 14 in this report were those who reported their year of birth as 1994 (2008-1994=14). By doing so, the data in this report could be comparable to corresponding data in the school year 2008-2009 (first semester opened in September 2008) of education sector.

- The 2009 Census asked about the attendance status by the question: "At the moment are you [NAME] studying, dropped out or never go to school?" with three options of answer: "Attending school", "Already dropped out" and "Never go to school before". These answers determine the status of attendance in this report.
- In the 2009 Census, there were four questions related to disabilities of four basic functions of vision, hearing, mobility (walking) and memory or concentration. Family members aged five and above will be asked with these questions. The respondents will self-evaluate and rate their disability into four degrees of "Not difficult", "Difficult", "Very difficult" and "Disabled". One individual is considered disabled if he/she cannot perform any of four above-mentioned abilities or considered partially disabled if he/she finds it difficult or very difficult to perform any of these four abilities. One individual is considered having no disability if all these four basic functions are performed without any difficulty.
- This report uses a definition of migration used in the 2009 Census. According to the 2009 Census, an individual is

considered a migrant if he/she changes the residence from a district to another at least once within five years before the 2009 Census. Such definition is relevant to the urbanisation status in Viet Nam, as people often migrate from rural to urban areas of a province or migrate from a less urbanised province to another city other than that province.

- Nevertheless, a limitation of 2009 Census is that there is no question regarding the purpose of migration. Therefore, it is hard to determine whether migration is to seek employment in the city, or to find casual seasonal job or due to the natural disaster.
- As 2009 Census does not include child labor statistics, this report fails to provide analysis of working children.
- When analysing detailed disaggregation, any cell with a sample of or smaller than 50 (population) will not be included in the analysis as the sample is too small. In such a case, all cells in the spreadsheet related to this disaggregated group will be left blank. However, for those with a sample of over 50 but not too big, a cautious interpretation of data is advised.
- Viet Nam has 54 ethnic groups, with Kinh the majority and all the rest considered minority groups. Ethnic groups analysed in this report include Kinh and main minority groups populated in Lao Cai province, including Dao, Giay, Mong, Nung and Tay and other groups.

OOS children aged 5

Five-year-old OOSC include those who did not attend preschool or primary school (before right age).

By the time of 2009 Census, the total number of children aged 5 by 2008 (born in 2003) in Lao Cai was 13,088, with 88.5% and 11.5% the school attendance and OOS rates, respectively. The number of Lao Cai OOSC aged 5 years was 1,505. The percentage of Lao Cai OOSC aged 5 was lower than the 12.2% of the country and second lowest of eight provinces (Figure App.2.1).

Figure 2.1. Five-year-old attendants and OOSC in Lao Cai province

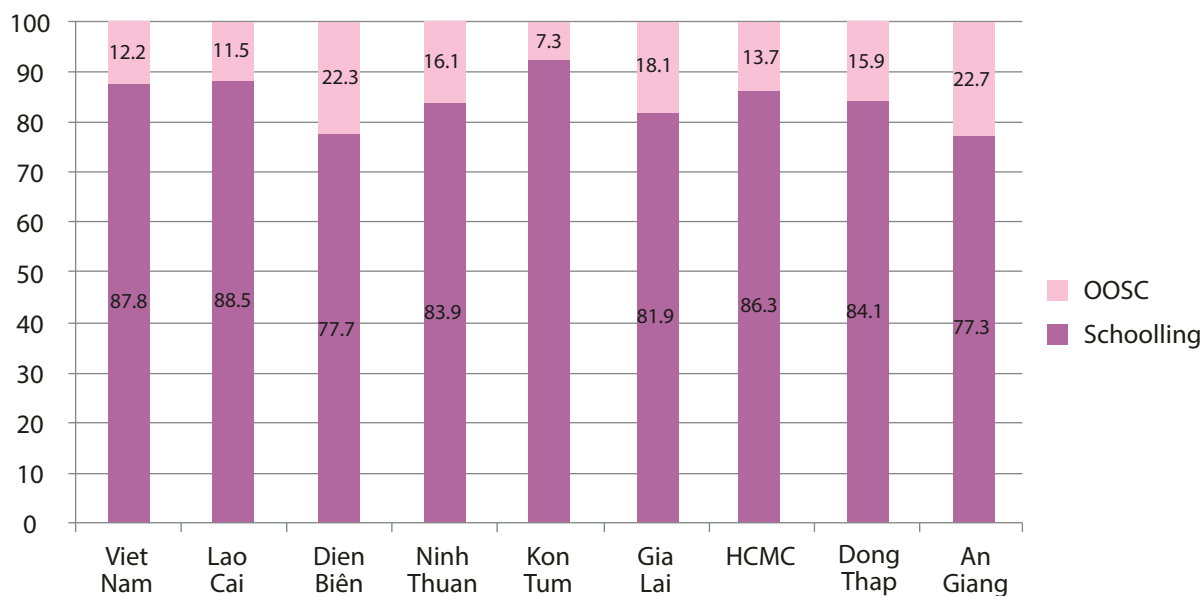
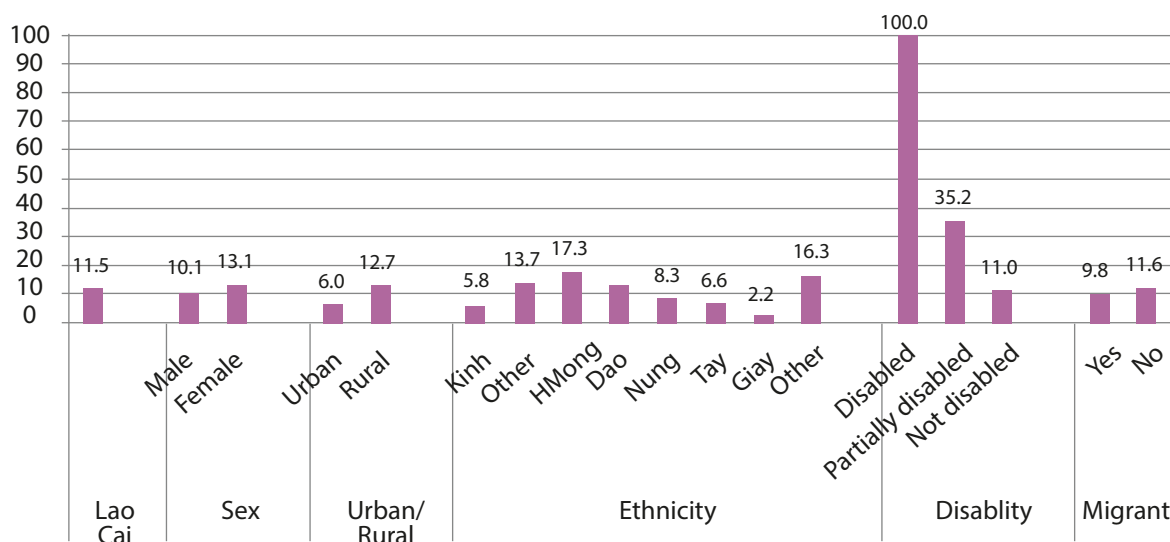


Figure App 2.2 provides visual information on the percentage of 5-year-old OOSC in Lao Cai province divided by characteristics, such as

gender, residence is urban or rural, ethnicity, disability and migration status.

Figure 2.2. Five-year-old OOSC in Lao Cai province by characteristics



The rate of 5-year-old OOS boys is not much lower than that of girls (10.1% versus 13.1%). Similar results applied to migrant and immigrant children (9.8% versus 11.6%). Nevertheless with detailed disaggregation of urban and rural areas, Kinh people and other ethnic groups, disabled and non-disabled groups, the percentage of 5-year-old Lao Cai OOS displayed a big gap. The proportion of rural 5-year-old OOSC was double that in urban areas at 12.7% and 6.0%, respectively.

The rate of 5-year-old OOSC of other ethnic minorities was double that of Kinh, 13.7% versus 5.8%, respectively. Of which, the rate of Mong 5-year-old OOSC was highest (17.3%), triple that of Kinh, followed by 5-year-old OOS Dao children (12.9%), double that of Kinh.

The number of children aged 5 with disabilities (50) was insufficient to analyze, but the percentage of 5-year-old OOSC with partial disabilities in Lao Cai was triple that of children the same age without disabilities, 11.0% versus

35.2%, respectively. Another surprise was that non-migrant families had a rate of 5-year-old OOSC slightly higher than families with migrants 11.6% versus 9.8%, respectively.

Out-of-school children at primary age

OOSC at primary age include those 6-10 years who do not attend primary school or lower-secondary school (attending school before the age).

At the time of conducting the National Population survey in 2009, Lao Cai had 61,822 children aged 6-10 to 2008 (born in 1998-2002), divided into 90.5% attended primary or lower-secondary schools and 9.5% were OOS (see Figure 5.10). The number of OOSC aged 6-10 in Lao Cai was 5,873. The percentage of OOS primary children in Lao Cai was double higher than nationwide (4%), the third highest among eight provinces.

Figure App 2.4 provides visual information about the percentage of OOSC at primary school age in Lao Cai divided by characteristics, such as age, gender, residence is urban or rural, ethnicity, disability and migration status.

The percentage of primary school aged OOSC increased slightly with age, which meant the status of primary school student dropouts slightly increased by final education level grade. Some 8.8% of OOSC are aged 10.

There were big gaps in primary school aged OOSC in Lao Cai between boys and girls, urban and rural areas, Kinh people and other ethnic groups, disabled and non-disabled as well as immigrants and migrants. These gaps are bigger than the ratios related to the 5-year-old OOSC.

Figure 2.3. Percentage of primary attendants and primary age OOSC in Lao Cai

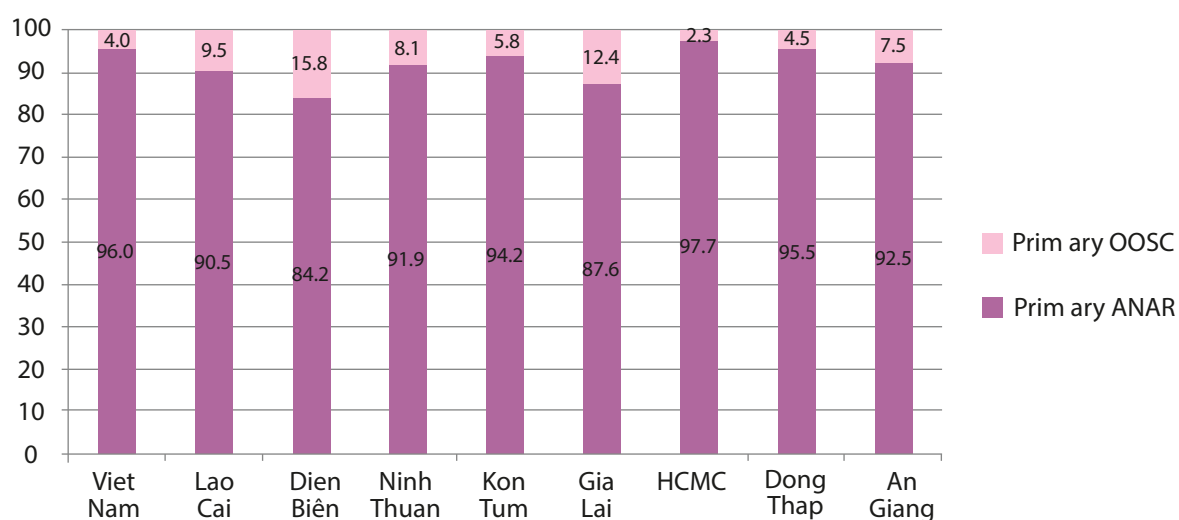
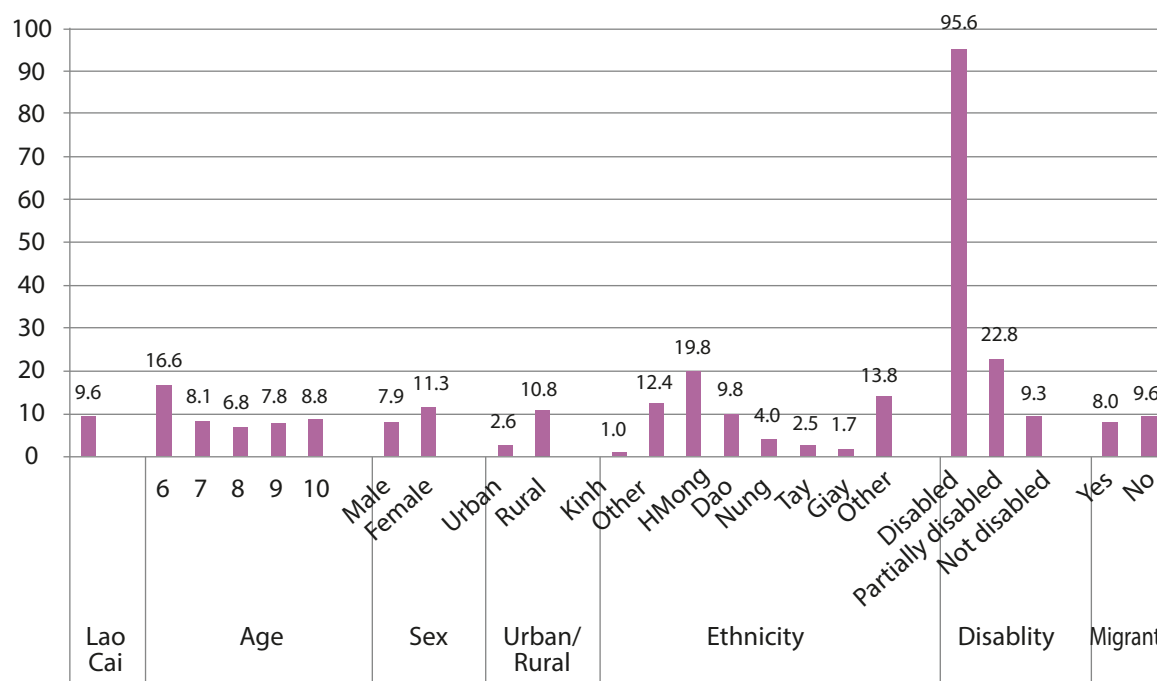


Figure 2.4. Percentage of primary-aged OOSC in Lao Cai province divided by characteristics

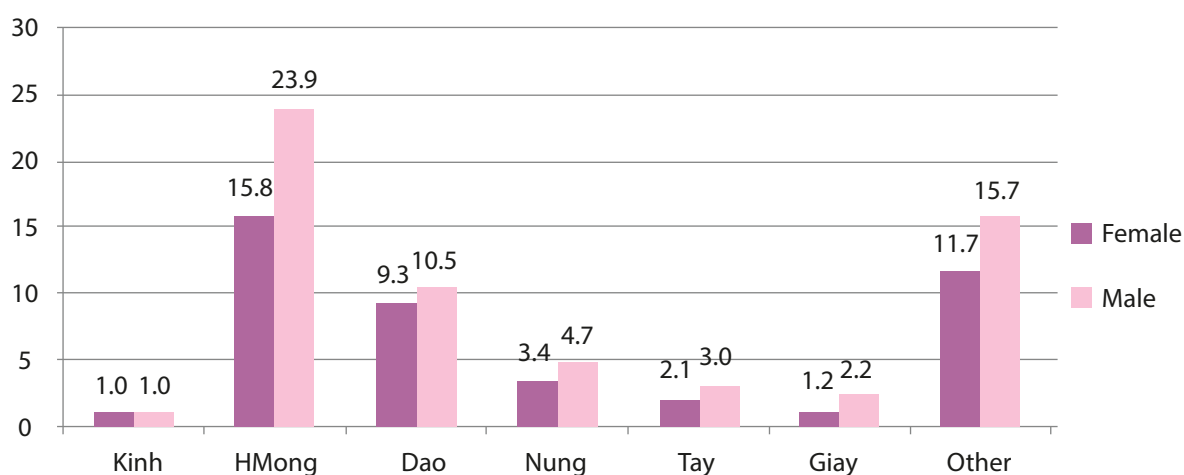


The percentage of primary school age OOSC girls is 1.4 times higher than that of boys, 11.3% against 7.9%, respectively. The underlying reason is that ethnic minorities have higher percentages of primary school age OOSC girls than boys. Mong account for one-third of the

primary school age population and the ratio of primary education OOSC girls is 1.5 times higher than boys. (Figure App 2.5).

The percentage of primary school aged rural OOSC was four-fold higher than urban areas, 10.8% versus 2.6%, respectively.

Figure 2.5. Percentage of OOSC at primary age by ethnicity and gender



The percentage of primary school aged OOSC of other ethnic minorities was more than 12-fold higher than Kinh, 12.4% against 1.0%, respectively. Mong have highest ratio of primary school age OOSC (19.8%), meaning one-in-five Mong primary school age children do not attend primary school. The percentage

of OOSC Mong children at primary school age was 20-fold higher than for Kinh, followed by Dao (10-fold) and Nung (four-fold).

The percentage of primary school aged OOSC with disabilities was 95.6% and that of primary school aged OOSC with partial disabilities was twice the rate of children at the same

age without disabilities 22.8% versus 9.3%, respectively. Primary school age children in non-migrant families had a higher proportion of OOSC than migrant families, corresponding to 9.6% against 8.0%.

Out-of-school children at lower-secondary school age

OOSC at lower-secondary school included 11-14 year children who do not attend lower-secondary or upper-secondary school (under-aged schooling), or even primary schools (over-aged schooling).

At the time of conducting the National Population survey in 2009, Lao Cai province had 54,016 children aged 11-14 as of 2008 (born in 1994-1997), with 72.9% lower or upper secondary school attendants, 9.6% primary school attendants and 17.5% out of school, which meant one-in-five lower secondary children was OOS (Figure 5:13). The number of lower-secondary school aged OOSC of Lao Cai was 9,452. The rate of lower secondary age OOSC was significantly higher than the proportion of primary school age OOSC in Lao

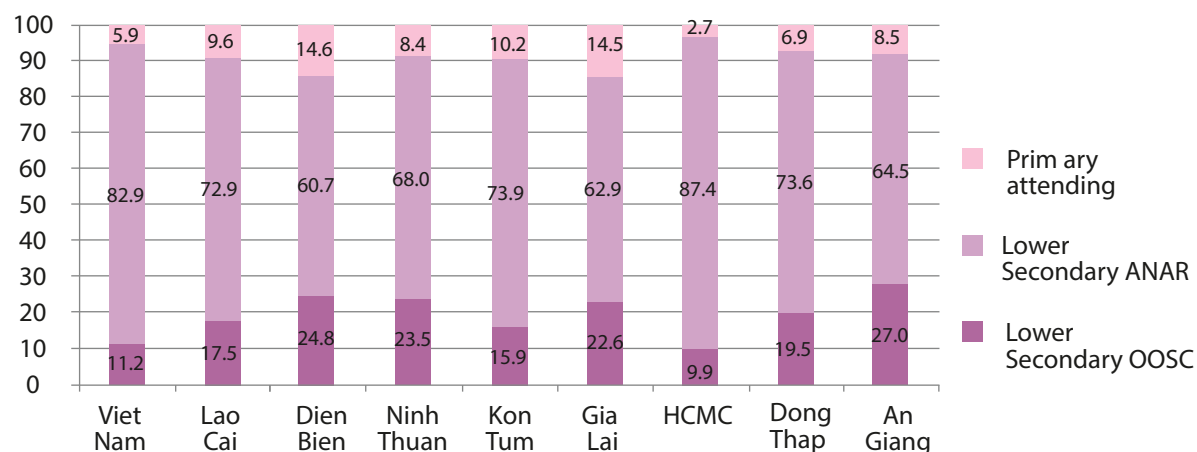
Cai (9.6%), 1.5 times higher than the country's average of 11.2% and the second highest among eight provinces.

At the time of the National Population survey in 2009, Lao Cai had a small ratio of lower secondary school age children attending vocational training courses, which did not affect the ratio of OOSC at lower-secondary school age.

Figure App 2.6 provides visual information on the percentage of lower secondary aged OOSC in Lao Cai divided by characteristics, including age, gender and residence is urban or rural, ethnicity, status of disability and migrant status.

The rate of Lao Cai lower secondary age OOSC increases with age and faster than the primary school age rate. This also means an increase in school dropout rates by the last grade of lower secondary education, similar to the last primary school grade, but with a greater degree than primary school. At the age of 14 there was 25.8% OOSC, which means one-in-four children aged 14 has a non-attendant child, while for those aged 10 there is a 8.8% OOSC.

Figure App2.6. Percentage of school attendants and OOSC at lower-secondary age

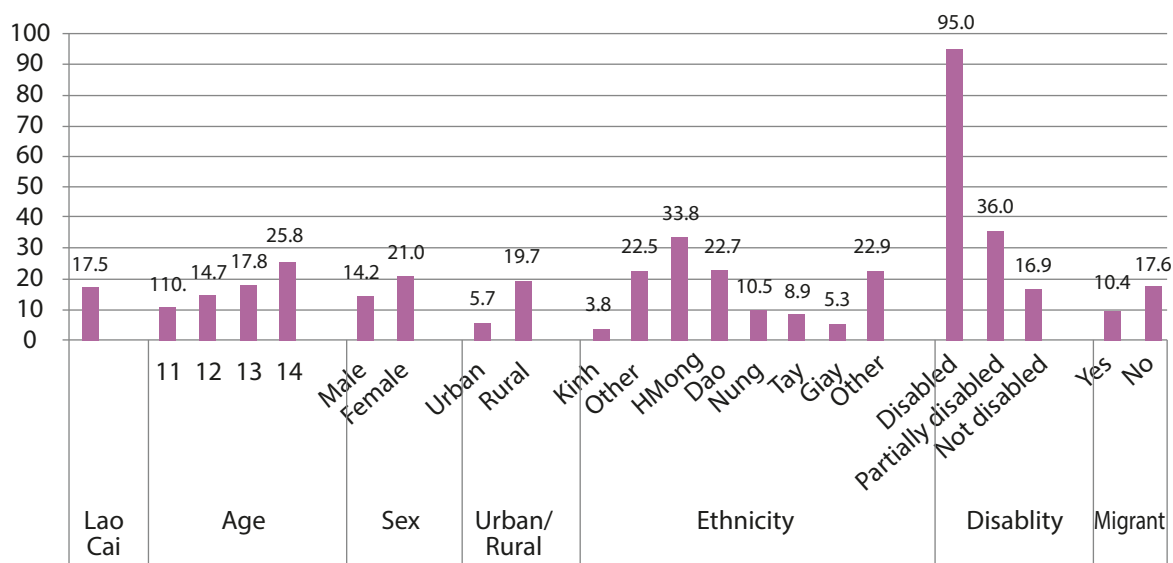


Note: lower secondary ANAR is the ratio of children at the age of lower-secondary school attending lower or upper secondary schools.

disabilities and non-disabled students as well as migrants and non-migrants. These differences are much greater than primary school age ones.

There were significant differences in the rates of lower secondary age OOSC between boys and girls, urban and rural areas, students with

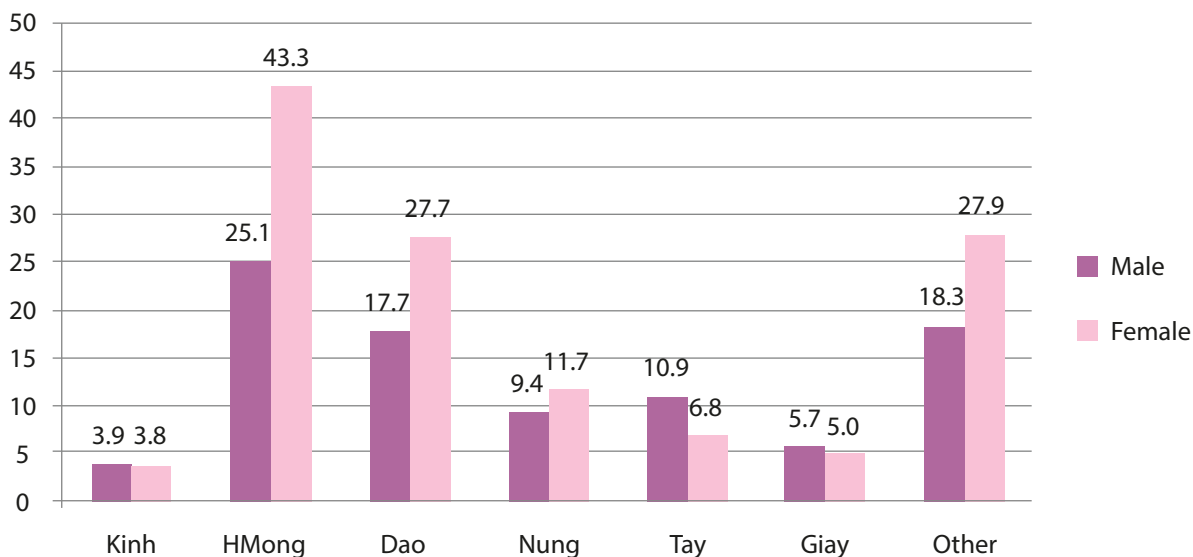
Figure App2.7. Percentage of OOSC at age of lower-secondary school by characteristics



The ratio of OOS girls at age of lower-secondary school was 1.5 times higher than boys, 21.0% versus 14.2%, respectively. The cause is similar to OOSC at primary school age, but to a larger extent. The underlying reason is most ethnic minorities have a higher percentage of primary

school aged OOS girls than boys, with Mong accounting for one-third of the population at primary school age and OOS primary education girls at 1.5 times higher than boys (Figure App 2.8).

Figure App2.8. Percentage of OOSC at lowersecondary age by ethnicity and gender



The ratio of OOSC at lower secondary age in rural areas was nearly four-fold higher than urban areas, 19.7% versus 5.7%, and that of other ethnic groups was almost six-fold higher than for Kinh. Mong have highest ratio of OOSC at lower secondary age, nearly nine times higher than for Kinh, then Dao and Nung ethnic groups at six- and almost three-fold higher, respectively than Kinh.

Children with disabilities or partial disabilities with a lower secondary age OOS rate account for a much higher rate of children without disabilities. Finally, the ratio in non-migrant families was 1.7 times higher than for migrant families, 17.6% versus 10.4%, respectively.

Children at risk of drop-outs

One of the methods to study children at risk of dropping out of school is to study those who have already dropped out to gain insights.

A school drop-out is defined as one who went to school the previous year, but had failed to return at the time of the 2009 Census. This means there is a need to calculate children at school during two consecutive years.

The 2009 Census did not provide such drop-out dates, but had data on education level of OOSC, discontinued and over age training.

Such data can be used to analyse children at risk of dropping out.

Children out of school in this section consist of primary school age (6-10 year) children or lower-secondary school age (11-14 years) (as of 2008) who had previously been to school, but by 2009 did not go to school.

Drop-out children at primary school age

According to Figure App 2.9, 2.1% of Lao Cai primary school age children had dropped out, the fourth-highest ranking out of eight selected provinces and higher than the country average of 1.2%.

Figure App2.9. Percentage of drop-out children at primary school age

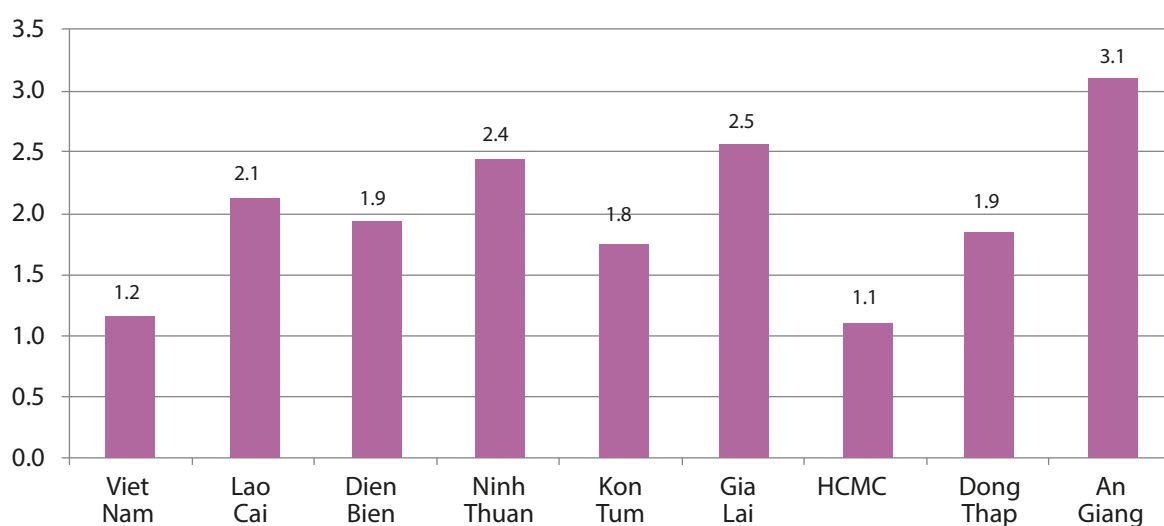
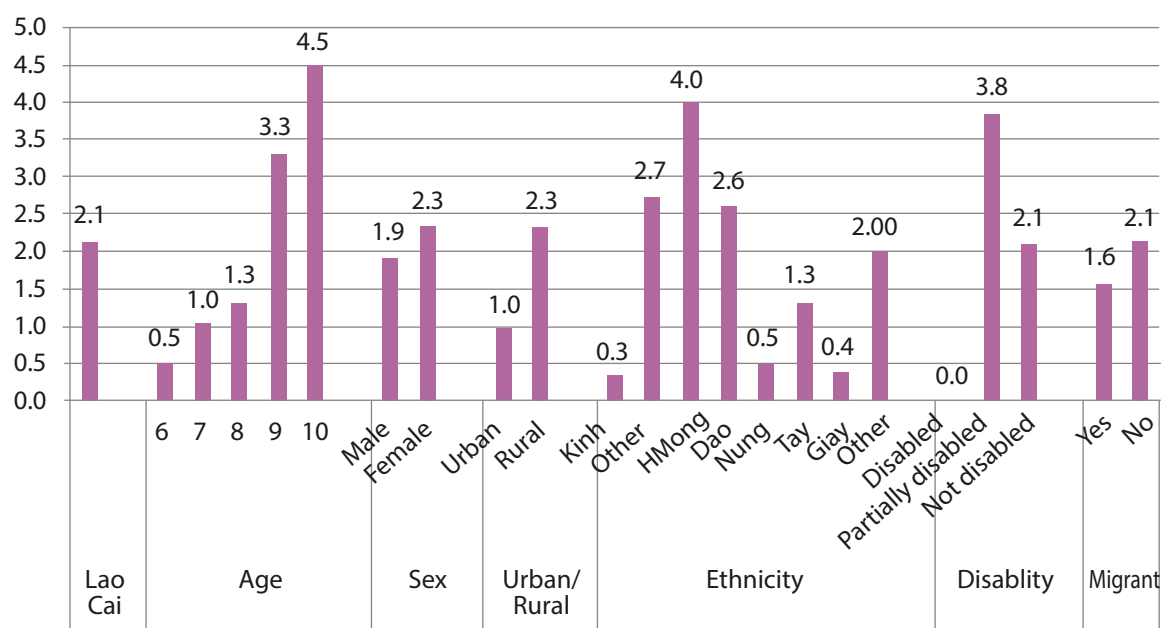


Figure App 2.10 provides visual information on the percentage of drop-outs at primary school age divided by characteristics, such as age,

gender, urban or rural, ethnicity, disability and migration status.

Figure App2.10. Percentage of drop-outs at primary school age by characteristics



The percentage of primary school age children dropping out of school in Lao Cai tends to increase with age. The more senior, the greater the percentage of primary school age children discontinuing classes. The percentage of drop-out children aged 10 was by 4.5% and that of drop-out girls at primary school age was higher than boys, but insignificant when compared to the big gap between rural and urban areas, ethnic groups, disabled children and groups of non/migrants.

The percentage of primary school age drop-out children in rural areas was double that of urban areas 2.3% against 1.0%, respectively. The ratio for ethnic groups (2.7%) was nine-fold higher than Kinh. Mong had the highest drop-out rate (4.0%), 13-fold higher than Kinh, followed by ethnic minority Dao and Tay that were 2.6%, higher than Kinh. The percentage of discontinued primary school age children with partial disabilities was almost double that of non-disabled children. Such ratios for non-migrant groups were higher than for migrants.

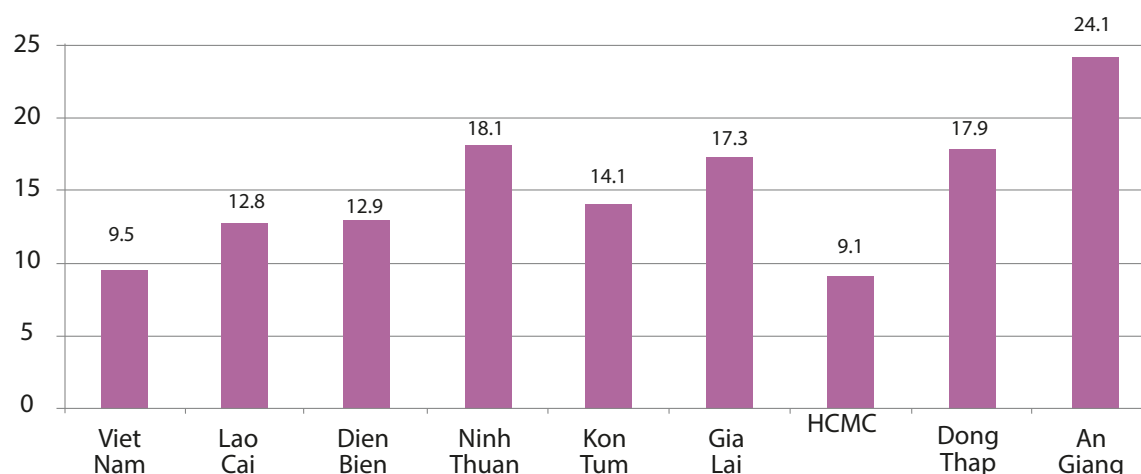
Drop-out children at lower-secondary school age

The percentage of discontinued children at lower secondary school age in Lao Cai province was 12.8%, six times higher than for primary school age drop outs (2.1%), the seventh highest out of eight selected provinces and above the national average of 9.5% (Figure App 2.11).

Figure App2.11 provides visual information about the rate of drop-out children at lower secondary school age in Lao Cai divided by characteristics, such as age, urban or rural, gender, ethnicity, disability and migration status.

The percentage of lower-secondary school age drop-outs in Lao Cai increases with age, as the more senior they are, the higher the proportion of drop-outs. The proportion of children aged 14 (Grade 9) dropping out of school is 20.2%, meaning one-in-five of such children has discontinued lower-secondary school. It is notable that the percentage of discontinued girls at lower-secondary school age was nearly 1.3 times higher than for Lao Cai boys, as ethnic minority girls must leave school earlier than boys.

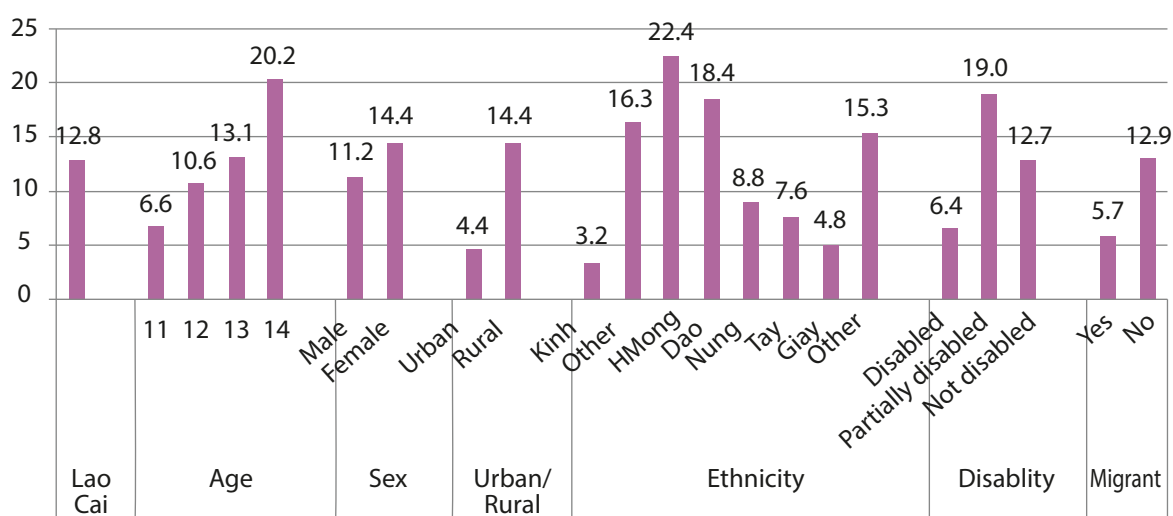
Figure App2.11. Percentage of drop-out children at lower-secondary age



The percentage of discontinued lower secondary school age children in rural areas of Lao Cai was three-fold higher than for urban areas. Other ethnic groups have five-fold ratios higher than Kinh people. That of children with disabilities was lower than for those without

disabilities, but this could be due to the small sample. The percentage of discontinued children with partial disabilities was higher than for non-disabled children, while non-migrants were significantly higher than migrants.

Figure App2.12. Percentage of lower secondary school age drop-outs by characteristics



Children with over-age schooling

Over age school children are at risk of becoming OOSC as they have the psychological pressure of being older and having to repeat classes leading to lower self-esteem and difficulties integrating with others.

At the time of the National Population survey in 2009, Lao Cai had 9.6% of children at lower-secondary school age attending primary school as so-called 'over aged' children, ranking it fourth out of eight provinces and nearly double the national average. (Figure App 2.13).

Figure App2.13. Percentage of primary students at lower-secondary school age

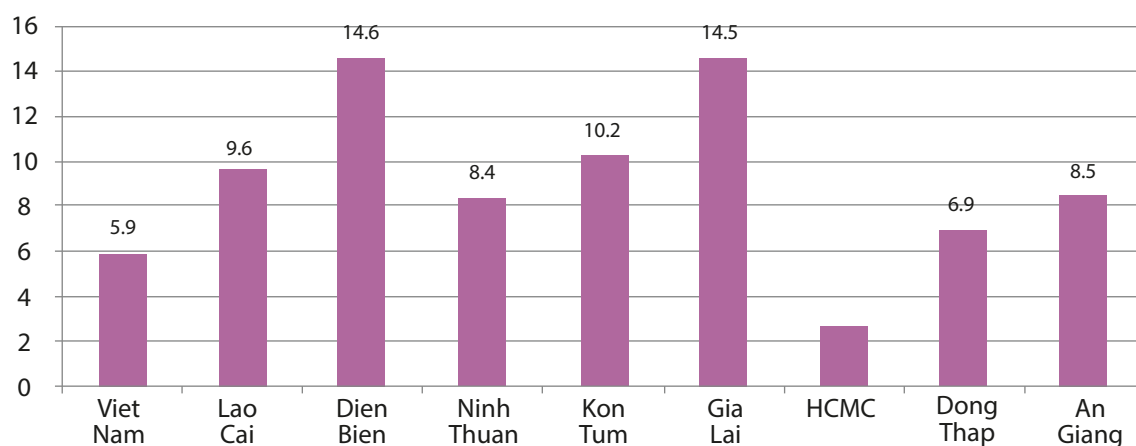
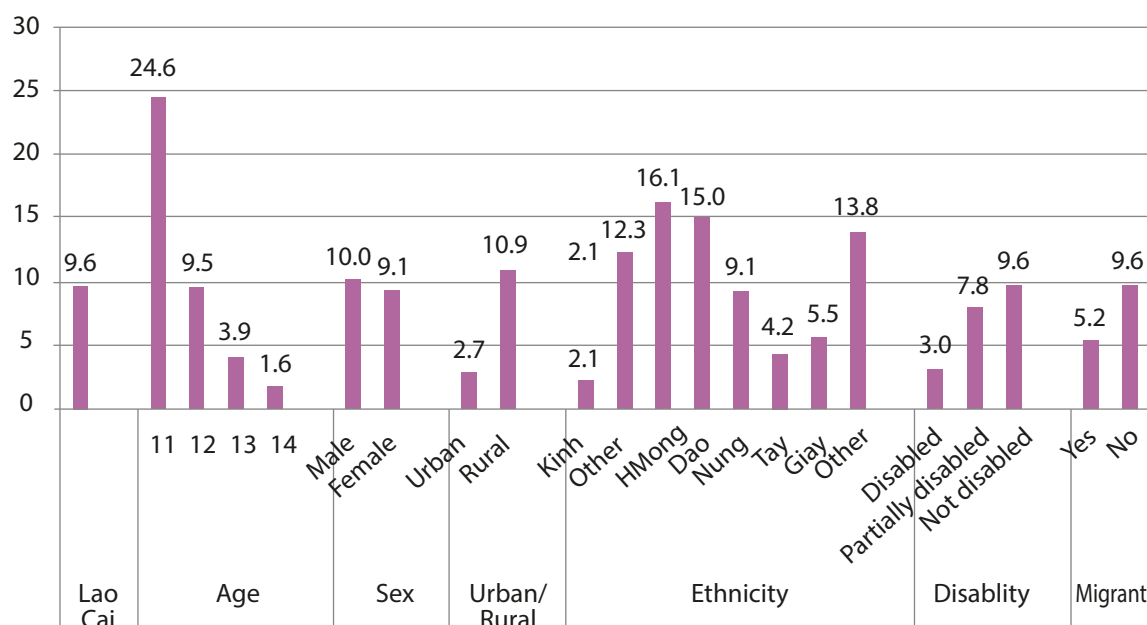


Figure App 2.14 provides illustrates the percentage of primary school attendants at lower-secondary age in Lao Cai divided by characteristics, such as age, gender, residence is urban or rural, ethnic, sexual disability and migrant status.

Over-aged enrolment rates in Lao Cai rapidly decreased with age. However, 3.9% of those

aged 13 and 1.6% of children aged 14 – the ages near or at the end of lower secondary level, still pursued primary education, equivalent to 782 over-aged students aged 13-14. [SD1] These children are at risk of dropping out. The over-aged enrolment rate gap in Lao Cai between boys and girls is not large, at 10.0% and 9.1%, respectively.

Figure App2.14. Percentage of primary students at lower-secondary education age by categories



Nevertheless, there were big differences in the percentages of over-age school attendance between urban and rural areas, Kinh and other ethnicities. The over-age enrolment rate of lower-secondary school age pupils in rural

areas was four-fold higher than urban areas 10.9% versus 2.7%, respectively, while that of ethnic minority lower-secondary school age students was six-fold higher than Kinh, 12.3% compared to 2.1%, respectively. Mong, Dao and

Nung have the highest proportions of over-aged attendances at lower secondary school, 16.1%, 15.0% and 9.1%, respectively.

Key findings from data analysis of OOSC based on the National Population survey in 2009

- At the time of conducting the National Population survey in 2009, the total number of OOS students in Lao Cai included:
 - There were 1,505 OOSC aged 5, accounting for 11.5% of such aged children. The ratio of 5-year-old OOSC in Lao Cai was less than the national average (12.2%) and ranked the second lowest amongst eight provinces.
 - There were 5,873 OOSC at the age of primary school attendance, accounting for 9.5% of primary school students. The ratio of OOS primary students was higher twice that of national data (4.0%), and the third highest amongst eight provinces.
 - There were 9,452 OOSC at age for lower-secondary school attendance, accounting for 17.5% of lower-secondary students. The ratio of OOSC at lower-secondary school attendance age in Lao Cai was significantly higher than the ratio of OOS at the age of primary school attendance in this province (9.6%), 1.5 times higher than the national average of 11.2% and sixth highest among eight provinces.
- The ratio of OOS in Lao Cai peaked at five years of age, then remarkably decreased at the age of primary education and climbed when children entered lower-secondary education age, even higher than the age of 5.
- At primary and lower secondary age levels, the rates of female OOSC are remarkably higher than of male OOSC. The gap is also growing in parallel with increases in age, 1.4 times at the age of primary education and 1.5 times at the age of lower-secondary education, respectively. Ethnic minority out-of-school children control this difference, including H'mong.
- The rates of OOSC at all three age groups in rural areas were all higher than those in urban areas of Lao Cai, with large gaps evident at two-fold at the age of 5 and four-fold at the ages for primary and lower-secondary education. In each area, the rate of OOSC is likely to rise at age 5, then decrease at primary education age, but increase again at lower secondary ages, and higher than those aged 5 and in rural areas.
- The ratios of OOSC of other ethnic minorities are higher than for Kinh, two-fold at age 5, 12-fold at primary education ages and six-fold at [SD1] lower-secondary education ages. Mong and Dao have highest rate of OOSC, and highest difference compared to Kinh as well as increases by age groups.
- The ratios of OOS of children with disabilities or partial disabilities are much higher than for children without disabilities in the three age groups.
- Non-immigrant families in Lao Cai had higher rates of OOSC than immigrant families. This gap increased in parallel with higher levels of education.
- The rate of OOSC increases in accordance with age groups, at primary and lower-secondary education, but more rapidly at lower-secondary education age. This OOS ratio peaks for students in final grade of lower secondary education (more than 25.8%), which means one-in-four children aged 14 drop out of school.
- The proportion of drop-outs in Lao Cai at primary education and lower secondary ages ranked fourth and seventh, respectively out of eight selected provinces, and higher than the national average. The ratio of discontinued children at lower secondary education age was six-fold more than primary education age. The discontinued situation appears worse in the final grade of the educational level.

- The proportion of over-age school attendance in Lao Cai falls as age increases. Nevertheless, 3.9% of children aged 13 and 1.6% of children aged 14, ages near or at the end of lower secondary education, were learning at primary school, [SD1] equivalent to 782 children aged 13 and 14 over-aged. These children/students are at high risk of discontinuing. This ratio is said to be higher for boys, rural and ethnic minority children, particularly Dao and Mong ethnicities.
- According to the analysis of 2009 Census, Lao Cai province achieved educational results below the national average level by 1.5 to 2 times. The rates of OOS female children at primary school age and lower secondary school ages were significantly higher than

those of male children and this gap was broader as ethnic minority girls, primarily Mong, could not attend school.

Decreasing trend of OOSC during 2009-2014

The MICS 2014 of Viet Nam survey conducted by the GSO with technical and financial support from UNICEF included nationwide OOSC results for 2014, split into six regions - including the Northern Mountains area. However, due to the small sample size, Viet Nam MICS 2014 was unable to provide detailed provincial level results.

Table App2.1 shows the proportion of OOSC of Northern Mountains areas in 2014 at primary and secondary school levels had reduced by more than half compared to 2009.

Table App2.1. Percentage of OOSC from the 2009 Population and Housing Census and the 2014 MICS Viet Nam

	Primary school		Secondary school	
	2009 census	MICS 2014	2009 census	MICS 2014
Total	4.0	2,1	11,2	6,0
Red River Delta	1,3	1,1	3,0	0,8
North Mountains & Midlands	7,0	4,5	13,3	7,0
Central Coast	2,8	0,1	8,7	3,5
Central Highlands	6,6	5,2	14,3	11,5
Southeast	3,0	2,2	11,8	6,5
Mekong River Delta	5.5	2,2	19,8	10,8

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