A SNAPSHOT: SDGS AND CHILDREN IN VIET NAM
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INTRODUCTION

The children of today will be the driving force of Viet Nam in 2030. Investing in children today lays the foundation for long-term sustainable development.

During the UN General Assembly Seventieth Session in September 2015, leaders from 193 countries made a global promise: Over the next 15 years they would strive to make the world a better place. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) they agreed on address the main challenges we are facing today, including poverty and inequity, hunger and disease, violence and climate change. While governments hold the primary responsibility for leading the way, concerted efforts by the private sector, in partnership with others, remain crucial to the effort. Never before has it been as urgent for sectors to come together to address these sustainable development challenges with new business models, investments, innovation and technology, underpinned by responsible business operations and public policies.

A child* is defined as any person under the age of 18 years, in line with international children’s rights standards.

All SDGs are interrelated and achieving them jointly is the key to success. To achieve one SDG requires achieving all interrelated SDGs. Cross sectoral collaboration is key to tackle complex issues.

* In this booklet, a child means any person under the age of 18 years unless otherwise specified.
The SDGs are an ambitious and universal plan of action for people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership that represent an historic opportunity to advance the rights and well-being of every child. The 2030 Agenda shines a laser focus on children, and puts a strong emphasis on equity: the development goals are only reached if they are achieved for all children, everywhere. Investments in the early years of life take advantage of crucial phases of brain development and help to ensure that all children can develop to their full potential, and support the growth of a prosperous society.

The well-being of children is an important marker of progress towards the attainment of the SDGs. Since they are not always visible in data and policies, dedicated efforts are required to make sure that no child is left behind in the implementation, monitoring and reporting of the SDG agenda.

Viet Nam is committed to achieving the SDGs by 2030 evidenced by the National Action Plan on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development approved by the Prime Minister in May 2017. The Government of Viet Nam and UNICEF have worked together to identify SDGs targets and indicators that are most important for children in Viet Nam. These child-focused targets are captured in Viet Nam’s SDGs Action Plan.

This publication provides a snapshot of the current status of SDGs for children in Viet Nam and expected outcomes. It also highlights key actions to be taken under the leadership and coordination of the Government of Viet Nam. Appended to the publication is the list of key SDGs child-focused indicators with disaggregated targets.
Almost ONE in THREE RURAL children experience MULTI-DIMENSIONAL POVERTY.

More than HALF of ETHNIC MINORITY children experience MULTI-DIMENSIONAL POVERTY.

> 50% ETHNIC MINORITY children

One in FIVE children experience at least two deprivations in EDUCATION, HEALTH, NUTRITION, SHELTER, WATER AND SANITATION, or SOCIAL INCLUSION.

GOAL 1 - NO POVERTY

No child should live in poverty.
WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?
• Reduce child poverty and vulnerability.

What can be done to accelerate progress towards the achievement of SDG 1?

• Advocate for socio-economic development planning and public finance management for children.
• Generate evidence about public spending patterns and the risks for young children and adolescents from socio-economic growth, regional economic integration, accelerated urbanisation, and migration.
• Advocate with the National Assembly and ministries on strengthening the equity focus of critical public policies and plans including: the Medium Term Expenditure Framework, annual social economic development plans, and national targeted programmes integrated with sufficient budgeting.
• Support the development and implementation of ministry circulars and decisions regarding the financing of social services such as education, child protection and health, including reduction of out-of-pocket payments.
• Strengthen equitable and integrated social protection measures to enhance resilience of vulnerable families and children, and scale-up and fully finance child protection systems.
• Encourage businesses to invest in affordable and accessible goods and services for people living in poverty and paying wages & benefits to employees that take into account their responsibilities to provide for their families.
**GOAL 2 - ZERO HUNGER**

*No child should be malnourished.*

**ONE in FOUR children UNDER 5 experience STUNTING**

6.4% children UNDER 5 experience wasting with 200,000 SEVERE ACUTE MALNOURISHED children annually.

**28%** children UNDER 5 and PREGNANT women are ANAEMIC.

**32.8%** children UNDER 5 and PREGNANT women are suffering from zinc deficiencies.

**<50%** Less than HALF of the TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS in Viet Nam use IODISED SALT.

**70%** children UNDER 5 and PREGNANT women are suffering from zinc deficiencies.

**80%** children UNDER 5 and PREGNANT women are suffering from zinc deficiencies.

**1 in 4**

ONE in FOUR children receiving early initiation of breast feeding (within the first hour and the day).
What can be done to accelerate progress towards the achievement of SDG 2?

- Accelerate the roll-out of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement in Viet Nam. The SUN movement focuses on nutrition during the first 1,000 days of life, starting from the moment a mother gets pregnant until the child turns two years old, through a multi-sectoral collaboration platform.
- Strengthen Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) to shape the SUN Movement.
- Integrate services for early years: health and nutrition services for mothers and young children including promote early breastfeeding among new-borns and exclusive breastfeeding among children under-6 months, appropriate complementary feeding, early child stimulation, integrated management of acute malnutrition, child deworming, multiple micro-nutrient supplementation and the management of childhood illnesses; and water, sanitation and hygiene services.
- Engage the business sector on nutrition issues ensuring products consumed by children are safe, and also promote nutrition in the workplace – breastfeeding, nutrition of pregnant workers.
- Mainstream adolescent nutrition into relevant health sector plans, strategies and policies, and develop programme guidance for nation-wide application to ensure nutrition results for women and girls.
- Translate policies into investment and implementation for improved nutrition, ensuring the financial tracking process for nutrition is optimised to ensure best nutrition value for money.
- Improve and protect nutrition outcomes in humanitarian emergency contexts such as natural disasters.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

- No Vietnamese children suffering from malnutrition in all forms, especially stunting.
- Control of micronutrient deficiencies.
- Promotion of optimal infant Young Child Feeding practices: breastfeeding and complementary feeding.
GOAL 3 - GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

No mother should die of giving birth.
No child should die of preventable causes.

6.3% OF BIRTHS NOT attended by a SKILLED HEALTH WORKER

Almost ONE QUARTER of children AGED 12-23 MONTHS NOT fully IMMUNIZED

20,401 CHILDREN (14 per 1,000 live births) UNDER 1 DIE in 2016

167,652 CHILDREN (21.8 per 1,000 live births) UNDER 5 DIE in 2016

53% of UNDER 5 deaths are NEW BORN

Equity matters

1.38 TIMES

Urban

Rural

Kinh

Ethnic Minority

4 TIMES

3 TIMES

60% richest population group

40% poorest population group

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What can be done to accelerate progress toward the achievement of SDG 3?

- Increase political commitment to ensure equitable access to high-quality, respectful health care for all women, new-borns and children in all settings.
- Invest in primary health system-strengthening to ensure equitable access to people-centred, quality health services that respond to the unique needs of all women, new-borns and children.
- Develop equity based analyses and policy options and recommendations in health with a focus on reduction of maternal, newborn and child deaths.
- Improve budgeting, financing and financial management for maternal and child healthcare.
- Build capacity for planning and prioritisation of services and monitoring health outcomes at sub-national levels, with disaggregation of data to uncover the impact on inequities.
GOAL 4 - QUALITY EDUCATION
Every child should benefit from effective and inclusive learning environments.

**6.7%**  
Children **UNDER 5 YEARS** not attending **PRE-PRIMARY or PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**5.1%**  
715,400 children from **5 to 14 YEARS** are **OUT OF SCHOOL**

**> 50%**  
More than **HALF** of **CHILDREN** with **SEVERE DISABILITIES** **NEVER** go to school

**> 20%**  
More than **1 IN 5** ethnic minority children from **3 - 5 YEARS** are not developmentally on-track in at least three of four: **LITERACY - NUMERACY, PHYSICAL, SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL, and LEARNING DOMAINS**
What can be done to accelerate progress towards the achievement of SDG 4?

- Improve early childhood education, including early stimulation and preschool curriculum reform with child-centred pedagogy and joint efforts with all relevant stakeholders to provide IECD services.
- Ensure equitable access and inclusive quality learning by transforming education towards a competency-based approach and 21st Century skills, particularly for disadvantaged groups, as well as fostering linkages with technical and vocational education and training.
- Provide mechanisms for boys and girls to express themselves in an enabling, safe and non-violent learning environment, including access to safe water, sanitation and handwashing facilities.
- Develop and implement a tuition fee waiver policy for both preschool and lower secondary education to ensure universal free education for children aged 5-14, bringing out-of-school children back to learning.
- Enhance the education system’s capacity and resilience for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.
- Forge public-private collaboration to support 21st century education for marginalised children in industrial zones and vocational training programmes for vulnerable adolescents linked with access job training and decent work for young people initiatives.
GOAL 5 - GENDER EQUALITY
Every child should have equal access to opportunities regardless of gender.

1 in 10
(AGES 20-24) were married BEFORE their EIGHTEENTH birthday in 2014.

1 in 100
(AGES 20-24) were married BEFORE their FIFTEENTH birthday in 2014.

100 BABY GIRLS
112.2 BABY BOYS
For every 100 BABY GIRLS born, 112.2 BABY BOY are born.

Equity matters
23.1%
9.2%
Kinh Ethnic Minority
MARRIAGE BEFORE 18
**WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?**

- Elimination of **child marriage**.
- Elimination of all forms of **violence against girls** and **women**.
- Elimination of **discrimination against** all **girls** and **women**.
- Increased public awareness and concrete actions for **gender equity** and **equal access** to **opportunities**.

*What can be done to accelerate progress towards the achievement of SDG 5?*

- Support girls to make informed and empowered decisions affecting their lives, including ensuring access to services (health, education, social care, and access to justice); ensure equal participation in decision-making of girls and women at household and community levels as well as in public and private sector.
- Invest in partnerships with faith-based leaders, communities, families, men and boys to promote positive gender norms and to end harmful practices, including child marriage.
- Implement unconditional social protection programmes such as child grants to eliminate household poverty, a key driver of child marriage.
- Enhance opportunities for early learning environments that address gender stereotyping and enhance fathers’ involvement in their children’s development.
- Implement social behaviour change communication in ending norms and practices that condone child marriage and gender stereotypes.
- Partner with the business sector to promote family friendly workplace policies that support work-life balance and promote shared family responsibilities.
GOAL 6 - CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

Every child should have access to clean water and sanitation.

**URBAN**

- 92% Have access to WATER SERVICES
- 91% Have access to BASIC SANITATION
- 93% Have access to HANDWASHING POINT AT HOME
- 5.8% OPEN DEFECATION

**RURAL**

- 79% Have access to WATER SERVICES
- 72% Have access to BASIC SANITATION
- 82% Have access to HANDWASHING POINT AT HOME
- 7.3% OPEN DEFECATION
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What can be done to accelerate progress towards the achievement of SDG 6?

- Invest in good sanitation and safe water to reduce stunting as children need a clean environment to grow and develop fully.
- Strong inter-sectoral coordination in the government system and collaboration between the government and communities to ensure safe water.
- Promote sustainable access to and use of improved sanitation and water supply in communes, early learning centres, schools and health centres including interventions to promote critical hygiene behaviours at household level.
- Establish innovative public-private partnerships with the safe water and sanitation sector to improve the availability and affordability of household water filtration, hand-washing equipment and latrine construction.
- Increase coordination with the Viet Nam Social Policy Bank for loan schemes for private latrine construction and water system improvements.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

- Universal and equitable access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation and hygiene for all.
- Improved water quality in most affected areas first.
- Elimination of open defecation.
GOAL 8 - ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DECENT WORK FOR ALL

No child should be subject to any forms of child labour.

1.75 million CHILD LABOURERS in Viet Nam

>1.3 million CHILD LABOURERS at risk of engagement in activities prohibited for adolescent workers or in HAZARDOUS WORKING ENVIRONMENTS

BETWEEN 2011-2014

>3,700 victims TRAFFICKED for FORCED LABOUR, PROSTITUTION and FORCED MARRIAGE

14% of 33,000 SEX WORKERS in Vietnam in 2013, are CHILDREN being SEXUALLY EXPLOITED

Equity matters

CHILD LABOUR

60% Boys

40% Girls

HAZARDOUS WORKING ENVIRONMENTS

TRAFFICKED

FORCED MARRIAGE

PROSTITUTION

85% Rural

15% Urban
WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

- Eradication of forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking, and the worst forms of child labour.
- Improved attendance of quality education.
- Creation of positive social norms and public attitudes that reject child labour.

What can be done to accelerate progress towards the achievement of SDG 8?

- Develop concerted and sustained efforts to address child labour from a child protection angle that considers the full range of vulnerabilities.
- Conduct research and share knowledge to fill data gaps in key areas of child labour such as forced labour and trafficking of children.
- Engage the business sector in protecting children from child labour in supply and value chains, and at community level; provide skills training for out-of-school adolescents and promote decent work for young workers, including the implementation of Children’s Rights and Business Principles (CRBP).
- Provide social support and care services to vulnerable families to prevent and eliminate child labour by helping reduce social vulnerability and exclusion and strengthening resilience to cope with shocks and strains.
GOAL 12 – SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

No child should be adversely impacted by business practices and operations.

4% of 718 listed companies in Viet Nam, published in 2017, SUSTAINABILITY REPORTS disclosing ENVIRONMENTAL and SOCIAL IMPACTS of operations.

3% of 289 surveyed listed companies in Southeast Asia (including Vietnamese listed companies) address CHILD RIGHTS ISSUES at the company board level.
WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

- Increased awareness and knowledge among businesses on their impact on children.
- Action by business to mitigate/minimise negative impact and maximise positive impact on children.
- Reporting on child rights issues in sustainability reporting.

What can be done to accelerate progress towards the achievement of SDG 12?

- Conduct further research and fill data gaps on the impacts of key industries on children – footwear and apparel, travel and tourism and the information and communication technology (ICT) sector.
- Raise awareness and knowledge on Children’s Rights and Business Principles among businesses, business associations and industry associations.
- Engage selected businesses in pilot programmes and public-private collaborations to develop good practice which can be replicated and scaled.
- Promote inclusion of child rights issues in guidelines for companies on sustainability reporting, criteria for corporate social responsibility awards and recognitions, guidance or tools for businesses on sustainable development.
- Integration of children’s rights issues into relevant national action plans, business regulations, standards or policies aimed at increasing responsible business practices impacting on children.
- Strengthen multi-stakeholder engagement to create an enabling environment for businesses to respect and support the rights of children in Viet Nam.
GOAL 13 - CLIMATE ACTION
No child should suffer from the effects of climate change and environmental degradation.

NATURAL DISASTERS
$1.7 BILLION USD ≈ 1% GDP
ECONOMIC LOSSES due to NATURAL DISASTERS in 2016

DROUGHT
39/63 ≈ 62% PROVINCES IN VIET NAM OF VIET NAM
WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

- **Strengthened children** and their communities’ resilience to climate-related hazards and natural disasters.
- Child-sensitive **climate change** measures integrated into national **policies, strategies, and planning.**
- Participatory approaches, involving girls and boys, to **disaster risk reduction**, climate change mitigation and adaptation and prevention.
- **School safety** ensured due to enhanced **disaster preparedness** and response capacity.

What can be done to accelerate progress towards the achievement of SDG 13?

- Use evidence-based approaches, including gender and vulnerability analyses, to enhance risk-informed socio-economic development planning and the legislative environment on disaster risk reduction.
- Invest in disaster risk reduction initiatives and systems to strengthen resilience of communities and the most vulnerable families, children and women.
- Strengthen cooperation with other countries and multiple stake-holders, including the private sector, on disaster risk reduction.
- Strengthen capacity to deliver an integrated disaster risk reduction and climate change curriculum and support the roll-out in targeted areas in relation to school safety education.
- Promote and protect the rights of children in emergencies, particularly during natural disasters.
- Strengthen the capacity of all sectors to identify and ensure child protection in emergencies.
GOAL 16 - PEACE AND JUSTICE
Every child is protected and has access to justice.

7 out of 10 children aged between 1 and 14 years experience VIOLENT PUNISHMENT at HOME. 

5,300 cases of CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE, primarily against girls, were reported between 2014 and 2016.

2 out of 3 children who are brought to CRIMINAL COURTS were sentenced to termed IMPRISONMENT.

4% of children UNDER 5 years do not have their BIRTH REGISTERED.
WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

- Elimination of all forms of violence against children and women everywhere, including in schools, at home, and in public areas.
- Universal access to justice for all children in contact with the law.
- Free birth registration for all children.

What can be done to accelerate progress towards the achievement of SDG 16?

- Reform the legal framework on child protection and justice for children, including the definition of the age of the ‘child’ to under-18 years of age, in line with international children’s rights norms and standards, so as to ensure access to services, full protection and realisation of the rights of all children under-18 years of age, especially as it relates to all forms of violence against children.
- Develop a comprehensive child protection system to provide prevention, early intervention and response to violence against children including development of the social work profession with special attention to children.
- Strengthen child justice specialisation and institutional capacity within the police, procuracy, courts and legal aid to increase access to justice and protection of all children in contact with the law.
- Strengthen life skills education for children, focusing on prevention and response to bullying and violence.
- Develop policies and capacity for specialised child protection services, including alternative care, respite care for families of children with disabilities and other support services for children with disabilities, psycho-social support, and rehabilitation and recovery services for child victims of violence and exploitation.
- Deploy positive parenting programmes aimed at preventing violence against children that contribute to a stimulating, loving, protective environment for young children and increase demand for quality integrated early childhood development services.
Improving the coverage and quality of child-related data is essential to harnessing the power of the 2030 Agenda for children and ensuring that no child is left behind. 95 of 169 targets are either directly (48) or indirectly (47) connected to children. Below are priority child-related SDG indicators.

**Annex: Child-focused SDG targets and indicators**

- **01. No poverty**
  - 1.1 Children living below US$1.90 per day
  - 1.2 Children living below the national poverty line
  - 1.3 Children in multidimensional poverty
  - 1.4 Children covered by social protection

- **02. Zero hunger**
  - 2.2 Stunted children
  - 2.2.2 Wasted children

- **03. Good health**
  - 3.1 Maternal mortality
  - 3.2 Skilled birth attendance
  - 3.3 Under-5 mortality
  - 3.4 New HIV infections in children
  - 3.5 Tuberculosis incidence in children
  - 3.6 Malaria incidence in children
  - 3.7 Adolescent suicide
  - 3.8 Under-5 mortality
  - 3.9 Under-5 mortality

- **04. Quality education**
  - 4.1 Minimum proficiency in reading and maths
  - 4.2 Early childhood development
  - 4.3 Pre-primary participation
  - 4.4 Parity in education
  - 4.5 Youth literacy
  - 4.6.1 WASH in schools

- **05. Gender equality**
  - 5.2 Intimate partner violence
  - 5.3 Sexual violence against girls
  - 5.4 Child marriage
  - 5.5 FGM/C
  - 5.6 Unpaid domestic and care work

- **06. Clean water and sanitation**
  - 6.1 Safely managed drinking water
  - 6.2 Safely managed sanitation and hygiene

- **07. Renewable energy**
  - 7.1 Primary reliance on clean fuels

- **08. Good jobs and economic growth**
  - 8.7 Child labour
  - 8.8.1 Spending on social protection and employment

- **09. Responsible consumption**
  - 12.8.1 Countries mainstreaming education for sustainable development

- **10. Reduced inequalities**
  - 10.1.1 Growth in income per capita among bottom 40%

- **11. Sustainable cities and communities**
  - 11.1.1 Population living in slums

- **12. Peace and justice**
  - 16.1 Child homicide
  - 16.2 Conflict-related deaths
  - 16.2.1 Punishment by caregivers
  - 16.2.2 Sexual violence against children
  - 16.9.1 Birth registration

- **13. Climate action**
  - 13.1 Countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategy
  - 13.2 Disaster affected population

- **14. Partnerships for the goals**
  - 17.18.1 Disaggregated SDG indicators at national level
  - 17.19.1 Countries registering births and deaths

- **15. Partnership for the goals**
  - 17.18.1 Disaggregated SDG indicators at national level
  - 17.19.1 Countries registering births and deaths
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