

A Summary Research Report



Migrant Workers

in Vietnam

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Chapter I: Executive Summary

Viet Nam's rapid economic development, with average Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of 7% since 1996, has brought about dramatic reductions in poverty rates and shifts in the structure of the national economy. But these gains have not been equally distributed, with industrial jobs concentrated in and near major cities. With the population remains over 70% rural and agricultural, the share of GDP contributed by agriculture is steadily declining from 41% in 1990 to 22% in 2004, while the industrial sector has grown from 29% in 1986 to 41% in 2003. These structural changes have been reflected in the country's legal framework, beginning with the Labour Code and continuing through the Enterprise Law and other laws currently under discussion by the National Assembly.

Facing underemployment and little prospect for increased earnings in the village, millions of young women and men have migrated to cities in search of work. The number of migrants is estimated to have grown between 25-50% over the last three to four years and is expected to accelerate after Viet Nam joins the World Trade Organization (WTO), adding one million new urban residents per year over the next two decades.

With limited education or technical background, many young migrants are drawn to entry-level, unskilled or semi-skilled jobs in the garment and footwear industries, manufacturing for export. As many of these enterprises are large and relatively new to Viet Nam, they tend to be located in industrial areas and zones on the outskirts of major cities and in adjacent provinces. Garment

and footwear factories employ an overwhelmingly female workforce.

The average working life of female migrants in these factories is short, only three to five years. Income is not high and working hours are long, especially in peak season in the second half of the year. Most migrants save significant portions of their income and remit it to their home villages, skimping on living expenses even for basic needs such as housing, food and health care.

This synthesis report, based on qualitative and quantitative research in five sites across Vietnam (Hai Phong, Ha Noi and the Red River Delta, Da Nang, Binh Duong, and Ho Chi Minh City), aims to depict working and living conditions from the viewpoint of migrant workers themselves. While research in each of the five locations varied somewhat in scope and emphasis, together the findings present a full and nuanced picture of migrants and the industries that employ them. Particular focus is placed on women workers, on garment and footwear factories, and on enterprises located in concentrated industrial areas, industrial zones (IZs) and export processing zones (EPZs).

This report is divided into seven chapters. Chapter I presents a summary of the report. Chapter II presents an overview of ActionAid Viet Nam's work to promote the rights and entitlements of female migrant workers, followed by a description of the research process behind this report. Chapter III provides background information on industrial zones and the garment and footwear sectors in

Viet Nam in each of the five research locations for this project.

Chapters IV and V contain most of the main research findings, first inside the factory (working hours, salaries, recruitment, contracts, working conditions, labour unions and dispute resolution), then outside the factory (housing, security, access to social services, leisure activities, savings, and plans for the future). Chapter VI examines some of the same issues from the viewpoints of factory managers, government and association officials, together with viewpoints on corporate social responsibility (CSR) and how this can apply to enterprises employing migrant workers. Those corporations who accept some level of

responsibility for their workers' welfare stand to benefit from greater stability and profitability in the long run.

Finally, Chapter VII presents substantive recommendations addressed to the Vietnamese government, local governments, corporations, labour unions and workers. The research team hopes that this report serves the dual purposes of providing information on a growing and important segment of the Vietnamese society and economy, and also encouraging appropriate stakeholders and authorities to take action to improve labour relations and the rights of migrant workers.

Ha Noi, September 2005



Chapter II: Introduction

ActionAid's mission is to fight poverty. Its programs address poverty issues in both rural and urban areas of Viet Nam. ActionAid defines poverty not only in income or food security terms, but also as a lack of access to information, health care and quality of life.

One of the target groups of ActionAid's research in Viet Nam is the urban poor, particularly migrants from rural areas. A large percentage of this population is made up of female labourers who are working in garment and footwear factories in industrial areas, industrial zones and export processing zones¹. ActionAid takes a people-centred approach to labour issues, with migrant workers as the key counterparts of projects. Additionally, ActionAid focuses on the basic rights of workers to a safe, clean and violation-free workplace, and on the responsibility of corporations to protect and observe worker rights according to national law and international conventions.

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1. For an explanation of the differences between these terms, please see Chapter III, p.7.

workplace, and on the responsibility of corporations to protect and observe worker rights according to national law and international conventions.

This research project forms part of ActionAid's project entitled "Promoting rights and entitlements of female workers through social action in highly urbanized cities in Viet Nam." This project is funded by Development Cooperation Ireland (DCI), the international development programme of the Republic of Ireland.

The project's goal is as follows: "To empower female workers to claim their rights and entitlements and their economic and social position in society, in the context of growing economic integration and globalisation." To achieve this goal, the following objectives have been set:

- To enhance the understanding of workers, mainly female workers, about their rights and entitlements in the working environment, through strengthening functions and roles of Trade Unions at all levels towards empowering workers.
- To improve the life skills of workers, especially female workers, to help them protect themselves
- To help female migrant workers achieve better access to livelihood and health care facilities
- To facilitate dialogue and action among all stakeholders for the decent lives of workers.

This project is implemented in five provinces and cities of Hai Phong, Ha Noi, Da Nang, Binh Duong and Ho Chi Minh. Phase I of the project lasted from May 2004 to June 2005, followed by Phase II from July 2005 to June 2006. One of the activities in Phase I involved research in these five provinces and cities. (For a full listing of participants in this research, please see Appendix) Each round of research was carried out by AAV in coordination with different local partners including Labour Unions, Departments of Labour, and Women's Unions. The research activities produced five separate reports ranging in length from 10 to 60 pages.

After field research was complete, AAV held three workshops in April 2004, October 2004 and June 2005, the first in Hai Phong and the second and third in Ha Noi. The research and workshop in Hai Phong were carried out prior to the launch of this project and were used as a basis for developing the project funded by DCI. At the three workshops, research findings were shared with government departments, the Viet Nam General Confederation of Labour, business associations such as the Leather and Footwear Association of Viet Nam and Viet Nam Textile and Garment Association, Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Viet Nam Women's Union. These workshops and their findings form an integral part of the research process.

Scope of research and research methodology

The five local research activities followed no single common design or approach. In each case, the Vietnamese research counterpart and specific focus of research was slightly different. This reflects a process of monitoring and reflection on the part of both ActionAid and Vietnamese partners. The overall methodology could be described as a snowball that becomes larger and larger as it gathers speed and descends the mountain; or, more appropriately given the subject at hand, as an assembly line in which each step in the production process adds new components and value to the final output.

The first study to be conducted was in Hai Phong (2003), focusing on labour and living conditions of women migrant workers from the ages of 17 to 25.

(Specific background data on each research location are given in Chapter III below.) Research in Ha Noi (2004) examined many of the same issues as in Hai Phong, with an added component of the causes behind women's decisions to migrate. For comparative purposes, researchers also interviewed rural women in Ninh Binh province who had not migrated or who had returned from periods of labour migration.

Research in three locations in central and southern Viet Nam was carried out in early 2005. Each of these studies added new components to the scope of the research through case study interviews, legal analysis, and examination of labour disputes. By the conclusion of all five studies, the topics considered had expanded past issues facing migrant women to include a broader analysis of issues and problems in the garment and footwear industries, as well as in Viet Nam's growing number of industrial and export processing zones.

In some locations, interviews with workers were carried out anonymously, or workers' names were replaced with an initial or abbreviation. In others, full names were used. This report follows whichever format was used in the individual research locations.

Table I. Locations and Scope of Research

<i>Year</i>	<i>Province/city</i>	<i>District(s)</i>	<i>Research counterpart</i>	<i>Focus of research</i>
2003	Hai Phong	Ngo Quyen, Kien Thuy, An Lao	Hai Phong Labour Confederation; Institute for Labour and Social Affairs	Impact of migration on women workers' lives
2004	Ha Noi + Ninh Binh	Thanh Xuan, Hoang Mai, Yen Mo	Ha Noi Labour Confederation; Ha Noi Women's Union; Ninh Binh Women's Union	Causes and results of rural- to-urban migration
2005	Da Nang	Hoa Khanh, An Don IZs	Da Nang City Labour Confederation	Qualitative interviews with women migrants, enterprise managers, city officials
2005	Ho Chi Minh City	Go Vap	Go Vap District Labour Confederation	Quantitative data on migrant workers
2005	Binh Duong	province-wide	Department of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs of Binh Duong; Binh Duong Labour Confederation, Management Boards of IZs and EPZs, Institute for Labour and Social Affairs, Department of Legality (MOLISA)	Implementation of labour laws relating to migrant workers and IZs/EPZs

Chapter III: Background on Migrant Workers and Enterprises Who Employ Them

A portrait of migrant workers in Viet Nam

An increasing share of Viet Nam's population is on the move. A 2001 analysis based on census data found that 6.5% of Vietnamese, or roughly 5.2 million people, had relocated in the previous five years. Half of this total migrated to another province, particularly to the south-eastern region near Ho Chi Minh City or to the Central Highlands (GSO & UNDP 2001).

The general causes of migration are not difficult to fathom. (Individual reasons for migration will be examined in Chapter V below.) Vietnam's rapid economic development, with average GDP growth of 7% since 1996, has brought about dramatic reductions in poverty rates and shifts in the structure of the national economy. But these gains have not been equally distributed, with industrial jobs concentrated in and near major cities. While the population remains over 70% rural and agricultural, the share of Gross Domestic Product contributed by agriculture is steadily declining (from 41% in 1990 to 22% in 2004), while the industrial sector has grown from 29% in 1986 to 41% in 2003 (CIEM 2005, Vu Xuan Hong 2005).

The generation born during the post-war baby boom is now entering the workforce at a rate of 1.4 million per year. Young people aged 15-24 account for 25% of the national labour force; those in the 25-34 age group make up an additional 30%. Relatively few young people are unemployed (4.5% in 2000), but many more are underemployed-up to 27% in rural areas (Wells-Dang 2003, United Nations 2003). Facing underemployment and little prospect for increased

earnings in the village, millions of young women and men migrate to cities in search of work (Oxfam GB 2003).

With limited education or technical background, many young migrants are drawn to entry-level, unskilled or semi-skilled jobs in the garment and footwear industries, manufacturing for export. As many of these enterprises are large and relatively new to Viet Nam, they tend to be located in industrial parks and zones on the outskirts of major cities and in adjacent provinces. Garment and footwear factories employ an overwhelmingly female workforce; the majority (though not all) are young and recently arrived from the countryside.

The average working life of female migrants in these factories is short, only three to five years. Income is not high and working hours are long, especially in peak season in the second half of the year. The seasonal nature of the work adds to the impermanence and instability of many migrants' jobs.



Most migrants save significant portions of their income and remit it to their home villages.

In the Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPA) conducted in 2002, researchers in several regions found that migrant workers were sending back 400,000-600,000 dong (US \$25-38) per month to their families, an amount equal to or greater than many rural families' total income. In the Ho Chi Minh City PPA, from one-third to two-thirds of the population in the poor areas of the city were migrants with either temporary registration status or none at all. The number of migrants was estimated to have grown between 25-50% over the preceding three to four years (Vietnam Development Report 2004:30-31).

Rural to urban migration will almost certainly accelerate further after Viet Nam joins the World Trade Organization. The World Bank forecasts that urban poverty will increasingly be concentrated among migrants and estimates that over the next two decades, up to one million people per year will leave their villages and move to the cities (Vietnam Development Report 2004:29). If these estimates prove correct, by 2020 Viet Nam's population will be 55% urban, reversing for the first time an agricultural priority that has existed from the beginnings of Vietnamese history.

Industrial zones and the garment and footwear sectors

This report examines the industries where migrants work through several overlapping lenses. First, *by location*: the preponderance of migrants work in industrial areas, industrial zones (IZs) and export processing zones (EPZs). Industrial areas are neighbourhoods in or outside a city that contain a high concentration of factories, but have no fixed boundaries or organized management system. Industrial zones are organized more formally, with a management board and defined boundaries. They include companies that produce for domestic as well as export markets. Export-processing zones are a type of industrial zone that produces solely for export and benefits from preferential tax and customs treatment. Since each of these types of zones contain dozens of large factories employing thousands of workers in a concentrated area, they can place extreme



stress on housing, social services, and living conditions for workers.

Second, the report differentiates among factories *by sector*, with a particular focus on the textile/garment and footwear/leather goods industries where many young women migrants work. These factories may or may not be located inside IZs or EPZs, though many of the largest ones are.

Third, the report examines variations among enterprises *by ownership type*: some factories are state-owned, often older ones; others are set up as domestic private businesses under the Enterprise Law, passed in 2000; while others are joint-venture or 100% foreign-owned (together, these types are referred to as "foreign-invested enterprises"). All three types employ migrants, though state-owned enterprises employ fewer of them. SOEs are also less frequently located inside IZs/EPZs.

The central case considered in this research is a young rural woman who migrates to a large city to work in a foreign-invested garment or shoe factory located in an IZ or EPZ. However, survey data and qualitative interviews also reflect partial cases and outliers. Some findings apply to all migrant workers, regardless of gender, industry or location. Other findings relate to all workers in IZs and EPZs, or to all workers in the garment export sector, for instance. The interplay among these variables helps to explain the range of experiences and conditions documented in this report.

Viet Nam currently has 104 IZs and 23 EPZs. These zones exist in 38 out of 65 provinces and cities nationwide, but are concentrated primarily in

the south-eastern coastal region (53% of total zones), Red River Delta (19%), and central coast (18%). The provinces and cities with the highest concentration of IZs and EPZs are all in the south-east; Dong Nai (15 zones), Ho Chi Minh City, and Binh Duong (12 zones each). Out of 737,500 workers in IZs and EPZs, 70% are migrants from other provinces, and 60% are women.

Garment and footwear factories form a significant portion of IZ/EPZ enterprises. As of 2002, 1,622 textile/garment factories and 350 footwear factories were registered nationwide employing a total of 1.43 million workers, of whom 80-90% are women. Ownership of these enterprises is split among all three major types in the country (see Table II., below). Production in garments and footwear has increased by an average annual value of 14.0% since 1996, and they represent one of Viet Nam's largest export earning sectors. Markets include the USA, European Union, Japan, and former Soviet bloc countries.

Research locations

Hai Phong

At present, this northern port city contains three IZs and EPZs as well as ten other industrial areas



with a total of 50 garment and footwear enterprises and 70,000 workers, forming a significant part of the city's industrial economy. Hai Phong was the first survey site chosen for this project due to the concentration and rapid growth of the garment and footwear sectors there.

Research took place in three areas: Le Lai ward (Ngo Quyen district), Kien Thuy district along the road to Do Son, and Truong Son commune of the outlying An Lao district. Of 30 garment and footwear/leather companies in these three locations, the study chose five enterprises for interviews: Hai Phong Footwear Co., Hai Phong Joint-stock Export Textile Co., Lien Dinh Footwear Co., Sao Vang Co., and Jung Ho Co. (which produces leather bags). These enterprises represented different economic sectors: state-owned, private domestic, and joint-venture.

Between 30-50% of the approximately 33,100 workers in these factories are migrants, and their numbers are rising. Most migrants to Hai Phong come from the nearby provinces of Hai Duong, Thai Binh and Quang Ninh, though some travel from the north-central region of Nghe An and Ha Tinh or more distant areas of northern Viet Nam.

Table II. Structure of enterprises in the garment and footwear industries

Sector	State-owned enterprises	Domestic private companies registered under the Enterprise Law	Foreign-invested enterprises
Garment and textile	22%	44%	34%
Footwear	20%	40%	40%

Source: Viet Nam Garment, Textile and Footwear Association (2003)

A sample of 500 migrant workers was taken for questionnaires, followed by group discussions and selected individual follow-up interviews. In addition to female workers themselves, interviews were also conducted with management, personnel staff, public health officers, union officials, and relevant local authorities.

Ha Noi

Ha Noi began the process of forming industrial zones later than provinces in southern Viet Nam but has caught up rapidly. There are currently three large IZs operating in Hanoi (Sai Dong, Thang Long and Noi Bai) plus 18 smaller industrial areas. In all, 25,000 people are employed in 75 companies in these zones: 54% work for 100% foreign-invested enterprises, 25% for joint-venture companies, and 20% for Vietnamese private enterprises. About 50% of these workers are migrants from other provinces. By 2010, the total number of workers in Ha Noi's IZs is expected to rise to 60,000, of which 70% will be migrants who require housing in the city. Ha Noi has not yet constructed any housing for workers in IZs.

The textile, garment and footwear sectors have been among the fastest-growing industries in Ha Noi. Since 2000, textiles and garments have expanded by an average annual rate of 17% and 33% respectively. Most of the growth in the footwear industry took place before 2000, but the industry has continued to expand at 6% per year since then. Despite this overall growth, however, production and employment have actually been quite unstable over the years. The number of enterprises in the textile sector has shrunk over time even though production value has increased.

Between 50-60% of workers in these sectors are migrants from rural areas, and 85-90% are women. Migrants come to Ha Noi primarily from other northern provinces in the Red River Delta, such as Ha Tay, Hai Duong, Nam Dinh, Thai Binh, Vinh Phuc and Ninh Binh, as well as Thanh Hoa. As demand for workers has increased since 2003, however, workers are beginning to migrate from more remote provinces in the north and north-west as well.

Research was conducted in five factories in industrial areas of Thanh Xuan and Mai Dong and

the surrounding rental residential areas. The factories are: Norfolk Hatexco Joint Venture, Mua Dong Woolen Co., Thuong Dinh Footwear Co., Ha Noi Textile Co., and Nam Hoa Co. Of these, the state-owned Mua Dong Co. is the most stable, with 83% local labour of which 75% is over the age of 25; however, this factory is also growing the most slowly. At the other extreme is the joint venture Nam Hoa garment company, which employs 95% migrants, 80% women, and 90% between the ages of 16 and 25. This was also the factory that appeared to have the highest level of labour practice infringements in the study.

Yen Nhan sub-district, Ninh Binh

As part of the Ha Noi research project, the team also visited one rural sub-district (or commune) in order to understand more about conditions in migrant-origin communities. The sub-district selected was Yen Nhan, in Yen Mo district, Ninh Binh province. Yen Nhan is ranked medium in economic terms, with 75% of income from agriculture and 25% from services. 30% of working-age women in Yen Nhan leave their villages to work in factories. Many men also migrate to cities and other provinces as construction workers.

Research interviews compared the experiences of young women who choose to stay in the village, usually marrying and starting a family, with those who move to the cities and look for industrial jobs. One limitation of this research was that few women from Yen Nhan actually go to work in Ha Noi; it appears that despite the much larger travel distance, they are more likely to migrate to Ho Chi Minh City. Hence, it was not possible to compare directly the experiences and living conditions of women from the same village who had migrated and had not.

Da Nang

Da Nang's present industrial boom began in 1997, when the city was separated from Quang Nam province to become a centrally-administered city. Since then, industrial zones such as Hoa Khanh, An Don, Lien Chieu and Hoa Cam have formed and attracted 224 enterprises employing more than 25,000 new workers. More than 90% are women, and more than 60% have migrated from

other central provinces ranging from Thanh Hoa and Nghe An in the north to Quang Ngai, Phu Yen and Binh Dinh to the south. Although the size of the industrial sector in Da Nang cannot yet compare to that in the South-East or in the Red River Delta, its growth rates have been extremely high in recent years.

Perhaps related to this rapid expansion, labour instability and unrest have been a major factor in Da Nang's industrial zones. According to a labour union official, this "out-of-control market" has not yet been fixed. Moreover, housing and services for workers are in short supply, as no company has yet concerned itself with providing accommodation or food for its workers, nor has the city government. If left unchecked, these trends may reduce the flow of labour and investment coming into Da Nang in the future.

Research in Da Nang was carried out in four parts, all in the Hoa Khanh and An Don IZs. Among the companies included were Quoc Bao Co., Huu Nghi Co., Keyhinge Toys, and Valley View Co. The first part of the research, "We Talk about Ourselves," consists of journalistic reporting about the lives of migrant women working in industrial zones. The second part, "A Life-Changing Journey," tells the stories of women's journeys from their home villages to work in the city, including perspectives of their family and neighbours in the village. Part three, "Owners and Workers," looks at labour-management relations and proposals for improving working conditions. Part four, "Listen to the Managers," interviews industrial and government officials about the situation of migrant workers. Results from all four sections are compiled in this report.

Go Vap District, Ho Chi Minh City

The largest city in Viet Nam, Ho Chi Minh City contains nearly 500,000 industrial workers plus another 200,000 in the state management sector. According to the HCMC Department of Labour, IZs and EPZs contain 1,600 foreign-invested companies employing 150,000 workers, of which 80-90% are migrants.

Go Vap is an urban district north of the centre of HCMC. The population of workers residing in the district has increased steadily by 10% per year

since the mid-1990s. At least 75% of this increase is due to migration from other provinces, including the north, centre and Mekong Delta. Go Vap does not contain an IZ as strictly defined but does have a large industrial area in its Ward 12; this is where most enterprises and union activities in the district are concentrated. Survey research took place in Wards 5, 12 and 17.

According to the Go Vap Labour Confederation, the district can be considered a "hotspot" for labour unrest, including work stoppages and strikes. The union recorded 18 cases of conflicts from 2000 through June 2003, and more have occurred since. In spite of this, an objective comparison of salaries and working conditions over the five research locations suggests that workers in Go Vap are in some respects relatively better off than those in other areas of the country.

Binh Duong

This rapidly developing province north-east of Ho Chi Minh City is one of the leading industrial and export-producing areas of Viet Nam. As of 2004, nearly 100,000 people were employed in the province's 12 IZs, an increase of 28% over the previous year. About one in three industrial workers in Binh Duong works in one of these zones. 65% of workers are women and over 90% of all workers originate from outside the province. Among the largest IZs in Binh Duong are Song Than I and II, Dong An, and My Phuoc. Enterprises with foreign investment employ 75% of IZ workers, with domestic private enterprises making up the other 25%.

Most industrial workers in Binh Duong are not highly trained: 4% have university degrees, 12% are high school or technical school graduates, and 84% have no specific training to their area of work. The large number of migrants has created a serious housing shortage in industrial areas. 70% of workers are currently renting rooms in boarding houses in place of more permanent housing.

Chapter IV:

Inside the Factory: Labour Issues in Industrial Areas, Industrial Zones and Export Processing Zones

Migrant workers, as well as locally-hired workers, face a variety of challenges as soon as they enter the factory gates. This chapter examines three broad categories of labour issues in the garment and footwear sectors in a number of Vietnam's IZs and EPZs. First, and of primary importance to many of the workers interviewed over the course of this research, what are the *terms of employment* in the factories—working hours, salary, benefits, contracts and recruitment processes? Second, what are working *conditions* like in these factories? Finally, how are workers *organized and represented* by unions and local labour authorities in the factories, and what happens when disputes and conflicts arise?

Working hours

Vietnam's Labour Code (adopted in 1994, amended in 2002) stipulates that normal working hours in industrial enterprises should be eight hours per day, six days per week, or a total of 48 hours per week. An average monthly work schedule is calculated on the basis of 26 working days. By law, employees should not work more than 4 hours overtime per day or 300 hours overtime per year.

Garment and footwear industries are labour intensive, with production continuing around the clock on eight-hour shifts. Particularly at times of high production demand (typically the second half of each calendar year, leading up to the Christmas

and New Year's holiday shopping seasons), the majority of enterprises in these and related sectors organize additional shifts, averaging four hours more per day, three or four days per week. Over the course of a year, this may add up to as much as 400 to 600 hours of overtime work.

Of 132 migrant workers in various industries surveyed in Go Vap district, Ho Chi Minh City, in spring 2005, the average working week was 53 hours. 22% of workers put in more than 56 hours per week. The highest workload reported was 91 hours per week, or 13 hour shifts with no days off. All but six of the workers interviewed in Go Vap work overtime. 63% reported frequent overtime shifts at least three times per week, while 35% worked these shifts once or twice per week. The average length of an overtime shift day was reported to be 11 hours and 30 minutes.

In Ha Noi, a 2004 survey of 235 workers in five garment and footwear factories found that 44% worked normal eight-hour shifts, 54% worked between 9-12 hours a day on average, and 2% worked more than 12 hours per day. Overtime was particularly prevalent in the Thuong Dinh Footwear Co., where 73% of respondents worked at least 9 hours per day on average, and the Nam Hoa garment factory, with 83% of respondents working overtime. Figures in Hai Phong are similar, with approximately 80% of workers reporting average daily shifts between 8 and 12 hours. Overtime in

the footwear industry was higher on average than in textile and garment factories.

Like their counterparts in Ho Chi Minh City, workers in Ha Noi and Hai Phong reported overtime shifts of four hours a day, as often as six days a week. In Hai Phong's footwear industry, 50% of workers interviewed took fewer than four days off per month, while in Ha Noi, many respondents said that they only have two Sundays off per month. In all of these cases, the total working hours exceed the amounts allowed in Vietnam's Labour Code. Workers reported serious health problems and psychological stress resulting from overwork; these effects will be examined in Chapter V. below. A question with additional implications is whether workers choose to work overtime voluntarily or are pressured to do so by their employers. Survey findings from Ho Chi Minh City indicate that some combination of both factors is likely true. 50% of employees in Go Vap district said that the amount of overtime they currently work is acceptable to them, while 26% would like to work even more hours if this were possible, in order to increase their income. The remaining 24% of workers, however, wished to reduce their hours.

“Employers always ask for three hours overtime but in fact we have to work three or three and a half hours more than that without payment. Our hours go from seven in the morning to ten at night, without turning our heads or talking with other workers. If we talk with others, we will be reprimanded. Even after a month of working here, new workers don't know any of their co-workers.”

- Female worker in Hai Phong

“My dream is to have a working day that doesn't go beyond eight hours. Now a twelve-hour day is a normal thing for me. I'm almost 30 now, and work takes up all of my time. I don't have time for anything else. If my salary were a little higher, it would be a lot easier for me to take care of my family, since I have six brothers and sisters, two of them still in school, and my parents are old. I don't mind working hard if I could earn enough to improve my own life and my family's.”

- Ms. Luong Thi Xuan, migrant worker in Da Nang

This is not in itself proof of forced overtime, but the fact that virtually all workers surveyed in Go Vap do put in overtime hours suggests that extra shifts are an expectation in many factories. In Hai Phong, workers in one factory were asked to sign a "voluntary" overtime agreement, which they accepted rather than spend time to complain to the personnel section.

More broadly, questions of working hours and overtime cannot be viewed in isolation from migrant workers' needs to earn higher salaries and to send money back to family and relatives in their home villages. Survey findings show that the majority of workers are willing, even eager, to maximize their income through longer hours at the factory, despite the cost of health needs and personal happiness.

Salaries

Salary levels in the garment and footwear industries range from low to extremely low. Almost all enterprises ensure that the salary levels written in labour contracts are higher than the minimum wage stipulated by the Vietnamese government (290,000 dong per month). Surveys found only five instances of salaries lower than this minimum, all in Hai Phong. However, significant numbers of workers-50% in Hai Phong, 22% in Ha Noi-still bring home less than the internationally-recognized poverty threshold of US \$1 per day, and the majority of workers in all regions of the country earn less than \$2 a day. At these rates, city workers are unlikely to accept jobs in garment or footwear factories, since they can earn more from considerably less difficult jobs (such as working in a shop or café). Hence, the majority of these jobs are filled by migrants.

Salary levels are notably higher in the south (Ho Chi Minh City, Binh Duong) than in the northern and central provinces surveyed. In 2004, the minimum salary in foreign-invested enterprises in Binh Duong was 556,000 dong (US \$35.19) per month, higher than the average salary in Hai Phong. The fact that living costs in the south are also somewhat higher may offset some of these gains, but the discrepancies are wide enough that large numbers of workers from as far north as

Table III. Salary levels in IZs and EPZs by province or district surveyed

	<i>Go Vap/HCMC (2004)</i>	<i>Binh Duong (2004)</i>	<i>Da Nang (2005)</i>	<i>Ha Noi (2004)</i>	<i>Hai Phong (2003)</i>
Average monthly salary (VND)	1,041,000 *	968,000 **	600,000*	625,000 * 700,000 **	500,000 * 600,000 **
Hourly wage in US \$ (15,800d = \$1)	0.32 *	0.29 **	0.18*	0.19 * 0.21 **	0.15 * 0.18 **

* = Surveys of workers

** = Reported by enterprises

Ninh Binh and Thanh Hoa provinces migrate south rather than to nearby northern cities.

The discrepancies in salaries reported by companies and workers might reflect penalties or allowances applied by the employer above or below the normal monthly wage. It may also be explained by the practice of trial or probationary wages when workers first enter the factory. Some companies were reported to extend the trial period by several months in order to pay lower salaries to workers. Survey respondents in both Hai Phong and Da Nang reported that during probation, they used up their salary entirely on living costs. Once this period finished their salary increased somewhat and they were able to save a small amount for their families.

Reported income in the footwear sector is higher than in garments and textiles. In Hai Phong, 58% of workers surveyed in footwear factories earned above the average salary for all enterprises, while only 38% of garment workers did. This may be explained by longer working hours in the footwear sector, higher skill levels, and/or allowances for hazardous work. In Binh Duong, the highest average salaries reported were in state-owned enterprises, followed by foreign-invested enterprises. Locally-owned private companies and enterprises managed at the district level paid the lowest salaries. In Ho Chi Minh City, however, no significant difference was observed between types of enterprises.

A large gender gap exists in salary levels as well. In Go Vap district, Ho Chi Minh City, men reported an average monthly salary of 1,235,000 dong, 36% higher than women's average earnings of 905,000 dong. Additional research is required to assess whether this pattern exists nationwide and,

if so, what the causes and possible solutions are for gender imbalances in compensation. One possible explanation is that unskilled migrant women fill the preponderance of low-wage jobs in the textile and footwear industries, while men are more likely to hold skilled positions.

Many employees in garment and footwear factories take home significantly higher salaries per month than stipulated in their contracts due to overtime pay and piece work. In Binh Duong province, average reported income for workers was 1,150,000 dong per month, or 19% higher than average salary levels. According to national regulations, overtime rates should be paid as follows:

- Overtime on normal day: 150% of normal wage
- Overtime at night: 200% of normal wage
- Overtime on Sundays: 200% of normal wage
- Overtime on holidays: 300% of normal wage

However, compliance with these rates is uneven. 20% of respondents in Ha Noi said that they receive no bonus rates for overtime and are paid at the same hourly level as during normal working hours. Cases of violations of overtime pay regulations were found in all five Ha Noi factories surveyed and were especially prevalent in Mua Dong Woolen Co. and Nam Hoa Co. Mr. Hoang Minh Hao, vice-director of MOLISA's Department of Salaries and Wages, concurs that salary violations, especially overtime pay, are a problem in some enterprises. A 2003 MOLISA survey of 170 companies nationwide found that 20% did not pay overtime wages and 9% did not pay a bonus for night shifts. (Other violations, such as maternity leave and wage transparency, were cited in more than 50% of enterprises.) Another typical salary violation concerns severance pay and termination of contracts.

Workers interviewed for this research complained frequently and strongly about their meagre salaries. Nguyen Thi Van, a worker in Da Nang for the past nine years, earns 700,000 dong (US \$44.30) per month. "With this amount of money," she says, "I hardly ever have time to go out, even though I have a boyfriend. Just earning this monthly income is so difficult, I never have anything extra left over." Another woman working in a different Da Nang textile factory, Le Thi Tuyen, adds that her monthly salary varies like a seesaw over the course of the year. In low-demand months, such as February, she may earn only 207,000 dong (\$13.10), while in peak months such as September to December, she brings home up to 800,000 dong (\$50.63). "In the past," Tuyen says, "I used to bicycle around buying a few things from shops on the street. But now in the months when my income is so low, I don't even have enough money to go anywhere, let alone spend money to see a film or music show. I've been working for five years but I really haven't been able to save anything. Workers like me and my sisters in the factory have worked out a formula: 'borrow money in the summer, pay back in the winter.' But even many times when I go back to my village [in Quang Nam province] I have to ask for more money from my family in order to pay back debts".

Despite these complaints, of course, workers continue to migrate in large numbers from rural areas to industrial zones. Economic motivations play a major role in migration decisions (see Chapter V, below). However low factory salaries are, they are usually still higher than what workers can expect to earn in their home villages, whether through agriculture or non-farm activities. The story of Th., a young woman from Ninh Binh province, illustrates this dilemma:

Th. has recently returned to her home village after two years working in a large footwear factory in Binh Duong province. She completed junior secondary school and a tailoring course, with the intention of opening a tailor shop in her village. However, when a relative introduced her to work in the footwear factory in the south, Th. decided to try it. She left home at the age of 16. Given her

tailoring knowledge, the company accepted her as a worker after one month probation.

In her first month, Th. earned 540,000 dong plus a punctuality bonus of 60,000 and daily lunches, for a total of 600,000 dong. After her probation period ended, the total increased to 700,000. She spent about half of this amount on rent, food and other expenses and saved the remainder to support her family. After two years in the south, her savings were substantial. She missed her family, but felt satisfied with her work.

However, when her mother fell ill and had no one to care for her, Th. decided to return home. She is now the main income earner in her family, combining work in the rice fields with tailoring. Her monthly income is now only 150,000 dong.

- ActionAid Vietnam report from Ha Noi

Th.'s story serves to explain both the attractiveness of migrant factory work to rural Vietnamese and the market reasons by which enterprises can recruit workers at the prevailing pay scales. As long as rural wages remain far behind even the lowest-paid urban factory jobs, the pattern of migrant labour will continue to increase. The only long-term solution to the rural-urban salary gap would be to attract investment in rural areas, whether industrial, agricultural processing, or handicrafts, to use onsite labour and provide economic incentives for workers to remain at home.

Recruitment of workers

Most companies surveyed practice open recruitment processes. However, in practice the number of workers who apply directly for jobs is low (about one-third in Hai Phong, for instance); the remainder apply through employment service centres. In theory these services are free, but in fact many workers pay for placement. In Ha Noi, 67% of workers interviewed had to pay recruitment fees; the practice was widespread in all enterprises of all types and sectors. The vice-chairperson of Truong Son sub-district, Hai Phong, reported that "many young kids here had to pay 700,000 dong for employment services. If they wanted to take a training course, they had to pay



more." Local police have tried to stop illegal employment brokers in the sub-district but without success.

Many workers come to the factory with little advance knowledge of what to expect. A survey of female workers from the Red River Delta arriving in Ha Noi found that 79% came through the introduction of a friend, only 20% applied directly or through a service centre. When choosing a job, 45% of women lacked information on salary, 40% on requirements of the job, and 35% on vocational skills. Of 236 women interviewed, 55% arrived in the city with no training whatsoever. 36% had tailoring training and only 8% training in other areas such as handicraft production.

Asked about their motivations for moving to the city, most women offered economic reasons: their family needed money (62%), they could earn more than staying at home (72%), or they were unemployed at home (71%), with many citing multiple reasons. Much less common were personal and psychological explanations such as a desire to live in the city (17%) or a difficult family situation at home (5%).

Contracts and benefits

Industrial workers are required by law to sign contracts with their employers. According to the MOLISA survey of enterprises mentioned above, compliance with this provision has improved steadily from 60% of workers in 1995 to 93% as of 2003. Violations of contract regulations, meanwhile, fell from 57% of cases to 12% over the same period. In addition, the average length of contracts has increased, so that more workers have stable jobs lasting at least one year, instead of insecure 3-month or 6-month temporary contracts. In Binh Duong, for instance, of 83% of workers with contracts submitted to the industrial zone management board, 70% had contracts valid from one to three years, 15% lasting less than one year, and 14% of unlimited duration. Similar numbers were reported in Ha Noi. There were no significant differences among industries or types of enterprises surveyed. In Ho Chi Minh City, however, only 63% of workers surveyed in Go Vap district had labour contracts.

Employers are also required to provide social insurance and health insurance for their employees. Here the record has shown less improvement than in the case of contracts. MOLISA figures show that 79% of enterprises provided social insurance in 1995; in 2003 this had risen only to 81%. Among those who do provide benefits, additional problems sometimes exist in transparent reporting and provision of the correct amount of benefit to workers.

Furthermore, rates of compliance varied widely by enterprise. Of five companies surveyed in Ha Noi, for instance, three provided social insurance to over 90% of employees, while one (Nam Hoa Co.) only covered 38%. According to Mr. Can Van

Table IV. IZ/EPZ workers receiving health benefits and social insurance, %

	<i>Go Vap/HCMC (2004)</i>	<i>Binh Duong (2004)</i>	<i>Da Nang (2005)</i>	<i>Ha Noi (2004)</i>	<i>Hai Phong (2003)</i>
Health insurance	44% *+ 8% with cards but expired	no data	no data	83% *	no data
Social insurance	52% *	79% **	no data	83% * 96% **	81% *

** = Surveys of workers

** = Reported by enterprises

Minh, director of industrial zone labour management in Ha Noi, nearly all workers (96%) in the larger industrial zones are covered by social insurance, but only about 35% of workers in small and medium enterprises are.

In Hai Phong, many companies only provided social insurance to workers with contracts longer than one year. Compliance was higher in the garment sector (94%) than footwear (77%). In the initial probationary period of employment, sometimes lasting as long as one year, no benefits were provided and workers had no coverage in case of accident or illness. Moreover, the seasonal fluctuation rate in the footwear sector was especially high, meaning many workers never obtained coverage.

When workers do become sick, whether covered by health insurance or not, many have to go through complicated procedures to request sick leave. Workers in Hai Phong describe a en-step process reporting up through the company hierarchy, to the local hospital, then back through the company ranks before sick leave is approved. In other cases, workers were required to obtain certificates from local authorities, but since migrant workers are often not able to register with the authorities, it was impossible for them to do so. Rather than go through these processes, many sick workers simply took leave without pay and/or pay cuts. These procedures are reportedly more cumbersome in foreign-owned enterprises than in Vietnamese ones.

Working conditions

Workers in all location surveyed expressed serious concerns about the conditions inside factories. The

most common complaints concerned noise, sanitation, and rest periods. In Ha Noi, 36% of respondents rated workplace noise as "negative" or "very negative" in its impact on workers. Heat, dust and gases were also cited by 36%. Smaller numbers found negative impacts from sanitation facilities (20%) and lack of drinking water (12%). In all, an equal number of respondents agreed as disagreed with the statement that "my working conditions are unsafe and unhealthy" (see chart, p. 35).

Many enterprises reportedly place limitations on workers' breaks and social interactions in the workplace. Workers in Hai Phong complained of scolding or financial penalties if they talked with colleagues during working hours or went to the toilet more than once per shift. Lunch breaks were short; some companies provided lunch, while others did not. The combination of long working hours and stressful conditions affected both the health and spirit of workers.

Workplace safety is also a serious issue in factories. In IZs and EPZs in Binh Duong, two-thirds of enterprises are reported to have received educational programs in labour safety from provincial authorities, while one-third had yet to take part in this training. Some enterprises have set up labour safety committees and planning processes to improve conditions. Industrial zone managers in Binh Duong believe that working safety and conditions in foreign-invested enterprises are generally better than in other factories since they are more likely to employ newer technologies and pay greater attention to protecting the environment. The highest rate of accidents is reported to be in domestic private enterprises.



Ms. Nguyen Thi L. left home at 17 to work in Hai Phong. Over three years of work, the only people she has met are colleagues at the factory and in her boarding house. Since the speed of work at the factory is high and working hours long (from 7:30 AM to 21-22:00 in the evening), she normally goes to bed immediately after returning home.

"I am a hard working person," she says, "and I receive my full salary [700,000 dong]. Other

workers have their pay docked if they arrive late, 20,000 dong for every five minutes. If you are sick and this is certified by the doctor but not yet approved by the company, your salary is still docked. I have been working in the factory for three years but still am not covered by social insurance. The salary increases very slowly, not enough to keep up with prices.”

Nguyen Thi L. also complained of a stressful working atmosphere in the factory. The Taiwanese manager sometimes scolded workers, who did not dare to respond for fear their salary would be docked. “We thought the Vietnamese managers would help us but they were scared of the Taiwanese manager and made us frightened too.”

- ActionAid Vietnam, Hai Phong report

Workers in foreign-invested companies were more likely to complain of abusive behaviour on the part of managers (both foreign and Vietnamese). Young women in Hai Phong described physical and verbal abuse from managers including shoes thrown at them, glue poured on their heads, water splashed in their faces, cutting of clothes, and repeated swearing. Such treatment, while not widespread in reports from other locations, constitutes a serious violation of workers' rights.

Whether they are subject to abuse or simply inconvenience, many workers say that they do not wish to continue working long-term in their current jobs. In Ho Chi Minh City, more than 30% of workers expressed a desire to move; in the Ha Noi survey, 25% agreed. The main reason cited was not working conditions, but a chance to earn a higher salary (34%). Personal reasons followed: desire to get married (14%), return to work in the village (9%), and obtain higher education (7%). Seven percent cited pressure and overwork as the main reason they wanted to move.

From the employers' point of view, instability in the workforce creates pressure to continue recruiting large numbers of new workers and influences the production process, hence their profitability as an enterprise. Turnover rates in some companies reach levels as high as 35-40%, which are clearly not sustainable for long-term business development. Given the data presented above,

however, it is difficult to see how industrial workers could be enticed to stay longer without significant improvements in salary scales and working conditions. The same changes would need to occur before garment and footwear factory jobs become attractive to urban residents, not only rural migrant labour. Both employers and employees share the goal of a more stable working environment guaranteeing both production and job security; the question is how this sustainability may be achieved.

Labour unions and worker education

According to chapter XIII of the Labour Code, unions are the "sole representative to protect the rights and legal interests of Vietnamese workers, both individually and as a group." Mr. Tran Trong Phuc of the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour explains that Vietnamese unions serve as "a bridge between employee and employer." Foreign employers in industrial zones who come from countries with more adversarial union relations may not understand the Vietnamese system, which can lead to confusion and opposition to union activities.

Labour unions are present in some, but not all, enterprises where migrants work. In Binh Duong, 100% of state-owned enterprises contain union organizations, but only 46% of joint-venture enterprises and 30% of domestic private companies set up under the Enterprise Law. In industrial zones outside Ha Noi, unions operate in 31 of 75 enterprises (41%). Union officials in Hai Phong noted that SOEs and private enterprises were taking an active part in union activities, but that it was more difficult to set up unions in foreign-owned or -invested companies, in part because foreign managers were sceptical of unions.

Research data gives a mixed picture of the effectiveness of unions. In Binh Duong, 30% of enterprises have set up dispute settlement committees to reconcile between competing interests in the workplace. A 2003 MOLISA study of corporate social responsibility in labour found, however, that 33% of workers said that unions played "no role" in their enterprises, while in another 36%, unions' role was limited to information dissemination. Only 16% of unions were actively involved in settling labour disputes,

“Over the past years with the open policy of the Party and State encouraging investment, all sectors of the economy have been advancing rapidly. Many new industrial zones and areas have provided jobs for workers. But alongside these positive aspects, there are still other issues that need to be resolved.

“Violations of labour law by enterprises are quite common. Some of them have been continuing for a long time without active efforts to address them. This has led to dissatisfaction among workers, and strikes and work stoppages are on the increase.

“Most factory workers come from a rural, agricultural background. They haven’t learned much about the law, especially labour law. Their education levels are low, and they don’t have skills or specialities so their income is low. It’s easy for them to be convinced or enticed to join illegal strikes.”

- Union official, Go Vap district, HCMC

“We are the representatives of legal authority that manage labour and employment at the local level. Of course, we always protect and stand on the side of workers. But we never listen to only one side. Through listening, we’ve come to understand that the difficulties of enterprises need our sympathy too. Saying this doesn’t mean that they’re completely correct, but our workers are also wrong sometimes.”

- Department of Labour official, Da Nang

and 8% providing training for union members. In some enterprises, unions' activities were also limited by a lack of knowledge of unions' role and a lack of independence from employers' interests. At one factory in Hai Phong, some union officers were elected by workers, but others were appointed through an unclear process. When workers submitted a complaint on food safety in the enterprise, no action was taken by these union officials.

Migrant workers who arrive in the factory without skills or previous training are unlikely to be familiar with the laws governing unions, worker safety, or other aspects of the Labour Code. In Binh Duong and Ho Chi Minh City, over 80% of workers have no more than a junior secondary school education. Only the minority with technical training has had

some exposure to labour issues and regulations. Unions have a potentially crucial role to play in building workers' knowledge, but evidence suggests that this is only happening in isolated cases.

Strikes and dispute resolution

Work stoppages and strikes have become frequent occurrences in Vietnamese factories, particularly in industrial areas, IZs and EPZs that employ large numbers of migrant workers. According to official government data, 751 strikes took place in the nearly ten-year period from January 1995 to November 2004.

Vietnamese law gives workers the right to strike under specific conditions. Strikes are considered legal or illegal based on a determination made by the court; however, a ruling on the legality of a strike is often not made until after the conflict has ended. In January 2005, Decree 04/CP was issued by the Vietnamese government to regulate resolution of disputes and strikes. Prior to this decree, there was no specific legal instrument for managing conflict in factories. An ordinance on resolution of strikes, which would be a higher-level legal instrument than the decree, is currently under consideration by the government.

Strikes have taken place in all types of enterprises and in all parts of the country, with a concentration in the south-eastern provinces of Ho Chi Minh City, Binh Duong, Dong Nai and Can Tho, as this is where the largest number of factories is located. Evidence indicates that foreign-invested companies have experienced more labour disputes than state-owned or domestic private enterprises. Of 64 strikes recorded in the years 2002-03, 68% occurred in joint-venture or foreign-owned factories, 21% in private domestic companies set up under the Enterprise Law, and 11% in state-owned enterprises. For instance, the Da Nang Department of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs tallies 18 strikes in the city since 1995, of which 16 have taken place in 100% foreign-invested companies (the majority of them from Taiwan and Hong Kong). Only two strikes occurred in state-owned companies. In Binh Duong, 52 labour disputes took place in 2004 including 19 strikes in 17 various enterprises, one-third of them of Taiwanese origin.

To cite one case study, more than 1,000 workers at the Huu Nghi (Friendship) Footwear Company in Da Nang's An Don industrial zone went on strike in late January 2005, just before the Tet holidays. The majority of the striking workers were women. The dispute arose due to the failure of management to pay overtime wages, but as the strike commenced workers added many other small complaints of unequal or unfair treatment. Conflicts also arose between workers in one section of the factory and those in another who felt they were not being treated equally by management. The stoppage was resolved when the company director (who is Vietnamese) met with the workers, agreed to their demands, and provided 50 million dong (US \$3150) on the spot to cover the overtime wages of workers.

Not all strikes are resolved amicably. In some enterprises, labour relations are worse after strikes occur than before. Strikes can cause serious harm to the interests of both workers and employers: workers lose salaries and other income during the period of the strike, while companies can face large losses due to failure to fulfil production contracts and the loss of confidence on the part of their customers and investors. A three-day strike in June 2005 at the Sam Yang garment factory in Cu Chi district, Ho Chi Minh City involved 7,200 workers and cost the company US \$4.5 million in damages. In the same month, 3,000 workers at the Hue Phong Footwear Company in Go Vap district, HCMC went on strike for two days and destroyed corporate property in the process. In Da Nang, 10,000 workers at the Keyhinge Toys Company reportedly participated in a May 2005 strike. The company announced on August 25 that

3,500 workers had been laid off beginning in July and their contracts would not be renewed due to a decline in orders (Lao Dong newspaper, 26 August 2005).

At a workshop organized by ActionAid Viet Nam and MOLISA in June 2005, participants from the five provinces studied in this research offered the following causes and reasons for strikes to occur:

- Enterprises do not observe the Labour Code or show respect for workers, for instance through dismissing workers illegally or not paying social insurance. In some cases these conditions have existed for a long time and have not been adequately dealt with;
- Managers demand excessive or unrealistic production quotas and lose the confidence of workers;
- Employers attempt to maximize short-term profits by underpaying workers, cutting benefits, or increasing working hours;
- In foreign-invested companies, language and cultural issues with foreign managers are sometimes an issue;
- Workers have low levels of education and are poorly informed about the law and labour relations, making them easily incited to strike;
- Many enterprises do not have labour union organizations to represent the workers' interests;
- Where unions do exist, they are often weak, and most strikes occur without the foreknowledge or involvement of union organizations.

Chapter V:

Outside the Factory: Living Conditions and Social Issues of Migrant Workers

Along with the challenges of work in the factory, migrant workers are also faced with many difficulties in daily life. This chapter analyses major problems in workers' lives such as housing, security, basic social services, social and cultural activities, relationships, saving habits, and plans for the future.

Housing

Research in all five locations shows that the majority of migrant workers rent rooms in boarding houses during the time that they work in industrial areas, IZs or EPZs. In Binh Duong, 70% of workers live in boarding houses or dormitories (2002 statistics), in Ho Chi Minh City 69% (2001) and Hanoi 58% (2004).

Migrant workers' dormitories are generally concentrated near factory locations and are built and invested in privately. Living conditions in these dormitory areas are inadequate and often unsanitary. Moreover, the living space is extremely



cramped. A survey in Go Vap district, HCMC, shows that 76% of workers do not have a kitchen inside their house, 32% have to use a common toilet with other households, and 88% drink water from wells. In Hai Phong, 33% of workers lack safe drinking water, 64% use well water and 36% water from pipes.

"For 50,000 dong [US \$3.16] a month, I have a place of shelter, half a wooden bed with an area of one square meter. However, these living conditions are really miserable and lacking in all conveniences. Every boarding house here is like this. Eight people crowd into one nine-square-meter room. If there are fewer than that, the landlady will bring more renters in. The whole row of dormitories has up to 48 people, but there are only two small showers and one toilet. There's not enough water, so we have to use unfiltered, dirty yellow well water. Often if I come back from work late, there's not enough water to take a shower. We're also not able to cook in the house. A lot of people just make do with eating a bun on the street, then come back and go to sleep. I'm often afraid that the food isn't safe to eat, but there's no other choice."

- A female worker in Hai Phong

Research in Binh Duong and Ha Noi looked more deeply into workers' self-evaluations of their living conditions. A significant proportion of workers in Binh Duong concluded that the conditions in boarding houses are "bad" or "very bad."

Table V: Percentage of workers who rate living conditions as “bad” or “very bad”

Living conditions	Ha Noi (2004)	Binh Duong (2004)
Space	9%	21%
Water source	6%	20%
Bathroom	6%	18%
Kitchen	13%	27%

In addition to basic living conditions (clean water, bathrooms and toilets), research in Go Vap district, HCMC further investigated related environmental issues such as air pollution, noise, garbage and waste water. Through observation and interviews, the research team discovered that boarding houses were almost all unbearably hot, dank, polluted by noise, easily flooded, and without garbage or sewage collection. Most rooms were in substandard housing, with tile or cement floors and wooden boards or other simple walls. Some structures were even formerly used to raise domestic animals.

“I began to rent out this house in 2002. Before that, this was a place for raising pigs, but then the river water became too polluted for the pigs. When people came to ask if they could rent the house, I divided the pig house into smaller compartments. At first there were four or five compartments, later we added some more. At the moment there are 12 compartments, made from sheet metal with cement floors.”

- Boarding house owner in Go Vap district, Ho Chi Minh City

Despite the poor living conditions in boarding houses, workers still have to expend a considerable fraction of their meagre incomes to pay rent. According to survey results in Go Vap, house rental takes up nearly 24% of monthly expenses of migrant workers. In Ha Noi, 83% of workers responded that they spend more than 200,000 dong (\$12.66), or nearly 30% of income, to rent room in a boarding house.



Although workers' need for housing is extremely pressing, corporations hardly meet this need at all. In Hai Phong, one company (the Lien Dinh Footwear Co., which is owned by Sao Vang Corp.) has constructed housing for workers, completed after research in Hai Phong was conducted for this report. In Da Nang, 40 hectares of land have been allocated to build three apartment complexes for workers. However, these three complexes can only supply housing for approximately 1,000 people (out of 15,000 migrant workers in the city). Out of the approximately 60,000 migrant workers in IZs and EPZs in Binh Duong province, only three corporations have invested in worker housing. The total area constructed for housing is 25,876 sq.m. for 4,850 people.

Security

The problems of makeshift and inadequate housing for workers are directly connected to their security. One issue raised by many workers is the phenomenon of theft of money or belongings. The majority of migrant workers are not registered with the local authorities where they live. Landlords wish to avoid paying taxes and doing paperwork, so do not provide a true accounting of the number of workers staying in their houses. Because of this, when thefts do occur, there is no intervention from the authorities.

Security in the neighbourhoods where boarding houses are located is also problematic. Research in Ha Noi found that some women workers had been harassed and assaulted on the streets and at their place of residence. Reports from Binh Duong, Da Nang, Ha Noi and Hai Phong all

“Anyone who rents a room recognises the problem of losing things. We go to work all day almost every day, while all kinds of people are hanging around the house. Often things that were just bought go missing immediately, so we don't dare to buy anything of value.”

- Ms. Le Thi Tuyen, worker in Da Nang

assessed that the areas where migrant workers live have problems with street safety. In some places, women workers have been deceived and abused by men who take advantage of their lack of family connections and their inexperience living in the city. Research in Da Nang and Ho Chi Minh City both mentions cases of women workers who become pregnant and have to return to their home villages to give birth. Others are enticed to work as karaoke hostesses or fall into the paths of prostitution and drug abuse.

Social services

Poor and intense living conditions and strenuous work have a serious effect on workers' health. According to survey results from Go Vap district, HCMC, 34% of respondents answered that their health is worse now than before they moved to the city for work. Research in Da Nang also mentions cases of women passing out en masse from psychological pressure at the workplace. In addition, women may faint from a lack of food or other circulatory ailments. In Ha Noi, the majority of workers say that their health has weakened after several years of factory work, due to poor nutrition, unsanitary food, and unsatisfactory living conditions and stressful work in the factory.

Although the health of migrant workers needs to be improved, they have restricted access to health care services. Research in Ha Noi and Hai Phong clearly demonstrates the present condition of health care for migrant workers. The majority of workers have periodic health checkups at the factory clinic (90% of workers in Ha Noi, 81% in Hai Phong). However, workers only go to the company clinic when they have normal illnesses such as stomach aches, headaches, and colds. The company clinics are not able to handle any disease that requires treatment.

As was analysed in Chapter IV above, procedures for requesting sick leave are complicated to the extent that workers are unable to rest and do not dare to take off work in order to seek hospital care. Survey results in Hai Phong show that only 8% of migrant workers go to hospital for treatment. Although the policy on health insurance states that migrants who have health insurance should be able to go to hospital in the place where they are registered to live, in reality it is only in the most serious cases (such as emergencies and intensive care) that migrant workers go to hospital. Though there are no detailed statistics, reports from Hai Phong indicate that the families of migrant workers are often unable to enjoy health care services that any poor family with an official residence permit is able to access.

Since health care conditions are deficient, workers frequently complain about health services. 31% of workers in Binh Duong find that services are "bad" or "very bad"; in Ha Noi this figure is 15%.

With the exception of the research in Go Vap district, HCMC, local research in the other four locations did not look deeply into access to education for migrant workers and their families. Research in Binh Duong mentions that 20% of workers find educational services to be "bad" or "very bad." Research in Go Vap includes more information on educational services for children of migrant workers. 56% of nursery-school aged children go to school, but only 33% of these attend public schools. For primary school, 88% of school-age children are able to attend, of which 76% go to public schools. The rates for junior secondary school are 84% and 62% respectively. This data shows that although the rate of children attending school is relatively high, the proportion that are able to attend public school is significantly lower.

Entertainment and social-cultural activities

Research in all five locations has a common finding that social activities of migrant workers are quite limited due to a lack of time and money. After a long and exhausting working day, workers returning home only have time to eat, drink, shower and wash their clothes, then have to sleep in order to recover their strength to go back to work the next day. If they have a few minutes of

"Our working day often extends to fourteen or fifteen hours. When we come home, we don't even feel like watching TV and don't have any time to meet a boyfriend."

- *Woman worker in Hai Phong*

"Sometimes we get off work at five in the afternoon, but usually it's overtime, flex-time, or voluntary extra work until finally getting home at nine or ten in the evening. There's no time to see a film or drink a cup of coffee, let alone fall in love, have a husband and children."

- *Ms. Vo Thi Hoang Phuong, worker in Da Nang*

"In the evening, anytime I feel sad I bicycle around the streets watching people going by so I don't feel so homesick. I don't dare to ask friends to go out with me, since I don't have much money to go to a café for a drink."

- *Ms. Nguyen Thi Thanh Thuy, worker in Da Nang*

"In my free time, I just watch TV, I can't go out and see a film or a music show since I don't have the money. A lot of times I really want to go, but when I think about the price I give up and decide to stay at home."

- *Ms. Pham Thi No, worker in Da Nang*



free time, most workers watch television or walk around outside in the streets. Many people wish they could watch films or music shows but always have to give up on the idea because of the cost. Survey data collected by the Research Institute on Arts and Culture in Binh Duong finds that 89% of workers entertain themselves with television and 92% listen to radio. However, only 28% have gone to cinemas, 12% to theatres, 22% to museums and 8% to state-run cultural palaces within the past year.

Migrant workers' own evaluations of their leisure, cultural and sport activities confirm the above findings. In Binh Duong, 34% of workers interviewed felt that their social activities were "bad" or "very bad," while in Ha Noi this rate was 14%. Workers in both Hai Phong and Ha Noi both found

one of the main difficulties in their lives to be the limited availability of cultural activities and sport.

Research in Go Vap district, HCMC, explored more deeply into gender differences regarding workers' social activities. The results show that there is no clear discrepancy on rates of participation or time spent in entertainment generally. The clearest difference is in the types of leisure activities preferred. Women workers primarily watch television, read newspapers, or take walks near their boarding houses, talking with each other, buying snacks or drinks on the street. Male workers, in addition to seeing films and reading newspapers, also go to cafés and bars with a greater frequency than women.



Social relationships

Almost all female migrants are young women who have not yet married. One of their greatest worries is that they have no time to meet and get to know a boyfriend. Most garment and footwear factories employ almost only women, thus women workers' chances to make friends with co-workers of the opposite sex is extremely limited. Moreover, the long working day with little time for rest or entertainment means that female workers have no chance to come in contact, get to know, and choose a partner to start a family. One point to consider is that research conducted for this report focuses on analysing the concerns of female workers in making friends of the opposite sex but does not consider the opinions of male workers on the same subject.

Those female workers who do have boyfriends meet many obstacles in life far from home. Research in Go Vap district, HCMC has found many examples of these problems. Although this is not widespread, some men and women workers live together in boarding houses and have sexual relations before marriage. There are cases that lead to marriage, but many relationships of this nature collapse. Due to social pressure and views on gender, the person who suffers the consequences of this loss is always the woman.

In addition to limited opportunities to meet and get to know people of the opposite sex, workers from outside provinces encounter many difficulties in fitting in with the urban communities where they

“Generally speaking no one here has a boyfriend. We work overtime all day, how could we have boyfriends?”

- *Woman worker in Go Vap district, HCMC*

“Men are really valued in the company. Any man who seems decent already has a partner, people like us never get a chance.”

- *Woman worker in Go Vap district, HCMC*

“I’m lucky since I already have a family. I don’t know when my co-workers can ever have a partner. No boyfriend anywhere would accept a girlfriend who works all day and never has time for him.”

- *Ms. Ho Thi Mai, worker in Da Nang*

“Some worker couples live together like husband and wife but without getting married. Out of 25 workers in my house, there are three married couples and two other couples who were living together but then broke up. The women don’t dare to go back to their villages after this, it’s like they’ve left their homes forever.”

- *Owner of a boarding house in Go Vap district, HCMC*

“Two people working in the same factory, both from Thanh Hoa province or one from Thanh Hoa and one from [neighbouring] Nghe An, get to know each other and then start living together. After they get bored they break up. I’ve seen this pattern many times. There are also couples who get married, but not many at all. In cases where the couples break up and move on, people still blame the woman for being stupid. If there’s a child, they go back home, but there are also people who don’t dare go back home. They might agree to have an abortion or give the child up for adoption to somebody else.”

- *Woman worker in Go Vap district, HCMC*

live. This appears to be equally true whether migrants come from distant regions of the country, as is frequently the case in Ho Chi Minh City, or simply from adjacent provinces, as is typical in Ha Noi and Hai Phong. According to research results in Hai Phong, only 15% of migrant workers are aware of and participate in community activities in the area around them. Many factors contribute to this restricted participation: most of workers' time is spent at the factory, so they have little opportunity to engage with the outside world; overtime work gives little time to participate in activities outside working hours; and since many workers are not registered with local authorities, the authorities pay little attention to them. When evaluating their relations with local authorities and mass organizations such as the Women's Union or Youth Union, almost all workers in Ha Noi and Hai Phong give low marks.

Savings habits

Most migrant workers interviewed for this study report that they save a significant part of their

“We’re never invited to any neighbourhood meetings.”

- *Woman worker in Go Vap district, HCMC*

“City people have different lives and careers from ours. Our work doesn’t give us any chance to meet them.”

- *Woman worker in Go Vap district, HCMC*

income. 85% of workers in Ha Noi save from 100,000-200,000 dong (US \$6.33-\$12.66) per month, out of an average income of 600,000-700,000 dong (\$38.00-\$44.30). In Go Vap district, HCMC, 85% of migrant workers save an average of 331,000 dong per month (\$21.00), about 30% of their income. A large percentage of these savings are sent back to the workers' home villages to support their families. On average, migrant workers in Go Vap district remit 2,516,000 dong (\$159.25) per year, or 209,000 dong (\$13.23) per month. In order to save this much of their earnings, migrant workers must scrimp on spending in all other areas of their living costs, sacrificing entertainment and leisure activities. Although none of the local surveys raised the question of the relationship between saving habits and deterioration of health through insufficient nutrition, this is an issue that requires further investigation.

“My income is only about 700,000 dong [per month]. In order to send my parents 500,000 dong each month, I have to really save. I can only afford to spend 200,000 dong for food and rent. A little food doesn’t cost much, for breakfast and dinner I eat on the street for only 1,000 dong per meal, and lunch at the factory costs 2,500.”

- *Ms. Nguyen Thi L., worker in Hai Phong*

“Every month I send my family about 100,000 dong. In order to have this money I have to save everything I can and eat cheaply. In the evening I cook myself a little pot of rice, a bowl of fish sauce and two dried fish or boiled vegetables, but I can’t afford to go out and eat in a restaurant.”

- *Ms. Nguyen Thi Hong, worker in Da Nang*

Future plans

When discussing their plans for the future, a significant percentage of migrant workers say that they do not plan to continue with their present jobs in the long term. In Ha Noi, this rate is 25%, and in Go Vap district, HCMC 30%. Some decide to look for other jobs, some choose to return home to their villages, and others have not yet made a clear decision. In Ha Noi, 30% of workers say they plan to return to the village, while in Go Vap district 24% say so. However, 48% of workers in Ha Noi say they would return home if they had a job there, and an additional 39% are undecided, with only 13% disagreeing (see chart, p. 36). A common finding of all five local studies is that whether workers choose to stay in the city or return to the village, they all feel uncertain about the future.

“I always feel that my parents in the village are waiting [for remittances I send] and poor from selling their faces to the soil and their backs to the sky, so I dare not leave my job. When I go home, I feel more relaxed in my mind, but the future seems so uncertain. Should I inherit the hardship of farming from my parents or what?”

- *Ms. Vo Thi Hoang Phuong, worker in Da Nang*

“After half a year of work [in the city], our moods are all bored and we want to go home. But when we think about going back, we feel embarrassed, since then we’d come home empty-handed.”

- *Four female workers in Da Nang*

“Nguyen Thi L. is 30 years old. Four years of continuous work in the factory left her with no more time to expand her relations and seek to begin a family. As she enters her thirties, she feels depressed whenever anyone mentions the question of family. She says that in present circumstances, she could go on working for three more years at most before her health becomes too bad to continue. She sees no future for herself. She will go back to the village where she came from, even though she doesn’t know what work she will do there to earn a living.”

- *ActionAid Vietnam report from Hai Phong*

Chapter VI:

Concepts of Corporate Social Responsibility

Fostering a culture of corporate social responsibility (CSR) forms one of the secondary objectives of ActionAid's promotion of worker rights and entitlements. Two of the research efforts used as sources for this report include approaches to CSR in their analysis. The Hai Phong report uses a social capital model to evaluate responsibilities of stakeholders in improving the lives of migrant workers. For research in Da Nang, interviewers sought out the opinions of corporations themselves, as well as local officials who are involved in implementing social policies for migrant workers. On the one hand, these efforts show that concepts of CSR are not foreign to Viet Nam, and in fact many managers and owners are personally concerned with improving worker welfare as they see it. On the other hand, many of the solutions proposed would only partially satisfy the criticisms of workers themselves. Corporations tend to interpret CSR as positive efforts to provide housing, food, transportation, or other "extras" outside the workplace, rather than ensuring basic labour rights inside the factory.

ActionAid takes a rights-based approach to CSR: at issue is not corporate philanthropy or charity, but rather whether corporations are following the Labour Code and are compliant with relevant international conventions on workers' rights.

ActionAid understands CSR in four ways:

- (i) Respect of corporations for the basic rights of workers, and unobstructed protection of these rights in the working environment;
- (ii) Respect of corporations for the rights of consumers who use products provided by

the corporation in terms of quality and safety to human health;

- (iii) Commitment in the investment strategy of corporations to the exploration and use of clean technologies and the treatment of waste products in ways that protect the surrounding environment;

- (iv) Commitment to abide by the law, especially in carrying out obligations to pay taxes, healthy business practices and fair competition.

Vietnamese officials take a similar view: at a December 2002 workshop, Vice-Minister of Labour Nguyen Luong Trao defined CSR as "the detailed rules and pledges of a corporation to abide by the law and express respect for the rights of workers and the community surrounding the corporation's facilities."

Most owners and managers of IZ and EPZ enterprises interviewed for this research project also express concern for workers' labour and living conditions and show some understanding of CSR as it applies to their own businesses. Among the suggestions raised by interview respondents are improvements in housing, food, and transportation for workers. Each of these areas is summarised below. While these areas of concern do overlap with workers' own priorities to some extent, particularly on housing, none address the core areas of worker dissatisfaction inside the factory of long working hours and low salaries. However desirable these improvements may be, therefore, they would at best only go partway to improving labour relations in export-producing factories.

Several caveats apply to the below findings: as most examples come only from research in Da Nang, they should not be generalised nationwide, nor was the sample size wide enough to draw conclusions about overall corporate attitudes even in central Viet Nam. Additional research on corporate social responsibility would be necessary to confirm and further develop these findings.

Workers' housing and food

As noted in the previous chapter, few enterprises in any of the five locations studied nationwide currently provide housing for workers. Nor have the cities and provinces where IZs and EPZs are located constructed substantial worker housing on their own. In Da Nang, the city People's Committee began to discuss allocating land for workers' apartment blocks as long ago as 1992. Up to now, 40 hectares have been set aside for construction of three apartment complexes, but due to limited funding, fewer than 1,000 units have been completed—far less than the need. Private investors are not willing to fund worker housing on their own since workers' salaries are too low to afford market rents. Although all IZs in Binh Duong have approved plans to construct residential housing, most of this housing is being used as resettlement sites or as a real estate business. When preparing plans for industrial zones, investors must all plan for resettlement of people displaced by construction, but not for worker housing. The reason for this is that investment in housing is large in scale, but the time period to earn back the initial capital is long, hence corporations find this ineffective.

Almost no enterprises in Da Nang provide meals for workers either. In 2003, the state-owned Huu Nghi Footwear Factory in the An Don IZ assigned several thousand square meters of space to build a kitchen and cafeteria for workers onsite. Food and drinks served there were guaranteed to be safe, with insurance coverage in case of food poisoning. The cafeteria not only added convenience for workers but saved time, and the factory was cited as a national model by an official of the Viet Nam General Confederation of Labour. However, this is one small example from a state-owned factory; more than 90% of workers in IZs

and EPZs either eat on the street or cook meals themselves in their rented dormitories.

All company and local government representatives interviewed agree that insufficient worker housing and food service facilities have significant effects on workers' living conditions, health, morale and security. But when presented with the question of who should take responsibility for correcting these deficiencies, respondents have no ready answer. The majority of enterprises and investors have declined to accept the burden of responsibility for worker accommodations and food. This difficulty extends back to the beginning of planning for industrial areas. Thousands of hectares of land have been set aside for IZs and EPZs, but neither corporations nor local authorities have seen to it that parcels of this land are reserved for housing, let alone markets, schools or child care facilities for the hundreds of thousands of workers employed in the zones. The sheer number of migrant workers crowding into Vietnamese cities makes large-scale construction programs infeasible.



Mr. Le Vien Man, director of a ceramic tile factory in the Hoa Khanh IZ, Da Nang, proposes a public-private partnership solution. "Cities should create conditions to provide land to corporations so that they can take care of constructing housing for their own workers. If financial capacity is limited, then at least dormitories should be built that are linked to markets, child care centres and other local services. In the longer term, when new IZs and EPZs are planned, the local authorities should plan better and simultaneously construct places for workers to eat and live. This will solve the problem right from the beginning and avoid the situation of 'securing the barn door only after the horse has escaped.'"

Mr. Tran Van Dong, vice-director of the Da Nang Industrial Zone Management Board, adds that "even without the land problems, the task of investing in and building apartment buildings for workers has many drawbacks for companies. The main difficulty is that the initial capital investment is large, but the returns are very slow." However, Mr. Dong believes these obstacles will gradually be removed as the city People's Committee creates more favourable conditions for investment in low-income housing.

Transportation

The ceramic tile factory director quoted above, Le Vien Man, has been actively involved in attempts to improve transportation facilities for workers in Da Nang. "At the moment," he says, "tens of thousands of workers, especially women, go to work in IZs and EPZs by bicycle, or even on foot. However, the authorities and corporations have not yet considered better possibilities for them." Mr. Man proposes that if buses were organised at the correct times to bring workers to IZs and EPZs, there would be many benefits on all sides. From the corporations' view, it would eliminate problems of worker tardiness or early departure from work². Second, buses would reduce traffic congestion and accidents around the factories, and if accidents did occur, they would be covered

2 Based on the working hours, overtime schedules, and salary penalties reported in Chapter IV above, it is difficult to believe that worker absenteeism is really a serious problem in IZ factories.

by insurance. Third, corporations could save space, no longer having to provide large parking areas in front of factories for workers' bicycles. Fourth, corporations would feel more secure about their property, as cases of workers stealing company assets would be easier to detect and control if all workers arrived and left in company vehicles. On the side of workers, they would not have to worry about traffic jams, late arrival at work, or having their pay cut for late arrival, nor would they have to pay parking fees (which are common at many factories).

Despite the advantages Mr. Man cites, few companies offer transportation for their employees. The major reason is the cost of purchasing buses and fuel, with no corresponding financial benefits to the corporation's bottom line. There are also logistical difficulties, since workers do not live concentrated in one location, but scattered in rental housing throughout low-income areas of Vietnamese cities. Mr. Man concludes that improving transportation is "difficult, but not impossible," if (as in the above housing example) city authorities provide incentives for companies to invest in transportation.

If Mr. Man and his colleagues are able to provide buses for workers, this would doubtless help to reduce traffic congestion near industrial sites in Da Nang. Whether it would make any substantial difference in workers' quality of life is debatable. No workers interviewed in any of the five research locations identified transportation as a major issue affecting their work or living conditions. As such, this is less an issue of corporate social responsibility as of corporate participation in urban transportation planning, however welcome that might be.

Conclusions

Corporate owners and managers who show active interest in their workers' well-being should be commended, not necessarily for their generosity but for their acceptance of social responsibility and ability to think in terms of long-term economic benefits for their enterprises and workers. Ms. Nguyen Thi Minh Nguyet, director of the Sai Gon Knitwear Company, notes that "on the side of corporations, many things are still lacking. We haven't been able to resolve issues such as

providing temporary parking and accommodations in a timely manner. We have been slow to sign contracts according to the regulations and to purchase social insurance for workers. We are prepared to accept this and correct it because we have chosen to stay here and work here for the long term. It would be crazy to mistreat the people who are helping us."

Such an expression of responsible business practices unfortunately stands in contrast to the conditions described at many garment and footwear factories in Viet Nam, where investors and owners appear to have sought short-term profits at the cost of long-term economic and

social stability. In the short-term picture, female migrant workers represent an endless supply of cheap, if poorly-trained, labour that can be overworked and poorly treated, then replaced three to five years later with new recruits. The immense personal and social costs of this system do not enter into these corporations' calculations. In the longer term, however, responsible corporate behaviour is not only in workers' interests, but also to the advantage of the corporations themselves. Concepts of CSR, even if incomplete, help to foster this pragmatic behaviour and should be expanded to all topics where disputes between workers and managers arise.

Chapter VII:

Recommendations

To the central government

1. *Prioritise investment in rural areas*, from state, private and foreign sources, to promote agricultural processing and small-scale industrial and handicraft production at the village level. Plentiful and adequately compensated labour opportunities in rural communities are the only way to prevent or slow migration to urban areas.
2. *Increase basic education, vocational training and employment awareness programs* in rural areas that are source areas for migrant labour, so that young women and men who choose to move to cities are better prepared vocationally and personally for the experience.
3. *Conduct increased, large-scale research on migrant workers*, in partnership where possible with NGOs and other international agencies, to confirm and deepen the findings in this report. More research is particularly needed in the following areas:
 - Best practices for employment of migrant workers
 - Effective means of strike and dispute resolution
 - Implementation of corporate social responsibility
4. *Ensure full legal rights and protections for migrant workers*, including resident registration, housing, health care and education. This will require cooperation among ministries and other government agencies, such as the Ministry of Education

and Training for adult education programs, the Ministry of Construction for questions of urban planning, and the Ministry of Public Security to ensure the security of areas where migrants reside.

5. *Develop a national policy framework for migrant worker housing* to be implemented at the city and provincial levels, including provisions for land allocation, tax incentives, and/or low- or no-interest loans for investors and builders of worker housing.
6. *Amend rules on legal overtime and social insurance* to increase penalties for enterprises that violate regulations on working hours and benefits. These are the most common violations reported in these research findings.
7. *Complete legal instruments regarding strikes and strike resolution* currently under consideration in the National Assembly and MOLISA, taking into account the findings of this and subsequent research.
8. *Amend legal provisions on IZs and EPZs* to require that new investors ensure adequate accommodation and living conditions for workers moving from outside the local area.
9. *Issue regulations on planning and land allocation for worker housing* in the process of constructing new IZs and EPZs.

To local governments

10. *Strengthen enforcement of the Labour Code* through obligatory monitoring of corporations where migrant workers are

employed and full public disclosure of findings.

11. *Cooperate with corporations to find solutions to housing, health care, security, clean water, and other problems in living conditions* of migrant workers. Solutions could involve public-private partnerships, allocation of land or other incentives for corporate action.

12. *Give priority to needs of migrant workers* in health care, education, and transportation, either through public and/or private channels.

To labour unions and workers

13. *Increase and strengthen union organisations* in enterprises employing migrant workers. Those enterprises that do not yet have union representation should be encouraged to initiate this. Those enterprises where existing union organisations are ineffective and out of touch with workers' interests should be targeted for training programs and increased activities.

14. *Set up bi- or tri-partite dispute resolution committees* in IZs/EPZs or other enterprises prone to labour conflicts, including representatives of local government and/or business associations.

15. *Train all migrant workers* in awareness and knowledge of Vietnamese law and international conventions pertaining to worker rights.

To corporations employing migrant workers

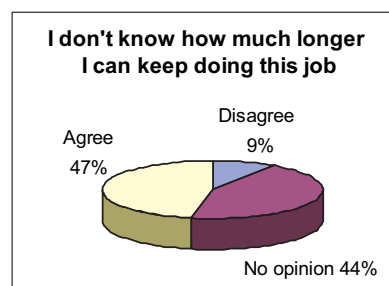
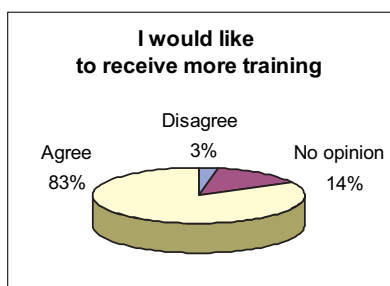
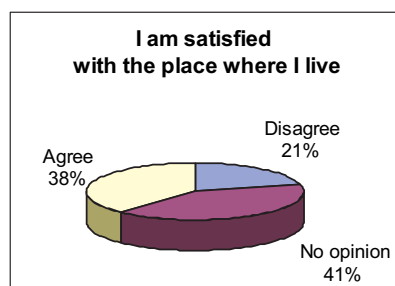
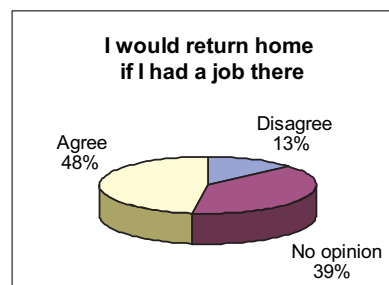
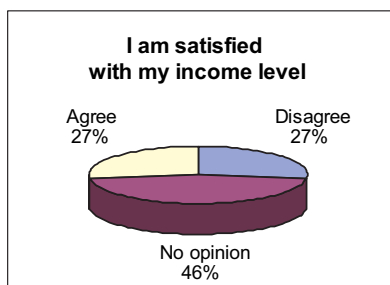
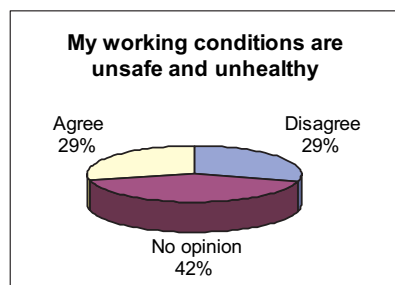
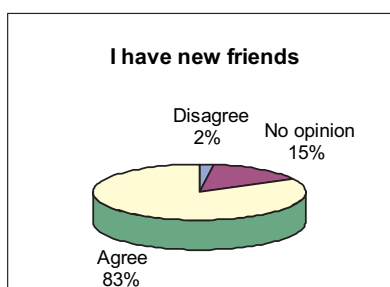
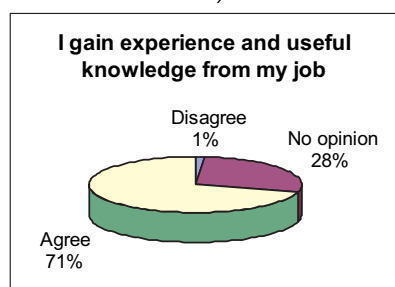
16. *Ensure 100% compliance* with provisions of the Labour Code relating to working hours, overtime pay, contracts and social insurance.

17. *Increase training on the Labour Code and in corporate social responsibility* for owners and managers. This could be provided through business associations or international agencies.

18. *Consider opinions and criticisms of workers* before embarking on programs to improve worker welfare, whether inside or outside the factory.

Appendix

1. Survey of 236 Female Migrant Workers in Ha Noi, 2004 (carried out by Ha Noi Trade Union and ActionAid Viet Nam)



2. Local Research Participants

Hai Phong:

Name	Position	Organization
1. Ngô Minh Hường	Team leader, report writer	ActionAid Việt Nam
2. Ngô Văn Hoà	Technical officer, report writer	Institute for Labour and Social Research (MOLISA)
3. Nguyễn Quang Minh	Team member	ActionAid Việt Nam
4. Phan Kiên Oanh	Team member	ActionAid Việt Nam
5. Lê Thanh Minh	Team member	ActionAid Việt Nam
6. Phan Ngô Áo	Team member	Go Vap District Labour Confederation, HCMC
7. Nguyễn Thị Khường	Coordinator	Hai Phong Labour Confederation
8. Bùi Thị Hên	Team member	Hai Phong Labour Confederation
9. Quách Tuyệ	Team member	Hai Phong Labour Confederation
10. Nguyễn Thanh Huyền	Team member	Ngô Quyền District Labour Confederation
11. Vũ Thị Huệ	Team member	Footwear company
12. Trần Thị Dền	Team member	Footwear company union
13. Nguyễn Thanh Thủy	Team member	Union official
14. Phan Thị Duyên	Team member	Worker, Sao Vàng Co.
15. Nguyễn Thị Văn Minh	Team member	Union official, Sao Vàng Co.
16. Nguyễn Thị Gái	Team member	Ánh Vàng Co.
17. Hoàng Thị Loan	Team member	An Lão District Womens Union
18. Vũ Minh Nguyễn	Team member	Kiến Thủy District Womens Union
19. Nguyễn Minh Hà	Team member	Ngô Quyền District Womens Union
20. Hoàng Thị Mỹ	Team member	Công ty có phen Diêm
21. Bùi Ngô Hà	Team member	Footwear Association
22. Nguyễn Phấn	Team member	Hai Phong Dept of Labour
23. Nguyễn Thị Ý	Team member	Lĩnh Dinh Footwear Factory
24. Nguyễn Ánh Thị	Team member	An Lão District Labour Union
25. Trần Ngô Doanh	Team member	Jong Ho Co., An Lão
26. Phùng Ngô Quý	Team member	Vanguard Youth Construction and Footwear Company
27. Trần Thị Sinh	Team member	Vanguard Youth Construction and Footwear Company
28. Ôi Thị Hoà	Team member	Kiến Thủy District Labour Union
29. Áo Phú Loan	Team member	Hai Phong Womens Union

Hanoi:

Name	Position	Organization
1. Ngô Văn Hoà	Technical expert; report writer	Institute for Labour and Social Research (MOLISA)
2. Ruth Bowen	Technical expert	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Australia
3. Nguyễn Thị Thanh Hà	Program coordinator	Ha Noi Labour Confederation
4. Ánh Thị Quy	Team member	Ha Noi Labour Confederation
5. Phan Thị Thanh Nhã	Team member	Ha Noi Labour Confederation
6. Trần Thị Phấn	Team member	Ha Noi Labour Confederation
7. Mai Ngô Lan	Team member	Ha Noi Labour Confederation
8. Phan Thị Hằng	Team member	Ha Noi Labour Confederation
9. Ôi Thị Minh Tâm	Team member	Thanh Xuân District Labour Confederation

Name	Position	Organization
10. Dường Xuân Thảo	Team member	Union official, Thuận An Shoe Co.
11. Trần Thị Minh	Team member	Union official, Thuận An Woolen Co.
12. Lê Thanh Thủy	Team member	Union official, Norfolk Joint Venture Co.
13. Nguyễn Thị Mai	Team member	Union official, Hà Nội Textile Co.
14. Thuận Chiên	Team member	Union official, Nam Hoa Co.
15. Mai Hồng Ngọc	Team member	Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry
16. Dường Tuyệ	Team member	Hà Nội Department of Labour
17. Công Thị Lữ	Team member	Hà Nội Women's Union
18. Lưu Lan Anh	Statistical officer	Research Centre on Environment and Working Conditions (MOLISA)
19. Trần Ngọc Tú	Team member	ActionAid Việt Nam
20. Phan Kiều Oanh	Team member	ActionAid Việt Nam
21. Nguyễn Thị Xì	Team member	Ninh Bình Women's Union
22. Nguyễn Thị Liên	Team member	Yên Nhân subdistrict Women's Union, Ninh Bình
23. Nguyễn Thị Ngọc Lan	Team member	

Da Nang:

Name	Position	Organization
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2. Phan Thanh Hải		

Binh Duong:

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2. Ngô Văn Hoà	Secretary	Institute for Labour and Social Research (MOLISA)
3. Hoàng Kim Ngọc	Team member	
4. Nguyễn Lan Hương	Team member	
5. Tô Thị Minh	Team member	
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4. Nguyễn Kim Dung	MA, Sociology	
5. Trần Minh Ú	BA, Sociology	
6. Nguyễn Thị Minh Châu	MA, Economics	
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Name	Position	Organization
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2. Giang Wells-Dang	Team member	Centre for Community Empowerment (CECEM)

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