



INTERNATIONAL  
LABOUR ORGANISATION

**SURVEY REPORT**

# **CHILD DOMESTIC WORKERS IN HO CHI MINH CITY**



March 2006

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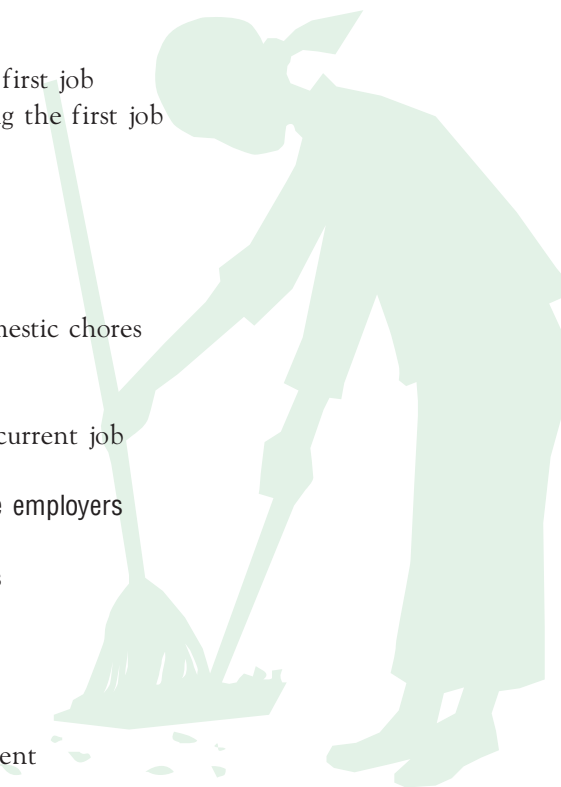
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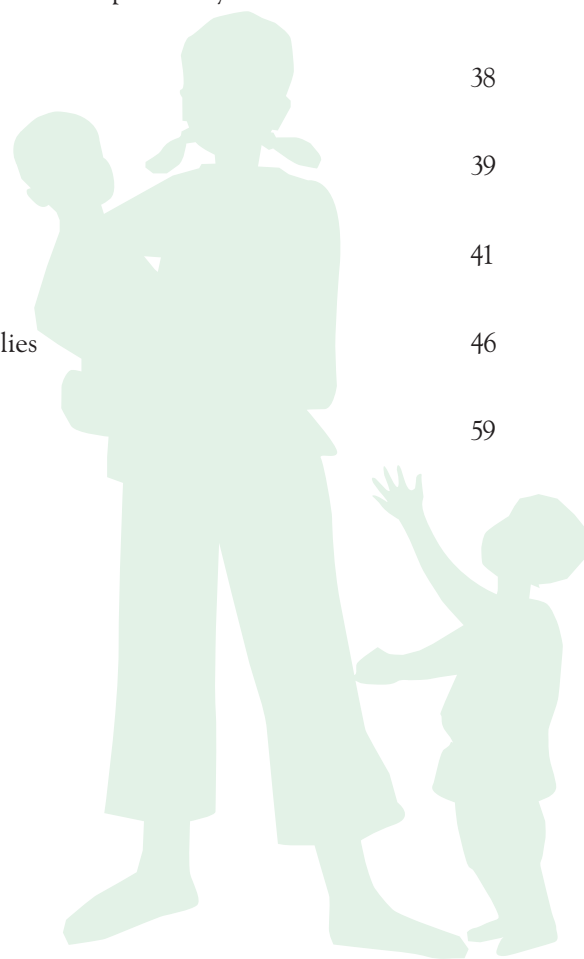
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## FOREWORD

The report of "Child Domestic Workers in Ho Chi Minh City" survey has the primary objective to estimate the size of the child domestic workers population in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC). The survey was conducted by the research team from the Institute for Economic Research (IER) and the Quality of Life Promotion (Life) Centre. The survey received invaluable support from the experts of the International Labour Organisation - International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour/Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (ILO-IPEC/SIMPOC)- Mr Debi Prasad Mondal, Mr Bijoy Raychaudhuri and Ms Ayaka Matsuno - and Ms Nguyen Thi Mai Oanh, the Program Manager of the "National Program for the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour in Vietnam".

We sincerely thank the employers who allowed the child domestic workers to take time off work to participate in the survey, the parents and guardians of these children and the community members for trusting us and sharing their concerns about the children.

We thank the representatives from Save the Children Sweden (Radda Barnen), the Vietnam Women's Union and the Committee for Population, Family and Children for sharing their views on child domestic work and experiences in developing programmes for this target group.

Our appreciation goes to the children who gave up their time of rest to participate in the survey and who were so brave to share with us their personal and work stories.

### Special thanks to the research team for developing this report:

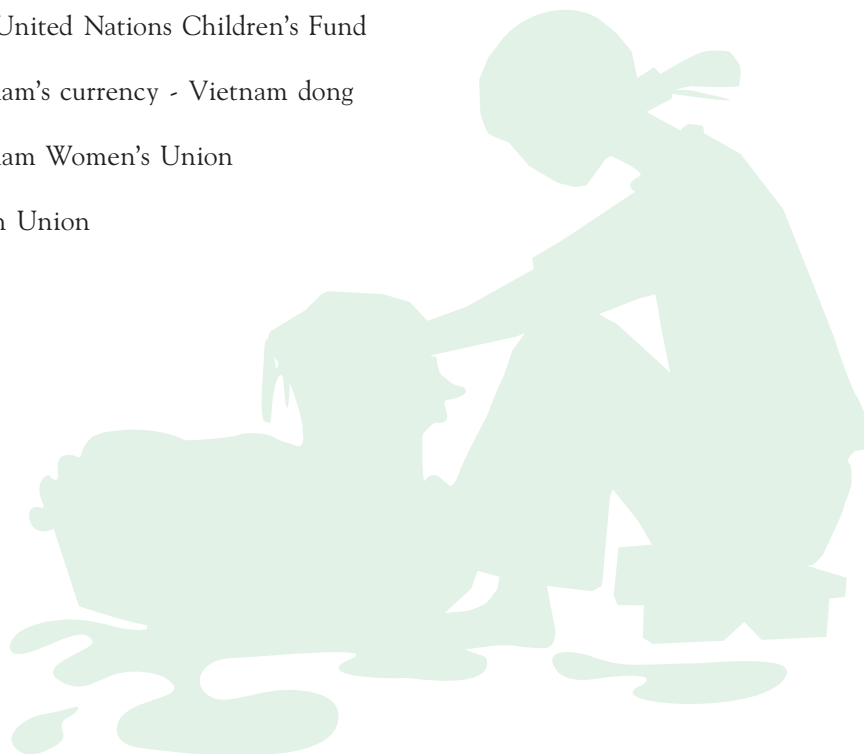
Dr Tran Hoi Sinh, IER  
Ms Tran Thi Thanh Thuy, IER  
Ms Le Thi Huong, IER  
Ms Nguyen Nguyen Nhu Trang, Life Centre  
Dr Hang Thi Xuan Lan, Life Centre

I expect the findings from this survey will facilitate awareness raising of relevant government authorities of the working and living situation of child domestic workers in HCMC. In addition, recommendations developed out of this survey will help inform the development of effective intervention programmes/ projects in the coming time.

RoseMarie Greve  
Director  
International Labour Organisation - Hanoi Office

## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AFESIP</b>	Acting for Women in Distressing Situations
<b>CDW</b>	Child domestic worker
<b>CPFC</b>	Committee of Population, Family and Children
<b>HCMC</b>	Ho Chi Minh City
<b>ID</b>	Identity
<b>IFGS</b>	Institute for Family and Gender Research
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organisation
<b>IPEC</b>	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
<b>IER</b>	Institute for Economic Research
<b>Life</b>	Quality of Life Promotion Centre
<b>SCS</b>	Save the Children Sweden
<b>SIMPOC</b>	Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour
<b>UNICEF</b>	The United Nations Children's Fund
<b>VND</b>	Vietnam's currency - Vietnam dong
<b>VWU</b>	Vietnam Women's Union
<b>YU</b>	Youth Union



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Vietnam economy has rapidly developed since the Vietnam government's adoption of market-oriented economy. The development of industries has brought about greater opportunities for employment, resulting in increased movement of the labour force from rural to urban areas, especially big cities such as Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), Hai Phong in search for jobs. More and more women are now carrying on the productive role, in addition to their reproductive role, to pursue their professional development as well as to generate more income for the family. Within this context, many households can now afford domestic workers - to assist with house chores and baby sitting. More often, women and children are found doing domestic work. Apart from domestic chores, the women and children can also assist with the home-based business of the employers. International literature has revealed many aspects of domestic workers' work life in which the working, living conditions, risks of being physically and mentally abused and health status of many workers are alarming. Children working as domestic workers are deprived from child's rights.

In Vietnam, little is known about the working and living conditions, health needs and aspirations of the people, especially children, who are engaged in hired domestic work. In 2000, Save the Children Sweden (SCS) has collaborated with the University of Social Sciences and Humanities of Vietnam National University-Hanoi to undertake a research on child domestic children in Hanoi. The study has unveiled the working life of the children behind the doors of their employers. The ability of the children to integrate into the new working and living environment as well as their working conditions were further investigated through two recent research studies conducted in Hanoi (and Thanh Hoa and Vinh Phu where many child domestic workers (CDWs) in Hanoi were originated) by the Institute for Family and Gender Research (IFGS) and SCS (2005) and in Hue and Hai Phong by Women Research Centre of the National University of Hanoi and the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (2005).

To date, studies on child labour in HCMC have been centred on street children, children working for workshops or their own families, children working on contract-based tasks such as putting matches into boxes, peeling tangerine... There is none on CDWs. From April to November 2005, the International Labour Organization (ILO) in collaboration with HCMC Economic Institution and Quality of Life Promotion Centre (Life) conducted a survey on CDWs in HCMC with three-fold objectives: (1) to estimate the size of the CDW population in HCMC, through a household-based survey; (2) to provide recommendations to develop effective intervention programmes or projects in the coming time and (3) to facilitate awareness raising of relevant government authorities on the working and living situation of CDWs in HCMC.

To achieve the above set objectives, the survey applied quantitative and qualitative methods. For quantitative survey, 3 structured questionnaires were used for CDWs, employers and parents or guardians of the CDWs. To obtain in-depth information, qualitative method was used with 4 semi-structured interview guides for CDWs, employers, parents and representatives of child-concerned organisations. It was a challenge to identify CDWs from the family book as there were no notes to specify whether they were the family relatives or CDWs. A majority of the employers tend to report CDWs as relatives. Some staff from the local authorities and some heads of the clusters of households were reluctant to let the survey team collect the lists of households or visit the households. A total of 100 CDWs were interviewed using structured questionnaires. The random sampling method only identified 39 CDWs from 200 clusters of households in HCMC and the remaining were identified by snowball sampling. 10 employers and 8 parents of the interviewed

CDWs were also interviewed using structured questionnaire. For qualitative method, 8 employers, 8 parents, 8 community members and 3 representatives of the three child-concerned agencies were interviewed.

Based on the statistical methods (using weight calculations), it is estimated that 2,162 children are employed to do domestic chores in HCMC in which 69.7% are female and 30.3% are male. Half of the interviewed CDWs come from the South of Vietnam including HCMC. For those who are originated from other provinces, one third has migrated to HCMC for 2 years or more. The survey found that 31% of the surveyed CDWs have started working, on the average, at the age of 13.2 and at the date of survey, 15% are under 15 and are all girls.

Common daily tasks of the CDWs include house cleaning, clothes washing, dish washing, cooking and/or child minding and cooking. The children are found to work almost 13 hours per day and 7 days a week. Break time was not specified but reported not to be fixed during the day. When they finish work, the children are too tired to attend evening classes, if at all allowed by the employers. One fourth of the interviewed CDWs do additional work apart from domestic chores such as service assistants in the employers' own business or running errands for others. More female CDWs are found doing domestic chores than male CDWs who tend to be used to assist the employers with their businesses. In the previous week of the date of survey, the mean number of hours spent by CDWs to perform other work than domestic chores was 2 hours 46 minutes.

In-depth interviews revealed that most CDWs coming from outside HCMC are not registered for temporary residence at the local authorized body. The "undocumented" status might put the children in vulnerable situations if they are exploited or abused as they could not receive timely help/interventions from the authorities. Regarding health care, common illnesses affecting CDWs include cough/respiratory problem reported by 36.1% CDWs, headache by 33.3%, fever by 3.3%, back pain by 25% and wounds/cuts/burns by 11.1%. 38.9% of the CDWs said they at least once had to work while they were sick and 52.8% have been ill/injured during work without being treated. 13% of the CDWs reported being frequently reproached/harassed and 26.7% aware of their friends being in the same situation.

98% of the CDWs have monthly income. The average income of the estimated/weighted number of CDWs (2,162) is VND 427,755<sup>(1)</sup>. The national minimum wage in Vietnam is VND 350,000<sup>(2)</sup> per month. However, in Vietnam, a person's wage is calculated by multiplying the minimum wage with indicator numbers of occupation, type of work, level of skills, and level of positions and then summed all up<sup>(3)</sup>. The wage of CDWs is merely the minimum wage, without any additions on top of the minimum wage. 2% of the CDWs are not paid and 17% do not receive their wage directly from the employers. The qualitative interviews show that some children have to work for pay off the debts/money being advanced by their parents. This bonded labour will tie the children up and increase their risk of being exploited.

Many CDWs are closely monitored by their employers especially those who live in the same house. 78% of the CDWs do not go out during free time. The survey also shows that 43% of the CDWs do not seek help when they have problems, 19% do not seek help from nor share happiness with anyone. Only 30% of the interviewed CDWs know other CDWs and 5% of CDWs never contacted home while working away. Further, the CDWs do not have days off and do not have opportunities to participate in entertainment activities. Most of the interviewed CDWs said they miss their homes and parents.

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1. *Approximately 26.9 US dollars*

2. *Approximately 22 US dollars*

3. *Circular No. 25/2005/TT-BLĐTBXH issued by the Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs dated 4/10/2005 which guides how to calculate wages as per Decree 118/2005/N?-CP.*

Risks of CDWs dropping out from school, as found in the survey, are very high. 11% of the CDWs are still going to school while the other 89% have dropped out from school. 35.5% of those who had previous jobs prior to the current job reported having had to drop out of school on the first day of work. 5 out of the 8 interviewed parents/guardians said that if their children wanted to go back to school, they would have to quit their current job which takes up most of their time during the day. 9 out of the 10 interviewed employers said they would not allow the CDWs to go to school as they would be too tired to work upon their return, or the children do not have fixed free time to go to school. These results once again stress that these children have been deprived from their rights to education.

When being asked if they want to do other work than the current work, 76% said yes. Three jobs that these CDWs desired to do are factory workers (27.6%), hair-dressers (25%) and tailors (19.7%). A small number of the children (7.9%) want to go back to school. Being asked to select a vocational skill to learn, 36% CDWs wish to learn tailoring and embroidery, 29.3% hair-dressing and 10.7% how to run small businesses.

**To address the issues identified during the survey, it is recommended that:**

Minimum age for working be reinforced by the authorities for all sectors. There must be penalties for those who are identified of employing children under 15 or making young workers (under 18) working on heavy and hazardous work.

Registration of CDWs in the locality where they work be strengthened with strong cooperation between local police and authorities, heads of clusters of households and community members.

Families at risk of having their children working and children at risk of dropping from school be supported by the local authorities to access local income generation, credit loans and vocational and skills training programs.

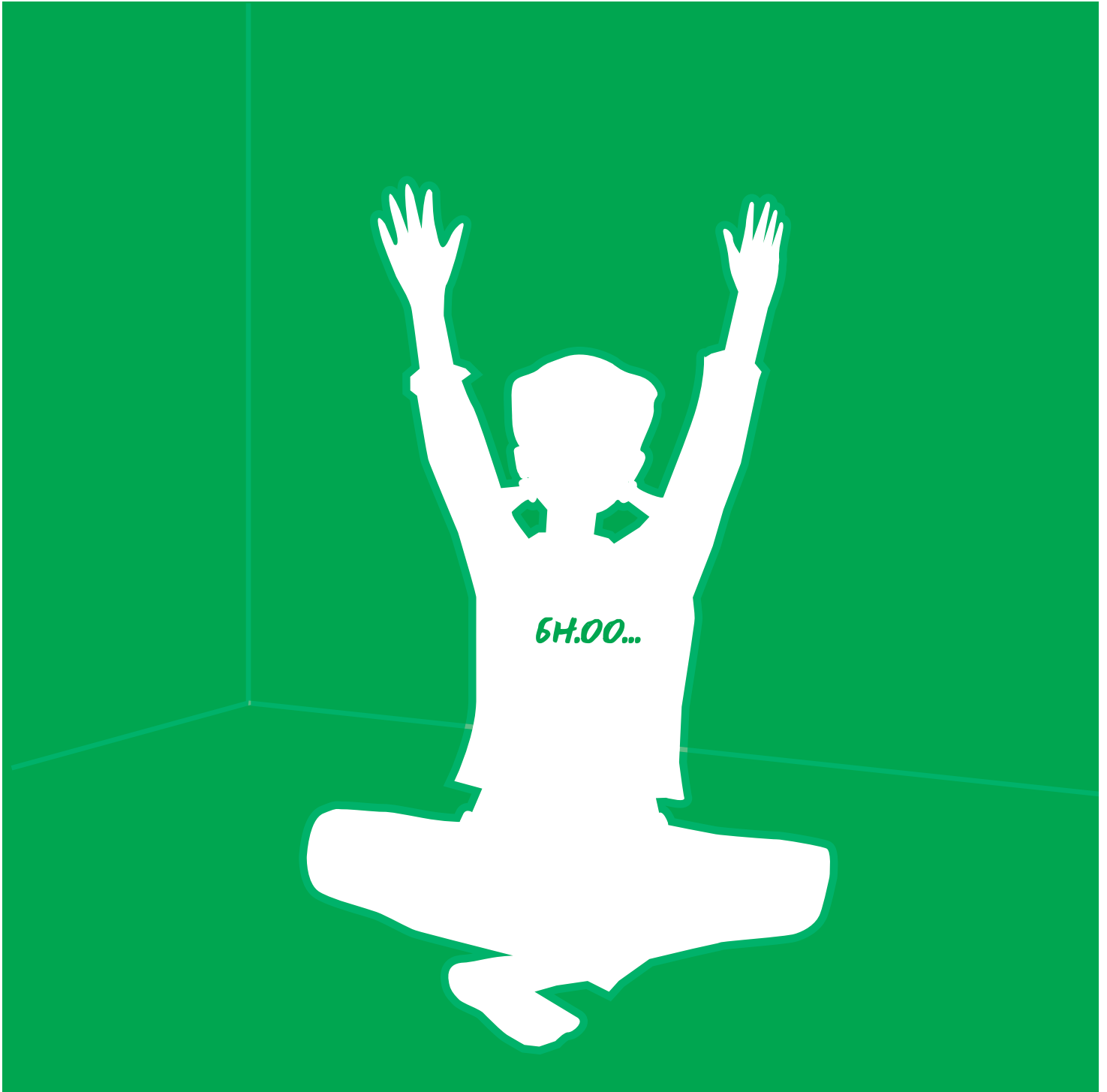
The government reinforce the policy of primary and secondary education universalisation. For children from poor and large families, create conditions (eg free books/notebooks, free school uniforms etc) and opportunities to help working children have access to different education systems.

The benefits of education and long term negative effects on children's physical and mental development when working early be communicated and promoted through different channels of communication and from central to local levels.

A coordination network of relevant department sectors, social organisations or community-based groups to combat child labour be established and supported by the concerned ministries for well functioning.

The existing consultation network and other support services (shelters, open houses, vocational establishments, as run by the Vietnam Women's Union (VWU) and the Committee for Population, Family and Children (CPFC)) be expanded to provide counselling and life skills training to CDWs.

It is expected that the survey findings will inform the government, local authorities, other concerned parties and community-based organizations in HCMC of the CDWs' working situations as well as their needs and aspirations. It is believed that with strong commitment, the central government and the HCMC authorities will develop relevant policies and effective strategies to combat the issue of child labour including child domestic work.



## Chapter 1. Introduction

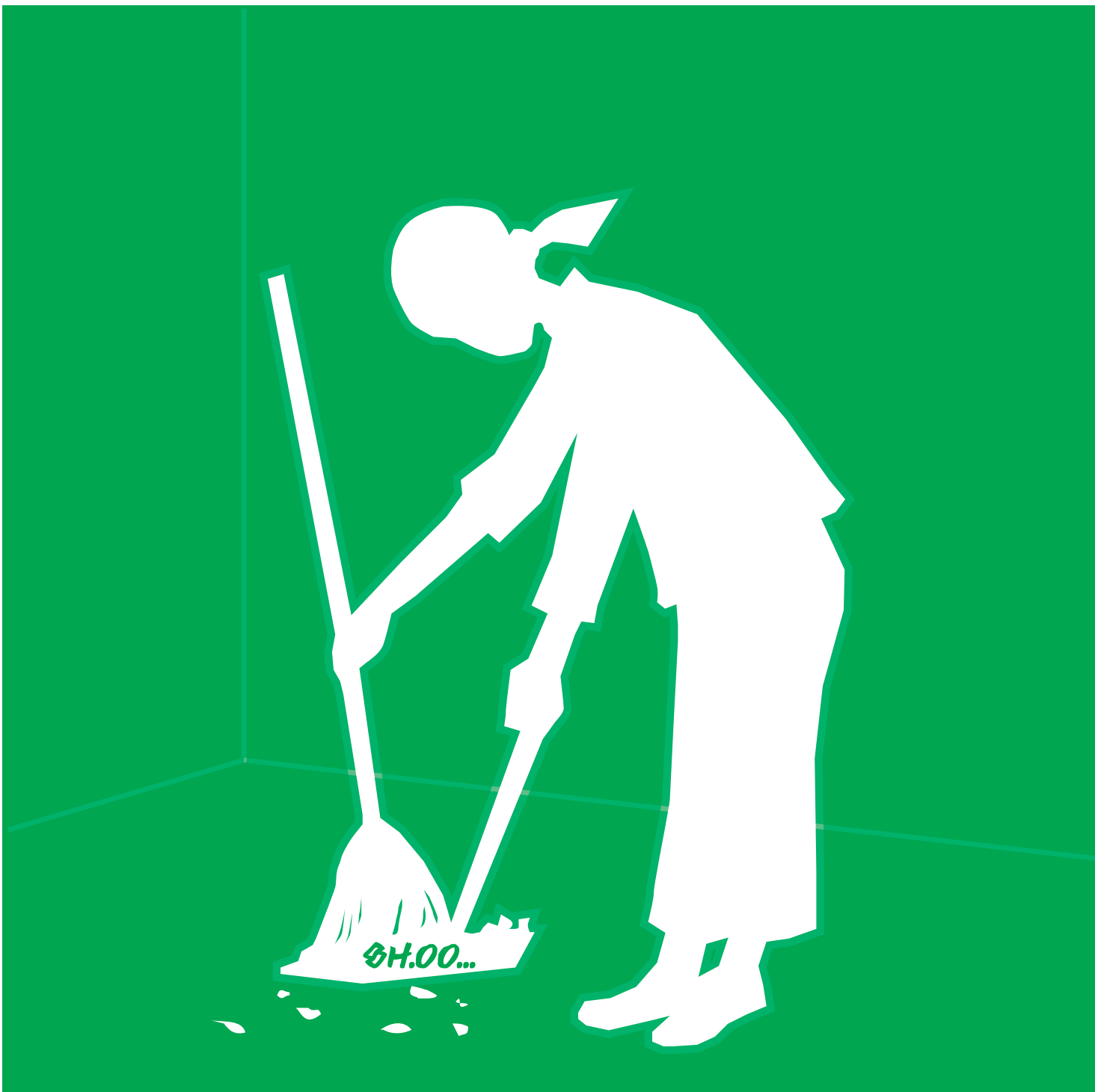
Since the Vietnamese economy transformed into market economy, community life has been improved greatly especially for people living in big cities like HCMC. The rapid economic development has attracted workers from different provinces including children with many kinds of jobs such as shoe polishing, lottery ticket selling, street vendors and doing domestic chores. Although lives in rural areas have been improved, many households are still in poor conditions with unstable income. Many parents have to take their children out of schools and let them work to contribute to family's income. Besides parents who are not aware of importance of education and think "No food leads to starvation while no education is still alright" force their children to quit schools and go to work. A survey on immigrants conducted from 1994 to 1996 by the HCMC Institute for Economic Research (IER) showed only one third of CDWs at age ranged from 13 - 19 go to school while 61% are working for a living.

Along with economic and social development, more and more women engage in social activities, hence quite many of them are in need of assistance in house and child care services. There are a greater number of children working as hired domestic workers due to increase of the demand. The lives of many CDWs are taking place behind employers' doors, hence living and working conditions of CDWs are a great concern of their parents, relatives, community and functional authorities. Surveys on CDWs in Vietnam in general and HCMC in particular are quite limited because of barriers in finding and approaching CDWs. Thus, most of child protection and care interventions in HCMC focus on street children. Only a few cases of CDWs have been intervened when the child has been found abused.

**From April to November 2005, the ILO in collaboration with IER of HCMC and the Life Centre conducted a survey on CDWs in HCMC. The survey objectives were:**

- To estimate the size of the CDW population in HCMC, through a household-based survey (main objective).
- To provide recommendations to develop effective intervention programmes or projects in the coming time.
- To facilitate awareness raising of relevant government authorities on the working and living situation of CDWs in HCMC.

This report aims to present the results of quantitative and qualitative survey on CDWs, parents, guardians, employers and community members. The report includes 8 chapters among which Chapter 2 describes the survey methodology; Chapter 3 outlines the profiles of CDWs, their households and employers. Chapter 4 describes the first job and current work of the surveyed CDWs, their health status and entertainment activities. Chapter 5 analyses the CDWs' awareness of risks and risks encountered while at work. Chapter 6 presents the aspirations of the CDWs and the existing CDWs-supporting services/activities in HCMC. Summary and discussions of the survey findings are presented in Chapter 7. Finally, Chapter 8 presents recommendations to assist governmental authorities and relevant organizations, agencies in developing intervention program for CDWs and their families.



## Chapter 2. Methodology of the Survey





## 2.1 Objectives of the survey

To estimate the size of the CDW population in HCMC, through a household-based survey (which is the main objective)

To support in providing/formulating recommendations to develop effective intervention programmes or projects in the coming time.

To facilitate awareness raising of relevant government authorities of the working and living situation of CDWs in HCMC.

## 2.2 Definition of terms

### Child domestic worker (CDW)

In this survey, any child aged from 6 to 17 who works in the household of people other than their parents is defined as a CDW, regardless of the amount or kind of remuneration she or he receives. CDWs, in the context of Vietnam, are employed to perform domestic chores, such as washing dishes, cooking, cleaning the house, looking after employers' young children and possibly engaged in the employers' economic activities.

### Household

A household can be a single person or a group of people who live together and have a common arrangement for eating.

### Child's guardian

Child's guardian can be the child's relative, a family's friend or acquaintance entrusted by the child and usually authorized by the family to look after the child when s/he is away from home.

### Employer

The head of household or the responsible person who hires and/or supervises the CDW is defined as employer.

### Community member

A person who lives in the same neighbourhood or neighbouring areas where there are CDWs.

### Cluster of households (To dan pho)

The State structure of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam includes four levels: central, provincial, district and commune (or ward). In each commune or ward, households are grouped into clusters for administrative management - named as To dan pho in Vietnamese. According to statistics of IER in 2001 for HCMC, there were, on average, 78 clusters of households per ward/commune and each cluster of households consists of approximately 40 to 70 households.

## 2.3 Sample size and sampling method

### Sample size

HCMC has a population of 6,117,251 people in 1,401,418 households. Administratively, HCMC is divided into 24 districts and suburban districts which are further divided into 317 wards and communes with an average of 19,041 people per ward/commune.

### The sample size as originally planned was:

- 258 CDWs (250 structured and 8 semi-structured)
- 68 employers (60 structured and 8 semi-structured)
- 68 parents or CDW guardians (60 structured and 8 semi-structured)
- 8 community members (all semi-structured interviews)
- Approximately 6 representatives of child concerned organisations

### Sampling frame

Sampling frame is the lists of households of 100 clusters of households randomly selected from a total of 8,989 clusters of households of the 8 selected (out of 24) districts with the following proportions: Group 1: 35 clusters of households, Group 2: 35 clusters of households and Group 3: 30 clusters of households.

### Sampling method

The 8 districts were stratified into three groups:

Group 1 consists of Districts 1, 3, 10 (as core districts) which host higher-income families and individuals. In addition, many business establishments tend to centre on these areas.

Group 2 consists of District 8, Tan Binh District (as urban districts) and Binh Tan District (as a semi-urban district) which host a significant number of family-based businesses that tend to employ children for simple domestic chores.

Group 3 consists of the remaining 18 districts in which District 9 and Hoc Mon District were randomly selected on the probability proportional to size (pps) basis.

Please see Annex 1 for a detailed description of the sampling method.

## 2.4 Data collection method and instruments

This is a household-based survey which applied quantitative and qualitative methods. For collecting quantitative data, three structured questionnaires were used:

CDW questionnaire: which includes information on child family, education, living and working conditions, health status and problems, entertainment, awareness of minimum age for working and child rights, concerns and aspirations (see Annex 2 for a full questionnaire).

Employer questionnaire: which includes information on history of CDW employment, tasks assigned to CDW, awareness of minimum age for working and child rights (see Annex 3 for a full questionnaire).

Parents/guardians of CDWs questionnaire: which focuses on background, history of migration, opinions of parents/guardians about working conditions faced by their children, importance of education and aspirations for their children (see Annex 4 for a full questionnaire).

To obtain an insight to the CDWs' living and working conditions from different perspectives, five sets of semi-structured questionnaires (in form of interview guides) were used for in-depth interviews with CDWs, employers, parents/guardians of CDWs, community members and representatives of child concerned organisations. All semi-structured interviews were tape recorded.

## 2.5 Data collection

### Quantitative survey

Lists of households of the randomly selected clusters of households were collected with assistance from the heads of clusters of households. CDWs from 6 to 17 were identified from these lists. To ensure the reliability of the information provided by the heads of the clusters of households, the survey team also conducted visits to several households randomly picked up. It has been extremely difficult to identify CDWs since many of them were not registered at the local police for their temporary residence<sup>(4)</sup>.

**The random sampling found only 20 CDWs from the 100 clusters of households.**

After consultation with ILO-IPEC/SIMPOC, another 100 clusters of households were randomly selected from the pool of clusters of households. The same sampling procedure was followed. For this round, the team paid visits to each household of the selected clusters of households. Only 19 CDWs were found. As 39 CDWs is a very small sample to make any statistical significance, the survey team in consultation with ILO-IPEC/SIMPOC decided to identify another 61 CDWs using snowball sampling<sup>(5)</sup>.

Given the small number of CDWs identified, the numbers of employers and parents have been reduced proportionately. However, the survey team only received consent for interview from 10 employers and 8 parents of the CDWs. Parents of CDWs based outside HCMC were not planned

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4. As regulated by Decision no. 51/CP issued in May 10, 1997, each Vietnamese citizen temporary migrating out of the place of permanent residence must be registered for (temporary) residence at the authorized body i.e. police at the place of destination.

5. In snowball sampling, the researcher begins by identifying someone who meets the criteria for inclusion in their study. The researcher then asks them to recommend others who they may know who also meet the criteria. And this goes on until the researcher reaches desired sample size.

to be engaged. Most of the CDWs approached by snowball sampling did not agree for the survey team to meet with their employers for fear that the employers would know they had been interviewed without their (employers) prior permission.

### Qualitative survey

Interviews of 8 CDWs, 8 employers, 8 parents/guardians and 8 community members for semi-structured interviews were undertaken. These respondents were found using snowball sampling and are different from those engaged in quantitative survey. In addition, 3 representatives from Save the Children Sweden (Radda Barnen), the VWU and the CPFC were interviewed. UNICEF, Save the Children United Kingdom and Terre des Hommes were also contacted but the team was told that these organisations were not engaged in any efforts with CDWs. Table 1 summarizes the number of survey respondents.

**Table 1. Survey respondents**

Survey respondents	Structured interviews		Semi-structured interviews
	Random sampling	Snow-ball sampling	
Child domestic workers	39	61	8
Employers	10		8
Parents/child's guardians	8		8
Community members			8
CDWs-concerned agencies			3
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>		<b>35</b>

## 2.6 Data analysis and reporting

All completed questionnaires were cleaned, input and analyzed by the Software Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program by the Institute for Economic Research. Qualitative data was transcribed, coded and analyzed in Microsoft Word by the survey team from Life Centre. The report has been jointly developed by the two institutions.

In the following chapters, wherever appropriate, the findings are presented in two separate samples: the random sample of 39 CDWs and the combined sample of 100 CDWs. Further on the presentation of the figures, N is used to indicate the sample size (number of people interviewed in the survey) and x is the recorded number of responses. Quotes were transcribed from the interview tapes and then translated into English. To provide a context to the quotes, question(s) raised by the interviewer and explanation of the research team are provided in the square parentheses - [ ] - as appropriate.

## 2.7 Ethical consideration

All respondents and informants participated in the survey on voluntary basis. The respondents were explained about the survey objectives. Interviews only took place with agreement of respondents. Recording of interviews was only done with acceptance of respondents. The interview was stopped if interviewees were not comfortable with the question.

The survey team followed strict rules to maintain confidentiality of the information gathered. All interviews, records, codes and list of interviews are kept confidentially and safely. Names and codes are not mentioned in the report.

## 2.8 Limitations of the survey

Children working as domestic workers are a very sensitive issue. Given Vietnam's child labour related legal framework and the Vietnamese government's commitment to eliminate child labour, having CDWs identified in the responsible areas might not position the local authorities with good image. Thus, some local authorities seemed to be reluctant to let the survey team collect the lists of households or visit the households for ensuring no case missing. So did some heads of the selected clusters of households.

It was a challenge to identify CDWs from the family book as there were no notes to specify whether they were the family relatives or CDWs. A majority of the employers tend to report CDWs as relatives.

Longer time should be spent with the CDWs to build trust and make the CDWs feel comfortable and confident to reveal their negative experiences in their daily work. However, given their workload as well as the employers' close supervision, the survey team could not meet all of the selected CDWs prior to the interview. Sensitive issues such as sexual harassment and abuse were very difficult to raise and discuss when people first met.





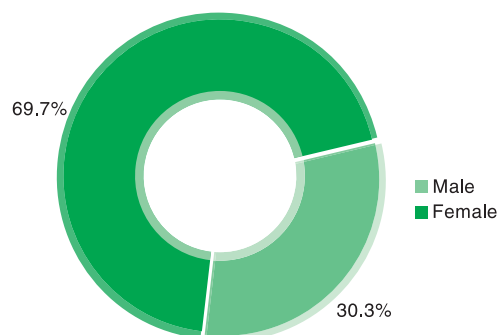
### **Chapter 3. Profiles of Child Domestic Workers in Ho Chi Minh City, their households and employers**

## 3.1 Characteristics of Child Domestic Workers in HCMC

### 3.1.1 Estimated (Weighted) number of CDWs in HCMC

The quantitative survey identified 39 CDWs in a total of 200 selected clusters of households. Based on the statistical methods (using weight calculations), it is estimated that 2,162 children are employed to do domestic chores in HCMC in which 69.7% are female and 30.3% are male.

**Figure 1. Sex of the CDWs**



A majority of the employers during the qualitative survey said that they would prefer hiring female CDWs to male. However, boys are also hired to do work that requires physical strength (for the employers who run family-based businesses). During the qualitative interviews, some parents of the CDWs revealed that they do not have any preference, or discrimination, for their children to do this work. As long as a job is available, parents will send their children off, either boy or girl. "Most people like hiring girls to do domestic chores. Very few boys are hired to do this type of work." (Community member, Binh Tan District).

The mean age of the CDWs is 15.92. The male CDWs have a higher mean age than the female CDWs (16.15 versus 15.88). Among the estimated 2,162 CDWs, 228 CDWs (10.55%) aged from 9 to under 15 and these CDWs are all girls (Table 2). For reference, according to the Vietnam Labour Code<sup>6</sup>, Article 6, Chapter I, the minimum age for Vietnamese citizens to work is 15. It is further stipulated in Article 119, Chapter XI that those under 18 are defined as young workers.

**Table 2. Estimates of CDWs by age and sex**

Age range	Sex				Total	
	Male		Female		N	%
	N	%	N	%		
9-14	0	0	228	15.12	228	10.55
15-17	654	100	1,280	84.88	1,934	89.45
Total	654	100	1,508	100.00	2,162	100.00

*Note:*

From this section onwards, the statistical data were generated from and presented with the aggregated sample of 100 CDWs interviewed using structured questionnaires, in which 39 CDWs were randomly selected and 61 CDWs were selected using snowball method.

6. Vietnam Labour Code-Guide Book, revised in April 2004 and effective from 1 January 2003, Labour Publishing House.

Other information was also analysed from 10 employers and 8 parents/child's guardians interviewed with structured questionnaires. With this type of information, details of the sample size will be provided.

### 3.1.2 Social characteristics of CDWs

#### Age

The survey identified 85 CDWs (85%) in the age group of 15 - 17 (older group) and 15 CDWs (15%) are in the age group of 9 - 14 (younger group). These CDWs under 15 are all girls. The most common age of CDWs found in the survey is 16 and 17, accounting for 63%.

The mean age of 100 surveyed CDWs is 15.92. Working children of the southern region of Vietnam have the lowest mean age (15.60) compared to those of centre and highland region (16.06) and those of northern region (16.79)

The employers during the in-depth interviews said that they did not like hiring young children since they cannot perform domestic chores and it takes time to teach or guide them. However, they said that they would prefer CDWs in the age of 11 - 15 because they can baby-sit apart from doing domestic chores.

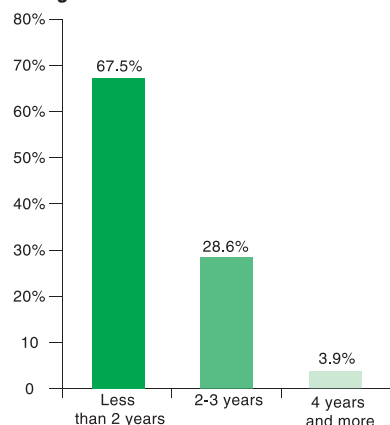
#### Place of original residence

23% of CDWs have their parents currently living in HCMC. For the others (77%), the parents live in 27 provinces throughout Vietnam. Among the male CDWs, 46.2% have parents living in HCMC. Similarly, the rate for female CDWs is 19.5%. The rate of CDWs of the 9-14 age group having parents in HCMC is higher than that of the 15 to 17 age group (53.3% compared to 17.6%). Qualitative survey shows that about half of the CDWs are from the southern provinces including HCMC. Overall, the CDWs from the Mekong Delta account for the highest percentage.

#### Situation of CDWs in HCMC

Figure 2 shows that 67.5% CDWs have migrated to HCMC for less than 2 years and a very small percentage of CDWs (3.9%) have migrated to HCMC for more than 4 years. In terms of number of years since they migrated, CDWs from the Southwest, Central and North Central provinces of Vietnam account for higher percentages.

**Figure 2. Number of years since CDWs migrated**





**Table 3. Percentage of CDWs in HCMC by place of origin versus number of year since they migrated**

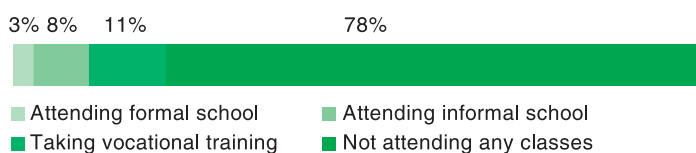
Years	% CDWs whose parents are living in North Central provinces	% CDWs whose parents are living in Southwest provinces	% CDWs whose parents are living in other provinces
2 years	64.2	14.2	21.6
1 year	32.3	35.2	32.5
Less than 1 year	22.4	44.5	33.1

### 3.1.3 Literacy, formal education and vocational training of CDWs

The survey found that 5% cannot read and 7% cannot write Vietnamese language. 46% have a level of primary school education, 38% have junior high school education (grade 6 - 9) and 5% have senior high school education (grade 10 - 12).

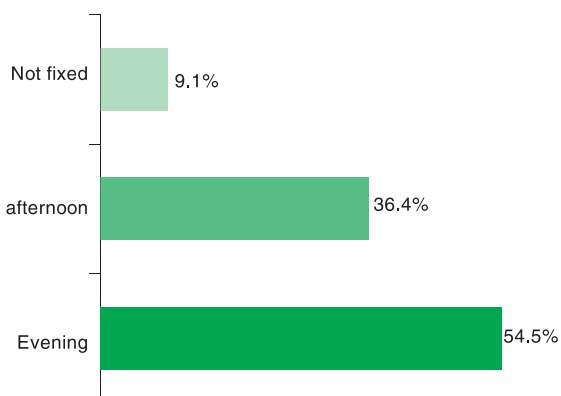
11 CDWs are still studying. Among 89 CDWs (89%) who no longer attend school, 11 CDWs are taking vocational training and 78 do not attend any classes. Among 11 CDWs who are attending vocational classes, 1 is on tailoring course, 1 on nutrition course, 7 on hair dressing and manicure course and 2 on handicrafts. The 2 CDWs that follow the handicrafts courses are boys and the 9 others are girls.

**Figure 3. CDWs' current school participation status**



Among 11 CDWs who are still studying, 3 (27.3%) are in primary school (formal system), 6 (54.5%) in junior high-school and 2 (18.2%) in senior high-school (informal system). Among those who are studying, 6 (54.5%) CDWs attend school in the evening, 4 (36.4%) in the afternoon and the remaining 1 (9.1%) do not have fixed studying time. Among these 11 CDWs, 7 are under 15 years of age.

**Figure 4. Studying time of 11 CDWs who are studying**



11 out of 31 CDWs have worked previously, among these, 35.5% reported dropping out of school to take their first job. Boys account for a higher rate of school drop-outs than girls. Common reasons for not attending school are "family cannot afford" (75%) and "having to work" (25%).

In the in-depth interviews, most CDWs revealed they had voluntarily quit school to work to support their parents- *"Yeah, I am helping my father. I started to work for this employer when I was twelve. Prior to that, I had sold lottery tickets for three years. I have taken this job for almost three years and am helping my father in the employer's food shop."* (Female CDW, 14 years old, District 3).

### 3.1.4 Identification

85% of the CDWs have a birth certificate; however, almost 20% in the age range 9 - 14 do not know whether or not they have a birth certificate. 58.3% CDWs in the age of 15 - 18 do not have an identification (ID) card. 100% of the male CDWs have an ID card while 36.4% of females own one.

10% CDWs do not have or do not know whether or not they have a birth certificate and an ID card. All of these CDWs know their age through their parents.

The main reason for many CDWs not having ID cards revealed during the in-depth interviews is a lack of time to apply for such a card to be issued at the place of original residence. *"She goes back home once or twice a year but that is not an appropriate time for applying for ID card. Hence, she still does not have such card even she is 17 already."* (A parent)

### 3.1.5 Current living conditions of CDWs

#### Living place and means of transportation

77% CDWs are currently staying at their employer's house. Among them 26.1% reported that their parents are living in HCMC. 14% live with their parents. The remaining CDWs live with friends and relatives. Very few CDWs live with their siblings and none of them lives alone.

**Table 4. Living place of CDWs in HCMC**

Whom to live with	Generic information	CDWs whose parents are in HCMC		CDWs whose parents are living in other provinces	
	N=100	N=23		N=77	
Employer's family	77%	26.1%	(x=6)	92.2%	(x=71)
Co-worker	3%	0%	(x=0)	3.9%	(x=3)
Parents	14%	60.9%	(x=14)	0%	
Siblings	1%	4.3%	(x=1)	0%	
Relatives	5%	8.7%	(x=2)	3.9%	(x=3)

To those who are not staying at the employer's house, the mean distance from home to the work place is 4.71 kilometres which takes an average of 20 minutes to travel. Among these CDWs, 14 (60.9%) walk and 3 (13%) ride bicycles to the work place.

## CDWs' use of facilities at the employer's house

100% CDWs reported using the facilities available at the employers' house such as electricity, piped water, electric fan, bed and mattress, television and radio.

In response to the question "Do you eat the same food with the employer's family?", 37% said yes for all meals, 31% said yes but only for main meals (i.e. lunch and dinner), 19% said the employer buys food for them and 13% buy their own food. A comparison of this group with those who are not staying at the employer's house reveals:

- The fact of eating with the employer's family for all meals is seen more in the group staying at the employer's house than the other group (44.2% versus 13%).
- The fact that CDWs have to buy their own food is seen more in the group not staying at the employer's house than the other group (26.1% versus 9.1%).

A few CDWs in the in-depth interviews admitted that they did not want to join the meals with their employers. Instead, they want to sit separately and eat afterwards for more convenience. Some CDWs shared the experience that their employers have considered them as close relatives, thus they feel comfortable eating together with the employers.

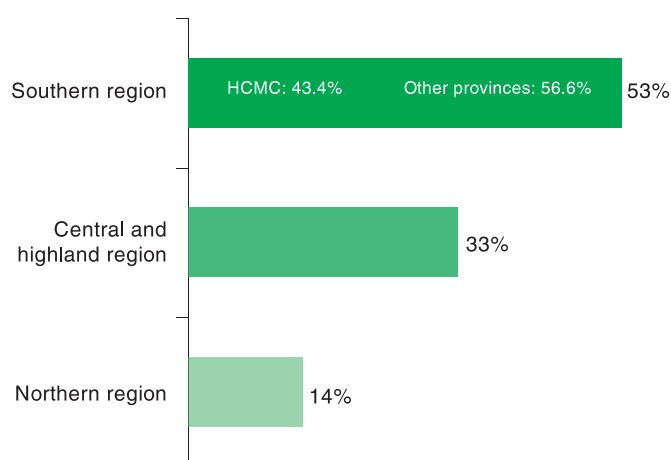
## 3.2 Characteristics of CDWs' households

### 3.2.1 Demographic characteristics

#### Ethnicity and place of original residence

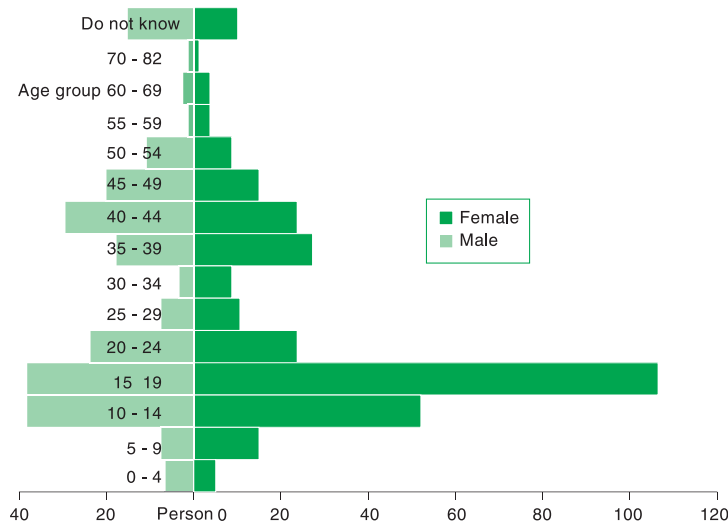
53% parents of the CDWs are currently living in the South of Vietnam. Among them, 43.4% live in HCMC and the other 56.6% in other southern provinces. 33% parents live in the Centre and 14% in the North of Vietnam.

Figure 5. Current living place of CDWs' parents



## Household composition

Figure 6. Age pyramid of the CDWs' household members



As defined earlier, a household size is determined by the number of members living and eating together under the same roof. Data analysis for 100 interviewed CDWs indicates:

- Female members account for 41.5% and males for 58.5%.
- 81.6% of the female CDWs have their father live together with their mother while among the male CDWs, this rate is 69.2%.
- 70% of the households have 4 to 6 persons. The average household size is 5.23 persons. For reference, the national household size is 4.44 persons (per household)<sup>7</sup>.
- On average, each household has 3.36 siblings (including the interviewed CDWs) (x=336).
- Mean age of the household members is 24.88 (x=499) in which mean age of the male members is 27.21 and of the female members is 23.36.
- Mean age of female and male siblings (including CDWs) in the household is not significantly different, 15.81 (x=121) as compared to 15.72 (x=215).

## Relationship in the households

Most CDWs revealed in the in-depth interviews that they have happy families. They added that since they were born in a large and poor family, their parents occasionally had arguments but not frequently. Quantitative data show that the majority of the CDWs still have parents, 1 lost both parents and 19 (19%) lost either one of their parents or have parents divorced.

7. Household Living Standards in 2002 by General Statistic Office of Vietnam.

### 3.2.2 Literacy and education of parents

Almost one-third (32.2%) of the CDWs' parents have a primary education level. 22.2% of the parents have junior high school education.

**Table 5. Education of CDWs' parents**

Education level	% Parents (N=179)	% Fathers (N=92)	% Mothers (N=87)
Cannot read and write	7.8	6.5	9.1
Can read and write	15.1	14.1	15.9
Primary school (Grade 1 to 5)	31.8	28.3	36.4
Junior high school (Grade 6 to 9)	22.3	22.8	21.6
Senior high school (Grade 10 to 12)	6.1	7.6	4.5
Do not know	16.8	20.7	12.5

### 3.2.3 Economic characteristics of CDWs' households

#### CDWs' parents' housing conditions

39.8% of the CDWs' parents' houses have an iron roof and 27.6% have a tile roof. The percentages of houses roofed with bamboo and with corrugated cement are the same being 15.3%. There are a small number of houses with flat cement (2%).

Houses with brick walls account for the highest rate (55%). Timber walls and bamboo walls are reported by 19% and 17% CDWs respectively. Other types of walls account for less than 10%.

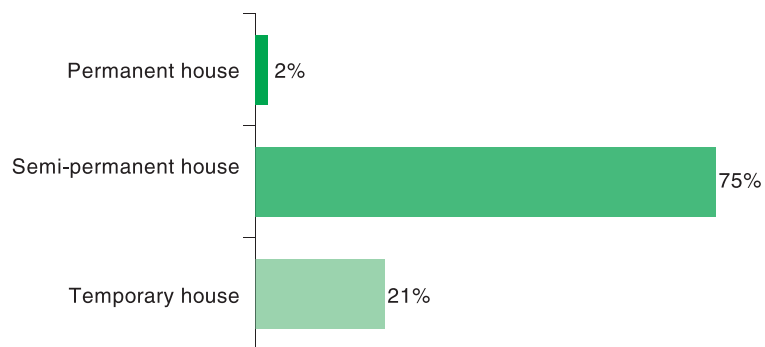
The three most popular types of housing identified through the survey are:

- Houses with walls and roof made of bricks and tiles account for 23%.
- Houses with walls made of bricks and roof with corrugated iron account for 21%.
- Houses with walls and roof made of bamboos and leaves or mud account for 12%.

A comparison of the CDWs' housing conditions against the 2002 National Living Standards Survey for housing classification show that 21% of the CDWs' houses are classified as "temporary", 75% as "semi-permanent", 2% as "permanent" and 2% (2 households) are currently living in rented houses<sup>(8)</sup>.

8. Classifications of housing: Temporary: (1) Type of roof: grass/straw/leaves/reeds/bamboo - Type of wall: rass/straw/leaves/reeds/bamboo/mud (2) Semi-permanent: Type of roof: roof by iron or other metal sheet, corrugated cement, tile - Type of wall: burnt brick, timber (3) Permanent: Type of roof: flat cement - Type of wall: burnt brick

**Figure 7. Classification of CDWs' houses**



### Facilities of CDWs' households

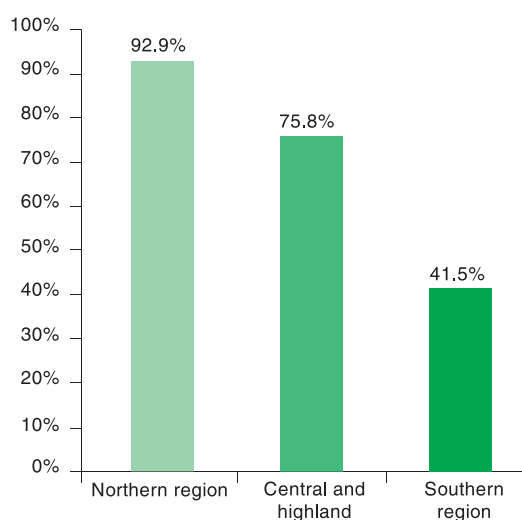
Facilities that more than two-third of the CDWs' households have access to include: electricity (reported by 96% CDWs), electric fans (87%), television (73%), well water (82%), mats and blankets (96%) and beds and mattresses (67%).

Facilities that almost one-third of the CDWs' households have are: radio (reported by 42% CDWs) and water tank (33%). Further analysis shows that facilities that 14% households have piped water and 14% have toilets with piped water.

### Land

60% of the households own land in which those from the North account for the highest rate 92.9% (13 out of 14 land-owning households). 75.8% of the households from the Centre of Vietnam and the Highland own land while those from the South account for the lowest rate of land ownership being 41.5%.

**Figure 8. Land ownership of CDWs' households by place of original residence**



## Occupation

Quantitative data gathered from 100 CDWs reveal that the main occupation of the CDWs' household members (including the CDWs) is agricultural work, accounting for the highest rate being 27.7%; domestic chores comes second reported by 24.3% CDWs. Other non-agricultural work is engaged by 20.3% household members. 17% of the household members are still studying.

**Table 6. Main occupation of CDWs' household members**

Main occupation		
	N=523	%
None	10	1.9
Agricultural work	145	27.7
Non - agriculture work	106	20.3
Domestic worker	127	24.3
Attending school (studying)	89	17.0
Still small, not working, not studying	20	3.8
Housewife/husband	15	2.9
Disabled (not working)	10	1.9
Do not know	1	0.2

Further analysis on the 127 members (24.3%) (of the interviewed CDWs) whose main occupation is hired domestic workers reveals:

- 6 parents and 21 siblings of the CDWs are also doing domestic work.
- The ratio of male/female members working as hired domestic workers is 1.44/10.
- 69.3% (x=88) of the domestic workers are in the age range of 15 - 17 and 16.5% (x=21) in the age range of 9 - 14.

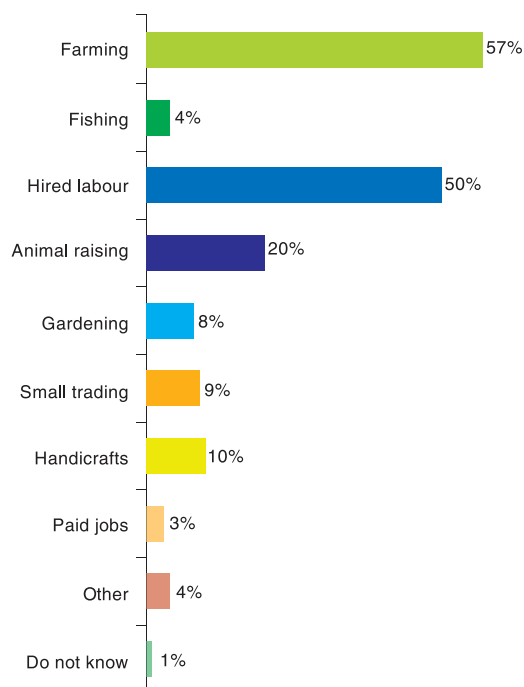
**Table 7. Analysis of 127 household members working as domestic workers by sex and age**

Age group (years)	All (%), N=127	Male (%), N=15	Female (%), N=112
9 - 14	16.5 (x=21)	6.7 (x=1)	17.9 (x=20)
15 - 17	69.3 (x=88)	80 (x=12)	67.9 (x=76)
18 +	14.2 (x=18)	13.3 (x=2)	14.3 (x=16)

## Income

Assuming that it would be difficult for the CDWs to provide an exact amount of their household's income, the survey only asked which occupation has brought main income for the CDWs' households in the previous year. Analysis of data collected from 100 CDWs shows that three main income sources of the households are farming and agriculture related activities (57%), working as hired labour for other people (50%) and animal husbandry (20%). 46% of the households earn an income from one occupation, 42% from two occupations and 12% from three or more occupations.

**Figure 9. Occupations that brought main income for the CDWs' households**



Qualitative interviews with CDWs' parents/guardians indicate that generally, their source of income is not stable, especially those who are working as hired labour. As a result, they have a difficult livelihood. Reasons for leading to such a hard life, as cited by the parents/guardians, are large family with many children, loss of crops due to floods or chronic sickness (heart problem, asthma, minor psychiatric problem) of one family member.

### 3.2.4 Level of satisfaction of CDWs' parents/guardians of CDWs' current job

The information presented in this section was collected through the interviews with 8 CDWs' parents/guardians.

5 out of 8 parents/guardians showed their satisfaction about their children's current job for the sole reason that they help increase the family income. The reason why the other two parents/guardians are not pleased with their children's work is that their children cannot go to school. The other parent stated that their child should have stayed at home to take care of their younger siblings.





## **Chapter 4. Child domestic workers and their work in Ho Chi Minh City**

## 4.1 CDWs' previous jobs

### 4.1.1 The first job

31% out of the total 100 CDWs have worked previously before their current job.

**Figure 10. Percentage of CDWs having worked previously**



For the 31 CDWs who have previously worked prior to the current job, an analysis of their age, sex, place of original residence and their previous jobs shows that:

- 38.5% male CDWs and 29.9% female have jobs prior this domestic work.
- 33.3% CDWs aged from 9 - 14 and 30.6% from 15 - 17 have also worked previously.
- None of the CDWs coming from the northern region have worked prior to the current job while 27.3% CDWs originally from the Centre and Highland and 41.5% of those from the South of Vietnam have worked previously.

**Table 8. Percentage of CDWs who have or have not worked previously**

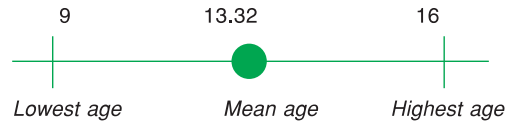
Characteristics of CDWs	N	Yes		No	
		x	%	x	%
Female 87	87	26	29.9	61	70.1
Male	13	5	38.5	8	61.5
Age group: 9 - 14 years (only girls found)	15	5	33.3	10	66.7
Age group: 15 - 17 years	85	26	30.6	59	69.4
Parents currently living in the North of Vietnam	14	0	0	14	100
Parents currently living in the centre and highland of Vietnam	33	9	27.3	24	72.7
Parents currently living in HCMC	23	6	26.1	17	73.9
Parents currently living in other southern provinces	30	16	53.3	14	46.7

\* CDWs originally from the South (including HCMC) that have worked previously account for 41.5%.

The previous work of these 31 CDWs can be divided into two types: (1) in-house work such as working in employers' family-owned businesses, doing domestic chores and (2) independent outdoor work such as shoe polishing, selling lottery tickets or souvenir gifts on the streets. The three most popular jobs undertaken by those who have worked previously are: domestic workers (38.7%), lottery tickets or souvenir gifts vendors (16.1%) and shop assistants (12.9%).

The mean age when these 31 CDWs started their first job is 13.32, ranging from 9 to 16 years of age. There is no significant difference regarding the first job undertaken between the male and the female CDWs and at what age such job was undertaken among the CDWs.

**Figure 11. Age of CDWs when starting their first job**



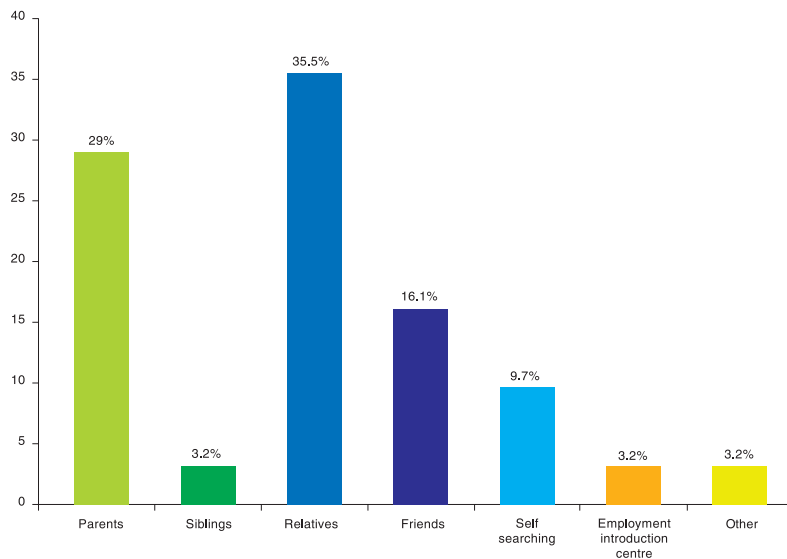
For the 69 CDWs who have never worked before this current job, the mean age, at the date of survey, is 15.9. These CDWs have been in their current job for a mean duration of 1 year. Thus, it is estimated that these children have started their current work on an average at the age of 15.

#### 4.1.2 Introduction and support to the first job

##### Source of information

The CDWs who worked before the present job reported that relatives, parents and friends were the main introducers to their first job respectively 35.5%, 29% and 16.1%. There is no difference in this regard between female and male CDWs, between the groups starting their first job at 9 - 14 and 15 - 17 years of age.

**Figure 12. Introducers of CDWs for their previous (first) job**



In-depth interviews with the CDWs and their parents/guardians reveal that in general, the CDWs are led to work by their relatives or acquaintance in the neighbourhood. These cases are usually based on "neighbours' relationships" - not commercially related. CDWs originally from the central or northern parts of Vietnam are usually brought to HCMC by an acquaintance or even non-acquaintance (but who was introduced to the family by acquaintance). Most of the guides are women. Each trip consists of 8-10 children and is managed by this guide. Employers hire CDWs through this guide and give her some money for transportation and commission. CDWs from Mekong River delta region are brought to HCMC individually or in small groups of 2 to 3.

### Persons who support the CDWs' previous job(s)

Quantitative data analysis shows that when doing their first job, 64.5% CDWs (N=31) received encouragement from their parents, 22.6% from siblings, 12.9% from relatives and 16.1% from friends. 9.7% of the children did not receive any support from both families and friends.

#### 4.1.3 Reasons for working and quitting the first job

Quantitative data analysis indicates that 38.7% of the CDWs (N=31) gave up their first jobs due to low income. 16.1% quit their job for being not sufficiently fed. 19.4% female CDWs reported that they quit their job because of excessive workload. None of the male CDWs quit their job for this reason.

Qualitative interviews of CDWs and their parents show that these children do not usually stay long in their first job. Reasons given include the fact that (1) they are too young and are not ready to live far away from home thus easily get homesick; (2) CDWs being in their teenage need more time to sleep; (3) the workload is far exceeding their physical strength; and (4) they do not get high pay due to lack of experience.

## 4.2 CDWs' current job

### 4.2.1 Employers' profile

Most of the employers interviewed in the quantitative and qualitative surveys are engaged in small businesses such as grocery stores, sale of motorcycle spare parts, food shops. Almost all these employers use CDWs for doing domestic chores and business assistance. Only two employers are working in the public sector one of whom is a medical doctor. A majority of the employers is in the age ranging from 30 - 40 with only one employer being 64.

### 4.2.2 Domestic chores

81 out of the 100 interviewed CDWs have only worked as domestic workers. Among them 12 have previously worked for other employers. In response to the question "What types of your daily work take the most and least time during the day?", many CDWs responded that the work taking most time was house cleaning, child minding and cooking and taking the least time was clothes washing, dish washing and other house work (not specified). Mainly girls responded to this question since boys are often found doing more additional work than domestic chores. Table 9 provides further details in this regard.

**Table 9. Daily work of CDWs**

Type of work	Work that take most time (N=100)			Work that take least time (N=84)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
House cleaning	2	36	38	1	11	12
Child minding	2	15	17	1	5	6
Cooking	2	14	16	0	6	6
Dish washing	1	10	11	0	17	17
Other housework	6	5	11	0	13	13
Clothes washing	0	5	5	1	18	19
House chores	0	0	0	1	8	9
Other	0	2	2	2	0	2

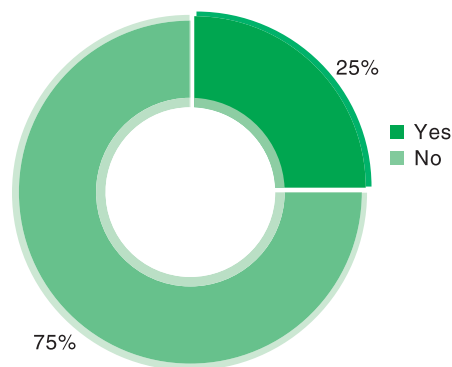
The majority of CDWs do two to three types of house work during the day, specifically 84 CDWs (84%) undertake three types, 15% two types and 1% only one type of work. 61% have been guided to do domestic chores by the employers, 17% by their parents and 14% by their older siblings.

#### 4.2.3 Additional work apart from domestic chores

##### Additional work

75% out of 100 interviewed CDWs said they did not do additional work apart from domestic chores. The remaining 25% said they did.

**Figure 13. Percentage of CDWs doing additional work to domestic chores**



**Cross tabulations of CDWs doing other work than domestic chores by their sex and age group indicate:**

- Among the male CDWs participating in the structured interviews, 69.2% do other work apart from the current job.
- Among the female CDWs, 18.4% have other work than domestic chores.
- The rate of male CDWs doing other work is 3.76 times higher that of female CDWs.
- Among the 9 - 14 aged CDWs, 46.67% are doing other work and 21.18% were recorded among the 15 - 17 age group.
- The rate of the 9 - 14 aged CDWs doing other work is 2.2 times higher that of the 15 - 17 age group.
- The mean age of those who do additional work to domestic chores is 15.44 in which the mean age for males is 16.33 and for females is 14.94.

**Table 10. Other work performed by CDWs**

	All (N=25)	Male (N=9)	Female (N=16)	9 - 14 age group (N=7)	15 - 17 age group (N=18)
	%	%	%	%	%
Shop assistants in employers' businesses	32 (x=8)	11.1 (x=1)	43.8 (x=7)	28.6 (x=2)	33.3 (x=6)
Service assistants/ waiters/waitresses	16 (x=4)	22.2 (x=2)	12.5 (x=2)	0	22.2 (x=4)
Do domestic chores for others	8 (x=2)	0	12.5 (x=2)	28.6 (x=2)	0
Work in the employers' production business	32 (x=8)	66.7 (x=6)	12.5 (x=2)	28.6 (x=2)	33.3 (x=6)
Other	12 (x=3)	0	18.8 (x=3)	14.3 (x=1)	11.1 (x=2)

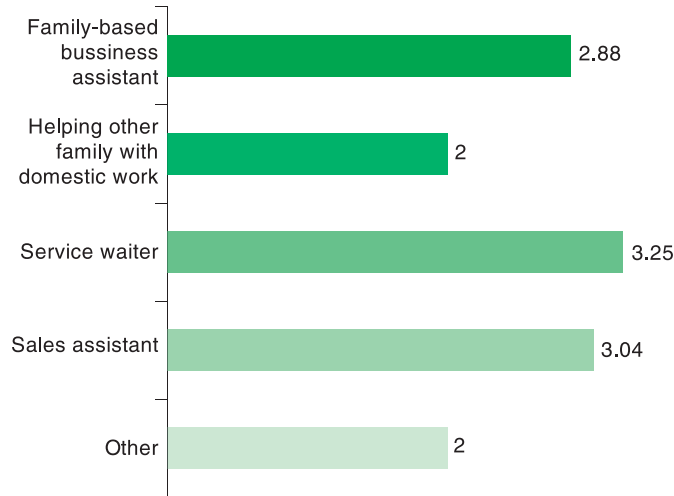
The three common additional works that the CDWs are conducting apart from domestic chores are sales/shop assistants, helping employers' family-based business and service waiters. Further data analysis show that:

- More female CDWs work as sales/shop assistants than males (43.8% versus 11.1%)
- More male CDWs work as service waiters than females (22.2% versus 12.5%)
- More male CDWs work in employers' family-based businesses than females (66.7% versus 12.5%)

### Time to do additional work

In the previous week of the date of survey, the mean number of hours spent by CDWs to perform other work than domestic chores was 2 hours 46 minutes, ranging from 1 to 5 hours. Those whose extra work as sales/shop assistants and service waiters/waitresses have the highest mean number of additional working hours during the day being 3 hours 20 minutes and 3 hours 1 minute, respectively. The male CDWs have a higher mean number of additional working hours than the females (3 hours 20 minutes versus 2 hours 27 minutes).

**Figure 14. Number of additional working hours during the day by types of work (hours)**



In-depth interviews reveal that the additional work is usually performed early in the morning or late in the afternoon or evening. The sale assistant sales and service waiters have to get up the earliest, from 4 - 5 in the morning and finish work at 9 - 10 in the evening. Most of them have little rest at noon.

*"Every day I get up at 5:30 and work until 17:00. Sometimes I get up at 3:00 just to get everything ready for the food sale."* (15-aged male CDW, District 8)

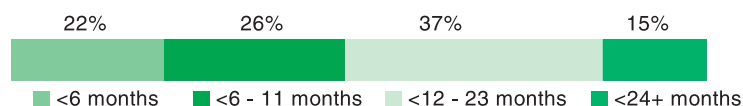
*"I usually see her getting up at 6:00 and going to the market. Then she prepares breakfast, washing clothes, cleaning house till lunch. After lunch, she irons clothes, prepare vegetables for dinner. She works non-stop and does not have even one full hour to rest or watch a film. She goes to bed at around 9-10 pm as she is too tired. She has to get up early the next day."* (A community member)

#### 4.2.4 Length of current employment

The most common length of doing the current job is 12 months (account for 20%). 22 CDWs (22%) have been with this job from less than 6 months, 26% from 6 to 11 months, 37% from 12 to 23 months and 15% over 23 months.

The mean length of employment (job seniority) of the 100 CDWs is 12.17 months. The 9 - 14 group has a longer mean employment length than the 15 - 17 group (13.2 versus 12 months). The females work for a longer mean time than the males (12.5 versus 10.2 months).

**Figure 15. Duration of CDWs' current employment**



On average, the CDWs get up at 06:00 AM and sleep at 22:11 PM. The female CDWs get up earlier and go to bed later than the males. The CDWs start their working day at 6:44 AM and finish their work at 19:37 PM. The female CDWs also start work earlier and finish work later than the male CDWs.

94% of the CDWs work 7 days a week, the rest works 6 days. 86% work 12 months a year while the other 9% work 11 months a year. On average, the surveyed CDWs work 12.53 hours per day, 6.94 days per week and 11.58 months per year. Table 11 presents these findings by CDWs' gender groups.

**Table 11. CDWs' working time**

	All			Females			Males		
	Minimum	Mean	Maximum	Minimum	Mean	Maximum	Minimum	Mean	Maximum
Time to get up	04:00	06:01	08:20	04:00	05:57	08:20	05:00	06:28	07:00
Time to sleep	20:00	22:11	24:00	20:00	22:14	24:00	20:00	21:51	24:00
Time to start work	04:50	06:44	09:00	04:30	06:39	09:00	07:00	07:19	08:00
Time to finish work	15:00	19:37	23:00	15:00	19:46	23:00	16:00	18:41	22:00
No. of working hours per day***	08:00	12:53	17:30	08:00	13:07	17:30	09:00	11:23	14:30
No. of working days per week	6	6.94	7	6	6.93	7	7	7	7
No. of working months per year	3	11.58	12	3	11.53	12	11	11.92	12

\*\*\* Since time for leisure was not specified in the questionnaire, the working hours presented here might include leisure time.

From the interviews with CDWs' parents/guardians and employers regarding the CDWs' working time and leisure time, 8 parents/guardians (N=8) stated that their children work for a mean number of 10 hours in a day, ranging from 8 to 15 hours. Three parents said their children work 8 hours a day while the other 3 said from more than 8 hours to 10. The remaining two stated that their children work for more than 10 hours per day.

8 parents/guardians (N=8) said that their children work 7 days a week. Time for resting as responded is 4 hours but not specified whether it is after or in between working hours. 10 employers (N=10) stated that the CDWs working for them work 9 hours, ranging from 7 to 10 hours. 9 out of 10 employers said the CDWs can take a rest any time if needed.



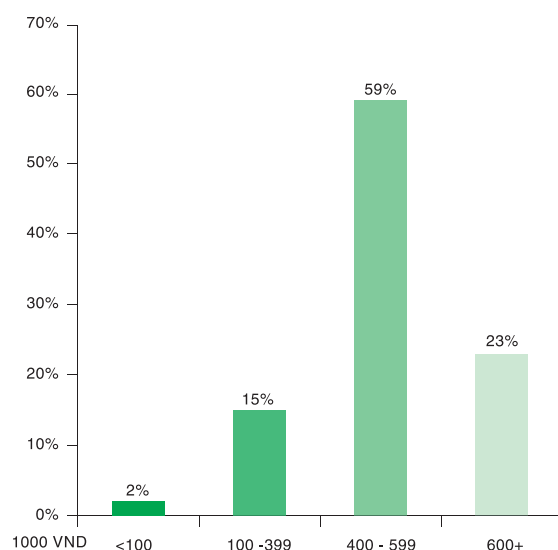
## 4.2.5 Income and expenditure

### Income

Among the interviewed 100 CDWs using structured questionnaires, 98% have monthly income. The mean income of the CDWs in the previous month is VND 454,500<sup>(9)</sup>, ranging from VND 60,000 to VND 900,000<sup>(10)</sup>. 77% of the total 100 CDWs have a monthly income from VND 400,000 to VND 600,000<sup>(11)</sup>. For reference, as stipulated in Article 1, Decree 118/2005/N?-CP dated 15/9/2004, the minimum wage is VND 350,000<sup>(12)</sup> per month. A person's wage is calculated by multiplying the minimum wage with the pre-determined numbers (N0) of occupation, type of work, level of skills, level of positions respectively and then summed up<sup>(13)</sup>. Wage can be paid based on time worked, pieces of work or bulk of work.

For the estimated/weighted number of CDWs (N=2,162), 98.1% reported having an income in the previous month (x=2,121). The average income of the 2,162 CDWs in the previous month is VND 427,755<sup>(14)</sup>, ranging from VND 60,000 to VND 700,000<sup>(15)</sup>. 69% of the 2,162 CDWs have an income of VND 400,000 to VND 599,000 per month<sup>(16)</sup>.

**Figure 16. Income of CDWs**



Note: Unit of VND 1000

In the previous month, the mean income of the male CDWs was VND 25,774 higher than the female's. For the weighted sample, the mean difference of income is VND 55,858<sup>(17)</sup> (VND 466,388<sup>(18)</sup> for males and VND 410,530<sup>(19)</sup> for females).

9. Approximately USD 28.59. Exchange rate: USD 1 = 15,900 Vietnam dong

10. Approximately USD 3.77 - 56.6

11. Approximately USD 25.16 - 37.74

12. Approximately USD 22

13. Circular No. 25/2005/TT-BLDTBXH issued by the Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs dated 4/10/2005 which guides how to calculate wages as per Decree 118/2005/N?-CP.

14. Approximately USD 26.9

15. Approximately USD 3.77 - 44

16. Approximately USD 25.16 - 37.67

17. Approximately USD 28.59

18. Approximately USD 7

19. Approximately USD 32.17

The younger group (9 - 14) has a lower mean income than the older group (15 - 17) (VND 323,333<sup>(20)</sup> versus VND 477,647<sup>(21)</sup>). The mean difference is VND 154,314<sup>(22)</sup>. For the weighted sample, the mean difference of income is VND 304,652<sup>(23)</sup> (VND 150,000<sup>(24)</sup> for the younger group and VND 454,652<sup>(25)</sup> for the older group).

The CDWs having other work than domestic chores earned a mean income in the previous month of VND 68,667 higher than that of those who do not have additional work. For the weighted sample, the mean difference is VND 111,636<sup>(26)</sup> (VND 511,537<sup>(27)</sup> for the former group and VND 399,901<sup>(28)</sup> for the latter group).

51% of the CDWs receive other benefits such as clothings, slippers etc. in addition to the monthly income whereas the remaining 49% receive nothing else than their income.

Interviews with structured questionnaires with 8 parents/guardians indicate that the mean salaries of the CDWs are VND 456,250 per month, ranging from VND 250,000 to VND 700,000 per month. Interviews with structured questionnaires with 10 employers also indicate that the mean salaries of the CDWs are VND 495,000 per month, ranging from VND 250,000 to VND 900,000 per month. In addition to salaries, the CDWs are provided with other benefits such as meals, bonus, medical fees and clothes. If these benefits were converted into cash, the CDWs would receive an additional amount of VND 168,750 per month on average.

2 in 8 CDWs in the in-depth interviews reported that they did not get pay for their work. These 2 children work together with their mother, father or sister for the same employer, and the adult member gets paid with an amount which is usually paid for one person (VND 300,000<sup>(29)</sup>). Some children reported to be given a very small amount as "piggy bank money" (VND 2,000 - 3,000<sup>(30)</sup>) or for buying breakfast but this happens not very often.

*"She occasionally gives her employee a few thousand dong for breakfast. Her mother gets VND 300,000 per month but is not provided with food."* (A community member)

*"Yes, I work for the same household with my mother and my younger sibling. [How much do they pay for each person per month?] VND 300,000 per month. Only my mother gets paid excluding meals. My younger sister and I do not get paid but eat meals at the employer's house..."* (Female CDW, 14 years old, District 3).

In-depth interviews with the employers reveal that some employers did not pay CDWs, especially the younger CDWs thinking that they are not "official domestic workers" yet but learner/apprentices. Some CDWs are unpaid due to a mutual agreement between the employers and their parents stating that CDWs will not get paid in compensation for a good shelter and good food at their employers' house.

*"She assists me a little bit in my massage business while minding the child. Her job is just simple like that. Sometimes I feel too tired with her because she does not give enough care for her job."*

---

20. Approximately USD 20.34

21. Approximately USD 30

22. Approximately USD 9.7

23. Approximately USD 19.16

24. Approximately USD 9.43

25. Approximately USD 28.59

26. Approximately USD 7

27. Approximately USD 32.17

28. Approximately USD 25.15

29. Approximately USD 18.87

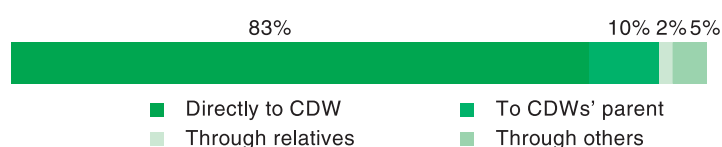
30. Approximately USD 0.13 - 0.19

*She acts as if she were still at her native place. I have to teach her from scratch. I have a small baby, that's why I want to have someone here who can play with my baby. Why on earth I have to hire such a 13 - 14 year old girl like her. She does not know anything."* (Employer, District 10).

### Mode of payment

84% CDWs are paid on a monthly basis, 5% paid on a daily basis and 11% paid in other modes such as through their brother or asking those who live in the same home village to give to their parents. 83% CDWs receive payment directly from their employers, 10% through their parents, 2% through relatives and 5% by other modes (via CDWs' siblings or country fellow friends). The younger group (9 -14) receiving payment through their parents account for higher rate than the older group (15 - 17): 13.3% (2/15 CDWs) versus 9.4% (8/85 CDWs).

**Figure 17. Payment mode**



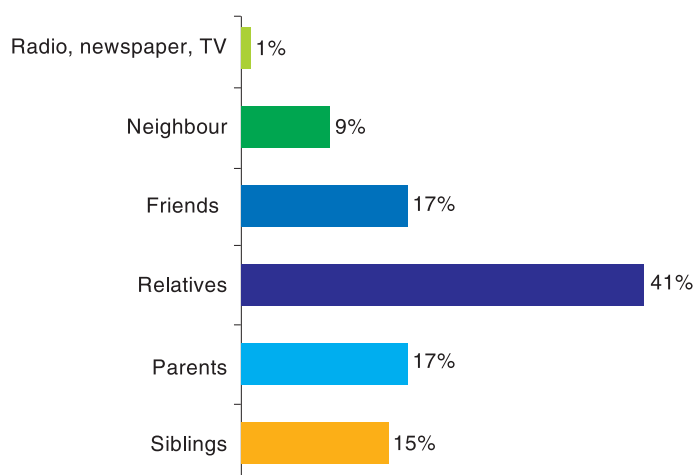
### Use of income

The CDWs who receive their pay directly from the employers use it as follows: giving to their parents/family (83.1%), paying school fees, books and uniforms (7.2%) and buying food (4.8%).

#### 4.2.6 Source for information for the current job

73% of the CDWs received information about the current job through their family members such as parents, brothers or sisters and relatives. One CDW received job related information from the mass media (newspaper, television and radio). None of the CDWs found the current job themselves.

**Figure 18. Source of Information of the current job**



Among 10 employers interviewed using structured questionnaires, 6 found CDWs through their relatives, 2 from their friends and 1 via introduction of another domestic worker.

## 4.3 Social contacts and relationship with the employers

### 4.3.1 Relationship with the employers

39% CDWs (N=100) said that their employers treat them well while 60% said their relationship with the employers is normal, not good not bad. One CDW (1%) reported not being well treated by the employer.

**Figure 19. CDWs' assessment of their relationship with the employers**



Reason cited by the CDW for not being well treated by the employer is that they are asked to do too much housework. Reasons why the CDWs thought they were well treated by the employers include:

- Providing them with meals (responded by 87.1% CDWs), giving clothes (69.2%), providing place to live (74.4%), assigning them with appropriate workload (56.4%).
- Satisfactory payment (accordingly to their efforts) (41%), provision of medical fees (33.3%). The reason of "allowing them to attend school" was the least cited by the CDWs (17.9%).

97 CDWs (97%) do not owe money to the employer. As for the 3 CDWs who are in debt to their employers, their parents do not live in HCMC and 2 out of the 3 do have other tasks in addition to domestic chores.

Three out of eight parents/guardians stated that their children are well treated by the employers and the other five said the employer's treatment is normal. None reported ill treatment towards their children.

#### One employer said during the interview:

*"I don't care much, let her free. She is still a kid and at this age kids are eating and playing. In the morning, she wakes up at the same time with my children. I don't differentiate housemaid from my children. She eats and sleeps together with my children. Every morning, after helping my two older children to get ready for school, she soaks and rinses the baby's clothes and then puts all into the washing machine. Then she quickly cleans the house. We are not at home during the day; therefore she has not much to do." (Employer, District 9).*

### 4.3.2 Social contacts

#### Registration with concerned government bodies

In-depth interviews with the employers reveal that most CDWs coming to HCMC for work do not register for temporary residence at the local authorized body i.e. police as regulated by Decision no.

51/CP issued in May 10, 1997<sup>31</sup>). Therefore, though many CDWs live in the employers' house for a long time, neither local police nor authorities know of their existence. In addition, according to the respondents living in the neighbourhood and their guardians, many CDWs are reported to authorities as employers' "nieces/nephews" or "relatives" coming from the countryside.

*"When they came here [local police] for registration, they asked where they [CDWs] are from. I just told the police that the children just come from the neighbouring areas. That's it. They did not ask anything else."* (Employer, District 3).

*"As she is still very young and does not have an ID card, I do not register for her residence. I just told the local police she is a relative from my home town."* (Employer, Tan Binh District).

### Contacts/Communication with the family

Quantitative data analysis shows that the most common ways for the CDWs to communicate with their family are using telephone (58%), visiting home (27%) and writing letters and send home through other people (27%). Five CDWs reported making no contacts with home. A cross tabulation of CDWs' communications with their families by their age group shows that, the younger group (9 - 14 years of age) rarely use telephone or write letters as ways to communicate as compared to the older group (15 - 17) (Table 12).

**Table 12. Forms of communication with CDWs' families**

	All (%), N=100	Age group: 9-14 (%), N=15	Age group: 15 - 17 (%), N=85
Do not contact	5	20	2.4
Visit your family	27	6.7	30.6
Phone	58	26.7	63.5
Write a letter	27	6.7	63.6
Send word through relatives	17	26.7	15.3
Family visit you	7	13.3	5.9

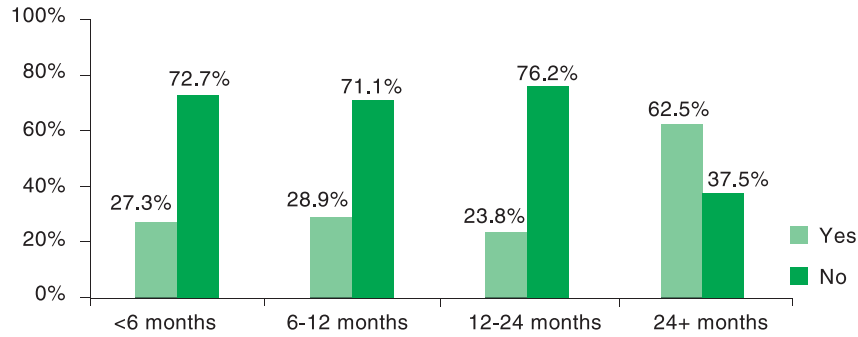
The majority of CDWs said it was easier to share gladness or happiness than sorrows. Whenever encountering problems, the CDWs tend to hide those problems from their family and if needed, they only share with their friends.

### Contacts with other friends doing the same job

30% out of the 100 surveyed CDWs know of other children who are working as domestic workers. The rate of CDWs working in this field over 2 years knowing of other CDWs is 2.5 times higher than that of those working for less time. There are no significant differences in the knowledge of other CDWs between the group having additional work apart from domestic chores and the group having no other additional work, and between the CDWs from different age groups.

31. Clause 14 of Decision no. 51/CP issued in May 10, 1997 regulated each citizen above 15 temporary migrating out of the place of permanent residence must be registered for (temporary) residence at the authorized body i.e. police at the place of destination. In case parents, spouse and children often migrating in one of their people's house must be registered once at the beginning of a year.

**Figure 20. Knowledge of other CDWs/time in the job**



53.4% CDWs (N=30) know 1 to 2 other children working as domestic workers. 36.7% know three to five persons and 9.9% know more than 5 other CDWs. Two CDWs reported knowing up to other 30 - 50 CDWs.

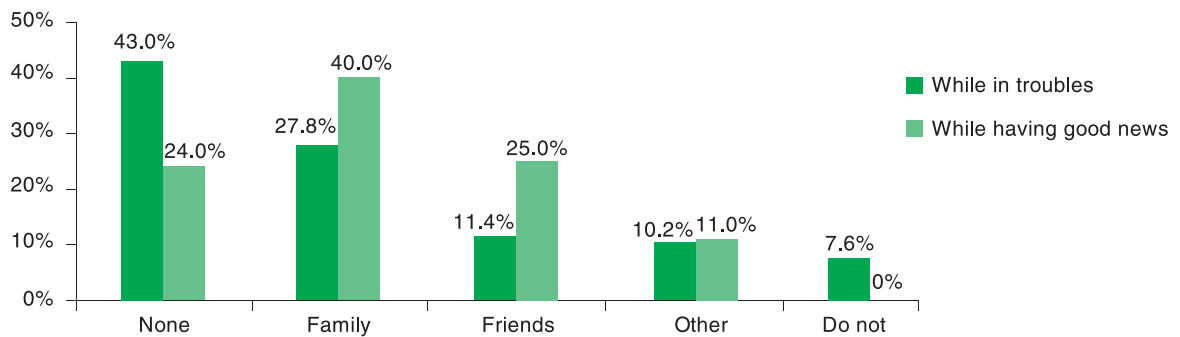
92% CDWs (N=100) said they have never introduced anyone to a domestic-work job. Among 8 CDWs (8%) who have once introduced such job to others:

- 7 CDWs are in the older age group
- The CDWs working in this field for longer time have introduced more jobs for others than those working for less time.
- The CDWs who do additional work apart from domestic chores have introduced more work to others than those doing solely domestic chores (3 out of 25 CDWs, accounting for 12% versus 5 out of 75 CDWs, accounting for 6.7%).

**Persons on whom CDWs count when in troubles or need to share good things**

While in troubles, 43% CDWs (N=100) do not seek help from anyone, 27.8% rely on their families, 11.4% turn to their friends and 7.6% said they did not know where to go. When having cheerful things, 24% CDWs (N=100) do not share with anyone, 40% go to their families and 25% fetch their friends. 19 CDWs do not go anywhere/to anyone when having troubles or cheerful things.

**Figure 21. Persons to whom CDWs turn when having troubles or good news**



## Possibility to access information

Qualitative data analysis reveals that the CDWs' opportunity to reach the surrounding communities and other social services is limited.

- Parents of the CDWs do not want social organizations or other child concerned government bodies/departments to approach their children.

*"At present, we know quite a few children working as domestic workers. However, it's not easy to approach them. It's more difficult if we want to intervene or help them. Even their family in the countryside does not want us to do any thing with their children."* (Child concerned government agency).

- The CDWs are closely supervised by the employers,

*"If we want to help the children, we need to approach their family instead of the CDWs. Some employers do not allow them to go out. They are even not allowed to talk with the neighbours. If they want to go anywhere, they will be taken by the employer. Some of them even go by car, but it's not an easy feeling."* (Child concerned government agency).

*"It's not easy to approach those children. We have to wait until they go to the market and then make acquaintance with them. Gradually, they trust us and are open to talk. If we just come to their employer's house to see the children, the employer will feel uncomfortable and might think that their privacy is invaded and thus might not cooperate with us and not tell us all the truth about the employed CDW. So, the key point is how to approach the children."* (Child concerned government agency).

## 4.4 Health care

### 4.4.1 Physical health during employment

#### CDWs' self assessment of their health

The survey found that none of the CDWs had spent any days in the previous week without food. In response to the question "Comparing with the time before working, how is your health?", 76% CDWs said that their health remains the same as before working. 17% stated that their health was better. One CDW (who did not belong to the group having additional work) said that his/her health got worse and 6% did not answer this question. All of these CDWs have parents living in HCMC and two third of the CDWs are among the younger group (9 - 14 years of age).

The rate of CDWs staying at the employers' houses and who feel his/her health is better than or the same as before is higher than that of the CDWs not staying in the employers' houses: 98.7% (76/77 CDWs) versus 73.9% (17/23 CDWs).

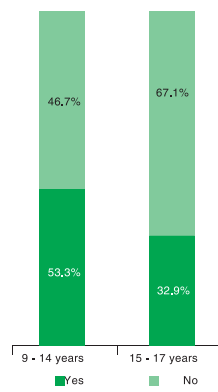
Qualitative interviews indicate that CDWs who perform domestic chores in the "white collars" households with main work as child minding have better health than others who perform both domestic chores and other additional work for small business households. This finding is confirmed by the CDWs' parents/guardians and the community members, "Fed adequately they have put on

lots of weight" (A community member). However, during the in-depth interviews, most CDWs disclosed that they felt deadly exhausted with the work, though most of them have not become seriously sick so as to be taken to the hospital.

### Illnesses

36% CDWs (N=100) stated that they have been sick or wounded during their service in which the younger group accounts for higher percentage of illnesses/wounds than the older group (53.3% versus 32.9%). There is a slight difference in the percentage of illnesses/wounds between those who perform additional work to domestic chores as compared to those doing solely domestic chores: 40% (10/25 CDWs) versus 34.7% (26/75 CDWs). The latest incidence of getting wounded is 4.98 months earlier (mean figure).

**Figure 22. Illnesses/wounds of CDWs by age group**



**Figure 23. Illnesses/wounds of CDWs**



**Figure 24. Examination and treatment for ill/wounded CDWs**



Common illnesses that CDWs usually catch include: cough/respiratory problem reported by 36.1% CDWs (x=13), headache by 33.3% (x=12), fever 3.3% (x=12), back pain 25% (x=9) and wounds e.g. cuts, burns by 11.1% (x=4).

8 out of 36 CDWs (22.2%) said that they have once been so ill that they could not work/go to work. 5 out these 8 CDWs are those who have additional work. 14 out of 36 CDWs (38.9%) reported having to work while being sick. 62.5% of CDWs from the younger age group who have been sick or wounded during their employment said that they still had to work while being sick.

From the in-depth interviews, it was found that CDWs frequently have minor accidents such as burns, cuts or skin peeled off, etc. One girl told that her employer did not give her money to buy breakfast so she sometimes fainted from hunger. Another girl claimed that she got scalded when mixing water to bathe the baby and then was fired.



"Risks? Well, she just had finger cuts all the time. Also some parts of her hand skin peeled off from washing clothes as the hand skin is quite soft. She often gets minor burn from cooking. What a clumsy girl." (Employer, District 8).

#### 4.4.2 Access to health services

19 out of 36 CDWs (52.8%) reported having been sick/wounded while at work but not receiving any treatment. The other 17 CDWs (47.2%) responded that they were treated for their illnesses. Medical staffs sought for treatment include:

- Doctor, nurse: 41,2% (N=17, x=7)
- Sale person in the pharmacy: 29,4% (N=17, x=5)
- Employer: 29,4% (N=17, x=5)

58.8% reported that medical costs were covered by the employers, 23.5% paid on their own and 17.6% have their parents settle these costs. The CDWs from the younger age group usually have the parents pay for their medical costs (2 out of 3 CDWs, accounting for 66.7%) while in the cases of the older group, such costs are usually covered by the employers (9 out of 14 CDWs, accounting 64.3%).

Two main reasons for not receiving treatment as cited by the CDWs are: "feeling not necessary to consult" at 78.9% (N=19, x=15) and "lack of money" at 10.5% (N=19, x=2).

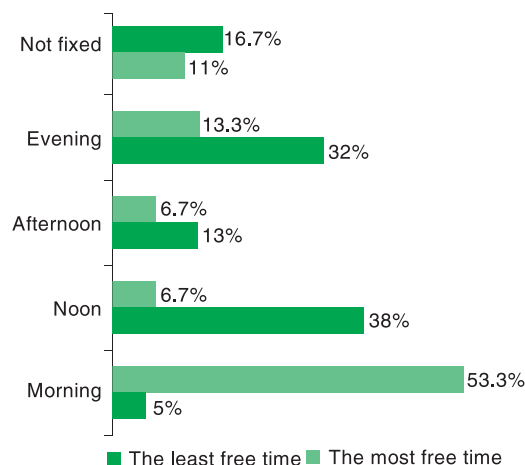
## 4.5 Entertainment of CDWs

### 4.5.1 Leisure time

Common leisure time of the surveyed CDWs is in the afternoon (N=100, x=38) and in the evening (N=100, x=32). 11% CDWs do not have fixed free/leisure time. Morning is the busiest time in the day for the CDWs (figure 25).

52% CDWs having additional work are most free in the afternoon while a smaller percentage (33.3%) of those who do solely domestic chores can have that leisure. Evening is reported as the most free time by both groups (32% reported by each group).

**Figure 25. Leisure time of CDWs**



#### 4.5.2 Entertainment activities

Quantitative survey on the 100 CDWs indicates that CDWs usually sleep (39%), watch television/films (35%) in their free time. The other 26% do various things such as reading newspapers/magazines and studying, etc.

In response to the question "Where do you often go to in your free time", data analysis from the 100 CDWs reveals:

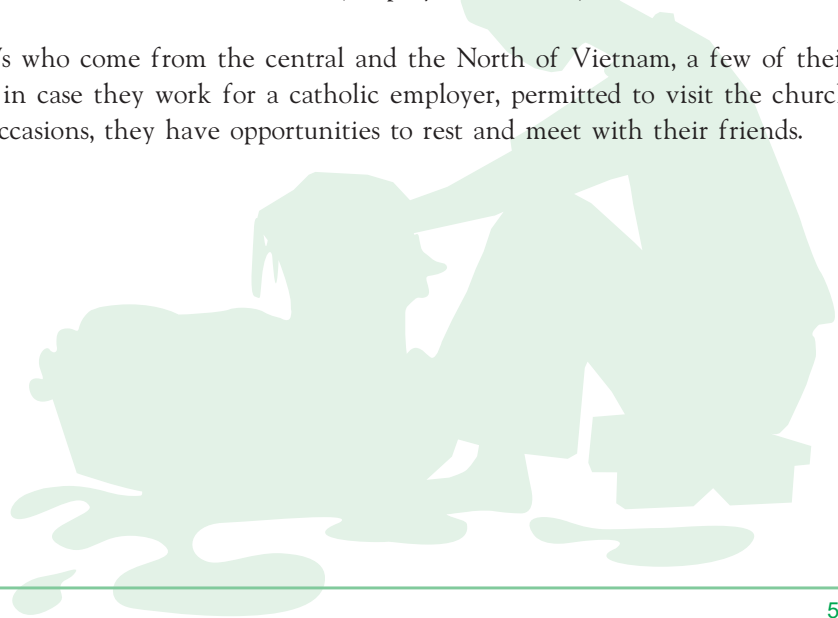
- Not going anywhere, just at home: 47%
- Resting place at the work place: 31%
- Visit friends and relatives: 12%
- Go to entertainment at public places (e.g. pagodas, entertainment places) 10%

Qualitative data show that those who assist with the employers' sales/businesses in addition to doing domestic chores have less time for entertainment than those who solely do domestic chores. In return, CDWs in the former group have more opportunities to meet with friends, other CDWs than the latter group. Those who baby-sit for the "white collar's" households have a variety of entertainment compared to those who work for small business runners because they can go with the employers' family on vacation trip, or take the baby to the streets or parks for playing. Most of the employers said that they felt comfortable with the fact that CDWs use entertainment facilities such as television and radio, provided that they complete their work.

*"In the morning, she gets up and then relaxes comfortably. Whenever we have customers, she has to serve them; if not, she can relax, doing nothing. Her main work is to play with the baby and just watch television all the day." (Employer, District 10).*

*"At this time of the day, she normally lulls the baby while sleeping. If she likes to, she can sleep. If not, she spends time watching television even the whole day. In general, she feels very comfortable living with us. Just sometimes, she runs errands." (Employer, District 9).*

According to some CDWs who come from the central and the North of Vietnam, a few of their Catholic co-workers, are, in case they work for a catholic employer, permitted to visit the church once a week. On those occasions, they have opportunities to rest and meet with their friends.





## **Chapter 5. Awareness of risks and risks that CDWs encountered while at work**

## 5.1 Awareness and perceptions of all regarding children performing domestic work

### 5.1.1 Awareness of child rights

#### Awareness of minimum age for working

In response to the question "Do you know the minimum age for children to work?", 22% CDWs (N=100) said yes and gave the mean minimum age of 16.05. The other 78% do not know of the minimum age for working. Cross-tabulation of data by CDWs' age, sex, place of original residence and employment length shows that:

- Those originally from the southern provinces account for the highest percentage in "do not know" (about the minimum age for working) as compared to those from other provinces (over 80% as compared to over 70%)
- Those who work in this field for more than 2 years account for higher percentage in "Yes, we know" as compared to those who work for fewer years (50% versus less than 30%)
- The rate of females who said "do not know" is higher than that of the males (80.5% versus 61.5%)
- The rate of CDWs from the older age group who know of the minimum age for working is twice higher than those from the younger age group (23.5% versus 13.3%).

Most employers in the quantitative and qualitative research know about the minimum age for working. During interviews, all employers knew that employing child domestic workers under the age permitted was illegal and that making them work hard would be accused as exploitation. *"She/he has just done some simple work such as dish washing or house cleaning subject to their ability and physical strength. I have never asked her/him to work so hard".* (Employer, District 10). However, they all want to employ children as domestic workers because CDWs are "less expensive" and "easier to deal with". Employers' knowledge about child's rights is very limited even though they are aware of the right to education for children.

*"Yes, I know that it's legal to employ people from the age of 18 upwards. But you see, such children are so poor. Feeling sorry for them, I employ them as domestic workers so that they have a job to earn money...Yes, I know they should go to school...But I think that Women's Union should be responsible for this issue. I'm so busy with my small business that I don't know about child's rights exactly".* (Employer, District 3)

*"I know about these rights a little bit. Children should be entitled to the right to education, entertainment and health protection. Based on the existing regulations, I can be accused of violating the laws. However, I think if someone forces children to work hard, it should call a violation. In the meanwhile, I just ask my worker to do some light work. If I do harm to her, she may report against me to the police."* (Employer, Hoc Mon District)

### Awareness of the importance of education for children

During the interviews using structured questionnaires, two out of eight parents/guardians of the CDWs did not see the importance of education for their children. The other five considered education important and the remaining parent saw it very important. The parents/guardians in the in-depth interviews revealed that since they did not have much education, their wish was to support their children pursue higher education. Nevertheless, they had to take their children out of school due to the family economic constraints.

### Awareness of CDW concerned support services and social organisations

Qualitative interviews reveal that apart from a few employers interested in social activities and aware of child rights, most employers and community do not receive any information about child rights from the local authority. Two out of seven employers being in-depth interviewed could name the child-concerned agencies e.g. "Women Union" and "Committee for Protection and Care for Children" (terms used by one employer in District 1 and one in Hoc Mon District). Others said they did not know or if they did have opinions, they said CDWs families had to help their children or charity organisations would help in case needed.

Local authorities normally provide some gifts to children of disadvantaged families at holiday, Tet (Lunar New Year) and do not give any other support and care to CDWs.

*"I do not see any activity specifically designed for the children in this area.. No policy for CDWs. Nobody cares for registering their residence as well as providing support to them." (Employer, District 3)*

### General awareness of child rights

Most of the community people in the survey have some knowledge of child rights. However, this knowledge is usually limited or inadequate. According to them, child rights are unknown to the community, especially younger children. Some parents and community people said that "protecting mothers and children are responsibilities of the Women's Union. We have never heard of such rights communicated in our cluster of households."

*"I think children should be protected and taken care in terms of physical and mental health. They should have some says...Our people have low literacy... They may hear about child rights but will not understand well what they hear. We are poor and being parents, we have to work to earn a living at any costs. Employers may not know about these rights. We have no choice but have to accept that. Consequently, the children cannot enjoy the rights they deserve." (Community member, Hoc Mon District)*

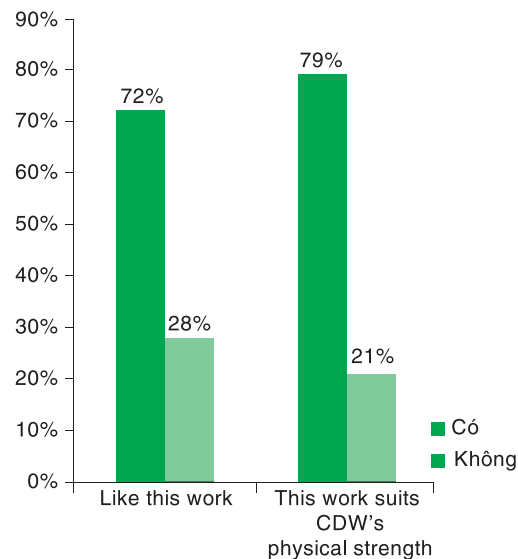
*"They [employers] just know very simply that they should not beat CDWs. Truly speaking, if the local authorities do not organize a communication campaign to raise awareness of the public, how can the street people know about these rights? They have never read any news papers, how can they recognize such rights?" (Community member, District 3)*

The officials of the child concerned agencies said that they were aware that CDWs are disadvantaged as compared to other children since they had to be away from their parents and are restricted of the rights to study and play - "Speaking in terms of rights, firstly we can see that they are taken of their rights to live with and be protected by the parents. Secondly, they do not have the right to study, they cannot attend school. And thirdly, they are not freed up to participate in entertainment activities etc." (A representative from a concerned agency)

### 5.1.2 Perceptions of all regarding children performing domestic work

72% CDWs (N=100) like the current domestic work. The rate of female CDWs who like their job is twice higher than that of the males (77% versus 38.5%). The two main reasons for being interested in this job are: "can support the family" (84.7%) and "can earn money for personal expenses" (23.6%). Three reasons that CDWs dislike their job include: "Do not like working" cited by 50% CDWs (x=14), "cannot go to school" by 17.9% (x=5) and "bad working conditions, heavy work" by 11.5% (x=3).

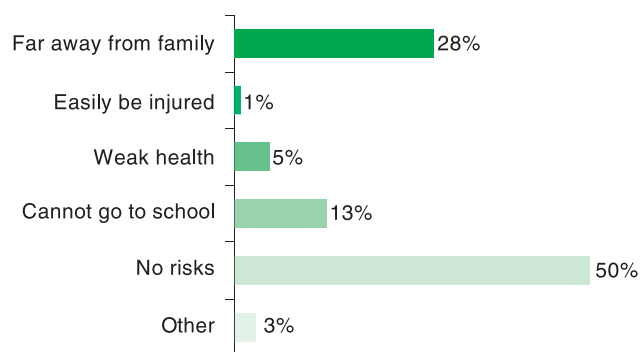
**Figure 26. Perception of CDWs of the current job**



79% CDWs feel that the domestic work is suitable for their physical strength, 14% said the work was light and 3% said it was too heavy. There is no significant difference in this regard between the female and male CDWs. However, if comparing the CDWs by their age group, it was found that a higher percentage (20%) of those from the younger group (9 - 14) do not know whether the work suit them or not as compared with 1.2% of those from the older group (15 -17).

In response to the question "What do you think the risks of this work are?", 28% CDWs (N=100) said that they had to live far away from their family. 13% responded that they could not go to school. Other risks cited by the CDWs are poor health and easily being injured.

**Figure 27. Awareness of potential risks of doing domestic work**



Seven out of eight parents/guardians interviewed by structured questionnaires thought that it is fine for their children to work as domestic workers because they help increase the family income (x=4). These parents thought that their children's working conditions are acceptable as the employers are kind and good-hearted (x=3). One parent, however, said that, the employer did not provide good working condition because their child could not attend school.

In response to the question "What are the advantages of hiring CDWs?", 3 among 10 employers in the structured interviews said that CDWs are "less expensive" and the other 3 said that they were "easier to deal with".

None of the CDWs said that they were forced to work by their parents/guardians. Most of the CDWs were aware of their family difficulties and wanted to work to assist their parents. This is the motivation that enables the children to try and like the job even though it is heavy and make them far away from the parents and siblings - *"No matter how hard or difficult the job would be, I have to overcome them provided that I am of some help to my parents"*. The CDWs also confirmed that domestic work is suitable to their strength.

*"Compared to this job [domestic work] and helping with the employer's food shop, selling lottery tickets is much harder... Before, I had to go everywhere and under the sun to sell the tickets. Now most work is in house."* (Female CDW, 14 years old, District 3)

In-depth interviews with some parents show their satisfaction about their children joining the world of domestic workers because they help to increase income for the family. Some said that doing domestic chores is better - "more relaxing" than other work like farming or peddling. These parents had no intention to change their children's condition, especially if their children are lucky enough to work for kind and good-hearted employers.

Most of employers and the local people in the neighbourhood admitted the advantages of employing child domestic workers. These advantages are identified as follows:

- CDWs are easier to deal with if compared to adults.

*"Employing a child domestic worker will be more advantageous. It will be easier for me to deal with her, to guide her. That's why it will be better to recruit such a child domestic worker than an adult domestic worker with the same amount of money. You know, it's very difficult to give orders to adults."* (Employer, District 3)

- CDWs working as babysitter will be easier to make acquaintance with small babies because they are "all childish".
- Children are less vulnerable to the risk of infectious disease.
- CDWs are less expensive, their pay can be lower, "we mainly provide them with food and accommodation. Maximum pay can be only VND 200,000 - 300,000 per month - with the pay for an adult worker I can employ two child domestic workers" (Community member)
- CDWs seldom request pay increase.
- Employers are recognized as good people who are willing to help disadvantaged children.
- Female employers feel secure about their family's happiness, "when a mistress is away from home, she doesn't feel worried that a child domestic worker can charm her husband." (Community member).
- It is easier to recruit a child domestic worker through sources of labour supply such as: in evening classes (known as "warm classes" organised for children who are from poor families, cannot afford going to school or having quit school for having to work), in places where street lottery vendors are often seen, in ports where boats carrying fruits and vegetables from Mekong Delta usually drop in, in small shops frequented by women (for example, hair dress ing salon, massage shop), in poor slums where migrant households are located or through other domestic workers..

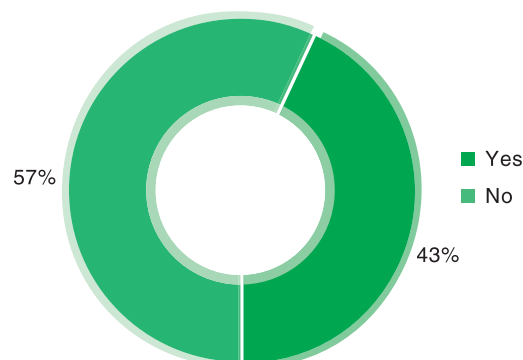
*The employers and the community members during the in-depth interviews commented that doing domestic chores is a light job "generally speaking, domestic work is a relaxing job."* (Employer, District 9)

An official from a child concerned department spoke about employers: "Nowadays, employers are also aware that they are exploiting the children. Thus they do not want anyone to know that they hire CDWs and tend to refer those CDWs as relatives."

### 5.1.3 Possibility of changing jobs of CDWs

43% of the CDWs stated that they would stay longer in the current work while the rest had other plans.

**Figure 28. Possibility of job changing of CDWs**





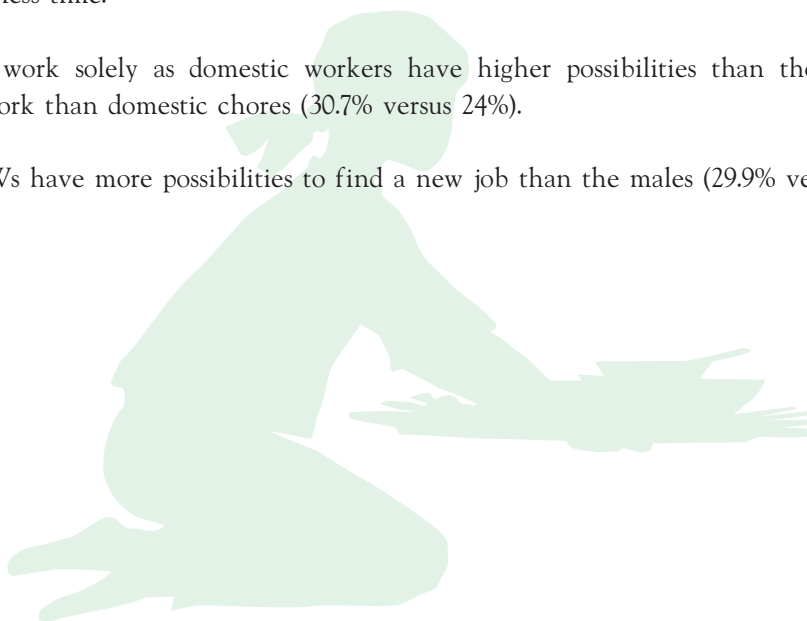
Cross-tabulations of possibilities for the CDWs to change job by their sex, age group, employment length and place of original residence indicate:

- CDWs from the younger group have lower possibility for changing jobs than those from the older group (33.3% versus 44.7%).
- Those who work for longer time have higher possibilities than those working for less time.
- 50.6% of the CDWs having a monthly income from VND 400,000 - VND 600,000 thought that they would stay longer in this job. This rate is twice higher than that of the group having lower income.
- Those originally from HCMC have more possibilities than those from other provinces (56.5% versus 39%).
- Those from the southern provinces that plan to stay long with the current job account for highest percentage (49.1%) as compared to those from the centre and highland (39.4%) and from the North of Vietnam (28.6%).

#### 5.1.4 Possibility to find a new job

In response to the question "If you do not work here any longer, can you find other work easily?" 68% of the CDWs (N=100) said that it was not easy. Further analysis on the possibilities of finding a job easily among the CDWs from different age groups, with different employment time, places of origin and sex indicates:

- The rates of CDWs originally from the centre and highland and those from Southern provinces are four times higher than that of those from the Northern provinces (33.3 versus 7.1 and 32.1 versus 7.1 respectively).
- CDWs from the long-time group have more possibilities to find a new job than those working for less time.
- Those who work solely as domestic workers have higher possibilities than those who do additional work than domestic chores (30.7% versus 24%).
- Female CDWs have more possibilities to find a new job than the males (29.9% versus 23.1%).



**Table 13. Possibility to find another job for CDWs**

Place of original residence	Easy to find another job		Not easy to find another job		Do not know	
	x	%	x	%	x	%
Northern region	1	7.1	11	78.6	2	14.3
Central region and Highland	11	33.3	21	63.6	1	3
Southern region	17	32.1	36	67.9	0	0
Male CDWs	3	23.1	10	76.9	0	0
Female CDWs	26	29.9	58	66.7	3	3.4
CDWs having worked for about or less than 6 months	8	24.2	24	72.7	1	3
CDWs having worked for 6-11 months	11	28.9	27	71.1	0	0
CDWs having worked for 12-23 months	7	33.3	12	57.1	2	9.5
CDWs having worked for 24 and more months	3	37.5	5	62.5	0	0
CDWs having additional work other than domestic chores	6	24	19	76	0	0
CDWs do solely domestic chores	23	30.7	49	65.3	3	4

Note: Totals make 100% horizontally

## 5.2 Risks faced by CDWs for doing domestic chores

### 5.2.1 Risks of dropping out of school

100% (N=8) of the CDWs' parents/guardians believed that there were no risks for their children to do domestic chores. Five out of eight parents agreed if their children continued their education, they had no choice but stop working because long hours of work had shorten their time in schools.

In the quantitative survey, 9 out of 10 employers said that if the CDW wanted to study, they would not let the children go because the children would be too tired to work upon their return from school (cited by 3 employers) and the children did not have any fixed free time to go to school (another 3 employers) - *"No, they have to take care of the baby, how can they go to school!"* (Employer, District 9); *"Whenever they finish their work, it's too late to attend the class."* (Employer, District 3).

### 5.2.2 Risks of being abused

Quantitative data analysis from 100 CDWs indicates 13 CDWs (13%) are frequently reprimanded by the employers, one CDW was teased and flirted. The other 86 CDWs (86%) have not been in such situations.

**Figure 29. Risks of being abused of CDWs**



Among 30 CDWs who said knowing of other CDWs, 8 (26.7%) said that their friends were frequently oppressed/shouted at/reprimanded by the employers. One (3.3%) said their friends were beaten and another said their friends were flirted. 15 among these 30 CDWs said that their friends have never faced such problems and the remaining 5 CDWs did not know.

Among 65 CDWs who have ruined or broken the employers' household items, 23.1% said they were reprimanded, 36.9% received clearer guidance from their employers, 15.4% remained untouched and 24.6% were initially scolded then guided by the employers.

According to opinions from the community members in the area where CDWs are working, those who serve as "helpers" for white collars experience less bad treatment (such as beating) by their employers than those who work for small business runners.

*"Generally speaking, they are intellectual people therefore they do not catch the habit of bullying their servant"* (Community member)

*"When she makes mistakes, I am ready to instruct her again not to blame seriously because she is too new to the job. This is not easy to get used to everything from the start."* (Employer, District 1).

Qualitative data analysis reveals that CDWs who work for business employers or other employers of lower class such as workers get regular slight scold or even insult. Many community members shared the experience that a CDW got a very bad scolding by her employer but dared not to respond because both her mother and herself have been working for the same employer and they are afraid of losing their job. Exceptionally, a 17-year-old CDW reported that she/he has been beaten by the whole family. The survey has not discovered any other special cases but recorded many stories from the respondents:

*"That girl also works as a child domestic worker like me but she has been beaten fiercely by her employer many times. [What means did the employer use to beat her?] With a stick".* (14-aged female CDW, District 3).

The issue of sexual harassment and abuse was explored through the in-depth interviews, yet, none of the CDWs reported having been sexually abused - as described in the questionnaire and by the interviewers - by the men or the boys in the employers' household. However, during the interview of the representative of a child concerned agency, it was shared that there were cases of CDWs being sexually abused and girls face more risks than boys - *"These are actual risks faced by CDWs. It would be no problem if the children work for decent people. But if they fall into "complex" households, the girls will be at high risk"*. (Representative of CPFC).

### Case no. 1

Have you come across any cases of CDWs who had faced any sexual abuse related problem and called or came here for help?

- She [the CDW] is quite cute. One day, the nephew of the employer got a job here [HCM] so he came to live with his aunt's family. And she was teased and then harassed by this nephew.
- How old is she?
- 14 years old.
- How old is the employer's nephew?
- He's over twenty. Initially, she likes the young man and enjoys being with him.
- However, he is getting too "excessive" and she cannot put up with it. The employer / aunt found out the fact and sacked the girl. She did not know where to go and somehow found our centre. Since she experienced sexual intercourse, we had to take some interventions...

**(told by a representative from CPFC)**

### Case no. 2

A while ago I came across one case that needs urgent assistance. She was transferred to us by the Eastern Region Bus Station. She worked as domestic worker for a family. Then she was sexually abused and ran away from that house. She was depressed and wandering around and then was raped by unknown people. She was found unconscious at the ER Bus Station. She was put on emergency aid and brought to us. We consoled and fed her then brought her to the HCMC VWU for technical assistance and liaised with her families to send her back.

**(told by a representative from CPFC)**

### 5.2.3 Risks of committing mistakes

65% CDWs (N=100) have made mistakes/ruined/broken the employers' household items while working. The CDWs from the younger age group account for higher percentage of making mistakes than those from the older group (73.3% versus 63.5%). There is no significant difference among those who have different duration of employment.

Among 61.5% CDWs (N=65) who have made mistakes/ruined/broken the employers' household items and were guided again by their employers: the rate of females (N=61, 62.3%) who were guided by the employers is higher than the rate of males (N=4, 50%); those from the older group (N=54, accounting for 64.8%) were guided more than the younger group (N=11, 45.5%).

Among 47.7% CDWs (N=65) who have been reprimanded, those from the younger group (N=11, 72.7%) were reprimanded more than those from the older group (N=54, 42.6%). 15.4% CDWs said nothing happened to them after such mistakes.



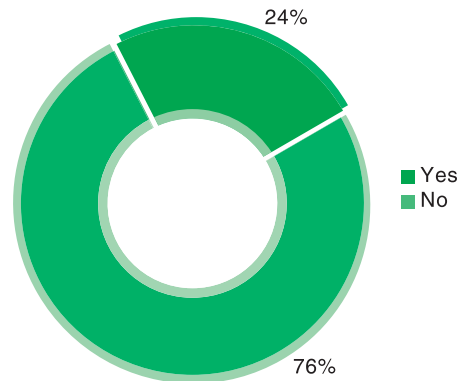
## **Chapter 6. Aspirations of CDWs and CDWs supporting services/activities in HCMC**

## 6.1 Aspirations of CDWs

### 6.1.1 Desired jobs and conditions

In response to the question "In the future, do you want to do other work than the current work?", 76% said Yes. Among 24 CDWs (24%) who said No, 1 CDW (4.2%) is from the younger age group and 23 (95.8%) from the older group.

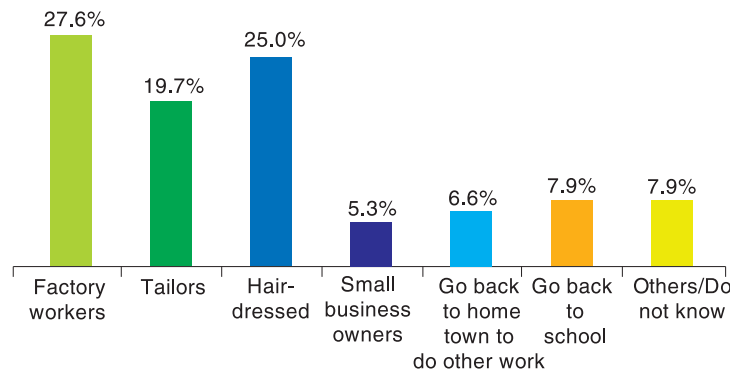
Figure 30. Desire to do other work in the future



3 jobs that 76 CDWs desired to do are: factory workers (27.6%), hair-dressers (25%) and tailors (19.7%). 7.9% of the CDWs want to go back to school. Cross-tabulations of these CDWs by age and sex indicate:

- Three things that CDWs from the younger group would like to do are becoming factory workers (N=14, x=6, 42.9%), continuing to study (N=14, x=2, 14.3%) and becoming tailors (N=14, x=2, 14.3%).
- Three jobs that the CDWs from the older group would like to engage in the future are hair-dressers (N=62, x=18, 29%), factory workers (N=62, x=15, 24.2%) and tailors (N=62, x=13, 21%).
- 81.8% of the male CDWs want to become factory workers in the future while the females want to become hair-dressers (29.2%), tailors (23.1%) and factory workers (18.5%).

Figure 31. Desired jobs in the future



Seven out of eight CDWs' parents/guardians revealed that the reason why their children do not work as CDWs is that their family has enough income. One parent said that they need to have sufficient land for planting crops to earn enough.

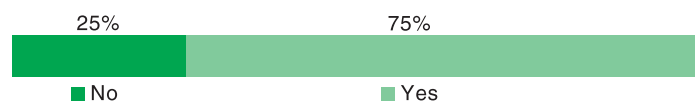
When being asked what support they need, most CDWs and parents in the in-depth interviews said they would like to receive loans for doing business and income generation so that their children can afford vocational training. Some CDWs wish to have financial support to take vocational training courses.

*"I plan to do this job till I am 19, 20 years old, I have to earn money now... Learning a skill? Yes, I'd like to learn how to fix motorbikes. I will take formal education when I get older."* (Male CDW, 15 years old, District 8)

### 6.1.2 Desired vocational skills

In response to the question, "In the future, would you like to learn a (vocational) skill?", 75% of the CDWs said Yes.

**Figure 32. Percentage of CDWs desire to learn vocational skills**



Being asked to select a vocational skill to learn from the questionnaire, 36% CDWs wish to learn tailoring and embroidery, 29.3% want hair-dressing and 10.7% want to learn how to run small business. 11 out of 75 CDWs (14.7%) like to learn other skills (not listed in the questionnaire) so as to become a mechanic worker (x=3), a worker (x=2).

Cross-tabulations of the CDWs' responses to the question "In the future, would you like to learn a (vocational) skill?" by their age and sex reveal the following differences:

- 57.1% of CDWs from the younger group want to learn tailoring and embroidery as compared to 31.1% of those from the older group having the same desire.
- The rate of CDWs from the older group that want to learn hair-dressing is 2.29 times higher than the rate of those from the younger group) (32.8% versus 14.3%)
- 30% of the male CDWs want to learn construction and 60% wish to learn other skills which are not specified.

A boy said during the in-depth interview, *"I really want to have money to learn how to fix motorbike but I dare not dream"* (15-aged male CDW, District 8). Similarly, the CDWs' parents/guardians said during the in-depth interviews that they wanted their children to learn a skill such as carpentry, hair dressing, tailoring, and embroidery or to become factory workers, tailors or construction workers.

## 6.2 CDWs supporting services/activities in HCMC

Local authorities normally provide some gifts to children of disadvantaged families at holidays, Tet but do not give any other support and care to CDWs.

*"I do not see any activity specifically designed for children in this area.. No policy for CDWs. Nobody cares for registering for their residence as well as providing support to them".* (Employer, District 3).

The CPFC is taking the leading role in protection of child rights. One representative of the CPFC told there is no statistics of CDWs in HCMC as well as a CDWs tracing system. However, in her opinion, the number of CDWs or children doing domestic work as well as helping employers in other things is increasing as HCMC residents' livelihood has been improved. She also shared that the interventions are very passive now. Intervention only takes place with individual cases identified by individuals, organisations or agencies. Helping CDWs to go back home is an activity mentioned the most as it was conducted with funding from Decision 19<sup>(32)</sup> issued by the Prime Minister of the Vietnamese government. She also said that when a community member reports a case of child abuse/ exploitation, CPFC coordinator groups face many problems in approaching the child as they have to find out when the child goes out without employers' supervision.

According to the HCMC VWU, child-focused programs or projects tend to target street children and children who are abused physically and mentally and who receive consultancy and care service at open houses. It is very difficult to approach CDWs, especially CDWs who do domestic chores alone as mentioned above as they are strictly supervised by their employers. Besides, it is difficult to identify whether children are hired to do domestic chores or whether they are relatives who come to stay, study and help in domestic chores because people will not register CDWs with authorities or if they do, they will name them under relatives. Hence, management of CDWs is a real challenge for the authorities.

*"Frankly speaking, we have not paid adequate attention to the CDWs. Child labour is an issue of families and society, however, at this stage our efforts are focusing on children who are engaged in worst forms of labour. There are not yet any specific agencies, departments assigned to take care of CDW group. The recent report of a girl who was beaten seriously by her employer on Sai Gon Giai Phong newspaper has put the issue into debate."* (Representative of HCMC VWU).

To date, some warm houses<sup>(33)</sup> have been established with functions of supporting and caring for children who are physically and mentally abused. There are AFESIP (Acting for Women in Distressing Situations) funded warm house of the HCMC VWU, Little Rose warm house of CPFC, Green Bamboo warm house of the HCMC Children Protection Association and other warm houses from the Women Charity Foundation. In addition, there are some counselling centres for children being abused such as the centre under the "Future" project implemented by the Children Protection Foundation and the Family and Children Counselling Office under CPFC. There is a strong collaboration between the warm houses and the counselling centres to provide support to children. For instance, after being counselled and comforted psychologically, children are brought or referred to the warm house for continued care, skill training and assistance to return home.

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32. Decision 19/2004 issued by the Prime Minister dated 12/2/2004 regarding approval of the Program on the Prevention and Tackle of Children, Children Victims of Sexually Abuse and Children in Hazardous and Dangerous Works for the period 2004 - 2010.

33. Warm houses (literally translated from "mai am") are places where children who have been mentally, physically or sexually abused are cared of, provided with food before being supported to go home. Some warm houses provide life skills and/or vocational skills to these children.



To prevent children from quitting school early and do heavy work, representatives of the two above agencies said it is vital to strengthen communication work to raise awareness on child rights protection and importance of education to child development. To prevent child abuse in workplace, it is necessary to consolidate the legal framework on prevention of child labour, management of CDWs at local areas as well as to conduct communication activities for employers aware of regulations on child labour and child rights.

Specifically, the representatives of these agencies have the following remarks:

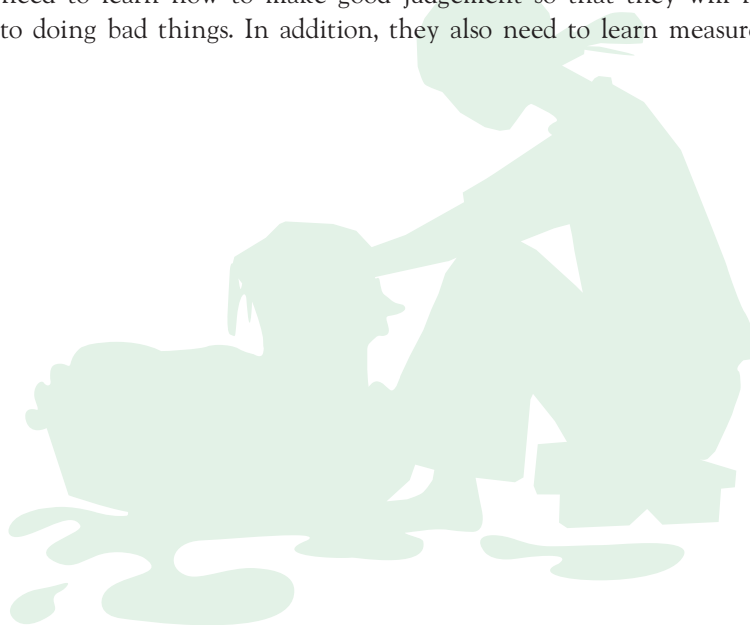
Child labour would need to be addressed from the root causes. It means that parents need to be made aware of the risks faced by CDWs and of basic rights of the children.

*"To me, this is a tough issue. If we want to combat this, we need go beyond HCMC to the original places where they came from. The key point here is to increase the awareness and knowledge of those children's parents so that they can understand basic rights of the children. It should be noted that the rights are of children but implemented by the adults."*

There is a need to implement interventions to support CDWs at place of destination. "It is because their family has such difficult living conditions that they have to migrate here to work. At least the local authorities where the children are working should have some activities to provide them with knowledge and skills to protect themselves." Interventions targeting employers need to be developed. Importantly, employers should be made aware of child rights so that at least they will let the CDWs access the surrounding environment and have more time to relax and entertain.

*"At first we need to work with the employers to raise their awareness and then change their practices so that they would at least let the CDWs participate in entertainment activities. Once the employers in HCMC understand child's basic rights, they will arrange work and time for the CDWs to attend evening class and/or life skill training to be organized by local social organisations".*

It is essential to provide life skill training for the children. Such training can be organized in their home land, prior to their departure to migrate for work, or at the place where they work. "The children need to be equipped with life skills. The first lesson should be how to define their own value. Secondly they need to learn how to make good judgement so that they will not be easily made use of or lured to doing bad things. In addition, they also need to learn measures to protect themselves."





## Chapter 7. Comments and Discussion



## 7.1 Status and trend of child labour in the form of child domestic worker

Results of quantitative surveys show that there are 2,162 children working as CDWs in HCMC. The actual figure might be higher because:

- Qualitative results revealed that a large number of CDWs are not registered to the relevant agencies or only registered as relatives of the employers. This practice is advantageous to both the employers and CDWs or their families and is the main reason for the figure being underestimated.
- There is no official system to trace and monitor CDWs. Therefore, official statistics only reflect those registered voluntarily and rarely by the employers and the cases reported by the abused CDWs.

Interviewed representatives of relevant government agencies perceived that child domestic work is on the rise, especially recently. Quantitative survey results showed that about one third of the CDWs (32.5%) have migrated to HCMC for two years or more. In addition, a significant number of CDWs (67.6%) reported to have migrated to HCMC for less than 2 years, which will possibly contribute to the increasing number of children engaged in this type of work. The representative of a child based organisation also indicated that there is a shift in the pattern of child labour employment. Previously, most CDWs were only working for the rich households in the city centre. Recently however, many middle-class households also employ children both to help doing house chores and to assist in their work such as small businesses. CDWs, therefore, have been distributed more evenly among the household classes.

Although the sample size was small, it seems that there are more CDWs originally from the Mekong Delta than from other regions. Quantitative data in Table 3 show that the number of children coming from this area has been increasing over time: 14.2% in 2003; 35.2% in 2004; and 44.5% in 2005. Besides, the average age of CDWs from the South of Vietnam is the lowest (at 15.7 as compared to that of those from the central region and central highland at 16.18 and 17.14 of those from the North of Vietnam) and at the same time with the longest history of work. It can be stated that children in the Mekong delta started working earlier than those in other areas.

Results also show that the proportion of boys having parents living in HCMC is 46.2% while that of girls is only 19.5%. This meant that parents/guardians in other cities/provinces tend to send girls more than boys to HCMC to work as domestic workers.

Qualitative results also show that child migration can be in groups or by individuals. Children from the centre and the northern provinces usually migrate in groups of same origins to help and protect one another in HCMC. Proportion of boys engaged in child domestic work is less than girls. This phenomenon reflects the Vietnamese culture where gender affects education, careers, employment opportunities, types of work, and responsibilities for family.

The quantitative and qualitative results show an increasing trend of children working as CDWs in recent years due to the following pull and push factors:

### Push factors:

- Children wanting to earn money to improve family's income.
- Children having to share economic burden with other family members.

- Some families having too many children so that they cannot afford good care for their children.
- Parents wanting their children to have access to better facilities and nutrition at employers' households.

#### **Pull factors:**

- Given the rapid economic development context, more households can afford hiring CDWs.
- More women working and participating in social activities, therefore seeking help for house chores.
- There is no system for management of CDWs under 18 years of age without guardianship of parents.
- Children can find a job through the information from relatives, friends, and employers.
- The enticement from relatives and friends who have involved in this type of work.

## **7.2 Risks of engaging in domestic work**

The information, collected during the survey, presented below shows that the chances and opportunities for CDWs not to do domestic work is very low.

- Level of familiarity with this type of work: Among 31% having worked before, 38.7% have also done domestic work.
- Consensus from family members for children to work: More than 80% of the CDWs received information for the previous and current job from family members.
- The family having too many children: A survey on Household Living Standard in 2002 by General Statistics Office showed that the average household size in Vietnam is 4.44, of which the largest average household size of 4.94 belonged to the poorest group. The average household size of the surveyed CDWs is at 5.23, higher than the country average for the poorest group in rural area.
- Poor economic condition of family: The main reason for the decision to migrate for job of the CDWs is the ability to help their parents to improve income (72% of the CDWs said they like to help their parents to earn income)
- Not wanting and not easy to find alternative jobs: 43% of the CDWs do not want to change the current job and 68% said it is not easy to find alternative jobs.

The limited access of CDWs to information from outside is a challenge for them to improve their awareness of the child labour issue/child rights and skills as well as ability to seek help. Due to livelihood need, many children and parents do not want to be approached by the government and the relevant agencies. They agree with the employers not to register the CDWs' temporary residence.

Both parents and CDWs perceive contribution to the family income as a responsibility to shoulder among family members. Some parents do not consider their children as decisive members, so they advance money from the employers or do not allow their children to receive payment directly from the employers. This practice increases the risk of the children being abused and exploited. The lack of awareness of the parents and the family relationship in the typical patriarchal Vietnamese family has limited some of the child's basic rights.

The CDWs of the younger group should be paid due attention by the concerned government agencies for the following reasons:

- Number of CDWs in the older group being aware of the regulated minimum working age for children is twice as many that in the younger group.
- 20% CDWs in the younger group do not know whether their work assignments are appropriate, while this figure in the older group is much lower (1.2%).
- Younger CDWs usually fetch an income of VND 154,314/month lower than that of the older group.
- The proportion of CDWs sick/injured in the younger group (53.3%) is higher than that of the older group (32.9%).
- The ability of the younger group to contact home is lower than that of the older group: 20% of the younger children do not contact home while only 2.4% of the older group do not do so.

### 7.3 Risks faced by children when working as CDWs

Impacts on mental health, missing opportunity for children development, and labour exploitation are rarely documented as these impacts are difficult to assess. However, one can observe positive impacts including the fact that they appear better fed and better clothed. Many parents perceive that it is the opportunity for their children to enjoy better living conditions. However, parents should be aware of the sufferings that these children have to endure.

#### Starting working at under 15

According to Vietnam Labour Code (Article 6), children under 15 years of age are not allowed to work. It is alarming to find that 31% of the surveyed CDWs have started working, on the average, at the age of 13.2 and at the date of survey, more than 15% of interviewed CDWs are under 15. Among them 33.3% (x=5) have worked prior to the current job and all of them are girls.

#### Being undocumented

Another issue found in the survey is that CDWs are not registered by their employers to the local authorities. This is against the law since Article 119, Chapter XI of the Vietnam Labour Code stipulates that employers who hire young workers are required to have separate labour records of the young workers with details of names, dates of birth, work types and results of periodical health check-ups. Being undocumented, these CDWs would be further vulnerable of being exploited or abused and could not receive timely help/interventions by the authorities.

## Working for long hours

The average working time of CDWs is 12 hours 53 minutes/day, 6.94 days/week and 11.58 months/year with no significant difference between the younger age (9-14) and older age (15-17) groups. Furthermore, 11% of the CDWs said they did not have fixed time for break. This shows that children working as CDWs are constantly working or at ready state for work in a prolonged period of time, exceeding the acceptable duration for children/adolescents as stipulated in Article 122<sup>(34)</sup> of the Vietnam Labour Code. Information from the interviews with CDWs also shows that these children have to work for long hours.

One can conclude that the CDWs' fatigue and insufficiency of sleep are due to long working hours. However, it is found that 39% of the CDWs use their break time to sleep. This is an important indicator used in this report to measure the impacts of work on the CDWs' health.

## Being physically and mentally abused

As presented in section 4.4, 38.9 % CDWs and especially 62.5% of the CDWs from the younger group said they at least once had to work when they were sick. 52.8% CDWs reported having been ill/injured during work without being treated. With regard to the children's mental health, 13% CDWs identified in the survey frequently reproached/harassed and 26.7% of them aware of their friends being in the same situation. It is obvious that CDWs, employers and parents are not fully aware of child protection rights.

Information from the qualitative interviews also shows that child abuse in CDWs is common. Mental and psychological abuse is in form of vulgar language, reproach, and discrimination such as not being allowed to participate in family meals or to use household facilities.

Although quantitative surveys revealed only one case of sexual harassment, information from other sources and relevant government agencies indicated that forced labour and sexual exploitation in CDWs also take place. Child sexual abuse and exploitation acts usually take place within the employers households and are rarely exposed outside the households, which explains the non intervention of neighbours and local government.

## Receiving low pay

An average income of VND 454,500/month<sup>(35)</sup> per CDW is considered appropriate by their parents/guardians. However, 2% of the CDWs are not paid and 17% do not receive their wage directly from the employers. The qualitative interviews show that CDWs are considered an exchangeable item of goods between parents and employers when parents received advance payments from the employers and their children work to pay off the debts. This is a way to force children to work without conditions and any opportunities to escape as they do not have money to travel. Therefore, the matter is not only about wages being paid but also the form of payment that increases the risk of children being abused and exploited.

## No access to information, little or no social life, being disconnected from the family

Qualitative surveys show that each employer applies particular rules that CDWs have to obey. Many CDWs, especially the live-in ones, are closely monitored when contacting the environment outside. The CDWs who have additional work apart from domestic chores or do not live in can

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34. Article 122 of the Labour Code of Vietnam stipulates: Juvenile children should not be requested to work more than 7 hours/day or 24 hours/week. The employer can only ask employees to work over time or at night time in some professions and types of work as regulated by the Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA).

35. See footnote 5

have better access to information. Quantitative data show that 78% of the CDWs do not go out during free time. This indicates that access to information of CDWs is very limited.

Quantitative results show that 43% of the CDWs do not seek help when they have problems, 19% do not seek help from nor share happiness with anyone. Only 30% of the interviewed CDWs know other CDWs and 5% of CDWs never contacted home while working away from home, especially those from the younger group (20%). Furthermore, the CDWs do not have days off and do not have opportunities to participate in entertainment activities. Most of the interviewed CDWs said they miss their homes and parents. All of these findings show that these children are being deprived of love and are isolated. The immediate and long-term mental and psychological damage to these children is unavoidable.

Being deprived of rights to education

Risks of CDWs dropping out from school, as found in the survey, is very high. Although 11% of the CDWs are still going to school, the other 89% have dropped out from school. Among those who have previous jobs before the current job, 35.5% reported dropping out of school on the first day of work.

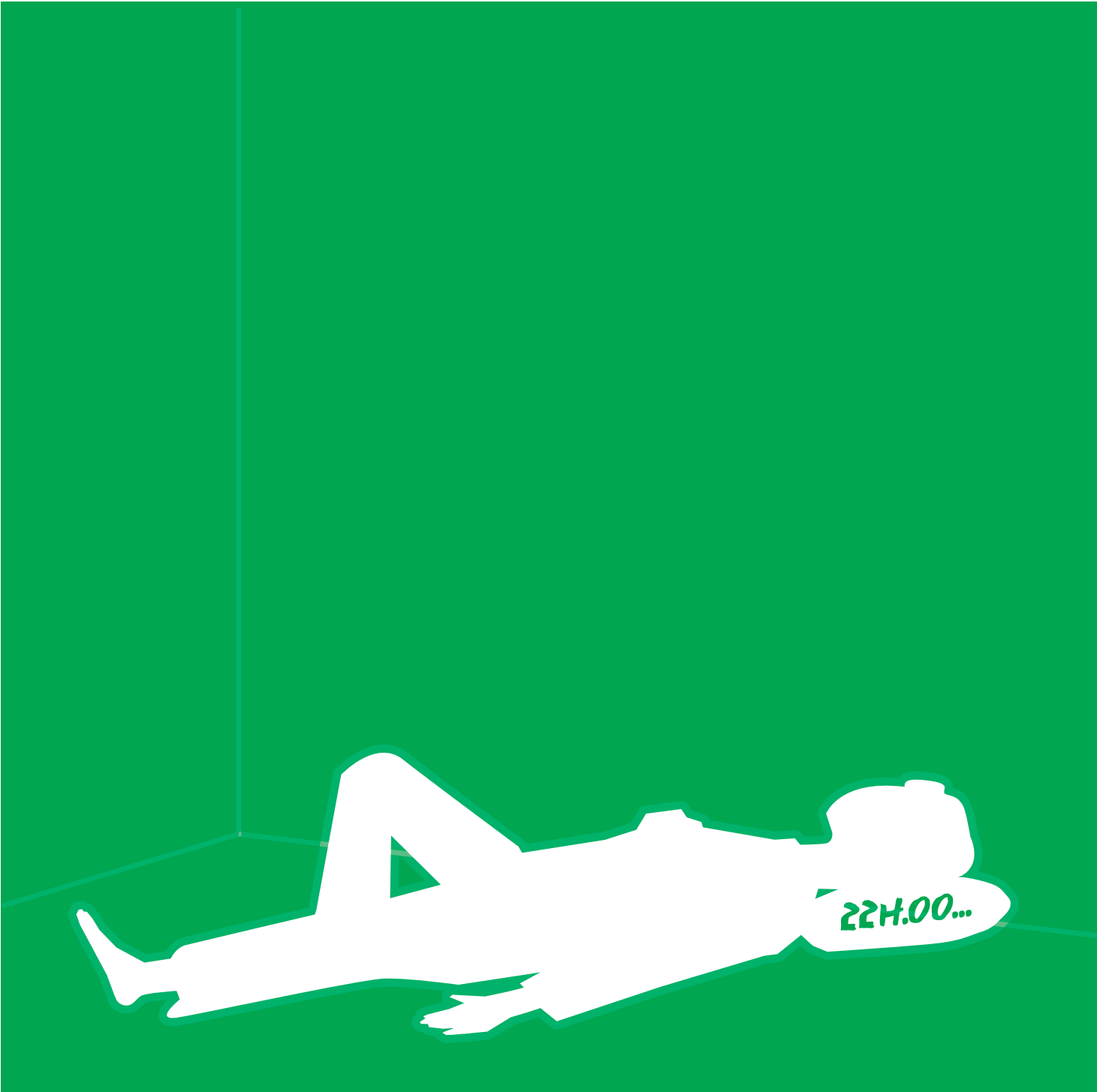
It was also found that 5 out of 8 of parents/guardians thought that if their children want to go back to school, they have to quit their current job. The reason is that the CDWs have to spend most of their time of the day working. Interviews with employers also generated the same results in which 9 out of 10 employers said they would not allow children working for them to go back to school as they would be too tired to work and that they do not have a fixed time to break from work for going to school. These results once again show that the risk of dropping out from school among the CDWs is very high due to the fact that these children have to work in prolonged periods of time.

## 7.4 Responsiveness of social organizations and support services to the needs of CDWs

The employers and CDWs' families are not aware that limiting access of children to information is an abuse of child rights. Some people think that the fact employers try to hide information about hiring CDW shows that they are aware of children's rights but deliberately ignore them. This is also due to the lack of awareness of law and of law enforcement.

The child-concerned government agencies have faced many challenges in protecting the rights for CDWs due to the lack of information on the situation as well as the risks and challenges that these children face. It can be said that no response or efforts have been made to address the needs of CDWs. The only system for management of CDWs at present is the residential registration and requirements for leave permits from the local police. However, this system does not prove to be effective in informing the number of children working as domestic workers as most of the CDWs are registered as relatives of the employers. There are no regulation, policy, or intervention activities to help reduce risks for CDWs.

Few experimental activities have been successfully conducted in the past months in HCMC. However, the biggest challenge of these activities is that it is difficult to approach CDWs. From experience, it is easier to approach CDWs in an unofficial way. An investigator needs to know the time pattern of each CDW to find out when they are allowed to go out without being monitored. Nevertheless, this is a costly method in terms of time and human resources and does not create a protection environment for the CDWs. Hence, many people recommend that education and raising awareness should be conducted before any other in-depth interventions to parents and employers.



## Chapter 8. Recommendations and Conclusion





## 8.1 Recommendations

This survey shows that CDWs in HCMC are extremely vulnerable to being physically and mentally abused and their parents, employers and even the CDWs are not fully aware of their rights. Based on the analysis of different aspects of CDWs' working conditions and related factors that drive their decisions to work, the following recommendations are developed with two purposes: (1) to inform project/intervention design in order to address the issues faced by Vietnamese children working as domestic workers and (2) to ultimately eliminate child labour in Vietnam.

For programming purposes, the recommendations target 4 groups of audience: the Vietnamese (central) government, the local authorities, the communities and the social organisations/groups. However, it is well understood that any efforts and programs to support the family and children would definitely need to be coordinated to achieve effective and sustainable results.

### 8.1.1 Recommendations to the Vietnamese central government and concerned authorities

Socio-economic development strategy should place special attention on the economic growth in rural areas of provinces, especially in areas to help improve rural people's life and reduce an increased disparity between the rich and the poor and between rural and urban areas. This will help resolve social issues - one of them known as child labour. In view of this, it is very important to set up a policy to provide direct assistance to the families of CDWs to upgrade their financial status. Apart from providing support to poor families to generate an income, the government needs to emphasize the importance of children education and how education can change the children's life in the future.

#### Recommendation 1

To enforce the minimum age for working in all sectors, as stipulated in the Vietnam Labour Law, there must be penalties for those who are identified of employing children under 15. Apart from the investigators' efforts, the government should encourage every citizen to identify and report incidences of employing children under 15 and young workers (under 18) in heavy and hazardous work.

Local police and authorities should seek collaboration from the head of clusters of households to actively identify children employed as domestic workers so as to develop strategies for support or intervention.

#### Recommendation 2

To design flexible policies which combine integrated activities in socio-economic development programs at provincial level so as to create employment opportunities for families in difficulties.

To facilitate the access of low income targeted families to financial services (microcredit)

#### Recommendation 3

To reinforce the policy of primary and secondary education for all people. For children from poor and large families, create conditions (eg free books/notebooks, free school uniforms etc) and opportunities to help working children have access to different education systems.

To raise awareness of population on the importance of education through different channels of communication and from central to local levels.

#### **Recommendation 4**

To combat child labour in general and child domestic work in particular, the central government should establish a coordination network of the relevant departments such as education, labour and social affairs departments and other social organisations or community-based groups.

Experiences and lessons learned for operationalising such a network can be sought from the documentation of international and Vietnam's programs in combating child labour, for instance the "National Program for the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour in Vietnam" supported by ILO Vietnam.

#### **8.1.2 Recommendations to local authorities**

Local authorities and the community play an important role in managing, monitoring, detecting, following up and support of cases of CDWs working in hazardous conditions/circumstances.

#### **Recommendation 5**

Local police and authorities should seek collaboration from the head of clusters of households and community members to actively identify and register children employed as domestic workers so as to develop strategies for support or intervention.

To detect and punish employers who have been accused of exploiting CDWs, affecting seriously CDWs' mental and physical health.

#### **Recommendation 6**

Local authorities where CDWs are reported should collaborate with local authorities and other relevant organisations where CDWs' families are living to develop programs to help targeted families to generate and increase their income. This will contribute to improving the families' livelihood, which in turn creates favourable conditions for CDWs to be able to resume their formal education or access to vocational/skills training courses.

#### **8.1.3 Recommendations to government agencies and mass organisations**

With principal functions of protecting rights of families, women and children, government agencies and mass organizations such as CPFC, the VWU, Youth's Union should strongly uplift their active roles to combat child labour as well as prevent and provide interventions for CDWs who are at risks of exploitation or abuse in their native areas (where their families are living) or in HCMC where they are working.

#### **Recommendation 7**

To enhance capacity of outreach collaborators of CPFC in awareness raising of the community and CDWs' families on child's rights, benefits of education and long term negative effects on their children's physical and mental development when working early. This can be done in partnership with the Department of Education and Training and the VWU.

Most of the CDWs come from large families - jobless or unstable employment, low income and limited literacy. Therefore, it is crucial to raise awareness of the targeted families on family planning and other population issues.

### Recommendation 8

(At the place of origin) To collaborate with local authorities and community to capture the difficulties of large families so as to provide them with timely support and counselling in view to reduce risks of parents sending their children to work early.

### Recommendation 9

(At the place of destination) To expand consultation network and other support services (shelters, open houses, vocational establishments) to provide advice and life skills training courses to CDWs. It is necessary to advertise these services through mass media so that CDWs can easily seek and access to assistance when they are in troubles.

## 8.2 Conclusions

Child domestic workers and the phenomenon of hiring child for domestic work are such issues that call for immediate attention and support from the society at large including the government, local authorities and other mass organizations. The numbers of CDWs who have obtained counselling and protection in counselling centres, shelters and warm houses are just the tip of the iceberg. If we do not timely detect the causes of CDWs forced to work in hazardous circumstances and their vulnerability to a variety of exploitation and/or physical and mental abuse - these can result in tremendous impacts on CDWs - future's labour forces of the country. With this report, the research team would like to warn the relevant authorities about the situation of child domestic workers in HCMC. We wish that the above recommendations would support the government, local authorities, other concerned parties and community-based organizations in HCMC in their strategy and action plans development to approach and provide support to this targeted group. We strongly believe that, with strong commitment from the Government of Vietnam in combating child labour, strengthened by the capacity and determination of the municipal authority as well as concerned departments in HCMC in close partnership with local authorities (at lower levels) and community, in the short term, child domestic labour will be monitored more closely and strictly; and in the long term child domestic labour will be prevented and eradicated completely in this city.

