

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MIGRATION FROM VIETNAM TO ASIAN COUNTRIES, 2000-2009:
Process, Experiences and Impact

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Glossary

This brief glossary provides definitions that we use for some key terms throughout this report

Migrant worker (*nguoi di xuat khau lao dong*): Contract temporary migrant worker who migrates from Vietnam to another country under a bilateral agreement between the two countries.

Returnee/former migrant worker (*nguoi di xuat khau lao dong tro ve VN*): A person who was a migrant worker and who has returned to Vietnam. Returnees fall under three subgroups: (1) those who have completed their contract and returned; (2) those who returned prior to the end of their contract – voluntarily or involuntarily – and cannot go back (“early returnees”); and (3) former visa overstayers who are back in Vietnam (“overstayers”). In this study, “returnees” do not include migrant workers temporarily visiting home during a contract.

State-owned recruitment company/agency (*Cong ty xuat khau lao dong*): A Vietnamese government-owned and licensed company that recruits and sends migrant workers abroad.

Pre-departure costs: Costs migrants have to pay prior to their departure abroad. These costs include recruitment fees, taxes, passports, visas, plane fare, training, etc. Aspiring migrants borrow money to pay their pre-departure costs. The need to reimburse loans creates debt **bondage** towards the people/institutions who loaned money to a worker.

Total earnings: Total net earnings during the time abroad. Out-of-pocket living expenses while in the destination country are not subtracted from total earnings.

Receiving countries: In this report, receiving countries refer to South Korea, Taiwan, Japan and Malaysia.

Trafficking : The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation (United Nations’ definition).

Intermediary (*moi gioi*): Individuals who introduce aspiring migrants to a state-owned recruitment company. The intermediary is not an employee of the company but works on its behalf or on behalf of another intermediary and receives a certain amount of money for each worker recruited.

Illegal work/illegal worker: Work without a contract that is not declared to the receiving state. Migrant that does illegal work.

Overstay/overstayers: Stay beyond the validity of the work visa. Migrants who stay in the destination country beyond the duration of their visa.

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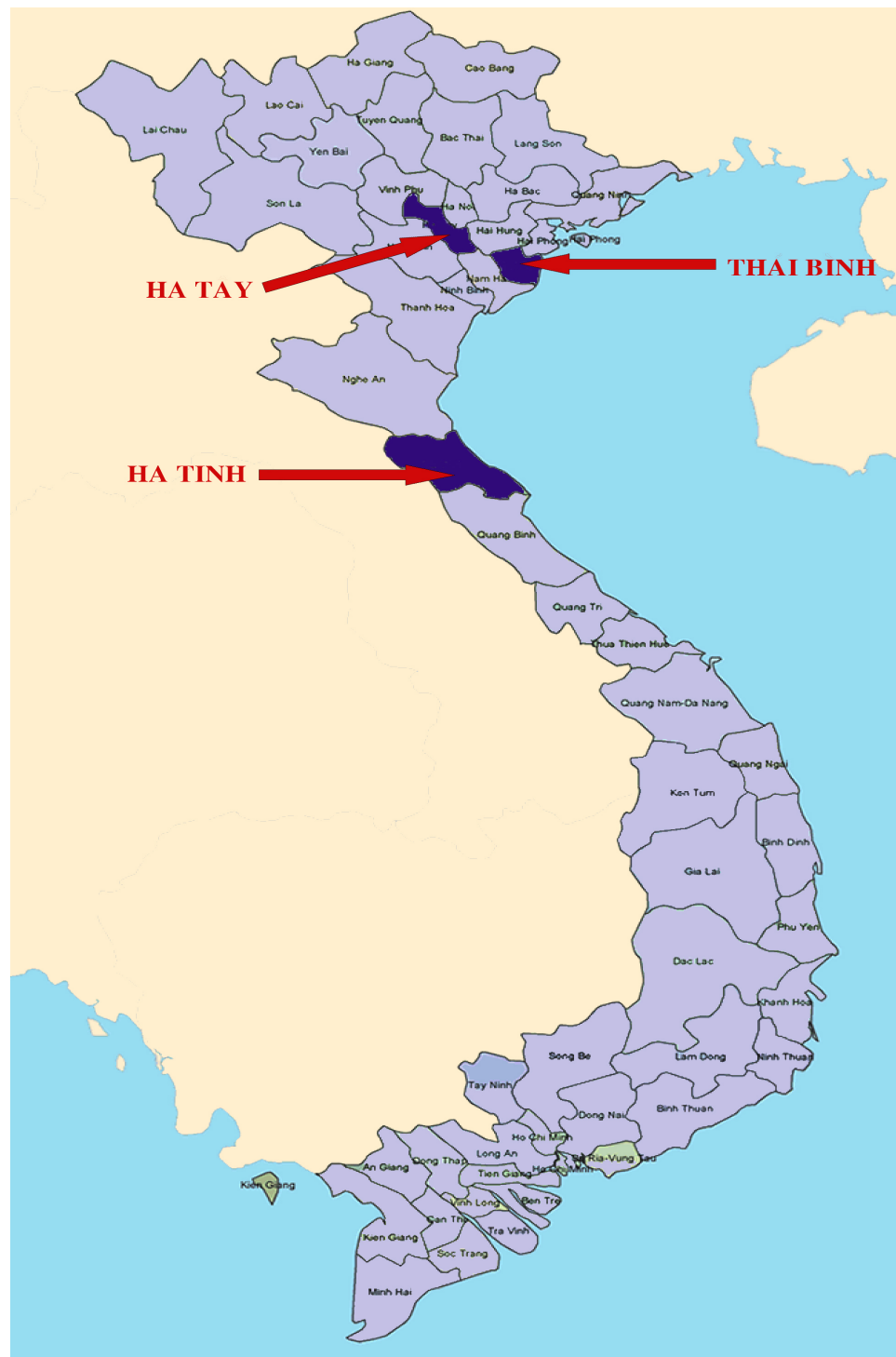
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INTRODUCTION: ADVANCING KNOWLEDGE ON LABOUR MIGRATION FROM VIETNAM TO ASIA

International migration has gone through significant changes in the last few decades with what Castles and Miller (2009) have called “The Age of Migration”. According to these migration scholars, this era is characterized by six major trends.

- (1) the globalization of migration – a process whereby more and more countries are affected by migratory movements;
- (2) the acceleration of migration with increases in the volume of people migrating in all regions of the world;
- (3) the differentiation of migration and the challenges faced by policy makers, as most countries experience various types of migration and migration becomes more permanent;
- (4) the feminization of migration, with increasing proportions of women migrating independently;
- (5) the growing politicization of migration affecting domestic and international political relations and the growing realization that migration issues require some form of global governance and cooperation between countries;
- (6) the proliferation of the migration transition whereby traditional lands of emigration become immigration lands.

The “age of migration” describes Asia remarkably well. This period has translated into increased opportunities and mechanisms for transnational migration that did not exist prior to the early 1990s: a rapid increase in the volume of migrants in the last two decades; a differentiation between workers, temporary residents, wives and permanent settlers; and a delineation between documented residents, those who overstay their visas and illegal workers. Migration within Asian countries, including Vietnam, has increasingly involved more female migrants, particularly if we add migrant workers *and* migrant wives in the count. Both groups of migrants leaving Vietnam for Asian countries have recently come to the fore of heated political debates within and between countries on national security, nationalism and trafficking, indicating new expressions of the politicization of migration. Finally, recent migrants move to countries undergoing a migration transition such as Taiwan and South Korea.

According to the 2005 Migration Report published by the IOM, the intensification of migration within Asia is one of the major migration transitions since the early 1990s (IOM, 2005). Despite large influxes of migrants from Asia who migrate outside the continent, to Canada and Australia for example, more actually migrate within Asia.

This report focuses on the largest international migration flow taking place between Asian countries since the early to mid 1990s: the migration of low-skilled temporary workers from developing nations to more developed nations of the region. These migrants are contract workers who have limited rights and benefits in their destination countries. As foreign workers, they have no legal route to permanent settlement and citizenship. They mostly work in the three-D sectors (dangerous, dirty and difficult): manufacturing, domestic work, construction, agriculture and fisheries, entertainment and the sex industry. Despite many

studies indicating problems with the migration of temporary low-skilled migrant workers in Asia, the hope that this type of migration can promote advancement in developing countries remains high. Indeed, leading scholars and international organizations are promoting temporary and circular migration as a way to enhance socioeconomic mobility for migrants and their families, as well as economic development for sending countries. With recent studies suggesting that remittances have the potential to reduce poverty in migrants' areas of origin, sending countries see temporary labour migration as a strategy to develop their economies.

According to Alejandro Portes, a leading migration scholar, promoting circular migration of temporary workers can yield positive outcomes for sending countries of migrants, mostly because of sustained flows of economic and social remittances (Portes, 2009). To date, circular migration is accessible to highly skilled workers who are granted quasi-citizen rights, multi-entry visas or permanent residence and who earn incomes that allow them to circulate between their home country and the country of immigration. In contrast, manual migrant workers find their passports confiscated, cannot easily change employers and are frequently abused and underpaid. The conditions of their migration do not necessarily nor systematically promote positive outcomes or development for sending nations. As such, the promise of circular migration for temporary workers will not be realized without considerable national effort and international collaboration to recognize foreign manual workers' contributions to the economic stability and development of receiving and sending nations. In this respect, international labour migration of manual workers understood and strategized as a way to promote co-development is a first step in recognizing migrant workers as being more than cheap labour (for receiving countries) or remittance senders (for sending countries). Documenting the present experiences of migrant workers is also crucial in promoting better policies that will enhance the development potential of international labour migration within Asia (Hugo, 2009).

Report focus

In this report, we examine the experiences of migrant workers from Vietnam who have worked in the four major destination countries: Malaysia, Taiwan, South Korea and Japan. Our findings document a decade of labour migration from Vietnam to Asia (2000-2009). We also include some findings from data collected from households with a member still abroad working as a migrant worker.

Our objective is twofold. First, we focus on the experiences of returnees, or former migrant workers, who have completed their migration and returned to Vietnam. Second, we study the impact of migration on two groups: (1) former migrants and their household members and (2) households who currently have a migrant abroad. Throughout the report, we provide a gender analysis for many variables, since one of our project's objectives is to understand migration as a gendered experience.

This report is based on extensive research we have been conducting since 2005. In Vietnam, we interviewed returnees, brokers, trainers, state-owned recruitment agencies, government employees and household members of migrants abroad. We also interviewed migrants in

their destination, particularly Taiwan. We worked with shelters, NGOs and other researchers to document the experiences of migrant workers. What we found contrasted sharply with the positive discourse about the benefits of temporary or circular migration dominating United Nations and academic discourse. Despite some success stories, many of our returnees had failed. Nearly all had experienced some form of deception, abuse or harsh working conditions. Costs paid prior to migration were outrageous relative to migrants' incomes. Recruitment in Vietnam was complex and regulations apparently poorly enforced. The picture was a sad one, and the benefits of migration seemed compromised by a long series of problems encountered by many migrants we interviewed, both at home and abroad.

To take our inquiry further, we decided to conduct a sample survey to document quantitatively the patterns we observed qualitatively. What were the incidences of the experiences we observed? How often did migrants return home without having been able to pay their pre-departure costs back entirely? How much did they have to disburse to migrate abroad? How frequent were problematic working conditions or work injuries? And how did migrants themselves assess their migration experience as a whole? With input from a team of researchers from Vietnam, Canada, Taiwan, South Korea and Japan, we designed a questionnaire to study the migration process, the experiences of migrant workers and the impact of this migration on Vietnamese migrant workers and their families.

The most important findings are presented in this report. The results make a strong case for the urgency of promoting migrants' protection and rights at home and abroad in order to enhance the potential benefits of this migration. For the time being, the overall benefits of labour migration appear to be seriously compromised and need prompt policy attention. These findings concur with Martin's conclusion that to strictly rely on global remittances to gauge the benefits of labour migration is problematic. Global remittances to Vietnam come from a variety of migrants: those who left after 1975 and are well settled in Canada, the US and Australia; some highly skilled migrants working around the world (e.g. after studying abroad); and manual workers working in Asia and the Gulf region. As Martin (2009) points out,

the evolving migrant promotion and protection infrastructure often assumes that development is a natural or inevitable outgrowth of sending more workers abroad, so that remittances can serve as the major indicator of migration's development impact. This may not be true (p. 2).

The focus on the experiences of returnees and of households with migrants abroad sheds light on the uneven outcomes of migration.

VIETNAM AS A SENDING COUNTRY OF MIGRANT WORKERS TO ASIAN COUNTRIES

Compared to other contract labour migrant-sending countries of the region, Vietnam sends relatively small numbers of migrant workers abroad. Both annual outflows and current stocks of international migrants are significantly lower than those in large sending countries, such as The Philippines, Indonesia and Bangladesh. In 2005, for instance, The Philippines sent close to 1 million workers abroad, Indonesia about 400,000 and Bangladesh and Sri Lanka over 200,000 each. For the same year, Vietnam only sent 70,000 to 80,000. According

to the latest published estimates by a representative of the Vietnamese government, there are approximately 500,000 contract migrant workers in the world currently (Abella and Ducanes, 2009). According to data from 2005, 90 percent of these workers were deployed in Asia with the main destination countries being Malaysia, Taiwan, South Korea and Japan. Recent documents stipulate that the objective is to have 1 million workers abroad by 2010 [this is stock, not annual flow]. Contrary to this ambitious objective, recent deployment indicates that Vietnam remains a small sending country, despite its total population of nearly 90 million and its large pool of potential migrants. In 2008, fewer than 100,000 migrant workers had been sent abroad and only 45,000 in the first eight months of 2009. Of the total number of migrants that left Vietnam in 2008 and 2009, approximately 30% were women. Appendix 1 provides national data on deployment by destination countries.

SURVEY SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

This study was conducted in three provinces of Vietnam: Ha Tinh, Thai Binh and Ha Tay (see Appendix 2 for methodological details). We conducted both qualitative interviews and a survey. We collected data from 619 households with a migrant abroad at the time of survey and from 646 returnees (migrant workers who returned to Vietnam), for a total of 1265 questionnaires. The 619 household members with a migrant abroad provided information on the migration of their household member. We include the information on migrants currently abroad in some of the analyses presented in this report. By doing so, we document migration for departures covering the 2000-2009 period.

All migrants

Our total sample of 1265 migrants (returnees and migrants abroad at time of survey) by destination shows about a third of migrants went to Malaysia, close to 40 percent to Taiwan, less than a quarter to South Korea and 5 percent to Japan (see Appendix 3). Sixty percent of the sample was male and forty percent female. Gender varies by destination with Taiwan having the largest proportion of women (61.0%), followed by Japan (41.6%), Malaysia (35.9%) and South Korea (9.6%). Our sub-sample for Japan was the smallest (67 migrants), in line with the smaller migration flow to this country at the national level (see Appendix 1).

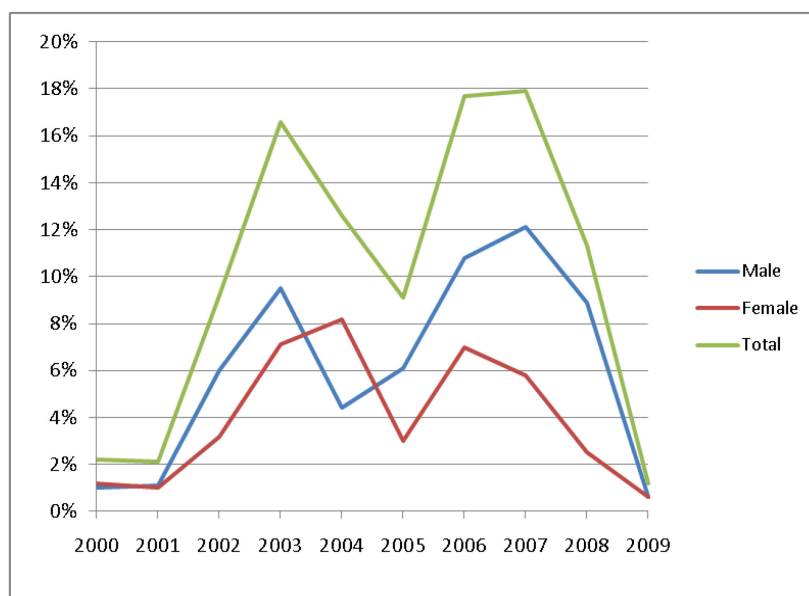
Regarding age of migrants, nearly 85 percent were between 20 and 39 years, with the largest age groups being 25-29 (25.5%) and 30-34 (22.9%). Migrants are relatively young because the recruitment policies of migrant receiving nations favour young workers and international migrants tend to be younger and healthier. Two thirds of the migrants were married (55.8% male and 44.2% female), approximately one third single (24.8% male and 25.2% female) and less than 3 percent were divorced/separated or widowed. It is notable that 85 percent of the divorced/separated migrants were females.

In the destination country, nearly 60 percent of migrants worked as factory workers and 18.7 percent as domestic workers, while the remaining worked in construction (6.8%), agriculture and fisheries (11.8%) and services (3.5%). Taiwan was the destination of nearly

all domestic workers, while factory workers were most frequently working in South Korea and Malaysia. About half the women were factory workers and the other half were domestic workers. Most men worked in factories, in fisheries and agriculture or in construction.

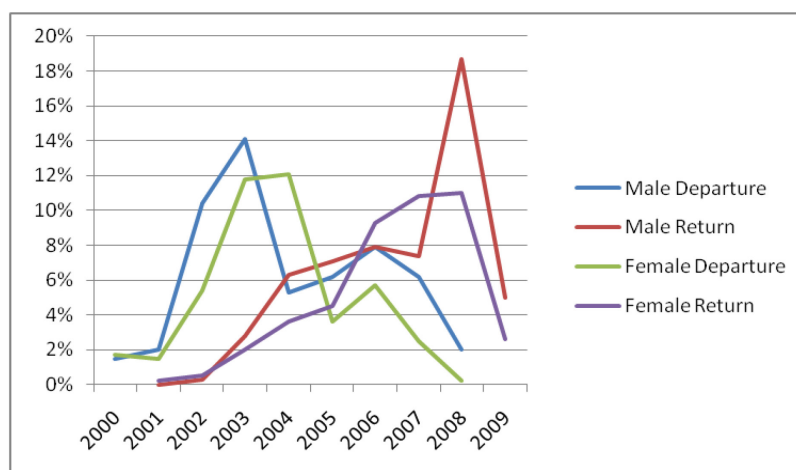
Our total sample includes migrants who left between 2000 and 2009, with most departures occurring between 2003 and 2007 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Sample Characteristics. Migrants' Year of Departure by Gender.



We note a drop in departures around 2005, which corresponds to an increase in pre-departure costs for that year (see section below). Figure 2 shows the distribution by year of departure and year of return by gender. We note that male migration started slightly earlier than female migration. Women, overall, left and returned earlier than men.

Figure 2. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Sample Characteristics. Migrants' Year of Departure and Year of Return by Gender.



Returnees

The sub sample of returnees (n=646) will be used for most of the analyses in this report. Overall, the profile of our subsample of returnees (Appendix 4) is similar to that of the overall sample. Appendix 5 shows the sample characteristics of the current migrants (as reported by family members in Vietnam).

Because the conditions of labour migration have changed over the past two decades, we included departures from 2000 to 2009 only and excluded 10 migrants who left Vietnam prior to 2000. Some migrants left a relatively short time prior to the survey and returned early (prior to the completion of their contracts). For some of the analyses, we only included migrants who left Vietnam in 2004 and earlier (for the analysis of early returns and overstays) to allow time between departure and the event of interest to take place¹.

Using returnees to discuss current labour migration requires caution. The benefit of this approach is that the survey participants have completed the entire migration cycle and can thus provide information on all aspects and steps of the labour migration process. The structure of this report uses this cyclical approach by examining the three main stages of their experience: pre-departure, work abroad and return. The drawback is that returnees had left Vietnam a number of years earlier; therefore, the information concerning the pre-departure period reflects the situation that prevailed three to nine years ago, not currently. To avoid this bias, we included, for some variables, the information obtained from family members concerning migrants currently abroad, thus capturing the stories of migrants who have recently left Vietnam. When using the returnees subsample only, we are depicting experiences of the past. Thus, averages are likely to have a wide variance, since they are calculated using information provided from migrants who left over a decade ago.

Throughout the analysis, we introduce four main variables: gender, country of destination, job abroad and province of departure. In addition, we note that migration outcomes are correlated with time spent abroad. The longer migrants stay abroad, the better they generally do. In Appendix 6 we introduce percentages of migrants by duration abroad for our four key variables. We note that over 50 percent of our respondents had a stay of less than three years duration.

Limitations of the sample

This sample is not representative of all migrant workers who go to Asian countries from Vietnam. Rather, it describes some patterns found in communities sending large numbers of workers in three provinces of Vietnam. The analysis, however, does indicate some key issues with respect to international labour migration flows that deserve further policy attention. See Appendix 2 for a longer discussion of the study limitations.

¹ A migrant who left in December 2004 and had a three year contract should have returned in December 2007. Between December 2007 and April 2009, the migrant had enough time to potentially overstay and then return. For the measure of early returns, we exclude recent departures (2005-2008) because, if these migrants are in our sample, they are very likely to be early returnees. The overall proportion of early returnees in the entire sample was 40 percent, while it was 30 percent when we only kept 2000-2004 departures.

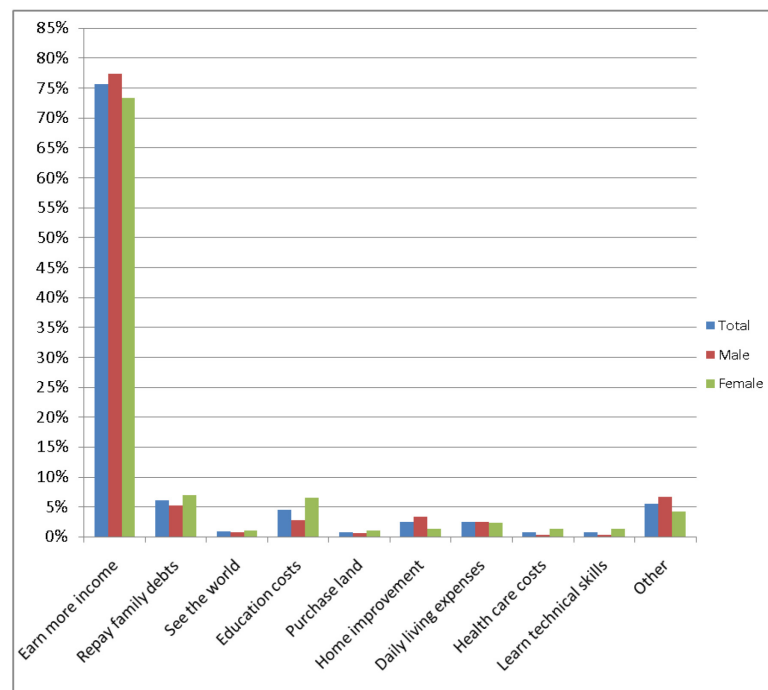
PART 1. FROM DESIRE TO DEPARTURE

Reasons for migration

Not surprisingly, results indicate that approximately three migrants in four declared “the desire to earn income” as the main reason to migrate abroad.

Figure 3 shows that main reasons vary by gender showing more women than men primarily migrating to pay family debts, children’s education costs and health care expenses. More men reported the desire to build or repair their house as the main reason to work abroad. Among migrants who had been to Taiwan, South Korea and Malaysia, the main reason for migration did not differ much from the overall distribution shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Main Reason for Migration by Gender.



Interview excerpt: Reason for migration

Q: Why did you want to go abroad to work?

A: I had many friends who went abroad to work that I wanted to go like them. To be honest with you, I already had a [good] job; I did not really have to go. But I wanted to see a foreign country, so I decided to go.

Q: Money was not the main reason for you to go?

A: I did not go to work overseas for economic reason.

Q: Why did you go?

A: Because I wanted to go abroad to know about life in a foreign country, I wanted to experience the world. Hung (male, Ha Tay province)

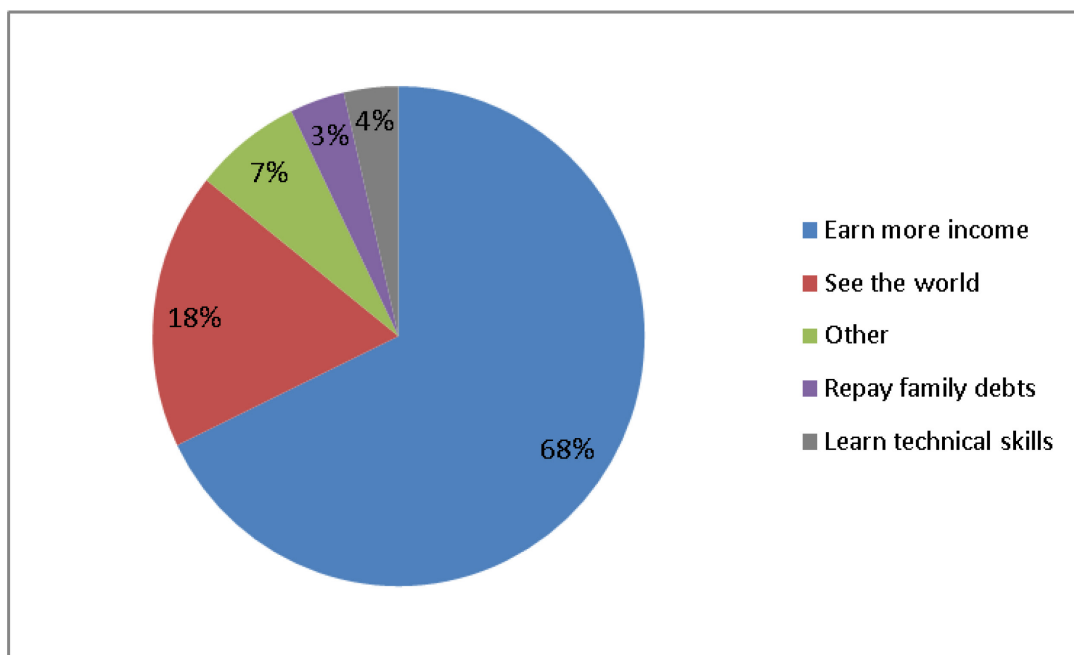
Interview excerpt: Reason for migration

Q: After you graduated from the College of Construction, why did you want to migrate to South Korea to work?

A: Because of economic reasons, I wanted to have capital to do my business, I wanted to go for some years then come back. In my heart, I would have rather stayed home, but for the economic reasons I had to go, so I had to choose between the two options. Cong (male, 28 years old, Ha Tay province)

Results indicate that more migrants go to Japan than any other destination because they primarily want to see the world (18% as opposed to below 1% for all other destinations) or learn technical skills (see Figure 4). Among all migrants who mentioned wanting to see the world, 83 percent had been to Japan.

Figure 4. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Main Reason for Migration – Japan.



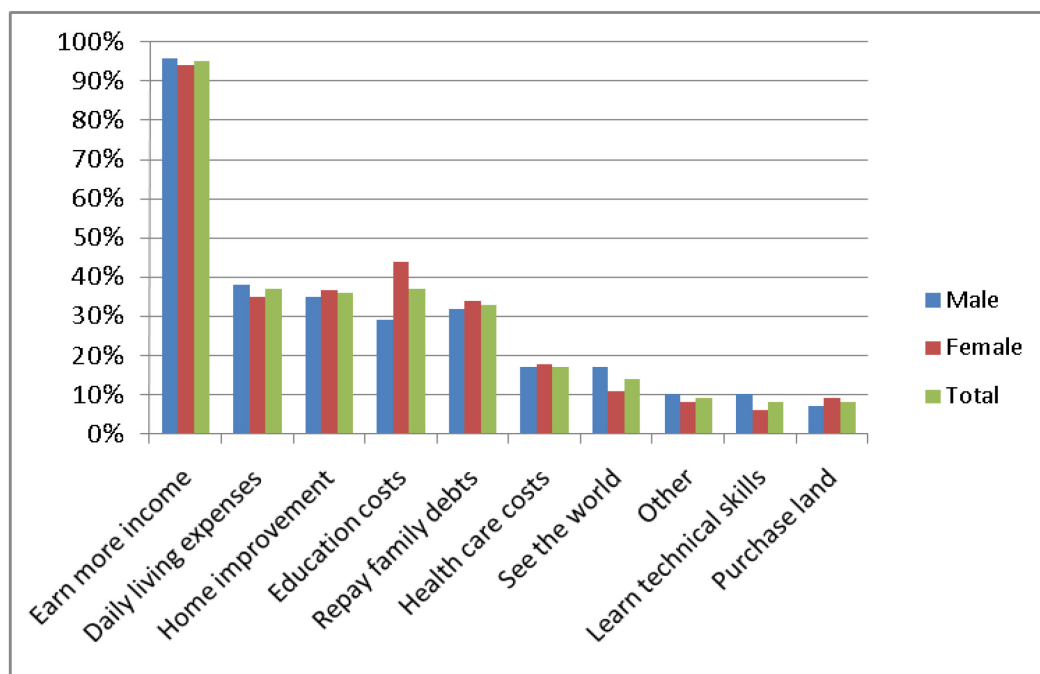
Desire to pay family debt was particularly common among those going to Malaysia. Nearly 50 percent of migrants who mentioned “need to pay family debt” as the primary reason for migration went to Malaysia. Repayment of debts was the main reason for migration for about one migrant in 15 draws attention to the fact that international labour migration is not only a strategy to obtain a higher income but also one to cover debts that are difficult to reimburse with local earnings².

Besides the main reason for migration, which often forces respondents to choose one

² We should note, however, that the debt mentioned may or may not be associated with migration abroad.

reason over the others, we asked respondents to mention all reasons that applied (see Figure 5). This provides a more thorough picture of the various reasons that push people to migrate.

Figure 5. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. All Reasons for Migration by Gender.



Over a third of respondents mentioned the following reasons: paying for daily living expenses, education, home improvements and family debts. The importance given to paying daily living expenses suggests that, for many migrants, migration is a vital family strategy for survival, as the basic needs of many families in the sample cannot be sufficiently met by relying only on their livelihood activities at home. Compared to men, women were much more likely to mention education costs. Education is always strongly valued in Vietnamese society and the majority of families, urban and rural alike, consider supporting children's education a priority. Paying the cost of health care was mentioned by nearly one in five returnees. In Vietnam, patients have to disburse approximately 70 percent of health care costs out-of-pocket; for this reason, remittances become an important source of health financing for migrant families.

When asked about the process of deciding to migrate, nearly all migrants, male and female, consulted with their family members before going abroad. The decision to migrate, particularly abroad, requires serious consideration, as it will significantly affect many aspects of the family's life during a long period of time (typically at least 3 years). Migration research in Vietnam has reiterated that the decision to migrate is often collective and that households see migration as a strategy for allocating family labour across space to reduce risks and maximize incomes. A considerable difference exists between men and women when asked if anyone opposed their desire to migrate abroad for work: 9 percent of men and 23 percent of women said "yes". We see that women's migration tends to raise opposition more often than men's. In the majority of cases, however, international migration does not seem to cause conflict or disagreement within families. Family members

were more often opposed when their relative planned to go to Taiwan or Malaysia, and less often opposed when they went to Japan or Korea, which indicates an awareness of the risks involved in migration to different countries.

Interview excerpt: Family strategy in migration decision

Q: Why were you [wife] the person who migrated, why wasn't it your husband?

A: Because he is smaller than I am. We were afraid that he would not meet the requirements [of recruiters]. We thought that he might not pass the health check. When he tried and went for the health check, he was tested positive with hepatitis B [he could not go]. So I said let me go instead.

Q: In your family, who thought about going abroad to work? Did you initiate this discussion or did your husband?

A: I did because our economic situation was very bad; we were in such hardship. So I said that we should give it a try. We took a chance so I went for training to see whether I could go or not. I decided to go and my husband agreed to let me go if I wanted to. Nga (female, 36 years old, Ha Tay province)

In conclusion, we see that migrants go abroad for a variety of reasons. In line with existing research, men and women have slightly different priorities, with women being more interested in investing in human capital (education and health) and men in material capital (building a house). Results also indicate that workers going to Japan differ from those going to other destinations in terms of their main motivation to go. As seen in the sample description (Appendix 3), migrants to Japan tend to be single, younger and more educated. Their objective is to travel as much as to earn income (in 20% of cases "travel and seeing the world" overrides income earning as the priority). Malaysia attracts people with debts more than other destinations, suggesting that migration to Malaysia attracts poorer families. Province of origin also affects the profile of migrants: migrants from Ha Tinh come from a poorer region of the country and were more likely to go to Malaysia.

Nhung (female, 42 years old, married with 2 children, Ha Tay province)

Nhung's life was very difficult, leading her to suffer from anxiety for many years. Her husband was unemployed; he physically abused Nhung and their children; and he would spend the family's money on gambling and alcohol. In light of these difficult conditions, Nhung decided to migrate to Taiwan in 2004 for a job as a domestic worker. In order to afford the pre-departure costs of migration, she had to borrow more than US\$700 from the bank and from her sister.

After working abroad for just over two months, Nhung's health had deteriorated to the point that she was no longer able to work. Upon her return to Vietnam, she had managed to save only US\$400, which was insufficient to repay her loans. In addition, her husband required extended hospitalization for his health problems. Consequently, Nhung and her family found themselves in considerable debt.

Interview excerpt with Nhung:

Q: At the beginning, when you first had the intention to go, did you discuss it with your family? Did your husband agree to let you go?

A: Most of the times, my husband is very bad ...

Q: Why is he bad? Are you still living together?

A: Yes, only because I have to, I am very miserable.

Q: You mean your husband does not help your family in any way?

A: He often drinks and gambles ...

Q: Does he beat you up?

A: He even batters the children, we are very unhappy. Even his mother and his brothers cannot stop him, and his illness is adding up the misery.

Q: What's wrong with him?

A: Because he drank too much, he's got liver disease and mental problems. Then he's got diabetes mellitus. During the last lunar New Year, we had to send him to hospital, it cost us 8 million VND. He had to stay in the hospital right through New Year's Day. The family brought him back home in the hope that he will change, but it is hopeless.

Q: Is this situation related to your migration overseas?

A: Yes, that was the main reason.

In addition to the reasons mentioned in our questionnaire, other reasons more difficult to capture with a survey instrument have been documented in migration research. For example, qualitative research indicates that domestic violence and conflict can push women to migrate overseas. Some young people might also want to postpone getting married or accumulate savings for their dowry or bride price.

Being recruited as a migrant worker

Networks

Ample scientific literature shows that network ties are crucial in providing access to migration opportunities and in securing better migration outcomes in the country of destination. Network ties provide access to information, support and resources. ***Among surveyed returnees, we see that the majority did not have any network migration ties before they migrated.*** Among respondents with network ties, women and men were equally connected at home with former migrants, with about 25 percent knowing one former migrant and about 20 percent knowing two or more. Slightly more women (57.5%) than men (54.0%) did not know any former migrant at all. Gender differences emerge more clearly in networks abroad. Before leaving, 66.3 percent of men did not know anyone in the

country of destination, as opposed to 73.9 percent of women. The remaining knew one person or more.

Beyond “knowing someone” (returnee or someone abroad), it is relevant to ask whether these ties were useful to the migrant. Overall, women communicated with someone who had returned more often than men; once in their destination, it is men that contacted someone they knew more often than women. This pattern of contacting network ties abroad could be related to occupations; it is more difficult for domestic workers to connect with people they knew prior to their migration than factory workers who are more likely to have days off and meet with friends. Domestic workers tend to form strong ties with other domestic workers in their neighbourhood, whom they can meet while walking an elderly person in a public park or visiting the local health clinic.

Interview excerpt: The importance of networks abroad

*When we lived in South Korea, we had many friends and brothers. If our friends worked in different provinces, we could call each other on the phone; we talked about life and work. For example, I would ask about overtime work, about their salary. Or I would ask them about their working hours, whether they felt tired ... about those who worked in the same province; we often met up on every Saturday afternoon and Sunday, and on different holidays. We relied on the Vietnamese community [for many things]. Those who had been working there for a year and already knew the language would help us. They showed us the way, showed us where to eat, where to live, and helped us to find [illegal] jobs ... it was priceless to meet the Vietnamese community in a strange country. **Hung (male, factory worker in South Korea)***

Network ties before departure with former migrant workers were more frequent among workers who went to South Korea and Japan and least frequent among those who worked in Malaysia and Taiwan. Women who went to Japan were the most likely to have a network tie at home with a former migrant. Migrants most likely to know someone in their destination country prior to departure were men and women who went to South Korea, with more than half knowing at least one person there.

By province of origin, migrants from Ha Tinh were least likely to know a returnee or migrant abroad. As expected, the weaker networks of migrants from Ha Tinh, in part, results from the fact that most migrants from our sample migrated in recent years (55% since 2005); whereas, more migrants from the other two provinces left between 2000 and 2004. This pattern could also be linked to destination, with migrants in Malaysia potentially less connected than in other destinations.

Overall, the weakness of network ties reflects the lack of maturity of these migration flows. We also noted during our fieldwork that many returnees are reluctant to share their stories because they failed (i.e. early return, low earnings, abusive working conditions). Networks

abroad are also difficult to form since most migrants only stay abroad for a few years. Working conditions may also prevent workers from forming network ties with other migrants and with non-migrants in their destinations. Interestingly, during our research in destination countries, we observed that there are many network connections between migrant workers and migrant brides from Vietnam in Taiwan and South Korea. In fact, ethnic businesses started by migrant brides often cater to migrant workers who purchase products or foods from Vietnam.

Recruitment

Candidates for migration must first be recruited by a recruiting agent or labour export company representative. Unfortunately, there are more candidates than available spots, so not everyone who begins the process eventually boards a plane.

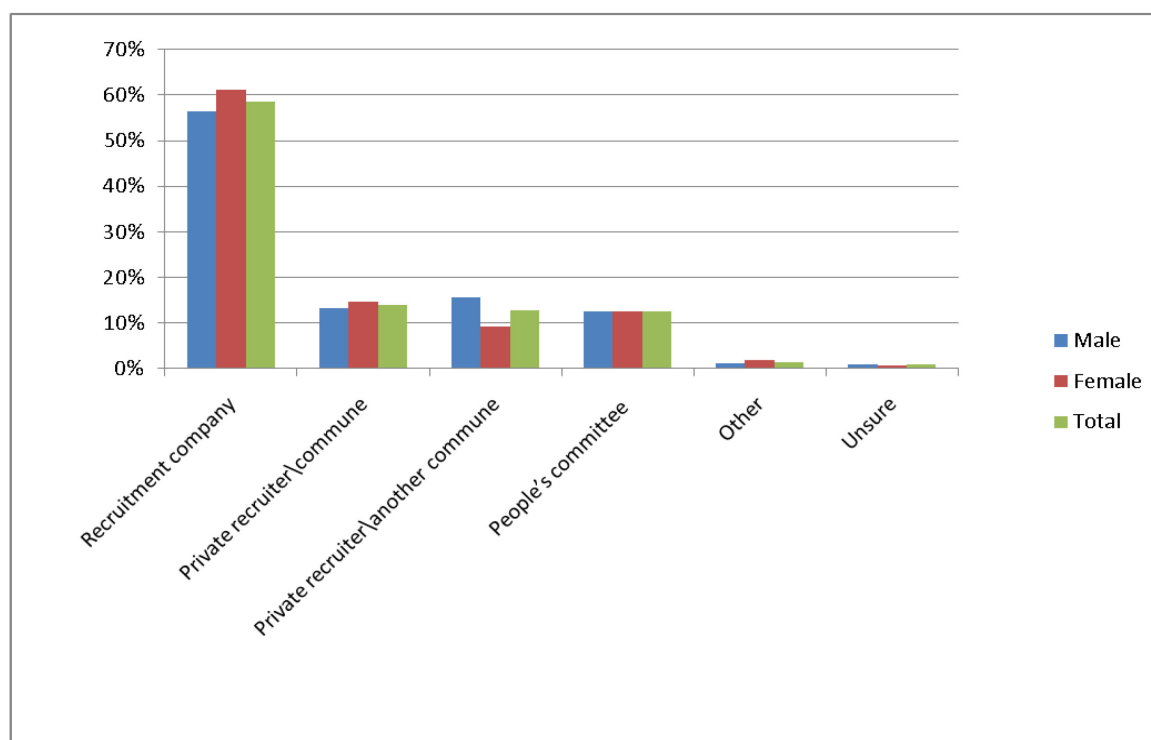
There are numerous actors involved in the recruitment of migrants: from large Vietnamese state-owned companies, to provincial and district level local governments, to foreign recruiting companies that recruit directly in Vietnam, to a multitude of individuals who “go-between” candidates for migration and recruiting companies (Wang and Bélanger, forthcoming). Because most rural dwellers prefer to be recruited at home, they are at risk of being deceived by ill-intended individuals who may act as fake recruiters. In some cases, the recruiter might be legal but his or her link to a “labour export company” might be unstable or uncertain. In other cases, the recruiting company might not need workers at the time a particular worker is considered. Some workers who begin the process are not selected due to individual matters such as health problems (for instance, a hepatitis B diagnosis) or lack of skills. Ultimately, regardless of the outcome, the multiple layers of “introducers” have the effect of increasing the money paid by migrants prior to departure. “Who gets to go” and “through which channel” are important questions that shed light on the dynamics of labour migration from Vietnam.

The most important step in the process of realizing one’s desire to work abroad is to contact a broker or labour export company in Vietnam. Figure 6 shows the distribution of “official contacts” made by respondents. “First official contacts” are actors who actually have the power to recruit workers, as opposed to a relative who would introduce the person to a recruiting agent. We see that most returnees (58%) surveyed were in contact (or put in contact through someone else) with the representative of a labour export company. The others went through the People’s committee of their commune or district (13%) or private recruiters from either their commune (14%) or another commune (13%). The distribution for men and women was very similar, but more men tended to be recruited by a private recruiter from another commune than women (16% of men as opposed to 9% of women).

Seventy percent of our respondents were introduced to their official contact by someone.

The remaining thirty percent said that they connected with the first official contact themselves, without being introduced by a third party. Among those who were introduced by a third party, the following categories of individuals were mentioned: household member (9%), relative (8%), friend or co-worker (12%), neighbour (7%), people from the same commune (16%), people from another commune (11%) and local officials (11%).

Figure 6. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Migrants' First Contact in Recruitment Stage.



The issue of recruitment requires closer attention. The multiple actors involved and the difficulties workers face in assessing who they are dealing with put many at risk for deception, abuse and trafficking. Our interview data were particularly revealing of such problems.

Contracts and visas

Information on work contract signatures shows that most workers signed two or three year contracts, which is in line with the policies of receiving countries. Migrants extended their initial contracts in 40 percent of cases. In our qualitative research, a number of participants reported that they had to sign more than one contract during the pre-departure period. In these situations, the worker typically signed a contract when being recruited. Then, a few days or a few hours before boarding the plane the recruitment agency would ask the worker to sign a new contract (some called it the “airport contract”) that generally stipulated different conditions than the previous one they had signed. The second one was presented as the final/revised one and generally included less favourable conditions (for instance, a lower salary). In most cases, workers felt that they had been deceived, but they could not turn back because they had already borrowed a large sum of money to pay their pre-departure costs.

In our sample, 93 percent of respondents signed one contract and 6.8 percent signed more than one (the remaining few did not sign a contract at all), thus confirming qualitative results that this practice was encountered by some of our respondents.

Tuan (male, Ha Tay province)

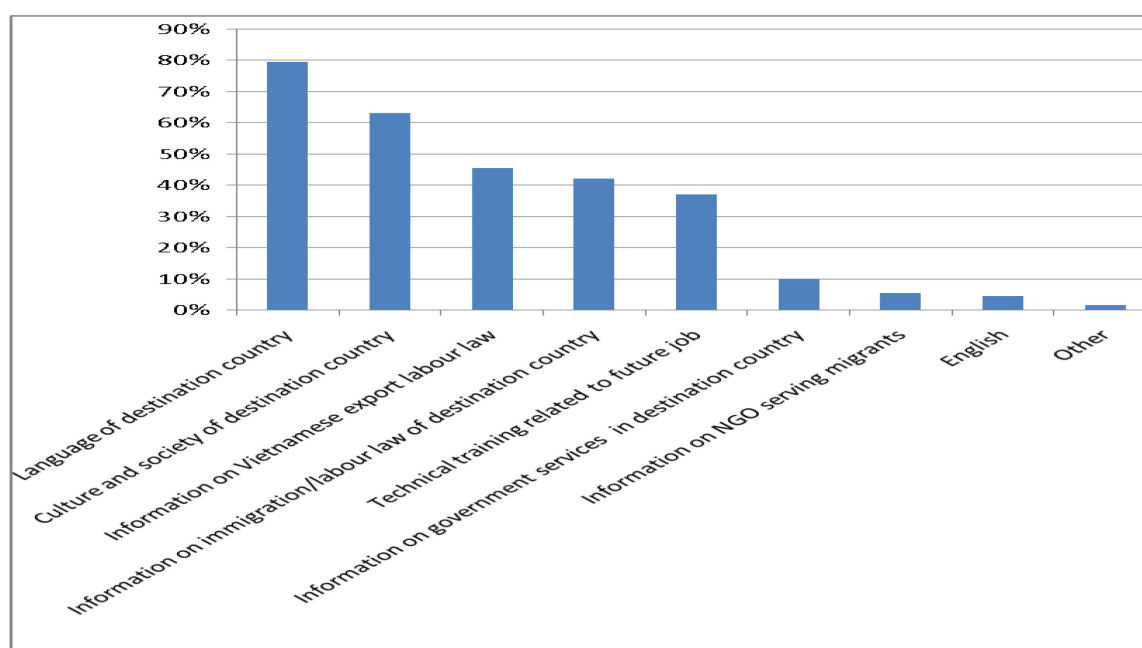
Desiring to work abroad, Tuan contacted a private broker in his district. He paid the broker US\$4,700 to cover the cost of paperwork, his visa, brokerage fees, and other miscellaneous costs. In addition to this sum, the broker regularly required Tuan to pay incidental costs associated with intermediaries involved in his recruitment, without ever providing invoices or receipts. Tuan also paid more than US\$100 for language training, but never received the training. The broker asked him to sign several contracts that he was unable to read. Tuan was only told that he would receive a monthly salary of US\$570 and that his food expenses would be covered by the employer. A few hours before boarding the plane, the broker presented Tuan with his final contract, which cited a lower salary and less favourable working conditions than he had been previously told. At this point, Tuan realized that he had been a victim of fraud but felt he had to sign the contract if he wished to migrate. Tuan later heard that this broker was arrested for fraud.

Pre-departure training

According to Vietnamese export labour law, pre-departure training is mandatory and export labour agencies must ensure that workers are trained properly prior to departure. Although the majority of respondents received training, on average 2.6 months, 13 percent did not.

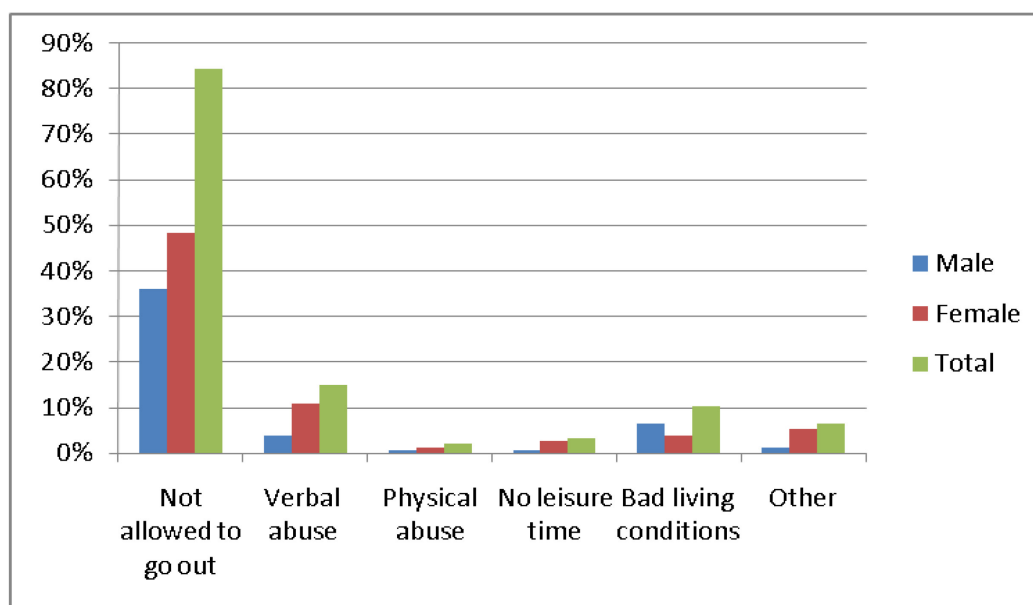
More than three quarters of respondents who received some training (77.3%) felt their training had adequately prepared them for their migration and job abroad, while the remainder (22.7%) felt they had not learned anything during their training. Concerning knowledge acquired during training, the following categories were the most frequently mentioned by respondents: foreign language, culture and society of planned destination, legal information and technical training (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Pre-departure Migration Training – Knowledge Acquired.



Our qualitative research indicates that some migrants had bad experiences during their pre-departure training. Among our respondents who received training, 72.8 percent did not experience any of these situations, while 27.2 percent of respondents experienced one or more (see Figure 8).

Figure 8. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Migrants who Experienced Problems with Pre-departure Training, by Type of Problem.



The most commonly reported problems during pre-departure training were as follows: not being allowed to go out at all, verbal abuse, physical abuse, no leisure time and bad living conditions. Other problems mentioned included not having enough to eat, not being taught anything and having to go through several training sessions.

Pre-departure costs

In a recent report by the UNDP on Migration in the Asia-Pacific region, Martin (2009) indicates the difficulties faced by Vietnamese migrant workers because of their high pre-departure debt when he writes,

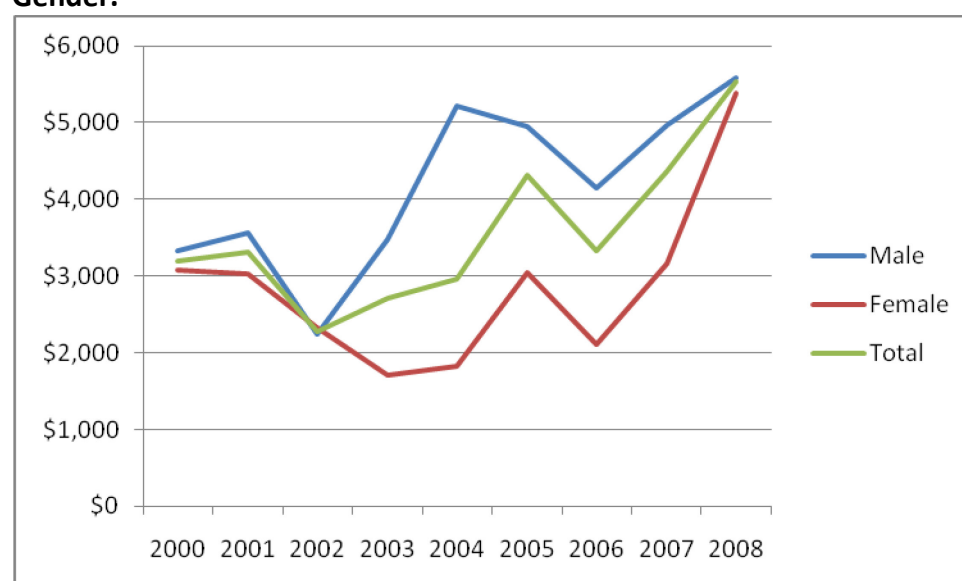
Vietnamese migrants have some of the highest debts when they go abroad, often exceeding the earnings they expect in first year of typical three-year contracts. As a result, up to 25 percent of Vietnamese migrants run away from the employer to whom they were assigned, since they can earn more as unauthorized workers than as legal workers with debt deductions from their wages. In response, the Vietnamese government has proposed punishing runaway workers when they return to Vietnam (Martin, 2009: p. 4).

In this report, we explore the issue of pre-departure costs versus earnings. Based on our results, we concur with Martin in his assertion that pre-departure costs are very high relative to earnings, which significantly shortens the period during which migrants are debt free and send remittances home.

In our survey, we define “pre-departure costs” as all money that candidates for migration must pay upfront, including intermediary fees, plane fare, passport and visa fees, a safety deposit and training fees (including tuition, living costs and taxes during training). Most respondents could only provide an overall cost and did not know the breakdown, although we asked them for details. This reveals that the vast majority of migrants are not aware of the official cost of individual items. Work contracts refer to conditions abroad (for instance, taxes to be paid to the government of the receiving country, cost of health care insurance, etc.). Intermediaries and agencies typically charge a lump sum without providing additional or detailed information. This practice puts migrants at risk of paying higher costs than they should. We include results from 1228 migrants (returnees and migrants currently abroad)³.

Average pre-departure costs were between US\$2,000 and US\$5,600, depending on the year of departure (see Figure 9); costs increased between 2002 and 2005, declined in 2006 and increased again until 2008. The costs for men were almost the same in 2004 (US\$5,219) and 2008 (US\$5,582). The peak in costs in 2005, both for men and women, corresponds to a decline in departures (see Figure 1). Apparently, the sharp increase in costs slowed down recruitment and fewer migrants left during that year. Departures rose again when costs declined in 2006.

Figure 9. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Migration Pre-departure Costs (in US\$) by Year by Gender.

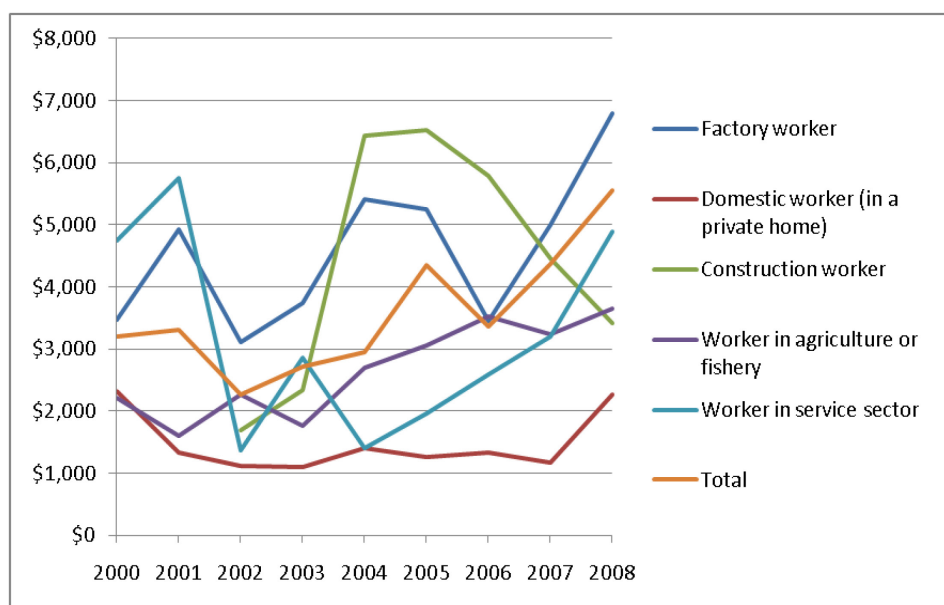


We note that there was a big gap in the pre-departure costs for men and women between 2002 and 2006, but in 2008 the gender gap closed and the costs converged. The increase in costs for women after 2006 could be attributed to Taiwan closing the door to domestic workers. With fewer options available, more women became factory workers, which involves higher costs.

³ In the case of migrants currently abroad, a household member was asked how much the migrant paid before going abroad.

Figure 10 shows the average costs by year by job. We see erratic changes but an overall increase since 2006 for all jobs except construction work (for which we have a small subsample).

Figure 10. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Migration Pre-departure Costs (in US\$) by Year of Departure by Job.



Costs by country of destination show very striking differences that persist over time (see Figure 11). Japan is at the top of the graph with average costs over US\$10,000 since 2004. The cost of migration to South Korea was stable in 2006-2007 (between US\$6,000 and US\$7,000), and the average cost of migration to Taiwan increased after 2006 to an average of nearly US\$6,000 in 2008. Costs of migration to Malaysia are the lowest and most stable over time (below US\$2,000 since 2001).

Figure 11. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Migration Pre-departure Costs (in US\$) by Year by Country.

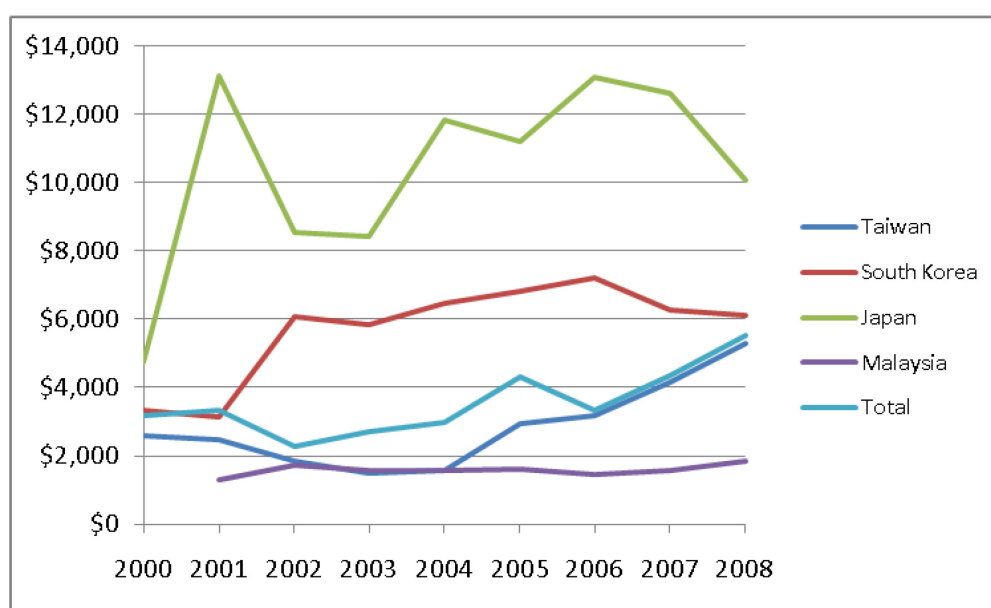
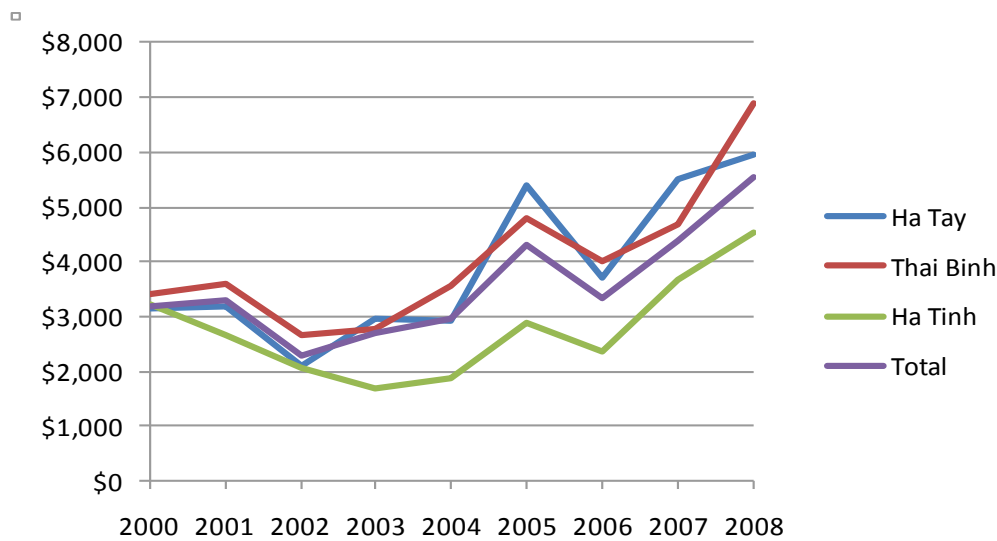


Figure 12. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Migration Pre-departure Costs (in US\$) by Year by Province.



We note important differences in the cost of migration from various provinces of origin (Figure 12). Relative to the costs paid by workers who left from Ha Tinh, workers who left from Thai Binh had to pay 57 percent more to go to South Korea and 50 percent more to go to Japan. Workers who left from Ha Tay paid similar costs as those who left from Thai Binh. The cost for Malaysia was the same, regardless of the province of departure. The variability in costs for all three other destinations by province of origin suggests variations in the recruitment fees embedded in pre-departure costs, since other costs should be relatively similar. Interestingly, the average costs were similar by province of origin in the early 2000s and began to diverge in 2002, with the lowest costs in Ha Tinh and the highest in Ha Tay and Thai Binh. Costs have increased steadily in all three provinces since 2006. If we focus on the last three years (2006-2008, n=584), we have a better picture of recent costs. **Between 2006 and 2008, costs paid by migrants prior to their departure increased by 33 percent, from an average of US\$3,331.31 to US\$5,538.91 (see Table 1).**

It should be noted that standard deviations are very high, indicating the great variability of costs reported. Costs by destination by year reveal a large gap: the three year average for Japan was US\$11,898.94; for South Korea US\$6,534.18; for Taiwan US\$4,419.23 and for Malaysia US\$1,519.45. Costs increased for Malaysia and Taiwan between 2006 and 2008, but declined for South Korea and Japan, although annual data for Japan are difficult to interpret given the small size of our subsample (n=32).

These figures indicate striking findings: the costs paid by workers vary considerably depending on their destination, province of origin and job abroad. Variability by destination seems to be institutionalized by recruitment agencies who officially charge different fees by destination; variability by province of origin, however, needs to be investigated further.

It should be noted that for some migrants our total pre-departure costs include a refundable safety deposit. Because workers must borrow money for this deposit and a refund can only

be obtained upon return and under certain conditions, it remains a pre-departure expenditure which increases their debt. Theoretically, the safety deposit should be reimbursed to all migrants upon return home if they have not run away from their employer during their stay (see below for the difficulties encountered by workers in getting the safety deposit back after being sent home against their will).

Table 1. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Migration Pre-departure Costs (in US\$) by Destination – 2006-09 Departures.

Destination country	Year of departure to work abroad	Mean pre-departure costs
Taiwan	2006	3190.02
	2007	4167.15
	2008	5292.92
	3 year average	4419.23
South Korea	2006	7225.67
	2007	6250.38
	2008	6109.21
	3 year average	6534.18
Japan	2006	13065.58
	2007	12614.75
	2008	10053.67
	3 year average	11898.94
Malaysia	2006	1453.30
	2007	1573.70
	2008	1827.57
	3 year average	1519.45
All destinations	2006	3331.32
	2007	4367.40
	2008	5538.91
	3 year average	4254.16

Migration financing

Nearly all migrants borrow money to finance their pre-departure costs. Overall, they had to borrow the equivalent of 97 percent of these costs, with women borrowing the full amount and men 94 percent. In 62 percent of cases migrants mortgage their residence and residential land to borrow part of the sum, and in 20 percent of cases they mortgaged their agricultural land. Men were much more likely to mortgage their properties than women (72% of migrants who mortgaged property were men). Migrants going to Malaysia and Taiwan were most likely to mortgage their house and residential land. ***The high pre-departure costs translate into heavy debts for nearly all migrants. It puts them in a debt bondage to the people who loaned them money.***

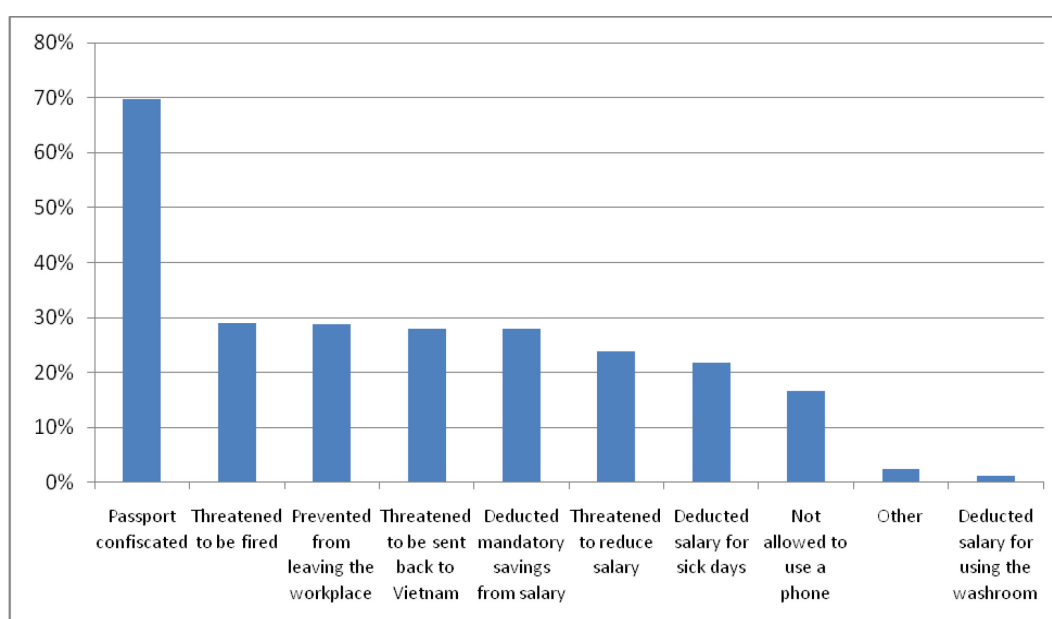
To finance migration, various sources of capital, both formal and informal, some at very high interest rates (between 1 and 2% per month), must be mobilized. Migrants borrowed small amounts from various relatives and friends and, when possible, a large amount from the bank. For over 25 percent of migrants two or more financial sources (i.e. borrowing, savings and selling of property) were needed.

PART 2. NEGOTIATING LIFE, WORK AND EARNINGS ABROAD

Arrival

Most migrants travelled in groups to their destination country. It is notable that 15 percent of migrants travelled alone to Taiwan; whereas, for other destinations only 3 percent did. Travelling alone involves more risk for migrants; most trafficking victims we encountered through our fieldwork had been sent alone to their destination. Large labour export companies generally send workers in groups. Approximately 15 percent of all migrants were given some training upon arrival at their destination, with workers to Japan being the most likely to receive training. Over 40 percent of migrants were not given contact information in case they encountered problems. Migrants to Japan were the most likely to have contact information (80%); approximately two thirds of migrants to Taiwan and South Korea were given such information; and those in Malaysia were the least likely (46%) to receive any. ***The fact that 4 migrants in 10 did not have any contact information in their destination country is alarming and calls for more systematic procedures to insure that all workers have someone they can reach in case they face problems or their rights are violated.***

Figure 13. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Migrants who Reported Unfair Treatment by Employer.



Employers who hire foreign unskilled and low-skilled workers in Asian receiving countries

often treat workers unfairly or infringe on their basic rights. Our survey shows that unfair treatment in the workplace is a common experience among our sample of returnees (see Figure 13).

Interview excerpt: Domestic worker who was prohibited from contacting her family in Vietnam

After I arrived in Taiwan, my employer did not allow me to contact anyone ... they were afraid I would escape so they did not let me go anywhere. If I went to the hospital, I could meet other Vietnamese people. At their house, I could not do anything. The old lady did not let me go anywhere; she did not even let me go out to the street or to the neighbours' house. The old lady is very strict. I had to take care of the old man all the time. Once I was allowed to go to the hospital and met other Vietnamese women. Some of them had been in Taiwan for quite a long time; some were staying with rather easy families; they even had cell phones! I gave them my home phone number, and then they helped me out [by calling my family]. If I had not met them when I took the old man to the hospital for a health check, I would not have been able to contact my family.
Nguyet (female, domestic worker in Taiwan)

Seventy percent of our sample had their passports confiscated by employers or brokers. Research has already identified that confiscating passports and personal identification is a major problem in the region. Nearly a third of migrants experienced one of the following: being threatened with dismissal or an early return to Vietnam, being prevented from leaving the workplace at any time or having mandatory savings deducted from their salary. Over 20 percent of workers had their salary reduced for sick days or were threatened with salary reductions. Over 15 percent were not allowed to use a phone. When interviewed workers reported using cell phones secretly and feared that if the boss found out they would be fired. Overall, negative work experiences were far more widespread among workers who had been to Malaysia and Taiwan, and less so among those who had been to Japan and South Korea.

Interview excerpts: Difficult living conditions

Domestic worker having to sleep on the floor next to the person she cared for:

I shared the room with the elderly lady I was looking after. She slept in the bed, while I slept on the floor next to her... They feared that I would run away; they seldom let me to go out. Nhung (female, Ha Tay province, domestic worker in Taiwan)

Factory worker who had to sleep in a container:

At night, I had to sleep in a container which was only 5 square meters. This container was located next to the road. In the summer, it was very hot while it turned extremely cold in the winter. The employer only provided us (the workers) with two lunch boxes per day. I always felt so hungry that I had to eat noodles instead ... I lost 6 kg.

Figure 14. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Migrants who Reported Negative Experiences in the Workplace.

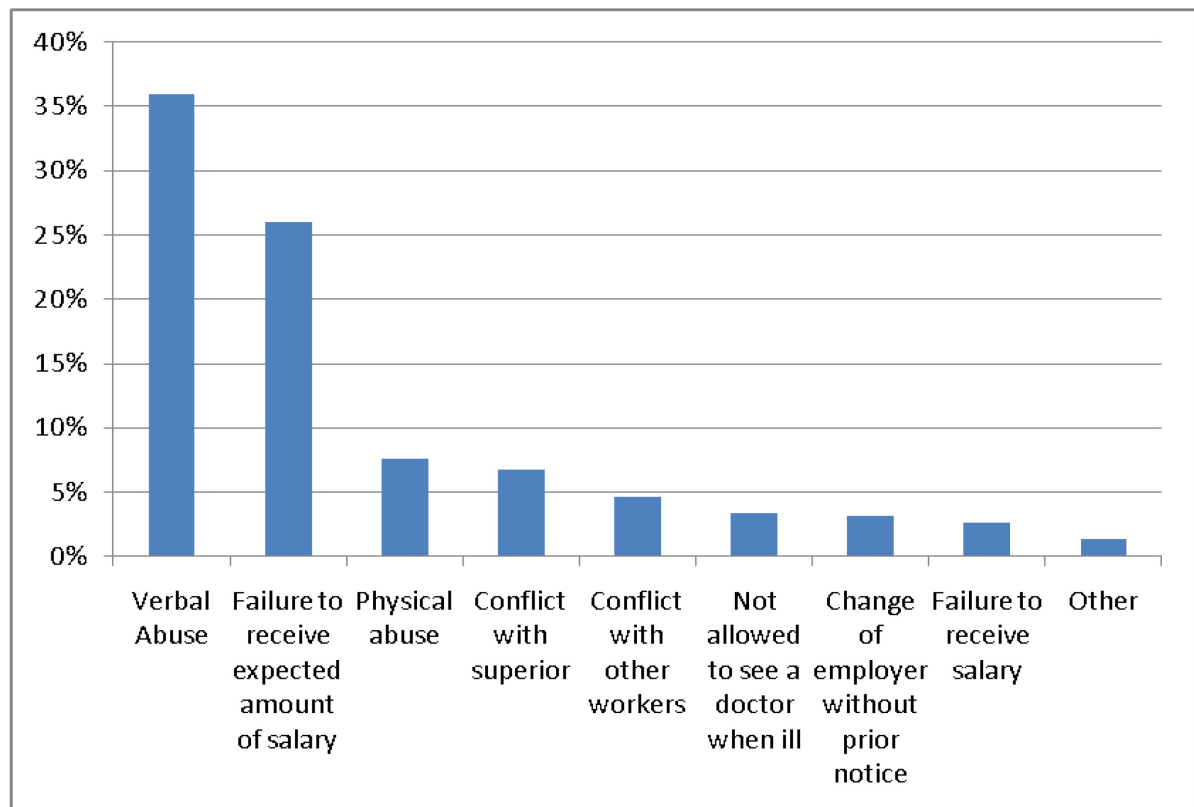


Figure 14 shows the frequency of certain negative experiences. Verbal abuse was experienced by over a third of migrants and failure to receive the expected salary by over a quarter. Less than 10 percent of our sample experienced physical abuse, an inability to see a doctor when ill, having employers changed without prior notice, conflict with supervisors or other workers or failure to be paid. Physical abuse was reported by nearly 8 percent of respondents, and, given that abuse might be underreported, this proportion is relatively high and deserves attention. Physical abuse was most commonly experienced by returnees from South Korea and Taiwan, while verbal abuse was most often reported by returnees from Malaysia and Taiwan. Of the 168 migrants who failed to receive the expected salary, 58 percent went to Malaysia, 30 percent to Taiwan, 9.5 percent to South Korea and 2 percent to Japan.

Interview excerpt: Difficult working conditions

*The manager where I worked was Chinese. We, 15 Vietnamese workers, were taught English prior to departure. Frankly speaking, when working there, we could not understand what the manager was saying. In the first month, we did not know how to do the work; hence, we were scolded and beaten all the time ... If he were kind enough, he would have taught us ... Because we were so poorly treated, we all felt ashamed. **Ti (male, Ha Tinh province, factory worker in Malaysia)***

Overall, men were likely to experience more and varied negative outcomes than women. About one half of migrants had one bad experience and the remaining 50 percent more than one.

When faced with infringement of their rights or problematic working conditions, workers may turn to government services that assist foreign workers, NGOs, other workers, their embassy, brokers or recruitment/placement agencies; however, many workers were hesitant to take any action for fear of being fired and sent back. In our survey, 22 percent of all migrants (most often those in Malaysia and more often men than women) reported having contacted someone when they encountered problems with their employer. When there were problems, nearly 10 percent contacted the Vietnamese embassy, while about 6 percent attempted to reach their intermediary or recruitment agency (in Vietnam or abroad). One third of those who did attempt to reach out to solve their problem generally contacted more than one person or organization. In most cases, returnees had their problems either only partially resolved or not resolved at all.

Only 15 percent of migrants reported having taken part in collective action to address work-related problems. Collective action was most widespread in Taiwan and Malaysia where problems were most frequent. One third of respondents deemed these actions as being successful. We should note that migrants are not unionized in countries so any collective action is informal and migrant-led.

Interview excerpt: Worker not allowed to leave the workplace

Q: Apart from working as a carpenter, what else did you do?

A: In general, I did not have any time to relax. When I completed a job, the employer immediately assigned me another one. For example, during weekends, they asked me to clean the shop. After finishing the cleaning, I was asked to do housework for their family, such as cleaning cars, sweeping the floors, or pulling grass or weeds ...

Q: Did they pay you for the extra jobs?

A: Never.

Q: Why did you not ask for pay?

A: I did ask, but they said the broker should have told me about this. If I agreed about this, I could continue to work. Otherwise, I could go home. At that time, I had no other choice but to listen to them.

Q: You had a day off every week, didn't you?

A: During the first six months I was abroad, I did not know whether cars rode on the road or in the sky. I was never allowed to go outside for six months! I could only work inside the boss's house. I asked to go out to discover the surroundings, but they refused because they were afraid that I would run away. Thuan (male, worker in service sector in Taiwan, Ha Tay province)

Interview excerpt: Workers' failed attempt to claim respect of contract by employer

I worked for 10 hours, but was paid for 9. I worked on Sundays, but was not paid for overtime, which was contrary to the work contract. According to the contract, my salary was supposed to be twice the amount I received. Because of the violation of the work contract, I took part in a collective action only one month after working abroad. We refused to work on Sunday. The manager threatened to fire us and refused to give any food for three full days. Tien (male, Ha Tay province, factory worker in Malaysia)

The number of migrants who had ever feared being fired because they expressed a concern to their employer was 13 percent (no gender difference). Fear of being fired was the highest in Taiwan (55%). Two thirds of migrants received useful advice from other workers or people in the country of destination.

Overall, men experience more adverse working conditions than women, which somewhat contradicts existing literature that emphasizes the vulnerability of female migrants. Because a good share of our female sample worked in domestic work, it could be that the private home can put women at risk but that it can also be protective, while factory environments are more systematically harsh and repressive for foreign workers. Women could also have been more reluctant to report negative experiences than men. We believe, however, that working conditions of factory workers need more research attention in receiving countries (Asis and Piper, 2008).

Mien (female, 29 years old, never married, Ha Tay province)

In 2002, Mien was introduced to a labour export company by her brother and friends. She registered with the company to work overseas, and arrangements were made for her to work as a waitress on a tourist ship in Taiwan for eleven months. Mien paid a total of US\$1,500 (more than 20 million VND) for the pre-departure costs, with US\$971 being paid in fees to the company and the remainder going toward training, transportation and visa fees. The work contract clearly stated that she would receive a monthly wage of US\$250, with a deduction of US\$50 for a brokerage fee. Her salary was to be paid through the recruitment company every three months.

Mien traveled abroad with a group of 47 Vietnamese workers. The workers received their first salary payment during their fourth month of work. However, after that first payment, the workers stopped receiving money. The workers asked the ship owner many times for their salary, but to no avail. Nine and a half months later, it became obvious that the ship owner was experiencing business difficulties. Half of the workers on the ship were sent home prior to the end of their contracts, and some ran away to seek work onshore, but were arrested and forced to return to Vietnam. Mien and the other female workers stayed on the ship, where their work duties were sporadic.

During their second year abroad, almost all of the workers requested to terminate their contracts and return home, but the ship owner convinced them to remain working for him, telling them that he was going to buy a new ship on which they could work. However, he did not buy a new ship, and his business was on the verge of bankruptcy. The lives of the workers became increasingly miserable: they were detained on the ship at all times; they were not being paid their salary; and they did not have enough food or personal supplies. Mien became severely ill several times. The ship owner agreed to let her go ashore for treatment, but she was required to pay for the hospital fees and medicine herself. Having no money of her own to pay for these expenses, she had to borrow money from her co-workers.

In an effort to prompt the ship owner to pay them and improve their working conditions the workers went on a hunger strike for nearly one week. They also alerted representatives of the labour export company, the media and other relevant organizations of their situation. Despite these efforts, the workers' situation did not change. Eventually, they asked the ship owner just to allow them to leave; even without the pay they were owed. Ultimately, the workers were paid for only seven and a half months of work, receiving nothing for the remainder of their second year on the ship. After arriving home, Mien immediately contacted the labour export company, but they refused to bear any responsibility for her ordeal.

Despite variations by country of destination, the frequency of negative experiences, like having one's passport confiscated and being verbally abused, indicates that migrants' rights abroad urgently need to be enhanced.

Chi (female, 36 years old, widowed as her husband died while working on a fishing boat for a South Korean employer, Ha Tinh province)

Unemployed and looking to earn money, Chi's husband decided to migrate for work abroad. He asked one of his Vietnamese friends who was already working abroad to introduce him to the labour export company in Hanoi that he had used to migrate. Chi's husband had to pay US\$3,000 for pre-departure costs, and an additional 30 million VND for a security deposit. Before leaving, he signed a contract that clearly outlined the nature of the work he would be performing and stated that he would earn US\$280 per month. He was not required to participate in a competition or receive any training prior to migrating. His friend who was working abroad taught him some basic South Korean sentences while on a visit home to Vietnam.

In November 2005, Chi's husband went to South Korea, where he was put to work on a fishing boat that was to go sailing the sea in Surinam (South America). He worked on the boat with three other Vietnamese workers. Chi received her husband's salary of 2.8 million VND, paid through the labour export company back home in Vietnam.

During her husband's absence, Chi received occasional phone calls from him. He told her that the crew work arduously all day long, and spent several months at a time out at sea. The ship owner had confiscated his passport and would not allow him to visit home. He was not even allowed to go ashore to see a doctor when he was ill.

At the end of his second year contract, her husband was very ill and wanted to return home. However, the ship owner forced him to stay for another three months. Having no money to pay for his flight home and not wanting to lose his security deposit, he decided to stay. Unfortunately, in his 28th month of working abroad, he passed away at the age of 36 for no apparent reason. The labour export company representative arranged for Chi's husband's cremation in South Korea. Chi's family did not receive his ashes until two months after his death. They did not receive compensation for his wrongful death, but were reimbursed the security deposit she had paid prior to migrating. Eventually, the owner of the ship on which Chi's husband died was arrested.

Chi is now living with her three children and her mother-in-law. She is working as a broker in tandem with her sister in Cyprus Island, where they send Vietnamese women to be domestic workers. Chi receives a brokerage fee of 3 million VND from each migrant worker.

Work and working conditions

Work injuries

Work-related injuries were very common in our sample, with one migrant in six (16%) reporting “ever have suffered from a work-related injury”. Most injured workers were males (82%), working in South Korea (34%) and Malaysia (38%), as factory workers (60%) or in fisheries and agriculture (18%), resulting from the use of equipment (66%). Of workers who were injured, three quarters overall and 40 percent of those working in Malaysia felt they had been attended to appropriately. Only twenty percent of injured workers received some form of compensation, and two thirds of compensated workers were satisfied.

Overall, the proportion of migrants who suffered a work-related injury is alarmingly high and indicates very dangerous working conditions for foreign workers in Asian countries. These injuries could reduce the potential benefits of labour migration for sending countries, families and migrants. Here is additional evidence that foreign workers' rights and safety abroad urgently need to be enhanced.

Nam (male, 33 years old, never married, Ha Tay province)

Nam migrated to South Korea to work from 2000 until 2007, despite having initially signed only a three year contract. He first worked for a lathing company in Seoul for one month, and then moved to Busan to work for another branch of the company. Unfortunately, he suffered a work-related injury, in which his right hand was almost crushed by an auger. At the time of Nam's accident, the supervisor was not present. A co-worker brought Nam to the hospital, where he underwent a 12-hour surgery on his hand. He was hospitalized for two months and required another two years of recovery, during which time he could not work. During this time, he had to go back and forth to the hospital on a regular basis for ongoing treatment. Although his hospital fees were covered by the insurance company, he did not receive any form of compensation or salary from the company during his recovery. Since Nam's injury, the manager of his company came to visit him once.

Three months before the end of Nam's contract, the company reinstated him to perform light work.

At the end of his official contract and finding himself with no savings, Nam felt he had no choice but to stay in South Korea and work, despite now being illegal and having to hide his injured hand in order to be hired. He found a position with a mechanical company that paid him a higher salary than he had previously earned and allowed him to work overtime. He was constantly afraid that his neighbours would notify the police, and so he would limit his life to the workplace, rarely going out or gathering with friends. Eventually, he was caught in a police raid and forced to return to Vietnam.

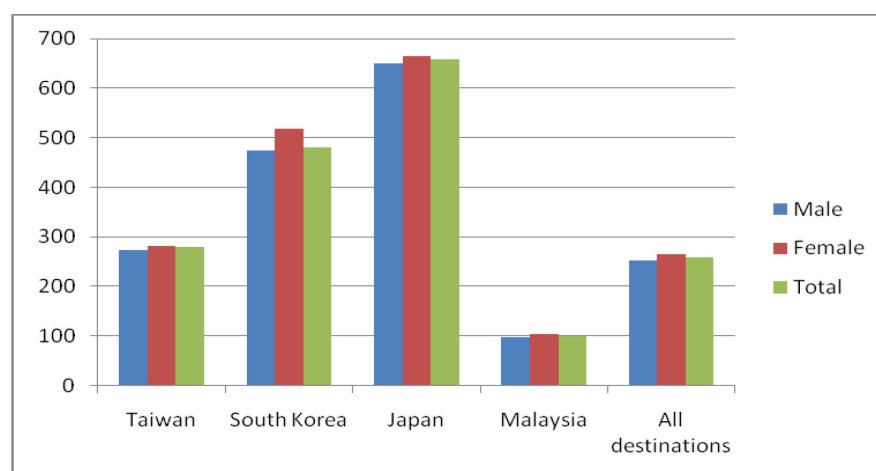
Overtime work

The opportunity to work overtime is essential for migrants. Those who had overtime work were able to repay their pre-departure costs faster and increase their total earnings. In qualitative interviews, failure to have the opportunity to work overtime was often given as a reason for running away to work in the illegal sector, since regular pay was not envisioned as being enough to repay costs in a timely fashion. In their main legal job, 52 percent of workers had the opportunity to work overtime, about one third said they had limited overtime work and 13 percent were able to work a lot of overtime. Japan and South Korea offered the most overtime work and Taiwan the least. Factory workers were the most likely to work overtime (31% had no overtime work) and workers in forestry and agriculture were least likely (94% had no overtime work).

Earnings

Monthly earnings vary by year of migration (first, second, third). Typically, migrants have the lowest earnings in the first year because they pay higher salary deductions in the receiving country. This was clearly the case for Taiwan, as seen in salary statements collected during the qualitative interviews. Earnings are also greatly affected by the availability of overtime work.

Figure 15. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Total Average Monthly Net Earnings (in US\$) by Destination by Gender (2000-2009 Departure).



We estimated an average monthly income over the entire duration of stay for the 604 workers who responded to the questions on earnings (Figure 15); *however, these earnings do not take into account the living expenses that some workers have to pay.* Results show large differences between countries. Some respondents refused to answer this set of questions because they preferred not to share information on income or they were reluctant to reveal their failure to earn money.

Interview excerpt: Different wages between foreign and national workers

We did the same job, but the unskilled Taiwanese workers enjoyed more favourable regulations than Vietnamese workers. For example, if we worked a night shift or on weekends, we did not receive any extra money, but they did. Loc (male, Ha Tay province, factory worker in Taiwan)

Incomes of foreign migrant workers in Japan and Taiwan.

In Japan, workers are considered trainees for the first year of their stay and only receive an allowance, not a salary. Employers must offer room and board at no extra cost. Theoretically, trainees are not supposed to work at all, they are there to 'learn'. According to our interviews, employers did provide room and board to trainees but many hired them illegally to do overtime work at a very low wage. In the first year, most of them actually did the same work as other workers, despite being 'trainees'. In the second and third years, migrants become interns and receive a salary, but they must pay their own accommodation and food costs. Given the high cost of living in Japan, these costs can use up a very substantial portion of their income and significantly reduce their ability to send remittances home. Salaries are not fixed by the government and vary by employer. In Taiwan, factory workers earn the national minimum wage and are generally housed in dorms. The minimum wage was US\$480.00 per month until July 2007 and was increased on July 1st 2007 to US\$ 525.00. Salary deductions include charges for room and board, fees to the placement agency in Taiwan and, in some cases, another fee paid to the Vietnamese recruitment agency. Domestic workers live-in with their employers may or may not be charged for room and board, depending on their contract. Most domestic workers, however, can earn overtime by working extra hours daily or working Sundays. It is not unusual for domestic workers not to have a day off for many months, or even for years. Some prefer not to take time off so that they can increase their earnings; others ask for time off but are refused this request by their employers. Because many of them care for individuals with high needs, they have to be available 24 hours a day.

Why do average earnings in our study differ from official incomes of receiving countries?

- *they take into account salary deductions, which can vary according to the placement agency abroad and the employer*
- *they take into account overtime work*
- *they take into account the salary of workers who worked illegally and overstayed their visas*

Interview excerpt: Different wages between foreign and national workers

One Taiwanese worker who was as skilled as I would receive 2,500 Taiwanese dollars for 8 working hours per day from 8 am to 5 pm. Vietnamese migrant workers had to wake up at 6 am to go to work and came home later, but received half that wage. Kieu Cao Tuan (male, Ha Tay province, factory worker in Taiwan)

Loan (female, 37 years old, married with 2 children, Ha Tay province)

Loan migrated to Malaysia in February 2006 and stayed there to work for just over two years. She had been introduced to a labour export company (VINAFOR) by the Deputy Head of her commune, who required her to pay him 20,300,000 VND for her migration. Later, she learned that, if she had paid the company directly, the cost would have been 18,600,000 VND. Prior to her departure, Loan paid 700,000 VND for a language training course at the commune; however, one week into the course she realized that it was not relevant to her work abroad and consequently quit. She did not have to participate in a competition in order to obtain a position abroad. Two months passed from the time of the training until she departed for Malaysia.

Loan was among a group of 14 female and two male migrant workers leaving Vietnam. The evening they arrived at the airport in Malaysia, there was nobody there to pick them up. They spent two days at the airport before a representative from the labour export company arrived and drove the group to another location, where they were confined for two weeks. Eventually, Loan was assigned a job assembling photocopy machines. She worked 12 hours a day, four days a week. Over six months, she received a net pay of 480 ringgits, after a tax deduction of 110 ringgits (Malaysian currency). She knew of Vietnamese labour migrants recruited by another labour export company who earned double this amount. Loan witnessed numerous work-related accidents in the factory. In addition, she was verbally abused by her supervisor. The workers lived under terrible conditions, including cramped housing and a lack of essential utilities; they did not even have access to gas for cooking. She took part in many group efforts by the workers to improve their salaries and living conditions; however, the workers' collective action did not change their employer's business practices, and the workers were left without further recourse to improve their situation.

Finding that she was working at demeaning jobs and receiving insufficient pay, Loan decided to return home without finishing her contract. She had to borrow 2,000 ringgits from a co-worker to pay for the airfare, and she also had to pay a fine for terminating her contract prior to its completion. During her time abroad, Loan remitted a total of 40 million VND to her family in Vietnam. She is glad to be finished working abroad and has no intention of migrating for work again.

We have to keep in mind that our findings summarize the average earnings of workers over a ten year period. This average amount varied greatly by destination and job. Average monthly earnings for the entire sample were approximately US\$258 (US\$252 for men and US\$264 for women). This average is low due to the inclusion of migrants who were abroad in the early 2000s when incomes were lower. The average was the highest for Japan,

followed by South Korea and Malaysia. Factory workers and domestic workers had the highest averages, and construction workers had the lowest. Workers living in Thai Binh had the highest monthly earnings (US\$320) followed by those in Ha Tay and Ha Tinh.

Ratio of costs to earnings

Since migration costs are high, we must examine the ratio of costs to earnings to capture how much money migrants actually make. We calculated the ratio based on the following information:

- total net earnings for entire duration of stay (this amount does not take into account living expenses, so earnings do not equal savings)
- cost of migration including total pre-departure costs, from which we subtracted the safety deposit amount for returnees who did not work illegally and/or did not overstay (most migrants had it returned to them)

Appendix 7 shows the distribution of the ratios. For our entire sample of returnees, the ratio is close to one (0.93), indicating that overall earnings were only slightly greater than costs. The overall male ratio was greater than 1, which indicates that, on average, men earned less than they paid to migrate. Women have an average overall ratio of 0.65, which means that they paid 65 percent of what they earned in costs.

Figure 16.1 ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Categories of Ratios of Pre-departure Costs to Total Net Earnings by Gender.

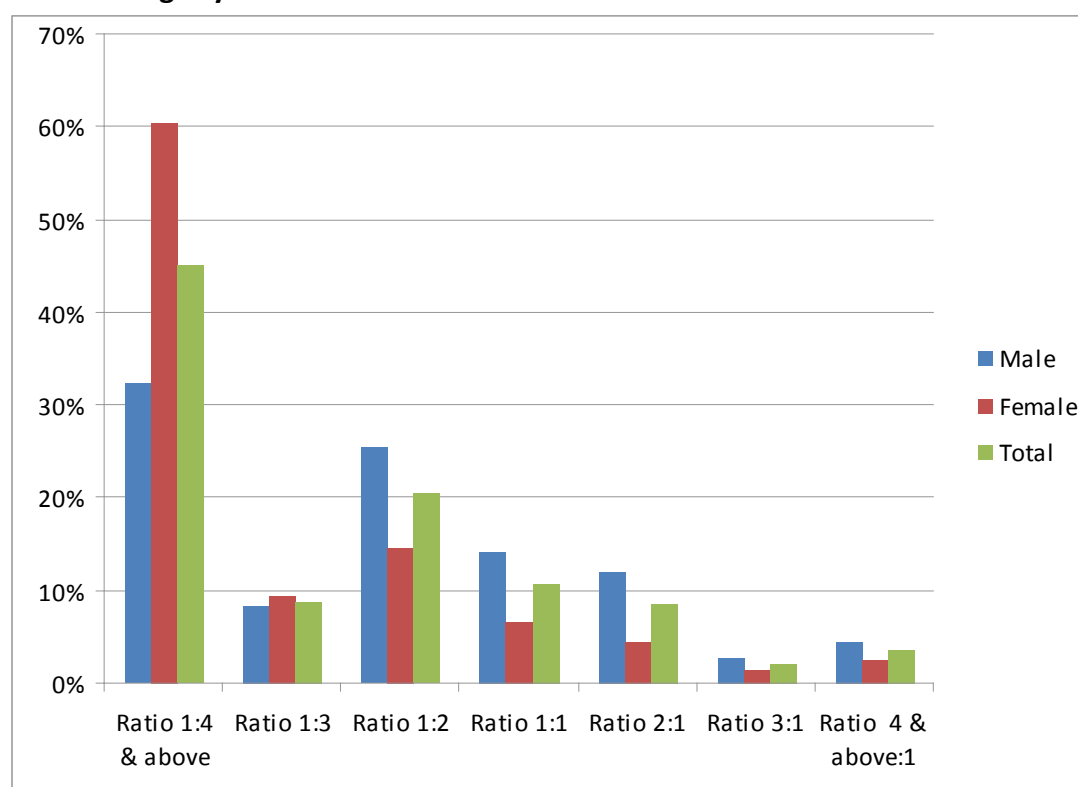
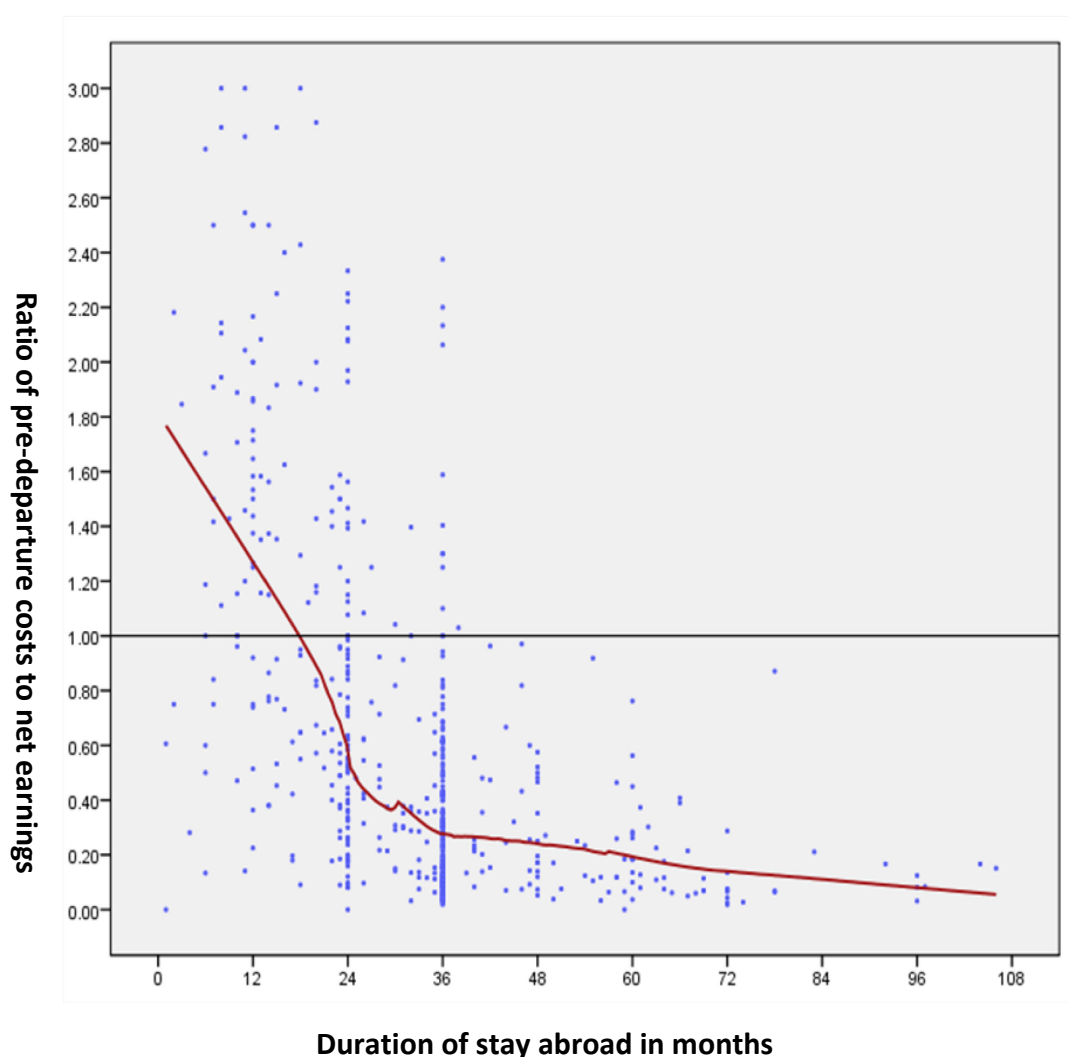


Figure 16.1 shows the distribution of ratios for the total sample. Approximately 45 percent

of our sample had a ratio of 25 percent or above (the costs equalled 25% of the earnings or less). Overall, we find more women than men in the lowest ratio category. In our sample, 25 percent of migrants did not make any money (ratio 1:1) or paid more than they earned (ratios of 4:1 and above, 3:1 and 2:1). The remaining (30%) made more money than they paid, but the ratio was still high, either 1:2 or 1:3.

These figures are greatly impacted by the high rate of early returns in this sample. Figure 16.2 shows the relationship between ratios of pre-departure costs to earnings and duration of stay (see red line on figure): the longer migrants stay abroad the more likely they are to recoup their costs. Migrants located above ratio 1 (see black horizontal line on figure 16.2) paid more in costs than they earned, while migrants located below the line have earned more than they paid in costs. A ratio of 1 means that pre-departure costs were equal to net earnings. It is only beyond 36 months of stay that earnings surpass costs for nearly all workers. Working abroad became more profitable for migrants who stayed three to four years (average ratio of 0.32) and more than four years (average ratio of 0.17) (see Appendix 7).

Figure 16.2 ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Correlation Between the Pre-departure Costs/earnings Ratio and Duration of Stay



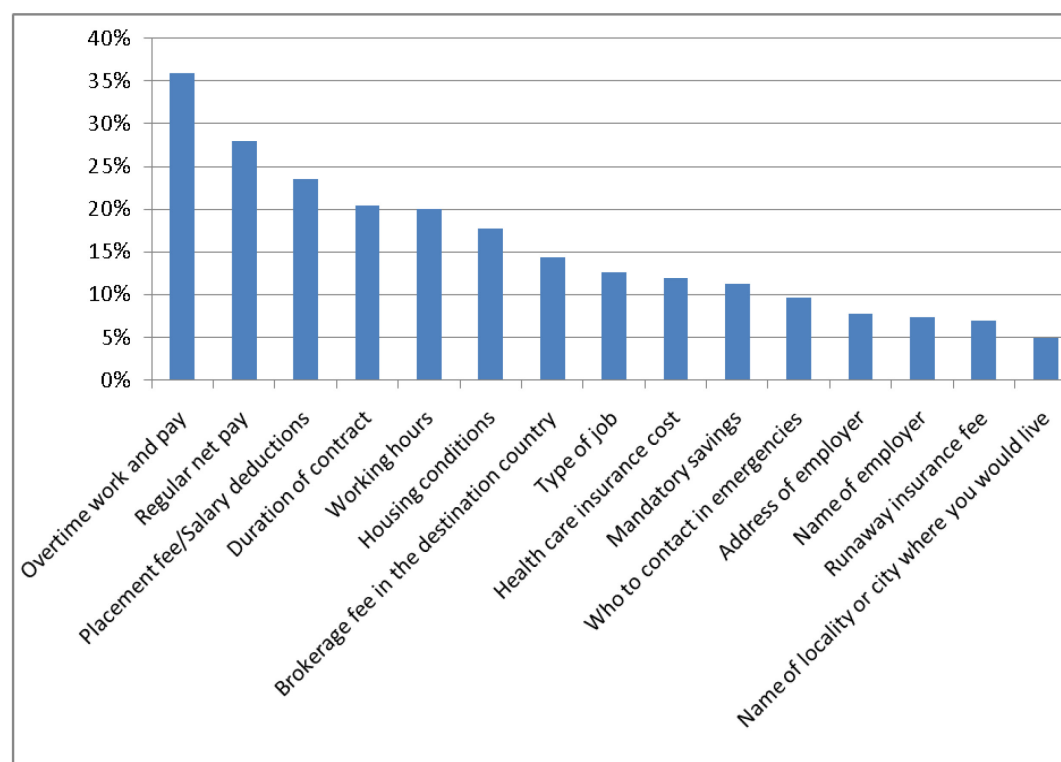
By country of destination, we note (see Appendix 7) that for up to three years of stay the ratio is still approximately 50 percent for Taiwan and South Korea, 14 percent for Japan and 71 percent for Malaysia. The lowest ratio is for workers who worked for four years or more in South Korea (6%). It is alarming to see that by province of departure, the overall ratio for Ha Tinh is 1.64, indicating that, on average, migrants from this sample paid more than they earned. Even workers who stayed for four years or more still paid 33 percent of their earnings in costs. Migrants who returned early (less than one year) paid nearly four times more than they earned.

These results provide clear evidence that, for this sample, the benefits of migration have been extremely uneven and greatly impacted by the duration of stay and destination. With an overall ratio of costs to earnings of 0.93 for the entire sample, we seriously question the returns of international manual labour migration for Vietnam. This high ratio is the reflection of numerous problems, such as involuntary early returns, low earnings and difficult working conditions, combined with very high pre-departure costs.

Information received prior to departure versus actual experience

Figure 17 shows the items for which returnees assessed information given to them prior to departure (on their work contract or by their recruiters orally) was not accurate, relative to what they encountered once they were working abroad.

Figure 17. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Migrants who Reported Discrepancies in Information Received Before Departure and Actual Work Situation.



Interview excerpt: Domestic worker facing abusive working conditions

According to the work contract that I signed in Vietnam, I was supposed to cook for ten people in one family. In fact, I had to cook for more than 18 people. Every day, I had to clean up the mistress's house, and then went to her four sons' houses to do cleaning in turn. Normally, I woke up at 5 am and went to sleep at around 10.30 pm. Therefore, it was quite strenuous. I asked to change the employer, but the recruitment company told me to return home. Oanh (female, Ha Tay province, domestic worker in Taiwan)

The most common inaccuracies involved overtime pay. Firstly, many workers understood from their contracts that they would be able to work overtime; however, once in their workplace, it was not the case. Since they had calculated the ability to repay their costs based on the expectation of working overtime, many felt cheated. Secondly, many reported that they were not paid the amount promised. It was not uncommon, for instance, for mandatory savings, placement fees and other salary deductions not to be mentioned in the signed contracts. Thirdly, about 20 percent reported discrepancies regarding working hours, duration of contract and housing conditions. Between 10 and 15 percent of returnees felt that they had been misguided regarding brokerage fees in the destination country, type of job, health care costs and mandatory savings. Other less frequent, but no less important issues, involved the employer's name, employer's address, runaway insurance fee and availability of emergency contact information.

Migrants' trajectories

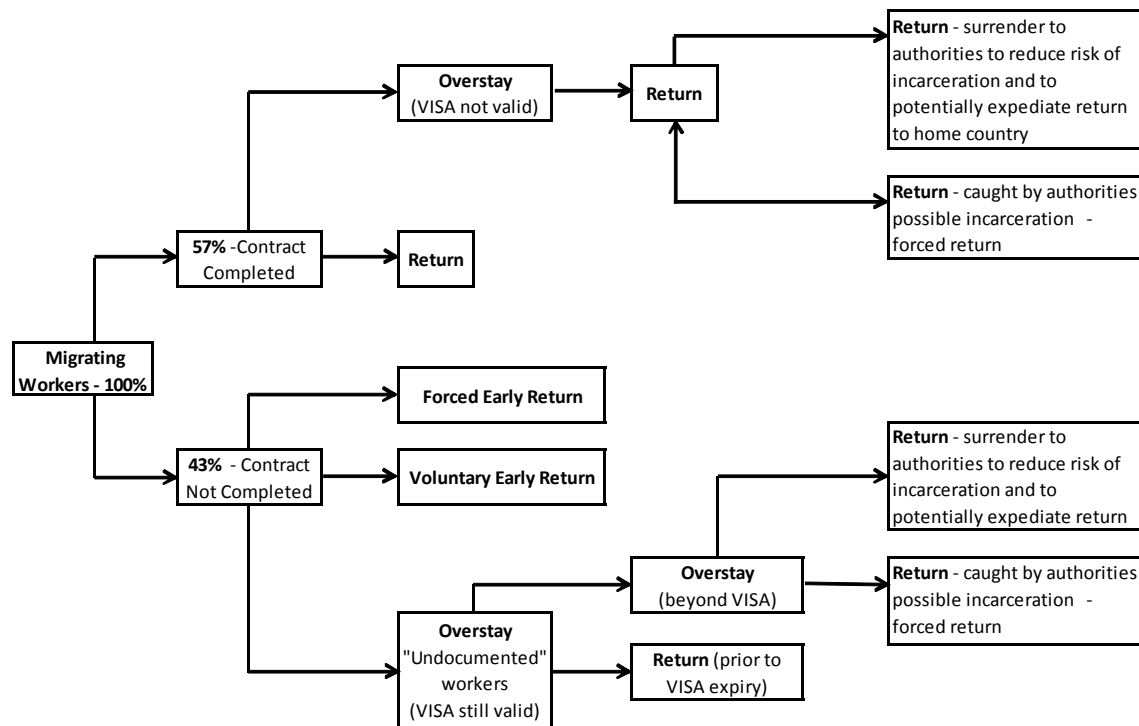
In our qualitative data, we identified various trajectories, but our survey only captures some of the pathways that migrants take between leaving and returning to Vietnam.

Figure 18 shows how, between departure and return, migrants may go through various stages in (1) the labour market (legal vs. illegal) and (2) their legal status in the destination country (documented vs. undocumented). We present results on *early return*, *overstay* and *illegal work*. *Early return* is defined as a return to Vietnam prior to the end of a work contract. *Overstay* is defined as stay in the destination country beyond the validity of the visa. *Runaway workers who are illegal workers* become *overstayers* if they remain in the destination country after their visa expires. Most runaway migrants work in the illegal work sector, although some reported having worked illegally when their visa was still valid and returning to Vietnam prior to the visa expiry date. Illegal work is work done outside the legal labour market regulated by contracts and migrant labour laws.

Based on our qualitative interviews, these outcomes generally resulted from working conditions that were difficult or problematic, such as unpaid salary, less than expected salary, shortage of work or abusive employers. When they realized that their high pre-departure costs would take a long time to reimburse, some workers chose to return home or to run away in the hope of earning more. In all destination countries, an illegal job market

also lures workers with promises of high wages and steady work, particularly overtime work.

Figure 18. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Employment Paths of Migrant Workers.



Early return

Early return is considered an undesirable outcome by migrants, since it jeopardizes their ability to repay their debts and build savings. Our ethnographic data suggest that early return was relatively common. The survey confirms this pattern with a total of 42.7 percent of our respondents returning before their contract ended. Because our survey included individuals who left in the few years preceding the survey, we have very high proportions of early returnees among these respondents. To avoid this bias, we excluded migrants who left during the period from 2005 to 2009. By keeping only those who left in 2004 and earlier, migrants have enough time to complete a contract and return. **Among earlier migrants (2000-2004 departures), 30 percent returned early, thus confirming a high proportion of early returns among this subsample (see Table 2).**

Overall, 30 percent of workers returned early, 59.4 percent returned upon the end of the contract and 10.6 percent overstayed (see Table 2). Men are more likely to return early and overstay than women. While nearly 70 percent of women returned when their contract was completed, only 49 percent of men did. Paths by destination varied with migrants who were in Taiwan and Malaysia more likely to return early, and those in Japan and South Korea to overstay. Taiwan and Japan had the highest proportions of migrants who returned upon the end of their contract. Between provinces, Hay Tinh had the largest share of early returnees and Ha Tay the highest one of overstayers. Domestic workers and service sector workers were the most likely to come home as expected, while early returns were very common among construction workers. Factory workers and workers in agriculture or fishery were the

most likely to overstay their visa.

Table 2. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Characteristics of Migrant Workers By Migration Path.

Migrants' characteristics		Returned home before contract completion (percent)	Completed contract and returned home (percent)	Stayed after contract completion (percent)	Total
Sex	Male	35.7	49.3	15.0	100.0
	Female	24.2	69.6	6.2	100.0
Destination country	Taiwan	29.7	63.9	6.4	100.0
	South Korea	11.9	52.0	36.1	100.0
	Japan	14.3	61.9	23.8	100.0
	Malaysia	40.7	55.6	3.7	100.0
Province	Ha Tay	29.4	56.7	13.9	100.0
	Thai Binh	25.9	65.3	8.8	100.0
	Ha Tinh	38.2	53.9	7.9	100.0
Type of job abroad	Factory worker	25.5	58.0	16.5	100.0
	Domestic worker	27.9	68.6	3.5	100.0
	Construction worker	53.3	42.3	4.4	100.0
	Worker/ agriculture or fishery	38.7	45.1	16.2	100.0
	Worker/ service sector	18.8	75.3	5.9	100.0
All migrants		30.0	59.4	10.6	100

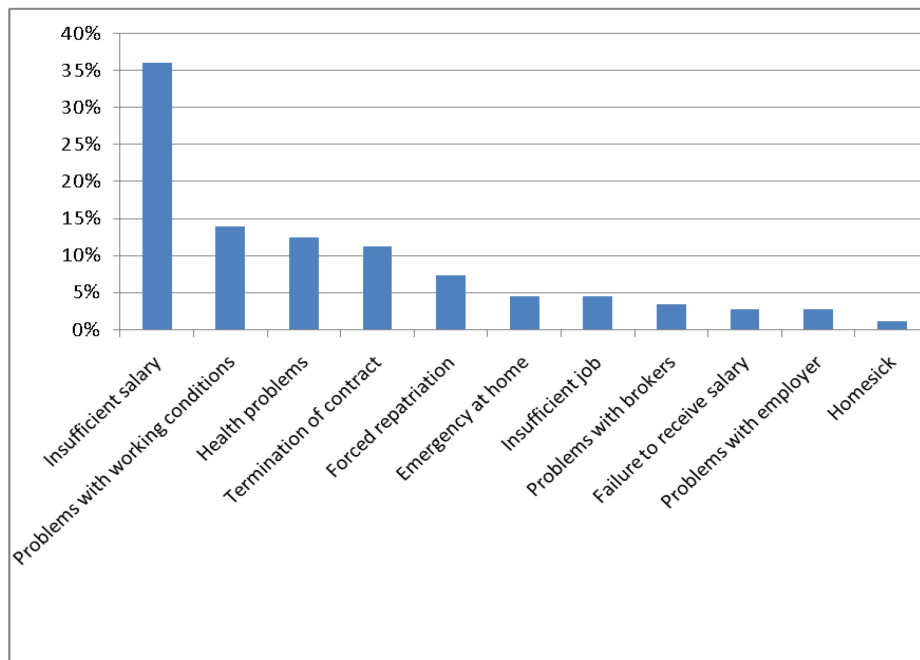
The main reason given for early return and reported by more than one third of the sample was insufficient salary (see Figure 19⁴). Close to 15 percent of respondents reported that they returned early because of poor working conditions, health or simply because their contract was terminated early by the employer. About 7 percent of returnees said they had been repatriated by force. All mentioned reasons are shown in Figure 19. ***Overall, results suggest that most workers involuntarily returned earlier than expected.***

Men faced salary-related problems more often than women, while women were more likely to return early due to poor working conditions (results not shown). ***Salary-related problems***

⁴ This figure is based on data for all early returnees of the sample regardless of year of departure, n=178

were most frequent in Malaysia, while poor working conditions were most frequent in Taiwan. By job, factory workers and construction workers faced salary-related problems most often, while domestic workers reported poor working conditions as being the most frequent reason for having returned early. It is notable that 13 percent of early returnees had suffered a work injury.

Figure 19. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Main Reason for Return Among Early Returnees.



For recruitment and placement agencies, the phenomenon of early return increases profits because they replace early returnees with new workers who have to pay recruitment fees and other costs, which are higher in the first year than in subsequent years. Many early returnees lose their safety deposit because they are presumed guilty of some wrongdoing. Returnees reported that, once in Vietnam, recruitment agencies interpret early return as resulting from dismissal for not following contract conditions, having run away or being engaged in deviant or criminal behaviour in the workplace (from interviews). If workers cannot prove that they are not responsible for their early return, it is difficult to claim the safety deposit. Based on our fieldwork in Vietnam and other destination countries, we found that most early returns are caused by the employers and, in some cases, by recruitment/placement agencies rather than the workers.

These results indicate that non-voluntary early return is a major risk and problem for migrant workers. Early return is experienced as a tragedy for many workers, particularly workers “sent back early” for no apparent reason. Our data show that it takes an average of 18 months of work abroad to reimburse the pre-departure debt; thus, most early returnees still have a debt upon their return.

In our qualitative interviews, we found cases where couples divorced because of unpaid pre-departure costs following an early forced return. For example, a woman who went to Taiwan as a domestic worker was sent back for no apparent reason after only two weeks of work. When she returned home, her in-laws rejected her on the basis that she was a bad

woman who must have done something wrong while abroad. Her parents in-law refused to contribute to the repayment of her loan, and, on their advice, her husband eventually divorced her.

From our individual in-depth interviews conducted in Vietnam and in a shelter in Taiwan (where early contract termination ended by living in a shelter rather than by a return home), we identified the following patterns leading to early return.

- *Trafficking cases where workers are sent on short term tourist visas (without their knowledge) and then sent back by force after a few months of forced labour*
- *Shortage of work in factory/workplace (i.e. no salary paid) and the inability or unwillingness to run away and work illegally*
- *Abusive employers*
- *Abusive working conditions that lead to injuries and mental health problems*
- *High salary deductions that reduce salary to unacceptable levels*
- *Terminations coming after workers complained or organized a collective protest*
- *Placement by brokers into illegal work, despite the apparent legal recruitment process and contract*

Nguyet (female, 44 years old, peasant, married with 4 children, Ha Tay Province, domestic worker in Taiwan, early non-voluntary return)

Nguyet's large family was very poor and did not have agricultural land from which to earn a living. Given these circumstances, she decided to migrate to Taiwan to work in 2005. She contacted a private broker in her commune who later introduced her to an intermediary agency. She paid a total of 14 million VND to the agency for her pre-departure training, visa, health check-up and transportation; the agency did not provide her with a receipt for these monies paid.

In addition, Nguyet paid 2 million VND for a brokerage fee. In order to obtain the money needed for these costs, she had to borrow from the bank by mortgaging her residence. Before leaving, she participated in two months of training, where she was taught rudimentary Chinese language and cooking skills. She signed a two-year work contract. After completing her training, there was a two and a half month lag before she was sent abroad to work.

In Taiwan, she was employed as a domestic worker for an elderly couple. Her main duties included performing household duties and helping the 72-year-old husband, who was paralyzed, with personal hygiene and mobility. The female employer treated Nguyet poorly, always scolding her and confining her to the house. Because of her limited knowledge of the language, Nguyet was unable to communicate effectively with her employers.

One day while she was taking the elderly man to the hospital, she met several Vietnamese domestic workers on the bus. She borrowed their cell phone to contact home; this was the first time she had communicated with her family since leaving Vietnam. The Vietnamese workers warned her that, even though she had signed a two-year contract, she had actually only been recruited to fulfill the remaining four to five months on the contract of the couple's former domestic worker, an Indonesian woman who had been fired for becoming pregnant. They suggested that she run away from her current position and find work in the illegal sector. Nguyet decided not to flee, as she was afraid of being caught by the police. She remained in her position but was very confused and concerned about what she had been told by the other workers.

After Nguyet had been working at the house for four and a half months, a representative of the recruitment company suddenly showed up, forced her to sign two documents in Chinese that she was unable to read and sent her back to Vietnam in the middle of the night without any explanation. She was paid 8 million VND for four months of work, even though she had been promised a full five months of salary by her employers. She was told that her earnings for the other two weeks that she had worked had gone toward taxi fare to the airport and her plane ticket home. At that time, she did not know who she could turn to for assistance.

Upon her arrival in Vietnam, she contacted the intermediary agency, but they refused her any assistance since she could not prove any wrongdoing on the part of the recruitment company or her employers. She filed two complaints with the Ha Tay Tourism Company, but did not hear back from them. She still has not been able to fully repay her pre-departure loan. Her marriage is suffering because of her early return and unsuccessful migration.

Overstay

One migrant in ten surveyed admitted overstaying their visa. Because some respondents might be reluctant to reveal this information, our data likely underestimates the proportion of migrants who overstayed. The average duration of overstay was 29 months. South Korea had the largest share of overstayers (58.2%), followed closely by Japan (41%), then Taiwan (11%) and Malaysia (15%) with the lowest proportions. Although few women overstayed, those who did, stayed longer (over 3 years, as opposed to just over 2 years for men). By country of destination, overstayers in Taiwan stayed an average of 4 years, while those in Japan and South Korea stayed between 2 and 3 years. By job, domestic workers stayed the longest, an average of 4.5 years, which is not surprising since domestic workers can build strong personal networks. In some cases, it is the legal employer that protects the worker once her visa expires and continues to employ her illegally.

Overstayers eventually returned to Vietnam by the following means: 42 percent were caught by the police and sent back, 31 percent turned themselves in to the police because they wanted to return, 20 percent presented themselves to the airport with a return ticket and the remaining 7 percent were sent back by their employer or broker. Gender differences are significant with more men being caught by the police and more women turning themselves in or being sent back by employers or brokers.

All receiving countries have shelters (run by NGOs or the governments) for runaway workers who encounter problems. Only 7 percent (n=29) of individuals reported having been in a shelter for foreign migrant workers, with three quarters being men. Most workers who used shelters were factory workers in Taiwan and South Korea, and the average length of stay at the shelter was 15 days.

Tuan (male, 43 years old, Ha Tay province)

Tuan went to South Korea to work in 2000. He ran away after four months on the job because his employer was paying him lower wages and forcing him to work longer hours than had been specified in his contract. He decided to leave his official job and subsequently found himself working a series of illegal jobs. With the help of friends, he first found alternate work in a remote province. After five months, there were no more work opportunities in that area, and Tuan moved again to work for a recycling company. Unable to handle the hazardous and toxic conditions under which he found himself working, he quit and found work with another employer. After three weeks of work, his employer refused to pay for the labour Tuan had performed. Tuan then moved to Busan, where he worked for a private factory for nearly five years.

The work Tuan performed in the illegal sector provided him much higher pay and more opportunities to work overtime, but it left him feeling insecure and worried. His network of friends helped ease his concerns, helping him with accommodation, job searches and notification of police raids. However, one day while he was out with friends, he was caught by the police and forced to return to Vietnam after seven years in South Korea. He returned home with US\$40,000 in savings.

Illegal work

It is a well-known fact that all destination countries have black labour markets for illegal workers and overstayers. In our study interviews, we interviewed migrants who were solicited on their personal cell phones by brokers of the illegal work sector with offers of good jobs and high salaries. Some workers voluntarily sought opportunities to overstay because they wished to make more money before returning to Vietnam. Past research shows that in some countries, for instance Japan, earnings in the illegal sector are higher than in the legal sector (Yamanaka, 2000).

Illegal workers and overstayers are often called “runaway workers” in destination countries. This problem is closely monitored, although countries respond differently. Taiwan, for instance, banned domestic workers from Vietnam because of the high rate of runaway workers. South Korea seems more tolerant towards overstayers than Taiwan or Japan. When asked if they left their employer before the end of contracts to work in the illegal work sector, 11.7 percent of migrants who departed between 2000 and 2004 said “yes”. One third of those who worked illegally were female and two thirds were male.

Personal networks were the main source of employment in the illegal sector, including friends from Vietnam and in their destination country; some workers found their illegal jobs

directly through brokers or legal employers without having been introduced.

Comparison between legal and illegal jobs

Most migrants (58%) who worked in the illegal sector assessed (overall assessment) their illegal job as being better than their legal one (15% said “worse” and 27% said “the same”).

Figure 20. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Assessment of Illegal Job Relative to Legal Job for Working Conditions, Housing Conditions and Regular Pay.



Opportunities to do overtime work were slightly higher in the illegal job sector, and, when overtime work was available, workers were able to do more hours in the illegal than in the legal job sector. Hourly wage was significantly higher in the illegal sector: US\$3.25 in the legal sector and US\$7.80 in the illegal one.

When we compare the set of responses on working conditions, housing conditions and pay for legal and illegal jobs, we note that workers assess their illegal job more positively on all three aspects (see Figure 20). Despite these positive assessments, interviews reveal the tremendous risks and pressure that workers in the illegal sector have to endure while working illegally.

Thang (male, 45 years old, married with 3 children, Ha Tay province, illegal worker in Japan)

In April 2000, Thang was sent by a labour export company to work in Japan as a trainee. His professional skills and good health were decisive criteria in his recruitment. Overall, the recruitment process lasted three months, but it took another five months for completion of paperwork before he left Vietnam. Thang’s total pre-departure costs were 80 million VND

(US\$5000), including US\$3000 for a security deposit. The training fee and airfare were covered by the recruiter. Thang signed a three-year contract to work in Japan. Upon his arrival in Japan, Thang was given a job in a factory as a carpenter. His monthly net earnings were 4 Man (Japanese currency, 1 Man = 1,000 yen), after deductions of 4 Man for a brokerage fee and another 4 Man for a security deposit. He did not have the opportunity to work overtime. This salary, however, was not enough for him to survive on; after four months on the job, he ran away to work in the illegal sector. His friends helped him find work with a mechanical company, where he was paid a much higher salary of 1,000 yen per regular working hour and 1,250 yen for an overtime hour. He often worked eight regular hours and an additional three hours of overtime per day. However, after working for some time without receiving a raise, Thang decided to quit the job. He subsequently went to work at a garbage recycling factory, where he stayed for another four months. There, he earned 1,200 yen per hour on day shifts and 1,500 yen per hour for night shifts. His earnings totalled approximately 30 Man per month, of which 15 Man went towards living expenses. After leaving the recycling plant, Thang worked numerous short-term jobs for different companies. He worked in construction for three months, where he was told he could earn up to 40,000 yen per month. Although Thang was paid for his first month of employment, his boss disappeared without paying Thang for the other two months he worked.

Overall, during Thang's time in Japan, he was employed for a total of three years, and was unemployed for two years and eight months. In his various jobs, he had sometimes requested a salary raise, but was refused because of his illegal status. During the time he spent working in the illegal sector, he was constantly afraid of being caught by the police. However, late in 2005, he turned himself into the police because he wanted to go home. He asked for a recommendation letter from the Department of Migration and went to the Vietnamese Embassy to apply for a passport. He returned home with US\$30,000 in savings after working abroad for nearly six years.

Illegal workers we surveyed were eventually caught by the police. When caught, 11 percent were imprisoned, 58 percent were sent back and 26 percent were released to resume work. Approximately 50 percent of runaway workers overstayed their visa, and the remainder returned to Vietnam before their visa expired.

Yen (male, 40 years old, married with 1 child, Ha Tay province, illegal worker in South Korea)

Yen migrated to South Korea to work between May 2003 and October 2007. Before leaving Vietnam, he entered into a professional competition and signed a contract to work as a carpenter. However, upon arrival, he was given a cleaning job at a construction site and after three months organized a strike with the other Vietnamese workers to demand higher wages and better working conditions. As a result of their collective action, seven workers, including Yen, were fired. They decided to run away to work in the illegal sector.

His life in South Korea from that point on was very unstable. For two years, he performed various jobs and moved around often, going from a job in a plastic production factory to working in a mechanical factory in Busan, then to work as a driller in Incheon, then finally back to Busan to work in a mill. During this time, he never had continuous work for more

than seven months at a time, often going two to three months between jobs. He eventually found a mechanical job, where he worked for two more years before returning home.

During his time abroad, Yen received considerable assistance from the other Vietnamese migrant workers in South Korea. Members of this network helped him run away from his employer, find new jobs, remit money home and fight for migrant workers' rights. They also celebrated special events with him.

Remittances

In this section, we present results from two perspectives: returnees on sending remittances and household members, with a migrant abroad, on receiving remittances.

Returnees

The vast majority of migrants (92%) had sent money home during their stay abroad, but 8 percent reported that they were not able to do so. Most migrants who never sent money home were in the destination country for less than one year. On average, workers were able to send money home for the first time after six months abroad (5 for women and almost 7 for men). This time period did not vary much by destination (after, nearly 7 months for Malaysia and just over 4 months for Japan). Concerning the frequency of remittances, two thirds of migrants either sent money “irregularly” or “two to three times a year”, and women tended to send money home more often and more regularly than men. Remittances were most often sent through banks, private transfers and brokers.

It is important to determine who receives remittances because it reveals who has access to the migrants' income. Men and women differ slightly in this respect. Remittance sending reflects the patriarchal and patrilocal kinship system. Overall, more women than men sent money to their spouse (60% as opposed to 50%). Parents frequently received remittances: 42 percent from male migrants and 30 percent from female migrants. Migrants sent remittances to their parents when they are involved in caring for grandchildren.

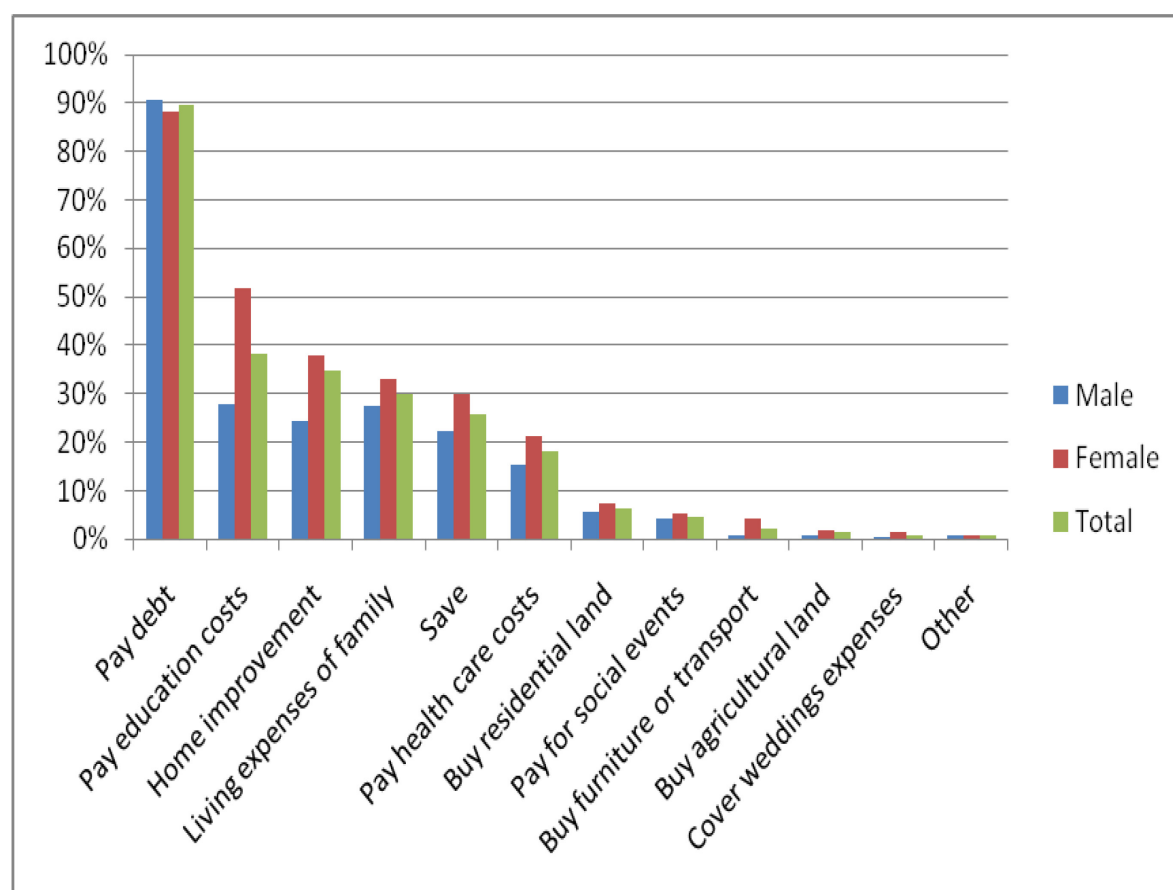
Women had a slightly greater likelihood of sending money to “other relatives” than men (14% vs. 10%). Also, many families live in stem family households and the husbands' parents have more power than the adult children. Our results indicate that remittances are received, administered and spent by more family members than simply the spouse (in case of married migrants) or the parents (in case of single migrants).

Average total remittances sent over the entire time abroad was US\$7,142 with women sending more money than men, on average. As expected, migrants in Japan and South Korea sent the largest amounts and those in Malaysia sent the lowest.

Migrants sent money home for various purposes, as described in Figure 21, with women reporting more reasons than men. The most often mentioned reason for sending money home, reported equally by men and women, was to repay debts. Covering education, health

care and house renovation costs were reported more often by women than men. One woman in five said she worried about how remittances were spent at home, while only one man in ten expressed the same concern.

Figure 21. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Migrants who Reported How Remittances were Spent by Gender by Category of Expenditure.



Households

Data from household members with a migrant abroad at the time of the survey provide further information on remittances. Overall, all households received money from their migrant members within 2 years of departure. During the first 3 months of the migrant's departure 47.7 percent had received money and by the sixth month 80.3 percent. Only 5 families did not receive remittances within a year. The promptness of remittance sending reflects migrants' efforts to support those left behind as soon as they are able, even if it means reducing their living expenses abroad. It also reveals the urgency of receiving money to repay family debts caused by migration costs and also pay for other necessities.

Compared to female migrants, male migrants tend to send remittances sooner. Up to 57 percent of male migrants and about 30 percent of female migrants sent remittances within 3 months of departure. Close to 84 percent of male migrants and 74 percent of female migrants sent remittances within six months. Also, women are more likely to wait until the

remittance is relatively large in value before sending it. We should note that differences between households with a migrant abroad and returnees could differ because migrants are at different stages of their migration.

Overall, we find that more male migrants send remittances home with greater frequency. For example, close to one in ten males sent remittances every month, compared to only one in fifty females; one in every five male migrants sent remittances once every two to three months, compared to only about one in eight female migrants.

About 40 percent of migrants sent remittances whenever they were able. This likely reflects difficulties that migrants face in saving quickly and consistently enough to send home in a patterned way. For a few there may be no real urgency at home or even no attempt to send remittances. Many migrants do try to send money home on a more regular basis: 10 percent of migrants sent remittances once a year; 25 percent sent remittances two to three times a year; close to 20 percent sent remittances every two to three months; and about 7 percent sent them every month.

Money was sent home primarily via bank transfer (74.3% of households), as it is obviously the safest way; however, some other informal forms of transfer with probably lower or no fees are also popular. These include private agencies (17%), brokers (10.7%) and friends or relatives who return home (9.5%). Money was sent primarily to migrants' fathers (35.2%), mothers (24.5%) and spouses (40.5%).

Cumulatively, by the time of the survey, the total amounts of money remitted were considerable. The median value of remittance is about 60 million dong (about US\$3,750). Distribution of remittance values varies widely with a range from insignificant to enormous (900 million dong, over US\$56,000). Dis-aggregated data show differentials in levels of remittance, with concentrations between 20 and 60 million dong; nevertheless, up to 37.2 percent of the households have received over 100 million dong.

A comparison of remittance value and family income provides more evidence of migrants' economic contribution. The mean total income of families is 13.7 million dong a year (US\$860), and the median income, a better measure, is much lower at around 8.4 million dong (US\$525).

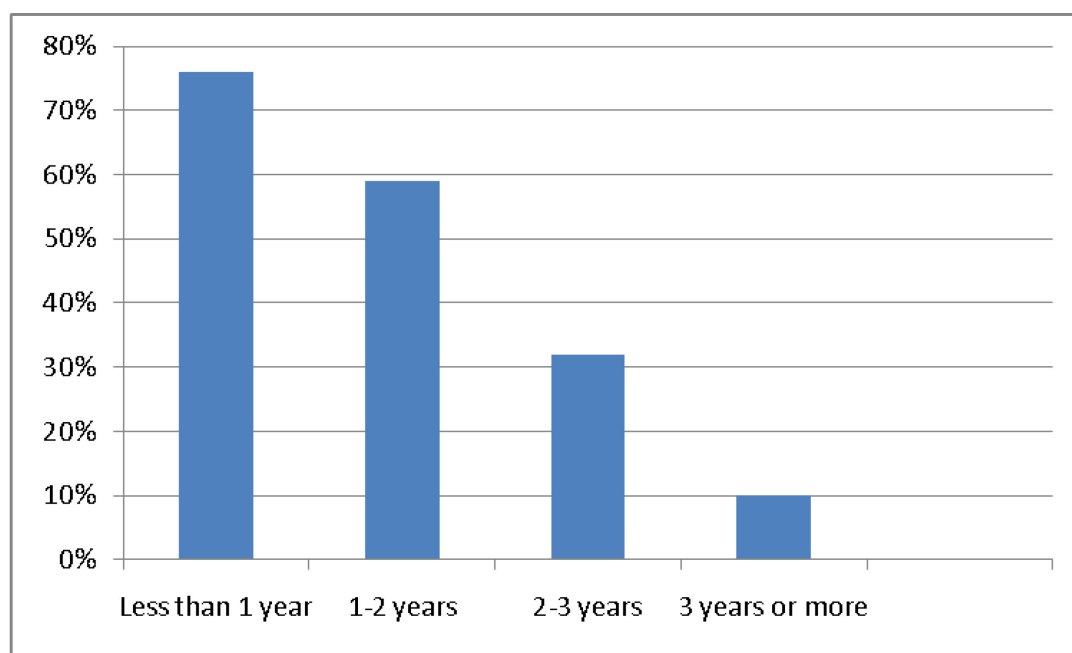
PART 3. WORKERS RETURNING HOME: GLORY AND SHAME

A marker of success: Having reimbursed one's pre-departure costs entirely

A key indicator of the polarization between success and failure is whether migrants had repaid their pre-departure loan by the time they returned home. We have seen that the priority when sending remittances is to repay their loan; only then can other projects be considered. For a significant proportion of returnees, however, this initial objective was not met and the experience turned sour.

From our sample of 603 returnees who answered this question, a third had not repaid their pre-departure loans when they returned from abroad (41% of men and 21% of women). Of those migrants who had not paid their loans back entirely (n=194), 50 percent were men. As we have seen above, the average time to repay the loans was 18 months. As expected, whether returnees had repaid their loan or not was correlated with duration of stay (see Figure 22).

Figure 22. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Returnees with Unpaid Pre-departure Costs by Length of Stay Abroad.



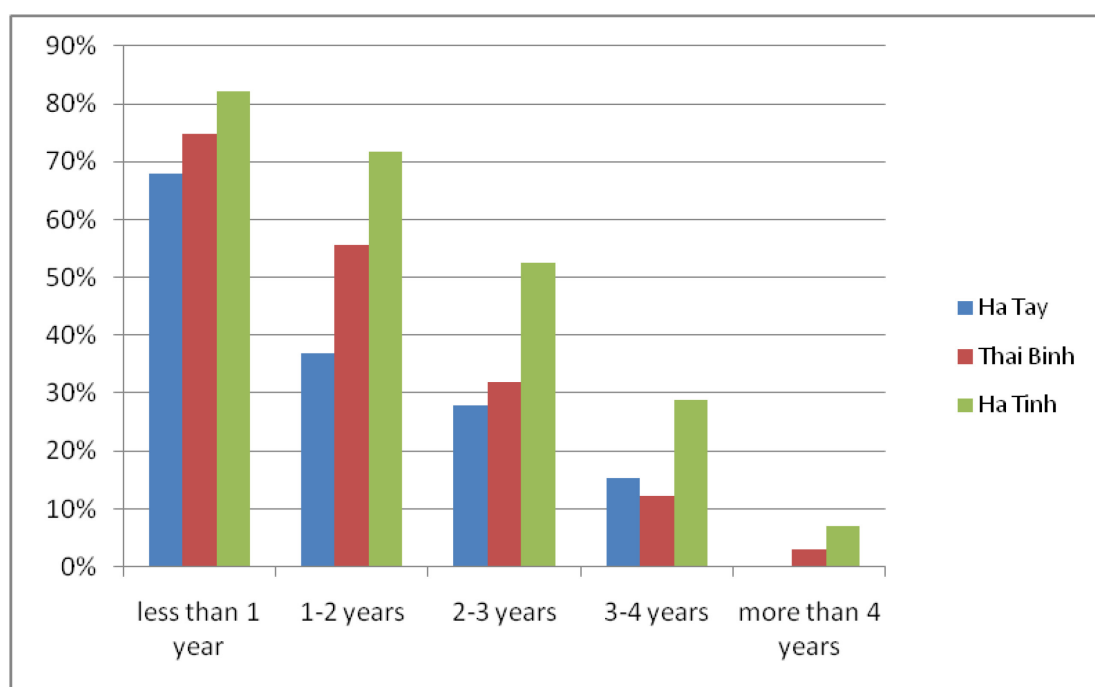
Over three quarters of migrants who returned after less than 12 months abroad had not repaid their debt; whereas, among returnees who stayed abroad three years or longer, 90 percent had been able to do so. Despite this logical relationship, the proportion of returnees still indebted after working abroad is high among workers who have been away for 1 to 2 years (59%) and 2 to 3 years (32%). Overall, it is clear that short contracts (under 3 years) and short stays abroad (often triggered by involuntary early return) led to debts and the incapacity to pay back pre-departure costs. Migrants returning from Malaysia were least likely to succeed in having paid their loan back (47%), followed by South Korea (27%), Taiwan (22%) and Japan (14%).

Interview excerpt: How failed migration brings about the need to migrate again

Before going to Malaysia to work, I had gone to work in Taiwan but failed. After staying in Taiwan for one week, I suffered from a severe back pain and the employer sent me back home right away. After being hospitalized for quite a long time in Vietnam, I went out to the sea [to fish] to make ends meet. Prior to leaving for Taiwan, I borrowed a large sum of money. I had to go abroad again to pay back my debts ... Frankly speaking, I went to survive. Even if I had caught fish for the rest of my life, I would never been able to reimburse the loans. Dung (male, 26 years old, Ha Tinh province)

Figure 23 shows the proportion of returnees who had not paid their pre-departure costs entirely when they returned home by province of departure and by duration abroad. We note that for all durations of stay, high proportions of workers from Ha Tinh returned with their pre-departure costs unpaid (see Figure 23). Higher proportions of workers from Thai Binh did not have their pre-departure costs paid upon return; whereas, workers from Ha Tay were most likely to repay their pre-departure costs before returning to Vietnam.

Figure 23. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Returnees with Unpaid Pre-departure Costs by Length of Stay Abroad by Province.



Tai (male, 39 years old, married with 2 children, Ha Tay province)

In the past, Tai had registered himself with three different export labour companies, spending more than 10 million VND, but had been unsuccessful in his effort to migrate for work. He finally succeeded and was sent to South Korea to work in May 2003 through Song Da company, with the coordination of his commune. He paid a total fee of more than 100 million VND, including fees of 92 million VND to the company, 6 million VND to the commune (in the form of contributions) and other fees. In order to borrow this large sum of money from the bank, he had to mortgage his family's land use certificate. After completing the required paperwork for his migration, it took nearly five months before he was sent to South Korea.

In South Korea, he performed various jobs at a construction site. He worked a lot of overtime, but was never paid for this additional work. At one point, some of the other Vietnamese workers at the construction site decided to run away to work in the illegal sector. The day after they left, the police came and forced all other Vietnamese workers at the construction site to return to Vietnam. Tai, unable to speak South Korean, did not understand what was happening and did not know who to contact for assistance. In total, he was in South Korea for three and a half months.

Tai's wife had received his salary of 13 million VND for his first two months of work in South Korea through the labour export company in Vietnam. After multiple requests to the company to reimburse his pre-departure costs, Tai received the additional 13 million VND for the six weeks he had worked, as well as 56 million VND for the forced dissolution of his contract. He now owes the bank approximately 40 million VND. Upon his return from South Korea, Tai suffered many health problems.

Tang (male, 41 years old, married with 2 children, Thai Binh province)

Tang migrated for work to Malaysia, where he stayed for approximately two years. A private agent from another commune in 2002 introduced him to a private broker in Hanoi who, in turn, had Tang apply for a labour export program with HITECO, a Hanoi-based company. Tang signed a three year contract with HITECO. His pre-departure costs were 19 million VND, 3 million VND of which went to the private broker. Tang had to borrow this money from the bank at an interest rate of 2 percent per month. On top of the 19 million VND, he paid 700,000 VND for a month-long training program and another 1 million VND for accommodation during the training.

During his first five months in Malaysia, he worked in a private iron shop, earning 30 ringgits per day. When the owner of this shop was awarded a construction contract to build a supermarket, Tang was transferred and worked on the construction site for nearly a year. During this time, his food expenses were covered by his employer, but he did not receive a salary. Tang and the other Vietnamese workers contacted the Vietnamese Embassy for help. The Embassy sent a representative, but the workers' problems were not resolved. Tang soon abandoned the job and found employment digging ditches at a promised wage of 100 ringgits per day. However, after working for over three months, he had received a total of only 970 ringgits; just enough to buy a ticket to fly back home. Upon his arrival at the airport in Vietnam, he had only 150,000 VND left to pay for the taxi fare home.

At the time of the interview, Tang had not paid off his debt. He had been unable to work for a year after returning home to Vietnam because of his unsuccessful migration. Against his family's wishes, he hopes to migrate for work again.

Most valuable and most difficult experiences

In open questions, returnees talked about what they felt had been the most valuable and most difficult experiences during their time abroad. Here are the most important ones.

Most valuable experience/lesson learned

- Work experience/professional skills
- Work ethics (steadiness, reliability, industriousness)
- Modern way of life (“civilized” manner and respect towards others)
- Learning about the world, other cultures/societies
- Overall life skills (ability to adapt)
- Language and communication skills

Most difficult experience

- Verbal/psychological abuse at work
- Workplace-related problems (lack of work, work relations)
- Low wage and other wage-related problems (unforeseen deductions)
- Hardship (exhaustion, long working hours, hazardous/toxic working conditions)
- Poor living conditions
- Work injury or accident
- Physical/sexual abuse
- Health problems
- Lack of safety

Lan (female, 26 years old, married with 3 children, Thai Binh province, unsuccessful worker, returning home with large debt)

In early 2002, wishing to migrate to Malaysia for work, Lan contacted a private broker from another commune, who introduced her to a labour export company in Hanoi. She was recruited for work in Malaysia by a representative of the company. Lan mortgaged her house to borrow a total of 18 million VND from the bank to cover her pre-departure costs, which consisted of 11 million VND paid directly to the company, 3 million VND for the private broker and 4 million VND for a three month training program and accommodations in Hanoi. She signed a three year work contract.

In Malaysia, she was given a job in a garment factory. The work was difficult and tedious, requiring her to replace thread on 60 knitting machines operating simultaneously. She worked twelve hours a day with only one 45 minute break. Lan’s monthly salary was equivalent to 3 million VND, paid through the intermediary agency. For her first five months of work, her net pay was only 1 million VND because of deductions for brokerage fees and the job training she had received. She was given very little opportunity to work overtime. The workplace was extremely noisy and stressful, and Lan fainted several times on the job.

No longer able to handle the working conditions in the factory, she decided to quit the job after 11 months abroad. She returned home having earned 10 million VND, which equalled her loan amount. The labour export company in Vietnam fined her 3 million VND for her early return. Having no money, she drew up a petition to be exempt from the fine.

Three months after Lan went to Malaysia, her husband migrated there as well and found a job in the same factory as Lan. Because he was not earning enough money and was working

a gruelling job, he also requested to return home before the end of his contract.

After both of their unsuccessful migrations, Lan and her husband are burdened with a huge debt, for which they are charged a monthly interest fee of 500,000 to 600,000 VND. In order to pay off their debt, Lan's husband wants to migrate to South Korea to work.

Post migration employment situation

One objective of international labour migration is to promote the acquisition of work experience and new skills. It is revealing to examine the post-migration employment situation of migrants. Approximately 20 percent had a job after their return. Among those who did not work after returning to Vietnam, the majority could not find a job, but others had health problems (mostly men), had a child (mostly women) or needed to look after dependent family members (mostly women).

The average monthly income at the time of survey was 1.4 million dong per month (870 000 for women and 1.9 for men), which is below poverty levels in Vietnam. It should be noted that 40 percent (more women than men) felt that having worked abroad increased their chances of finding employment at home.

Returnees' assessment of migration impact

Children's education and well-being

Nearly 40 percent of returnees estimated that their migration had an impact on their children's (or sometimes siblings') education and well-being. Women were more likely to positively assess the impact on children. Approximately half of the migrants felt that their migration abroad contributed to the possibility of their children (or siblings) being schooled at a higher level (for instance, upper secondary) and helped them benefit from extra private lessons or tutoring. Over one in ten said that it allowed one family member to access a university or a vocational school. ***We see that labour migration has an overall positive impact on investment in human capital in the form of education, which will likely benefit communities in the medium and long term.***

But nearly 40 of migrants assessed that their migration negatively impacted their children's school performances, particularly because they lacked supervision and assistance. A small proportion reported that children had to quit school for various reasons: there was too much work to do at home in the parent's absence; the migrants faced difficulties paying their debt; or parents were unable to pay school tuition and fees. To a general question on the overall impact of migration on their children's education and well-being the responses were as follows: 25 percent "negative", 18 percent "both positive and negative", 16 percent "positive" and the largest proportion, 40 percent, "no impact".

Health of self and family members

The relationship between health and migration is complex and important to study. Migration can affect a migrant's health negatively or positively, and remittances may enhance the health of household members (medicine and health care services become more affordable).

Twenty percent of migrants reported that they suffered health problems after returning home that were attributed to working or staying overseas (equal number of men and women). Of these migrants, 75 percent said that the health problem was due to a work injury, 80 percent reported that it limited their ability to work after returning and 1 in 6 had a permanent disability.

To better assess the impact of migration on migrants' health, we estimate negative outcomes for our entire sample. Overall, 3 percent had a permanent disability (an additional 2% did not know whether it would be permanent or not); 16 percent had limited ability to work after their return due to their poor post-migration health; and 15 percent still suffered from a health problem at the time of survey. ***These results, combined with the high proportion of work-related injuries documented above, indicate that manual labour migration entails a high cost to the health of a significant proportion of migrants, thus reducing the long term benefits of migration. Hazardous working conditions and extremely long working hours help explain these results. These findings call for a much closer look into migrant workers' safety abroad and into social programs for injured and ill returnees in sending countries.***

The overall assessment of how migration impacted *the health of family members* resulted in most migrants estimating no impact (50%) or an overall positive impact (44%). Few assessed a negative impact (6%).

Family and gender relations

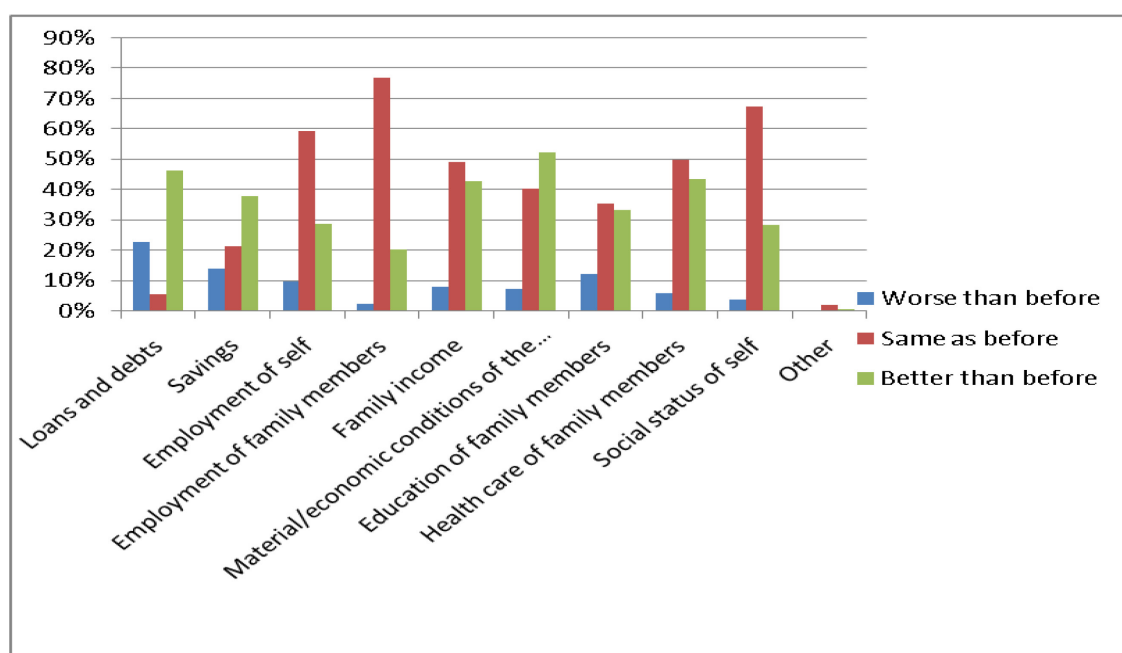
A rich body of research on migration within Asia examines how migration affects family relations at home. We noted in our interviews that women who were sent back early without notice and came back with a loan were susceptible to rejection by their in-laws who did not want to assume the repayment of the debt. As documented by many other researchers, these women were systematically suspected of wrongdoings, such as engaging in sex work or, for domestic workers, seducing the boss and were judged harshly. Some men who returned early were also suspected of wrongdoings, such as stealing or running away, but many received compassion, rather than judgement, from their fellow villagers. Among those whose marital status changed after the migration, a small proportion (9%) had divorced or separated and attributed this change specifically to their migration. With our data we could not estimate the divorce rate of our surveyed population.

Overall, most returnees assessed that their absence had either no impact on their relationships or that it had improved them. Very few individuals felt that their family relations had deteriorated because of their time away. Once they returned, 78 percent of

returnees felt that the division of labour within the household had not changed, while 20 percent felt it was more equitable than before (no significant gender differences).

Overall impact as assessed by returnees

Figure 24. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Returnees' Overall Assessment of Impact of Migration by Category of Impact.



Overall, most migrants are positive in their overall assessment of the impact of migration, but a significant proportion feel that their situation has not changed or has worsened.

Again, the polarization between winners and losers is striking. Over a third of migrants felt that they have been deceived at some point during the migration process (from recruitment to return).

PART 4. IMPACT ON HOUSEHOLDS: PERSPECTIVES FROM MIGRANTS' FAMILIES

Economic impact on households

The money sent home was used by the migrants' family for many purposes; however, the priority for almost all the households (92.8%) was to repay money borrowed to finance international migration of one or more family members. Given the large amount of money borrowed, it is difficult to repay the debt quickly. Our data show that 65.4 percent of households are making progress in paying off the debt; about 7.5 percent see no

improvement; and a considerable number are getting deeper in debt due to high interest rates and insufficient (or even no) remittances sent home by the migrants. Debt service is a serious problem that limits any positive economic impact of migration. In Vietnam, the labour migration industry is poorly regulated by laws and state agencies, and profit-seeking enterprises, private agents and individual brokers have taken advantage of legal gaps to make money from migration. Consequently, migrants and their families are overcharged for a long list of fees and costs (Daniele and Wang, 2008).

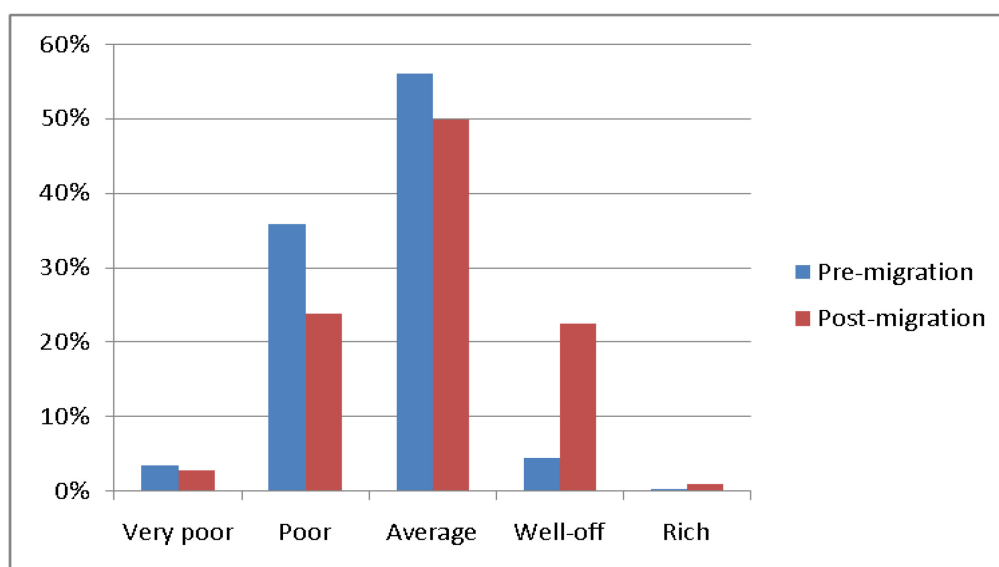
It is obvious, nevertheless, that, for many families, remittances are crucial for their livelihood. When asked to assess the contribution of remittances to the overall family income, 61 percent of the households value its contribution; 27.2 percent consider the remittance share to be from significant to very significant; and 14.5 percent admit that remittances contributed are quite minor.

The key problems of the current labour migration to Asian markets, particularly the debt trap and low income earned abroad, means that migration has fallen short in improving the economic conditions of the migrants' family. Thus, while 40.1 percent of the households are delighted with an increase in overall income, 51.1 percent have experienced no positive change and 8.8 percent have seen a decline in family income. Even with remittances, some families still have to repay large debts with interest. Many families who receive little or no money face a difficult situation.

Although close to one in every four households (23%) is able to save some money from remittances, almost none of them save for investment purposes. Of this small group, only 5.5 percent invests the remittances in their current economic activities and 2.7 percent use remittances as a source for new investment. Meanwhile, many more households use remittances to purchase furniture, appliances and motorbikes (21.7%). Research on international migrant workers worldwide shows that migrants' families will more likely purchase luxury items rather than invest. Our research confirms this trend among families in Vietnam. An in-depth inquiry is needed to explain why. Indeed, investment decisions depend on both micro and macro level factors. At the micro level, for example, decisions may depend on individual attitudes, available opportunities or productive capabilities. At the macro level, factors such as policies, sectoral development or tax level are all important as they form incentive and disincentive structures for investment decisions taking place at the micro level.

In total, 42.9 percent of households consider that migration of their family members has resulted in a better saving situation, 34.5 percent report no progress and 22.6 percent told interviewers that migration has worsened their savings.

Figure 25. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Household Members' Assessment of Economic Status of Households Before and After Migration.



Finally, respondents were asked to classify the economic status of their household before and after family members joined the migrant labour programs. As illustrated in Figure 25, a significant improvement was seen in the household economic status between pre-migration and post-migration. The families who consider themselves poor drops from 35.8 to 23.9 percent; whereas, the number who consider themselves well-off rises from 4.5 percent to 22.5 percent (more than four times).

Children's education and well-being

Education is strongly valued in Vietnamese society, both in rural and urban areas. For Vietnamese families, it is common practice to prioritize education among various investment decisions, regardless of the economic situation. Although preference is given for the education of sons over daughters, especially in the countryside, overall parents strive to support their children's education. Government policy on education is consistent; all children from the age of 6 should go to school and learning is encouraged at all levels of the school system. Vietnam had successfully achieved universal primary education (UPE) by the early years of the 21st century and is now targeting universal education at the lower secondary level.

Despite this, in the past decade there have been many flaws in the school system, ranging from problems with infrastructure, particularly in the rural and remote areas, to quality of both learning and teaching. The most serious problems are the increasing inequity in education and the skyrocketing costs for the poor to finance their children's education. Even at the primary level, where school tuition is waived nationwide, parents are responsible for numerous expenses, including security and sanitary fees, school construction fees, parent-teacher association fees, textbooks and learning aids, student uniforms, etc., throughout the school year. It has been documented by many reports conducted by both Vietnamese institutions and international donors that education cost is the chief reason that access to

education for many Vietnamese is limited, particularly for ethnic minorities and those living in rural areas. Since education is an important human resource, people usually invest in their children's future whenever possible.

Migration enables many poor families to pay education costs through remittances. As shown in the survey data, 37 percent of households in our sample use remittances to pay for education costs. The money allows up to 58 percent of them to continue their children's education, including attendance at vocational schools and universities (21.4%). In addition to keeping their children in school, 56.2 percent of families were able to afford after-school tutoring, which is often much more costly than formal education. If there is no remittance, it is very likely that some children would have to drop out because families would either be unable to pay for schooling or put a higher priority on having them earn money, even though the opportunity cost of working instead of learning can be very high.

But the impact of migration on education is not limited to only purchasing power. Besides the financial contribution, migrants influence the attitude towards education. In general, this finding is encouraging with 38.9 percent reporting an overall positive impact (family member's education getting better), 53.5 percent reporting no change and only 7.6 percent concluding the impact is negative.

However, when education is considered overall, family education, including children's socialization, is also important. A common concern is that, while the parent is away, he or she cannot have a direct effect on the children and the parent at home has more difficulty educating the children alone. It is even more difficult if both parents are away and the children are living with relatives. In some cases, as more money becomes available, education becomes less important to them. In the survey, this concern was shared by 42.2 percent of households. More specifically, 27.3 percent view the impact as being both positive and negative and 14.9 percent conclude that there is only a negative impact. Households seeing only positive impact account for 27.3 percent and 36.2 percent see no impact of migration on family education.

Health of self and family members

As with education, health care in Vietnam is undergoing a difficult process, with a widening gap in the distribution of gains in health outcomes across regions and income groups. Health policy has shifted its focus from grassroots organization to a complex network of health care providers, ranging from public hospitals to private practitioners. Although the government continues to subsidize the poor, reflecting its socialist orientation, the increased reliance on market mechanisms has led to a neglect of social mandates and growing health costs. Meanwhile, subsidization has not resulted in lower out-of-pocket expenditures (accounting at present for over 70% of total household spending on health), leading to further medical disadvantage and entrenching poverty.

As highlighted by the survey data, about 15.3 percent of the households spend remittance on health care. The remittance allows many families to have better access to health care services which are prohibitive to them before migration. As reported by the respondents of

this sub-group, now one in every four families can pay for a hospital stay (23.6%) and receive better medicine, treatment and care. Remittances are not only spent on medical and service costs. With more money available, families can buy more nutritious foods. Good nutrition will more likely improve overall health, and 32.4 percent of families report having better diets thanks to remittances.

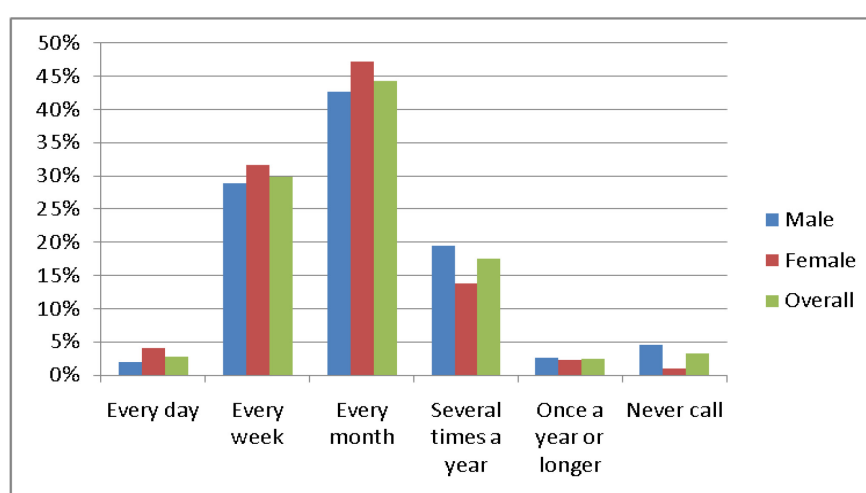
Better health can also be achieved by doing less work, particularly hard labour, which is typical in the rural areas. With the remittances sent from abroad by migrants, 13.3 percent of households in our sample were able to reduce the amount of hard work they performed and have more time for leisure, physical exercise and other healthy activities. In addition, 26.9 percent of families view having better living conditions, such as better housing and more comfortable living, following migration as improving their health.

Family and gender relations

Transnational migration results in separation of family members across international borders. Since it is just a strategy to reallocate labour across space to maximize income and minimize risks, family cohesiveness remains in the majority of cases. In some cases bonds among family members can be strengthened as a result of migration, as emotional connections and family members' responsibilities are recognized more.

With inexpensive communication through telephones, contact between migrants and their families is greatly facilitated. Calling home is the most common means of communication, and the frequency of calling is quite high. Our data show that 44.1 percent of families receive phone calls from migrants every month, 29.8 percent every week and 2.7 percent every day. Unfortunately, 3.3 percent never receive calls from their migrant family member.

Figure 26. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Frequency of Telephone Calls Between Migrant Abroad and Family in Vietnam.

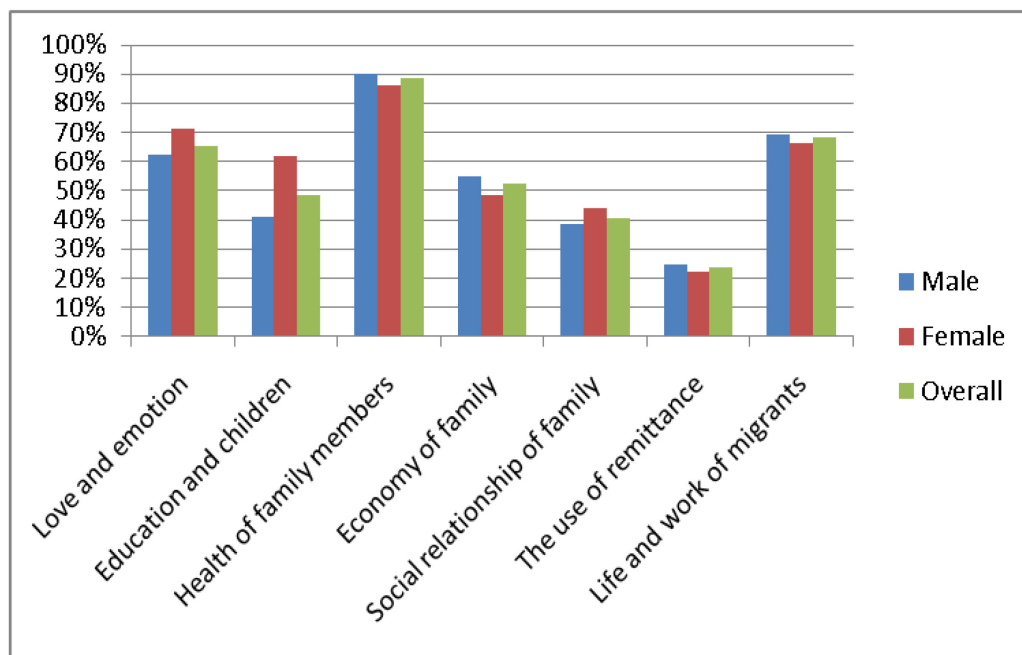


Data on frequency of calls by migrants to their families show that females call home more often than males. For example, 4 percent of females call home every day versus less than 2 percent of males. Similarly, about 32 percent of females and 29 percent of males call home

every week, while 47 percent of males and 42 percent of females call every month. These figures to some extent reflect the slight difference in men's and women's attitudes regarding communication with home. In general, men are more likely to call home regarding something important; whereas, women tend to communicate more, possibly because they tend to be more anxious and expressive.

Figure 27 lists the topics that are commonly discussed when migrants and their families communicate. The most commonly discussed topic is health on both sides (90%), followed by details of life and work abroad (68.2%), love and emotional issues (65.4%), economic matters, such as livelihood, jobs, investment, production, etc. (52.4%), children's education (48.2%), social relationships among family members and the community, including important social events, such as marriages, funerals, worship, etc. (40.3%) and the use of remittances (23.6%). These topics represent the concerns shared by both migrants and other family members, reflecting the fact that migrants are inseparable from the daily lives of their family at home.

Figure 27. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Topics of Communication Between Migrant Abroad and Family in Vietnam.



Here again we see gender differences regarding personal concerns between the males and females in the study. In general, women are more emotional in their communication. They tend to talk more about children's education, as well as other social issues regarding relationships between family members and between families and communities. Men are more interested in discussing economic and health matters.

Respondents reported improvements in relationships following migration with spouses (40.8%), children (40.8%) and other family members at home (39.8%).

Migration has increasingly been seen as a status leverage venue. During fieldwork, members of the research team recognized sharp differentials between households having one or

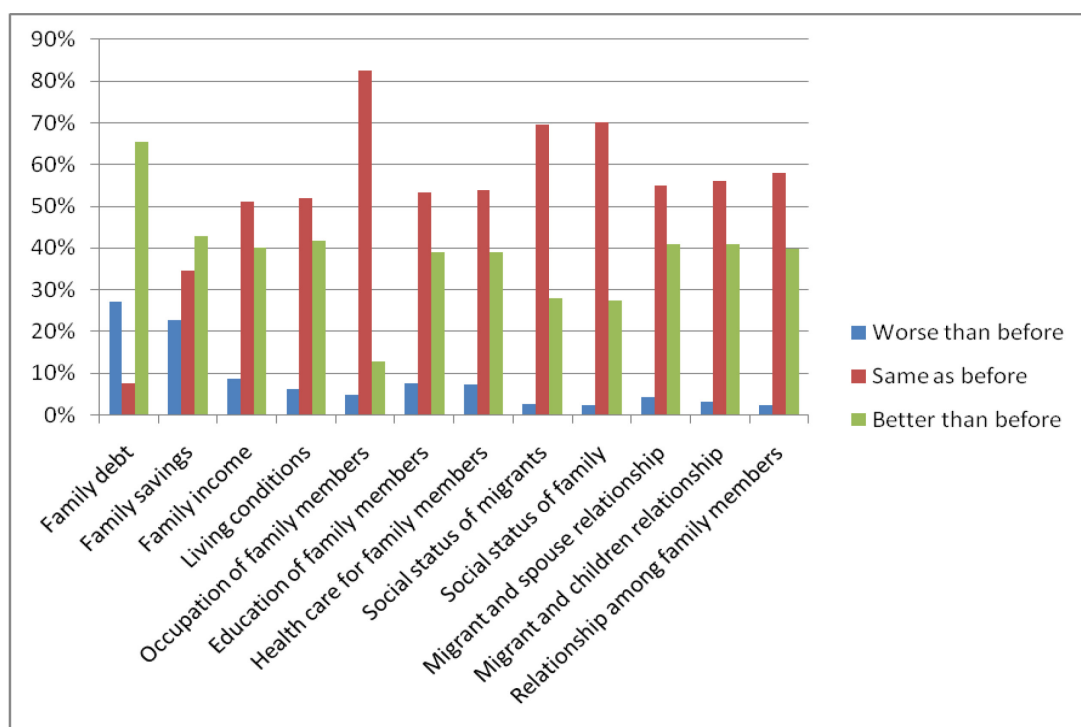
more members migrating for overseas work and other households, both in economic conditions and social status. In many communes, most of the newly-built, two-storey buildings with good furniture and appliances belong to migrant households. As a result, the majority of working people find the possibility of going overseas to work desirable, despite spreading news of problems with labour migration.

To measure the impact of international migration on improvements in family status, we asked respondents to rank the social status of migrants and their family units. The statistical results show that about 30 percent see migration as enhancing status, although the majority saw no change. The same percentage (30.2%) found that the family is “proud” of their present status and one in every five households (21.6%) is planning to send more members abroad. A considerable number (about 2.5%) thought migration negatively impacted status.

Overall assessment

Figure 28 summarizes the impact of migration (negative, none, positive) on the family, as reported by family members. At a glance two interrelated pitfalls of the current situation of labour migration are family debt and savings as 27.2 and 22.6 percent of households, respectively, report a negative impact.

Figure 28. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Impact of Migration. Household Members’ Assessment of Impact of Migration by Category of Impact.



The highest percentages of households, 65.4 and 42.9 percent, respectively, report a positive impact. This is not surprising as the impact of migration is dependent on several variables, such as timing of migration, family’s economic situation, type of overseas work,

migrant workers' salaries and savings, the amount and use of remittances, countries of destination, etc.

Respondents report a positive impact with respect to improvements in living conditions (41.7%), family income (40.1%) and education/health care (38.9%). Positive impact is less likely reported regarding change or improvement in occupations of family members at home and social status of migrants and their families, which can be either self-perceived or real. As shown, over 80 percent of respondents see no change in the occupations of family members, and about 70 percent disagreed that the social status of either the migrants themselves or their family changed as a result of migration for work in rich Asian countries.

Close to 78.3 percent of respondents reported that international labour migration was, to some degree, positive for the household. Of all respondents, only 38.4 percent reported a positive impact; about 39.9 percent recognized both positive and negative impacts; around 12.9 percent had a negative view; and 8.8 percent saw no impact.

CONCLUSION: WINNERS AND LOSERS OF LABOUR MIGRATION

1. Migration experiences and outcomes are polarized between the “winners” and “losers” of labour migration. Although a majority of workers assess that their overall situation improved, very significant proportion saw no improvement or even deterioration. This polarization emerges from results showing the variability in pre-migration costs, working conditions, degree and frequency of deception, net earnings, work injuries and migrants' overall self assessment of the impact of migration on themselves and their families.
2. Province of departure was an important factor shaping migrants' experiences. Migrants from the province of Ha Tinh tended to experience the most adverse circumstances and negative outcomes: most of them went to Malaysia and earned low incomes. A third of respondents returned home early and with their pre-departure debt unpaid. Migrants leaving from Thai Binh and Ha Tay fared better overall, but had to pay much higher costs, except for those going to Malaysia.
3. Country of destination was another factor affecting migration. Malaysia was particularly problematic in all respects. Migrants to South Korea and Japan had the best outcomes. Taiwan was a more risky destination, particularly for men, but still better than Malaysia.
4. Job abroad was also an important determinant of the migration experience and outcomes. Interestingly, domestic workers (all in Taiwan) had the best experience of all workers as a group. There was more homogeneity in their salaries, working conditions and self assessments. Other jobs showed more variability and extreme cases. Fisheries and agriculture was the most difficult work sector, followed by factory work. This result could be affected by domestic workers' initial low

expectations and other workers' higher expectations.

5. The polarization between positive and negative experiences and outcomes characterizes the entire migration process (recruitment, training, travel abroad, work and life abroad, return). As such, migration needs to be conceptualized as a process and not strictly as time spent abroad. Migrants' protection begins with recruitment and ends with return, particularly for those who experienced negative outcomes.
6. The entire migration experience from departure, to work abroad to return is gendered. This survey highlights that males working in fisheries and agriculture are particularly at risk for negative migration outcomes. Despite the strong emphasis of existing research on the vulnerability of domestic workers working in private homes, our survey results indicate that male workers tend to experience worse working conditions and higher rates of early return than female migrants.
7. Another important gender difference emerged with respect to the economics of migration. Women pay lower pre-departure costs than men, but tend to send more remittances and return home with more money. They are also less likely to run away and work illegally.
8. The most negative outcomes included early returns (30%) and not having paid one's pre-departure debt entirely after return (33%). Overall, 41 percent of respondents reported a negative assessment of migration, and 33 percent of migrants felt they had been deceived during the migration process.
9. Most migrants succeeded in sending remittances home. The primary use for remittances was to repay the pre-departure debt, which took an average of 18 months of working abroad. Most remittances were used for home renovations, daily living expenses and investment in human capital (health and education). We have no evidence that investment in livelihood was a common use of remittance.
10. In light of the frequent negative migration outcomes uncovered in this survey, we believe that the potential benefits of international labour migration for migrants, their families, communities and Vietnam as a country are seriously compromised. While some migrants win and move ahead, a proportion that we deem too large loses and ends up in a worse position after migration. It would be wrong to put most of the blame for these negative outcomes on workers. Clearly, all actors involved need to take a hard look at how they can contribute to enhancing the rights and protection of migrants if the aim for labour migration is to promote development in rural Vietnam.

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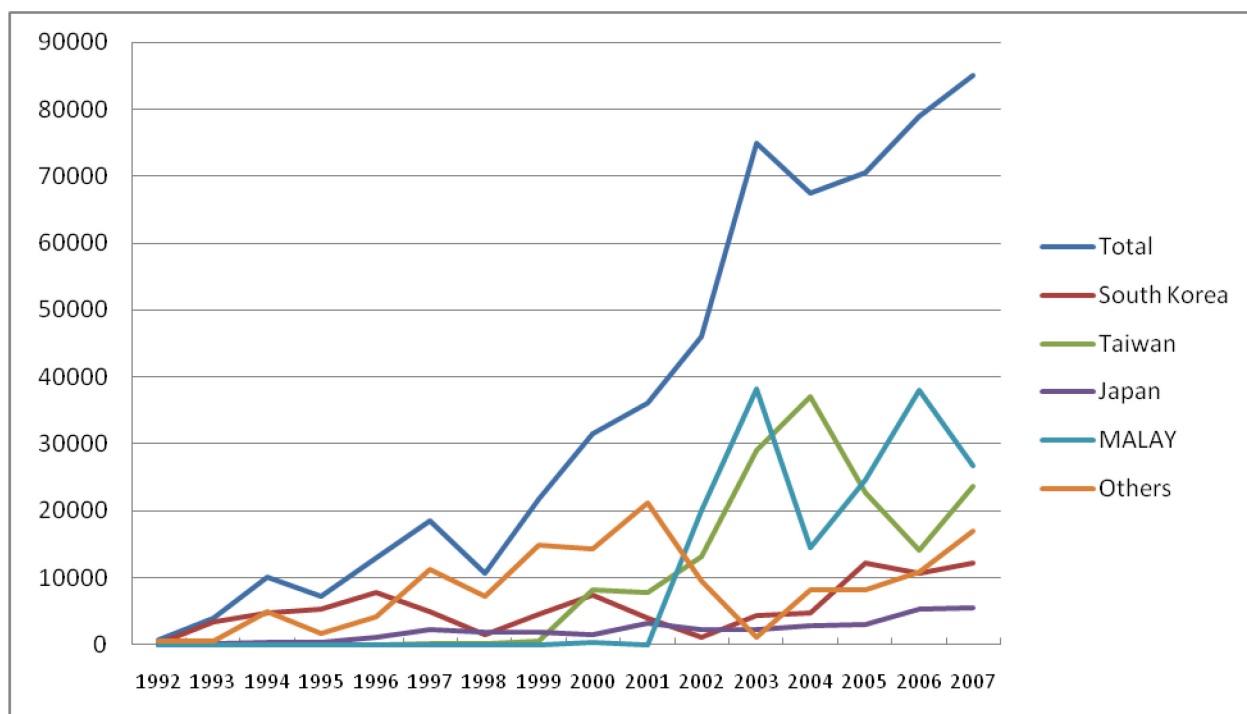
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Appendices

Appendix 1. Total numbers of Vietnamese migrant workers (in thousands) deployed by year by destination



Source: MOLISA data

Appendix 2. Research Method and Data Collection

This report draws upon the analysis of quantitative data collected through the survey on the impact of international labour migration on migrants and their households at the source community, as well as qualitative data from the in-depth interviews with migrant returnees. The study uses both quantitative and qualitative approaches to utilize the advantages of each method. While quantitative data are needed to estimate statistically specific measurements in the target population, the in-depth interviews reveal certain sensitive and detailed information that is unlikely to be obtained from a quantitative survey.

Quantitative study

Survey questionnaires

Questionnaires are designed at the community, household and individual levels to capture multi-level effects. A total of 565 individual questionnaires were completed by former migrants who were defined as those who had returned to Vietnam for at least 6 months after completing a work contract in South Korea, Taiwan, Japan or Malaysia. We did not select migrants who were home on short visits with relatives. The individual questionnaire includes nine sections: (1) demographic information on the migrant, (2) destination and duration of stay, (3) networks and recruitment, (4) pre-departure training in Vietnam, (5) travel overseas, (6) work experiences in the destination country, (7) communication with home and remittances, (8) other work and overstay, and (9) return and impact of migration.

The second questionnaire designed for migrant-sending households has six sections: (1) general information on the migrant(s) including demographic characteristics and the migration decision-making process (2) information about employment abroad (3) communication with home (4) remittances, (5) assessment of the impact of international labour migration on the sending household, and (6) general information about the household. A total of 639 household questionnaires were collected. We define migrant-sending households (referred to as “migrant household” thereafter) as those households with at least one migrant worker currently working in four above-mentioned East Asian countries. In selecting migrant households, we did not discriminate for the time since emigration.

The last questionnaire designed for local authorities of each commune selected includes six sections, each of which cover a separate aspect of community characteristics and activities: (1) general information about the commune, (2) information about migration, (3) infrastructure, (4) socioeconomic status and cultural characteristics, (5) assessment of the impact of labour export, and (6) policy recommendations. The community questionnaires were administered by field supervisors. Informants of the community questionnaires are local authorities. Some sections of the questionnaire contain village/ward level information, while the remainder refer to commune level information.

Study sample

Sampling design

The survey was conducted in three provinces: Ha Tay and Thai Binh, which administratively belong to Northern Vietnam, and Ha Tinh, which belongs to Central Vietnam. We chose these sites because there is a predominance of international labour migrants who were willing to participate in the study and they were geographically accessible to the research team.

Through cooperation with the provincial administrators, the most updated figures on international labour migrants of all districts and communes were obtained. These data were certainly imperfect, but they were necessary for the selection of districts and communes. For each province, we selected approximately two districts that have sent large numbers of residents working overseas. In Thai Binh, the survey was conducted in the two districts of Dong Hung and Vu Thu. In Ha Tinh, the two districts studied were Nghi Xuan and Can Loc. For Ha Tay⁵, the survey was only in the district of Thach That. In addition, based on these data, three communes from Dong Hung, four communes from Vu Thu, two communes from Nghi Xuan, two communes from Can Loc, and five communes from Thach That were chosen. The migrant returnees and migrant households are not spread out evenly; rather, they tend to be concentrated in certain communes. Therefore, in order to ensure an adequate number of individuals and households to satisfy the estimated sample size, we chose the communes with the largest number of households with migrants working in East Asia and migrants who had returned from overseas.

The number of migrant returnees and migrant households obtained from the lists provided by local authorities and collaborators were virtually equivalent to the sample size, so the research team decided to interview all those who were listed. Therefore, apart from those who refused to participate in our survey and those who were unavailable at the time of interviewing, the sampling results show that we surveyed nearly all migrant returnees and migrant households in the selected communes.

In terms of the selection of respondents for the household questionnaire, the household head or an adult household member (usually the husband/wife or father/mother of the migrant) who is knowledgeable about the household situation and the migrant was selected from every household included in the sample. We also balanced the sample of respondents (both migrant returnees and migrant household members) by sex and age. Commune statistics and site observation techniques were also employed to situate research analysis in the local contexts.

⁵ **Ha Tay** is a former [Province](#) of [Vietnam](#), in the [Red River Delta](#), now part of [Hanoi](#). On [May 29](#), 2008, it was decided that Ha Tay would merge with [Hanoi](#) province on [August 1](#), 2008.

The total number of individuals and households interviewed in the three target provinces are presented below.

Total Number of Individuals and Households Surveyed.

Province	Migrant returnees	Migrant households
Thai Binh	218	235
Ha Tay	211	220
Ha Tinh	210	201
Total	656	639

The second component of the study consists of qualitative data collected from a total of 99 in-depth interviews in three provinces studied from 2005 to 2009, with the objective of highlighting important issues related to how migration creates opportunities and vulnerabilities for migrants, their families and communities. The respondents include former migrant workers who worked in East Asia, household members with a migrant currently abroad, intermediaries (brokers) and representatives of the People's Committee. We interviewed workers who had been to all four destinations studied in this report. Interviews were transcribed in Vietnamese and a content analysis was done using N-Vivo.

The survey was conducted in March and April, 2009. The pre-test of questionnaires was done in one commune of Ha Tay. The research fieldwork was formulated to obtain the most fruitful collaboration not only from respondents and local collaborators, but also positive support from local authorities. During the stage of sample selection, local authorities and collaborators were involved in the process. In every selected commune, the research team worked with the People's Committee to have them confirm the objectives of our study and approve the research schedule. The cooperation and assistance of local authorities facilitated our fieldwork. Before carrying out the interviews, local authorities introduced the study to interview subjects in the sample and made sure that they would be at home on the interview days.

During the survey period, our research team was divided into two groups; each took responsibility for carrying out the survey separately in each district of target provinces. Each group had a group leader who was responsible for coordinating the fieldwork and contacting local authorities, a person who took care of group's logistics, two fieldwork supervisors and six interviewers/investigators who were recruited and trained carefully. Also, each group had two to three guiders, usually the commune head or staff who takes care of labour-invalid-social issues of the commune, who was responsible for directing the researchers to the sampled households and introducing them to the respondents. This made gaining access to respondents feasible and time-saving.

At the end of each day, completed questionnaires were gathered so that supervisors could check if answers to each questionnaire were precise and logical of each questionnaire; then the whole team had a regular meeting in order to learn from any mistakes that had been

made. The data collection and interviewing process were also supervised closely. The fieldwork involved participant observation of community and household relations and informal discussions about international labour migration.

Limitations of the study

This study is limited in various ways. First, we cannot assess the role of other types of emigration from the villages/communes (for instance internal migration to urban areas). Some of the changes we document also likely resulted from local socio-economic changes brought about by Vietnam's rapid development over the past decade. Second, our study was only conducted at one point in time, and we asked study participants to think retrospectively when assessing changes following the wave of international labour migration from their communities. This approach could introduce biases due to an exaggerated assessment of the impact of migration. Third, as mentioned above, in order to get a more focused picture of the impacts of international labour migration at the individual and household levels, as well as guarantee the sufficiency of sample size, we selected the locations with the largest number of migrants working overseas. Accordingly, we anticipate that the impact of international labour migration should be "large" due to this sampling method. The fourth limitation concerns non-response, particularly those subjects who were supposed to be in the sample but simply failed to cooperate or were inaccessible. This is thought to be a serious problem for many surveys because biases in overall results are questionable; however, we deemed that the rate of non-response in our study is very low. Last, but not least, response bias may be a limitation, which is unavoidable in every survey. People tend to give responses that they think are socially acceptable in order to "please" the interviewer. In our survey, participants mostly tended to refuse, be reluctant or lie when answering some questions concerning income or savings. Despite these study limitations, the voices of migrants' parents, spouses and siblings indicate that villagers interpret the phenomenon of international migration for work to have a very significant impact on village life, as well as family and gender relations. This alone is valuable, since it will likely inform family decisions with respect to future migration.

Ethical issues

The research team was well aware of international ethics standards for social science research. Participants were clearly informed of the goals and objectives of the study and read an informed consent statement. Oral consents were obtained prior to the interview. Also, participants were given the option to withdraw from the study at any time. The research team carefully assessed the potential harm to participants during individual interviews and interrupted the interviews if necessary. A small compensation in cash was offered to participants for their time.

Software

In terms of data analysis, the survey data were entered into SPSS, and then statistical analyses were performed. The in-depth interviews were tape recorded in their entirety, then transcribed. Interview transcriptions were then analyzed using the N-Vivo software for qualitative data analysis.

Appendix 3. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Sample Characteristics. Total sample (returnees and migrants abroad at time of survey).

Characteristics of Total Sample of Migrants		Male	Within sex (%)	Percent of total	Female	Within sex (%)	Percent of total	Total	Overall within sex (%)	Overall Total (%)
Country of Destination	Taiwan	189	24.7	39.0	295	59.0	61.0	484	38.3	100.0
	South Korea	273	35.7	90.4	29	5.8	9.6	302	23.9	100.0
	Japan	39	5.1	58.2	28	5.6	41.6	67	5.3	100.0
	Malaysia	264	34.5	64.1	148	29.6	35.9	412	32.6	100.0
Province	Ha Tay	305	39.9	69.0	137	27.4	31.0	442	34.9	100.0
	Thai Binh	179	23.4	43.1	236	47.2	56.9	415	32.8	100.0
	Ha Tinh	281	36.7	68.9	127	25.4	31.1	408	32.3	100.0
Age	20-24	117	15.3	59.7	79	15.8	40.3	196	15.5	100.0
	25-29	241	31.5	76.4	82	16.4	25.4	323	25.5	100.0
	30-34	183	23.9	63.1	107	21.4	36.9	290	22.9	100.0
	35-39	145	19.0	55.8	115	23.0	44.2	260	20.6	100.0
	40-44	63	8.2	42.6	85	17.0	57.4	148	11.7	100.0
	45-49	14	1.8	33.3	28	4.5	66.7	42	3.3	100.0
	50-54	2	0.3	33.3	4	0.8	66.7	6	0.5	100.0
Marital Status	Never married	285	37.3	74.8	96	19.2	25.2	381	30.1	100.0
	Married	475	62.1	55.8	376	75.2	44.2	851	67.3	100.0
	Divorced/Separated	5	0.6	20.0	20	4.0	80.0	25	2.0	100.0
	Widowed	0	0.0	0.0	8	1.6	100.0	8	0.6	100.0
Level of Education	Illiterate/No school	4	0.5	80.0	1	0.2	20.0	5	0.4	100.0
	Primary	71	9.3	55.0	58	11.6	45.0	129	10.2	100.0
	Lower secondary	419	54.8	58.0	303	60.6	42.0	722	57.1	100.0
	Upper secondary	223	29.2	63.2	130	26.0	36.8	353	27.9	100.0
	Vocational/College or higher	47	6.2	85.5	8	1.6	14.5	55	4.4	100.0
Occupation in Destination Country	Factory worker	516	68.3	69.5	226	45.5	30.5	742	59.2	100.0
	Domestic worker (in private home)	2	0.3	0.9	232	46.7	99.1	234	18.7	100.0
	Construction worker	82	10.8	96.5	3	0.6	3.5	85	6.8	100.0
	Worker in agriculture or fishery	135	17.9	91.2	13	2.6	8.8	148	11.8	100.0
	Worker in service sector	21.0	2.8	47.7	23.0	4.6	52.3	44	3.5	100.0
Overall Total		765	100.0	60.5	500	100.0	39.5	1265	100.0	100.0

Appendix 4. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Sample Characteristics of Migrant Returnees.

Characteristics of Returnees		Male	Within sex (%)	Percent of total	Female	Within sex (%)	Percent of total	Total	Overall within sex (%)	Overall total (%)
Country of Destination	Taiwan	88	24.5	32.5	183	63.8	67.5	271	42.0	100.0
	South Korea	85	23.7	86.7	13	4.5	13.3	98	15.2	100.0
	Japan	15	4.2	51.7	14	4.9	48.3	29	4.5	100.0
	Malaysia	171	47.6	69.0	77	26.8	31.0	248	38.4	100.0
Province	Ha Tay	143	39.8	61.9	88	30.7	38.1	231	35.8	100.0
	Thai Binh	81	22.6	37.7	134	46.7	62.3	215	33.3	100.0
	Ha Tinh	135	37.6	67.5	65	22.6	32.5	200	31.0	100.0
Age	20-24	29	8.1	53.7	25	8.7	46.3	54	8.4	100.0
	25-29	95	26.5	66.0	49	17.1	34.0	144	22.3	100.0
	30-34	98	27.3	59.8	66	23.0	40.2	164	25.4	100.0
	35-39	79	22.0	51.6	74	25.8	48.4	153	23.7	100.0
	40-44	46	12.8	45.1	56	19.5	54.9	102	15.8	100.0
	45-49	11	3.1	42.3	15	5.2	57.7	26	4.0	100.0
	50-54	1	0.3	33.3	2	0.7	66.7	3	0.5	100.0
Marital Status	Never married	72	20.1	69.2	32	11.1	30.8	104	16.1	100.0
	Married	284	79.1	54.8	234	81.5	45.2	518	80.2	100.0
	Divorced/Separated	3	0.8	17.6	14	4.7	82.4	17	2.6	100.0
	Widowed	0	0.0	0.0	7	2.4	100.0	7	1.1	100.0
Level of Education	Illiterate/No school	2	0.6	100.0	0	0.0	0.0	2	0.3	100.0
	Primary	39	10.9	57.4	29	10.1	42.6	68	10.5	100.0
	Lower secondary	225	62.8	55.0	184	64.1	45.0	409	63.4	100.0
	Upper secondary	84	23.5	54.2	71	24.7	45.8	155	24.0	100.0
	Vocational/College or higher	8	2.3	72.7	3	1.0	27.3	11	1.7	100.0
Occupation in Destination Country	Factory worker	222	62.0	65.9	115	40.2	34.1	337	52.3	100.0
	Domestic worker (in private home)	2	0.6	1.3	152	53.1	98.7	154	23.9	100.0
	Construction worker	50	14.0	98.0	1	0.3	2.0	51	7.9	100.0
	Worker in agriculture or fishery	73	20.4	93.6	5	1.7	6.4	78	12.1	100.0
	Worker in service sector	11	3.1	45.8	13	4.5	54.2	24	3.7	100.0
Current Occupation	Technical worker	12	4.1	2.3	30	13.3	5.8	42	8.1	100.0
	Peasant	136	46.7	26.4	148	65.8	28.7	284	55.0	100.0
	Handicraftsmen	46	15.8	8.9	3	1.3	0.6	49	9.5	100.0
	Manual worker	63	21.6	12.2	8	3.6	1.6	71	13.8	100.0
	Small trader	11	3.8	2.1	22	9.8	4.3	33	6.4	100.0
	Big trader	4	1.4	0.8	3	1.3	1.3	7	1.4	100.0
	Service sector	13	4.4	2.5	8	3.5	1.6	21	4.1	100.0
	Other	6	2.3	1.2	3	0.0	0.0	9	1.8	100.0
Total		359	100.0	55.6	287	100.0	44.4	646	100.0	100.0

Appendix 5. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Sample Characteristics. Migrants Currently Abroad (Information Provided by a Household Member in Vietnam).

Characteristics of Migrant from Household Survey		Male	Within sex (%)	Percent of total	Female	Within sex (%)	Percent of total	Total	Overall within sex (%)	Overall total (%)
Country of Destination	Taiwan	101	24.9	47.4	112	52.6	52.6	213	34.4	100.0
	South Korea	188	46.3	92.2	16	7.5	7.8	204	33.0	100.0
	Japan	24	5.9	63.2	14	6.6	36.8	38	6.1	100.0
	Malaysia	93	22.9	56.7	71	33.3	43.3	164	26.5	100.0
Province	Ha Tay	162	36.9	76.8	49	23.2	23.2	211	34.1	100.0
	Thai Binh	98	49.0	49.0	102	51.0	51.0	200	32.3	100.0
	Ha Tinh	146	70.2	70.2	62	29.8	29.8	208	33.6	100.0
Age	20-24	88	21.7	62.0	54	25.4	38.0	142	22.9	100.0
	25-29	146	36.0	81.6	33	15.5	18.4	179	28.9	100.0
	30-34	85	20.9	67.5	41	19.2	32.5	126	20.4	100.0
	35-39	66	16.3	61.7	41	19.2	38.3	107	17.3	100.0
	40-44	17	4.2	37.0	29	13.6	63.0	46	7.4	100.0
	45-49	3	0.7	18.8	13	6.1	81.3	16	2.6	100.0
	50-54	1	0.2	33.3	2	0.9	66.7	3	0.5	100.0
Marital Status	Never married	213	52.5	76.9	64	30.0	23.1	277	44.7	100.0
	Married	191	47.0	57.4	142	66.7	42.6	333	53.8	100.0
	Divorced/ Separated	2	0.0	14.0	6	3.1	86.0	8	1.3	100.0
	Widowed	0	0.5	0.0	1	0.2	100.0	1	0.2	100.0
Level of Education	Illiterate/No school	2	0.5	66.7	1	0.3	33.2	3	0.5	100.0
	Primary	32	7.9	52.5	29	13.6	47.5	61	9.9	100.0
	Lower secondary	194	47.8	62.0	119	55.9	38.0	313	50.6	100.0
	Upper secondary	139	34.2	70.2	59	27.7	29.8	198	32.0	100.0
	Vocational/ College or higher	39	9.6	88.6	5	2.3	11.4	44	7.1	100.0
Occupation in Destination Country	Factory worker	294	73.9	72.6	111	52.6	27.4	405	66.5	100.0
	Domestic worker (in private home)	0	0.0	0.0	80	37.9	100.0	80	13.1	100.0
	Construction worker	32	8.0	94.1	2	0.9	5.9	34	5.6	100.0
	Worker in agriculture or fishery	62	15.6	88.6	8	3.8	13.4	70	11.5	100.0
	Worker in service sector	10	2.5	50.0	10	4.7	97.5	20	3.3	100.0
Total		406	100.0	65.6	213	100.0	34.4	619	100.0	100.0

Appendix 6. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Migrant Returnees Duration of Stay.

Migrant Returnees - Duration of Stay		1 year or less (%)	1-2 years (%)	2-3 years (%)	3-4 years (%)	More than 4 years (%)	Total	Total (%)
Gender	Male	20.6	17.5	18.9	29.8	13.1	359	100.0
	Female	11.5	9.1	25.4	43.9	10.1	287	100.0
Country of Destination	Taiwan	17.6	10.3	23.5	43.4	5.1	272	100.0
	South Korea	17.1	9.5	12.4	23.8	37.1	105	100.0
	Japan	3.3	10.0	6.7	56.7	23.3	30	100.0
	Malaysia	16.1	19.3	25.3	32.1	7.2	249	100.0
Province	Ha Tay	11.9	8.5	23.8	37.9	17.9	235	100.0
	Thai Binh	10.0	13.6	20.5	47.3	8.6	220	100.0
	Ha Tinh	28.4	19.4	20.4	23.4	8.5	201	100.0
Occupation in Destination Country	Factory worker	10.7	14.5	22.9	37.4	14.5	345	100.0
	Domestic Worker (in a private home)	12.9	7.1	21.9	50.3	7.7	155	100.0
	Construction worker	21.6	15.7	19.6	31.4	11.8	51	100.0
	Worker in agriculture or fishery	43.0	19.0	20.3	10.1	7.6	79	100.0
	Worker in service sector	16.7	20.8	12.5	37.5	12.5	24	100.0
Overall Total		16.6	13.8	21.8	36.1	11.8	646	100.0

Appendix 7. ILAMI Vietnam 2009 Survey. Ratio of pre-departure costs to net earnings by gender.

Earnings and Ratios of Cost to Earnings for Migrant Returnees		Male total earnings	Male fees to earnings ratio	Female total earnings	Female fees to earnings ratio	Overall average	Ratio average
Average total earnings		8718	1.16	9498	0.65	9067	0.93
Country of Destination							
Taiwan	1 year or less	1634	4.12	1411	3.50	1554	3.90
	1-2 years	5325	0.93	3508	0.80	4416	0.87
	2-3 years	4726	1.07	7778	0.25	6811	0.51
	3-4 years	11805	0.58	11156	0.13	11279	0.22
	More than 4 years	29270	0.15	19885	0.04	21226	0.06
	Average	6317	1.84	9534	0.48	8500	0.92
South Korea	1 year or less	1690	2.21			1690	2.21
	1-2 years	3993	1.00			3993	1.00
	2-3 years	10663	0.52			10663	0.52
	3-4 years	29679	0.13	18059	0.19	27233	0.15
	More than 4 years	38587	0.10	36819	0.11	38119	0.10
	Average	20449	0.75	31047	0.13	21946	0.66
Japan	1 year or less			966	9.09	966	9.09
	1-2 years	13122	0.94			13122	0.94
	2-3 years	30705	0.14			30705	0.14
	3-4 years	26666	0.34	28811	0.27	27873	0.30
	More than 4 years	17015	0.22	26757	0.46	21886	0.36
	Average	21985	0.45	26195	0.99	24012	0.72
Malaysia	1 year or less	915	2.70	1072	3.09	962	2.82
	1-2 years	1670	1.33	1493	1.22	1630	1.30
	2-3 years	2331	0.77	2560	0.65	2452	0.71
	3-4 years	4255	0.49	3567	0.66	4092	0.53
	More than 4 years	5564	0.35	5572	0.27	5566	0.33
	Average	2945	1.06	2603	1.08	2837	1.07
Province							
Ha Tay	1 year or less	1157	3.14	724	1.66	1100	2.93
	1-2 years	6231	0.60	2335	0.67	4796	0.63
	2-3 years	5035	0.77	7352	0.31	6169	0.55
	3-4 years	11093	0.39	11233	0.21	11154	0.31
	More than 4 years	32854	0.12	29279	0.11	31570	0.12
	Average	12217	0.86	12081	0.31	12163	0.64
Thai Binh	1 year or less	2544	1.97	2709	2.41	10981	2.17
	1-2 years	3737	1.29	4311	0.77	3895	1.14
	2-3 years	8577	0.61	5337	0.31	6294	0.40
	3-4 years	18775	0.33	12312	0.18	14093	0.22
	More than 4 years	28001	0.14	24458	0.15	26125	0.15
	Average	11979	0.83	10361	0.39	10982	0.56
Ha Tinh	1 year or less	1165	3.43	578	4.52	996	3.74
	1-2 years	2049	1.31	1467	1.46	1907	1.35
	2-3 years	3900	0.94	3599	0.77	3772	0.87
	3-4 years	4153	0.65	8830	0.41	5748	0.57
	More than 4 years	9709	0.38	8508	0.21	9334	0.33
	Average	3261	1.63	4230	1.66	3574	1.64