

# **IMAGES Country Study Documentation**

# **Vietnam**

**2012**

# 1

## KEY OBJECTIVES

This research in Vietnam was based on the wider study conceptualized and designed by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) in New Delhi and was implemented in partnership with two research partners in Nepal and Vietnam. In Vietnam, the study partner was the Institute for Social Development Studies (ISDS). This research adapted the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) survey tool to explore men's attitude towards son preference. IMAGES is one of the most comprehensive surveys ever carried out on the attitudes and behaviors of men aged 18-49 years, on issues related to gender equality, including sexual and reproductive health, maternal health, gender-based violence and men's participation in care-giving and family life.

# 1

## KEY OBJECTIVES

Strong son preference in parts of Asia has led to serious discriminatory practices towards girls and women, with disturbing effects on their status, health and development. The significant male surplus in some populations resulting from the excess of male births since 1980 has an impact on the sex ratios at birth and subsequently affected the dynamics of marriage in several regions of this continent. The lack of women available for marriage has created further discrimination through increased violence against women, trafficking, abduction, forced marriages, or sharing brides among brothers as different practices in different countries. Girls who are born also face discrimination in their lives through unequal opportunities for health care, education and fulfilling their aspirations.

# 1

## KEY OBJECTIVES

In Vietnam, the patrilineal and patrilocal kinship system that tends to place strong normative pressure on couples to produce at least one son. Men's views about the importance of sons and daughters are highly influenced by traditional customs, gender roles and expectations. Traditionally, sons are essential to carry on family lines and names, to perform ancestor worship and to take care of parents in their old age. Also, sons are more desired because having a son helps improve a woman's status within the family and a man's masculinity and reputation within the community. Men and women with no sons are often exposed to strong pressures from the extended family as well as experience humiliation within the community.

# 1

## KEY OBJECTIVES

In parts of Vietnam, there is an imbalance in the sex ratio at birth, which is seen as a demographic manifestation of gender inequality corresponding discrimination against females before birth. In order to meet their strong preference of sons, many couples tend to use advancing technologies, including ultrasonography to determine the sex of the fetus and induced abortion to eliminate unwanted female fetuses (UNFPA, 2011). It has been argued that despite impressive social achievements in the improvement of women's well-being during the past few decades, son preference still persists and hinders the country's efforts towards gender equality.

# 1

## KEY OBJECTIVES

At the time of this study, the government of Vietnam had demonstrated its strong commitment to promote gender equality and to eliminate violence against women. The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was ratified by the Government in early 1982. More importantly, in 2006, Vietnam passed the Law on Gender Equity (GEL), which ensures gender equity in all aspects of life and assigns detailed responsibilities to specific organizations, institutions, families and individuals in ensuring these principles. Following this, in 2007, the Government passed the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control (DVL), which provides explicit protection from violence within the family to its members and covers a wide range of acts of domestic violence. The Government has also produced a number of decrees, circulars and national plans of action to address the prevention and control of domestic violence. Reducing gender-based violence is one of the key objectives put forth by the draft National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011-2020.

# 1

## KEY OBJECTIVES

Thus, the main objective of this study was to understand the dimensions, nature and determinants of Vietnamese men's attitudes to son preference and gender-based violence. The specific objectives of the project included assessing men's current behaviors and attitudes on a wide range of issues as they relate to gender equality, assess men's knowledge and attitudes toward son preference and violence, exploring contributing factors that can be attributed to men's attitudes and behaviors related to gender-based violence and son preference and assessing men's knowledge of and attitudes toward policies that have sought to promote gender equality (e.g., gender-based violence, sex selection, family planning and inheritance rights).

# 2

## DATA COLLECTION

This study focuses on men's attitudes towards gender equity, son preference, and violence (intimate partner violence and other forms), and their knowledge about reproductive health and existing policies. As a consequence, the survey instrument was designed to be relevant to these issues as they applied to adult men in stable, co-habituating relationships as well as those not in a stable relationship. Specific topics in the questionnaire included: socio-demographic characteristics, childhood experiences, attitudes about relationship and son preference, intimate relationships, reproductive history of partner, preference on family size and composition, knowledge about abortion law, fatherhood, health and wellbeing, policies, and sexual experiences.

This study uses a modified version of IMAGES to include a focus on son preference. A structured interviewer-administered paper questionnaire was developed based on the IMAGES survey tool and Partners for Prevention (P4P), translated into the local language (Vietnamese) and pre-tested locally.

# 2 DATA COLLECTION

Based on the pretesting results, the questionnaire was revised and finalized. Most of the questions were close-ended and some key variables were included in the multiple questions. The individual questionnaire was divided into 11 sections with approximately 250 items and took about 45-60 minutes to apply.

The questionnaire included some specific questions for the Vietnamese context, such as those related to the bride-price and the number of doctors visited for an ultrasound test. The study excluded items related to dowry and number of wives the respondent had simultaneously, as these were considered irrelevant to the Vietnamese context.

There were a total of 12 interviewers in the country field team. Since the survey respondents were men, all the data collectors were male, because it has been found that male interviewers are likely to get more accurate information on sensitive issues from male respondents.

# 2

## DATA COLLECTION

Prior to the fieldwork in the Vietnam study, the local authorities and the Department of Population and Family Planning of the two selected provinces, Hung Yen and Can Tho, were contacted to obtain their permission and assistance for the research team. The survey was conducted in Hung Yen from 3-10 August, 2011 and in Can Tho from 17-26 August, 2011. In total, 1,424 men were interviewed, 719 in Hung Yen and 705 in Can Tho.

The questionnaire was administered by the interviewers for the first 10 sections and self-administered for the last section with more sensitive questions. Standard procedures were followed to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.

Men's attitude towards gender norms were assessed using an adapted version of the Gender Equitable Men (GEM) scale developed initially by the Horizons Program and Instituto Promundo in Brazil (Pulerwitz J. and Barker G., 2008). This scale has been widely adapted to many countries and has shown high levels of validity.

# 2

## DATA COLLECTION

For this survey, 24 statements were used to measure men's attitude towards gender equality which were sub-categorized into: gender roles; sexuality/sexual relationships; violence; reproductive health; masculinity and value of sons and daughters.

In Vietnam 17 statements respectively were finally selected using factor analysis and after assessing reliability test (Cronbach Alpha score was 0.81 in Vietnam). Responses were collated under two broad categories: agree (which combined the responses 'strongly agree' and 'agree') and 'disagree' (which combined the responses 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree')

# 3

## SAMPLE SIZE AND LOCATION

The sample comprised of 1424 men from two districts namely Hung Yen in the North and Can Tho in the south.

The study adopted a standard multi-stage cluster sampling design, with clusters(enumeration areas) as the primary sampling unit. The broad approach was to first select the district/province based on the sex ratio at birth. Within the district/province, samples were then distributed in order to get equal representation from the rural and urban areas.

Stage 1: Selection of province: The provinces of Hung Yen (sex ratio at birth, SRB =124) and Can Tho (SRB = 110) were selected for the survey, because of their elevated SRB levels.

Stage 2: Selection of communes within each province: Since the population sizes of Hung Yen and Can Tho are almost the same (1,128,702 and 1,187,089, respectively),the total study sample of 1,680 men was divided equally between the two sites.

# 3

## SAMPLE SIZE AND LOCATION

Based on the rural/urban population distribution in Vietnam, of the 840 men in each site, 588 men (70%) were selected from four rural communes and 252 men (30%) from four urban wards. The eight communes were selected from each province using Probability Proportionate to Size (PPS), based on a list of all the communes in the selected province and their sizes (i.e., the number of households or of people).

Stage 3: Selection of clusters within each commune: Using PPS, two clusters were chosen from each selected commune.

# 3

## SAMPLE SIZE AND LOCATION

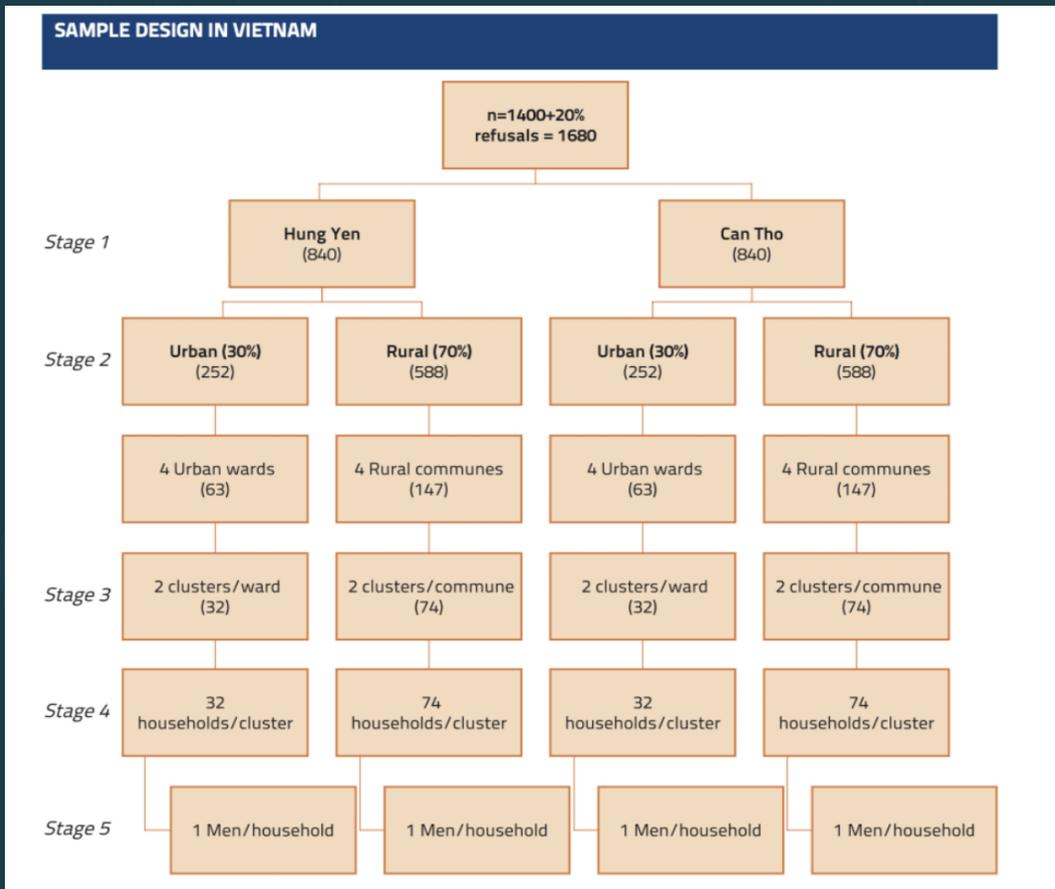
Stage 4: Selection of households within a cluster: An accurate list of households was developed in each cluster with the assistance of local authorities and population motivators. A random selection was made in the list to get a total of 74 households in each cluster of each rural commune and 32 households in each cluster of each urban ward.

Stage 5: Selection of men within each household: If more than one eligible respondent was found in the selected household, then the Kish table in the household selection form was used to identify the eligible man from each selected household for interview (figure A2.1).

# 3

## SAMPLE SIZE AND LOCATION

A detailed visual of the sample design can be seen below.



# 3

## SAMPLE SIZE AND LOCATION

The majority (54 percent) of men interviewed in Vietnam were in the oldest age category of 35 to 49 years; the youngest age category of 18 to 24 years made up a smaller proportion (19 percent) of respondents. The mean age of the respondents was 35 years. The vast majority of the men interviewed in Vietnam (91 percent) lived in a joint family structure. Almost half the Vietnamese men (45 percent) had married after the age of 25. The table below shows selected demographic characteristics of respondents by age, marital status, place of residence, type of family, and age at marriage.

# 3

## SAMPLE SIZE AND LOCATION

SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS		
Characteristics	Vietnam	
	Percentage	n
<b>Age</b>		
18-24 years	19.1	270
25-34 years	26.9	382
35-49 years	54.0	768
<b>Mean age</b>	<b>34.9</b>	<b>1425</b>
<b>Marital status</b>		
Currently not married	24.3	1079
Currently Married	75.7	346
<b>Place of residence</b>		
Rural	68.5	976
Urban	31.5	449
<b>Type of family</b>		
Nuclear	8.6	123
Joint/Extended	91.4	1302
<b>Age at marriage</b>		
<20 years	5.7	62
21-24 years	49.1	434
25-49 years	45.2	491
<b>Mean age</b>	<b>24.6</b>	<b>1087</b>

# 4

## RESPONSE RATE

There were initially 1680 refusals to participate in the survey.

# 5

## WEIGHTING PROCEDURE

Because the eight communes selected from each province in Vietnam used Probability Proportionate to Size (PPS) sampling, the samples were designed to be self-weighting.

# 6

## MISSINGNESS ASSESSMENT

No additional information available in this section.

# 7

## QUALITY CONTROL

No additional information available in this section.

# 8 INTERVIEWER TRAINING

Prior to conducted the survey, the field teams underwent five-day intensive training in the application of the research instrument and quality assurance from the core team members, based on standard World Health Organization practices for carrying out research on sensitive issues.

# 9

## DATA COLLECTION PARTNER

The GEM scale was originally developed by the Population Council and Promundo with young men aged 15-24 years and later adopted by the IMAGES for adult men, and adapted in Vietnam to match the local context.

This study was undertaken by International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) in partnership with the Institute for Social Development Studies (ISDS) in Vietnam. The International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), Asia Regional Office (ARO), former Technical Specialist at ICRW, Dr. Ajay Kumar Singh and former Research Associate at ICRW, ARO, Ms. Sonvi Kapoor, contributed to finalizing the study instruments, sampling design and guiding the teams in Vietnam during data collection and analysis.

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) Committees of the ICRW provided the ethical approvals to carry out the study. The study was commissioned by UNFPA, Asia and Pacific Regional Office, Bangkok and funded by Australian Government, AusAID.

# 10 ETHICAL APPROVAL

The study protocol was approved by the ICRW's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The study team, including the research assistants were made aware of the sensitivity of the area being explored under the study and took several steps to minimize discomfort to study participants. Ethical guidelines developed by the WHO on studying sensitive issues were maintained throughout the study and beyond. Participants in the study were fully informed about the nature of the study, the research objectives, and the confidentiality of the data, and gave written consent (a thumb-print for those who could not sign their names) for their participation in the study. Standard procedures were followed for ensuring anonymity and confidentiality of the participants.

# 11

## NOTES ON STUDY

This study was the first of its kind in Vietnam to explore men's attitudes on a wide range of issues related to gender equality, son preference, the levels and types of intimate partner violence and knowledge and attitude toward laws and policies related to women's right.

In Vietnam, the study was carried out in only two provinces, one in the north and one in the south, so the data are not representative for the country as a whole. The analysis, however, does indicate some significant patterns and trends with respect to son preference and gender-based violence that deserve further policy attention. It should be noted here that, in two out of four rural communes, which were randomly selected in Can Tho, the majority of their populations originally migrated from the north as a result of the partition of the country in 1954. Most of them are Catholics.

# 11

## NOTES ON STUDY

The research team found that this generation has still upheld northern accents, way of life and culture. The fact that the majority of the respondents in the two southern communes have northern origins might produce biases to provincial comparisons.

A general limitation of the data could arise from response bias, which is found unavoidable in every interview. In this study, for some 'sensitive' questions, especially about violence and sex selection practices, respondents may tend to give responses that they think are socially and politically acceptable as "right" or to please the interviewer.

The background is a solid teal color with several dark blue, hand-drawn style lines. These lines are abstract and somewhat chaotic, with some forming large loops and others being straight or slightly curved. The lines vary in thickness and have a slightly textured, chalk-like appearance.

# IMAGES

International  
Men and Gender  
Equality Survey