FACTS & FIGURES

- Human Development Index: 116 of 189 countries (UNDP 2018)
- Gender Inequality Index: 67 of 160 countries (UNDP 2018)
- Gender Gap Index: 77 of 149 countries (WEF 2018)
- Women's labour force participation: 73.2% - high in the region (UN Women 2013)
- Women in vulnerable/informal employment: 69% (2012) – women have limited access to formal employment and thus limited access to social security.
- Domestic violence prevalence: 3 in 5 ever married women experience some form of violence in their lifetime by their intimate partner. (UN Women)

Gender-based violence (GBV)*

- Lifetime prevalence of physical and/or sexual partner violence: 34%
- 32% of ever-married women aged 15-49 had experienced physical violence by a partner and 10% had experienced sexual violence.
- 54% of women experienced emotional abuse in their lives.
- 58% of women experienced at least one form of abuse in their lifetimes, and violence had occurred in the past year for half of those women.
- 10% of women survived non-partner violence, and 3% of women had been sexually abused before the age of 15.
- GBV survivors were more likely to report poorer health outcomes and were three times more likely to have attempted suicide

*GBV data from Vietnam General Statistics Office National Study on Domestic Violence

General:

- Population: 92.70 million persons (2016)
- Urbanisation: 34.51% (31.99 million) urban, 65.49% (60.71 million) rural
- Sex ratio: 49.31% (45.71 million) male, 50.69% (46.99 million) female
- Ethnic groups: 54 ethnic groups. Majority (90%) are Kinh (Viet).
- Sex ratio at birth: 113 boys to 100 girls (2013)
- Birth rate: 15.5 births/1,000 population (2017)
- Death rate: 5.9 deaths/1,000 population (2017)
- Maternal mortality: 54 deaths/100,000 live births (2015)
- Infant mortality rate: 17.3 deaths/1,000 live births
- Life expectancy at birth: 73.7 years
- Literacy: 94.5% - male: 96.3% and female: 92.8% (2015)
- Education expenditure: 5.7% of GDP (2013)
- Labour force: Estimated at 54.45 million persons (15 years and older)
- Child labour: 2,545,616 children aged 5-14.

COUNTRY CONTEXT

Vietnamese culture is rooted in Confucianism, which is characterised by patrilineal descent, male privilege and hierarchical relationships that support gender inequality.

- **Patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted gender stereotypes** with respect to the responsibilities and roles of women and men in the family and in society result in subordinate roles of women.
- **Harmful practices such as child marriage** in certain areas greatly hinder the health of women as well as women’s ability to be economically independent.
- Common understanding behind **son preference** is the belief that only sons can carry on family lineage and are responsible for ancestral worship. **Sex ratio at birth is highly skewed** (113 boys to 100 girls in 2013) due to son preference.
- These gender biases and gender stereotypes are promoted in **education curriculum and through the media** with limited government intervention to counter prevailing beliefs and harmful practices.

Gender-based violence:

- Related to the subordinate role of women **domestic violence occurs in all sectors of society**. 58% of ever married women have experienced sexual, physical, or emotional violence according to a national survey. (NSDVVN)
As patriarchal values are entrenched, some women are not aware of their right to live free from violence and accept the belief that violence in a relationship is ‘normal’. Some women feel it is their duty to endure the violence to have family harmony.

Unfortunately there is very little data on gender-based violence, especially in the public sphere and in the workplace, as well as lacking data on crime, human trafficking, and violence against children (at home and school).

Employment:
- Although women have a high labour participation rate, they work in sectors where they are poorly paid and undervalued.
- At the same time, they are responsible for productive work in the household, which often forces women to take informal jobs that pay little and are insecure but have flexible hours.
- Women are likely to work in agriculture or small business run by their own families. In such work, health and social insurance is not covered and employees must cover it themselves if they choose to. Thus few women working in these areas have any form of social security.
- On average, Vietnamese women spend 19.7 hours on ‘market work’ and 38.7 hours a week on unpaid care and housework (traditionally referred to as ‘women’s work’), while for men this is 25.1 hours and 26.2 hours, respectively.

Education:
- Women face barriers in access to resources and productive assets and technical and vocational training.
- 85.4% of the Vietnamese labour force was unskilled or unqualified in 2010. From 2011 to 2015, this rate decreased gradually, to reach 80.1% in 2015 (77.6% male; 82.7% female).
- As recently as September 2017, the National Assembly Standing Committee called for an investigation into reports by the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour of a spate of firings from industrial zones, 80% of whom were women workers under 35 years of age (VNA, 2017). This suggests a friction between women’s ability to work and their traditional status as carers, as well as the precariousness of their work status overall.

LEGAL CONTEXT

National legislation:
National laws to prevent and respond to violence against women in place include (among others):
- The Law on Gender Equality (2006), with provisions for social and family life.
- The Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control (2007), providing for measures to prevent and combat domestic violence, and details the acts of violence in the family.
- The Marriage and Family Law (2014). This law provides for the principle of gender equality in property and inheritance in cases of divorce and death.
- Law on Elections (2015). This law introduced a gender quota for female candidates for election.
- State Budget Law (2015). This law directs that gender equality, hunger eradication, poverty reduction, and ethnic policies are to be prioritised in budgetary allocations.
- Vietnam’s National Gender Equality Strategy (2011–2020) and supporting Action Plan specify a range of targets on women and work.

International legislation:
- Vietnam is a signatory to a range of international conventions, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1982), and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the ASEAN Region (2004).

SOURCES
ILO Better Work programme
OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index (2014)
UN WOMEN report on ‘Prevalence Data on Different Forms of Violence against Women’
Vietnam General Statistics Office conducted the National Study on Domestic Violence in Viet Nam (NSDVVN) from late 2009 to mid-2010, in collaboration with other ministries and UNJP